

POLITICO PLAYBOOK 2012

OBAMA'S LAST STAND



GLENN THRUSH
INTRODUCTION BY EVAN THOMAS

Obama's Last Stand: Playbook 2012 (POLITICO Inside Election 2012)

Glenn Thrush , Politico

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A series of on the 2012 presidential election, POLITICO's *Playbook 2012* provides an unprecedented real-time account of the race for the White House. The third edition, *Obama's Last Stand*, follows the reelection campaign of President Barack Obama as it struggles to find the winning formula in a political landscape that has changed dramatically since his history-making victory in 2008.

Though battered and bruised after nearly four years in office, Barack Obama remains the most competitive player on the field in American politics today. In *Obama's Last Stand*, POLITICO White House correspondent Glenn Thrush chronicles the efforts of the president and his team to secure a second term in the face of a determined opposition, unfavorable economic headwinds, and a series of missteps by his own team.

This is a revealing portrait of the president at the most precarious moment in his political life, with insights and anecdotes drawn straight from the notebook of one of the most perceptive reporters in America. The trash-talking schoolyard athlete in Obama is very much in evidence, especially when he speaks caustically about his Republican rivals, including the man he thinks is trying to steal his legacy, Mitt Romney.

Yet apart from Romney and the uncertain economy, Obama's greatest obstacle on the road to reelection may be Obama 2008. He and his team of talented advisers must try to reconcile their nostalgia for that once-in-a-lifetime campaign with the realities of an election fundamentally altered by the advent of super PACs and the evaporation of Obama's superstar popularity. That challenge has led a campaign operation that once prided itself on flawless execution of strategy to commit several of the most dangerous unforced errors of Obama's political career.

Yet the game is far from over. If Obama is sometimes his own worst enemy, he also has the talent and drive to reclaim this race. Spurred on by the realistic prospect of losing, and growing ever more impatient with the foibles of his campaign staff, Obama the competitor is gearing up for the most critical fourth quarter of his career. This is the story of the last stand that will either cement his legacy forever—or consign him to a roster of once-promising one-term presidents.

Obama's Last Stand: Playbook 2012 (POLITICO Inside Election 2012) Details

Date : Published August 20th 2012 by Random House Audio (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780449009796

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Format : Audio

Genre : Politics, Nonfiction, History

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From Reader Review Obama's Last Stand: Playbook 2012 (POLITICO Inside Election 2012) for online ebook

Rick Cheeseman says

eh.

Stewart says

Pretty good overview of the approach by President Obama's team to the re-election, and the tension between hope/change and the rough-and-tumble negative politics of an incumbent with a wavering economic recovery.

Kurt Pankau says

Well-written and informative, but it's not so compelling as the previous titles in this series. It can't be helped--those were describing the Republican primary and had a much more fun cast of characters. This book follows the Obama campaign in its uphill slog against Romney. Chronicling Obama's stumble out of the gate, some poor choices made early on, and the tremendous obstacle of the Citizens United decision, this campaign plays out like an underdog story and stops just as Obama is finding his stride.

Michael Cohen says

The narrative catches you up as if you had traveled to Mars before Curiosity got there AND didn't have Internet access (Curiosity does). This was the weakest of the three POLITICO books so far and extremely disappointing. The author was different this time and it's perhaps a reflection on his list of sources. There was very little information on the Romney campaign compared to what you read of the Obama campaign. Overall, very little new, which is unfortunate since that's what I tend to value in my news. Based on this mini-book, I might skip the forthcoming last one in the POLITICO series and wait for Game Change II, which you know will have great reporting.

Alicia Brooks says

I didn't love this book as much as the first two in the series. It might be that I'm more in tune with the President's reelection campaign but it didn't feel as insider-y as the first two.

Christopher says

Not as juicy and filled with "fly on the wall" narrative as the other two ebooks Politico has published this election cycle. In essence, this is a really long magazine article on Obama's "unforced error" (author's term) with his lackluster support for the so-called Super PACs. Also, the previous two ebooks contained more insight into the Romney campaign. One thing is for sure: the Romney campaign is much better at stopping leaks than Obama. There is virtually no new insight on Mitt Romney in this book.

Mark says

Not as good as the first two books in the series, still decent information about a campaign that was in trouble in the beginning, but still seemed to skim things more than the first two books.

Jonathan Gormley says

This e-book can be read in less than two hours and is an insider account of the Obama reelection campaign since 2011. The book is presented in brief vignettes and they are focused around the timeframe of early spring 2012 (GOP primary) to the end of this July.

This is real embedded journalism, but to be clear the point of view is subtly pro-Obama. In fact the introduction to the book reads like a warning that you will read some ugliness about the Obama team but to keep in mind that both Obama and Romney are guilty of running campaigns that descend into the gutter, which is a subjective comment completely off topic for the narrative to follow.

Glenn Thrush seems to bend over backwards to make Obama into his narrative's sympathetic protagonist. Obama is portrayed as a reluctant warrior who supposedly belabors decisions by his campaign to go negative, but on the other hand he's described in more intimate scenes as the most competitive guy you'd meet... challenging staffers to pick up basketball and other games and striving to win at all costs.

The White House is male-dominated and mirrors the President's competitiveness, which leads to the Obama campaign's strategy of "killing Romney," and yes those words are quoted in the book from a Democrat strategist. You'll read how the campaign conducted focus groups and arrived at the strategy. Then you'll read how Obama and others at times are unsure of the strategy and bicker over its implementation.

Obama is shown at times as hyper-aggressive... he is said to want to run against Marco Rubio to kick his ass, and that he hates Mitt Romney as a human being. But then we are told that Obama is pulling punches... that he didn't want to form a Super PAC and he still desires to give his soaring speeches like 2008 instead of the taunting he does from the stump in 2012. These contradictory data points remind us that this is not an accurate psychoanalysis of Obama as much as an entertaining narrative with some insider gossip thrown in.

The best parts of the e-book are the insider details on the personality clashes within the Obama campaign and broader allied organizations like Priorities USA. Particularly enjoyable is how Priorities USA director Bill Burton and DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman-Schultz are each disrespected by most in the Obama sphere.

And for comic relief we have the hapless Joe Biden. Re-live his screw ups from the past year and see the fallout from the inside of the White House.

This is a good brief read for politicians and will likely be discussed around Capitol Hill and the like for the next couple of weeks, so I will recommend it if you want to spend a couple hours reliving the news cycles of the past few months and digging a little deeper into the personalities that surround Obama's reelection campaign.

Stephen says

A one sit read. Good for political junkies who are following the campaign closely. It contains a big surprise about Super PAC's and Obama's overall strategy.

Rick says

This makes me want to read the rest of the POLITICO e-books about the last election. You learn something in each one of them. This one I learned a good amount about Obama's approach - or utter lack thereof - to superPAC money. Boy, am I glad he won anyway. What a pointlessly close election. It also makes me think I am going to have to boycott Steve Wynn. Also it makes me wonder just how much of a baller Steve Wynn is that he ONLY has a 737. Not even a 777 buddy? Also the author of the Steve Jobs biography was briefly considered for an Obama administration spot, and many of Romney's wall street donors are pro-gay marriage. Thus continues the endless mystery why people ignore social issues for their own pocketbooks. Depressing.

A good read, though. I look forward to reading the Romney campaign counterpart.

Drew says

I have liked the Politico Playbook series so far. The other two were focused on the Republican primary, and this is the first to focus on the Democrats. The vignettes provide a good look into the personalities involved in the campaign, and makes watching the campaign more fun. I did think there were more juicy details in the first two books, but I don't think this was from a lack of effort on the authors part. I look forward to the fourth one and would like to see more writing like this in the future.

Donna says

For a political junkie like me, this book was fun to read. Gossipy and sometimes irreverent, it offers glimpses into the day-to-day activities and transactions of people we see on the news every day--from the president, members of his cabinet, and his press secretary to just ordinary folks who happen to get briefly caught up in matters of national importance. The folks at Politico observe and record the machinations of government on a daily basis, and they're very good at humanizing the people behind the headlines!

Reed says

Easy and quick read. Politico does a good job with their topical ebooks; however, I'm still waiting for the Gamechange sequel.

Matt says

I thought this was better than the second Politico book, but not by much. Once again, mainly a little extra inside dope for political junkies who also follow the news closely.

Gary M. says

A must-read for political junkies, this e-book highlights the relatively in disciplined reelection effort of the Obama White House, their flagging fundraising, and, most revealingly, the President's penchant for fits of rage against political opponents and allies alike.
