



Misunderestimated

Bill Sammon

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A riveting portrait of President Bush as he broadens the war on terror overseas—and plunges into high-stakes political battles at home

"They underestimated me," George W. Bush famously remarked on the eve of his historic presidency. Fractured syntax aside, Bush was right: his detractors misunderstood his appeal to the American public, and underestimated his considerable political skills. In this compelling new book, Bill Sammon reveals how the president is turning these misperceptions to his advantage in the looming showdown with John Kerry and the Bush haters.

As senior White House correspondent for the *Washington Times*, Sammon has been granted extraordinary access to the president and his closest confidants, from political gurus Karl Rove and Andy Card to foreign policy advisers Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. The result is a compelling chronicle of the second eighteen months of George W. Bush's term, as the administration's focus shifts from al Qaeda and Afghanistan to Iraq and the 2004 election. Sammon's on-the-scene reporting and exclusive interviews with the president and his top advisers reveal how the White House is implementing the most profound shift in U.S. foreign policy in more than half a century, prompting an eminent Democratic historian to rank Bush alongside John Quincy Adams and Franklin Delano Roosevelt as one of America's "grand" strategists.

For the first time, Sammon discloses the president's vow that Kerry will "regret" bad-mouthing the liberation of Iraq, the seminal event in the post-9/11 phase of the Bush presidency. Rove even details for Sammon the White House strategy to paint Kerry as a condescending elitist whose "blatant" attempts to capitalize on his Vietnam experience will ultimately come back to haunt him.

Misunderestimated also meticulously tracks the rise of the Bush haters, a disturbing political phenomenon that colors everything from the war on terrorism to the presidential campaign. The impact extends to the press, which Sammon exposes for racing to brand Operation Iraqi Freedom another Vietnam "quagmire" less than eighteen months after making the same blunder during the Afghan war.

In *Misunderestimated*, Sammon takes readers inside the Oval Office for historic decisions of war and peace, aboard Air Force One for a daring, surprise descent into Baghdad, and even on an intimate tour of Bush's beloved Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas. It's a mesmerizing account of a president determined not to repeat his father's two fundamental mistakes—abandoning Iraq and failing to vanquish the Democrats.

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