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RAPHAEL

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SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

History, Geography & Area Studies - North America

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The following review will appear in the October 2012 issue of CHOICE. The review is for your internal use only until our publication date of 01 October 2012

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Raphael, Ray. **Mr. President: how and why the founders created a chief executive.** Knopf, 2012. 324p index ISBN 9780307595270, \$27.95

Coeditor of the recent *Revolutionary Founders* (CH, Dec'11, 49-2279) and author of *A People's History of the American Revolution* (CH, Nov'01, 39-1794), Raphael offers an insightful narrative that follows the development of executive power in the US political system from prerevolutionary veneration of the British monarchy to the expansion of presidential authority during the administration of Thomas Jefferson. The author's lucid treatment explores in grand detail how delegates to the Federal Convention, James Wilson, James Madison, and Gouverneur Morris in particular, constructed what became the most powerful office in US politics. Raphael forcefully argues that the direction the office took under the first three administrations (which he explores in some detail) was closer to the more monarchical vision of Alexander Hamilton and that from the very beginning, "the Presidency embarked on an evolutionary course" that carried it "well beyond the strictures of the original rule book." With a deep consideration for the modes of election, a jealous regard for the separation of powers, and a frightening awareness of their Colonial history, the founders attempted to fashion an energetic executive consistent within the dominant paradigm of republicanism. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Raphael's superb study is well suited as a general introduction to the topic and as a primer for undergraduate studies. -- B. C. Odom, *Jefferson State Community College*