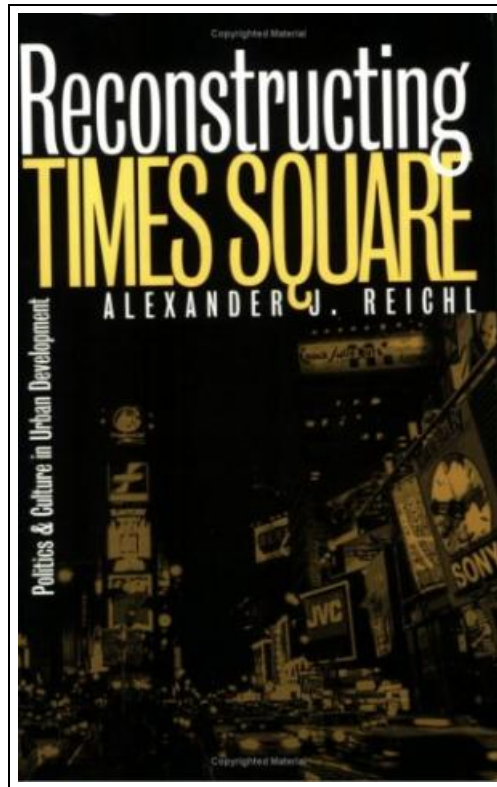


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RECONSTRUCTING TIMES SQUARE: POLITICS AND CULTURE IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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University Press of Kansas. Paperback. Condition: New. 256 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.1in. x 0.8in. When the big ball drops on New Years Eve, thousands are there to witness that great glittering sight, while millions more watch on national television. Times Square may be the cultural hub of America, the Crossroads of the World, but its lights have not always shone as brightly as they do now. Once a glamorous theater district, Times Square and 42nd Street had degenerated into a neighborhood known for the winos and sex shops of *Midnight Cowboy* until New York's business and arts communities stepped in. These advocates of urban revitalization exploited cultural and historic preservation arguments to transform a low-income entertainment district into a Disney-fied tourist mecca. Where Ratsko Rizzo once kicked cars and hookers plied their trade, Mickey Mouse now greets visitors from atop a Disney superstore surrounded by rising office towers, theaters, and theme restaurants all thanks to huge tax subsidies and government support. Alexander Reichl tells the fascinating story of how cultural politics and economic greed transformed the city's physical and social environment with an ongoing multibillion-dollar redevelopment program, changing the district from a symbol of urban decline to one of urban renaissance. He explains the political significance of the historic preservation and arts-related approach to urban revitalization, showing how it was used to appeal to the upscale values of middle-class New Yorkers often hostile to urban renewal. He also examines the role of the Walt Disney Company in the project and demonstrates its power to redefine a premier public space. In telling the story of Times Square, Reichl reveals much about politics and power at the city level and their relationship to the development of urban space. He frames his lively narrative with an illuminating account of how historic preservation initiatives at...

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