



Losers: The Road to Everyplace but the White House

By Michael Lewis

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Losers: The Road to Everyplace but the White House By Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis is a master at dissecting the absurd: after skewering Wall Street in his national bestseller *Liar's Poker*, he packed his mighty pen and set out on the 1996 campaign trail. As he follows the men who aspire to the Oval Office, Lewis discovers an absurd mix of bravery and backpedaling, heroic possibility and mealy-mouthed sound bytes, and a process so ridiculous and unsavory that it leaves him wondering if everyone involved—from the journalists to the candidates to the people who voted—isn't ultimately a loser.

The contenders:

Pat Buchanan: becomes the first politician ever to choose a black hat over a white one.

Phil Gramm: spends twenty million dollars to convince voters of his fiscal responsibility.

John McCain: makes the fatal mistake of actually speaking his mind.

Alan Keyes: checks out of a New Hampshire hotel and tells the manager another candidate will be paying his bill.

Steve Forbes: refuses to answer questions about his father's motorcycles.

Bob Dole: marches through the campaign without ever seeming to care.

Losers is a wickedly funny, unflinching look at how America really goes about choosing a President.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Michael Lewis, the author of *Liar's Poker*, which Tom Wolfe called "the funniest book on Wall Street I have ever read," now turns his eye to the peculiar method Americans use to choose their president. Beginning with the 1996 New Hampshire primary, Lewis tagged along with players both major and minor. Keeping his eyes open to the nuances of how campaigns are so carefully managed today, Lewis is able to make some insightful, damning, and often hysterically funny observations. The reporting technique is eccentric--who else would spend so much time with Morry Taylor, a rich man who ran for president in what amounted to a vanity campaign--but it works. Lewis has written a very good book that could be shelved under both humor and public affairs.

From Library Journal

Journalist Lewis's (*Liar's Poker*, LJ 9/1/89) chronicle of the 1996 presidential campaign examines the battle for the Republican Party nomination and the following general election. It differs from most campaign books in that its perspective is "from the bottom of the political food chain." Lewis argues that the leading candidates were so preoccupied with risk avoidance that they failed to address important concerns of the electorate. This meant that to the extent such matters were addressed at all, it was by the lesser candidates. Therefore, Lewis devotes more attention to such minor Republican candidates as Alan Keyes and Morry Taylor and to Green Party candidate Ralph Nader than to Clinton and Dole. His book is not comprehensive, but it provides a frequently humorous and occasionally insightful look into contemporary electoral politics for lay readers. ?Thomas H. Ferrell, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette
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From [Booklist](#)

Tired of the conventional campaign postmortem cranked out by the likes of Elizabeth Drew or Bob Woodward? Lewis criticizes their sort of books for taking a top-down view of campaigns and politics, so he adopts a from-the-fringe perspective on the 1996 presidential extravaganza. Because the only question in doubt was who would lose to Clinton, Lewis started out following the Republicans, most closely the candidates without even the proverbial snowball's chance: Morry "the Grizz" Taylor and Alan Keyes. Something about their amateurishness (Taylor) or intense moralizing (Keyes) attracted Lewis, not to mention their disdain for hired political pros--the "rented strangers" of the subtitle. Lewis dislikes the artifice of PR- and poll-propelled politicians, and his antic journal is largely a poking at the thick protection that overlays most serious candidates, as well as a pricking of the pomposity of the bigfoot journalists who tail them. Vignettes, all telling and pointed, are the name of Lewis' game, and they unroll from Iowa to New Hampshire to San Diego to Chicago in a rich, sardonic sequence that easily makes this the most fun campaign book since Richard Ben Cramer's *What It Takes* (1992). The innumerable acid asides give Lewis' story a delightful digging tone that captures the zaniness, phoniness, and earnestness of a process that, in the end, was a battle for 17 percent: that, believe it or not, was the percentage of all eligible voters who voted for the 1996 winner. *Gilbert Taylor*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Edgar Foley:

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