**FRONTLINE Investigates *McConnell, the GOP & the Court* in New Documentary**

[***McConnell, the GOP & the Court***](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/mcconnell-the-gop-the-court/)

Tues., Oct. 31, 2023  
 7/6c: [pbs.org/frontline](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/), [PBS App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-app/) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ScyryU9Oy9Wse3a8OAmYQ) 10/9c: PBS stations ([check local listings](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/schedule/)), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ScyryU9Oy9Wse3a8OAmYQ) www.facebook.com/frontline | Twitter: @frontlinepbs  
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Amid a Republican leadership shakeup in the House, and questions about the future of Mitch McConnell (R-KY) in the Senate, FRONTLINE investigates the life and legacy of one of the most powerful Republican leaders in Senate history.

Premiering Oct. 31 on PBS and online, [***McConnell, the GOP & the Court***](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/mcconnell-the-gop-the-court/) shows the path to power of an unlikely political leader who has dramatically reshaped the Supreme Court — and whose consequential decisions helped usher in an era of deep polarization in both the country and the Republican party.

“He’s 81 years old. He is balancing a heck of a lot. And he’s sort of a leader in a party that he doesn’t really know anymore,” says Kentucky journalist James Robert Carroll, who has covered McConnell for years. “How long does he want to do that? And how long do they want him to do that? That’s the other question.”

***McConnell, the GOP & the Court***is the newest film from FRONTLINE’s award-winning political team, Michael Kirk, Mike Wiser and Vanessa Fica.At its heart, the documentary is a dramatic, decades-long story of McConnell’s rise to power, and the costs of attaining and keeping it. That story is told through a powerful video archive and incisive interviews that delve into McConnell’s defining early struggle against childhood polio, his political method, and the roots of his quest for power.

“Mitch McConnell was present at the creation, for better or worse, of modern politics,” conservative columnist George Will, McConnell’s friend, tells FRONTLINE.

Through interviews with close advisors and associates, critics, biographers and journalists, the film traces McConnell’s political journey from his days as a supporter of the civil rights movement to his shift rightward in the Reagan era, to his reluctant embrace of Donald Trump and then his anger at the president on January 6th, 2021, to his current health scares and questions about how long he will continue to lead Senate Republicans.

“I’m not sure who would replace him if he weren’t there,” says McConnell’s close associate, former U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), in the documentary. “Because right now he’s the indispensable figure in the Republican party, as well as the American government, for a stable, center-right point of view.”

The documentary sheds light on how McConnell became a consummate political operative whose decisions would help secure a conservative majority on the Supreme Court, and would usher in a new phase of partisanship and polarization in U.S. politics.

“Mitch McConnell is a ruthless campaigner, and he will pull no punches,” his former chief of staff Josh Holmes tells FRONTLINE. “He is renowned in Kentucky and nationally to be an incredible strategist when it comes to finding the weakest part of his opponent and seizing on it.”

Among the close associates who speak in the film are Holmes, Will, Alexander and former McConnell political director Scott Jennings. Other interviewees, who have known McConnell for decades from his early days in Kentucky, include former U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY) and Kentucky journalists Keith Runyon and Al Cross. Many reporters and commentators who have covered McConnell closely over the years also share their insights in ***McConnell, the GOP & the Court***, including conservative writer Mona Charen, biographer Michael Tackett, NPR reporters Kelly McEvers and Tom Dreisbach, The Associated Press’s Darlene Superville and *Washington Post* journalists Dan Balz and Eugene Robinson.

As McConnell faces challenges politically and physically to his long hold on power, ***McConnell, the GOP & the Court*** is an illuminating look at the long-serving leader and how his shrewd choices have reshaped the Supreme Court and U.S. politics.

***McConnell, the GOP & the Court*** will be available to watch in full at pbs.org/frontline and in the PBS App starting Oct. 31, 2023, at 7/6c. It will premiere on PBS stations ([check local listings](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/schedule/)) and on FRONTLINE’s YouTube channel at 10/9c. The documentary is distributed internationally by PBS International. [Subscribe to FRONTLINE’s newsletter](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/newsletter-subscriptions/) to get updates on events, podcast episodes and more related to ***McConnell, the GOP and the Court.***

**Credits**

***McConnell, the GOP & the Court*** is a FRONTLINE production with the Kirk Documentary Group. The director is Michael Kirk. The producers are Michael Kirk, Mike Wiser and Vanessa Fica. The writers are Michael Kirk and Mike Wiser. The reporter is Vanessa Fica.The editor-in-chief and executive producer of FRONTLINE is Raney Aronson-Rath.

**About FRONTLINE** FRONTLINE, U.S. television’s longest running investigative documentary series, explores the issues of our times through powerful storytelling. FRONTLINE has won every major journalism and broadcasting award, including 106 Emmy Awards and 31 Peabody Awards. Visit [pbs.org/frontline](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/frontlinepbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/frontline), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/frontlinepbs/) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ScyryU9Oy9Wse3a8OAmYQ) to learn more. FRONTLINE is produced at GBH in Boston and is broadcast nationwide on PBS. Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional support for FRONTLINE is provided by the Abrams Foundation, Park Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the FRONTLINE Journalism Fund, with major support from Jon and Jo Ann Hagler on behalf of the Jon L. Hagler Foundation, and additional support from Koo and Patricia Yuen. Funding for *McConnell, the GOP & the Court* is provided by the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation.

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