

Fire And Fury Summary



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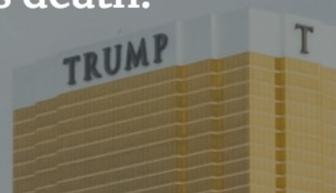
1-Sentence-Summary: *Fire And Fury* is a first-person account of Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016, his unexpected victory, and subsequent first year in the White House as 45th president of the United States.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

"Politics had seemed to become, even well before the age of Trump, a mortal affair. It was now zero-sum: When one side profited, another lost. One side's victory was another's death."

- Michael Wolff



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In 2016, a movie called *Spotlight* won the Oscar for Best Picture. It tells the story of a small team of investigative journalists at The Boston Globe. They dug into an old case, which revealed that Catholic priests in the Boston area had systematically abused thousands of minors over decades. The true story won them a Pulitzer Prize, and now the Oscar repeats the message: journalism matters.

With enough time and the right resources, reporters have a chance at discovering what the world really needs to know. Michael Wolff is one of those reporters. The year *Spotlight* won the Oscar, he requested behind-the-scenes access to Donald Trump's presidential campaign, which he was granted. Throughout the second half of 2016 and most of 2017, Trump's first year as 45th president of the United States of America, he conducted over 200 interviews with Trump and his senior staff and observed day-to-day operations in the West Wing of the White House.

The result is *Fire And Fury*. Titled after a phrase Trump used when threatening North Korea, the book describes Trump as an erratic, chaotic, emotion-driven leader, his administration as incapable and unprepared, and the resulting politics as pure mayhem. Within three days of publication, it sold a million copies.

Here are 3 lessons about the life and politics of what may be America's most controversial president ever:

1. Neither Trump nor anyone on his campaign expected him to actually become

president.

2. The reason Trump signs so many executive orders is that no one around him knows the proper procedures.
3. In his first year as president, most of Donald Trump's decisions arose from two internal camps' disputes.

Would you like to get an exclusive sneak peek into the inner workings and surroundings of president Trump? Then let's go!

Lesson 1: Everyone on Trump's presidential campaign was surprised to see him win, even Trump himself.

Here's an interesting thought experiment: What if Donald Trump never *wanted* to become president? Think about it. He's over 70, rich, famous, and well-connected. Would you want to go through the trouble? Plus, he was known for pulling all kinds of media stunts long before announcing his candidacy. **What if the whole thing was set up to fail?**

According to Wolff's sources, that's precisely the case. First, there's Trump's idea of his own TV channel and network, which he talked about a lot during the campaign. Second, all of his advisors, like Kellyanne Conway and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, were already planning their next career moves. Third, there's the lack of preparation for regulatory scrutiny, like Trump's many real estate holdings with sketchy financials.

Lastly, and maybe the most revealing, Melania, Trump's wife complained a lot about the media attention. So much in fact, that when she found out her husband won, she cried. According to his own son, Trump himself "looked as if he had seen a ghost." The only one who seemed to at least be somewhat prepared was Steve Bannon, who would become Trump's chief strategist and, supposedly, the driving force of his administration.

Lesson 2: Trump's executive orders are mostly a way to compensate for his staff's inability to create policies the usual way.

Within seven months of Trump taking office, Bannon was fired. Thus, he ended up contributing even more derogatory, public statements about Trump and those surrounding him to Wolff's book than the journalist had already recorded. Before that, however, Steve Bannon was largely considered the puppet master behind not just Trump's successful campaign, but also many of the policies he established in his first year.

That's because – and this would add even more validity to the president-by-accident thesis – **none of Trump's senior staff seemed to have any idea about how policy making works**. They didn't know how to prepare official documents, which presented an opportunity for Bannon to push his idea of creating "shock and awe." He told someone to find out how an executive order works, which Trump only had to sign, and then ramped up on those.

This not just got Trump's staff out of trouble, it also allowed Bannon to progress his conservative, right-wing, economic nationalist agenda. He originally wanted Trump to sign

200 executive orders in the first 100 days, mostly to cause an uproar. In the end, there were “only” 55 in 2017, but that’s still five per month!

Lesson 3: Since Trump is so emotional and confused, most of his first-year decisions were the result of two teams fighting to persuade him.

Donald Trump doesn’t seem like the kind of guy who takes orders. If you look at this Twitter, within two minutes you can tell he’s angry, impulsive, and unpredictable. But it’s precisely *because* of his many cognitive biases that the people close to him can steer his decisions by pushing the right buttons. Next to Bannon, another party that made good use of Trump’s tendency to agree with whoever speaks last is the couple Wolff refers to as ‘Jarvanka.’

Ivanka Trump is Donald’s daughter and the wife of Jared Kushner, son of a real estate mogul and also one of Trump’s advisors. Wolff says the couple took White House jobs to minimize damage and support more democratic policies. But since that’s the opposite of everything Bannon wants, **the Trumpian persuasion war was now split into two camps: Jarvankaists and Bannonites.**

Sometimes, Jarvanka won, and Trump would moderate his temper. Sometimes, team Bannon won, and he’d go nuclear – literally – with another angry tweet directed at Kim Jong-un. It also didn’t help that Trump lived in constant denial. He’d think whatever he decided was the right choice. And if people told him it wasn’t, he’d blame someone else.

I don’t know what the truth is. Maybe Donald Trump can’t decide, maybe he constantly changes his mind. But to me, a world in which a man of either version runs the most powerful country is a scary place.

My personal take-aways

I don’t like politics. They pit people against one another and usually, they don’t impact your daily life all that much. That said, for a book that caused a media storm like this, I think a summary is important. *Fire And Fury* takes a clear stance against Trump, but whether you like or hate him, I hope you can use it to learn something and keep an open mind.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why Trump’s staff instantly fell apart after winning
- Where Bannon learned to direct public attention
- Which speech gave listeners a ray of hope Trump might be a good president
- How the firing of FBI director James Comey might lead to Trump’s impeachment long after it happened

- Why it's so hard for Trump to decide

Who would I recommend the Fire And Fury summary to?

The 15 year old young Republican, the 43 year old skeptic Democrat, and anyone who's constantly outraged by Donald Trump's behavior.