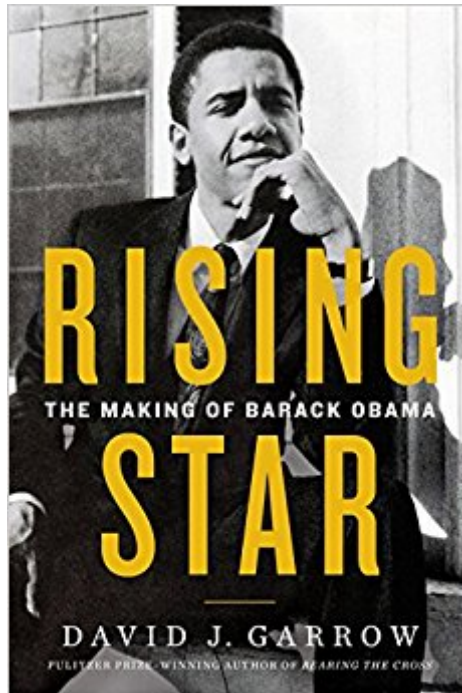




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# Rising Star: The Making Of Barack Obama



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER *Rising Star* is the definitive account of Barack Obama's formative years that made him the man who became the forty-fourth president of the United States—from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Bearing the Cross*. Barack Obama's speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention instantly catapulted him into the national spotlight and led to his election four years later as America's first African-American president. In this penetrating biography, David J. Garrow delivers an epic work about the life of Barack Obama, creating a rich tapestry of a life little understood, until now. *Rising Star: The Making of Barack Obama* captivatingly describes Barack Obama's tumultuous upbringing as a young black man attending an almost-all-white, elite private school in Honolulu while being raised almost exclusively by his white grandparents. After recounting Obama's college years in California and New York, Garrow charts Obama's time as a Chicago community organizer, working in some of the city's roughest neighborhoods; his years at the top of his Harvard Law School class; and his return to Chicago, where Obama honed his skills as a hard-knuckled politician, first in the state legislature and then as a candidate for the United States Senate. Detailing a scintillating, behind-the-scenes account of Obama's 2004 speech, a moment that labeled him the Democratic Party's "rising star," Garrow also chronicles Obama's four years in the Senate, weighing his stands on various issues against positions he had taken years earlier, and recounts his thrilling run for the White House in 2008. In *Rising Star*, David J. Garrow has created a vivid portrait that reveals not only the people and forces that shaped the future president but also the ways in which he used those influences to serve his larger aspirations. This is a gripping read about a young man born into uncommon family circumstances, whose faith in his own talents came face-to-face with fantastic ambitions and a desire to do good in the world. Most important, *Rising Star* is an extraordinary work of biography—tremendous in its research and storytelling, and brilliant in its analysis of the all-too-human struggles of one of the most fascinating politicians of our time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

â€œImpressive. ... [A] deeply reported work of biography.â€• (New York Times Book Review)â€œRigorous. ... Thorough. ... Meticulously researched. ... Delivers insight and clarity on Obamaâ€™s enigmatic personality.â€• (Christian Science Monitor)â€œA prodigious work. ... Each page crackles with the strength of [Garrowâ€™s] research.â€• (USA Today)â€œExtremely well-done. ... Garrow slices the fat of fiction away from fact. ... [A book] equally as valuable for what it is saying about the present and the future as well as the past.â€• (Atlanta Black Star)â€œRevealing. ... Probing. ... [Garrow] tells us how Obama lived, and explores the calculations he made in the decades leading up to his winningâ€”the presidency.â€• (Washington Post)â€œPhenomenalâ€• | Essential. â€• | Persuasive. â€• | Authoritative. â€• | A stunning and indispensable work of history. â€• | A masterwork of historical and journalistic researchâ€• | [and] a terrific read.â€• (David Greenberg, Politico)â€œA tour de force. ... An epic triumph of personal and political biography. (Paul Street, New York Journal of Books)â€œThe authoritative biography of Barack Obamaâ€™s prepresidential years. ... Illuminating. ... Impressively researched. ... Readers will be richly rewarded.â€• (Library Journal (starred review))â€œA convincing and exceptionally detailed portrait. ... Political history buffs will be fascinated.â€• (Publishers Weekly (starred review))â€œImportant. ... Engages, absorbs and mesmerises.â€• (Literary Review (London))â€œGarrow is a demon for research. ... Eminently solid. ... Consistently readable -- an impressive work.â€• (Kirkus Reviews)â€œGripping. ... [A] compelling read [that] should appeal to political junkies and insiders. ... Foundational.â€• (Washington Independent Review of Books)â€œLearned. ... May endure in the American presidential canon.â€• (Globe and Mail (Toronto))â€œDefinitive. ... Fascinating. ... So interesting, youâ€™ll be hard-pressed to put it down.â€• (Paul Lisnek, WGN Chicago)â€œYou definitely want to pick it up. ... Very thorough, very well-researched.â€• (Roland Martin, NEWS ONE NOW)â€œComprehensive. ... Contains many insights to Obamaâ€™s life and character. ... Will be the defining work on Obamaâ€™s early life for years to come.â€• (The Federalist)â€œImmensely informative. ... Reveals Mr. Obama in all his complexity.â€• (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

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"*Rising Son: The Making of Barack Obama*" by David Garrow, (May 2017). WOW! The first thing that impresses a reader is that this 1,461-page tome feels like it weighs like a 10-lb. sack of flour (okay, really only 7.2 lbs.). About 78% of the book is analysis (1,078 pages), with the balance being: notes, bibliography, and index. The author deeply delves into studying the upbringing of U.S. Pres. Barack Hussein Obama from his childhood years up to his announcement that he would run for the office of the U.S. President in mid-January 2007. The author doesn't really analyze the 2008 presidential campaign itself in detail, but notes several crises that could have severely hurt (and possibly derail) Obama's campaign. In the Epilogue, the author does briefly review both presidential campaigns, and notes some highlighted events in Obama's presidency (hey, only about 35 pages of reviewing his eight years in the Oval Office). Being a libertarian, I was surprised to read: "Barack claimed to *Time* [magazine] that as an undergraduate, 'I was reading Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek,'

famous conservative economists," but doesn't relate how those two influenced him outside of apparently stimulating his survival spirit: "... Barack told the Tribune [newspaper] that 'I had to scratch and claw my way to the point I am now....'" (p. 1049). The author reviews how the controversial remarks of Rev. Jeremiah Wright impacted Obama's campaign, as well as questionable sexcapade controversies during his college years. The author's legal credentials will have to serve as how one views the "truthiness" of the author's contentions and discoveries. I wasn't involved in Obama's campaigns, and like most will need to await the feedback of Obama's staff in (partially) validating some aspects of the author's portrait of our 44th president. Hey, there's almost 1,100 pages of critical analysis, so there is indeed extensive commentary on Barack's teenage and collegiate life. Undoubtedly, anti-Obama conservatives will be pleased with the many revelations in this book, but they undoubtedly will bemoan "if only this stuff had been revealed earlier!" Obama fans will pan some of the author's contentions, but most of us will be impressed with the extensive research that the author has undertaken in exposing so much of the unknown Barack (at least to those of us who didn't follow his Chicago, liberal community-organization activities, state senate votes, and his brief U.S. Senate career -- topics which the author discusses in great detail). [Brent Staples has a fine review in The New York Times. Also, do see a conservative's view by Lloyd Billingsley in his review "The Incredible Bulk: David Garrow's massive monument to the Obama myth" in the May 22, 2017 online "FrontPage Mag"..]

This is the most you will ever know about Obama before he became president, because of the author's incredibly painstaking research and the subject's secrecy about his life. It is not a hatchet job; the author is a Pulitzer Prize winning, distinguished academic historian. Fwiw, he considers himself a "progressive" and the criticism in the epilogue is from the Bernie wing of the Democratic Party. It is a depressing book. Obama was an extremely intelligent, very privileged man who consistently chose opportunism over principles. He also tends to be delusional; a minor example: he still thinks he's a good basketball player even though he was third string on his rich kids high school team. His claim to be a scholarship student at his high school is disproven as are many other stories from his first book, which others have noted as historical fiction. His community organizing was paid for and ultimately fruitless. The law review presidency was the result of a political popularity contest between liberals and conservatives. His father was at best a deadbeat dad, a wife beater and a drunk, not the person in his book. Etc. Critics of Rising Star say it's tedious. It is. But the details are impressive. A typical sentence about a lunch meeting will not only name the people but where they got what degrees, the restaurant, its location, reputation, menu choices, ad nauseam. You can skim

these parts. Btw, while Obama was never motivated by money, except to provide a very nice lifestyle for his family, Saint Michelle has been all about achieving lifestyles of the rich and famous since she graduated from Harvard. Very tedious to read about people earning in the six figures in the 90s and seven figures in the 00s, thanks to book sales, complaining about student loans. We will probably never know about his early childhood to the same degree, especially in Indonesia, because of time, distance and language. But if you want to know about Obama you should read this book.

This exhaustively researched and laboriously-written biography of President Obama portrays a three-dimensional character, complete with flaws, political ambition and calculation, and a self-centered absorption which is common in politicians. It also depicts a complex individual who embarked upon an exhaustive search for his self-identity, and a person of uncommon intelligence and a capacity for the formulation of in-depth principles and policies designed to improve our society. I went into this book as an Obama fan and left it even more so, as I appreciate the man more than the myth. I look forward to seeing how history treats Barack Obama.

This is the longest boring read I've read in a long time. Interesting story but too much detail. Gives a good understanding of how Obama came to where he was as President. Skim read most of it and you won't miss much.

It was very interesting. Cutting through all the rhetoric that filled his years in office. I knew some of this, but not all of it. I better understand the reasons behind some of his policies.

Extensive research, but Garrow's focus doesn't provide much illumination in substantive areas beyond works by Jodi Kantor, David Maraniss, David Remnick, and others. Nothing justifies the nearly 1000 pages. A good editor and less time bashing the work of others would be an improvement. Another great doorstop.

excellent

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