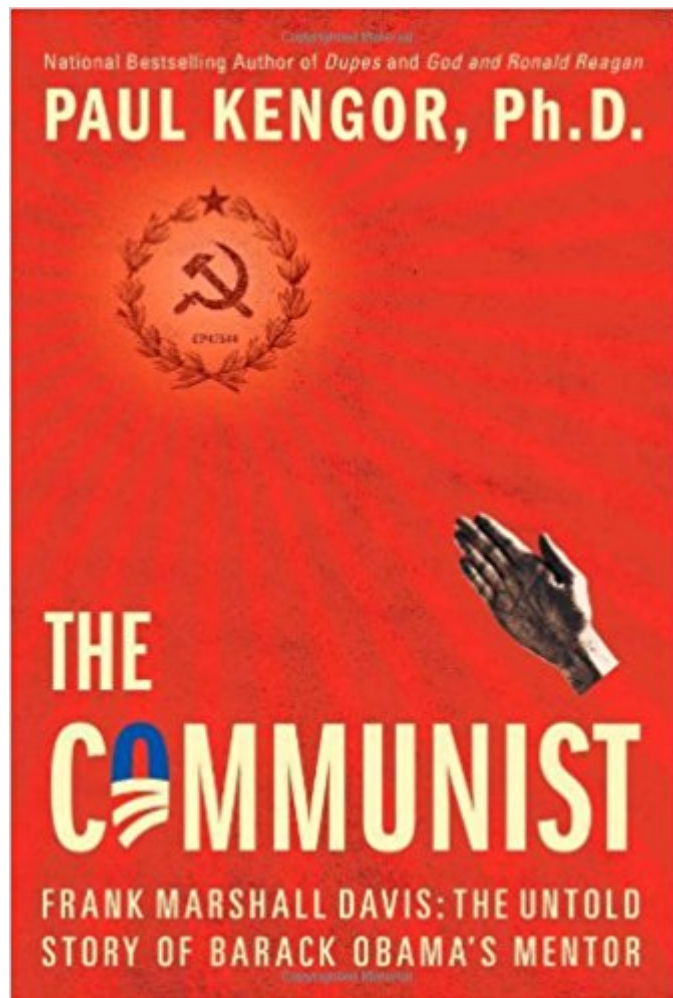




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The Communist



Synopsis

“I admire Russia for wiping out an economic system which permitted a handful of rich to exploit and beat gold from the millions of plain people. . . . As one who believes in freedom and democracy for all, I honor the Red nation.”

•FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS, 1947

In his memoir, Barack Obama omits the full name of his mentor, simply calling him “Frank.”

Now, the truth is out: Never has a figure as deeply troubling and controversial as Frank Marshall Davis had such an impact on the development of an American president. Although other radical influences on Obama, from Jeremiah Wright to Bill Ayers, have been scrutinized, the public knows little about Davis, a card-carrying member of the Communist Party USA, cited by the Associated Press as an “important influence” on Obama, one whom he “looked to” not merely for “advice on living” but as a “father” figure. While the Left has willingly dismissed Davis (with good reason), here are the indisputable, eye-opening facts: Frank Marshall Davis was a pro-Soviet, pro-Red China communist. His Communist Party USA card number, revealed in FBI files, was CP #47544. He was a prototype of the loyal Soviet patriot, so radical that the FBI placed him on the federal government’s Security Index. In the early 1950s, Davis opposed U.S. attempts to slow Stalin and Mao. He favored Red Army takeovers of Central and Eastern Europe, and communist control in Korea and Vietnam. Dutifully serving the cause, he edited and wrote for communist newspapers in both Chicago and Honolulu, courting contributors who were Soviet agents. In the 1970s, amid this dangerous political theater, Frank Marshall Davis came into Barack Obama’s life. Aided by access to explosive declassified FBI files, Soviet archives, and Davis’s original newspaper columns, Paul Kengor explores how Obama sought out Davis and how Davis found in Obama an impressionable young man, one susceptible to Davis’s worldview that opposed American policy and traditional values while praising communist regimes. Kengor sees remnants of this worldview in Obama’s early life and even, ultimately, his presidency. Kengor charts with definitive accuracy the progression of Davis’s communist ideas from Chicago to Hawaii. He explores how certain elements of the Obama administration’s agenda reflect Davis’s columns advocating wealth redistribution, government stimulus for “public works projects,” taxpayer-funding of universal health care, and nationalizing General Motors. Davis’s writings excoriated the “tentacles of big business,” blasted Wall Street and “greedy” millionaires, lambasted GOP tax cuts that “spare the rich,” attacked “excess profits” and oil companies, and perceived the Catholic Church as an obstacle to his vision for the state—all

the while echoing Davis's often repeated mantra for transformational and fundamental change. And yet, The Communist is not unsympathetic to Davis, revealing him as something of a victim, an African-American who suffered devastating racial persecution in the Jim Crow era, steering this justly angered young man on a misguided political track. That Davis supported violent and heartless communist regimes over his own country is impossible to defend. That he was a source of inspiration to President Barack Obama is impossible to ignore. Is Obama working to fulfill the dreams of Frank Marshall Davis? That question has been impossible to answer, since Davis's writings and relationship with Obama have either been deliberately obscured or dismissed as irrelevant. With Paul Kengor's The Communist, Americans can finally weigh the evidence and decide for themselves. *** There were hundreds of thousands of American communists like Frank who agitated throughout the twentieth century. They chose the wrong side of history, a horrendously bloody side that left a wake of more than 100 million corpses from the streets of the Bolshevik Revolution to the base of the Berlin Wall double the combined dead of the century's two world wars. And they never apologized. Quite the contrary, they cursed their accusers for daring to charge (correctly) that they were communists whose ideology threatened the American way and the greater world and all of humanity. They took their denials to the grave, and still today their liberal/progressive dupes continue to conceal their crimes and curse their accusers for them. We need hundreds and thousands of more books on American communists like Frank, so we can finally start to get this history right and, more so, learn its vital lessons. To fail to do so is a great historical injustice. We especially need to flesh out these lessons, which are morality tales in the truest sense of the word, when we find the rarest case of a man like Frank managing to influence someone as influential as the current president of the United States of America the leader of the free world and driver of the mightiest political/economic engine in history. Such figures cannot be ignored. The people who influence our presidents matter. from The Communist: The Untold Story of Barack Obama's Mentor

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Customer Reviews

Paul Kengor, Ph.D., is a bestselling author whose works include *Dupes: How America's Adversaries Have Manipulated Progressives for a Century*; *God and Ronald Reagan*; *God and George W. Bush*; *God and Hillary Clinton*; and *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism*. His articles regularly appear in publications ranging from USA TODAY to The New York Times, plus numerous academic journals. A professor at Grove City College, Kengor is a frequent commentator on television and radio. Kengor earned his bachelor's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and his master's from American University.

Growing Up Frank FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS was born on December 31, 1905. He grew up in Arkansas City, Kansas, which he described as a "yawn town fifty miles south of Wichita, five miles north of Oklahoma, and east and west of nowhere worth remembering."¹ That was a charitable description, given the racism he endured in that little town. In his memoirs, Frank began by taking readers back to his high-school graduation on a "soft night in late spring, 1923." He was six feet one and 190 pounds at age seventeen, but "I feel more like one foot six; for I am black, and inferiority has been hammered into me at school and in my daily life from home." He and three other black boys "conspicuously float in this sea of white kids," the four of them the most blacks ever in one graduating class. "There are no black girls," wrote Frank. "Who needs a diploma to wash clothes and cook in white kitchens?"² Frank was rightly indignant at this "hellhole of inferiority." He said that he and his fellow "Negroes reared in Dixie" were considered "the scum of the nation," whose high-school education "has prepared us only to exist at a low level within the degrading status quo." And even the education they acquired was often belittling. "My white classmates and I learned from our textbooks that my ancestors

were naked savages," said Frank, "exposed for the first time to uplifting civilization when slave traders brought them from the jungles of Africa to America. Had not their kindly white masters granted these primitive heathens the chance to save their souls by becoming Christians?"³ Frank would one day rise above the degrading status quo. For now, he lamented that he himself had fallen victim to this "brainwashing" and "ran spiritually with the racist white herd, a pitiful black tag-a-long."⁴ As Frank surveyed the sea of white classmates that soft spring evening, he was glad to know it would be the last time he would be with them. He could think of only three or four white boys who had treated him as an equal and a friend, and whom he cared to remember.⁵ One moment that was unforgettably seared into his soul was an incident when he was five years old. An innocent boy, Frank was walking home across a vacant lot when two third-grade thugs jumped him, tossed him to the ground, and slipped a noose over his neck. He kicked and screamed as the two devils prepared, in Frank's words, "their own junior necktie party." They were trying to lynch little Frank Marshall Davis.⁶ As the noose tightened, a white man heroically appeared, chasing away the two savages, freeing Frank, brushing the dirt from his clothes. He walked little Frank nearly a mile home, then simply turned around and went about his business. Frank never learned the man's identity.⁷ Imagine if that kindly man could have known that that "Negro" boy he shepherded home would one day help mentor the first black president of the United States. It is a moving thought, one that cannot help but elicit the most heartfelt sympathy for Frank, even in the face of his later political transgressions. Frank's parents apparently informed the school of the attempted lynching, but school officials did not bother. "I was still alive and unharmed, wasn't I?" scoffed Frank. "Besides, I was black." Frank rose above the jackboot of this repression, assuring the world that this was one young black man who would not be tied down. He enrolled in college, first attending Friends University in Wichita, before transferring to Kansas State University in Manhattan.⁸ At Kansas State from 1924 to 1926, Frank majored in journalism and practiced writing poetry, impressing students and faculty alike. These colleagues were almost universally white. To their credit, some of them saw in Frank a writing talent and were eager to help. RACISM Of course, that upturn did not end the racism in Frank's life. Another ugly incident occurred in a return home during college break.⁹ A promising young man, Frank was working at a pool hall, trying to save money to put himself through school. It was midnight, and he was walking home alone. A black sedan slowly approached him. Out of the lowered window came a redneck voice: "Where the hell you goin' this time of night?" Frank warily glanced over and saw two white men in the front seat and another in

the back. Worried, he asked why it was their business. "Don't get smart, boy. We're police," snapped one of them, flashing a badge slightly above his holstered pistol. "I'm police chief here. Now, what the hell you doing in this neighborhood this time of night?" A frightened Frank explained that this was his neighborhood. He had lived there for years, was home on college break, and was simply walking home from work. "Yeah?" barked the chief. "Well, you git your black ass in the car with us. A white lady on the next street over phoned there was somebody prowling around her yard." Frank asked, "Am I supposed to fit the description?" The chief found Frank's question haughty: "Shut up and git in the car!" They delivered Frank to the woman's doorstep. "Ain't this him?" said the hopeful chief. The woman quickly said it was not. Frank looked nothing at all like the man she had spotted. "Are you sure?" pushed the chief. "Maybe you made a mistake." The lady insisted that Frank was not the suspect, to the lawman's great disappointment. Frank suspected that the chief was keenly disappointed not to have the opportunity to work him over. "It wasn't everyday they had a chance to whip a big black nigger," said Frank, "and a college nigger at that." The chief told Frank to get back in the car, where he began interrogating him again, even though Frank was fully exonerated. The chief was not relenting. He was looking for blood. "Where do you live?" the chief continued. Frank stated his address. The chief turned to his buddies: "I didn't know any damn niggers lived in this part of town, did you?" One of the officers replied: "There's a darky family livin' down here somewhere." Frank was utterly helpless, at the mercy of men with badges and guns and "the law" behind them. He boiled inside, but could do nothing. He later wrote: "At that moment I would have given twenty years off my life had I been able to bind all three together, throw them motionless on the ground in front of me, and for a whole hour piss in their faces." RESENTMENT Frank escaped this incident physically unharmed, released to his home by the police. But he was hardly unscathed. Such injustice understandably fueled a lifelong resentment. Frank's upbringing, as told through his memoirs, is gripping. His writing is witty, engaging, sarcastic, at times delightful, leaving it hard not to like Frank, or at least be entertained by him. But the wonderful passages are tempered by Frank's numerous ethnic slurs, mostly aimed in a self-deprecating manner at himself and his people, but also directed at others, such as "the Spanish Jew" (never named) whose restaurant he frequented in Atlanta, and, worst of all, by the many sexually explicit passages. One can see in Frank's memoirs the author of *Sex Rebel*, and one can

see a lot of sexism, with Frank making constant graphic references to women's private parts (with vulgar slang terms) and referring to women as everything from "white chicks" to "a jane" to a "luscious ripened plum," just for starters.¹⁰ In his memoirs, Frank devoted an inordinate amount of space to his sexual encounters. Sex Rebel must have been his chance to more fully indulge his lurid obsessions. Of course, Frank also invested his writing talent in noble purposes: advancing civil rights by chronicling the persecutions of a black man. Interestingly, to that end, Frank's memoirs are remarkably similar to Barack Obama's memoirs; the running thread being the racial struggles of a young black man in America. Frank's memoirs reveal an often bitter man, one who had suffered the spear of racial persecution. His contempt for his culture and society also led to a low view of America. When America is acknowledged in his memoirs, it is not a pretty portrait: "The United States was the only slaveholding nation in the New World that completely dehumanized Africans by considering them as chattel, placing them in the same category as horses, cattle, and furniture." That attitude, wrote Frank, was still held by too many American whites.¹¹ Thus, his hometown of Arkansas City was "no better or worse than a thousand other places under the Stars and Stripes."¹² Again, that bitterness is understandable, a toxic by-product of the evil doings of Frank's tormentors. Yet what is unfortunate about Frank's narrative is the lack of concession, smothered (as it was) by resentment, that this same America, no matter the sins of its children, still provided the freedom for Frank to pull himself up and achieve remarkable things, which are manifest as one reads his memoirs. We also find in those memoirs a resentfulness of religion and God. Frank had been raised by Baptist parents and taught the power of prayer "from infancy." But he felt he did not see results. When blacks were massacred in riots in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Frank knelt at his bedside and "prayed for retribution." When nothing happened to the perpetrators (at least in this world), he was puzzled. The results were the same when a young black mother in the South was burned at the stake while the white mob laughed at her cries. Frank again prayed for divine retribution. "I became deeply depressed," said Frank, "feeling that God had somehow let me down."¹³ Frank was also angry at how every picture he had seen portrayed a white Jesus, "usually blonde," and a blackened devil. If this was so, pondered the young Frank, what could he expect as a black man? He asked himself: Why would a "white Lord" punish his own white, ethnic brothers?¹⁴ For Frank, this childlike misinterpretation was "tiny at first" but snowballed. He suspected that the Christian religion was a "device" to keep blacks subservient to whites. "Very

well,Ã scoffed Frank. Ã“Then I was through with it.Ã15 To the contrary, FrankÃs black contemporaries, and the generation of slaves who recently preceded them, understood the culprit not as God but as men, not a bad Christian religion but bad Christians. Professor Gary Smith, author of an Oxford University Press book on views of heaven, states that black slaves viewed heaven as Ã“the very negation of slavery,Ã a place where they would finally experience the dignity and worth denied on earth. Ã“Admission to heaven would validate their humanity,Ã writes Smith. Ã“Although masters and many other whites defined them as uncivilized brutes or mere commodities, in GodÃs eyes they were valuable, precious human beings for whom His Son died.Ã Smith adds that Ã“many blacks looked forward to heavenly bliss and compensation and divine retribution for their suffering.Ã16 There was more to FrankÃs rejection of God. His grandfather was agnostic, and those seeds, when mixed with FrankÃs unanswered prayers for retribution, Ã“fell in welcoming soil.Ã (As a parallel to Barack Obama, Newsweek described ObamaÃs grandfather as a Ã“lapsed ChristianÃ who likewise did not nurture in him a Christian belief system, nor did ObamaÃs grandmother or mother,17 with the grandparents at best attending a Unitarian Church known among locals as Ã“The Little Red Church on the Hill.Ã18) Frank said that his grandfather Ã“converted me almost immediately.Ã19 He was easy prey. Frank began haunting the recesses of the Wichita Public Library, where he imbibed the anti-God writings of agnostics and atheists. This was a pivotal period. By then, Frank was not an immature five-year-old with childlike questions but an eighteen-year-old becoming a man. His break from Jesus Christ was intellectually reinforced.20 Overall, Frank said he did not forever physically desert churches, always seeing them as valuable social centers for black Americans who needed them and for addressing problems of everyday living.21 Did he become a lifelong committed agnostic or atheist? He does not clarify in his memoirs, though he clearly rejected the Christian faith at one point. And as we shall see in his writings in the 1940s and 1950s, he would take pointed jabs at Christians for their supposed sins of anticommunism and anti-Sovietism. Indeed, significantly, among the rancid fruits of this separation from Christianity may have been communism. Herein might be seeds of FrankÃs eventual turn to Marxism-Leninism, a totalitarian ideology and god that failed, that shackled human freedom to an unparalleled degree. It was President Harry Truman, FrankÃs eventual nemesis, who remarked that Ã“the seeds of totalitarian regimesÃ are nurtured by Ã“misery and want.Ã Those seeds Ã“grow in the evil soil of poverty and strifeÃÃ of which there was plenty in FrankÃs lifeÃ and Ã“reach

their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died.²² This was Truman's rationale for the benevolent Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, which Frank vilified in his columns. So abiding was Frank's opposition to the Marshall Plan that one of the few foreign-policy assessments in his memoirs is his open acknowledgment that he adamantly rejected the Marshall Plan, which he characterized (outlandishly) as a weapon that Truman "aimed directly at the Soviets."²³ Yes, even three or four decades after all the hell that Stalin unleashed after World War II, Frank, in his memoirs, was still convinced that Truman, not Stalin, had spoiled the opportunity for a postwar peace.²⁴ But that would come much later. For now, in the 1920s, Frank Marshall Davis was still trying to find himself in this challenging, often cruel world.

CHICAGO • THE FIRST TIME For about two and a half years in college, Frank worked toward a journalism degree. In those days, however, a college degree was secondary to the training, and Frank would never get a diploma. Young folks did not go to college to party. Frank, like many of his generation, scrapped and scraped to cobble together enough dollars to stay in school long enough to learn a trade, to better himself. He was already writing and impressing his professors, who happily recommended him to newspapers and magazines. Frank's personal life also underwent turmoil. His mother died in the summer of 1926 from a ruptured appendix not treated quickly. She had divorced in 1906, shortly after Frank's birth, remarrying in 1909. Frank, the twenty-year-old blooming poet, was very philosophical about her death. He described it poetically as a "parting, a period to the sentence, an ending of the chapter, and a final closing of the book." He might be sickened, incensed, horrified at how death comes, but not death itself. There is no way to escape death, he ruminated, so "why weep at this 'eventual rendezvous with this finality?'"²⁵ So, in 1927, after unsuccessfully looking for writing jobs in Kansas, and as his family bonds severed, Frank sought meaning in Chicago, where—like Obama later—his fledgling career took root. Frank loved Chicago, finding an acceptance as a black man denied to him in Arkansas City. In his memoirs, he detailed the city vividly, excitedly, particularly his first walk down State Street, with the sweet sounds of jazz emanating from building after building. These scenes are among the most joyous and captivating in Frank's memoir, as he recounts his arrival beautifully and at greater length than any other part of his book. Frank was entranced by Chicago, and entrances others in his characterization. The poet so adored Chicago that he put his love to verse, writing his first long poem on the Windy City.²⁶

Frank did not have much experience in journalism, though he had more than most black journalists. He counted himself among the most "professionally trained" (by college education) aspiring black

journalists in America. He sought out black newspapers in particular, which, as Frank noted, at that time were almost all Republican.²⁷ In those days, black Americans overwhelmingly identified with the GOP, the “party of Lincoln.” As Frank noted, not until FDR did this party identification begin to change. Frank himself supported Republican presidential candidates in the 1930s. Here in Chicago, from 1927 to 1929, Frank launched his career as a professional writer, composing poems and submitting short stories in outlets ranging from National Magazine to the Associated Negro Press. He relished the work, calling it “journalitis.” In 1927, he secured a full-time post with the Chicago Evening Bulletin, a publication he and several other enterprising black journalists launched together, and at a “very good salary” of thirty-five dollars per week. Unfortunately, the Evening Bulletin was a struggle, and it “expired” after only several months, folding up in October 1927.²⁸ Here we see an entrepreneurial Frank, another admirable trait that never left him. Frank always worked very hard, busted his rear end, picked himself up again and again. He was the quintessential hardworking American who made his own opportunities, even when the deck was stacked against him. His personal ethic and undeterred individualism were the embodiment of everything communism was not. Even as the Evening Bulletin succumbed, it was an invaluable experience, and Frank continued to look for steady work. Over the next two years, he wrote for (among others) the Chicago Whip and the Gary American in nearby Gary, Indiana. In August 1929, he left the Gary American to return to Kansas State University on a scholarship. Torn between returning to college and returning to the Gary American, and alternately doing both, Frank eventually heeded a call, ironically, back in the Jim Crow South—in Atlanta.²⁹ It would be in Atlanta that the political Frank began taking form. He would not be there long, eventually returning to Chicago, but long enough to change the course of his political life and philosophy forever.

Author kept it interesting, credible and balanced. Did not accuse but instead backed up all of his work. The book was rather disturbing given that the subject of the book was a mentor to our current president. It also helped to explain the questionable actions taken by our current president. I would definitely read other books written by Mr. Kengor.

I had always assumed that talk of Obama as a Communist was hyperbole. And that reverences to people in Obama’s past, such as Frank Davis, was smearing built on nonsense. Then I read Kengor’s book. Kengor makes very few judgments in this book. Instead, he presents a huge amount of facts, almost all first hand sources, and gives footnotes. Reader’s can make their own

conclusions. This is not fast or easy reading. The threads of Communism that intertwine or run parallel for the decades building up from the 30's until Davis meets Obama is its own story and not easy to follow. But it is important. In addition to learning about Frank Davis, and Obama, I learned quite a bit about Communists in general and how they work their disinformation and spread influence. A great fact-based book on an important topic. Worth studying.

This a must read! What was most breath taking to me was the revelation of anti American activity in this country by communists since the 1920s! This book will make clear what we've been seeing recently.

This book is about Frank. Frank had a problem: he hated his country. What did he do? He became a member of the Communist Party of the USA (#47544), where people who hated America found a other people they could party with. Frank Marshall Davis was an African-American born in Kansas in 1905. He would later become a journalist, writing on civil rights issues. Still later, he would fall into a bad crowd, like Paul Robeson (who would be awarded the Stalin Peace Prize) and Ben Davis, associate editor for the Daily Worker. During WWII, a war which saw the CPUSA flop TWICE on orders from Moscow and also saw many American "progressives" quit in disgust, Frank decided to get on board. He edited Red papers in Atlanta and Chicago before suddenly packing up and moving to Hawaii. Frank never deviated from the Party Line. Even as America revived Europe with the Marshall Plan and Truman rid the Armed Forces of segregation via executive order Frank vilified the United States and praised Stalin and the USSR in the pages of the Honolulu Record. America was the great evil in the world and communism its greatest hope... at least in Frank's mind. But his thoughts and opinions in the 1940s, 50s and 60s are inconsequential, written as they were in Red newspapers which were only followed by Marx's disciples. It is the 1970s when Frank might have done his worst damage to the United States of America: he began mentoring a young man by the name of Barry Obama. Obama's biological father was in Kenya and his (first) stepfather was in Indonesia, leaving Frank to bitterly warn Obama against "the American Way and all that s***." Obama would later mention Frank several times in his autobiography. Well-written and well-researched, this book covers a topic that the mainstream media would rather not talk about. And the proof of this man is available for all to see, thanks to the end of the USSR and the CPUSA records kept in Moscow. Dr. Kengor does not say Obama is a communist. But Frank was there when Obama needed a father figure. And we know what kind of attitude that father had.

THE BOOK WAS VERY INTERESTING WHICH I ALREADY KNEW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BARACK OBAMA AND FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS. I WONDER IF THE AMERICAN VOTER KNEW THIS I BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE HAD A DIFFERENT PRESIDENT IN 2008 AND 2012. BECAUSE I KNEW ABOUT IT AND I HAD BEEN TO SOUTH VIETNAM TO FIGHT THE COMMUNISTS, THERE WAS IN NO WAY THAT I WAS EVER GOING TO PUT A PERSON WHO HAD CLOSE RELATIONS WITH A FBI KNOWN COMMUNIST (DAVIS) INTO THE WHITE HOUSE. I ONLY HOPE NOW THAT THE AMERICAN VOTER KNOW WHO THEIR CANDIDATE REALLY IS BEFORE THEY VOTE. I AM A REPUBLICAN BUT IF THERE WAS EVER A REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LIKE OBAMA I WOULD VOTE FOR THE DEMOCRAT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. MY DAD WOULD BE ROLLING OVER IN HIS GRAVE RIGHT NOW. HE FOUGHT THE JAPANESE IN WORLD WAR 2, THE COMMUNIST IN SOUTH KOREA DURING THE KOREAN WAR AND THE COMMUNIST IN THE VIETNAM WAR.

Excellent detailed account about a man who syenites to undo America and send it down the wrong path.. Despite him doing that I feel not only malice towards Frank Marshall Davis but pity as well!!! This book goes into detail about the bigotry and racism that he faced!! The racism he faced growing up was inexcusable but so was his unwavering support of the brutal oppressive Soviet Union and its leaders. Frank Marshall Davis was definitely a blind follower to the Soviet Premiere Joseph Stalin. Does not bore you and I believe you will find this book interesting.

I saw Dr. Kengor in Dinesh D'Souza's groundbreaking documentary "2016: Obama's America." I then decided it would be prudent to do some digging on one of Obama's radical mentors. In this case, it would be Frank Marshall Davis who was a card carrying member of Communist Party USA, card # 47544. I enjoyed the last third of the book the most because it focused mostly on Barack Obama's relationship to Davis. The first two thirds focuses on the words and deeds of Frank Marshall Davis. Its an excellent read and I know much more about Barack Obama and Frank Marshall Davis than I wish I did.

In Today's American Holocaust, Communism has melted into our social fabric. Not only is it there, it stands on the verge of erasing American doctrine. This book ventures into that world. Kengor is an expert scholar on Communism. He is not a Communist. If that other perspective interests you, read Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals" published in 1970. It conceived the socalled "Community Organizer" concept. WE live with its consequences.

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