



Speech-less: Tales of a White House Survivor

Matthew Latimer

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From a top speechwriter to President George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld, this may be the most deliciously candid memoir ever written about official Washington—a laugh-out-loud cri de coeur that shows what can happen to idealism in a town driven by self-interest.

Despite being raised by reliably liberal parents, Matt Latimer is, from an early age, lured by the upbeat themes of the Reagan Revolution and, in the tradition of Mary Tyler Moore, sets off from the Midwest for the big city, determined to "make it after all." In Matt's glory-filled daydreams, he will champion smaller government and greater self-sufficiency, lower taxes and stronger defense—and, by the force of his youthful passion, eradicate do-nothing boondoggleism and lead America to new heights of greatness.

But first he has to find a job.

Like an inside-the-Beltway Dante, Matt chronicles his descent into Washington, D.C., hell, as he snares a series of increasingly lofty—but unsatisfying—jobs with powerful figures on Capitol Hill. One boss can't remember basic facts. Another appears to hide from his own staff, barricading himself in his office. When Fate offers Matt a job as chief speechwriter for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Matt finds he actually *admires* the man (causing his liberal friends to shake their heads in dismay), his youthful passion is renewed. But Rummy soon becomes a piñata for the press, and the Department of Defense is revealed as alarmingly dysfunctional.

Eventually, Matt lands at the White House, his heart aflutter with the hope that, here at last, he can fulfill his dream of penning words that will become part of history—and maybe pick up some cool souvenirs. But reality intrudes once again. More like *The Office* than *The West Wing*, the nation's most storied office building is a place where the staffers who run the country are in way over their heads, and almost everything the public has been told about the major players—Bush, Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld, Rove—is wrong.

Both a rare behind-the-scenes account that boldly names the fools and scoundrels, and a poignant lament for the principled conservatism that disappeared during the Bush presidency, *Speech-less* will forever change the public's view of our nation's capital and the people who joust daily for its power.

From the Hardcover edition.

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