

CHAPTER — † THREE † —

After dinner, Maria put the boys to bed, and they settled comfortably in the living room. David said, "I notice you haven't served any alcoholic beverages, which confirms our report that you are both teetotalers. That is a plus. We won't make a big deal of it, because some people would think you were being too narrow. Nevertheless, we will let the word out, and there are many areas of the country where that will be a big help."

Maria said, "David we don't make a big show of it, but during the four years that Bob was prosecutor, we saw too much crime, death, and heartache, caused by alcohol, for us to be drinkers. We don't want our boys to use it, and the only way we can be credible about it, is not to use it ourselves. After all it is just another mind-altering drug. We don't need it."

Bob smiled. "If I may interrupt this sermon, let me point out that David is sitting here planning our campaign for vice-president, just as though I were already a candidate."

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

“You’re right, Bob. Let me back up to where we were before dinner. When you get to Congress, we can arrange for you to be made chairman of some sub-committee that will be investigating some aspect of the drug problem. This is a matter of great concern to the public right now and it isn’t going to go away. With your law and order background as a prosecutor and your experience on the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee of the Missouri Senate, you are a natural. We can also arrange for extensive television coverage of your sub-committee hearings. A few years of that will make the name of Robert M. Hill into a household phrase. Everyone will know about this young, smart, 100% loyal American, law and order, black Congressman. Not only will white voters be willing to vote for you for vice-president, they will be glad to. And think how you could cement the black voters back into our party.

“And I haven’t even mentioned Maria yet. Think what she could do with the Hispanic vote — the fastest growing segment of our population. An expert, experienced, television performer — think what your beautiful, articulate wife could do for the party in Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Florida, to say nothing of Illinois, New York, and New Jersey. She would be as much in demand as a speaker as you would be.”

“David, you need to back up a little farther. Here you are running me for vice-president again and I am not even in Congress. How do we jump that hurdle?”

“Bob, I am talking about this vice-presidency thing because I want you and Maria to see that there can be a lot more involved here than just a seat in Congress. Now of course, we can’t guarantee you the nomination for vice-president. A lot would depend on your performance in Congress, and, of course, the nominee for president has the final say, although he would pay attention to the National Com-

CHAPTER THREE

mittee. But we can almost guarantee you the seat in Congress. Of course, you will have opposition. Any nut with the filing fee can get his name on the ballot. But we can do a pretty good job of keeping any really credible opposition out of the Democratic primary. We can offer good appointments, whatever it takes. Now the National Committee will not publicly endorse you in the primary. But behind the scenes we can see that you get all the money you need and all the expert public relations help you need for a top notch campaign. We can see that you get all the workers you need from various friendly organizations, such as the teacher's union, and we can see that you get plenty of favorable coverage in the news media. Since the incumbent is retiring, the Republicans will probably put up a stronger candidate than usual, but we can give you even more help in the general election than we can in the primary. And this is a strong Democratic district. The odds are at least 10 to 1 that we can get you in Congress."

Maria put her arm around Bob. "Honey, this is the most exciting thing I ever heard. What do you think?" Then turning to David, "What are the draw-backs?"

"Not too much really. You both would have to be very careful about what you say and do. Once the spot light is turned on you, you have to watch every step. We can give you some tutoring on that. And Bob, your voting record needs to veer more and more toward the liberal side. There are some issues that are absolutely critical. On these litmus test issues you have to be on the right side — strike that — you have to be on the correct side. One of those will be coming up in the Missouri Senate in a few weeks. I refer to House Bill 160."

"Oh, the informed consent bill?"

David frowned. "We don't call it that. Try to think of it as an anti-freedom of choice bill. Bob, you must vote against HB

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

160. Believe me, that is absolutely vital.”

“But it’s a good bill, David. All it does is require that a woman understand what she is doing before she has an abortion. She is given printed material that does three things; it shows her the stage of her baby’s development; it describes the method to be used to kill the baby; and it informs her of the alternative of adoption. Then there is a 24 hour waiting period for her to consider the material.”

“For heavens sake, Bob, you have got to use the right words. Never refer to the occupant of the womb as a baby — it is a fetus. And never, never say that anything is being killed — it is simply the termination of a pregnancy. I can sympathize with you, Bob, but those are the rules of the game . You played some football. You know you have to follow the rules whether you agree with them or not, and even when the rules don’t make sense. Using the right words is a very important rule. Remember what happened to poor old John Glenn. He is a good man — probably one of our best, but he made the mistake of saying ‘man and wife’ when he should have said ‘husband and wife.’ I know it sounds crazy, but it really hurt him.”

Maria nodded her head. “I have dealt with some of these people myself. David is right, honey, one wrong word could brand you forever as a hopelessly crude, male, chauvinist pig — even though anyone who knows you, knows that is not true.”

Bob shrugged his shoulders. “So what if I am branded. I don’t see why I have to be pro-abortion in order to run on the Democratic ticket. I know lots of Democrats who are anti-abortion. I would bet that the majority of people in this congressional district are pro-life. Why our present congressman is pro-life, and certainly he is a good Democrat.”

David leaned forward. “Bob, you are absolutely right. There

CHAPTER THREE

are many good Democrats who are anti-abortion, and a good many Republicans who are pro-abortion. But unfortunately, this has become more and more a party line issue. There are certain constituencies that are vital to the Democratic Party, who are rabidly pro-abortion, just as there are certain groups that are vital to the Republicans, who are rabidly anti-abortion. The result has been to pull the two parties in opposite directions. An anti-abortion Democrat can still be elected on the local level, although, since the Webster decision, that is going to become more and more difficult. But I will guarantee you that, for as far as we can see into the future, no Democratic National Convention is going to nominate an anti-abortion candidate, just as no Republican Convention is going to nominate anyone who is pro-abortion.

“You say that your present congressman is pro-life and still a good Democrat, and that’s true. He is so firmly entrenched that they have left him alone. But since the Webster Case, even that has changed. They were planning to go after him in next year’s primary, and that is part of the reason he decided to retire. This Webster Case has really opened a can of worms. Before it, the pro-choice people could pretty much ignore the state legislatures and even Congress to some extent, because they could count on the Federal Courts to carry the ball for them. But Webster changes all that. The Supreme Court has let the legislative branch know that they can pass some laws that won’t be thrown out. So now the legislative races are very important, both local and national. Bob, even if you end up running for re-election to the Missouri Senate next year, if you vote for HB 160, you will have strong opposition. You may win but it won’t be easy.

“Right now, Bob, you are in a great position. Dozens of ambitious politicians all over the country wish they were in the same position. You have never had to take a public stand on

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

this abortion thing. The right-to-life people didn't endorse either side in your senate race. Apparently the question didn't even come up, but believe me it is going to come up in all future races. No anti-abortion bills have come before the Missouri Senate during your term, so you are still clean. You can take the pro-choice side without breaking any commitments and without looking like an opportunist. Pity poor Dick Gephardt. When he got presidential ambitions he had to change sides, and believe me it has hurt him, and that's too bad because he has a lot going for him. Don't let that happen to you, Bob."

Maria asked, "David, just who are these constituencies who are so vital to the Democratic Party that we have to let them dictate our position on abortion?"

David said, "Well, you have heard a lot about the gender gap. We have been stronger with the women voters than we have with the men. The abortion issue must be at least part of the reason."

"But most of the women I know are against abortion," Maria answered. "In fact the right-to-life movement is mostly women, at least it is around here. Our party is strong with Hispanics, but I think that is more in spite of the abortion issue, than because of it. My people love children and I think the same is true of black people. David, I just don't see any constituency that is so big that our party has to yield to them on the abortion issue."

David looked uncomfortable. "Maria, it is not that they are so big. Sometimes the size of a constituency is not what makes it important. I think you know what I mean."

"Yes, David, I think I do. And I am sorry if I sounded like a prosecuting attorney." She smiled at Bob. "I just wanted to see if you confirmed the opinion that I have come to from my news work. We have to yield to these people, not because of

CHAPTER THREE

their numbers, but because of their influence as opinion makers. In other words, the drive to legalize abortion was not a grass-roots movement at all. It came from the top down. I have even heard that the case involving the Connecticut contraceptive statute was cooked up by some law professors and others for the specific purpose of laying the ground-work for *Roe v. Wade*."

Bob broke in, "Maria and I have not been active in the pro-life movement, but we have talked about it a good deal and have considered getting active. As you say, I could take a pro-choice (see I'm learning the right words) stand right now without breaking any commitments. But the trouble is, Maria doesn't believe in abortion and neither do I. How can we go against our conscience?"

"Bob, you don't have to go against your conscience. You are entitled to your own personal, religious convictions, but, as a state senator, you are not entitled to impose those convictions on other people. You are not entitled to tell the women of Missouri that they cannot control their own bodies."

"But what about the bodies of the little babies? Don't I owe some obligation to them?"

David stood up and turned in front of the fireplace. "Bob and Maria, look at it this way. When I read the reports about you, I was excited. Now that I have met you and talked to you, I am even more excited. I think you have what it takes — both of you. I said the odds are 10 to 1 you can be elected to Congress. Let me change that. It is my professional opinion that the odds are 50 to 1 that Bob can be elected to the United States Congress next year. And from what I have seen of the two of you, I am firmly convinced that Congress would just be the first step. Bob, you could go all the way.

"Now you have won two tough elections. You two have proven that you have a talent for politics. Look at it as a God-

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

given talent that you should use and not bury in the ground. Politics is an honorable profession. Democracy can't work without it. I'm sure you agree with that. Basically, there are two kinds of politicians — the practical ones and the ideologues. I believe the practical ones make the better rulers. The trouble with the ideologues is that they see everything through the colored glasses of their own ideology, and forget they are supposed to serve all the people and not just those who agree with them. It has been said that politics is the art of the possible. The practical politician accomplishes what he can. The ideologue tries for too much and ends up with nothing. Thus, the practical one does a better job for the people he serves.

“I am a professional politician working for the Democratic National Committee. It is my job to look for men and women who will make good candidates and who will do a good job when they get into office. In selecting candidates I have to consider all the different voting blocks and influence groups who make up the party, because it doesn't do any good to come up with a candidate who cannot be elected. I don't agree with all these groups. I don't even like some of them. Let me make a confession. I don't like abortion either. But I can't let my personal feelings mess up the job I have to do.

“Remember, politics is the art of the possible. You and I are not going to stop abortion. The pro-abortion people have too much power. As Maria said, the opinion makers have decided that we need legalized abortion. I don't know all of their reasons, but I do know that the national news media, the academic community, and the entertainment industry are busy selling abortion to the American people, and they are making a good deal of progress. You can't stop them, Bob. If you try to fight them, all you will accomplish is the abortion of your own career. Even if the Supreme Court reverses *Roe v.*

CHAPTER THREE

Wade outright, that will just throw it back to the 50 state legislatures. The right-to-life people may be able to get some states to outlaw abortion, but with all the power they will have working against them, they for sure will not get all 50 states to do that. I would wager, that after the dust settles, the big majority of the American women would still be able to get an abortion by driving less than 200 miles. So you would just be throwing your career away for no purpose at all.

“Bob, we will not ask you to speak against HB 160. All we ask is that you vote against it. The Governor of Florida brought up one of these ‘informed consent’ bills, and we were able to kill it in committee; thus very few of our people had to take a stand on it. We can’t do that here in Missouri because you still have too many pro-life Democrats. For your sake, I am actually glad that we can’t kill it in committee because it enables you to establish the necessary credentials, quietly but firmly. We won’t make a big issue of it, but the right people will know how you voted, and your career on the national level will be launched.

“Think of all the good you two could do if Bob were to become the vice-president of the United States. Consider what perfect role models you would be for millions of blacks and Hispanics. You two could provide the inspiration that would lift thousands of young people out of the grip of poverty. And think what you could do for race relations in this country. By showing that you could reach that high office strictly on your own merit, and by showing that you are there to serve not just your own race, but all of the American people, you could strike one of the greatest blows against racism in all our history. And if Bob should go all the way, and become president, then you could multiply all I have said about 10 times.”

David returned to his chair. “Well, that is about all I have

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

to say. I have tried to be as open with you as I know how. I honestly believe that everything I have said is well within the realm of possibility. I honestly believe that you two are in a unique position to perform a great service for your people and for your country. Remember what old Mordecai said to Queen Esther when she was in a similar position to help her people: 'And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' "

Bob and Maria looked at each other in silence. Then Maria said, "David, you make a very plausible and persuasive case. Perhaps you are the one who should be running for Congress. Seriously, this whole thing just takes my breath away. But it is obvious that you know what you are talking about, and it is obvious that you really believe this could all happen."

Bob added, "Needless to say, we are flattered and taken back by all the nice things you have said about us and by the interest shown in us by the National Committee. This is a decision that Maria and I will make together and we need time to talk about it and pray about it. How soon must you have our answer?"

David said, "We want you to think about it carefully. I certainly don't want you to get into something that you will later regret, although I do not believe you would ever regret doing this. Your congressman is going to announce his retirement in about 30 days. When he does, several good Democrats in this district will be interested in the job. It would help if you could be the first to announce. That would help us to keep out any strong opposition in the primary. It is easier to keep people from running than it is to get them to withdraw after they have taken the plunge."

"That should give us plenty of time. Now one more thing; I assume all this should be kept confidential. However, I do have a great deal of respect for my parents' opinion, and I

CHAPTER THREE

would want to talk it over with them. Also, I would need to talk to my law partner before making a decision. Sherm has always been more than fair with me and I couldn't take a step such as this without his knowledge. However, all three of these can be trusted to keep it quiet."

David nodded his head. "There is no problem with any of them, and by all means you should get their input. In fact, if there is anyone else that you want to talk to and can trust, go ahead and get his advice. On an important decision such as this you should look at all your options and be sure you are doing the right thing."

"In other words what you want is my 'informed consent'."

David laughed. "Touche. Bob, I appreciate your sense of humor. But a word of caution here. If you get into this thing, you will be dealing with people who will not appreciate your sense of humor. Many politicians have gotten into trouble trying to be funny. Remember what happened to James Watt. He kept trying to be a comedian and ended up out of a job."

"Okay, David, I understand what you mean and I promise to save my bright remarks for Maria in the privacy of our little home."

"And I promise to keep all your jokes confidential, honey. David, it is getting late. We have a spare bedroom. You are welcome to spend the night."

David shook his head. "You are very kind, but I have an 8 o'clock plane out of St. Louis in the morning, and I need to drive back at least part way tonight. And you are right, it is getting late, and if neither of you have any more questions, I will be on my way. Here is my card. Call me any time, and I will be in touch with you." He moved to the door and put on his coat. "I have really enjoyed meeting you both. Thanks for the dinner, Maria. Think about all we have said, and I hope your answer is 'yes.'"

DRUMS OF MOLOCH

As the door closed behind David Mullins, Maria turned to Bob, and put her arms around him. "Honey, this whole thing is just too fantastic to take in. Let's sleep on it and then start talking about it tomorrow."