

# Kingfish: The Reign of Huey Long



For nearly a decade, Huey Long, known as the "Kingfish," dominated the political landscape of Louisiana with his fiery rhetoric, populist policies, and larger-than-life persona. His reign as governor and later senator left an indelible mark on the state, transforming it in profound and controversial ways. In this article, we delve into the captivating life and career of Huey Long, exploring his rise to power, his political achievements, and the lasting legacy he left behind.

## **The Rise of the Kingfish**

Born in 1893 in Winn Parish, Louisiana, Huey Long grew up in a modest family. Despite facing financial hardships, he managed to excel academically and graduated from Louisiana State University. Long's natural charisma and talent for

public speaking propelled him into the world of politics, where he quickly made a name for himself as a champion of the ordinary working class.



## Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P. Long

by Richard D. White (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

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Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 452 pages



Long's political career took off when he was elected governor of Louisiana in 1928. With his strong personality and famous catchphrase, "Every Man a King," he presented himself as a champion of the poor and the oppressed. Long's "Share Our Wealth" program aimed to redistribute the nation's wealth, proposing higher taxes on the rich and a minimum income for every American. His policies resonated with the struggling masses during the Great Depression, making him a beloved figure among the common people.

### A Controversial Reign

While Long was praised for his commitment to the working class, his methods often faced criticism. Known for his dictatorial tendencies, he centralized power in his hands and ruled Louisiana with an iron fist. Critics accused him of corruption, nepotism, and even suppressing political opposition. However, Long's supporters argued that his authoritarian style was necessary to push through radical reforms and challenge the existing establishment. Throughout his tenure, he implemented

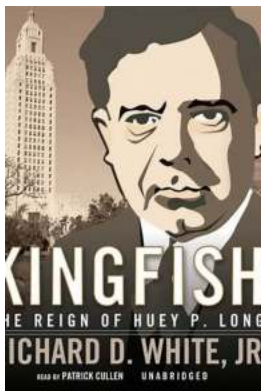
progressive policies, including infrastructure development, education reform, and healthcare expansion.

## Legacy and Assassination

Huey Long's reign came to an abrupt end on September 8, 1935, when he was assassinated at the Louisiana State Capitol. His death sparked conspiracy theories and left a void in Louisiana politics, as well as in the broader national landscape. Despite his controversial methods, Long's legacy remained significant. His vision for economic justice and redistribution of wealth continued to influence politicians and shape public discourse for years to come.

Huey Long, the charismatic Kingfish, left an undeniable impact on the political history of Louisiana. While his tactics may have been divisive, his commitment to the working class and his radical reforms earned him the love and admiration of many. The legacy of his reign continues to generate debate and fascination, making Huey Long a figure of both admiration and controversy in American history.

Keywords: Huey Long, Kingfish, Louisiana politics, populist policies, legacy, political landscape, Great Depression



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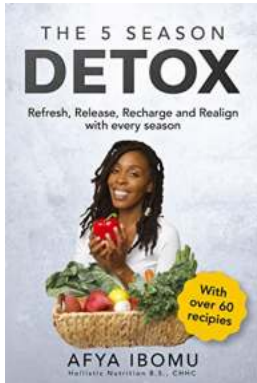
From the moment he took office as governor in 1928 to the day an assassin's bullet cut him down in 1935, Huey Long wielded all but dictatorial control over the state of Louisiana. A man of shameless ambition and ruthless vindictiveness, Long orchestrated elections, hired and fired thousands at will, and deployed the state militia as his personal police force. And yet, paradoxically, as governor and later as senator, Long did more good for the state's poor and uneducated than any politician before or since. Outrageous demagogue or charismatic visionary? In this powerful new biography, Richard D. White, Jr., brings Huey Long to life in all his blazing, controversial glory.

White taps invaluable new source material to present a fresh, vivid portrait of both the man and the Depression era that catapulted him to fame. From his boyhood in dirt-poor Winn Parish, Long knew he was destined for power—the problem was how to get it fast enough to satisfy his insatiable appetite. With cunning and crudity unheard of in Louisiana politics, Long crushed his opponents in the 1928 gubernatorial race, then immediately set about tightening his iron grip. The press attacked him viciously, the oil companies howled for his blood after he pushed through a controversial oil processing tax, but Long had the adulation of the people. In 1930, the Kingfish got himself elected senator, and then there was no stopping him.

White's account of Long's heyday unfolds with the mesmerizing intensity of a movie. Pegged by President Roosevelt as "one of the two most dangerous men in the country," Long organized a radical movement to redistribute money through his Share Our Wealth Society—and his gospel of pensions for all, a shorter workweek, and free college spread like wildfire. The Louisiana poor already worshiped him for building thousands of miles of roads and funding schools, hospitals, and universities; his outrageous antics on the Senate floor gained him

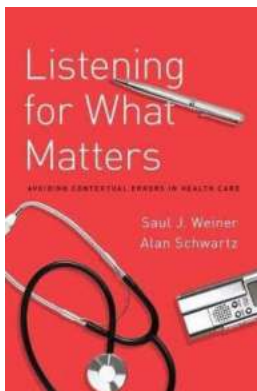
a growing national base. By 1935, despite a barrage of corruption investigations, Huey Long announced that he was running for president.

In the end, Long was a tragic hero—a power addict who squandered his genius and came close to destroying the very foundation of democratic rule. Kingfish is a balanced, lucid, and absolutely spellbinding portrait of the life and times of the most incendiary figure in the history of American politics.



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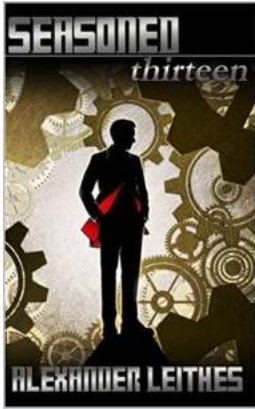
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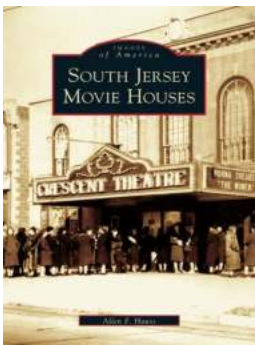
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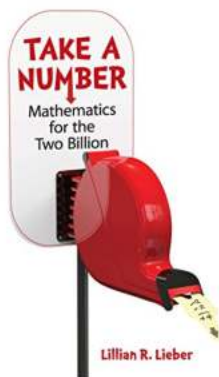
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