



White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism (Politics and Society in Modern America)

By Kevin M. Kruse

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During the civil rights era, Atlanta thought of itself as "The City Too Busy to Hate," a rare place in the South where the races lived and thrived together. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, however, so many whites fled the city for the suburbs that Atlanta earned a new nickname: "The City Too Busy Moving to Hate."

In this reappraisal of racial politics in modern America, Kevin Kruse explains the causes and consequences of "white flight" in Atlanta and elsewhere. Seeking to understand segregationists on their own terms, *White Flight* moves past simple stereotypes to explore the meaning of white resistance. In the end, Kruse finds that segregationist resistance, which failed to stop the civil rights movement, nevertheless managed to preserve the world of segregation and even perfect it in subtler and stronger forms.

Challenging the conventional wisdom that white flight meant nothing more than a literal movement of whites to the suburbs, this book argues that it represented a more important transformation in the political ideology of those involved. In a provocative revision of postwar American history, Kruse demonstrates that traditional elements of modern conservatism, such as hostility to the federal government and faith in free enterprise, underwent important transformations during the postwar struggle over segregation. Likewise, white resistance gave birth to several new conservative causes, like the tax revolt, tuition vouchers, and privatization of public services. Tracing the journey of southern conservatives from white supremacy to white suburbia, Kruse locates the origins of modern American politics.

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Editorial Review

Review

Ronald Brownstein, "American Prospect" *American Prospect* : In *White Flight*, a study of white resistance to desegregation in Atlanta, Kruse produces a panoramic and engaging portrayal of the struggle over desegregation.

Jeff Roche, "Journal of American History" *Journal of American History* : An ambitious, well-researched, and interesting study, *White Flight* offers a provocative examination of the connections between race and conservative politics.

Jonathan Tilove, "Times-Picayune" *Times-Picayune* : Kruse presents a nuanced portrayal of the trends that fostered the growth of the suburbs and the casting aside of racist demagoguery.

R. Claire Snyder, "New Political Science" *New Political Science* : *White Flight* provides a detailed yet fascinating history of right-wing backlash against the civil rights movement that has relevance not only for historians but also for political scientists. Kevin Kruse's study deserves a wide reading.

Kristen O'Hare, "Urban History Review" *Urban History Review* : In his book, Kevin Kruse analyzes the ideology accompanying white flight and its ongoing impact on American politics. . . . In a beautifully written, clearly structured, and deeply researched narrative, Kruse lays out the historical processes that led to the development of modern conservatism.

Clay Risen, "Nashville Scene" *Nashville Scene* : Kruse's ultimate success lies in using history to answer contemporary political questions, and without compromising his professional standards.

From the Back Cover

"In his study of Atlanta over the last 60 years, Kevin Kruse convincingly describes the critical connections between race, Sun Belt suburbanization, the rise of the new Republican majority. *White Flight* is a powerful and compelling book that should be read by anyone interested in modern American politics and post-World War II urban history."--**Dan Carter, University of South Carolina**

"*White Flight* is a myth-shattering book. Focusing on the city that prided itself as 'too busy to hate,' Kevin Kruse reveals the everyday ways that middle-class whites in Atlanta resisted civil rights, withdrew from the public sphere, and in the process fashioned a new, grassroots, suburban-based conservatism. This important book has national implications for our thinking about the links between race, suburbanization, and the rise of the New Right."--**Thomas J. Sugrue, Kahn Professor of History and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, author of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis***

"This is an imaginative work that ably treats an important subject. Kruse gets beyond and beneath Atlanta's

image as a place of racial moderation, the national center of the civil rights movement, and a seedbed of black political power to reveal other simultaneous, important currents at work."--**Clifford Kuhn, Georgia State University**

"Kevin Kruse recasts our understanding of the conservative resistance to the civil rights movement. Shifting the spotlight from racial extremists to ordinary white urban dwellers, he shows that "white flight" to the suburbs was among the most powerful social movements of our time. That movement not only reconfigured the urban landscape, it also transformed political ideology, laying the groundwork for the rise of the New Right and undermining the commitment of white Americans to the common good. No one can read this book and come away believing that the politics of suburbia are colorblind."--**Jacquelyn Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**

About the Author

Kevin M. Kruse is a professor of history at Princeton University.

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