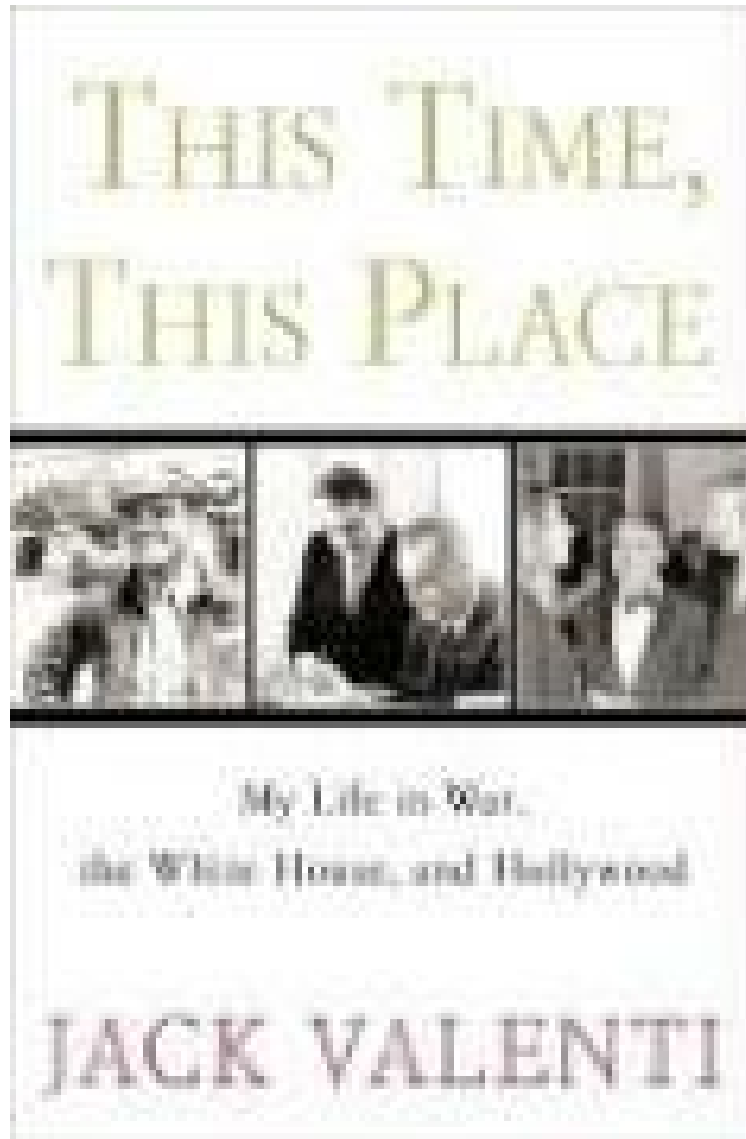


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# This Time, This Place: My Life in War, the White House, and Hollywood

*Jack Valenti*

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**Jack Valenti : This Time, This Place: My Life in War, the White House, and Hollywood** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised This Time, This Place: My Life in War, the White House, and Hollywood:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An amazing biography!By Sahra BadouAt the beginning of the

book, the author asks if anyone would read his book. He actually debated whether to write his biography. I'm glad he did. Like the Reagan Diaries, I had been putting off reading this book. I guess the cover was not appealing, or maybe because the book was not recommended to me. I had bought it because at the time I was interested in reading biographies. It just sat there on my bookshelf collecting dust for over three years. With a lack of books to read, I picked it up. Wow! What an amazing guy! Jack Valenti really did it all! He was a World War II pilot, fought the Germans in daring air combats, was an advisor to both JFK and President Johnson, and was head of the Movie Industry, acquainting himself with the biggest stars in Hollywood. Yet throughout his biography you never get the sense of an egotistical person; rather you revel in this humble and down to earth character. Valenti talks about the war with the Germans, and his daring air sorties. He describes vividly his training days as a pilot to actual combat in France. Loving anything related to aviation I was very captivated by his account. Several times became close to death over France and Germany, but not once was his aircraft downed. Valenti also describes how after the war he had to cross the Atlantic to return his aircraft to the USA. That account was also thrilling and read like a novel. I always thought that President Johnson was a weak president, gaining the presidency only because JFK was assassinated. I also believed in the conspiracy theory that Johnson was behind JFK's assassination. This book set the record straight. You can almost say that this book is also a biography of President Johnson. Valenti writes extensively about him, and portrays him for who he really is: a humble and intelligent man who only acted on America's best interest and not his own. For example, he refused to run for second term because he thought that this would end the Vietnam War. According to Valenti, Johnson gave up on life after his presidency. He neglected his health and became obese. The thought of death always loomed over him, and he always believed he would die in his sixties. It was a tragedy reading this after I had high regards and respect for this truly humble and just man. Valenti also describes the day JFK was assassinated, and the somber mood of the nation and his aides during that tragic moment. He really manages to bring the reader back in time to relive those moments. He is truly a great writer, and this biography, albeit two biographies in one, reads like a novel. The biography then continues on with Valenti's life in Hollywood. A lot of name dropping, such as Cary Grant, Kirk and Michael Douglas, Katherine Hepburn, Catherine Zeta Jones, Tom Cruise, Julia Roberts, just to name a few. He gives a good account of Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn, and the reader will enjoy getting a glimpse, although brief, of their life. Cary Grant, for example, refused to act in later years so that he is frozen in time as this handsome young man. His chapters on Hollywood beat any Hollywood gossip magazines. I really recommend this book. If you like reading biographies, then this book should be on your shelf.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Truly wonderful  
By Foothill Ranch 141 always loved Jack Valenti. He gave so much to his country, whether in war or in the Johnson White House. Yet he seemed so down to Earth, never letting the situation consume him. He was a lucky man, not getting killed in the War and being picked up by LBJ on 11/22/1963, but he capitalized on his opportunities and worked very hard to reach a level of success he enjoyed when he reached the MPAA. I wish he didn't break the sections when he with the MPAA so oddly, but take a look at this book. Wonderful.

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Another Forrest Gump!  
By Rick Spell How's this for a life change: you arrange logistics for the President's trip to Texas in 1963, end up in the famous photo of President Johnson being sworn in, end up LIVING in President's Johnson's residence for a month and become his chief aide, how's that? Well, if that's not enough, within 3 years become president of the Motion Pictures Industry roundtable of executives also responsible for lobby work. Such is the life of Jack Valenti, an always engaging personality on TV, this book backs up that persona in spades. After being a WWII pilot, the U of Houston grad gets in the Harvard MBA program which sets him on his course. After early life set-up the book focuses on his years in the White House and close relationship with Pres. Johnson before focusing more than half the book on Hollywood, his job and his relationships. At the end, he revisits his memories of famous people that he loved or admired: Jackie Kennedy, Warren Buffet, Lew Wasserman, Kirk Douglas, Tom Cruise, etc. The list is long and illustrious, and while very interesting, this is the one part of the book that suffers from massive name-dropping. I can't recommend this book higher from a great American. If you have interest in politics or pop culture in the 2nd half of the 20th century, this book is a must read. But, if you want to read the life story of a truly engaging, friendly, family man then it is definitely for you. My condolences to the family on the unexpected death of Jack Valenti shortly after completion of the book.

With the nation at war in the 1940s, twenty-two-year-old Jack Valenti flew fifty-one combat missions as the pilot of a B-25 attack bomber with the 12th Air Force based in Italy. In the 1960s, with the nation reeling from the assassination of a beloved president and becoming embroiled in a far different kind of war in Vietnam, he was in that fateful Dallas motorcade in 1963, flew back to Washington with the new president, and for three years worked in the inner circle of the White House as special assistant to President Lyndon Johnson. Then, for the next thirty-eight years, with American society and popular culture undergoing a revolutionary transformation, Valenti was the public face of Hollywood in his capacity as head of the Motion Picture Association of America. Been there, done that, indeed. Texas-born and Harvard-educated, Valenti has led several lives, any one of which could have provided ample material for an unforgettable memoir. As it is, *This Time, This Place* is the gripping story of a man who saw the terrible face of war while fighting with skill and bravery for his country; who was in the room, listening, participating, and remembering,

as political decisions were made that would benefit or devastate countless lives in this country and on the other side of the world; and who championed the interest of the vast and globally influential movie industry with tenacity and vision. The list of boldface names whom Valenti knew and with whom he worked is as varied as it is astonishing in number. Aside from LBJ, there were Jack and Bobby Kennedy, Kirk Douglas, Frank Sinatra, Robert McNamara, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Julia Roberts, Cary Grant, Lew Wasserman, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Jack Nicholson, Michael Douglas, Warren Beatty, and Bill Clinton, to begin a very long list. The life of a man who earned both the Distinguished Flying Cross and his own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is inherently intriguing, but Valenti's warm, sometimes rueful, always engaging account gives this memoir a depth of humanity and a taste of life's unpredictability that will linger long after you turn the final page. From growing up poor but largely oblivious to that fact in a hardscrabble neighborhood of Greek and Italian immigrants in Houston to rising to the highest summits both of national government and Hollywood, *This Time, This Place* is a candid and clear-eyed reflection of the joys and sorrows, ambitions and disappointments, of a life fully recognizable in its extraordinary variety. It is also a sweeping and important historical record, written by a brilliantly successful man who helped to shape politics and entertainment in the second half of the twentieth century, and who always found himself in the center of the current storm.

From Publishers Weekly Valenti, an "obscure owner of an advertising and political consulting agency in Houston," came under the national spotlight when, with little fanfare, he became a special assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson. Valenti opens with Kennedy's assassination, right after which Johnson told Valenti, without warning, "I want you on my staff." After his arrival in Washington, Valenti jumps back in time, cruising through his Houston childhood, experience as WWII B-25 pilot and subsequent Harvard education. The dramatic arc works well, setting up nicely the book's weightiest portion, an insider's view of the Johnson White House, featuring a fascinating discussion of Robert McNamara's summer 1965 plan to increase U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. The last third chronicles Valenti's 38 years as chair and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America, an organization with close ties to Washington politics; Valenti shares enlightening details of developing and implementing the MPAA's voluntary movie rating system, still in place today, as well as his relationship with numerous "icons of the silver screen" (Kirk Douglas gets the most space). Valenti's informal prose occasionally runs purple, but his life story, populated with Washington power-brokers and Hollywood royalty, is an absorbing one. 15 b/w photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Jack Valenti has written numerous essays for the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, Atlantic Monthly, Newsweek, and other publications. He lives in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.