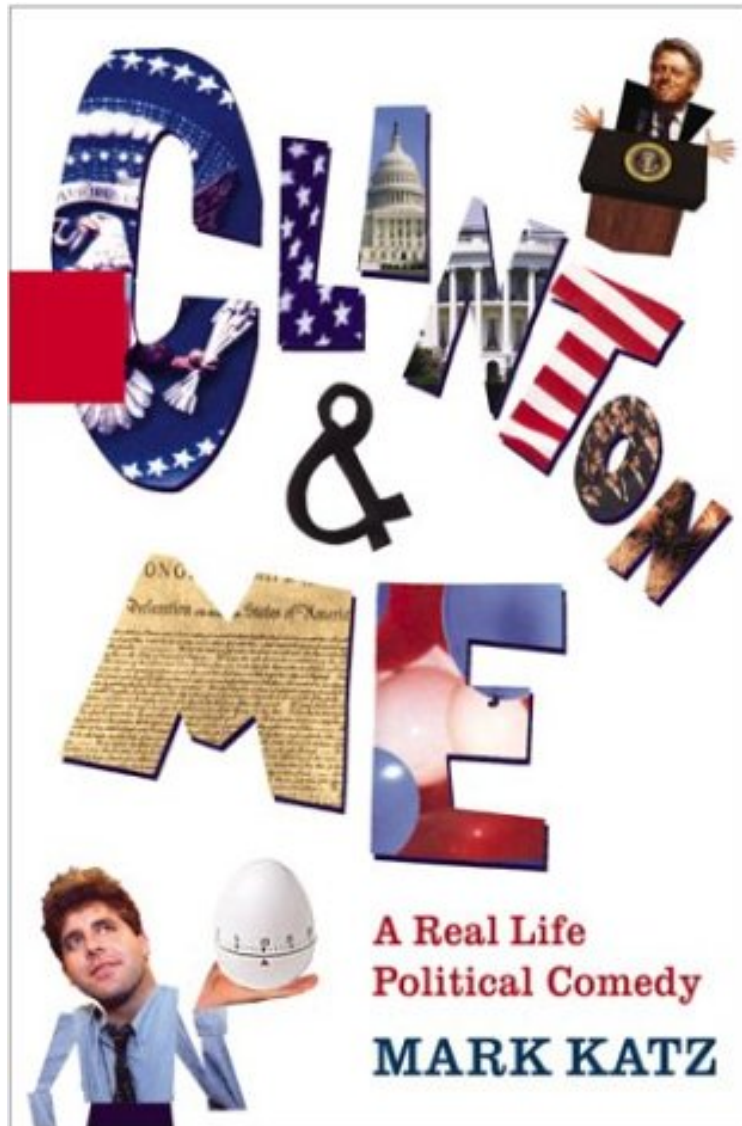


## Clinton Me

Mark Katz

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**Mark Katz : Clinton Me** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clinton Me:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Single-issue exposé By D. Bruce Brown With this, Katz's axe has now been ground. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of my favorite books By Terry W. Sprouse The author presents a fascinating and hilarious insider's look at the sometimes chaotic presidency of Bill Clinton. As the presidential humorous speech writer, Mark Katz, gives us a great "fly n the wall" viewpoint. He also covers the time

he spent writing speeches for the dour Michael Dukakis. Katz shares with us the funny lines that he wrote which Dukakis inexplicably refused to use. One of my favorite parts of the book was when Katz presented an idea for a speech that revolved around an egg timer. I could feel the tension between Katz and Clinton as the President refused to use the infamous egg timer and actually removed it from the table. Then the tension was ratcheted up by when Katz walked across the room and put the egg timer back on the table, not willing to surrender his prize comedic idea for the speech. I admired Katz's courage in sticking up for what he knew was funny. Even though out-ranked by the President, he held firm to his belief that when it came to humor, he was the expert, and not the President. As political entertainment goes, it doesn't get much better than this. 9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Hilarious, enlightening; dare I say 'Katzian'? By Larry Mark - Editor of MyJewishBooksDotCom This book contains the painfully funny adventures of President Clinton's in-house joke writer. Mark Katz, the son of an orthodontist, was the kid who cracked jokes from the back row of your seventh grade English class... but it was the Honors English class. He was the class clown to the elite, not the student body masses. He learned to self-edit all his jokes and only voice the best ones. He grew up to write humor speeches for nation's Chief Seventh-Grader, Bill Clinton, as well as a top FOB Hollywood celebrity, Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of State Albright and others. Katz's job was to write Clinton's funny responses to the crises of the moment. Lines that are funnier than "I did not have sex with that woman." This book opens like all good business and political biographies. There is a crisis the author must face. Once overcome, the book starts at the author's birth and works forward to the opening episode. In this book, the opening episode is stress-filled but humorously enlightening. President and Mrs. Clinton are perturbed; Clinton's speech is minutes away, and Katz's jokes are not to the President's liking. Will Katz buckle under Clinton's pressure or stand up for his jokes? And will Clinton find something to nosh on as they talk? When the story continues, we find Katz in his mother's womb. Yes, just as Clinton was influenced by JFK and shook the hand of JFK at the White House, Katz's life was affected by JFK, too. Katz was nearly prematurely born when his pregnant mother was startled by JFK's assassination in 1963. As a preteen, Katz was supporting McGovern in the way a kid could and rushing home from school to watch the Watergate hearings on PBS. In high school, his jokes were getting him in trouble with the principal, and in college he was writing a humor column. In his book we learn about the life of a grunt volunteer on the Dukakis campaign, his struggle up the campaign staff ladder, and the back-story of Dukakis' photo-op with the tank. His stints in advertising in Manhattan and California, and his cross-country road trip are hilarious and bluntly honest. Some stories are too honest. How was Katz to know that his first boss would be the best friend of Katz's brother's litigious ex-fiancé, or that the sweater he borrowed from his brother for work was hers? As Michael Waldman's book, "Podus Speaks," verified, joke writers have strong egos and desires for exposure, in a world where copywriters and speechwriters are supposed to live in anonymity. Katz deftly balanced between anonymity and exposure most of the time. In mid-book, when Katz joins the emerging Clinton campaign and crashes on the couch of a guy named Stephanopoulos in Little Rock, we learn about the role of humor and the joke writer, the annual DC Winter roasts and dinners known, and gain insights into the machinations of the West Wing, OEOB, and VP's residence. Katz also lists the jokes that never made it into the recorded speeches. This is a delightful and necessary read during this primary and convention year.

When you provide the comic relief for the Leader of the Free World, the line between funny and weird can get a little blurry. Consider the extraordinary experiences of Mark Katz, the in-house humor writer of the Clinton White House, whose job was to produce the president's comic response to the crisis du jour. For eight tumultuous years, he wrote Bill Clinton's annual series of humorous speeches to the Washington press corps those rare evenings in the nation's capital when the president trades in his bully pulpit for an open mike. In a town where C-SPAN passes for entertainment, Katz faced the sometimes surreal task of finding the funny in an administration rocked by politics and partisanship; Whitewater and Waco; Dr. Elders and Henry Hyde; and ultimately the circus of impeachment. Here, too, are the unlikely adventures of an itinerant wiseass careening down the bumpy path that takes him from the principal's office to the Oval Office. After college, Katz hitched his wagon to Michael Dukakis's star only to become the joke writer for a campaign that was a joke unto itself. Four years later, he was an unemployed advertising copywriter in need of a job when he got a call from a Clinton White House desperately in need of jokes. And the rest, as they say, is comedy. With fearless and irreverent wit, Mark Katz chronicles the triumphs, tribulations, and power players of an eventful presidency from a unique vantage point a lone humorist embedded deep inside the chaotic West Wing. Dramatic, revealing, intimate, and uproarious, Clinton Me is an epic comic journey and a once-in-a-lifetime look at the funny business that is American politics.

From Publishers Weekly Within the Beltway, the "Silly Season" is confined to the first three months of the year, when the Gridiron Club, the White House Correspondents' Dinner and the Alfalfa Club (a group of Washington insiders) ask important politicians, including the president, to deliver funny speeches. Clinton's designated joke writer was Katz, who wrote Clinton's speeches for these affairs as well as speeches for Al Gore and Madeleine Albright. Katz found his comedy writer niche after considerable experience as a class clown; after graduating from Cornell, he successfully dodged what he calls the "Vietnam of [his] generation" an L.A. Law-inspired courtroom career. In 1988 Katz entered

politics as a member of Michael Dukakis's presidential campaign staff. His description of writing for this "pathologically unfunny" man is a comic delight. Katz made a brief foray into advertising, but then, thanks to relationships with Dee Dee Myers and George Stephanopoulos, former Dukakis staffers then in the Clinton White House, Katz landed a spot writing for POTUS through the notably unfunny Contract for America, Whitewater and Monica episodes. It is humor that Katz cares passionately about, not politics. As he says, "I like Al Gore. Comedy meant a lot to him and that meant a lot to me." He sends his jokes, hundreds of which are included here, into the world with the same pride, and angst, that parents feel when sending their children off to college. This quality is endearing and softens the rougher edges of his humor, which often involves the odd juxtaposition of self-deprecation and self-aggrandizement. Happily, he is often very laugh-out-loud funny. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Former presidential joke writer Katz will keep Americans laughing with this zesty political memoir of his days as Bill Clinton's number-one humorist. After outlining his background as a young "wiseass" in training, he recalls his first foray into political speech writing as a gagsmith for the seemingly dour Mike Dukakis. After a disastrous stint as an advertising copywriter, he returned to the campaign trail, joining Clinton's youthfully hip staff. Putting a hilarious spin on momentous national and international events, he provides the ultimate insider's view of an often overlooked or underestimated art. Always witty, at times downright comical, this intimate account of a funnyman's experience in the White House during one of the most controversial presidencies is certain to elicit guilty laughs from both liberals and conservatives alike. Margaret Flanagan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Clinton and Me is unique: a behind-the-scenes look at politics that makes you laugh your ass off." -- Maxim "Great fun." -- BookPage "If you think Bill Clinton was witty, give some credit to Mark Katz." -- People "Unimpeachable wit." -- New York magazine