



# The White House Staff: Inside the West Wing and Beyond

*Bradley H. Patterson Jr.*

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Shrouded in anonymity, protected by executive privilege, but with no legal or constitutional authority of their own, the 5,900 people in 125 offices collectively known as the "White House staff" assist the chief executive by shaping, focusing, and amplifying presidential policy. Why is the staff so large? How is it organized and what do those 125 offices actually do? In this sequel to his critically appraised 1988 book, *Ring of Power*, Bradley H. Patterson Jr.—a veteran of three presidential administrations—takes us inside the closely guarded turf of the White House. In a straightforward narrative free of partisan or personal agendas, Patterson provides an encyclopedic description of the contemporary White House staff and its operations. He illustrates the gradual shift in power from the cabinet departments to the staff and, for the first time in presidential literature, presents an accounting for the total budget of the modern White House. White House staff members control everything from the monumental to the mundane. They prepare the president for summit conferences, but also specify who sits on Air Force One. They craft the language for the president to use on public occasions—from a State of the Union Address to such "Rose Garden rubbish" as the pre-Thanksgiving pardon for the First Turkey. The author provides an entertaining yet in-depth overview of these responsibilities. Patterson also illuminates the astounding degree to which presidents personally conduct American diplomacy and personally supervise U.S. military actions. The text is punctuated with comments by senior White House aides and by old Washington hands whose careers go back more than half a century. The book provides not only a comprehensive key to the offices and activities that make the White House work, but also the feeling of belonging to that exclusive membership inside the West Wing.

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