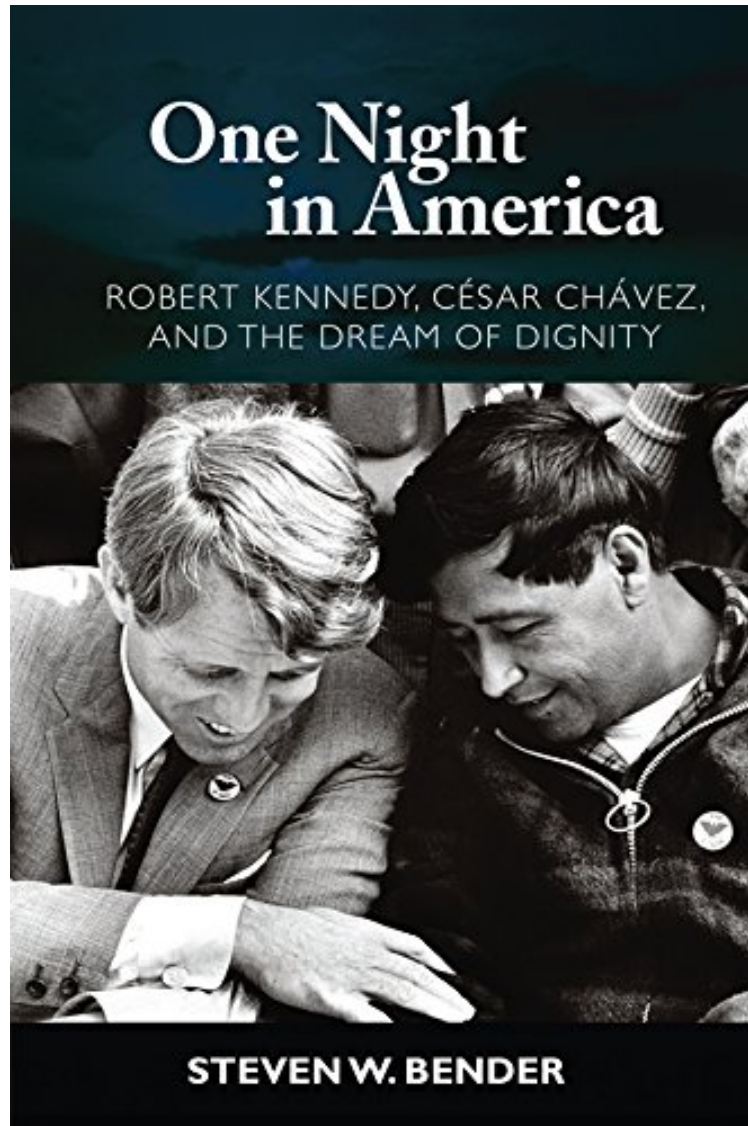


[Pdf free] One Night in America: Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, and the Dream of Dignity

# One Night in America: Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, and the Dream of Dignity

Steven W. Bender

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**Steven W. Bender : One Night in America: Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, and the Dream of Dignity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Night in America: Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, and the Dream of Dignity:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. EnjoyedBy JerryThis was an interesting read on the ideaology of RFK and Cesar Chavez which I hadn't been exposed to. The author's correlations to their ideas with regard to the poor in American as well as migrant groups and the hand that American politics/policies abroad play is very interesting.

"Courageous." -Ilan Stavans, author of *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language* Robert Kennedy and Cesar Chavez came from opposite sides of the tracks of race and class that still divide Americans. Both optimists, Kennedy and Chavez shared a common vision of equality. They united in the 1960s to crusade for the rights of migrant farm workers. Farm workers faded from public consciousness following Kennedy's assassination and Chavez's early passing. Yet the work of Kennedy and Chavez continues to reverberate in America today. Bender chronicles their warm friendship and embraces their bold political vision for making the American dream a reality for all. Although many books discuss Kennedy or Chavez individually, this is the first book to capture their multifaceted relationship and its relevance to mainstream U.S. politics and Latino/a politics today. Bender examines their shared legacy and its continuing influence on political issues including immigration, education, war, poverty, and religion. Mapping a new political path for Mexican Americans and the poor of all backgrounds, this book argues that there is still time to prove Kennedy and Chavez right.

Bender frames his history of American Latino political participation within a study of the friendship of Robert Kennedy and Cesar Chavez, who first met during JFK's presidential campaign. RKF oversaw outreach to Latinos, while Chavez headed the largest voter registration organization in California. Later, Chavez turned to rural union organizing of immigrant agricultural workers and called for help from RFK, who backed their 1966 strike. His backing of Chavez and the union, their shared belief in nonviolent activism, and their commitment to Catholic teachings on the poor created a bond between the son of Irish wealth and the Mexican farm worker. In turn, Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union worked to help RFK win the 1968 California primary from which Bender dates the decline of Chavez's union. After RKF's assassination, union political enthusiasm waned, and President Nixon sought to undermine the Farm Workers legally and economically. In the face of the anti-immigrant movement that began in 2006 and some anti-Hispanic vitriol from 2008 GOP candidates, Bender issues a plea for a revival of the RFK-Chavez concern for the dignity and well-being of the poor. He conveys both the fact and the emotion of the Latino dream for uplift, as shared by Chavez and RFK. "The reverberations of a single night? June 4th, 1968? continue to be felt in Mexican American politics. Insinuating an alternative, brighter path to that tragic history, one in which Bobby and Cesar cemented their friendship, a path where disillusionment gives way to enthusiasm, is the courageous purposes of this book. Viva Bender!" -Ilan Stavans, author of *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language* "What do you want? And how can I help? That's why we loved him." -Dolores Huerta "I think that [Robert Kennedy and Cesar Chavez] were kindred spirits before they met. They both recognized in the other the same values and the same hope for the country and hope for the [underprivileged]." -Ethel Kennedy About the Author Steven Bender, James and Ilene Hershner Professor of Law at the University of Oregon School of Law, is the author of *Greasers and Gringos: Latinos, Law, and the American Imagination* (New York University Press, 2003).