

# Book Review: This Will Not Pass

*by Michael S. Jordan*

Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns, *This Will Not Pass: Trump, Biden, and the Battle for America's Future*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2022.

If this book were listed as historical fiction, it would be hard to accept the assumptions made as true with so many outrageous acts by Donald Trump and his minions – the plot line would be incredible; but as history, we come to realize that these reported events actually took place. The events are so very well documented in vivid detail that the book is hard to put aside to take a break when finishing a segment or chapter of the it. You will want to read on to learn what is next. In the history of our nation, we have never had a president who was seditious or thought of attacking our own government, derailing our democratic institutions, failing to concede defeat, or refusing to cooperate in the peaceful transfer of power to his successor – that is, until Donald Trump!

The authors, Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns, are national correspondents for The New York Times who have used their many contacts in Washington and elsewhere to obtain inside information from people at all levels having firsthand knowledge and insights into the attempt by Donald Trump to stage a coup. They cover the period of the campaign in 2020, the period after the election until January 6, 2021, and the events thereafter with precision and jarring detail so the reader can learn what people knew, what people did, and how other people reacted. There were numerous unlawful acts by despicable people and many persons who stood by silently enabling the wrongdoers. Yet, many heroes emerged in both political parties at the national and local levels to protect our democracy.

At various critical times, the authors take us from one critical player in events to another at a different location, showing what those people were doing and saying at the same time. As various events described in the news are covered in the book, we learn precisely what was going on with others. Where was Trump as Mike Pence was ushered to safety only 30 feet from the insurrectionists?

The revelations demonstrate how close we were to losing our democracy and finding ourselves subjugated under the tyranny of an autocratic dictator. At the eve of the insurrection brought forward by a seditious conspiracy, many persons saw that January 6 would be a dangerous day rather than a day where we merely take a step in the peaceful transition of power.

As the book begins, we learn that Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.), with a military and intelligence background, having a good sense of the dangers possible on January 6, gave sound advice for safety to Congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), who would most likely be a recognized target by the Trump mob that could use the chaos to harm, rape, or kill her. The women were not close friends.

We learn very detailed and specific conversations such as that moderate congresswoman telling a left-leaning congresswoman to drive and not walk to the Capitol building, to enter through an adjoining building and use the tunnels while dressed in clothing not typically worn to confuse anyone looking for her, and to definitely not wear her congressional pin and only present it to the guards when going through security. This advice was designed to get the congresswoman safely to the constitutionally mandated January 6 processes to accept the electoral vote.

This book is a near contemporaneous documentation of the events taken with the voices and eyes of many famous and not so famous persons. It will be available in future years to look back and see where we failed and where we were lucky enough to succeed in preserving our democracy – if just for a while. We see that our 245-year experiment with democracy may easily become a passing fancy. We learn of the angry climate that can exist and did exist in our nation not caused only by Donald Trump but taken advantage of by Trump. Special interest money in election donations, gerrymandered congressional districts, information systems and right-wing television cable news pedaling lies later called “alternative facts,” and power-seeking unpatriotic populist politicians pandering false narratives are just a few of the precipitating factors and ingredients igniting the insurrectionists now under either investigation, indictment, or jail sentence.

I read this book as I heard the revelations made by the January 6th bipartisan select committee in the U.S. House of Representatives showing that the wrongdoing before, on, and after January 6, 2021 was not spontaneous; it was planned and orchestrated by Trump, his chief of staff, Mark Meadows, and Trump's henchmen such as Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman, Jefferey Bossert Clark, and Sidney Powell.

History continues to be made and we will see where the continuing investigations take the prosecutors in the Justice Department as well as those in states such as Georgia, Arizona, New York, and elsewhere. Until those events unfold, while there are many great books telling the story up to this point, *This Will Not Pass* is a great book to read and learn what occurred and what was done by whom and when.

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