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The Reluctant Taoiseach: A Biography of John A. Costello

David McCullagh

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The Reluctant Taoiseach: A Biography of John A. Costello David McCullagh
Politician, Barrister, Attorney General, family man The Reluctant Taoiseach takes a fresh and revealing look at the life of a man at the centre of politics and law during one of the most turbulent periods in Irish history. John A Costello remains the most elusive of Ireland's former Taoisigh, despite his enormous contribution to Irish history. He declared the Republic, led the country's first coalition government, and faced the Mother and Child Crisis. A surprise choice who battled against taking the job, Costello was the Reluctant Taoiseach. In this new book, historian and political correspondent David McCullagh charts the life of this fascinating man, using his personal archive of papers, as well as interviews with former colleagues, family and friends. McCullagh offers new insights into a political career which stretched from Independence to the end of the 1960s, including the Commonwealth Conferences of the 1920s, to the new Constitution of 1937, and Governments in the 1940s and 1950s. This book also traces Costello's glittering progress through the Four Courts as he was involved in many famous cases from defending the inheritance of an Indian Princess received from the Boss of Tammany Hall, to cross-examining poet Patrick Kavanagh in a libel action which gripped the public imagination.

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