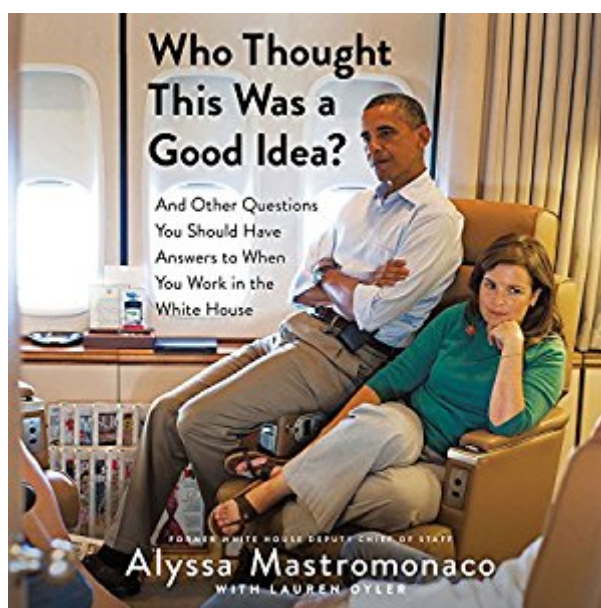


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# Who Thought This Was A Good Idea?: And Other Questions You Should Have Answers To When You Work In The White House



## Synopsis

If your funny older sister were the former deputy chief of staff to President Barack Obama, her behind-the-scenes political memoir would sound something like this. *Who Thought This Was a Good Idea?* is an intimate and admiring portrait of a president, a candid book of advice for young women, and a promising debut from a savvy political star.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ms. Mastromonaco, the Obama White House deputy most likely to regale the staff with “The Jackal,” has written a political memoir “slash” thriller. Will she even survive her absolutely draining stint as PBO’s aide-de-camp? I worried that the last page would just be whatever letters were in the center of her keyboard when her poor forehead came crashing down. Which is merely to say that Ms. Mastromonaco does an excellent job of telling civilians about the stress and adrenaline levels of working in the White House. (At least back when people were keen to do a good job for the citizens of America.) From getting POTUS and entourage a second plane in case of an Iraqi sandstorm, or making sure the U.S. Secret agents were allowed to bring their weapons into South Africa, Ms. Mastromonaco got the job done. One might, simply out of feminist reflex, flinch each time the author mentions that she cried. The underlying culprits were usually exhaustion or physical issues. However, when one considers the grim souls currently stalking the west wing, one remembers to appreciate the fact that she has a human, beating heart, and that she had the emotional capacity to actually care. I suspect privacy rules & regs forced the

author to limit the PBO anecdotes. The former president's playful attempts at matchmaking for Ms. Mastromonaco caught me by surprise; the ultra-rational regimen of salmon and brown rice (even while campaigning) did not. But he seems to have been just like all non-disturbed people saw him to be "an extraordinarily decent, bright, hardworking man. A man who, while carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders, took time to call a grieving Ms. Mastromonaco and offer her words of comfort from Air Force One. Just as, I believe history will confirm, the nation was lucky to have him, Obama was lucky to have Ms. Mastromonaco.

I liked this book. It was a fast read so great for a book when you don't want to do a lot of thinking. Alyssa writes like she speaks so it's often like listening to a younger friend talk. The stories are funny and chaotic. Nothing too political just stories of a young woman in an interesting job. Alyssa explained her purpose in writing the book about 3/4 of the way through. She wants the book to be educational for young women working their way through intense jobs. I was in that spot many years ago so I got most of her points. A book like this might have been helpful for me to read in my 20s or 30s. Consider it for that young professional woman in your life who is working her tail off and needs some motivation and laughs. Overall, I enjoyed the book. I look forward to reading a book by a more mature woman in the Obama administration. Alyssa didn't write that book but she did write a good book.

I hoped for more in-depth on the workings of the WH. There wasn't a lot of that given the length of this book. Don't get me wrong, some of the details were truly extraordinary but not enough. I personally was looking for a great tome of how things actually worked, not the lack of a tampon dispenser in the ladies room and Alyssa's role in getting one installed.

Alyssa's sharing of her time and experiences working as Obama's Staff is light-hearted, enlightening and full of nice anecdotes that fills in what it is like to work in the White House under the Obama administration. But sometimes I feel that Alyssa is sharing a lot of mistakes and quirks of her job rather than showing what was the skills Alyssa picked up along the way that helps her in her career. That is after all why people read the book, to be inspired.

This was a good book that brought insight into the Obama administration from someone who was with him a long time.

It's so, so easy to feel defeated and dissuaded to enter politics (esp. in the current climate), but Mastromonaco reminds us why we should with stories and insights that made me laugh, cry, cringe, but most of all, inspired. Riveted, I finished this in an afternoon and proceeded to buy 5 copies and had them sent to friends.

*Who Thought This Was a Good Idea?* is a funny and interesting look into the life of a young woman who worked in the offices of Bernie Sanders, John Kerry and Barack Obama. Alyssa Mastromonaco worked on Obama's presidential campaign and eventually ended up working as President Obama's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. This book would be interesting for most people, but especially young women thinking of starting a career in politics.

I was very disappointed given that I thought it would have more content about the Obamas'. I also didn't appreciate the portrayal of some of the more personal issues. I finished the book, but it was not a good read for me.

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