



I Told You So: Gore Vidal Talks Politics: Interviews with Jon Wiener

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“I exist to say, ‘No, that isn’t the way it is,’ or ‘What you believe to be true is not true for the following reasons.’ I am a master of the obvious. I mean, if there’s a hole in the road, I will, viciously, outrageously, say there’s a hole in the road and if you don’t fill it in you’ll break the axle of your car. One is not loved for being helpful.”

Gore Vidal, one of America’s foremost essayists, screenwriters, and novelists, died July 31, 2012. He was, in addition, a terrific conversationalist. Dick Cavett once described him as “the best talker since Oscar Wilde.” And Vidal was never more eloquent, or caustic, than when let loose on his favorite topic, the history and politics of the United States.

This book is made up from four interviews conducted with his long-time interlocutor, the writer and radio host Jon Wiener, in which Vidal grapples with matters evidently close to his heart: the history of the American Empire, the rise of the National Security State, and his own life in politics, both as a commentator and candidate.

The interviews cover a twenty-year span, from 1988 to 2008, when Vidal was at the height of his powers. His extraordinary facility for developing an argument, tracing connections between past and present, and drawing on an encyclopedic knowledge of America’s place in the world, are all on full display. And, of course, it being Gore Vidal, an ample sprinkling of gloriously acerbic one-liners is also provided.

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