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White House Nannies

by Barbara Kline

“Barbara Kline knows more secrets in Washington than the CIA. White House Nannies set the gold standard in this town for us working parents, and Barbara’s experiences are a treasure.”

—Ann Compton, White House Correspondent, ABC Radio

“Barbara Kline sent us a soccer playing Mary Poppins with a Mt. Holyoke degree. Lucky kids! Lucky parents!” —Chris and Kathleen Matthews, host of “Hardball with Chris Matthews” and co-anchor of ABC 7 News (Washington, D.C.), respectively

“Barbara Kline is the go-to guru for the capital’s nanny needs--helping me and countless other women here struggling to juggle jobs and motherhood. Nobody knows the inside lives of Washington women like Barbara.”

—Claire Shipman, senior national correspondent, ABC News

“For years, Barbara Kline has kept countless Washingtonian families’ homes, jobs, and sanity intact. Now, her extraordinary page-turner, *White House Nannies*, will keep you in stitches with countless nanny-capers from your nation’s capital. Enjoy the perils of the most powerful at their most pitiful as they confront the panoply of problems that plague working parents everywhere. Newsmakers, news breakers and masters of the universe are no match for the nanny network.”

—Mary Matalin, former White House Advisor

Barbara Kline is the *other* Chief of Homeland Security. When Washington D.C. power parents are having a baby, or when their household is spinning out of control, they call Kline, president of the capital’s premier nanny agency. Her hilarious, behind-the-scenes memoir, *White House Nannies* (a Tarcher/Penguin hardcover; May 5, 2005; \$23.95), reveals the nation’s capital as you’ve never known before.

Kline has been matching high-powered couples with ultra-competent nannies for more than two decades, and her tales run from the poignant to the utterly absurd.

Read about the unsung heroines whose special commitment makes their work far more than a job. Nannies see babies take their first steps and hear their first words while Mom and Dad are halfway around the world trying to save it. Meet these wise, wonderful (and occasionally odd) surrogate mothers who keep Washington from spinning off its axis of global power. It's "West Wing" crossed with "Supernanny."

Kline ran a successful ice cream parlor on Capitol Hill until a late-night armed robbery convinced her to look for a safer line of work. When she and her husband, working parents with a baby in diapers, were having a hard time finding quality childcare, *White House Nannies* was born.

White House Nannies follows rising television correspondent star Janette Huntington and her driven corporate lawyer husband David Wilder as they search for the perfect nanny for their new baby, Spencer. After some false starts, Kline strikes gold and sends them an English nanny named Emma who saves the Huntington-Wilders from disaster. As their careers surge forward, Janette and David increase their reliance on overworked Emma – and start to question their role as Spencer's absentee parents.

Backstairs stories of other career-driven parents abound—including political advisors Mary Matalin and James Carville, and "Hardball" host Chris Matthews and his television anchor wife Kathleen, who hired ideal nannies with Kline's help. On a typical day at her agency, she and her staff are besieged by all sorts of emergencies as they serve as confidantes to both clients and nannies. (One couple is *outraged* when they realize their nanny from Nepal has no idea how to make cinnamon toast for their child's breakfast!)

High-powered matchmaker Kline tries to satisfy frantic couples who can handle international crises but not their own children—as well as members of the Nanny Mafia. Securing the perfect nanny involves the usual mix of D.C. power games and diplomacy. Nannies are bribed with cash bonuses, vacations and luxury S.U.Vs to stay with difficult children. After parents finally *do* find their ideal nanny, they still can't relax: they have to stay on the alert for nanny-nappers, desperate couples ready to lure away their nanny with a bigger salary and flashier perks.

Keenly observant Kline will make you laugh when she blows the whistle on the domestic affairs of the political movers and shakers. *White House Nannies* takes readers from Washington's downtown halls of power and the White House itself to ornate Georgetown mansions and trendy Adams-Morgan restaurants. Put yourself in a "time-out" and read this book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: As owner and president of White House Nannies, an agency she founded in 1983, Barbara Kline knows just about all there is to know about the strategic art of "nanny placement." Kline lives in Chevy Chase, MD, with her husband, two college-age children, and Wally the Miniature Schnauzer.

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Highlights from

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- Among Barbara Kline's first clients were a Secretary of Defense and his wife. Their grand home in McLean, Virginia, was situated on an exclusive residential street and their neighbors were other government big shots. Kline found them an affable nanny who hailed from Minnesota. But it soon became clear that this woman was not the sharpest knife in the drawer. She seemed to constantly lose her house keys. So she made several copies and passed them out to all her friends in case she lost hers. The Secretary of Defense never found out that his own home was – defenseless!
- Mary Matalin, GOP political advisor and White House Nannies client, is in the middle of a meeting with Ariel Sharon and Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to resolve a Middle East crisis—when her nanny calls. Matalin takes the call, worried that one of her children is sick.

“Can I ask the dry cleaners to pick up my cleaning along with yours?” asks the nanny. Since she couldn't tell the difference between World War III and a dry cleaning crisis, her days with the Carville-Matalins were numbered.

- A frantic nanny calls Barbara Kline's office after she locked herself out of her high-profile employer's home in tony North Arlington, Virginia. Meanwhile, the toddler in her care was locked *inside* the house -- along with her employer's unlisted telephone number at the Department of Defense. But by the time Kline reached the toddler's mother, the two-year-old had crawled out of the house to freedom through the doggie door.
- An elected official and his wife were in the throes of his re-election campaign while their nanny took care of their temperamental son. He refused to eat his cereal and banana for breakfast and screamed for candy. His howling woke up his mother, who stormed barefoot into the kitchen. Nanny watched in silent shock as the candidate's wife dumped a bag of M&Ms into Junior's bowl. “Just give him the chocolate,” she snarled, before turning on her heels and going back to bed.

- One wealthy Alexandria family adored their nanny from the Midwest so much, they let her live in their swanky pool house, which was featured in a *Washington Post* article about nannies' living arrangements. Years later, the high-profile couple realized that their enterprising nanny had been running a brothel right under their noses! After they fired her, they found out just how many of their neighbors had known all along about their nanny's profitable side business.
- A Maryland client of White House Nannies was a prominent Bush One Republican. She and her four children had been quite happy with their nanny for more than a year. When it was time to take down their Christmas tree, the nanny insisted on dragging it outside to the curb. She soon began gasping for air and clutching her chest, but when paramedics arrived to examine her, the nanny struggled to fight them off. It was soon thereafter discovered that "she" was actually a man.
- A distraught nanny called looking for a new job. She had been working for an Ivy League graduate dad who had installed Nanny Cams. But this father had more than safety on his mind—he had secretly installed video equipment in his nanny's bedroom and bathroom. The espionage was uncovered when the nanny went searching for a Winnie the Pooh tape for the kids and stumbled across a videocassette labeled with her name. Soon after she slipped it into the VCR, she brought suit against her now-former employer.