

DC Confidential by Christopher Meyer.  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2005.

The political furore that greeted the serialisation of Sir Christopher Meyer's memoir of his time as our man in Washington was a hefty clue not to the 'scandalous' nature of his reminiscence as much as - for the politicians to whom he referred - to the veracity and accuracy of his writing.

DC Confidential is as entertaining and informative a memoir as one could wish to read; in addition, for those with a close interest in American politics it is a valuable insight into events between 1997 and 2003, which encompassed the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the build up to the invasion of Iraq.

Christopher Meyer writes with frankness about the highs and lows of his posting, the tensions of his role, the difficulties of bridging the gap between American and British expectations and needs, and the behaviour and attitude of major political figures. He slates no one, though his frustration with some of the Downing Street apparatchiks is all too clear - and from what he said justified. It is hard to single out anything as being especially interesting - the entire book is an enthralling read - but his material on White House dynamics, especially the major administration players, is fascinating and adds valuable pieces to the jigsaw puzzle that is the George Dubya Presidency.

The overwhelming impression left by the book is that Sir Christopher is a highly astute and honourable man who has made an excellent contribution to our national life and still has, one hopes, more to give.

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