



# **The Man Who Sold the World: Ronald Reagan and the Betrayal of Main Street America**

*William Kleinknecht*

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Since Ronald Reagan left office—and particularly after his death—his shadow has loomed large over American politics: Republicans and many Democrats have waxed nostalgic, extolling the Republican tradition he embodied, the optimism he espoused, and his abilities as a communicator.

This carefully calibrated image is complete fiction, argues award-winning journalist William Kleinknecht. The Reagan presidency was epoch shattering, but not—as his propagandists would have it—because it invigorated private enterprise or made America feel strong again. His real legacy was the dismantling of an eight-decade period of reform in which working people were given an unprecedented sway over our politics, our economy, and our culture. Reagan halted this almost overnight.

In the tradition of Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, Kleinknecht explores middle America—starting with Reagan's hometown of Dixon, Illinois—and shows that as the Reagan legend grows, his true legacy continues to decimate middle America.

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