



THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM of EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY

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For Immediate Release

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***Coup: The Day the Democrats Ousted Their Governor,
Put Republican Lamar Alexander in Office Early,
and Stopped a Pardon Scandal***

A Lecture by Keel Hunt

Followed by comments and discussions
with Hal Hardin and John Siegenthaler

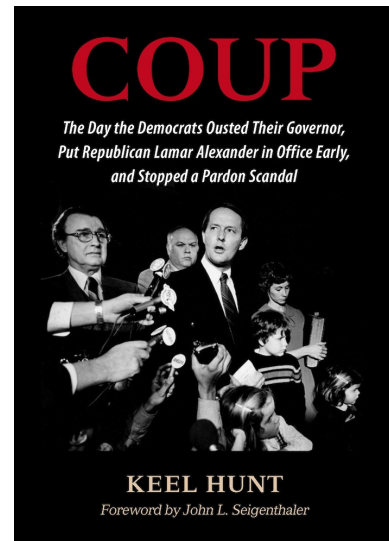
PROGRAM: “*Coup*,” special lecture and discussion by Keel Hunt, Hal Hardin, and John Siegenthaler

DATE: Tuesday, November 12, at 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: East Tennessee History Center
601 South Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

ADMISSION: FREE

(Knoxville, TN) Keel Hunt, author of *Coup*, the definitive account of the “pardons for pay” scandal that rocked Tennessee in the late 1970s, will be the guest speaker for a lecture at the East Tennessee Historical Society, 601 S. Gay Street, on November 12. The lecture begins at 6 p.m. and is free and open to the public and is sponsored by the firm of Lewis, King, Krieg & Waldrop, P.C., Knoxville.



Coup is the remarkable story of how partisans from both sides of the political aisle came together on January 17, 1979, to stop what one FBI agent called, “the state’s most heinous political crime in half a century.” Driven by new information that some of the worst criminals in the state penitentiary were to be released (including possibly James Earl Ray), state leaders put aside party differences to act in the best interest of the state and its citizens. They ousted sitting governor Ray Blanton and installed a governor-elect who happened to be from the opposite party. Keel will share an insider’s account of the intrigue, personalities, conversations, and actions that led to this action that is unprecedented in American history.

Hunt’s presentation will be followed by further commentary by Hal Hardin, a U.S. attorney at the time, who, though a friend of Blanton, tipped off officials that more pardons were planned, and John Siegenthaler, publisher of *The Tennessean*, during this tumultuous time in Tennessee government.

A Nashville native, Keel Hunt has been a reporter, editorial writer, Washington correspondent, and city editor for *The Tennessean*. As a special assistant to Governor Lamar Alexander, he worked with the development of Tennessee Homecoming '86 and other programs. He has served as a consultant to some of Tennessee's largest institutions, from businesses to non-profits, and currently writes a regular column called "Metropolitan" for *The Tennessean* editorial pages. He is a trustee of the Country Music Foundation, a member of the Nashville's Agenda Steering Committee, and serves on the CABLE Advisory Council.

About the ETHS

Established in 1834, the East Tennessee Historical Society is widely acknowledged as one of the most active history organizations in the state and enjoys a national reputation for excellence in programming and education. For 179 years the East Tennessee Historical Society has been helping East Tennesseans hold on to our unique heritage-- recording the events, collecting the artifacts, and saving the stories that comprise the history we all share.

The program is free and open to the public. The lecture will begin at 6:00 at the East Tennessee History Center, 601 S. Gay Street, Knoxville. Mr. Hunt will be signing books following his lecture. For more information on the lecture, exhibitions, or museum hours, call 865-215-8824 or visit the website at www.EastTNHistory.org.

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