



C Street: The Fundamentalist Threat to American Democracy

By Jeff Sharlet



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C Street - where piety, politics, and corruption meet

Jeff Sharlet is the only journalist to have reported from inside the C Street House, the Fellowship residence known simply by its Washington, DC address. The house has lately been the scene of notorious political scandal, but more crucially it is home to efforts to transform the very fabric of American democracy. And now, after laying bare its tenants' past in *The Family*, Sharlet reports from deep within fundamentalism in today's world, revealing that the previous efforts of religious fundamentalists in America pale in comparison with their long-term ambitions.

When Barack Obama entered the White House, headlines declared the age of culture wars over. In *C Street*, Sharlet shows why these conflicts endure and why they matter now - from the sensationalism of Washington sex scandals to fundamentalism's long shadow in Africa, where Ugandan culture warriors determined to eradicate homosexuality have set genocide on simmer.

We've reached a point where piety and corruption are not at odds but one and the same. Reporting with exclusive sources and explosive documents from C Street, the war on gays in Uganda, and the battle for the soul of America's armed forces - waged by a 15,000-strong movement of officers intent on "reclaiming territory for Christ in the military" - Sharlet reveals not the last gasp of old-time religion but the new front lines of fundamentalism.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

C Street includes everything a riveting tale about a controversial national movement should—scandal, affairs, conspiracies, death, and, of course, secrecy. Sharlet's story of American fundamentalism begins in a historical mansion on Washington DC's C Street, diverts to Argentina, takes root in Uganda, and ends at a street protest in Manhattan. The second in an unofficial series (after *The Family*) about a religious cabal of politicians from both major parties, Sharlet brings a wealth of research (including many quotes from conversations with "C-streeters" and others in "the Fellowship") to reveal the startling mindset of a movement few even know exists. Vivid descriptions of key players brings his tale to life; in fact, the reader is never allowed to forget that this is true, and Sharlet's repetition is unnecessary. But he deftly unravels the residence as not just a place, but an ideological greenhouse for the teachings of evangelists, Christians, proponents of the Far Right, and others who compose a fundamentalist movement that aims to put Jesus in the Oval Office and get the Bible equal footing with the Constitution.

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From [Booklist](#)

Even after the sexual affairs of several congressmen brought the Fellowship (and its D.C. residence on C Street) into the light, most Americans have still never heard of this elitist fundamentalist organization. Even those who have will have trouble getting their heads around a mostly faceless organization whose goal is to convert the world to a trickle-down Christianity, as Sharlet calls it, where God has chosen the leaders (them) and everyone else follows. With our leaders somehow prechosen, it makes it easier to forgive their transgressions (the Fellowship, for example, has no problem working with heads of state like Haiti's Papa Doc Duvalier and those in present-day Uganda, who advocate the death penalty for homosexuals). That this heavily financed, multilayered organization has been operating for decades—and today is actively implanted within the U.S. military—makes this well-documented, probing investigation even more mind-bending. Mostly, those in the Fellowship don't talk. Maybe now the discussion will start. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** When the affairs of Fellowship members Senator John Ensign R-Nev. and South Carolina governor Mark Sanford broke, Sharlet's book *The Family* became a best-seller. His follow-up is sure to attract similar attention. --Ilene Cooper

Review

"At once a gripping political thriller, a masterpiece of investigative journalism, and a timely call to arms, *C Street* reveals all that can be hidden within an innocuous Washington address. Jeff Sharlet delivers a warning that the blurring of the line between church and state is both an urgent local problem and a matter of global concern." (**Peter Manseau, author of *Rag and Bone: A Journey Among the World's Holy Dead and Songs for the Butcher's Daughter***)

"Jeff Sharlet has an incredibly rare double talent: the instincts of an investigative reporter coupled with the soul of a historian." (**Hanna Rosin, author of *God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America***)

"Jeff Sharlet is one of the very best writers covering the politics of religion." (**Ken Silverstein, author of *Turkmenistan: How Washington Lobbyists Fought to Flack for a Stalinist Dictatorship***)

"Few writers can pull off investigative journalism, historical research, and elegant storytelling. Sharlet does

all this with a story that a lot of people don't want to hear and others won't believe." (**Diane Winston, author of *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of The Salvation Army***)

"[Sharlet] writes with insight, verve, and, thankfully, none of the bogus punditry and bad sociology that often passes for informed discourse about the contemporary role of religion in public life. His refreshing narrative style is as engaging as his groundbreaking information." (**Frederick Clarkson, *The Public Eye***)

"Un-American theocrats can only fool patriotic American democrats when there aren't critics like Jeff Sharlet around-careful scholars and soulful writers who understand both the majesty of faith and the evil of its abuses." (**Rick Perlstein, author of *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America***)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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