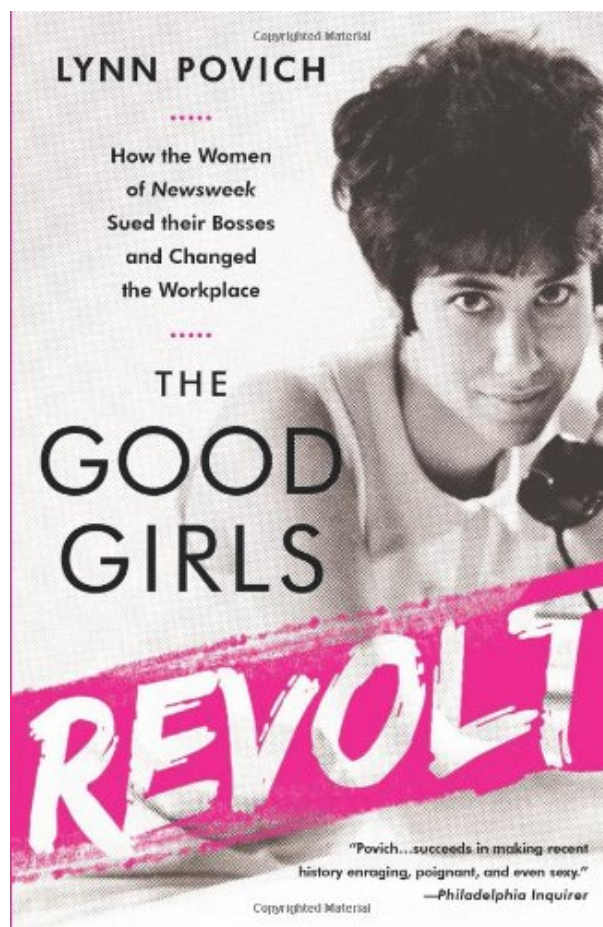
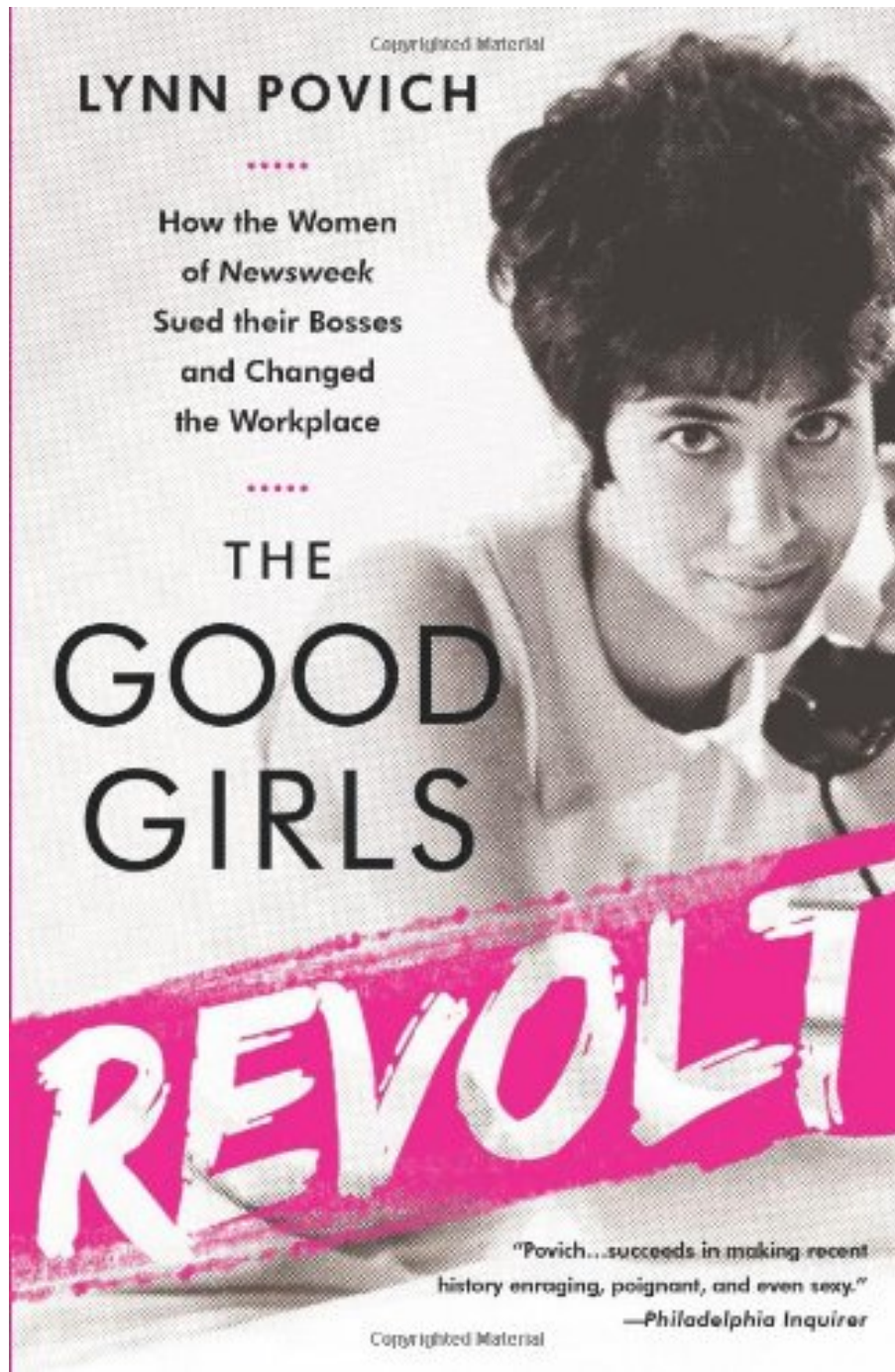


**THE GOOD GIRLS REVOLT: HOW THE
WOMEN OF NEWSWEEK SUED THEIR
BOSSES AND CHANGED THE WORKPLACE
BY LYNN POVICH**



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Review

Gloria Steinem

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Jeannette Walls "A meticulously reported and highly readable account of a pivotal time in the women's movement." Kirkus "Povich's in-depth research, narrative skills and eyewitness observations provide an entertaining and edifying look at a pivotal event in women's history."

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"The personal and the political are deftly interwoven in the fast-moving narrative.... The Good Girls Revolt has many timely lessons for working women who are concerned about discrimination today....But this sparkling, informative book may help move these goals a tiny bit closer."

Boston Globe "Solidly researched and should interest readers who care about feminist history and how gender issues play out in the culture."

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Revolt, her fascinating (and long overdue) history of the class-action lawsuit undertaken by four dozen female researchers and underlings at Newsweek magazine four decades ago.... If ever a book could remind women to keep their white gloves off and to keep fighting the good fight, this is the one.”

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The inspiration for the new Amazon Original Pilot

It was the 1960s—a time of economic boom and social strife. Young women poured into the workplace, but the “Help Wanted” ads were segregated by gender and the “Mad Men” office culture was rife with sexual stereotyping and discrimination.

Lynn Povich was one of the lucky ones, landing a job at Newsweek, renowned for its cutting-edge coverage of civil rights and the “Swinging Sixties.” Nora Ephron, Jane Bryant Quinn, Ellen Goodman, and Susan Brownmiller all started there as well. It was a top-notch job—for a girl—at an exciting place.

But it was a dead end. Women researchers sometimes became reporters, rarely writers, and never editors. Any aspiring female journalist was told, “If you want to be a writer, go somewhere else.”

On March 16, 1970, the day Newsweek published a cover story on the fledgling feminist movement entitled “Women in Revolt,” forty-six Newsweek women charged the magazine with discrimination in hiring and promotion. It was the first female class action lawsuit—the first by women journalists—and it inspired other women in the media to quickly follow suit.

Lynn Povich was one of the ringleaders. In *The Good Girls Revolt*, she evocatively tells the story of this dramatic turning point through the lives of several participants. With warmth, humor, and perspective, she shows how personal experiences and cultural shifts led a group of well-mannered, largely apolitical women, raised in the 1940s and 1950s, to challenge their bosses—and what happened after they did. For many, filing the suit was a radicalizing act that empowered them to “find themselves” and fight back. Others lost their way amid opportunities, pressures, discouragements, and hostilities they weren’t prepared to navigate.

The Good Girls Revolt also explores why changes in the law didn’t solve everything. Through the lives of young female journalists at Newsweek today, Lynn Povich shows what has—and hasn’t—changed in the workplace.

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Most helpful customer reviews

35 of 37 people found the following review helpful.

"Equality is never given, it is taken." -- Jane Bryant Quinn

By takingadayoff

When the Newsweek editors decided to write a cover story about feminism in March 1970, it was a hot topic, just the sort of current events coverage that the news magazine was known for. The day the issue hit the stands, a group of women who worked at Newsweek filed a civil rights suit against the magazine. Newsweek was being sued for gender discrimination.

Lynn Povich, one of the few women writers at Newsweek at the time, was one of forty-six women filing the suit, and she has gathered the documents and interviewed many of the people involved, on both sides, to ensure that the story isn't forgotten. The resulting book left me feeling both exhilarated at the progress they made in 1970 and beyond, and dismayed at the lost ground that will have to be fought over yet again.

The case was almost laughably open and shut, from a legal standpoint. Women with Ivy League degrees were hired at Newsweek as secretaries or researchers, and rarely rose above that. Men with similar degrees were hired as writers and went on to become correspondents and editors. Women who tried to become writers were discouraged or simply passed over. The few who did become writers were paid lower wages than men at the same level.

But the system was so entrenched that most of the women were reluctant to stir the pot. They were good girls.

While some of the management at Newsweek were surprised that the women won the suit, they shouldn't have been. On the other hand, it probably shouldn't have been a big surprise to the women that two years after having won the case, there were even fewer women writers and editors at Newsweek than before. They had to sue again.

Povich quotes Jane Bryant Quinn (who worked at Newsweek, but not at the time of the lawsuits) as saying "Equality is never given, it is taken."

The book opens and closes with the plight of several women working for Newsweek today who are astonished to find themselves facing obstacles such as the ones that were supposed to have been overcome

forty years ago. They were unaware of the events of forty years ago. The Good Girls Revolt may have to be waged yet again.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

A must-read for women in the workplace

By Diane

My sons like to tease me and call me a feminist (yeah, they don't get it), a badge I proudly wear, so I was surprised that I knew nothing about the revolt by the women working at Newsweek magazine, who in 1970 brought a complaint to the EEOC against the magazine charging discrimination against them in hiring and promotion practices.

Lynn Povich, a writer who worked at Newsweek and was part of the suit, brings the story to life in *The Good Girls Revolt: How the Women at Newsweek Sued Their Bosses and Changed the Workplace*. The women were employed at the magazine as researchers, but were never promoted to writer or editor, even though they had similar education and experience as the men hired as researchers and quickly promoted to writer and editor.

Nora Ephron, who worked at the magazine, described the "caste system"

"For every man there was an inferior woman, for every writer there was a checker", said Nora Ephron. "They were the artists and we were the drones. But what is interesting is how institutionally sexist it was without necessarily being personally sexist. To me, it wasn't oppressive. They were going to try to sleep with you- and if you wanted to, you could. But no one was going to fire you for not sleeping with them."

Mad Men's Madison Avenue offices weren't the only places where sex and booze ruled the workplace.

Povich is an excellent writer, and parts of this book, especially where the women were secretly meeting and trying to recruit other women to join the suit, read like a tense spy novel. Will they get caught?

They hired a young and pregnant Eleanor Holmes Norton to represent them. "The editors, who had supported the struggle for civil rights, were completely baffled by this pregnant black woman who questioned their commitment to equality."

The male editors, some of whom seemed like great guys, just didn't get it. What was worse in many of the women's eyes, was that Katherine Graham, who owned *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*, didn't get it either. There is a powerful scene where Graham meets with the women and appears baffled by their action.

Along with the historical context of this story, I enjoyed reading about the inner workings of the magazine. We had a subscription for many years, and I always turned to read Anna Quindlen's back page column first. I had no idea that the struggle for equality there was so recent.

I recognized so many names in this book- Quindlen, Ephron, Eleanor Clift, Jane Bryant Quinn and Maureen Orth among them. But it is the names that I didn't know, they are the important names, the ones who laid it all on the line so that the above mentioned women would be well known. Women like Povich, Pat Lynden and Lucy Howard paved the way for the other women with this lawsuit.

This book is essential reading for all young women starting out in the workplace. They must know who fought the battles for them so that they have the opportunities now available to them. The women of *Newsweek* are heroes, and I think that this book would be perfect for a high school or college journalism curriculum. I was also lucky enough to meet Ms. Povich at this year's Book Expo America, a true honor.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

So much progress, so much still to achieve.

By Cynthia

I had the oddest feeling while reading this book that time both stands still even as it flees by. Povich starts the book with a vignette of three young professional women and their plight of career stagnation due to discrimination. Then she describes the stories of some of the principal complainants in the 1970 class action suit brought against 'Newsweek' for sex discrimination. Povich outlines not just their professional stories but also some of their relevant personal history including their outlooks on life, their career goals, and their unique personalities. This makes the story personal and the reader can't help but root for their triumph. It seems so ludicrous from this distance to realize a lot of these women had Ivy league educations yet were stuck in the mail or research rooms of 'Newsweek'. What a waste of an education, drive, and talent. They did win the suit but sadly, they had to continue to fight for what they'd supposedly won through the courts. An entrenched social system doesn't change overnight. Also, not everyone longs to be at the top, many are content with fulfilling jobs that allow time for a family life. The downside to the situation is the women who'd been exiled to fact checking for the male writers sometimes didn't aspire to be writers but felt compelled to try out for that slot after the suit and if they succeeded in becoming a writer they felt obligated to write 'hard' news rather than arts and culture articles regardless of their interests. Worst of all few of the women who lodged the suit benefited personally from it. It was the women who came after them who were able to take advantage of the opportunities these women made possible. Povich walks us through the decades post-suit and what that meant for women.

One of the worst enemies for women then and now is the desire to be 'nice', to be a team player, and to be thought well of. Women in positions of power are much more likely to be disliked than those in the typing pool. Worst of all finding a mentor is a challenge for women. Men can more easily find an older, more successful man to teach him the ropes, someone who will champion him and his career goals. Standing out or achieving recognition as a woman is seen as being pushy and rude. Not so for men especially if they have someone powerful to back them. It was then that I realized how relatively recent some of these changes were. And sadly the experiences of Jessica, Jesse, and Sara, the three women who sued for more job opportunities and less discrimination in 2010, still felt the sting of a culture that under estimates women and the family in general even today. This is a fascinating history of the workplace and I love how Povich informs on how both sexes benefited and/or were deprived of finding a work situation that best fit for them. So much progress, so much still to achieve.

This review is based on an e-galley provided by the publisher.

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