



Launching the War on Poverty: An Oral History (Oxford Oral History Series)

Michael L. Gillette

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Head Start, Job Corps, Foster Grandparents, College Work-Study, VISTA, Community Action, and the Legal Services Corporation are familiar programs, but their tumultuous beginning has been largely forgotten. Conceived amid the daring idealism of the 1960s, these programs originated as weapons in Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, an offensive spearheaded by a controversial new government agency. Within months, the Office of Economic Opportunity created an array of unconventional initiatives that empowered the poor, challenged the established order, and ultimately transformed the nation's attitudes toward poverty.

In *Launching the War on Poverty*, historian Michael L. Gillette weaves together oral history interviews with the architects of the Great Society's boldest experiment. Forty-nine former poverty warriors, including Sargent Shriver, Adam Yarmolinsky, and Lawrence F. O'Brien, recount this inside story of unprecedented governmental innovation. The interviews capture the excitement and heady optimism of Americans in the 1960s along with their conflicts and disillusionment.

This new edition of *Launching the War on Poverty* adds the voice of Lyndon Johnson to the story with excerpts from his recently-released White House telephone conversations. In these colorful and brutally candid conversations, LBJ exercises his full arsenal of presidential powers, political leverage, and legendary persuasiveness to win one of his most difficult legislative battles. The second edition also documents how the OEO's offspring survived their volatile origins to become broadly supported features of domestic policy.

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