



Whittaker Chambers: A Biography (Modern Library Paperbacks)

Sam Tanenhaus

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Whittaker Chambers is the first biography of this complex and enigmatic figure. Drawing on dozens of interviews and on materials from forty archives in the United States and abroad--including still-classified KGB dossiers--Tanenhaus traces the remarkable journey that led Chambers from a sleepy Long Island village to center stage in America's greatest political trial and then, in his last years, to a unique role as the godfather of post-war conservatism. This biography is rich in startling new information about Chambers's days as New York's "hottest literary Bolshevik"; his years as a Communist agent and then defector, hunted by the KGB; his conversion to Quakerism; his secret sexual turmoil; his turbulent decade at Time magazine, where he rose from the obscurity of the book-review page to transform the magazine into an oracle of apocalyptic anti-Communism. But all this was a prelude to the memorable events that began in August 1948, when Chambers testified against Alger Hiss in the spy case that changed America. **Whittaker Chambers** goes far beyond all previous accounts of the Hiss case, re-creating its improbably twists and turns, and disentangling the motives that propelled a vivid cast of characters in unpredictable directions.

A rare conjunction of exacting scholarship and narrative art, **Whittaker Chambers** is a vivid tapestry of 20th century history.

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