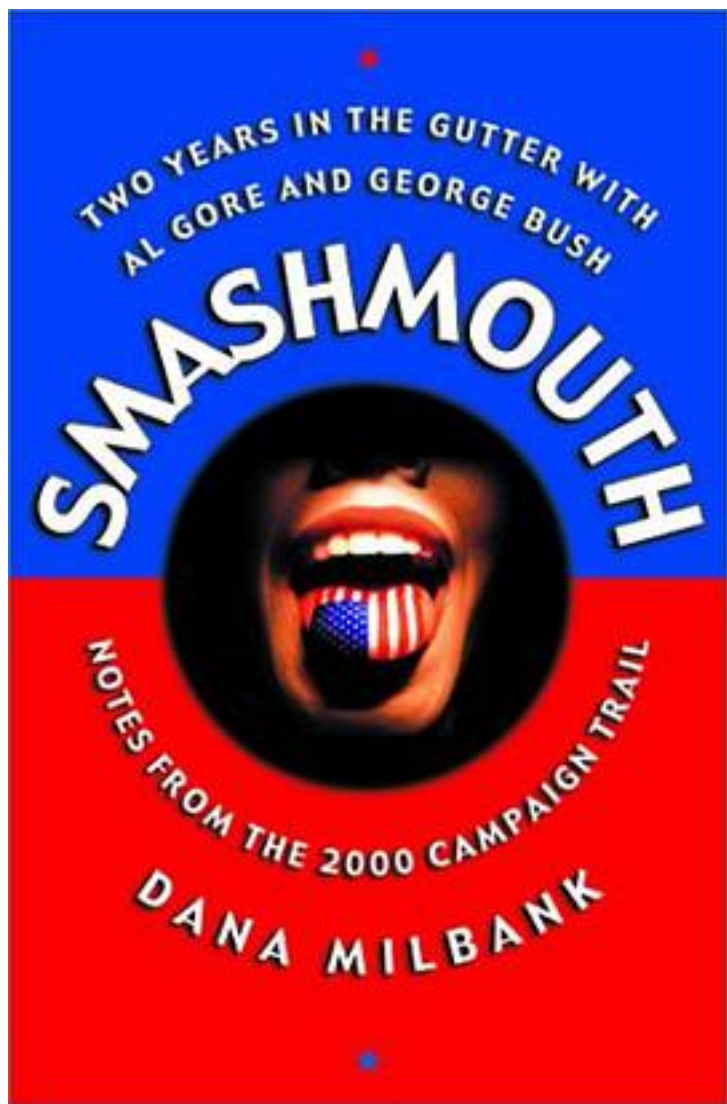


Smash Mouth



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In this irreverent campaign diary, equal parts Hunter S. Thompson and Michael Lewis, Washington Post political writer Dana Milbank remembers the bruising highlights of the 2000 presidential campaign. Contrary to most media reports, negative campaigning is actually in decline, but our political system is no better off for it. Or so believes Washington Post political writer Dana Milbank, whose campaign book *Smashmouth* provides a witty yet ultimately very serious look at the sense and senselessness that occurred during the 2000 presidential campaign. What matters is not whether a campaign claim is positive or negative, but whether the claim is relevant," writes Milbank. "The press should police outright falsehoods, of course, but otherwise let the candidates fight it out." Traveling by bus, plane and motorcade with the candidates, Milbank provides an indelible behind-the-scenes look at the brutal skirmishes that made up this century's first presidential campaign. "It's time for us to admit that the negative can be positive, that the nasty is often nice for the body politic. And this will involve an even more difficult proposition: acknowledging that some of the maligned practitioners of attack campaigns serve a useful purpose in our democracy." -Dana Milbank

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