

# 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny

By David Pietrusza



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### Nominated for the American Library Association (ALA)'s Notable Books Council's 2015 Notable Books List

Two Depression-battered nations confront their destiny in 1932, going to the polls in their own way to anoint new leaders, to rescue their people from starvation and hopelessness. America elects a Congress and a president--ebullient aristocrat Franklin Roosevelt or tarnished "Wonder Boy" Herbert Hoover. Decadent, divided Weimar Germany suffers two rounds of bloody Reichstag elections and two presidential contests--doddering reactionary Paul von Hindenburg against rising radical hate-monger Adolf Hitler.

The outcome seemed foreordained--unstoppable forces advancing upon crumbled, disoriented societies. A merciless Great Depression brought greater-perhaps hopeful, perhaps deadly--transformation: FDR's New Deal and Hitler's Third Reich.

But neither outcome was inevitable.

Readers enter the fray through David Pietrusza's page-turning account: Roosevelt's fellow Democrats may yet halt him at a deadlocked convention. 1928's Democratic nominee, Al Smith, harbors a grudge against his one-time protege. Press baron William Randolph Hearst lays his own plans to block Roosevelt's ascent to the White House. FDR's politically-inspired juggling of a New York City scandal threatens his juggernaut. In Germany, the Nazis surge at the polls but twice fall short of Reichstag majorities. Hitler, tasting power after a lifetime of failure and obscurity, falls to Hindenburg for the presidency--also twice within the year. Cabals and counter-cabals plot. Secrets of love and suicide haunt Hitler.

Yet guile, ambition--and terror--may yet still prevail.

1932's breathtaking narrative covers two epic stories that possess haunting parallels to today's crisis-filled vortex. It is an all-too-human tale of scapegoats

and panaceas, class warfare and racial politics, of a seemingly bottomless depression, of massive unemployment and hardship, of unprecedented public works/infrastructure programs, of business stimulus programs and damaging allegations of political cronyism, of waves of bank failures and of mortgages foreclosed, of Washington bonus marches and Berlin street fights, of once-solid financial empires collapsing seemingly overnight, of rapidly shifting social mores, and of mountains of irresponsible international debt threatening to crash not just mere nations but the entire global economy.

It is the tale of spell-binding leaders versus bland businessmen and out-of-touch upper-class elites and of two nations inching to safety but lurching toward disaster. It is 1932's nightmare--with lessons for today.



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#### **Editorial Review**

Review

### WINNER OF THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER BOOK AWARD SILVER MEDAL FOR WORLD HISTORY

"lively ... wonderful ... mesmerizing."

#### (Kirkus [starred review])

"1932 confirmed my belief that David Pietrusza is the best historian of our times. Deep, clever, witty, master of the subject."

#### (Columnist and film critic Ivan Denisov)

"excellent"

(Carl M. Cannon, Washington Bureau Chief, RealClear Politics)

"Sweeping and surprising"

#### (John Batchelor, syndicated radio host)

"Powerful! . . . majestic . . . "

#### (John Gizzi, NewsMax)

"well written, well researched . . . Pietrusza's easy informal style moves back and forth between the two [Hitler and FDR] expertly."

(John Bicknell, executive director, watchdog.org)

"David Pietrusza isn't just one of the best historians writing these days, he's one of the best storytellers--and his latest masterpiece, 1932, is another home run."

#### (Matt Lewis, columnist, The Daily Beast)

"David Pietrusza has done a brilliant job! 1932 is a great read. It's great history, a real page turner. In short, David Pietrusza continues to hit the ball out of the park."

(John Rothmann, Former host, KGO-AM [San Francisco], co-author of *Icon of Evil* and *Harold E. Stassen: The Life & Perennial Candidacy of the Progressive Republican*)

"extremely well written and researched. Highly recommended!!"

#### (Huffington Post critic Rob Taub)

"a page-turner that puts history into perspective for readers young or old."

#### (Ed Tant, The Athens Banner-Herald)

"... more than mere history; Pietrusza has brought 1932 to life and created a compelling page turner. I highly recommend it."

#### (Blogger Joseph Sherlock)

"All momentous turns in history have an origin. 1932 explores the rise of Franklin Roosevelt in the United States and Adolph Hitler in Germany, two entirely different men who would clash to define the rest of the 20th century and beyond. David Pietrusza does a marvelous job of weaving the rise of these leaders with a rich narrative that reads like a novel. We all know the story, but Pietrusza brings it to new life."

(Reviewer Jay E., NetGalley)

"You can't put it down . . . "

#### (Salena Zito, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's "Off Road Politics")

"a well-researched tome on two unlikely icons of the 20th century who changed history"

#### (The Cooperstown [NY] Crier)

"riveting"

#### (Author George Marlin, Newsmax)

"the bar was set quite high for the author by those of us who awaited the release of this book. But the author once again lives up to his exemplary standards. In his latest work, David Pietrusza yet again displays his ability to analyze, distill, explain and supplement history's most fascinating years and its most fascinating personalities, and in the process he gives those of us who love to read history another excellent and enjoyable literary experience."

#### (POTUS Geeks Blog - [#1 book of 2015])

#RecommendedReading

#### (Author and Basketball Hall of Famer Pat Williams)

"an excellent job of dynamically weaving together, in a single book, the essential life narratives of two of the titanic figures of the twentieth century."

#### (Selous Foundation for Public Policy Research)

"a narrative that is both fascinating and original."

#### (blogger Daniel Wright)

"Thought I knew much about these two giants of 20th century leadership till Pietruza's new history with one focus: their simultaneous rise to power in 1932; a truly momentous year. Pietrusza fills in the gap that most histories skim over . . ."

#### (The Heartland Progressive)

1932 represents a rare combination of scholarly rigor and relentless drama. This book ranks right up there with *In the Garden of the Beasts* and should be a must choice for every book club. (Amity Shlaes, author)

David Pietrusza's thrilling narratives not only instill history with the richness it deserves, but they teem with intimate portraits and stories that make you feel like you're reading a great novel. 1932 is perhaps his best work yet. Which is saying a lot. (David Harsanyi, syndicated columnist and author)

David Pietrusza's 1932 is history at its page-turning best: original, incisive, evenhanded, and impossible to put down. Great storytelling by a great writer. (Kimberly Guilfoyle, co-host, "The Five," Fox News Channel)

A bifurcated, lively study of the year that saw the rise of the two most significant political figures of the early 20th century. . . . In this wonderful new history for lay readers, he tackles two rising political geniuses, one good, one evil, at their moments of election: Roosevelt and Hitler. Two unlikely men of destiny at the cusp of seizing power in 1932 and poised to shape historical events in their respective countries, they were able to overcome enormous obstacles—FDR his polio affliction, Hitler his lack of talent and general status of persona non grata—corral the necessary accomplices, and press forward by sheer and startling forces of will. While FDR and Hitler had little in common growing up—one hailed from the aristocracy and enjoyed every kind of family, school, and professional privilege; the other failed at most everything he tried, even spending time in a homeless men's shelter—both had adoring mothers, leadership abilities, and an ability to stir their followers by marvelous rhetoric. After struggling with his disability since the early 1920s, FDR did not feel ready to run for the governorship of New York in 1928, but his nominating presidential convention speech for Al Smith galvanized the Democratic Party, and Smith begged him to succeed him as governor. While Smith lost abysmally to Herbert Hoover, Roosevelt 'squeaked through to a narrow victory' and began his stupendous comeback, convincing the people of his vigorous health as well as the disastrous policies of

Hoover. Hitler, having hit rock bottom once his mother died and twice rejected entrance to art school, found his conversion in World War I. As the author astutely notes, war became for Hitler a religion, and he began to cobble together his own lethal, unstoppable political force. A mesmerizing study in contrast and comparison. (*Kirkus*)

"...excellent new book, 1932: The Rise of Hitler & FDR, 'Time heals some wounds'." - Carl Cannon realclearpolitics.com (*Real Clear Politics*)

#### Review

[In *Rothstein*], Pietrusza does a terrific job of capturing Rothstein's colorful career and sheds new light on [his] role in fixing the World Series, disputing the standard history. (*New York Times*)

[Starred Review of 1920: The Year of the Six Presidents] A rousing chronicle . . . Pietrusza . . . adds color and dimension with smart discussions of Prohibition, women's suffrage, immigration, civil rights, the League of Nations and labor strife, and he offers animated portraits.... A hugely fascinating episode in American history, told with insight and great humor, by an author in command of his subject. (Kirkus)

[Starred Review for 1960] Almost half a century after Theodore White's *The Making of the President*, 1960, Pietrusza (1920: The Year of the Six Presidents) raises the bar with his winning and provocative chronicle . . . Highly recommended. (Library Journal)

From the Author

#### 1932's richly-textured cast of characters includes:

- Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt
- Adolf Hitler
- Herbert Hoover
- Reich President Paul von Hindenberg and his son Oskar
- Germany's scheming gray eminence Gen. Kurt von Schleicher
- Controversial radio priests: Detroit's Fr. Charles Coughlin and Pittsburgh's Fr. James R. Cox
- Populist Sen. Huey "The Kingfish" Long
- Nazi propaganda chief Joseph "The Evil Dwarf" Goebbels
- 1928 Democratic nominee Al "The Happy Warrior" Smith
- Wall Street financiers Bernard Baruch and Joseph P. Kennedy
- Peripatetic journalist Winston Churchill
- American press lord and Democratic kingmaker William Randolph Hearst
- Nazi Reichstag leader (and former morphine addict) Hermann Goring
- Speaker of the House (and reluctant presidential candidate) John Nance "Cactus Jack" Garner
- Hitler confidante (and former FDR friend) Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl
- Columnists Walter Lippmann, Will Rogers, Heywood Broun--and the acerbic H. L. Mencken
- FDR advisor (and former Woodrow Wilson gray eminence) Col. Edward Mandel House
- Embattled German chancellors Heinrich Bruning and Franz von Papen
- Big city mayors James J. "Beau James" Walker (New York), Anton "Pushcart Tony" Cermak (Chicago), and James Michael Curley (Boston)
- Rightwing German veterans leaders: the one-armed Franz Seldte and the part-Jewish Theodor Duesterberg
- FDR's gnomish but adoring alter-ego Louis McHenry Howe
- Brain Trusters Rexford Guy Tugwell and Raymond Moley
- Nationalist German press lord Alfred Hugenberg
- Scandal-plagued Brownshirt leader Ernst Rohm

- Left-wing Nazi Party leader Gregor Strasser
- Stormtroopers Edmund Heines and Horst Wessel
- Bonus March leader Walter W. "Hot" Waters
- Hitler's suicidal women: Geli Raubal and Eva Braun
- AP reporter and Eleanor Roosevelt's confidante Lorena Hickok
- Eleanor's bodyguard State Police Sgt. Earl Miller
- German film star (and budding Nazi) Leni Riefenstahl
- US military men Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower, and George Patton
- An array of stumbling Democratic dark horses: "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Albert Ritchie, Newton D. Baker, and Owen D. Young
- 400,000 Brown Shirts
- 20,000 Bonus Marchers
- . . . and millions of desperate unemployed.

#### **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

#### **Evelina Lewis:**

Here thing why this kind of 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny are different and reliable to be yours. First of all studying a book is good but it depends in the content of computer which is the content is as delightful as food or not. 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no e-book that similar with 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny. It gives you thrill looking at journey, its open up your eyes about the thing that will happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your method home by train. For anyone who is having difficulties in bringing the branded book maybe the form of 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny in e-book can be your alternative.

#### Lucinda Brown:

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#### Johnny Hoffman:

This 1932: The Rise of Hitler and FDR--Two Tales of Politics, Betrayal, and Unlikely Destiny is great

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#### **Steven Craig:**

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