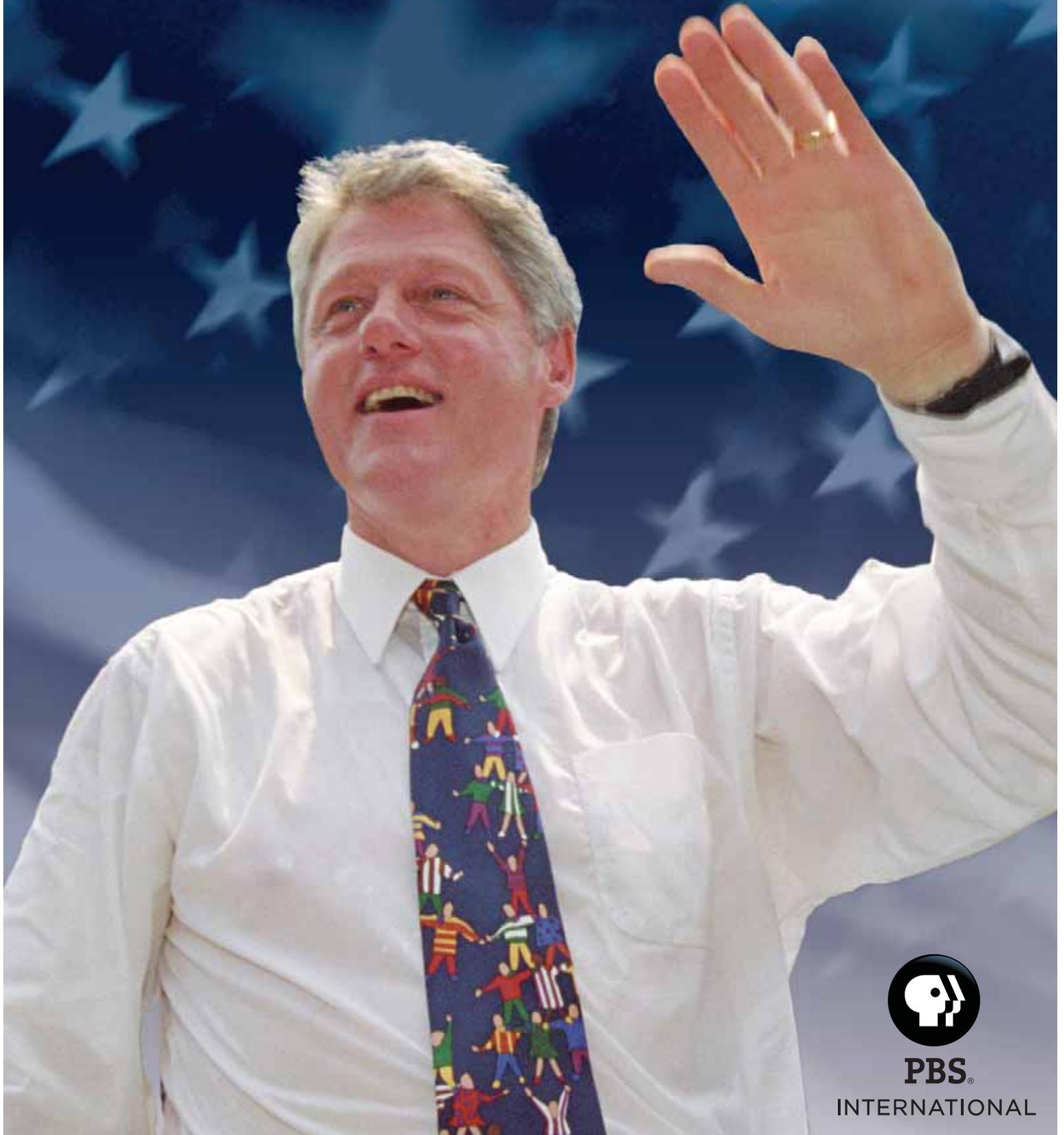


CLINTON

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On January 19, 1999, President Bill Clinton delivered his seventh State of the Union address to a packed audience of senators and congressmen in the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. The news was good. Clinton reported to Congress that under his stewardship the nation was enjoying the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history, including the creation of nearly 18 million new jobs, unprecedented levels of home ownership, and diminishing welfare rolls and unemployment. By all accounts, it should have been a triumphant moment for an ambitious politician who could justifiably claim to have mastered the immense job he had always considered his destiny; but in fact, Bill Clinton's presidency was hanging by a thread, in large part because he had shown that he was unable to master himself.

That very same day, in the Senate chamber inside the same Capitol building, Clinton's lawyers rose to defend the president in an impeachment trial, against charges growing out of a sordid White House sex scandal and alleged cover-up. "William Jefferson Clinton," intoned Charles Ruff, the lead defense counsel, "is not guilty of the charges that have been preferred against him. He did not commit perjury; he did not obstruct justice. He must not be removed from office."

"There were always these two sides to Bill Clinton," one senior advisor told an interviewer, doing his best to put the bewildering paradox of his boss into words. "On the one hand, this towering intellect, this almost boundless political talent... On the other, this maddening, deflating sense that you never knew when the other shoe would drop and you'd be left scrambling for survival."

Clinton tells the fascinating story of an American president who rose from a broken childhood in Arkansas to become one of the most successful politicians in modern American history, and one of the complex and conflicted characters to ever stride across the public stage. It recounts a career full of accomplishment and rife with scandal, a marriage that would make history and create controversy, and a presidency that would define the crucial and transformative period between fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11. It follows Clinton across his two terms as he confronted some of the key forces that would shape the future, including partisan political warfare and domestic and international terrorism, and struggled, with uneven success, to define the role of American power in a post-Cold War world. Most memorably, it explores how Clinton's conflicted character made history, even as it enraged his enemies and confounded his friends.

The latest in a series of distinguished presidential biographies, this program features unprecedented access to Clinton associates, staff, and family, as well interviews with biographers and journalists.

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CREDITS

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