

Lou Hoover was not without her critics and her character flaws. Dunlap gives suitable attention to those who criticized Lou as being an absentee parent and too insensitive to the feelings of friends and associates. In other words, she shows how Lou Hoover was a woman of this world, given to personal limitations common to her generation.

That the White House years were a trial for both Hoovers is without dispute. Dunlap traces Lou as she delves into her special projects and fumes at the treatment that her husband and his administration received in the press. Dunlap adds that Lou slipped into distrust of the press and even a touch of paranoia as the national economy declined into financial collapse.

Woman of Adventure is a lively, substantive study of an exceptional woman. It is a book that belongs on the shelves of most libraries in Iowa and many libraries that have significant collections of books on the role of women in American history.

Tuesday Night Massacre: Four Senate Elections and the Radicalization of the Republican Party, by Marc C. Johnson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. 247 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 paperback.

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Today, states like Idaho, South Dakota, Indiana, and Iowa are, to many, bastions of conservative politics. Yet in *Tuesday Night Massacre*, Marc C. Johnson argues that it was not always this way. Detailing the rise of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) and right-wing PACs in the late 1970s, Johnson suggests that a series of U.S. Senate elections in 1980 were illustrative of an unprecedented, "carefully choreographed national campaign of fear, animosity, half-truth, distortion, anger, and in some instances bald-faced lying" by NCPAC on behalf of Republican candidates (3). Those campaigns not only ended the political careers of Frank Church of Idaho, Birch Bayh of Indiana, George McGovern of South Dakota, and John Culver of Iowa, but Johnson also argues that they changed the scope and tone of local Senate elections, which had previously been grounded in the issues rather than nationally charged rhetoric.

Narrating the founding of the NCPAC, Johnson explains how the backroom brawling of conservative activists Charles Black, Roger Stone, and John T. "Terry" Dolan joined with the direct mail empire of

Richard Viguerie and political legitimacy of North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms to embrace a conservatism “less about a theory of government than a sharp-elbowed playbook designed to demonize opponents and win elections” (19). Truth meant little to the NCPAC; it only valued winning power. With the 1976 Supreme Court ruling *Buckley v. Valeo* striking down restrictions on independent expenditures in political campaigns so long as they did not coordinate with the candidate, NCPAC’s \$2.8 million war chest in the 1977–78 cycle paved the way for a conservative ambush of unprepared Democratic incumbents in 1980 (26). A 1978 test run in Iowa toppling first-term Sen. Dick Clark—where the Iowa Pro-Life Action Council buoyed former lieutenant governor Roger Jepsen against a moderate Republican—proved “a single emotional issue leveraged by a determined third-party opponent [could] mobilize the ire of constituents” and “there was no sure way to fight back against the New Right’s negativity” (40). Nor would the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) investigate blatant connections between NCPAC and Republican candidates. When South Dakota Democrats demonstrated that NCPAC recruited Republican Jim Abdnor and an anti-abortion primary challenger to McGovern, attacking McGovern as an out-of-touch liberal before backing out of the race, the FEC ignored its own staff recommendations to punish NCPAC (103, 111).

Following established theses from political scientists like Richard Fenno, Johnson highlights how NCPAC repeatedly intoned that Culver, McGovern, Bayh, and Church, were “too liberal” for their constituencies. Iowa Rep. Chuck Grassley, Johnson argues, “was arguably the most successful of all the Republican candidates supported by NCPAC . . . diminishing the importance of high profile outside help while benefiting handsomely” from insider knowledge that anti-abortion advocates would hound Culver at NCPAC’s urging (90). As Culver stuck to his liberal bona fides, responding to charges he was a “baby killer,” Grassley let NCPAC, Corey, and single-issue voters do the talking for him. Perceptions of Culver as “liberal” rose from 42 to 65 percent over the campaign; Grassley, “with a boost from NCPAC and the rest of the New Right, draped that resentment around Culver’s broad shoulders” (95–96). Ultimately, Johnson argues, NCPAC “clearly understood cultural expression of white middle class anxiety”—fear of government, resentment of the Washington establishment, and “anger about spending and about America’s decline”—and used that not only to reflect but also to shape political discourse in 1980 (124). All a figure like Grassley needed to do was emphasize his Iowan, and indeed, midwestern background as a farmer, not a Harvard football player like Culver.

Johnson's work draws on a strong range of political papers, using archival collections of all four defeated senators and a breadth of political commentaries on the Senate races. These sources, though, don't explain how NCPAC campaigners ran such negative campaigns yet, despite how "Culver's opponents succeeded in making the very word 'liberal' a nasty and . . . unacceptable label" (96), they neither ended Democratic control of the Iowa legislature nor slowed the Senate careers of South Dakota senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson, elected in 1986 and 1996, respectively. He paints Daschle as "a smooth, articulate politician with a reputation for moderation and solid constituent service" and Iowa's Tom Harkin—who beat Jepsen in 1984—as succeeding in a nasty campaign mostly because of Jepsen's blunders (151, 161). A deeper dive may suggest NCPAC's political impact was fleeting in state politics, including the internal weakness of the Republican Party of Iowa at the time, and blunted successfully by a new generation of Democratic politician. His work also elides recent scholarship on conservatism in the postwar Midwest and does not make use of NCPAC papers themselves, housed at Stanford since 2018.

But real damage, Johnson argues persuasively, had been done in the Senate and national political discourse in 1980. Pointing to the rise of Donald Trump, Johnson notes NCPAC's intervention meant that "every Senate election is now a national election" and that ideology replacing the deal-making of the Senate "eliminates an opportunity to find a consensus approach to national challenges" (176–77). In an epilogue as long as his conclusions on the winners themselves, Johnson switches from historical to political commentary, noting that "the vision of a completely ideological Republican Party" that Terry Dolan envisioned "has been realized" as the new normal in American politics (187).

Tuesday Night Massacre is a timely work, digestible for political junkies who will enjoy its blow-by-blow campaign tales and students of New Right conservatism. But Johnson's effort is particularly important for its focus on state-level politics. Situating Iowa and other "flyover" states not as passive agents within the NCPAC and New Right takeover but active battlegrounds where local actors debated their states' political futures will help scholars build on the fruitful means of inquiry Johnson has begun.