



# THAT MAN

## ROBERT JACKSON'S PORTRAIT OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

*G. Edward White*

**I**N DECEMBER, 1999, after William E. Jackson's death, members of his family found, in a closet of his Manhattan apartment, a folder labeled "Roosevelt Book." Bill Jackson was the son of Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, who had been an associate and intimate friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Jackson's acquaintance with Roosevelt dated back to 1912, when the former was a young lawyer and the latter, ten years Jackson's senior, an aspiring politician in New York state. In 1934 Roosevelt, now President of the United States, had asked Jackson, who by then had established a fulfilling and lucrative law practice in Jamestown, New York, to come to Washington to work for the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Jackson initially resisted the invitation, then tentatively agreed, and ended up prosecuting Andrew Mellon, former Secretary of the Treasury, for unpaid income taxes, a trial that garnered national attention. Three years later Jackson was Solicitor General of the United States; a year and half later was Roosevelt's Attorney General; and by July 1941 had been nominated to the Court by Roosevelt.

Jackson was not a mere foot soldier in the armies of the Roosevelt administrations. As Solicitor General he sought to secure the validation of

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*G. Edward White is a David and Mary Harrison Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Virginia School of Law. Copyright 2023 G. Edward White.*

New Deal legislation in the Supreme Court. When Roosevelt introduced his “Court-packing plan” to alter the composition of the Court, Jackson publicly defended it and subsequently wrote a book, *The Struggle for Judicial Supremacy*,<sup>1</sup> in which he attempted to show that although the plan failed, Roosevelt and his legions had “won the war” by convincing Court majorities to change their oppositionist posture toward social welfare legislation. As Attorney General Jackson had been one of Roosevelt’s chief advisors as the United States sought to aid the allied European powers in their war against Nazi Germany, while ostensibly maintaining a posture of neutrality in a climate of domestic opposition to U.S. military involvement. He had been the chief drafter of the “destroyers-for-bases” pact with Great Britain, which sought to justify United States aid to the British in the face of neutrality. He had accompanied Roosevelt on fishing trips, swims in a pool where business was done, and numerous breakfasts and lunches where serious issues were addressed. Of all the prominent people whom Jackson had encountered in his varied public career, Roosevelt was the one he most admired, and whose company he most enjoyed.

Jackson was a packrat, who compulsively kept records of his public activities, and a gifted writer, whose first instinct was to commit his thoughts to writing and second and third instincts to edit and polish those thoughts. When Bill Jackson’s family discovered “a jumble of handwritten and typed pages by Justice Jackson containing detailed, intimate recollections of FDR,” they “immediately recognized [the] importance” of the “Roosevelt Book” file.<sup>2</sup> Bill Jackson and his sister, Mary Jackson Craighill, had donated a large collection of their father’s personal papers to the Library of Congress in the early 1980s. The “Roosevelt Book” had not been included in that gift: a few years after Robert Jackson’s death in 1954, Bill had approached Knopf Publishing with a proposal to “work . . . up” his father’s recollections of Roosevelt “into an interesting small volume.”<sup>3</sup> Forty years later Bill’s “work” had not been undertaken, and his family was unaware that the “Roosevelt Book” existed.

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<sup>1</sup> ROBERT H. JACKSON, *THE STRUGGLE FOR JUDICIAL SUPREMACY* (1941).

<sup>2</sup> John Q. Barrett, *Introduction*, in ROBERT H. JACKSON, *THAT MAN: AN INSIDER’S PORTRAIT OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT* xxv (John Q. Barrett ed. 2003) (hereafter “THAT MAN”).

<sup>3</sup> William E. Jackson to Blanche Knopf, April 22, 1958, quoted in *THAT MAN*, xxiv.

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After Roosevelt's death in 1945 several of his former associates published accounts of their acquaintance with him, many of which spent more time on the lives and careers of the authors than on their purported subject. In August, 1948, a satiric essay on reminiscences about Roosevelt, entitled "Frank Sullivan's Story,"<sup>4</sup> appeared in *The New Yorker*. The essay was a take-off on James Farley's memoir of his time with Roosevelt which had been published that year.<sup>5</sup> Its author, the humorist Frank Sullivan, recounted slights and ingratitude he had received from Roosevelt, whom he had actually met only once, shaking hands in a receiving line.

Bill Jackson called the Sullivan article to his father's attention, making reference to a "chat about 'I knew FDR' memoirs" the two had recently had.<sup>6</sup> Robert Jackson responded, in an August 22, 1948 letter, that he would "file [the Sullivan essay] for reference when I come to do anything of the sort."<sup>7</sup> By the next summer he wrote Bill that he had begun to make "a rough outline" of a book on Roosevelt.<sup>8</sup> But a summer later he had not made much progress, writing Bill in August of 1950 that he hoped "to get my papers on F.D.R. administration assorted and arranged and then next summer to do the writing."<sup>9</sup> He does not seem to have worked on the book in the summer of 1951.

It was not until the spring of 1952 that Jackson suddenly became motivated to begin work on his recollections of time spent in the company of Roosevelt. The motivation came when the Court heard the *Youngstown* steel seizure cases<sup>10</sup> in the spring of 1952, and Philip Perlman, the Solicitor General, in the course of representing the government's position in the cases, asserted that Truman's authority to seize the steel mills in the context of the Korean conflict was no different from Roosevelt's 1941 seizure of an aviation plant in California as the U.S.'s entry into World War II was

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<sup>4</sup> *Frank Sullivan's Story*, THE NEW YORKER, Aug. 13, 1948, 22-24.

<sup>5</sup> JAMES A. FARLEY, *JIM FARLEY'S STORY: THE ROOSEVELT YEARS* (1948).

<sup>6</sup> William E. Jackson to Robert H. Jackson, August 17, 1948, Papers of Robert Houghwout Jackson, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter "Jackson Papers"), Box 2.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Jackson to William E. Jackson, August 22, 1948, id.

<sup>8</sup> Robert H. Jackson to William E. Jackson, August 25, 1949, id.

<sup>9</sup> Robert H. Jackson to William E. Jackson, undated, id. The postmark on the letter indicates that it was mailed from Monte Rio, California on July 29, 1950.

<sup>10</sup> *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer*, 343 U.S. 579 (1952).

on the horizon. During oral argument Jackson responded to Perlman's assertion that there were facts, of which Perlman was apparently unaware, that sharply distinguished the 1941 seizure from the Truman administration's seizure of the steel mills. After the argument Jackson wrote Bill that Perlman had been "struggling and confused."<sup>11</sup> Eventually, in his concurring opinion in *Youngstown*, Jackson would say that the "superficial similarities" between the 1941 seizure and Truman's efforts "yield[ed] distinctions so decisive" that the 1941 seizure "cannot be regarded as even a precedent, much less an authority for the present seizure."<sup>12</sup>

When he eventually came to write an introduction to his "Roosevelt Book," Jackson said the following:

Not long ago I was sharply reminded that if I am ever to tell what I saw of the story of these times [with Roosevelt], I must be about it. In defending, before the Supreme Court, President Truman's seizure of the steel plants, the Solicitor General cited President Roosevelt's 1941 seizure of the North American Aviation plant in California and my justification of it as Attorney General. Turning to the record, it was a shock to realize that of those who participated in the conference at which that decision was made, I am the only survivor. That hinted to me that time does not wait upon our convenience.<sup>13</sup>

Thus in the summer of 1953 Jackson turned to the writing of his book on Roosevelt. He had previously published *The Struggle for Judicial Supremacy* and two books on Nuremberg<sup>14</sup> with Alfred A. Knopf, and he wrote Alfred Knopf in June, 1953 that he had begun work on the book,<sup>15</sup> enclosing a copy of a previously unpublished memorandum Roosevelt had written in 1941 objecting, on constitutional grounds, to a portion of the Lend-Lease agreement the United States had signed with Britain. Jackson had published Roosevelt's memorandum, with his comments, as a short article in

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<sup>11</sup> Robert H. Jackson to William E. Jackson, May 13, 1952, Jackson Papers, Box 2.

<sup>12</sup> 343 U.S. at 648-649.

<sup>13</sup> THAT MAN, 1.

<sup>14</sup> ROBERT H. JACKSON, THE CASE AGAINST THE NAZI WAR CRIMINALS (1946); ROBERT H. JACKSON, THE NURNBERG CASE (1947).

<sup>15</sup> Robert E. Jackson to Alfred A. Knopf, July 3, 1953, Jackson Papers, Box 15.

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the June, 1953 issue of the *Harvard Law Review*.<sup>16</sup> Knopf responded that he found Jackson's article "very interesting," but reminded him that "of course for us you'll be writing for the general reader and not for the lawyer."<sup>17</sup> Over the summer of 1953 Jackson worked regularly on the book. By August, 1953 he had produced an introduction and drafts of eight chapters and had settled on his title, "That Man," which also began each chapter.<sup>18</sup>

Once Jackson resumed his duties on the Court in October, 1953, he apparently did no more work on the book. He suffered his first heart attack in March, 1954 and was hospitalized for two months, and then spent the summer recuperating, some of it at the Bohemian Grove retreat in California. When he died in October 1954, the most recent date on his book chapters was August 14, 1953.<sup>19</sup>

After Jackson's death his chapter drafts remained in the "Roosevelt Book" folder, in the custody of his secretary Elsie Douglas.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently she gave the folder to Bill Jackson, who in 1958 wrote Blanche Knopf, Alfred's wife and business partner, that he hoped to prepare his father's drafts for publication volume "if I can ever get the time to go over them."<sup>21</sup> But the folder containing the draft manuscript was still in Bill Jackson's possession on his death in December, 1999, when his family located it.<sup>22</sup>

When Jackson family members discovered the "Roosevelt Book" folder in Bill's apartment, they decided to approach John Barrett, a member of the St. John's University law faculty,<sup>23</sup> who for years has been in the process of writing a biography of Jackson and has served as a curator of materials on Jackson, periodically publishing, in law reviews and other outlets, vignettes and accounts of Jackson's life and career. With the help of Jackson family members – notably Nancy-Dabney Roosevelt Jackson, Bill's widow – John

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<sup>16</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *A Presidential Legal Opinion*, 66 Harv. L. Rev. 1353 (1953).

<sup>17</sup> Alfred A. Knopf to Robert H. Jackson, July 10, 1953, Jackson Papers, Box 15.

<sup>18</sup> Barrett, *Introduction*, in *THAT MAN*, xxiii.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*, xxiii & 217 n.35.

<sup>20</sup> William E. Jackson to Elsie L. Douglas, April 28, 1958, quoted in *id.*, xxiv.

<sup>21</sup> William E. Jackson to Blanche Knopf, April 22, 1958, quoted in *id.*, xxiv.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*, xxv.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

Barrett began to reconstruct and assemble the “Roosevelt Book” file for publication.

The draft manuscript chapters that Barrett worked with were in an uneven state. “Some parts,” Barrett noted, were “quite complete and obviously were polished by Jackson’s customary practice of close editing and thorough writing.” Other parts took up “particular contexts” in Jackson’s time with FDR, but “contain[ed] much less than Jackson evidently planned to write about” Roosevelt. Later chapters “appear[ed] to be dictated drafts” and were “less eloquent than the final text that Jackson would have produced.”<sup>24</sup>

To remedy those difficulties Barrett, whose research on Jackson has made him intimately familiar with the extensive Jackson Papers at the Library of Congress, sought to supplement Jackson’s draft chapters with material from other Jackson writings on the topics Jackson took up in *That Man*. His principal sources were two extensive sets of folders in the Library of Congress collection. One, now listed as Boxes 189, 190 and 191,<sup>25</sup> is an autobiography that Jackson began in 1944 covering his career from his early life up through his time in Washington to the commencement of the Nuremberg trials. The other is Boxes 258 and 259, an oral history memoir, consisting of conversations Jackson had in 1952 and 1953 with Harlan B. Phillips, the director of the Columbia University Oral History project. Jackson had completed editing of the transcripts of those conversations in the summer of 1954 and had sent the edited versions to Phillips just before his death. The coverage of Boxes 258 and 259 is largely duplicative of Boxes 190 and 191, with some exceptions, such as Box 259 containing a complete account of the Nuremberg trials. Neither set of folders covers material in Jackson’s life and career after his return to the Court from Nuremberg, but both sets provide considerable detail on Jackson’s time

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<sup>24</sup> Id.

<sup>25</sup> Barrett’s 2003 references to boxes in the Jackson Papers in the Library of Congress sometimes coincide with the box numbers listed in the current collection and sometimes deviate from them. A reference to what Barrett describes as Jackson’s “Columbia oral history interview,” in Box 190, id., 227, matches with the current collection, but Box 190 contains Jackson’s 1944 autobiography, not the Columbia interview. At another point Barrett identifies comments Jackson made about Charles Evans Hughes as coming from the autobiography, which he identifies in Box 188 of the Jackson Papers. Id., 67. In the current collection the box in which the comment appears is Box 189, Folder 2, pages 159-160.

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with Roosevelt, including impressions from Jackson's first meeting with Roosevelt in Albany in 1912 through Roosevelt's death.

The material in the Jackson autobiographical and oral history materials in the Library of Congress is more polished than that in the "Roosevelt Book" draft chapters. There is evidence of Jackson's having edited all the autobiographical materials contained in Boxes 190 and 191 (not Box 189), and one can tell from Phillips' introduction to the oral history materials, as well as by examining the materials themselves, that Jackson had edited them as well.<sup>26</sup> Thus Barrett was able to insert, in the "Roosevelt Book" chapters, a large amount of material from the Jackson papers relevant to the topics of those chapters. There are numerous insertions of such material in each of the published versions of chapters in *That Man*, with Barnett signaling which portions amount to inserts.<sup>27</sup> The result is that the published versions contain more material on Roosevelt than Jackson had initially included in his draft chapters of the book, and the material is likely in a more polished state.<sup>28</sup>



When he thought about writing a book on Roosevelt, Jackson probably did not agonize over the question of what distinctive contributions he could make to the very large literature on FDR's life and career that was expected to materialize over the years. Few people had known Roosevelt in public life as long and worked with him as closely as Jackson. And although Roosevelt's relationships with his associates were somewhat deceptive – his informality, sense of humor, and lack of pretension creating an atmosphere of warmth among people in his company that was not quite the same as close friendship – Jackson's closeness to Roosevelt was real. Over a number of years he had been present with Roosevelt in countless situations, relaxed and stressful, where sometimes momentous issues were discussed and sometimes trivial banter predominated.

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<sup>26</sup> Phillips' introduction, dated February 1, 1955, is in Box 258, Folder 1 of the Jackson Papers.

<sup>27</sup> See Barrett, *Introduction*, in *THAT MAN*, xxvi, 219 n.46.

<sup>28</sup> Occasionally Barrett moved some text in draft chapters to other draft chapters where he felt "it seemed to fit better." He gives an example of moving some material in a chapter on "That Man as Lawyer" to a "less finished" chapter, "That Man as Economist." *Id.*, xxv.

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Jackson had seen Roosevelt occupy multiple roles, around which he organized *That Man*, a “topical and not chronological . . . arrangement.”<sup>29</sup> His chapters covered “That Man” in “the White House,” “as Politician,” “as Lawyer,” “as Commander-in-Chief,” “as Administrator,” “as Economist,” “as Companion and Sportsman,” and “as Leader of the Masses.”<sup>30</sup> Most of the roles were products of Roosevelt’s political career, already established in New York state by 1910 and galvanized by his being named Assistant Secretary of the Navy when Woodrow Wilson became president in 1912, eventually leading to his becoming the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate in the 1920 election. Some roles were not. Roosevelt had gone to Columbia Law School, and entered the legal profession, but, Jackson noted, “it is plain he was born for politics, not the law.” Jackson doubted whether Roosevelt “ever liked the drudgery and detail of the law,” and felt “he was always impatient of the slow and exacting judicial process.”<sup>31</sup>

Of the various roles Roosevelt occupied, he was, in Jackson’s view, noticeably successful in some and less so in others. As “that man in the White House,” he had an “ease and aptitude” for the role.” He “never appeared self-conscious about his position,” and “never tried to impress one with the magnitude or difficulty of his job.” He was “so self-assured,” Jackson recalled, “that I never heard him assert his right to command or remind anyone that it was he who was President.” Roosevelt “was immersed in work nights, holidays, on weekend cruises, and vacations,” declining advice to take time out from his schedule to rest and including, “in his moments of relaxation,” the people “with whom he worked.”<sup>32</sup> He “took over his high office as if born for the part.”<sup>33</sup>

Roosevelt was also effective “as Politician.” His style was, however, somewhat unusual. Although he was the first Democratic president elected after over a decade of Republicans, he took no steps to remove Republican appointees from office or to establish Democratic patronage. That was consistent with his attitude as a reformer in New York politics, where he had been an outspoken opponent of patronage and corruption from the

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<sup>29</sup> Robert H. Jackson to William E. Jackson, August 25, 1949, Jackson Papers, Box 2.

<sup>30</sup> *THAT MAN*, iv.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*, 59.

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*, 11, 13, 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*, 11.



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Tammany Hall organization. Nor was Roosevelt particularly interested in Cabinet meetings or in his relations with Congress. When he met with his Cabinet, he reminded Jackson “of an old lady . . . who said she always enjoyed her religion more if there was a little devilry going on in the choir”: Roosevelt “never seemed to mind a certain amount of devilry going on in his official family.” The “serious matters between the President and Cabinet departments were usually taken up privately.” Toward Congress his attitude “was somewhat mercurial.” When he “could not get members of Congress to cooperate with him, he believed in going over their heads to their constituents.” In short, Roosevelt’s “underlying strength” as a politician “was not with Congress, nor was it with the party leaders.” It was “with the great masses of warm-hearted people who saw him as a champion and enlisted in his cause.”<sup>34</sup>

Roosevelt was also successful, in Jackson’s view, in his role as commander-in chief of the armed forces, “one that he liked” and “devoted more and more time to activities that fell under that rubric of authority.” In the draft chapter in his “Roosevelt Book” Jackson wrote that he “was not with [Roosevelt’s] administration during the war,” having gone onto the Court before Pearl Harbor, and would limit his comments on “That Man as Commander-in-Chief” to “rather casual observations made when I saw him on social occasions” during the war years.<sup>35</sup> Barrett took this disclaimer with a grain of salt, being aware of Jackson’s deep involvement with war planning during his tenure as Attorney General, and filled up the “Commander-in-Chief” chapter with memoranda from Jackson’s papers and accounts from his Columbia oral history. One insertion, taking up much of the chapter, revealed Jackson’s very close involvement with the destroyers-for-bases deal. Jackson had left a detailed account of that arrangement in his papers, and after his death Bill Jackson and Jackson’s last law clerk, Barrett Prettyman, edited the memorandum, which Barrett included in full.<sup>36</sup> The chapter also includes a conversation in the Columbia oral history in which Jackson offered to resign from the Court shortly after Pearl Harbor, and Roosevelt said that Jackson should remain on the Court, adding that “there were further prospects in connection with [it], which I took to

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<sup>34</sup> *Id.*, 30, 31, 46, 57.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*, 82-103.

be a reference to the Chief Justiceship,” and that “when the peace came . . . there would be important things that I was particularly qualified to do.”<sup>37</sup> That may well have been a reference to Roosevelt’s wanting to enlist Jackson in the prosecution of war criminals.

Two other roles in which Roosevelt excelled, Jackson felt, were those of “Companion and Sportsman” and “Leader of the Masses.” On fishing trips and in private chats, Jackson found Roosevelt “irresistible and inimitable.” He “liked people, almost any people.” He enjoyed the company of others, “liked to pick their minds and see what they were thinking, liked to know the details of their lives and their problems.” During fishing trips – fishing and swimming were two of the few athletic activities in which Roosevelt, whose legs were paralyzed from having contracted polio in 1921, could freely engage – Roosevelt enjoyed mixing martinis for his associates and playing poker for small sums. He intermingled business and pleasure on those trips, inevitably inviting people with whom he worked to accompany him on them. He discouraged his associates from staying up late, betting large amounts, and drinking excessively. On one fishing trip, in 1941, he told Harry Hopkins, his chief foreign policy advisor, that if Hopkins went to Miami for an evening after high winds had caused the boat to dock overnight at Fort Lauderdale, he would “not take [Hopkins] on another trip.” Hopkins had been ill, and out of concern for his welfare Roosevelt, Jackson recalled, “lit into him like an angry father with a wayward son.”<sup>38</sup>

On another occasion Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and Edwin Watson, a military aide to Roosevelt who also served as the president’s appointments secretary, made a bet about whether Josiah Bailey, a Senator from North Carolina, was a lawyer. Watson won the bet (Bailey was a lawyer), but Ickes did not pay it. Watson asked Jackson for advice, and Jackson, aware that Watson controlled access to Roosevelt, told him that the next time Ickes sought an appointment with the president, Watson should insist that he pay him before “opening the door.” The advice proved successful, and Jackson sent Watson a bill for \$100 for legal services. When Roosevelt learned of the incident, he wrote a spurious memorandum to the Solicitor General soliciting an opinion as to whether Jackson should

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<sup>37</sup> *Id.*, 107.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*, 135, 148.

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be removed from the Attorney Generalship for practicing law in the White House. "Such was the spirit," Jackson wrote, "with which the president dealt with his associates."<sup>39</sup> Roosevelt's ability to deflect tension with humor, his obvious pleasure in socializing with those with whom he worked, and his capacity for enjoying virtually all of the aspects of being president made him, in Jackson's view, an ideal companion.

Roosevelt was also a conspicuous success as "leader of the masses," Jackson believed. Part of that came from his ability to respond to the Depression by "extend[ing] government aid to an extraordinary number of persons," ranging from businessmen to members of labor unions to the unemployed. Another part of it was connected to Roosevelt's ability to "get across to the people something that stirred them." Although Roosevelt "was not an orator" comparable to some such as Winston Churchill, and his "speeches lacked ... literary quality and finish," he was "the first real master of the new technique in mass communication necessitated by widespread use of the radio." In his "fireside chats" on national radio networks he did not "seem to be reading to an audience," or "reciting," just talking informally, drawing his listeners into a conversation and giving them the impression that if they wanted to respond to him, he would attend to their comments. As a result Roosevelt was, Jackson felt, "the President of the United States best understood by the masses of the people."<sup>40</sup>

There were also roles occupied by Roosevelt in which, in Jackson's view, he was less successful. Two in particular were "Economist" and "Administrator." Jackson began his chapter "That Man as Economist" with the following:

It always seemed to me that the President was at his weakest in dealing with economic or business problems. He had not engaged in business ... and he had no personal knowledge of its methods or its problems.[<sup>41</sup>] He tended to think of economic matters as per-

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<sup>39</sup> *Id.*, 149.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*, 157, 158, 159, 163.

<sup>41</sup> Roosevelt practiced law only briefly, from 1908, when he joined the firm of Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn in New York City, to 1910, when, after being elected to the New York state Senate, he made politics a full-time career. At Carter, Ledyard he had worked in admiralty law: naval affairs were a lifelong interest. See ROBERT DALLEK, *FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: A POLITICAL LIFE* 38-39 (2017).

sonal rather than impersonal forces. He was much inclined to think about economic matters in terms of rights and wrongs. He was inclined to think that we were prosecuting a group of businessmen because they had done some moral wrong, and that if he talked to them and made them see that their course was morally wrong, they would do something about it.<sup>42</sup>

As an illustration of Roosevelt's weakness as an economist, Jackson noted that during his administrations there was a recurrent conflict, in the area of anti-trust, between what Jackson called the "Woodrow Wilson theory," which emphasized "free competition" and dismantling of large-scale enterprises, and the "NRA theory," which anticipated businessmen's being "allowed to make certain agreements that would be in restraint of trade with the approval and under the supervision of an administrative body." Roosevelt "plainly had no firm convictions and expressed no dogmatic views about the monopoly problem," and waffled between the two approaches, which Jackson attributed to Roosevelt's views not being "grounded in economic theory or practice." Roosevelt had "keen political judgments and social philosophy," but "had never devoted himself to much study of the economic problems of the country."<sup>43</sup>

On another occasion Roosevelt's "lack of aptitude for economic matters" resulted in his giving Jackson "a weird plan for excess profits taxation" after Hitler invaded Poland in 1939. He had put his plan, "God knows from where he had obtained it," in a brief memorandum. "I am sorry to say," Jackson reported, "that none of the experts in the Administration whom I consulted gave [Roosevelt's] memorandum respectful attention." In short, "[t]he President was not at his best on the business side of government," and "needed strong economic and financial advisers on whom he could rely."<sup>44</sup>

Nor was Roosevelt an "accomplished" administrator. "[I]n normal times, when his office demanded only an orderly and efficient administration of settled affairs," Jackson speculated, "it is doubtful that [Roosevelt] could have been a distinguished President." Although he "inspired an intense loyalty everywhere in his administration," it was "often . . . hard to find out what his bidding was." Staff members frequently held contradictory views about

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<sup>42</sup> *Id.*, 119.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*, 122-124.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*, 132-133.

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how Roosevelt desired to address issues, and Roosevelt, not wanting to encourage conflict among those who worked with him, rarely clarified matters. “[I]t must be admitted,” Jackson concluded, “that the President was not a master executive. Administration was not his strong point.”<sup>45</sup>

*That Man* is a discerning glimpse into working with, and for, a President whom nearly all of his associates liked, admired, and were passionately loyal to. But the actual “Roosevelt Book” discovered in Bill Jackson’s apartment was quite far removed from the eventual manuscript compiled and supplemented by John Barrett. If one compares the pages in *That Man* taken directly from Jackson’s original draft chapters to Barrett’s insertions from Jackson’s autobiography, oral history, and other files in the Jackson papers, more than half of the content comes from the latter sources. In addition, Barrett supplied numerous notes, biographical sketches, and a bibliographic essay, resulting in a useful and engaging volume, but not one very much resembling the “Roosevelt Book.”

That is hardly Robert Jackson’s fault. As Barrett notes, had he lived he would have doubtless rewritten, polished, and supplemented his draft chapters on Roosevelt. John Barrett was fortunate, in compiling *That Man*, that Jackson kept written records in his private papers of a great many of the incidents in his varied life, and that Jackson was compulsively inclined to reduce his memories of events and people in his career to writing. That provided Barrett with a wealth of material to supplement Jackson’s “Roosevelt Book.” We are fortunate, as well, to have had a compiler as knowledgeable and skillful as John Q. Barrett. *That Man* is as much his book as Robert Jackson’s.



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<sup>45</sup> Id., 111, 117.