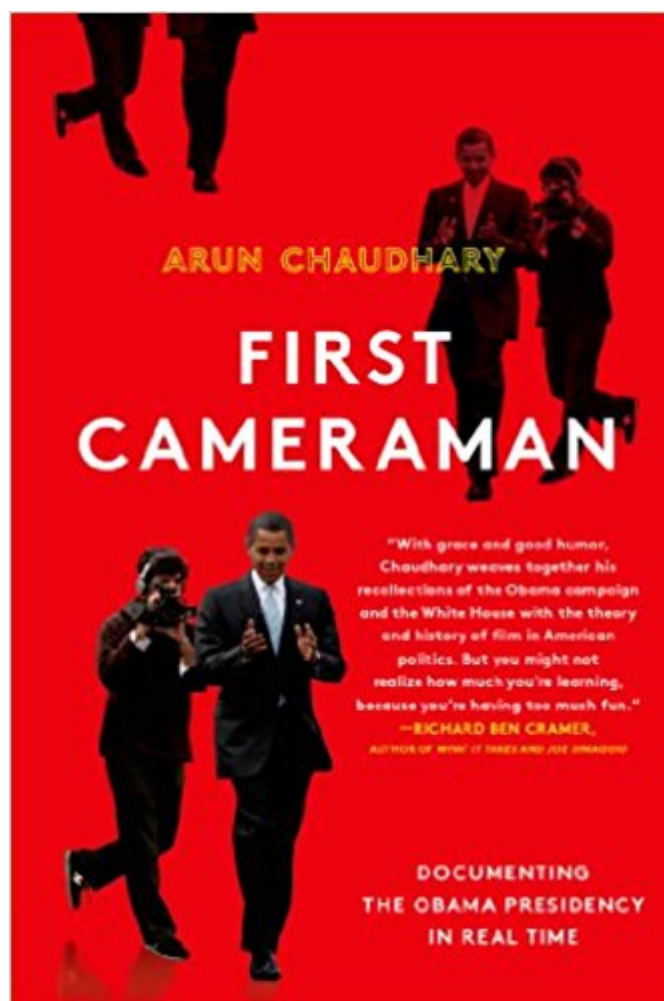


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First Cameraman: Documenting The Obama Presidency In Real Time



Synopsis

The first official White House videographer chronicles his time capturing behind-the-scenes moments of the president and his administration in *First Cameraman*. From the early months of the 2008 campaign and through the first two and a half years of the Obama administration, Arun Chaudhary had a unique perspective on the president of the United States. "I'm sort of like President Obama's wedding videographer," he explains, "if every day was a wedding with the same groom but a constantly rotating set of hysterical guests." Some of the moments Chaudhary captures are small, like the president throwing warm-up pitches deep inside Busch Stadium in St. Louis before the All-Star game. Some are intensely emotional, as when Obama comforts a grieving teenager whose father had died in a devastating tornado. And some are just plain bizarre—like getting thrown out of the Indian parliament by his belt, or being trapped in a White House bathroom while Obama conducts a YouTube town hall on the other side of the door. Film and politics have been intertwined ever since the first Edison reels rattled in projection halls a century ago. But with the advent of new technologies and a new public that is hungry for images of their leaders, Chaudhary has been in the right place at the right time to participate in the interplay of film and politics at the very highest level. His entertaining and eye-opening book—which includes stories and images of key players such as Barack and Michelle Obama, Joe Biden, and Hillary Clinton, among others—gives readers a unique view of their government and their president in these historic and challenging times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

• Arun was New Media? I always assumed he was CIA!
• David Axelrod, Former Senior Advisor to President Obama and Senior Strategist, Obama for America
• With grace and good humor, Chaudhary weaves together his recollections of the Obama campaign and the White House with the theory and history of film in American politics. But you might not realize how much you're learning, because you're having too much fun.
• Richard Ben Cramer, author of What It Takes and Joe DiMaggio
• So interesting to finally learn what whatshisname's job actually was, I used to just ask him if he knew where the president went.
• Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of the City of Chicago and Former White House Chief of Staff
• First Cameraman tells a refreshing story about American politics
• It's that what you see is what you get. What the camera saw in Barack Obama in 2008 is what the cameraman himself discovered off-camera. Wow!
• Chris Matthews, Host of Hardball and The Chris Matthews Show and bestselling author of Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero
• If John F. Kennedy was the first television president, then Barack Obama is the first YouTube president
• and Arun Chaudhary, the first first videographer, captured the images that mark a seismic shift in the way American politics is practiced.
• Dee Dee Myers, former White House Press Secretary and author of Why Women Should Rule the World

Arun Chaudhary served as the first official White House videographer from 2009 to 2011 and was also a key member of Obama's new media team during the 2008 campaign. He previously worked in film in New York and was a member of the NYU Graduate Film Department faculty. He received his MFA in filmmaking from NYU and his BA in film theory from Cornell University. Chaudhary has been profiled by The New York Times, the BBC, National Journal, Politico, Fortune, and many political websites. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife and son.

Not only would I recommend reading this book.. but I would recommend hiring him to train your team on how to create a long lasting video presence! Arun understands how video can help convey a candidate's personality and has mastered the behind-the-scenes footage that we all want to see. While many views have been shared about the Obama Campaign & the Obama Administration... this book is from a guy who was in the bubble and gave us his perspective through the camera lens every day! It's great to learn his reflections on how media consumption is changing in America as well as the stories of how he pushed to make the changes necessary to modernize how the White House would be documented from now on!

... in which I review Mr. Chaudhary's freshman effort, marvel at him marveling about funny band names, and ultimately award the book five stars! First Cameraman is an engaging read in which each chapter opens with a quip similar to the above. The purpose is to whet the reader's appetite about the content forthcoming and to key said reader into what are most likely to be the funniest bits in the chapter (even if they are in a footnote). So what is First Cameraman about? Well, not exactly what I thought it was about. I was looking forward to a series of "Behind the Music" moments about our 44th president. While there were a few of these throughout the text, that really wasn't the purpose of the book. The book is really about the history of film-making as it pertains to a political context. It speaks to what is unique about this challenge and how the present-day technology contributed to the evolution (the maturity, even) of this medium in a White House context. The author is humble but does credit himself (and his instrumental team members) with enacting this change. In fact, there isn't enough early (pre-Obama campaign) biographic information about the author and the reader is left feeling a little cheated out of background context that would have made it easier to identify with his story. Format-wise, the book contains scores of footnotes, none of which are bibliographic annotations. Rather they are most usually the anecdotes - many quite lengthy - that would be better highlighted in the text itself. I find footnotes distracting from the flow of the story but other readers may enjoy the way the notes provide a means by which to procrastinate from the main text, if only for a few moments. My advice for the sequel - no footnotes. After all, if the quantity of footnote on a given page approaches the quantity of main text on the same page ... is it really a footnote? Does the tail wag the dog? I think ultimately the book will appeal most to filmmakers, film students and history buffs. It's well-written and paints the beginning of an entrepreneurial story for burgeoning filmmakers while providing a degree of "behind the scenes" White House shenanigans that will appeal to the more casual reader. Oh, and about those funny band names ... ah, something about agriculture. Guess you'll have to read it!

I find it extremely refreshing to read a book about both presidential politics and the White House that isn't written with the same partisan, regurgitated formula. The author has a great sense of humor and I truly felt like a fly on the wall while reading about the events highlighted in the book. Definitely recommend this book to your friends and family!

I loved this book, a behind the scene documentation of the President's life as seen through the cameraman. His personal experiences becoming that camera and learning experiences along the way made for fun and interesting reading. Facts, comments etc. of all the people in the book, give

you an insight to human nature. It was an easy book to read.

This is an amazing book that really shows how much new media evolved under the Obama campaign, much due to Mr. Chaudhary's role. It is a great read that also shows another side of the presidential campaign that most Americans don't have a chance to see unless they are directly involved in said campaign. Great read... highly recommended.

This is a great, light read, accentuated with a heavy dose of comedy that gives a definitively unique look at the inner workings of the White House and a Presidential campaign. As such, it's a welcome relief from your typical book about the White House or politics in general, because it is written from the perspective of an "every-man" on the outside looking in. An Every-man who just happens to have the best seat in the house (and a sense of humor - probably the only sense of humor in government). I recommend it, particularly if you have an interest in politics, the White House, or film. It gives you a perspective you won't get from any other book about the White House, or politics.

I like this book. It's entertaining and easy to read. I never understood the logic and thought behind any campaign's use of media beyond changing the channel when a political ad came on. I'm not a film student...just a regular citizen and I enjoyed learning some of the theory of film making and also about the advances in media and how politics incorporated these changes. The only drawback of the book is that you want to learn more about the author since it seems half autobiographical and half historical but obviously for the sake of his own privacy, the author draws the curtain to focus the attention on job of documenterian. I was surprised to learn that the White House did not already have a video documentarian on staff. It makes sense to me on the why. I would recommend this book to others.

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