

Chapter 5

Dan Quayle was making last-minute checks on all the details for Vice President Bush's party in three days. Marilyn, have you seen my cowboy boots? You know, the ones we got at the rodeo last spring? We want to make the Bushes feel at home; I want a Texas theme for the party, so I'd appreciate it if somebody would help me find them.

Never mind that Bush hadn't actually lived in Texas for about twenty years, and wasn't even born there, anyway.

Let's see, calculated Dan, as he surveyed the contents of his Chuck E. Cheese wallet, Where's the number for that caterer?

Unbelievably, he had waited until now to call the caterer. But, for *Capitol Caterers*, his procrastination wouldn't pose any problem whatsoever. Harrison would simply phone one of the local grill pits in Indianapolis and have vast quantities of ribs and chicken picked-up and delivered by unmarked CIA vans.

As Quayle rummaged through the wads of business cards and receipts packed into his wallet, he spotted his *Subway* lunch card. Oh, I've been looking for this! One more ham and tuna six-inch and I get a free one!

He continued his search, following the distraction. Caterer, caterer, hmm, . . . Oh, here it is. Better give them a call.

Meanwhile, Chuck and Lyle were buzzing about the apartment, packing for the trip.

Which tie, Lyle: The fish or the cobra? asked Chuck.

Well, since the Vice President was in the Navy, I'd pick the fish one.

Good. I'll take the cobra. Chuck decided, thinking that Lyle had no fashion sense at all.

The phone rang. Hello? Lyle answered.

Hello, Lyle. Is Charles nearby? asked Mrs. Clarke.

Yes he is, Mrs. Clarke. By the way, thank you for sending over those delicious cheese blitzes.

Your welcome, dear.

Chuck corrects Lyle while making his way to the phone. It s *blintzes*, not blitzes.¹

Hi, Mom.

Don t be so hard on poor Lyle, Charles. He can t help it he s unfamiliar with our glorious culture. (Sings)

*Hava nagila hava
nagila Hava
nagila vay-nis-ma-cha*

Ma,. . . Ma, please. Chuck pleads.

What s the matter? You used to *love* to hear me sing!

I *do*, Mom; it s just that we re trying to pack for the trip, and, you know, we ve got lots to do.

Well, *Mr. Bigshot* I m performing for the Vice President son of mine. Show your Mother a little respect, and, at least, *call* once in a while. Daddy and I worry, you know. (Sings again)²

*Sunrise sunset
Can't sleep can't forget
Thought I heard your footsteps
Coming home to me*

MA! Please! . . . Ok, I promise, I ll come over before going to Indianapolis. Chuck relented .

What I wanted to tell you, *before I was so rudely interrupted*, is that I have a message for you to give to Mr. and Mrs. Bush. Tell them that we ladies of the Forest Hills Jewish Community Center in Queens are pledging our support. And, ask if they could attend our tribute to Joe Franklin.

¹ Webster s defines blitz as a sudden and overwhelming attack. Come to think of it, *either* would be correct to describe Mrs. Clarke s blintzes.

² She s seen *Fiddler on the Roof* 87 times.

Marty Freed had set up the travel arrangements for the boys to fly out of JFK the next day. Chuck and Lyle were permitted a guest; they invited their friend Shirra Assel, who would fly out of Marrakech to join them later in Indianapolis.

Jim Harrison, himself, had made arrangements for a flight from Washington. Having received a tip that Shirra was making the trip to have an audience with Bush, Jim realized that the situation was worse than he had thought. What if Shirra Assel attempts to blackmail the Vice President with the map? he shudders.

Quayle's office had reserved the *Alamo Room* and a block of sleeping rooms at the Holiday Inn in downtown Indianapolis for the party. Chuck and Lyle, upon arriving the night before, rang the bell and waited for the desk clerk—surprise! It was the surly clerk from Scranton! Having been recently transferred,³ Curt Manners was as surprised to see the boys as they were him.

Well, well, look who's here—if it isn't Simon and Garfunkel. Don't tell me Rip Taylor canceled.

Ha-Ha. Very funny. What's the matter? Holiday Inn has too much business and wants to *scare away* the customers? countered Lyle.

Keep your pants on, baldy. We're just *guests* at your dump; *and* we just happen to be performing here tomorrow for Vice President George Bush at the request of Senator James Danforth Quayle, Chuck boasts.

The only thing that Senator Quayle would request from *you two*, would be to stop singing and get your no-talent asses outta town.

Oh yeah? You'll see—just give us our room, Chuck ordered.

Ok, let's see, Curt hesitates. Please be patient, gentlemen; housekeeping needs to ready your room. It will just be a few minutes.

Curt chuckles as he goes into the back room and makes a call to housekeeping.

A few minutes later, Chuck unlocks the door to room 714, enters first, and turns on the lights, surprised at what he sees.

Can you believe that smartass? Chuck asked. Lyle, look at the beds.

Sure enough, Curt had the maid make the beds with *pink sheets*.

³ Translation: had his ass fired!

That prick s gonna get his, vows Lyle.

Early in the next afternoon, Chuck and Lyle went down to the Alamo Room to do a soundcheck. Marty had made the arrangements for a local sound and light outfit to provide *Rogers & Clarke* all the equipment they would need. While the boys were doing their check-one-two s, Lyle took special notice of several of the caterers.

Chuck, look at those guys setting-up the buffet. Do you recognize em?

Well, they *do* look kind of familiar, but being in show business, you see people all the time *you* know that.

No, *smuck*⁴ it s *them!* It s those guys that were *shootin* at us in the desert! Can t you see that?

Lyle, they re the wait a second you re *right; it is* them! Holy shit! Why are they here?

I ll tell ya why. Harrison sent his goons here to spy on us; *that s* why.

Good thinking, Lyle. Let s act dumb⁵ so they won t know we re *on* to them.

Dan and Marilyn Quayle greeted the guests as they began arriving shortly after five p.m.. You have to give Dan credit; he *does* know how to throw a party; he s had a lot of practice.

Just before six, the guests of honor arrived. Chuck had the honor of doing the introduction from the stage.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Vice President, and the next President and First Lady of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush, and his wife Barbara.

The nearly one-hundred guests sounded a resonant applause in the luxurious Alamo Room as the celebrated Bushes and Quayles made their way to the head table.

Chuck and Lyle sat at their assigned table adjacent to the stage; Chuck sipping a bourbon and water, of course, and Lyle also drinking his usual, a Budweiser.

I wonder where Shirra is? asked Lyle.

⁴ Lyle *still* couldn t say schmuck.

⁵ That would really be a stretch, now, wouldn t it?

She'll be here; she probably wants to slip into the party unnoticed. assured Chuck.

Did I tell you that my Daddy knew Bush?

Really?

Yeah. Before I was born, he worked at Texas Oil when Bush was on the board of directors. By the way, did you see those *barbecued ribs* they're bringin' in?

Lyle was in hog heaven. Chuck, on the other hand, was not particularly interested in the tasty Texas treats⁶, especially now, with his case of pre-show butterflies.

While seemingly everyone in the room was fixated on the Bushes, an unseen attractive woman in a sleek evening dress sauntered up to the stage.

Hello, boys. said the woman in a hushed voice.

Shirra! exclaimed Chuck. So good to see you!

Wow, you look great! gushed Lyle. I'd always imagined you dressed like this, but seeing you in that dress is even better.

Are you trying to put the moves on *my girl*, Lyle?

They all laughed and sat back down at the table together.

When will you return to Ishtar? asks Shirra.

Not for a long, long time. vows Lyle. Maybe if we feel like getting shot at.

We're gonna try to make it here in the states before we tour abroad again. said Chuck. This gig may be a big break for us, you know, being heard by so many important people, and all.

My friends, I don't believe these people will want to help you; they are only interested in helping themselves. Don't let their fine clothing and manners deceive you. They are as soulless as those mercenaries you met in Morocco. admonished Shirra. The only way to get the attention of these people is by threat.

Well, if you talk about destruction, Shirra, you can count me out. Chuck said⁷.

⁶ I know, it sounds like a brand of dog food, doesn't it?

⁷ Perhaps Chuck heard *Revolution* on the radio.

Me, too. chimed-in Lyle.

No, no. I don't mean threatening bloodshed. Listen to me. Bush directed the CIA to overthrow the beloved King Fah in Ishtar in 1979, and in his place, they put Emir Yousef all for the greed of the oil companies. Jim Harrison is trying to keep Bush insulated from you and from the knowledge of the map. My friends, let us all use this occasion as an opportunity to advance our separate causes. Shirra pleaded.

What've you got in mind? asked a curious Chuck.

What is it that you both want? asked Shirra.

We want to make it big *really* make it big as songwriters. confessed Lyle.

And I want Jim Harrison and his CIA spies out of Ishtar. Shirra stated. Don't you see? Bush would shake in his shoes at the notion of the facts of his CIA's evil deeds in Ishtar being made public, in this, the election year. His dreams of the Presidency would surely go up in smoke.

Are you suggesting we *blackmail* the Vice President, Shirra? a concerned Chuck asked.

No, this is a task that I must accomplish, myself. And, since you have, in the past, both risked your lives for my sake, I shall do your bidding, as well. Just find a way tonight to introduce me to Mr. Bush.

The boys' meeting with Shirra did not go unnoticed. Jim Harrison had his waiters conduct their intelligence gathering while refreshing drinks and serving hors d'oeuvres.

Excuse me, please; may I get madame something to drink? the waiter asked Shirra.

Hey, garçon. I could use another beer. Lyle said with a hint of contempt.

Lyle stared fiercely into the waiter's icy blue eyes, as though he could melt them. The waiter returned the glare, but could not outlast Lyle's. The proud Texan pondered what he would do to the son-of-a-bitch if he had the chance.

Over at the head table, George Bush was busy saying hello and shaking hands with the many guests who walked by to pay their respects and show their support. The Vice President was flanked by Barbara to his left, and Dan to his right.

You sure put together a nice party, Dan. Bush complimented. Bar and I haven't been

to this kind of shindig since Boss Hogg's cast party for the Dukes of Hazzard.⁸

Chuck noticed the throng of guests making their way to the Bushes' table.

Let's all go over to see Bush; I gotta ask him something, and it may be your chance to meet him, too, Shirra. Chuck said, remembering his mother's request.

The queue to meet the candidate quickly shortened, and it was Chuck's turn.

Mr. Vice President, how are ya? I'm Chuck Clarke, and these are my friends Lyle Rogers, and Shirra Assel.

Howdy Mr. Clarke; nice to meet you and your friends. Have we met Miss Assel? George innocently asked, moments before he realized just who she was.

I don't believe so, sir. Shirra politely replied.

Mr. Bush, I believe you knew my father *Kersey Rogers*. Lyle asserted.

Yes! I remember Kersey from my Texas Oil days. Bush recalled. Has your father passed away, son? Bush asked, remembering that Lyle said *knew*.

Yes, sir about a year and a half ago. Lyle answered with a trace of sadness.

I'm sorry, son. He was a good man, your father. Couldn't understand why he gave up such a future at Texas Oil for that gas station in Ponder. I have to admire him, though; not many guys would've done that. You look a lot like him, son.

Thank you Mr. Bush. I know he was fond of you, too.

So, fellas, how did you end up at this party? Bush asked.

Dan Quayle returned to the table and overheard the question.

Mr. Vice President, let me tell you who these gentlemen are. Hi guys. So glad you could make it. These are the entertainers I hired for the party; you're gonna *love* them, sir. I saw them in Pennsylvania last month. They're great!

Entertainers? Terrific. Lyle, will you sing *Long Tall Texan* for us?

Mr. Bush, my mother in Queens wanted me to ask you if you could possibly attend their tribute to Joe Franklin.

⁸ Gee, why wasn't *I* invited; after all the fan mail I sent to that show? Dan wondered.

Joe Franklin? a puzzled Bush asked. Well, son, you'll have to talk to my campaign manager, Lee Atwater by the way, Lee's a real good picker, you know. Maybe he could sit in with your group?

Sure, no problem. Chuck replied.

Shirra reached into her purse an act which quickly drew the response of several Secret Service agents and pulled out a white letter-sized envelope.

Mr. Bush, you can read this letter at your leisure. she said crisply.

Bush apprehensively accepted the envelope, and slipped it into his suit coat, planning to read it after the party.

After everyone had their fill of the feast that Harrison's henchmen had provided, attention turned toward the stage where Senator Quayle had taken his place at the podium.

Vice President and Mrs. Bush, distinguished guests and friends, I thank you for coming here to our fair city to pay tribute and show your support for our Vice President, whose long and distinguished career deserves our highest praise.

Tonight, my friends, we launch the Bush candidacy for the office of President of the United States. Mr. Bush, and *whoever he chooses as his running mate* (clears throat) have an uphill climb on their way to the front steps at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. George Bush will battle numerous foes along the way. At least he won't have to deal with Gary Hart and speaking of Gary Hart . . . (Dan awkwardly makes a transition into a joke.)

What's the difference between the wives of George Bush and Gary Hart? One has Bush in her heart, and the other has Hart in her bush!

The room was so quiet, you could've heard the sweat roll off Quayle's forehead. Then, in a delayed reaction, George Bush began to chuckle the laughs came, sputtering at first, and building in length and loudness until he was completely bowled-over in laughter.

Most of the guests, who wouldn't know a *good* joke if it bit 'em in the ass let alone a *bad* one, quickly picked up the cue and started their patronizing laughter.

Despite his inappropriate attempt at humor, Quayle had done a great job warming-up the audience for *Rogers & Clarke*, whom he then introduced.

I have asked these *gifted* entertainers to be a part of our celebration, this evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you *Lyle Rogers and Chuck Clarke!*

Chuck and Lyle launched into an adaptation of their song *Hello Ishtar*, reworded especially for the occasion.

*Hello Bush, you're more than a VP,
You're the Big Kahuna.
Hello Quayle, we saw you in Subway
Getting a six-inch tuna.⁹*

Jim Harrison approached the head table.

Vice President Bush, how are you, sir? asked Jim. The boys at the office are all excited about your candidacy; and, I want to *personally* offer you my support and best wishes.

Thanks, Jim. You know, Bar and I want to thank you and Gladys for the holiday fruit basket. Damndest thing happened, though. Our dog Millie got into it and ate all the figs. That damned dog shit *all over the place* even in Ronnie's office. Man, was he pissed.

Oh, I'm sorry about that, sir. But, Mr. Bush, I couldn't help but recognize the young lady, who accompanied the entertainers, as *Miss Shirra Assel*, from the nation of Ishtar. And it reminded me of our years that we worked together at the Agency. I remember how she and her people's movement gave us such a rough time with the installation of the Emir.

Yeah, I was surprised to see her here. What's her connection with the entertainers?

Uh, beats me, sir. Harrison, the lying weasel, shrugs. Would you like the boys at the office to take a look at that envelope she handed you? You know, maybe find out what she's up to?

Harrison continued his attempt to cajole Bush out of the letter, but without success.

Chuck and Lyle's performance was getting a warm response from the head table, as Bush and Quayle both did a little chairdancing, handclapping, and toe-tapping. Lyle broke into Bush's request.

*Well I'm a long tall Texan
I ride a big white horse*

⁹ His next one is free!

(He rides from Ponda on a big white huawse)¹⁰

Bush *really* liked this one. He took a long look at Dan, and then spoke.

Dan, you were right; these guys *are* great especially that Rogers boy from Texas. Son, I'll tell ya. You throw one helluva party. I like that in a man. Take this picante (pronounces it like the word can t.) sauce, for instance. Most guys would've served that cheap shit made in New York City. But not you; you got the *good* stuff that's made in San Antonio, Texas. Bush says reverently.

You're so kind, sir. But, you know, I also make a *mean* dip. I'm *known* for it. I'm told that when people think dip, they think Dan Quayle.

Now, see that, Bar? He *makes* dip. Bush tells his wife. That's the kind of quality decision-making that we're gonna need in the White House. So, Dan, I'd like to ask you if you'd consider being my running-mate. Are you interested? Bush bluntly asked.

Dan, who needed a lingering question answered before he would commit, asked, Well, does the White House cable get the *Superstation*? If so, ok.

Great, then but let's keep it quiet until we announce it at the convention, ok Dan?

George Bush added Quayle to the ticket simply because he *liked* him; they had a good chemistry between them. Bush always hated the way candidates often *strategically* picked their running-mates adding them to just to pick up the votes of their constituents. Despite Quayle's foibles, Bush knew that Dan was, basically a good guy someone who would support his presidency. That's all George needed.

Lee Atwater, as Bush's campaign manager, *was*, however, a cool strategist. It was *he* who first recommended Quayle to his client. Why?¹¹ Because Dan Quayle represented *impeachment insurance* for George Bush. Atwater was aware of Bush's past as Director of the CIA, a job that by its very nature, produced more than enough skeletons-in-the-closet for anyone who had it. Therefore, no matter what George Bush ever could or would do as president, Atwater believed that Congress would look the other way. He figured, they would rather see *Millie* take the presidency than Quayle.

During a trip to the men's room, George Bush handed Shirra Assel's letter to Lee Atwater. Lee, how about taking a look at this, and tell me what it's all about.

¹⁰ Sung by Chuck with a *New Yuawk* accent, of cuawse.

¹¹ How *dare* you question the political wisdom of the late Lee Atwater! Lee always said, My mama didn't raise no dummies, so *shut the hell up!* And, try to have a little respect for the dead, please.

Lee obliged, tore open the envelope, and scanned its contents.

Hmm. . . where did you get this, George? Lee asked intently, then added, Never mind; I'll talk to you in the car about this.

Lee decided he wouldn't tell Bush *everything* the letter said, so as not to upset him. He knew that his job was to be the buffer. Lee couldn't risk having Bush's confidence shaken. He would decide what to do about Assel and the entertainers.
