

Washington Insider Explains Why Donald Trump Wanted to Stay in the White House for Christmas 2018

If anyone knows about Christmas in the White House, it's historian, author and political commentator Doug Wead. The bestselling author has interviewed a total of six presidents and nine different first ladies as well as 19 children of the presidents. One of his books, *All the President's Children*, tells the stories of those children.

One question he always asks, Wead says, is about Christmas in the White House. But he says Donald Trump's 2018 Christmas was unique—for a heartwarming reason.

"Often, presidential Christmases are not in the White House," he says. "They're at Camp David, or they're at the president's retreat, for example, Hyde Park for FDR, or Mar-a-Lago for Donald Trump. So they're fun, and they're stressful. What's fun is that the White House, there are first-run movies in the theater. Every brand-new gadget comes over the transom. They get it at the White House; even if you can't find any of them left in the aisles at Walmart, they've got them at the White House. And you don't just get a turkey, you get the national turkey. You don't just get a Christmas tree, you get the national Christmas tree."

For Christmas 2018, Trump wanted to stay in the White House and work, Wead says. The year before, he went to Mar-a-Lago. "And the family was saying, 'Well, we'll stay too,'" Wead says. "He said, 'No, no, no, you go to Mar-a-Lago and have fun. ... I'm going to stay and work in the White House.'"

Trump's family went to Florida, but they kept calling and

asking him to join them or to allow them to return to the White House to spend the day with him, Wead says. The president told his son-in-law and daughter, Jared and Ivanka Kushner, “No, I’ve got eight homes, and this one’s a rental. I won’t have it very long, so I think I’ll just enjoy Christmas.”

“By ‘rental,’ he meant it’s the people’s house,” Wead says. “But what he was really doing was he wanted to visit the troops on Christmas night in Iraq. And the Secret Service warned how dangerous that was. And so at the last minute, they flew the first lady up to Washington on Christmas, and she participated with him in a service at the National Cathedral. And then that night, Christmas night, they got on Air Force One and flew to Iraq.

“She wanted to go,” Wead says of the first lady. “The president of the Secret Service sat her down and said, ‘You can’t go.’ And she said, ‘Well, I’m going.’ And then they said, ‘No, it’s extremely difficult to plan these trips, and the security risk is high. And only twice before in history has a first lady actually been in combat. ... And she said, ‘If my husband is in danger, I am going to be with him in that danger. And I am going,’ and so at the last minute, she was put on the plane, and Christmas night they flew to Iraq.”

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