

Chapter 1

December 8th

Ann Hunt, the young CIA analyst, was escorted into the Oval Office. It was exactly nine pm. Two men and two women were standing between the two couches in quiet conversation. She walked toward her boss, CIA Director Warren Simpson, and said, "Good evening, sir." Warren greeted her and introduced her to Steve Postles, FBI Director and Jane Evans, Secretary of Homeland Security.

Rebecca Owens, the President's National Security Advisor said, "Hi, Ann. Good to see you again." Then she added to the whole group, "The President should be here in a minute. Let's wait for her so you don't have to go over everything twice."

The mood among the meeting participants was serious. Ann sensed Warren seemed a little tense.

The Oval Office door opened and the President, followed by her Chief of Staff, Judy Webber, walked in and took control, "Thank you all for coming. Please be seated and let's get started. I understand the CIA wants to pick up a couple suspected terrorists. Walk me through what we know, and what you are proposing."

The President and her Chief of Staff sat in chairs and the others sat on the two off white couches

Warren Simpson began, "Madam President, as you know we believe there is a cell of Al Qaeda terrorists who are in our country with the intention of detonating one or more dirty bombs somewhere in the Washington D.C. area. Members of a prominent family in D.C. are assisting them. Earlier today, two brothers from that family eluded our people who were watching them. One of the brothers was later seen in D.C., with two other men in his car, when he stopped to pick up two additional men we believe are part of the terrorist cell. Late this afternoon, the two suspected terrorists returned to their apartment. One of the men was wearing a backpack, which he didn't have when he left his apartment early this morning. We believe the backpack may contain one of the bombs, and we believe their attack may be imminent.

"We are recommending the FBI and CIA raid the suspects' apartment, take them into custody for interrogation, and confiscate any evidence in the apartment, hopefully one of the dirty bombs."

The President was tired after a long day of meetings, but she had listened carefully to Warren's summary of the situation. She said, "Warren, I understand we arranged for one of the brothers, suspected of involvement, to purchase fake explosives and detonators, and you were monitoring the location of these materials. Where are they now?"

Warren looked at Ann and said, "Ann, why don't you answer that one."

Ann paused for a moment as she looked directly at the President and then began, "Madam President, we arranged the sale to Mohammed, the younger brother. We placed tracking devices in each of the six detonators. Mohammed put the explosives and detonators in the trunk of his car and drove to his apartment in Richmond. A few days later all the signals from the tracking devices stopped transmitting. There are two

possibilities. He found the devices and destroyed them, or he is using a blocking device. I might add, if he found the devices, he may have concluded the explosives and detonators are fakes. If he tested the explosive he would know it is fake, and he may have obtained real explosives and detonators.”

“Thank you, Ann. Sounds like a lot of unknowns and speculation to me.”

Ann replied, “Yes Madam President. I would describe it as a lot of circumstantial evidence and educated opinions.”

The President was a little surprised with Ann’s passively aggressive response. “And do you think if we go to a judge requesting a search warrant based on this circumstantial evidence and educated opinion, the judge will grant us a search warrant?”

Ann said, “Questionable, Madam President.”

The President had only met Ann once before, but her initial impressions of the young lady were quiet positive. She smiled inwardly realizing that the CIA Director had given Ann a more important role in this meeting.

“Ann, you and your Director were here previously on the suspected plot, and I said come back when you have more evidence that will stand up in court. Do you think we are there, yet?”

Ann responded, “Madam President, with all due respect, you may be using the wrong standard. My team is tasked with following Al Qaeda, collecting intelligence, analyzing the intelligence and the situation, and preventing another terrorist attack on the United States. Sometimes we collect intelligence in ways that would not meet the standard required in a court of law. We may have that situation facing us now. It is highly likely that a cell of terrorists plan to attack sites in Washington D.C. soon. It could be tomorrow, or the next day or several days from now. Hopefully, they are using fake explosives and will be unsuccessful. I don’t want to take that chance. And Madam President, I don’t think you should take that chance either. We have reliable intelligence that indicates an attack is imminent. I don’t believe you want to be known as the President who had intel about an attack and did not act. There are times when the standard for evidence useable in a trial, may be too high. This may be one of those times.”

The President stared at Ann. Everyone else in the room was dead silent, wondering how the President would respond to Ann’s comments.

Finally, the President warmly said, “Ms. Hunt, I like a person who speaks her mind, knowing the risks involved, but believing in herself. I agree with you. Thank you for being so frank. We need more of that in this city.”

The President continued, “Anybody else have an opinion on the CIA’s recommendation that we raid the apartment and find out what’s in the backpack?”

Homeland Security and the FBI both said they support the recommendation. Then Steve Postles added, “Madam President, we have a team standing by once we have the green light. We can implement later tonight. We will take the suspects and the backpack to Quantico where we have bomb experts and interrogation capabilities.”

The President said, “You have my approval to proceed. Keep Rebecca informed. Thank you all for coming this evening.”

Ann and Director Simpson walked out together. He said, “Well done, Ann. I was a little worried for a moment that you had gone too far, but tonight we learned something good about our first woman President. Thank you.”

“Thank you, sir. I’m going to call Meyers at the FBI. I want to be there during the raid, and see what evidence is in the apartment.”

* * *

Eleven months earlier

Carolyn Holliday awoke at five am on her first day as President of the United States. She enjoyed the smell of the fresh flowers that had been put in her bedroom, and she was amazed at how quiet the White House residence was. She still could not fully grasp that she was now the first woman president of the United States.

She got out of bed, turned on the TV to watch the news, and walked to the window to see what the weather looked like. To her surprise it had snowed during the night and the ground was covered with a couple inches of snow, and it was still snowing.

Suddenly, the door to her bedroom unexpectedly opened and a Secret Service agent entered. He calmly but firmly said, “Madam President, there has been a security breach, and we need to go to the bunker immediately.”

She quickly grabbed a long coat from her closet to cover herself, and as the agent lead her by the arm, she wondered if the security problem was really serious. She decided to wait until they were at their destination before she asked any questions.

When they arrived at the bunker, another Secret Service agent informed her that an individual, across the street from the White House perimeter, had aimed a rifle with a high power scope at the White House and fired two shots. He had been subdued, without any injuries, taken into custody, and was being questioned. The President was escorted back to her residence. She was pleased to realize that she had not been afraid or panicked when the Secret Service agent burst into her bedroom. On the way back to her residence, she asked the agent, “How often does this kind of thing happen?”

He responded, “There is no way to know what the frequency will be, Madam President. During the last year, we only had a few incidents, three or four.”

The President sat at her breakfast table enjoying a cup of coffee. She was thinking about the grueling campaign and how happy she was that it was over. She was now presiding over a country where the voters had put the presidency in the hands of a Democrat and both houses of Congress in the control of the Republicans.

The divide in philosophy of government was enormous. She was facing the hardest decisions of her life. She could govern holding to her liberal beliefs and do battle with the Republicans on every important issue facing the country. Or she could try to find common ground with the Congress and avoid four years of a do nothing government.

It would not be easy. If she abandoned her liberal base she would likely be a one-term president, but if she could build the relationships necessary with the Republican leaders in the Senate and the House, she had a chance to break the Washington gridlock, make history, and make the country strong again. She would reach out to the Republicans and begin to mend some fences and unite the country.

Carolyn Holliday had made her reputation as a leader when she was the Governor of California. The state government, like the federal government, was split by strong philosophical differences on priorities and how to solve the problems. She forged alliances with the opposition and found solutions that both sides initially were against,

but eventually both sides came to understand that a partial win for each was a better solution than no progress at all.

Carolyn was a very attractive, distinguished woman who had just celebrated her sixtieth birthday. She was almost five feet ten, with black hair that she wore shoulder length. It was beginning to show a little gray, but she didn't bend to the temptation of having it colored. Her wardrobe consisted of almost a dozen business suits, most of them with skirts rather than pants. She always wore a very elegant silk blouse under the suit coat. She had far more blouses than she did suits. For evening activities and more formal events she had many elegant dresses for those occasions.

She grew up in San Francisco and graduated from UC Berkeley in the early eighties. She met John, her future husband, at Berkeley during her senior year. After graduation, she went to law school and he began work in a small technology company just south of San Francisco. He soon left to start his own company with a couple of his friends from Berkeley. When Carolyn finished law school, John convinced her that his company needed help with a variety of legal issues, and she joined the company as chief legal counsel. One year later, they were married. A few years later, John took the company public and suddenly the Hollidays were very wealthy. Carolyn enjoyed the business world, especially the experience of working with Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan during the initial public offering. But she yearned to return to academia and teach law. She remained on the Board of John's company when she joined the faculty at Stanford. While teaching at Stanford, she became involved in the political scene in California, first as an appointed Commissioner on the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC). That was followed by several other committees and boards that were part of the California government system.

John's company continued to grow and expand internationally which required frequent trips to Asia. Occasionally, Carolyn would join him on a trip, especially when his itinerary included meetings with important government leaders.

While teaching at Stanford, Carolyn was impressed by one of her students, Judy Webber. She was small, only five two, and quiet slender, but what she lacked in physical stature she made up for with her intelligence, work ethic, and her confident attitude. Carolyn became Judy's unofficial mentor and they developed a very close friendship. After law school, Judy became her administrative assistant, and theirs became a lifelong relationship.

Carolyn and John, with their new wealth, became active in the San Francisco social scene. Eventually, she was persuaded to take a step into politics and run for Mayor of San Francisco. She lost the election, but learned a lot about politics. Some of it she liked and some she did not. She definitely was attracted to the power, but she detested the shady deals that went on behind the scenes.

Later, she ran for Governor of California, won, and served two terms. Judy had been very active behind the scenes in her campaigns, but when Carolyn asked her to be her Chief of Staff, Judy politely declined. After a lengthy discussion, Judy persuaded Carolyn that she could be more effective as a less visible, silent advisor and counselor.

While Carolyn was Governor, John contracted an infectious disease during one of his trips to Thailand, and after a year fighting the disease, he passed away. Carolyn was grief

stricken, but poured herself into her job. After John's death, her friendship with Judy became even stronger as she leaned on her for strength.

When John first contracted the disease and was hospitalized, it made headline news because he was the husband of the Governor of California, and the CEO of a very successful technology company. After his death the story was again covered in the press, but little was mentioned about the specifics of the disease. The press generally liked the Governor, and left her alone to grieve her loss.

The Hollidays never had children.

Carolyn, while finishing her breakfast, thought back to her inaugural address. She was pleased with the tone of the speech and the balance between articulating her strong liberal ideals and the need to reach out to the Republican lead Congress to find ways to work together. She knew John would have been proud.

* * *

Paul Marino asked, "What did you think?"

Robert Wolf (R), Speaker of the House, and Paul Marino (R), Senate Majority Leader were having their first regular breakfast meeting since the President took her oath of office. Paul always hosted these meetings in the Senate Dining Room. Robert was from South Carolina. It was easy to tell he was from the south when he opened his mouth and turned on his southern charm, always speaking slowly with an educated, southern accent. Physically he was a large man, six feet three inches tall and just over two hundred and fifty pounds. He still had a full head of hair although it was now gray, or as Robert insisted, silver. His fellow Republicans in the House had nicknamed him the Silver Fox, both for his physical appearance and his negotiating skills.

Paul was shorter, just less than six feet, and much more physically fit. His fitness routine was to jog three days a week and exercise in the gym three days a week. He rested on Sundays. Unlike Robert, he was nearly bald and wore wire-rimmed glasses.

In his slow, southern drawl, Robert said, "I assume you are referring to Madam President's inaugural address, Paul." He paused and then went on, "I thought she gave a very good speech. Luckily it wasn't too long so we didn't have to worry about freezing to death. Obviously, I disagree with most of her priorities, but she said the right things about wanting to work with Congress to accomplish things for the sake of the country. At least that is a refreshing change. Only time will tell if she was sincere." Robert had serious doubts about the President's sincerity, but he kept his doubts to himself.

"I agree," added Paul. "She is one tough lady, and she is about as liberal as the last guy, maybe even more so, but she is smart enough to know she has to find some things we can all work on together. It will be interesting to see how long before we hear from her and what tack she takes to get things moving forward. I think we should show some initiative and develop our own list of priorities, like she did in her speech. Then we can urge her to work with us on defining one list of priorities that we can work on together."

Robert was worried that Paul was too eager to compromise. He responded, "Don't you think we should just wait awhile and see if she takes the initiative?"

“No, I think we should be proactive so she can’t continue the label us as the ‘do nothing Congress’. I will have my staff draft a list of priorities and you can have a look at it and make suggestions for minor changes, ok?”

“Deal”, commented Robert.

A few days later, Robert Wolf received a “confidential” letter from the Senate Majority Leader. Attached to the brief letter was the following list of priorities:

- Budget
- Health Care Reform (ACA, Medicaid, and Medicare)
- Debt limit
- Corporate income tax reform
- Individual income tax reform
- Business friendly regulatory reform
- Social Security reform
- Immigration reform, both legal and illegal

The Speaker reviewed the list with his staff and his leadership committee. They agreed this was an acceptable starting point.

The same day the Speaker was discussing the priorities with his staff, he received an invitation from the President to visit the White House for an informal meeting with the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives. She said her objective was to discuss working with Congress to address the problems of the country. She included with the letter an attachment showing her list of major priorities.

- Budget
- Immigration reform
- Debt limit
- Regulatory reform
- Income tax reform
- Health Care Reform

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The President began, “Jim, I thought we should sit together and talk about how things are going to work between us. You know I am going to depend on your help with members of Congress. With your long career in both the House and Senate, and the fact that I have no experience in that area, you can make a major contribution because of your relationships.”

The President and the Vice President were having their first working lunch together since being sworn in. The Vice President, Jim Townsend, had spent his political career first in the House and then moving to the Senate. He was from New York, and was chosen to be the Vice Presidential candidate more to bring a geographical balance to the ticket than for any other specific capability. He was a capable legislator, and had many friends in Washington. He was tall and handsome with greying, thinning hair, and his wife was a high-powered lawyer in one of Washington’s leading law firms.

Carolyn knew that Jim, like most Vice Presidents, was concerned about his role in the administration. She wanted to keep him motivated and feeling like he was an important part of her team. She knew she would need his help with Congress.

“Thank you, Madam President. Before I respond I have a serious question. Must I call you Madam President all the time, or can we make an exception when we are having a private meeting, like this?”

Carolyn smiled and said, “Jim, call me Carolyn when it is just us. When others are present, showing respect for the office, address me as Madam President. Likewise, I will address you as Mr. Vice President in front of others.”

“I appreciate that very much, Carolyn. Back to your comment, I will be happy to use my personal relationships with members of the House and Senate to help move your agenda through the congressional process. They have some unusual rules and procedures in both the Senate and the House, plus there are many oversized egos to manage. I encourage you to use me when you see a difficult situation developing.”

“Jim, beyond your relationship with Congress, I want you to feel like you are free to involve yourself in other areas where you have a strong personal interest. If you want to learn more about a particular issue, or if you feel you can bring some expertise, feel free to jump in and join the fun.”

“Thank you, Carolyn.”

“One other subject I want to discuss is our selection process for the long list of job openings we have in our new administration. The process is well underway, but I want to explain my philosophy and then hear some thoughts from you. First, I want to find the most qualified candidates for every job. I especially want to give women opportunities in our government, beyond where previous administrations have gone. However, to be considered for a job, their qualification is obviously of the utmost importance.”

The President continued, “Let me also comment on cronyism. There is too much of that in our government today. Don’t misunderstand me, being a good friend or a generous contributor should not automatically disqualify someone from consideration for an important job, but that person must have all the skills needed for the job and be qualified beyond any doubt.

“Jim, share some of your thoughts on the important criteria needed to work in our administration.”

Jim thought for a moment and responded, “Intelligence, good judgment, excellent resume of meaningful experience, no flaws in their personal background, and political philosophy that matches ours. Those are a few that come to mind off the top of my head.”

Carolyn said, “I would add a few others like, unquestionable moral character, and willing to say what they believe even if it conflicts with my opinion. They must also be a team player, meaning they can fight for a different position but they must be willing to accept and fully support my final decision. I want to choose people who are willing to do what is best for the country, even if it may not necessarily mesh totally with their political beliefs. I want people who have a strong legal and moral compass, and follow it even when tempted to do something by any means to accomplish the desired end.

“Jim, I also want your help as a sounding board. I am extremely comfortable with my judgment and decision making ability. Having said that, I often look at the problem and ask myself, ‘what would a man do?’ Because I am the first woman in this job, I want to be able to look back on my decisions and be confident I made the best decisions for the

country, based on what we knew at the time. I will always listen to input if you think I am making the wrong decision or a bad decision. I may disagree and go ahead with my decision, but I want people around me who are willing to give me their input, especially you.”

The President spent much of her time working with her transition team on hiring people for her administration. She was obsessive about hiring the best person for the job, while giving women every opportunity she could find. In the end, for the first time in history, women filled a majority of the Cabinet level posts.

Martha O’Rourke, an outstanding CEO from private industry became Secretary of State. Linda Bennett, a personal friend and highly successful executive at Goldman Sachs, was persuaded to join the administration as Treasury Secretary. General Jane Evans, from the Pentagon, retired from the U.S. Army and accepted the position of Secretary of Homeland Security. And many other women found themselves serving in significant positions throughout Carolyn Holliday’s administration. Judy Webber, after long discussions with her dear friend and boss, agreed to become the President’s Chief of Staff.

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Paul Marino and Robert Wolf travelled together to the White House meeting.

Charlie Banfield (D), Senate Minority Leader and Steve Caldwell (D), House Minority Leader, also shared a car. It was a cold and windy winter day when they arrived at the White House. Clouds were forming for another snowstorm. They passed through security and were escorted to the Cabinet Room. Jim Townsend, the Vice President, was waiting to greet them all.

The room itself was impressive. A large rosewood table, large enough to accommodate eight people on each side was centered in the room. At one end of the room was an old fireplace with one of the many historic paintings that adorned the White House. One of the long walls of the room had three large windows, and the opposite wall had more historical paintings displayed. Behind the chair where the President would sit, were the American flag and the Presidential flag. After everyone found their designated seats at the table, the door opened and the President and her Chief of Staff walked in. Everyone stood.

The President walked around the table greeting each participant with a warm smile and a handshake. The four leaders of Congress were seated on one side of the long table and the President, her Chief of Staff, and the Vice President, were seated on the other side of the table. There were bottles of water and glasses placed in front of each participant. Regardless of the size of the meeting, the room and all its history created a powerful environment.

As she returned to her seat and settled herself, she began, “Welcome to the White House. I know this is not your first time visiting, but this is the first time I have invited all of you here. I consider this possibly the most important meeting we will have, because it will set the tone for all things to come. We all have a choice. The government of the United States has gotten progressively more gridlocked over the recent decades. We can continue to perpetuate the gridlock by standing firm on our principles, or we can all work

together to unite this great country under our leadership. I am not naïve to think the Republicans will suddenly accept all my liberal ideas, nor should they think I awakened today and realized that I am now a conservative. What I do believe is that we can agree to work together, respecting each other's principles, while looking for ways to find common ground on the important issues.

“When I sent your invitation to 'my party' today, I included a list of my priorities. Senator Marino and Speaker Wolf, you may be surprised to learn that Senator Banfield and Congressman Caldwell were not consulted on that list of priorities. So I don't even have a consensus within my own party yet, but I thought the list was a good starting point to try to reach an agreement on what the legislative priorities should be. Not for the Democrats and not for the Republicans, but for the country. I have heard a rumor that without any prodding from me, the leadership of the Senate and the House has already developed its own list of priorities. Well done. This may give us an alternative starting point. Now all we have to do is find a way to reconcile the lists into one that we can all agree on. Then we can start the process of addressing the top priority and eventually work our way through the list. I think there are enough things on the list to keep us busy for my first term. And when my liberal supporters find out I am working closely with the opposition, I may only have one term. So, let's get to work.

“I would like to go around the room and let each of you express your thoughts on the process. Anyone want to go first?”

Senate Majority Leader Marino took the initiative and said, “Madam President, first let me offer my personal congratulations to you on becoming our President. It is refreshing to hear your comments regarding working with the Congress. I think your approach is a sound one, and I can assure you we look forward to working with you. I acknowledge that there has been and still is, a wide divide between liberals and conservatives, but the country has spoken and it is our responsibility to find solutions to the many problems facing this great nation.”

“Thank you, Senator Marino.” The President thought Marino had made a good start. It was nice in tone, but short of any real substance, but expected as a starting point.

Speaker Wolf went next, speaking slowly in his southern drawl. “Madam President, I echo all of Senator Marino's comments. I am sure you are aware of the deep distrust that exists in Washington. You have a huge challenge to overcome. We'll give you the benefit of the doubt, and assume, for now, that you are sincere. It is a refreshing change. We don't expect you to agree to everything the Republicans want to do. But we do hope you will listen to our ideas, even though they may be very different from yours, and work with us to find common ground for the good of our country. It is time to break the gridlock.”

Again, politically correct, thought the President. I wonder how the Democrats will respond.

“Thank you, Speaker Wolf. I appreciate your forthrightness. I will make the same assumption you made regarding sincerity. I will trust you are sincere, until you give me a reason to think otherwise.”

Senator Banfield decided it was his turn. Charlie Banfield was an old fashion Texas Democrat. He was a big man, physically, nearly six feet two with wide shoulders and a big chest. Unfortunately, his stomach was also getting larger. He had a full crop of silver hair, and occasionally wore black-rimmed glasses. He could have passed for Lyndon

Johnson's brother or cousin. The similarity was so strong that a few of his closest friends had nicknamed him Lynde. With his best Texas drawl he began, "Well Madam President, it is obvious there is a new sheriff in town. My feelings were a little hurt when you didn't reach out to Congressman Caldwell and me prior to this meeting, but we'll all get to know each other and our styles as we work together. I don't like the gridlock in Washington any more than you do, Madam President. I'm hopeful Senator Marino will allow us to actively participate in the legislative process, even though we are the minority party."

Senator Marino responded, "Senator, your President has reached out to all of us to work together. Let's all start with an optimistic attitude. There will be time for positioning later. You don't have to start it today."

Now it is heating up a little, thought the President. Also predictable from our Senator from Texas.

She added, "Thank you for your comments, Senator Banfield. Congressman Caldwell, would you like to add your thoughts?"

"Thank you, Madam President. I sense we are experiencing a new beginning in Washington, and it is time. I know there are difficult days ahead, and it will not be easy to reconcile our differences, but I can assure you the Democrats in the House will work with you, Madam President, to solve the many problems facing our great country."

"Thank you Congressman Caldwell." President Holliday continued, "Gentlemen, I have a suggestion. The most polarizing issue facing our country is health care. It is very unpopular with a majority in the country and even though the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was the Democrat's crowning achievement, I am willing to put it back on the table. I don't know if repeal and replacement is the right answer or major modifications to the existing law is a better solution, but the status quo is unacceptable to me. I suggest, as a major concession by the Democrats, we put the Affordable Care Act third on the list, just after the budget and debt issues. Additionally, I am willing to include Medicare and Medicaid reform together with the ACA. I do that to show I am serious about working together."

The Senate Minority Leader and the House Minority Leader both winced, but reluctantly agreed. The group spent another hour and a half discussing the list of priorities and left the meeting in agreement. The President thanked them all for their comments and support.

The new, agreed List of Priorities would be used in the President's upcoming State of the Union address.

Agreed List of Priorities

- Budget
- Debt limit
- Health Care Reform
- Immigration Reform
- Corporate Tax Reform
- Individual Tax Reform
- Regulatory Reform
- Social Security Reform

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When the President didn't have a dinner meeting, she and Judy would frequently dine together, in the President's residence. It was a small dining room that the President had redecorated to make it feel warm and casual. She always had fresh flowers in the room to give it a fresh, pleasant fragrance. Carolyn had convinced Judy to live in the White House in a separate suite that was adjacent to the President's private residence. Judy had never married, and had dated infrequently. Her life, after law school, was primarily devoted to assisting Carolyn.

Judy was clearly Carolyn's closest friend and advisor.

She was born in the Bronx, and came from a large family of six brothers and sisters. She was the youngest. She had gone to public school through high school and graduated from NYU with a degree in Political Science before moving to California to pursue her law degree at Stanford.

She rarely visited her family. On the rare occasion Carolyn questioned her about them, she kept her answers simple, saying she had moved on and didn't have much in common with them any more.

Over dinner one night Carolyn asked Judy why her parents didn't attend the inaugural celebration. Judy responded that they were elderly now and not in very good health. Carolyn said, "You should be sure you stay in touch with your parents and siblings. Anytime you want or need to go see them, please do. Things will always be hectic around here, but family is important."

Carolyn was from a small family, with only one younger sister. Her parents had both died while she was Governor, her father first and her mother one year later, both from cancer. Her younger sister, Julie, lived in Newport Beach, California with her husband and three children, all girls. Carolyn and Julie talked on the phone on a regular basis, but their lives were so different they had little in common.

Carolyn asked Judy, "How do you think the meeting went with the congressional leaders?"

"They all said the right things. I was a little surprised we made as much progress as we did. It was great getting agreement on the list of priorities. Frankly, I think you might have more trouble with your Democrat colleagues than the Republicans. Reading the body language, Senator Banfield and Congressman Caldwell both seemed uncomfortable. Obviously they don't like being in the minority, but I think they may be concerned that you are going to lessen their influence even more by working directly with Senator Marino and Speaker Wolf."

"Interesting, I sensed the same thing. We will need to give Banfield and Caldwell some extra attention to help their egos. Maybe the Vice President can help. I am curious how you read Marino and Wolf? I am walking a delicate line with them, wanting to show them I want to work with them and find solutions we can all live with, but I don't want them to misread my intentions as weakness."

Judy replied, "I am sure they will test you soon to see how 'weak' you are. You established a good beginning today, and you're on the right track."

"Thanks, Judy. I think I am going to do some reading and then try to get comfortable with sleeping in the White House. I wonder if we ever get use to it?"

"I am sure you will, Madam President. Good night."

“Good night, Judy. Let’s have breakfast in the morning.”

As the President left the room she thought to herself how lucky she was to have Judy as a sounding board for her ideas and her perspective on people. She was pleased she had Judy as a confidant and a friend.

That began a routine of the two having breakfast together almost every morning. Once in a while they would have a visitor join them, but generally it was a private time for the two of them.