



Free Ride: John McCain and the Media

David Brock, Paul Waldman

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We live in a gotcha media culture that revels in exposing the foibles and hypocrisies of our politicians. But one politician manages to escape this treatment, getting the benefit of the doubt and a positive spin for nearly everything he does: John McCain. Indeed, even during his temporary decline in popularity in 2007, the media continued to support him by lamenting his fate rather than criticizing the flip flops and politicking that undermined his popular image as a maverick.

David Brock and Paul Waldman show how the media has enabled McCain's rise from the Keating Five scandal to the underdog hero of the 2000 primaries to his roller-coaster run for the 2008 nomination. They illuminate how the press falls for McCain's "straight talk" and how the Arizona senator gets away with inconsistencies and misrepresentations for which the media skewers other politicians. This is a fascinating study of how the media shape the political debate, and an essential book for every political junkie.

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