A presidential trip is often substantive, but it is also always theater: each city an act, every stop a scene.

His national and political roles are public and he wants them to be so: cameras and the press are invited to witness every handshake, film each ceremony, record all the ringing words.

These massive expeditions are the responsibility of the White House Advance Office.

Within the White House staff, trip planning calls for intricate choreography among more than a dozen separate offices...

Like the daily schedule..., a trip is not a casual event but a calculated piece of a larger theme – and, as such, is designed to convey a message.

Forward planning for domestic presidential trips may be done from four to eight weeks in advance but is more likely compressed into an even shorter lead time.

For domestic trips... ‘site surveys’ would be undertaken perhaps six weeks ahead of time, and ‘pre-advance’ teams would be sent out weeks beforehand.

Floods, disasters, hurricane damage, funerals: a presidential presence is often required. But then the advance office looks like a long-range planning unit and more like a firehouse.

Funding is a sensitive issue. There is a four-way division: (1) Assuming the trip is nonpolitical, the White House budget itself supports only the travel expenses of the advance teams and the presidential party (and its VIP guests), including the staff of the White House Press Office. (2) For any trip, political or not, the government covers those costs that related to the president’s security.

To be a successful advance person... you have to have that
minor crooked side to you, and you have to be willing to do whatever you have to do. That doesn’t necessarily mean breaking the law, but it means that you can’t be shy and have to be assertive.”

IBID., ¶ 4, line 1 – “The advance team may include nongovernmental companions: technical experts from the news networks, news photographers, and representatives from the White House Correspondents Association.”

p. 624, ¶ 1, line 1 – “The government team and the news planning team represent institutions that are different and often at odds.”

p. 625, ¶ 1, line 1 – “If the trip is political and a big rally is scheduled, the advance team will include another specialist, a ‘crowd-builder,’ who comes with the attitude that this ‘us a historic occasion, a great party, the biggest thing to ever happen in this town.”

IBID., ¶ 2, line 1 – “The local hosts must do the actual work, mobilizing hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers.”

IBID., ¶ 3 [Indented Quote] – Note all six of the steps listed.

p. 590, ¶ 2, line 1 – “No matter how rah-rah some aspects of a trip may be, White House advance staffers are forever conscious that it is the president of the United States who is there.”

IBID., ¶ 4, line 1 – “When its own thousand details are done, the White House Press Office compiles a ‘Press Schedule Bible,’ which is given out to the national press representatives.”

p. 626, ¶ 7, line 1 – “On the morning before the day of departure, the Advance Office holds a final trip briefing for the chief of staff; it will be the chief of staff who gives the final imprimatur fo the Air Force One manifest.

p. 627, ¶ 3 [indented quote], line 1 – “The high point... is ‘The Moment,’ the one snippet of action that visually tells the story of why the trip was undertaken in the first place.”

Note: These moments are the essence of the “sound bytes,” which 80% of the time have visual components.