



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 15, 2016

Trump Names Steve Bannon as Co-Equal of Priebus

Donald Trump's [announcement on Sunday](#) that he was naming Reince Priebus as his chief of staff and Steve Bannon (shown) as his chief political advisor generated outrage from the Left and the Right. While the Right accused Trump of selling out his principles by installing longtime Republican stalwart Reince Priebus as his personal gatekeeper, most of the Left's outrage was focused on Bannon, who has made it his life's mission to oppose and expose the establishment's control of the media and the political process in general.



Those who know him, however, have a vastly different and more favorable view of the man.

Running Breitbart News ever since its founder, Andrew Breitbart, died in 2012, Bannon has tapped into, and augmented, an increasing number of citizens' distaste of and outrage against the establishment. More than 40 million people view his website every month, pushing its Alexa ratings close to the top worldwide.

In March, Lloyd Grove of the liberal, far-left Daily Beast described Breitbart's, and thus Bannon's, impact on the movement referred to as "alt-right":

[The Breitbart website is] Trump-friendly [and] regularly savages the GOP establishment, the media elite, the Washington consultant class, and the Fox News Channel.

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This was intentional from the start. Said Bannon in January: "We think of ourselves as virulently anti-establishment, particularly anti the permanent political class."

He didn't start out that way. Born into a poor family in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1953, Bannon grew up close to the naval yard and upon graduating from Virginia Tech in 1976, joined the Navy. He served in the Pacific Fleet for four years, and when he returned, he served as special assistant to the chief of naval operations at the Pentagon. He explains: "I come from a blue-collar, Irish Catholic, pro-Kennedy, pro-union family of Democrats."

But his service in Washington led to a change of heart: "I wasn't political until I got into the service and saw how badly Jimmy Carter [messed] things up. I became a huge Reagan admirer. I still am."

But during a time when his investment company was operating various media companies in Asia, he learned how little difference there was between Republicans and Democrats. "But what turned me against the whole establishment," he stated, "was coming back from running companies in Asia and seeing that Bush has [messed] up as badly as Carter. The whole country was a disaster."

When he left the navy, he attended Harvard Business School, receiving an MBA and a job offer at Goldman Sachs. He worked in their Mergers and Acquisitions Department for four years, making enough money to allow him and some colleagues to start a boutique investment company, Bannon & Co.



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When he negotiated the sale of Castle Rock Entertainment to Ted Turner, he received a stake in five TV shows, including *Seinfeld*.

He got into films, making a Reagan documentary, *In the Face of Evil*. Its success led him to produce a documentary about Sarah Palin and films celebrating the Tea Party. His success with these led to an introduction to Andrew Breitbart, who was operating his startup business, Breitbart.tv. When Breitbart died of a heart attack in 2012, Bannon was invited to take over as CEO.

During his stint at Breitbart, the website exposed the ACORN scandal and later the Weiner sexting scandal, among others. Bannon also founded the Government Accountability Institute (GAI), which produced the films *Bush Bucks: How Public Service and Corporations Helped Make Jeb Rich*, and *Clinton Cash: The Untold Story of How and Why Foreign Governments and Businesses Helped Make Bill and Hillary Rich*. These were carefully researched and crafted films according to *Bloomberg Businessweek*, which called them “rigorous, fact-based indictments against major politicians.”

Bannon had, through the years, become close with Trump, and when Trump announced his candidacy for the president, Bannon became a vocal supporter through Breitbart. In August he was invited to join Trump’s campaign staff, replacing Paul Manafort as campaign manager. One of Trump’s campaign staffers told Yahoo News:

I mean, the guy clearly knows how to get things going, how to get a message going, and how to push that and layer it so those things are going to take root ... that [it’s] something people are going to like.

I mean, clearly, that’s how he’s built Breitbart and how he acts on the morning calls for the campaign. When we’re talking about messages, he’ll say, “Let’s jump on this story.... Let’s start talking about this. It’s going to be huge and we’ve got to go big on it.”

Under attack by far-left members of the media such as the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and others, Bannon’s supporters have closed ranks behind him. Kellyanne Conway, Trump’s campaign manager, stated, “I’ve worked very closely with Steve Bannon. He’s been the general of this campaign. And frankly, people should look at his full résumé. He has got a Harvard business degree. He’s a naval officer. He has had success in entertainment.”

His “co-equal” in the new Trump administration, Reince Priebus, concurs: “I’ve spent a lot of time with him. And here’s a guy who’s a Harvard Business School [graduate], a London School of Economics [graduate], a 10-year naval officer advising admirals. He was a force for good on the campaign at every level that I saw, all the time.”

Time will tell how the “co-equal” partnership will work out. At the moment, Priebus will be Trump’s administrator while Bannon will be his advisor on content and strategy. Call it “quiet” versus “confrontational.”

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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