

(continued from front flap)

charismatic champion of economic populism, William Jennings Bryan.

The 1896 election is a compelling drama in its own right, but McKinley's strategies offer important lessons for both political parties today.



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**KARL ROVE** served as Senior Advisor to President George W. Bush from 2000 to 2007 and Deputy Chief of Staff from 2004 to 2007. He now writes a weekly op-ed for *The Wall Street Journal* and is a Fox News contributor. Before he became known as "the Architect" of President Bush's 2000 and 2004 campaigns, Rove was president of Karl Rove + Company, an Austin-based public affairs firm that was involved in more than seventy-five campaigns for Republican candidates for president, governor, and senator, as well as handling nonpartisan causes and nonprofit groups.

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## Praise for *The Triumph of William McKinley*



"Either politics used to be more fun or Karl Rove just makes it seem that way. Whichever, his account of the 1896 election is written with great verve, even as it is informed by thorough research and illuminated by shrewd insight. This is political history at its most engaging."

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The Triumph of  
William McKinley



Karl Rove



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# The Triumph of William McKinley

## Why the Election of 1896 Still Matters

# Karl Rove



Author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Courage and Consequence*

"A vivid, intriguing and compellingly modern rendering of one of the most underappreciated episodes in American political history."

—Charles Krauthammer, author of  
*THINGS THAT MATTER*

The 1896 political environment resembles that of today: an electorate being transformed by a growing immigrant population, an uncertain economy disrupted by new technologies, growing income inequality, and contentious issues the two parties could not resolve. McKinley's winning 1896 campaign found ways to address these challenges and reformed his party, thereby creating a governing majority that dominated American politics for the next thirty-six years.

McKinley, a Civil War hero who preferred "the Major" above any other title he was given, changed the arc of American history by running the first truly modern presidential campaign. Knowing his party could win only if it grew beyond its base, he reached out to diverse ethnic groups, including openly seeking the endorsement of Catholic leaders and advocating for black voting rights. Running on the slogan "The People Against the Bosses," McKinley also took on the machine men who dominated his own party. He deployed campaign tactics still used today, including targeting voters with the best available technology. Above all, he offered bold, controversial answers to the nation's most pressing problem—how to make a new, more global economy work for every American—and although this split his own party, he won the White House by sticking to his principles, defeating a

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