

## Machiavelli in America



Machiavelli in America traces the influence of the Florentine thinker on American politics, from the Founders (c. 1770s) through today's rough-and-tumble political panorama. Machiavelli's ideas have been re-interpreted internationally as real-politik. He proposed that the ends justify the means, and that any manner of fraud, violence or corruption must be utilized in attaining and retaining power. People, he assured us, are so mean, small and selfish that they will only act under necessity, so the successful prince must force the population, through whatever means necessary, to follow his dictates. He maintained that the most powerful form of fraud was the appearance of religiosity and said that the successful prince must hold no art higher than that of war. In this disturbing, erudite and highly readable book, America is shown to be a surprising example of Machiavellian politics, utilizing all of the post-modern methods of information distribution and legal fraud and corruption. Lee Atwater, Karl Rove, George W. Bush, the Supreme Court's *Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission* (2010) and the Super PACs it spawned, the massive amounts of money (power's master key), the intermingling of the language of religion and war, and the 90% negative advertising of the 2012 Presidential campaign (channeling Machiavelli's dictum that the adversary must be assassinated, though in contemporary America by character assassination) and even Barack Obama's Machiavellian machinations are looked at in light of the Renaissance political philosophers' ideas. The last section of the book offers a response to this kind of thinking, with a specific, implementable program that will begin to devolve the power of American democracy back to the people and away from the shrinking numbers of oligarchs who control the political system through Machiavellian

means and vast amounts of money.

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