

Bill Clinton – An American Journey by Nigel Hamilton.
Century 2003.

Nigel Hamilton, biographer of Bill Clinton's hero and, in some areas, role model, John F Kennedy, has produced a stupendous unauthorised biography of a memorable President of the United States of America.

Meticulously and minutely researched, Hamilton writes in an easy style, each section of the book divided into smaller sub-sections which makes reading its 700-plus pages all the easier.

Most of us will always juxtapose the name Clinton with Lewinsky, but there is much more to Bill Clinton than his prodigious sex drive. His extremely humble origins, the brilliance of his intellect, his sense of need to make his country a better place, his extraordinary ability to engage with people, his will to live the American dream where in theory anyone can become the President, the nature of his enduring relationship with his long-suffering wife Hillary and his political skills are described in a way that makes his many flaws if not always forgivable at least comprehensible.

The book ends with Clinton's election in 1992 as the forty second President of the US. It remains to be seen whether Hamilton will write a sequel on the presidency itself, but regardless of whether he does so this will stand for some time as an outstanding biography of a man who for some of the wrong reasons and plenty of right ones must rank as one of the most outstanding figures in twentieth century US politics.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh