

Fire and Fury

Inside the Trump White House

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This book started as a first 100 days of Trump presidency project but unfolding events made it a first year of presidency book

The events I have described in these pages are based on conversations that took place over a period of eighteen months with the president and his staff.

While the Trump administration has made hostility to the press a virtual policy, it has also been more open to the media than any other white house in recent memory.

“You hit Donald on the head, he keeps going, he doesn’t even know he has been hit on the head”

Trump was undisciplined, he has no capacity for any game plan. He could not have been part of any organization nor was he likely to subscribe to any program. He is a rebel without a cause.

**China was the first front in a new cold war.
And it had all been misunderstood in the
Obama regime**

China is everything, if we don't get china right, we wont get anything right. The whole thing is simple, china was where Nazi Germany was in 1930.the Chinese like the Germans are the most rational people in the world until they are not.

**In politics, someone has to lose, but
invariably everyone thinks they can win.**

Many candidates for presidency have made a virtue of being Washington outsiders, in practice this strategy only favors Governors and not senators

**Bannon defines Trump as a simple machine ,
the on switch was full of flattery and the off
switch was full of calumny**

And certainly amongst his basic character notes, Steve Bannon was a plotter. Strike before being struck. Anticipate the moves of others, counter them before they could make their moves was his strategy.

Distress is an opportunistic business play

Distress is also a contrarians game, and the contrarians impulse – equal parts personal dissatisfaction, general resentment and a gambler's instinct

Bannon's strategic view of government was shock and awe, dominate rather than negotiate.

Trump branded himself as a political outsider, actually finding himself on the outside wounded him

Trump acquired no formal sort of social discipline – he could not even attempt to imitate decorum. He could not really converse for instance.

Trump found the White house , an old building with only sporadic upkeep and piecemeal renovations as well as the famous roach and rodent problem to be vexing and even a little scary.

The phone was his true contact point with the world- to a small group of friends, and most frequently Tom barrack.

**Hosting business advisory councils was a
Kushner strategy.**

The Trump brand was suddenly the world's biggest brand, the new Apple, except the opposite, since it was universally disdained.

The media has a careful if selective filter when it comes to portraying real life in the White House. The President and the first family are not subject to intense scrutiny.

You could hardly find an entity more at odds with military discipline than a Trump organization. There was no real up and down structure, but merely a figure at the top and then everyone else scrambling for attention.

Good management reduces ego. In the trump white house it would often seem that nothing happened, reality did not exist if it did not happen in Trump's presence.

Trump didn't read, he didn't even really skim. If it was print it might as well not exist. Many believed that he was semiliterate

In the Trump white house, expertise according to the white House , that liberal virtue was overrated.

**Steve Bannon was running the Steve
bannon white house, Jared Kushner was
running the Kushner white house, and
Reince Priebus was running the Paul Ryan
white house. It was a 1970 s video game the
white ball in a black triangle**

Bannon, Kushner and Priebus all built their own mechanisms to influence the President and undermine the others.

Analysis or argument or power point did not work. But who said what to trump and when often did matter.

Politics had seemed to become , even well before the Trump age, a mortal affair, it was now zero sum, if one side profited, the other lost.

Trump always soured on everyone around him.

The president did not truly listen to anybody, the more you talked , the les he listened.

Most presidencies are shaped by external crises, the presidency in its most critical role is a reactive role.

The president like Generals. The more fruit salad (medals and decoration) they wore, the better

**The president did not like listening to
Generals and their similar power point style.**

‘do nothing’ had long been viewed as an unacceptable position of helplessness by American foreign policy experts. The instinct to do something was driven by the desire to prove you were not limited to nothing.

Ivanka had long ago figure how to make successful pitches to her father. You had to push his enthusiasm buttons. He may be a business man but numbers didn't do it for him

‘Men who demand loyalty tend to be the least loyal themselves’ – Ailes talking of Trump

The geniuses was one of Trump's terms of derision for anybody who might annoy him or think they were smarter than him.

**Trump hopelessly personalized everything .
He saw the world in commercial and show
business terms. Someone else was always
trying to one up on you, someone was
trying to take the limelight.**

For each of his friends and enemies, it came down to their personal press plan, if they got more press, then he got less!!

In presidential annals, the firing of FBI director James Comey may be the most consequential move ever made by a president acting entirely on his own.

For Trump, as with many showmen or press release entrepreneurs, the enemy of everything is complexity and red tape. And, the solution for everything is cutting corners.

Saudi leadership was marked by age, traditionalism, relative anonymity and careful consensus thinking.

The Saudi royal family on the other hand where the leadership comes from was often marked by excess, flash , excess and the partaking of the joys of modernity in foreign ports. MBS , a man in a hurry was trying to bridge the Saudi royal selves.

The old foreign policy was based on the idea of nuance. In effect the new foreign policy, a trump doctrine was to reduce it to three elements : powers we can work with, powers we cannot work with and those who have no power whom we can disregard.

Trump would always need saving – he might be a brilliant actor but he could not manage his own career.

Bannon believed that the Trump presidency might fall in some more or less apocalyptic fashion if Kushner and his wife remained Trump's most influential advisors.

**‘This town is about institutions’ said
Bannon, We fir the FBI Director and we fire
the whole FBI. Trump is a man against
Institutions.**

**Trump's rifts often began as an insult
comedy and solidified as bitter accusations
and then in an uncontrollable moment,
became an official proclamation.**

Trump was impetuous and yet did not like to make any decisions, at least not the ones that seemed to corner him into having to analyze a problem.

**It was a conundrum that would be a battle
with Trump**

**North Korea had been a heavy on detail,
short on answers problem that Trump
believed was the product of lesser minds
and weaker resolve.**

The White House takes perfectly healthy people and turns them into old, unhealthy people.

