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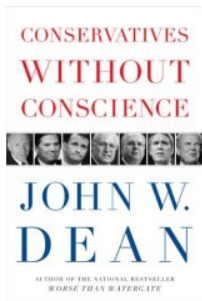


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In *Conservatives Without Conscience*, John Dean, who served as White House counsel under Richard Nixon and then helped to break the Watergate scandal with his testimony before the Senate, takes a vivid and analytical look at a Republican Party that has changed drastically from the conservative movement that he joined in the mid-1960s as an admirer of Senator Barry Goldwater. Listen to our interview with Dean as part of our July 13 [Amazon Wire podcast](#) (along with interviews with Garrison Keillor and Henry Rollins) to hear how he originally conceived of the book with the late Senator Goldwater, and the social science research he drew on to put together his portrait of the "conservative authoritarian." (You can subscribe to regular Wire podcasts [here](#).) And take a look at Dean's choices for the [best books to read on the American presidency](#) in our [Grownup School](#) feature.

From Publishers Weekly

In his seventh book, Dean, the former Nixon legal counsel whom the FBI has called the "master manipulator" of the Watergate coverup, weighs in with a rebuke to Christian fundamentalists and other right-wing hard-liners. A self-described Goldwater conservative (indeed, Goldwater had planned to collaborate on this book before his death), he rails against the influence of social conservatives and neoconservatives within his party. Suffused with bitterness stemming from the controversies in which he has been embroiled, Dean's book paints a thin social science veneer over a litany of mostly ad hominem complaints. Purporting to show that social conservatives and neoconservatives are, on the whole, demonstrably authoritarian, bigoted, irrational and amoral, *Conservatives Without Conscience* offers helpful hints such as "Conservatives without conscience do not have horns and tails," and evinces a telling fascination with politicians' shady book deals. Though there is clearly much to condemn in the policies and tactics Dean deplors, assailing everyone from French political theorist Joseph de Maistre to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist to the chairman of Yale University's conservative association as "Double High" social-dominance-oriented authoritarians undermines his journalistic credibility. Dean's lurid accusations may be entertaining, but they add little to the reasoned debate that Washington so sorely lacks today. (July 11)

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A Sobering Look At How Radical Elements Are Destroying The Republican Party!, July 11, 2006

Reviewer: [Roy Chan](#) (Long Beach, CA USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

In his book, "Conservative Without Conscience," John Dean employs his distinctive knowledge and understanding of Washington politics to examine the conservative radical Republican leaders - from Capitol Hill to Pennsylvania Avenue to K Street and beyond. The author not only highlights specific right-wing-driven GOP policies but also probes the conservative mind-set, identifying recurring qualities such as the unbridled viciousness toward those daring to disagree with them, as well as the big business favoritism that costs taxpayers billions. Dean identifies specific examples of how court packing is seeking to form a judiciary that is activist by its very nature, how religious piety is producing politics run amok, and how concealed indifference to the founding principles of liberty and equality is pushing America further and further from its constitutional foundations. To not give away the details, this is a perfect book for those who want to know what's happening at the top levels of the Republican Party. The author presents his text to show what the current right-wing authoritarian is thinking when conflated with the dominating personalities of the conservative leadership that could take the United States toward its own version of fascism. This is a MUST READ book for those who want to learn more about the United States Republican Party and its effect to our society. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!

Was this review helpful to you? ([Report this](#))

253 of 294 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Now Dean is trying to stop a threat to American Democracy.** July 12, 2006

Reviewer: **Robin Orlovski "political activist"** (United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 500 REVIEWER REAL NAME™

Still known as one of the figures in the Watergate cover up, John Dean is an unlikely hero for this liberal. However, the central thesis of his latest book argues that the GOP has been hijacked by extremists who ingeniously pose as moderates. They've taken the 'middle America' strategy pioneered by Nixon himself to dangerous extremes--and are doing much worse than Watergate if not stopped.

While parts of the book possibly do come across as self-pity (since he is still trying to salvage his reputation across the political spectrum, of course he would attack an unpopular president) I am also familiar with the 'Goldwater conservatism' which is talked about in the book.

The late Arizona Republican Senator, once considered Mr. GOP and the standard bearer of the 'New Right' actually was a staunch libertarian, something which has gone over the head of his political descendants--rushing to claim the title, but not the accompanying issue positions and duties. Unlike Goldwater, they are rushing to the side of social conservatives, who want to fight for freedom abroad by denying it to Americans at home.

Therefore it also is quite possible this book is Dean telling the truth--and desperately hoping the audiences will heed his message before any further damage is inflicted upon the country.

Other people could write 'exposes' of the Republican Party, but they would not carry Dean's historical weight. Specifically because of who he is--and yes, what role he played in American history, Dean is qualified to write a no-holds barred critique of the current Republican Party's internal problems and the external consequences.

Was this review helpful to you? [\(Report this\)](#)

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★★★★★ **Great Read.** July 29, 2006

Reviewer: **P. Prado** - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

There still may be hope for conservatives with a conscience. Reading this book only affirmed what used to be an honorable republican party is now been highjacked by these authoritarian fascists. Are we opening up the door to a dictatorship? Hopefully this will open up the eyes of the remaining 75% of true patriots and lovers of democracy for this country.

Was this review helpful to you? [\(Report this\)](#)

0 of 15 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Victim of Bush Derangement Syndrome speaks out!** July 29, 2006

Reviewer: **P. McGuinness "freedomstruth"** (Austin, TX USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Sobering yet unintended look at the mindset of those afflicted with BDS - Bush Derangement Syndrome. BDS is a virulent disease prevalent among liberals since 9/11, afflicting many with a unfounded and irrational fear of Bush that has grown acute due to his approach to the global war on terror.

Dean has gone full tilt BDS. This mistitled book is not about conservatives, but about coming up with scaremongering against the Republicans. (There is no political philosophy worth mentioning here, despite the title; If you want to learn about Conservative thinking, read "The March to Freedom" a book of essays on Conservative thought.)

Dean was and is a political operative, the former Carville of the evil Nixon administration has come full circle and is using the dirty tricks of character assassination he used on one side against the other side, only he doesnt seem the irony of it in this screed. He sees vindication in attacking former friends where an objective reader sees a vindictive cesspool of overheated character assassination and mudslinging. His attacks on Bush administration policy, actions or personal peccadillos could be cited against 'the other' side, e.g., the Clinton administration, corrupt Democrats, Hillary Clinton (viz Morris' "Rewriting History"), and one only need read partisan books from the other side (paging Ann Coulter), to see how it's done. All politicians are imperfect humans, and, gee whiz, power does corrupt (btw, a conservative principle proven true time and time again).

Two threads, both of them half-truths, are woven into Dean's Jeremiad on conservative Republicans. Thread one is the Christian theocratic angle. But social conservatives - which include many non-evangelicals although evangelicals are the backbone - are NOT asking for an America any different from what it was in the past.

The legitimate and serious cultural debate about laws and mores (abortion, gay marriage, pornography, prayer in schools) has been in the last generation one about secularists and cultural innovations fighting for changes against social conservatives who oppose them. Social conservatives want no more than what America once was, culturally: was America circa 1960 a "Christian Fascist state"???

The second thread is the "Authoritarianism" charge and his attacks on executive branch power. That is simply a profound misunderstanding (actually mis-representation) of the War against Terror, aka war against Islamo-fascism, and what the US should and must do. It is further a disproven charge, given the over-willingness of both Supreme Court (Viz Hamdan) and Congress to meddle in micro-managing of war in Iraq, war on terror, etc.

Everything he states could be stated against the Clinton administration in spades; for example, "an unnecessary war based on phony premises that did not get UN authorization or proper Congressional mandate" - uh, that would be Kosovo and our attack on Serbia in 1999. But that's just one example. Consider the huge uses of executive powers - Lincoln suspending Habeus Corpus, Roosevelt putting thousands of Japanese citizens in camps, Wilson's Parmer raids; oh, and lets not forget LBJ spying on Goldwater HQ in '64 or Nixon's 'plumbers' aka Dean's friends.

What has Bush given us? We captured terrorists and instead of summary executions, we send them to Gitmo, with culturally sensitive meals, pro bono lawyers, Geneva rights (1st time for terrorists!) and UN issuing 'human rights' reports on behalf of the world's worst terrorists in our captivity. This is "authoritarianism"?! Spying on terrorist communications is a threat to our 'privacy'?!?

Leftwing BDS sufferers portray a dark picture of threats from the Bush administration, Republicans, etc. portraying threats that are nor real, while they ignore the real threat that global Islamofascist terrorism poses to us: Bali, London, Madrid. The leftwing has made a pact with the Islamofascist devil - understating the threat of terrorism as a way of undermining Republican/conservative power. Pick up and read "Unholy Alliance" by David Horowitz for the whys and hows on the dark underbelly of the moonbat BDS-afflicted Left.

On both his main points, Dean flubs it with overheated fearmongering, lack of perspective, and character attacks that mis-represent Republicans and conservative ideals.

Dean's book is partisan read-meat for leftwing Deaniacs, but worse than useless for an objective observer. Dean's book leaves readers with a misunderstanding of both what conservative Republicans are really about and what the real challenges to our country are.

Was this review helpful to you? [\(Report this\)](#)

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **The Hijacking of a Party.** July 28, 2006

Reviewer: **L. Glasner** (NY NY) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

In his new, provocative book, Conservatives Without Conscience, Dean provides a watershed moment: We are on the cusp of being taken over by authoritarianism wrapped in a blanket of pseudo-conservative ideology. Unless we the public recognize it and counter it within the next decade or so, the US may be shocked to find itself among the world's dictatorial regimes.

But Conservatives Without Conscience is not about John Dean or Watergate; it is about an attempt to understand how the conservative movement evolved to its place today, the different factions that call themselves conservative, and an understanding of the thinking behind both the leaders and followers of such policy. After having read the book, I can report that it is not that Dean has changed his political outlook so much as that the definition of conservative has moved to such extremes that Dean now sees himself as left of center. Apparently, the term conservative has been fixed around contemporary conservative hegemony. Dean uses this book to object.

Dean laments the loss of the core conservative principles that have largely been overrun by the political right. From neocons to teocons, these groups all coalesce around a common enemy: liberalism. Dean points out not just their internal inconsistencies and intellectual dishonesty, but also the common thread of authoritarianism that runs through them. This is not a characterization that Dean takes lightly and it is one that stands apart from the brand of "kinder, gentler" conservatism that represented the Goldwater/Reagan ideology and its cousins.

In undertaking the analysis that is this book, Dean asks the ultimate question: Why? What is it about contemporary conservative thinking (or nonthinking in many cases) that makes people subscribe to authoritarian claims? Why do people in general succumb to this kind of ideology? To address these questions, Dean looked toward social science and social psychology and found himself immersed in research and data that provided answers that made sense. Research by Stanley Milgram and more recently Bob Altemeyer harkens back to themes put forth by Hannah Arendt and her ideas about the "banality of evil." Dean

Amazon.com: Conservatives Without Conscience: Books: John Dean

discusses these major social science theories and aptly applies them to the current crop of conservatives who dominant US politics. None of the theories suffice independently to understand the phenomena, but taken together they go a long way toward explaining how a few dominant personalities have been able to radicalize and co-opt the traditional conservative philosophy without too much protest from within their own ranks. Until now. Dean's may not be the only voice rumbling from more traditional conservatives, but it is clearly the loudest and the most cogent. Others have mostly remained on the sidelines without being cheerleaders.

Dean's voice should be heard as a calling card for those traditional conservatives (i.e., those with a conscience) whose values have been hijacked by the Bush/Cheney White House. Dean would like this book to raise both the consciousness and conscience of those conservatives and moderate Republicans and Democrats who have been both acquiescent and silent in the face of bald-faced lies, corruption, and a tilt toward tyranny. We are all stakeholders.

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No [\(Report this\)](#)

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ Betrayal of Conservatism by Christian Fascism, July 28, 2006

Reviewer: **Danny Stoll** (Acworth, GA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Traditional conservatism bears no resemblance to the current brand of ideology that has taken control of the Republican Party. This new brand is fascist in nature and wraps itself in a Christian banner. However, it is no less than Christian Fascism itself. This means that the current leaders of the Republican Party have sold out the conservative movement to authoritarian theocrats who are traitors to American Democracy and the American nation. John Dean makes it clear that we are in danger of losing the nation that we all love so dearly. This is being done in the name of conservatism. However, a conservative movement it is not.

It is important that all Americans wake up and realize what is happening in our country. We must not allow the principles and ideals of our nation to be usurped by those who think they know what is best for all of us, and who seek to consolidate all political power in the office of the Presidency.

Our nation was founded upon progressive and liberal ideals (i.e. equality and liberty for all). This cannot be denied no matter what fascists historical revisionists try to manufacture.

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


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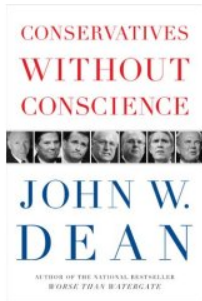
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From Publishers Weekly

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From Booklist

Starred Review With the perspective of a former Republican political insider, and experience in the Watergate scandal when he was White House counsel to Nixon, Dean takes a sincere, well-considered look at how conservative politics in the U.S. is veering dangerously close to authoritarianism, offering a penetrating and highly disturbing portrait of many of the major players in Republican politics and power. Looking back on the development of conservative politics in the U.S., Dean notes that conservatism is regressing to its authoritarian roots. Dean draws on five decades of social science research that details the personality traits of what are called "double high authoritarians": self-righteous, mean-spirited, amoral, manipulative, bullying. He concludes that Chuck Colson, Pat Robertson, Newt Gingrich, and Tom DeLay are all textbook examples. Dean calls Vice-President Cheney "the architect of Bush's authoritarian policies," and deems Bush "a mental lightweight with a strong right-wing authoritarian personality." Dean maintains that conservatives without conscience have produced such a hostile, noncollegial environment in Congress that threats of resistance through filibusters have been met with threats of a "nuclear option" and that conservatives have used fearmongering about terrorist attacks to the point where the nation faces a greater threat of relinquishing its ideals of democracy. Dean appeals to conservatives to find their consciences and to all Americans to take serious heed of what is going on in the nation. Readers of all political perspectives will find this book riveting. *Vanessa Bush*
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Los Angeles Times Book Review for Worse Than Watergate

A detailed...powerful case in a riveting book.

The Washington Post for Worse Than Watergate

Searing... an angry indictment.

The New York Times Book Review for Worse Than Watergate

Dean has again amassed evidence of a cancer growing on the presidency.

Book Description**John Dean takes a sobering look at how radical elements are destroying the Republican Party along with the very foundations of American democracy**

John Dean's last *New York Times* bestseller, *Worse Than Watergate: The Secret Presidency of George W. Bush*, offered the former White House insider's unique and telling perspective on George W. Bush's presidency. Once again, Dean employs his distinctive knowledge and understanding of Washington politics and process to examine the conservative movement's current inner circle of radical Republican leaders—from Capitol Hill to Pennsylvania Avenue to K Street and beyond. In *Conservatives Without Conscience*, Dean not only highlights specific right-wing-driven GOP policies but also probes the conservative mind-set, identifying recurring qualities such as the unbridled viciousness toward those daring to disagree with them, as well as the big business favoritism that costs taxpayers billions. Dean identifies specific examples of how court packing is seeking to form a judiciary that is activist by its very nature, how religious piety is producing politics run amok, and how concealed indifference to the founding principles of liberty and equality is pushing America further and further from its constitutional foundations.

By the end, Dean paints a vivid picture of what's happening at the top levels of the Republican Party, a noble political party corrupted by its current leaders who cloak their actions in moral superiority while packaging their programs as blatant propaganda. Dean, certainly no alarmist, finds disturbing signs that current right-wing authoritarian thinking, when conflated with the dominating personalities of the conservative leadership could take the United States toward its own version of fascism.

About the Author

John Dean was White House legal counsel to President Nixon for a thousand days. Dean also served as chief minority counsel for the House Judiciary Committee and as an associate deputy attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice.

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