

Fire and Fury

by Gary Fouse



I generally have a rule of thumb about reading books about sitting presidents. The rule is that I don't. It doesn't matter whether it's a hit piece or a hagiographic piece. It doesn't matter who the president is. The fact of the matter is that books about current presidents are almost always agenda-driven. For the same reason, I stay away from presidential autobiographies. No matter how modest they try to be, they are self-serving. If I want to read a book about a president, I choose someone who is long dead.

Now we have this latest book by a tabloid style writer named [Michael Wolff](#) about the Trump White House. The book is entitled, [Fire and Fury-Inside the Trump White House](#) .It's a hit piece dedicated to the theme that Trump's White House is a romper room of fighting and intrigue, and that Trump itself is unbalanced. It seems that Wolff was actually granted some leisure time to hang around the White House and observe the fun and games going on. One thing that is contested is how much if any access Wolff gained with Trump himself. Not surprisingly, since Trump commands almost all of the 24 hour news cycle in the US, this book is already a blockbuster. The

news media is promoting it for all it is worth because it promotes the idea that Trump is unhinged and not psychologically fit to be president—a useful theme since the Russian collusion narrative seems to be going nowhere. Thus, Trump's enemies will latch on to anything that could be used to remove him from office. Why not a hit piece by a questionable writer?

CNN, for example, is all over the book. The hapless Wolf Blitzer talks about it on his silly show, "The Situation Room," which is probably named for Blitzer himself than any real developing situation going on from day to day. I keep waiting for the day Wolfie breaks down and takes hostages in "the situation room," a distinct possibility if CNN doesn't get the goods on Trump soon.

But let's get back to the other Wolff and his book. While Wolff insists that he stands behind the facts in his book 100%, he is really not too sure what the facts are. What can one say about a book labelled as non-fiction when the author states that he can't say categorically that everything in the book is factual? Yet that is precisely what Wolff wrote in the [book's prologue](#).

"Many of the accounts of what has happened in the Trump White House are in conflict with one another; many, in Trumpian fashion, are baldly untrue. These conflicts, and that looseness with the truth, if not with reality itself, are an elemental thread of the book.

"Sometimes I have let the players offer their versions, in turn allowing the reader to judge them. In other instances I have, through a consistency in the accounts and through sources I have come to trust, settled on a version of events I believe to be true."

Not exactly reassuring, is it? As judges will always advise juries in evaluating the testimony of a questionable witness,

if they find any part of the witness' testimony to be not credible, they are free to disregard all of it.

One of the features of the book that has drawn particular interest is a statement ascribed to Steve Bannon, the loose cannon Breitbart executive who worked briefly in the White House. Bannon supposedly gave his opinion on the controversial meeting that occurred in Trump Tower during the 2016 presidential campaign between Donald Trump Jr, Jared Kushner, and a Russian lawyer linked to the Kremlin. Bannon was quoted as calling Trump Jr "treasonous". That has caused a firestorm, and Bannon has now