



The Deadly Bet: LBJ, Vietnam, and the 1968 Election (Vietnam: America in the War Years)

Walter LaFeber

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Lyndon Johnson made a life or death bet during his Presidential term, and lost. Intent upon fighting an extended war against a determined foe, he gambled that American society could also endure a vast array of domestic reforms. The result was the turmoil of the 1968 presidential election—a crisis more severe than any since the Civil War. With thousands killed in Vietnam, hundreds dead in civil rights riots, televised chaos at the Democratic National Convention, and two major assassinations, Americans responded by voting for the law and order message of Richard Nixon.

In *The Deadly Bet*, distinguished historian Walter LaFeber explores the turbulent election of 1968 and its significance in the larger context of American history. Looking through the eyes of the year's most important players—including Robert F. Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, Martin Luther King, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Nixon, George Wallace, Nguyen Van Thieu, and Lyndon Johnson—LaFeber argues that the domestic upheaval had more impact on the election than the war in Vietnam.

Clear, concise, and engaging, this work sheds important light on the crucial year of 1968.

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