



Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship That Shaped the Sixties

Kevin M. Schultz

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A lively chronicle of the 1960s through the surprisingly close and incredibly contentious friendship of its two most colorful characters.

William F. Buckley, Jr., and Norman Mailer were the two towering intellectual figures of the 1960s, and they lived remarkably parallel lives. Both became best-selling authors in their twenties (with *God and Man at Yale* and *The Naked and the Dead*); both started hugely influential papers (*National Review* and the *Village Voice*); both ran for mayor of New York City; both were noted for their exceptional wit and venom; and both became the figurehead of their respective social movements (Buckley on the right, Mailer on the left). Indeed, Buckley and Mailer argued vociferously and publicly about every major issue of their time: civil rights, feminism, the counterculture, Vietnam, the Cold War. But behind the scenes, the two were close friends and trusted confidantes. In *Buckley and Mailer*, historian Kevin M. Schultz delves into their personal archives to tell the rich story of their friendship, their arguments, and the tumultuous decade they did so much to shape.

Here is the entertaining and deeply American story of what Mailer himself called a "difficult friendship": from their debate before the Floyd Patterson–Sonny Liston heavyweight fight in 1962 to their failed mayoral campaigns, to their confrontation at Truman Capote's Black-and-White Ball, to their starring roles in the central events of the '60s, including the giant antiwar rally in Berkeley, the March on the Pentagon, and the national political conventions in Miami and Chicago. Through it all, Schultz charts their friendship, whether sailing together off the coast of Connecticut, celebrating rave reviews and grouching about lousy ones, and defending each other's decisions privately even as they attack each other's positions publicly.

Brimming with Buckley and Mailer's own thoughts from their personal diaries and letters, *Buckley and Mailer* also features cameos by other leading figures of the time, including James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Barry Goldwater, Robert F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Gloria Steinem, and Gore Vidal. Schultz delivers a fresh chronicle of the '60s and its long aftermath as well as an enormously engaging work of narrative history that explores these extraordinary figures' contrasting visions of what America was and what it could be.

8 pages of photographs

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