

## Chapter 2

Michael Harris, the junior senator from the State of Indiana, stood up from behind his desk in the Senate Chamber. The desk was still one of those installed in 1819, though modified for extra storage space on the top. He looked down at the stack of books before him. Sending his aids to the Library of Congress across the street over the last few days resulted in at least fifty books on the subject in discussion at the moment. The thirty-one year old senator, with graying temples adorning his dark hair, adjusted his glasses as he held in his left hand the bill he was going to address.

This bill had recently come over from the House, passing easily the liberal agenda, which included this ban on guns, which could result in an amendment to the Constitution which would negate the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms. Coming to the Senate, it had seemed once again the liberals would not be able to gain the sixty votes to override a presidential veto. Mike, the new guy on the block, had personally called or spoken to each senator on the subject. He knew that with compromises and promises made, along with the normal “back scratching,” it could pass the Senate also.

The President Pro Tem had recognized the “junior senator from the great state of Indiana.” As Mike stood to speak, butterflies gathered in his stomach. Usually, a young senator was required to keep quiet, and not even give speeches on the floor of the senate. How he was recognized now by the chairman was merely though a calculated oversight as he timed his request with the normal request for adjournment. The President Pro Tem merely thought this young senator was wishing to rush home to the family, or maybe out to a Lobbyist’s party. So, as a gesture of bi-partisanship, the Pro Tem had called on Mike to make the motion to be adjourned, or so he thought.

“Mr. President, I am standing to address this senate body on the bill before us today, SB1189, a Resolution to Amend the Constitution’s Second Amendment.”

A hush came over the chamber as senators stopped packing up to leave. Eyes turned to watch Senator Harris, who occupied one of the seats in the back row and farthest to the left of the chamber. It took several minutes for most senators to even locate who it was that was speaking. The Pro Tem looked at the seating chart underneath the glass on his desk to even make sure who it was who was speaking.

“Uh, Senator, uh, Harris? As presiding officer, I just assumed that you would be offering a dismissal request.”

“No, Mr. President, but I appreciate you recognizing me just the same. I would like to begin by saying that I...”

“Senator Harris, the Chair will be patient for a few moments, but if I had any idea that you were going to speak on a bill from the floor, I would not have even recognized you.”

“And I appreciate your recognition, Mr. President,” Mike stammered a bit, but realized what he must do and continued. “But, realizing that the President Pro Tem is an honest and gracious gentleman from Colorado, I will take your recognition as a reminder of your kindness toward both sides of the aisle. Now, continuing what I was going to say...”

“Mr. Harris, the Chair finds you out of order in this instance...”

“Oh, but Mr. President, according to the rules of the Senate from the beginning, once you have recognized me, I have the floor until I am through speaking. Unless you are willing to set a precedent that will turn Senate rules on their head, so to speak.”

“Oh, just continue on Mr. Harris. I trust you will be brief with your statements. Are you planning to be brief?”

“Thank you, but no, Mr. President. I plan on speaking to the issue until I am finished.”

“Please, Mr. Harris, the Chair would caution you to be brief. Remember, the Chair has a wonderful memory when it comes to grandstanding senators. We will not forget anytime soon what you are wishing to do, which is against the wishes of the President Pro Tem of the United States Senate.”

The Senate was completely quiet throughout this exchange, and somewhat puzzled as to the usually quiet senator from Indiana’s problem. Some senators on both sides decided to reseat themselves to hear what Harris had to say, considering he was putting his entire future role as a legislator on the line for a few minutes of being able to speak to the whole Senate. Some of the liberal senators to the right of the Chair were already writing a note about completely snubbing the senator from Indiana from this point forward. No one defies the “club rules” of the Senate, especially someone as conservative a voice from some “hick town” in the Midwest.

“Mr. President, esteemed colleagues from both sides of the aisle, Senate Bill 1189, if passed by this body, would send a chilling effect throughout the entire country. The Right to Bear Arms is fundamental to our society. This extension of the Brady Bill goes far beyond what any reasonable person would believe should be done...”

“Would the Senator yield for a question?” The Majority Leader was standing beside his desk at the front of the chamber as his booming voice thundered across the room.

The President Pro Tempore, the only person in the chamber who could be spoken to directly, and not in the third person, echoed the question.

“Will the junior senator from Indiana yield for a question?”

“I will yield for a question only.” Mike had done his homework and knew every trick the opposition, and maybe even his own party, would ask to derail what he was endeavoring to do.

“Mr. President, would the senator from Indiana please answer as to ‘how long’ he plans to speak to on this subject? Will he take five minutes?”

The Pro Tem again echoed the question, following the strict rules of the Senate Chamber.

“Yes, I will answer the Majority Leader question, Mr. President. I do not plan on speaking for only five minutes. I plan on speaking for as long as it takes to get my points across.” Having been the Majority Leader in the Indiana Senate for six years made this no easier for Mike. *This is the big leagues*, he thought in waiting for a response.

“Mr. President, would you be so kind as to inform Senator, uh, Harris is it,” the Majority Leader continued, “that most of us will be leaving now, as about half of the chamber is empty anyway. Please let my esteemed colleague know to have a pleasant time speaking to no one about whatever it is he would like to speak on.”

This was again repeated by the President Pro Tem.

“Why Mr. President, please thank the Majority Leader for his kindness. I will do that.”

Men started packing up and moving to the back of the chamber to the cloak rooms on each side. Hand waves went up from both Democrats and Republicans in his general direction. Mike stood during the rush for the doors and wondered if what he wanted to accomplish could actually be done in this way.

The Pro Tem spoke up as soon as the rustling of senators leaving had subsided.

“Mr. Harris, since I have to continue to be here for as long as you have the floor and are speaking, will you be so kind as to give me some time frame so that I can notify my next of kin as to my whereabouts?”

“Mr. President, I would like to give you a time frame, but at this point, I cannot. Now that the majority of the senators have left, I will let you know of the fact that I am going to hold the floor and speak on this bill until there is a vote of cloture which is taken and three-fifths of this senate body has voted for me to stop.”

“Are you planning a Filibuster, Mr. Harris?”

“I do not know at this time, Mr. President. If someone could assure me of there being less than sixty votes on this issue to not override a veto, then I could be persuaded to close my session. Until that is done though, I suppose it will be just you and me for a while.”

The President Pro Tem busily scribbled notes on index cards in front of him, motioning to his aids and Senate Pages to deliver them for him. This maniacal show from this junior senator was not setting well with him, and he needed help from his side of the aisle to stop this show-boating. Perhaps some could be caught before they left the building so that they could be on their phones to attempt to collect the whole

body. Nothing like this had happened in the last forty years or so, ever since South Carolina's Senator Strom Thurmond spoke for twenty-four hours and eighteen minutes against the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

"Mr. President, using my right as a member of this senate of unlimited debate, I am going to be reading for the record the entire history of the Second Amendment Right to Bear Arms from every source I have in front of me, and maybe any sources that come in from others while I am here. I intend to bring as much attention to this atrocious Bill as can in the next few days if need be."

As more Pages shuttled back and forth from offices and cloak rooms, including to the Senate Office Buildings and back, the Chairman decided to play the game with the young senator for a while.

"Senator Harris, by all means please continue with what you were saying. I have decided this would be a good time to take a nap. Would a Page please find a pillow and bring it to me?"

"Mr. President, the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution declares that every American has the right to bear arms..."

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Members of the leadership of both parties gathered unofficially in a back room of the main cafeteria in the Hart Building, the newest of the Senate Office Buildings. Doors were closed to visitors and senators had coffee and snacks delivered to them. The Majority Leader had a scowl on his face. He brought the meeting to order.

"Gentlemen, I have assembled us together to see how we can stop this young senator from Indiana from making a mockery of our time and institution. Ralph, he's one of your boys, what are you going to do about this?"

"I don't really know what to make of this, Charlie. He blindsided me too. About a third of our people are at home running for reelection in two weeks. I know that goes for your party also. So, we can't bring them all back for a cloture vote. I'm open to suggestions."

Charles Burton and Ralph Ford had been in the Senate a combined 46 years. They knew every trick in the book, and some tricks were even thought up by them.

"Who is his closest friend in the senate? Anybody here know?" Burton looked around the table at heads shaking in the negative. "Any suggestions?"

The Minority Whip spoke up. "Well, if he is trying to bring attention to this Senate Bill 1189, perhaps that's where we should start. I will send him notes letting him know that we have checked this out and there are not enough votes to override a veto."

"Why would he believe you?" It was clear that Burton was in charge of this meeting.

“Well, we have to try something. We really don’t know what his motives are for doing this in the first place. We need to talk to him.” The Whip responded with frustration. “Besides, I have plans this weekend in Europe.”

“We all have plans for the weekend, Fred. This is Thursday. We have by tomorrow noon to put this to rest gentlemen. As for me, I will stay here in my office and monitor how he is doing. But you will be available to me at all times. Make sure you give your number to my secretary.” Burton stood, dismissing the meeting.

Going directly to his office, Burton picked up his phone receiver at his desk and punched the numbers.

“Barry, this is Charlie. We had enough senators hanging around tomorrow to have a quorum to pass that Brady Bill amendment. Make sure they stay in town. We are going to try to shut up a young man who is making a fool out of us, and then we are going to pass that bill so our plan can be carried out. Is that clear? ... Good.”

He thought for a moment, and then punched more numbers on his secure line.

“Let Ali-Abdul know we are dealing with the situation, but we may need his help.”

Burton sat down behind his desk and wrote out a plan for each situation that could arise.

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“When is the funeral,” asked Jim Stoeffler, President of Ameritech.

“Saturday,” responded Brandon Waters, Indianapolis Director of the Department of Public Works. “Steve was a great senator, and a great man.”

“He was also our last hope for being able to defeat BARA.” The speaker was the Adjutant General for the Indiana National Guard, Major General Martin Forrest.

The men around the table nodded when the name BARA was mentioned. BARA was the new bill implementing a new Constitutional Amendment doing away with the right to bear arms for individuals. The bill that started out as Banning Assault Rifles in America had conveniently become Banning All Rifles in America.

There was silence around the room as men glanced at each other, wondering what was in the mind of each other as they contemplated their next move in defeating this amendment.

Forrest continued. “We needed Steve in the Governor’s office. Period. Now we’ll get that Allen guy as governor, and he will just go along with the Libs in congress.”

“Are you certain Indiana will be the first state to test this amendment?” The question came from Marion County Sheriff Gerald Henderson.

All eyes turned to the man seated at the head of the table. He nodded as he spoke softly. “If this bill passed the Senate this week, it would be placed on this year’s ballot in little over two weeks.” The men all looked into the grieved eyes of the senior senator from their state, Bob Hayes.

“But how can they do that,” asked United States Congressman Chris Bradford. “Doesn’t there by law have to be ninety days before the election before an amendment can be placed before the people?”

Hayes responded, “It already has been applied for and accepted as part of the ballot. The ballots have been printed with it on there. My sources have seen it with their own eyes. Indiana is the test state. The powers that be are convinced that if this passes a conservative, Midwestern state, then several other states will follow suit. Thirty-five states, and it becomes apart of the Constitution.”

“It seems like we could have stopped that from happening. Can’t we make a challenge in the court?” Bradford seemed frustrated as he squeezed his fists together.

“Ted?” Hayes looked at the man at the other end of the conference table, Ted Bauer, Attorney General for the State of Indiana.

Bauer spoke slowly, “We would need the right judge, and the right jurisdiction, and we would need time also. Plus, we give up the one advantage we have.” He glanced at the men around the table. “Anonymity. They would know who was on to them, and they would know how to neutralize us one by one.”

These meetings had been going on for the past two years, ever since the model legislation was proposed concerning upgrading the Brady Bill to include all firearms. Calling this the Meeting to Defeat the Bill, MDB, these men has placed their present and future positions of power in each others hands. They had, in essence, pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to ensuring the safety of the people of Indiana, and ultimately all of America.

“Martin, explain to Chris what you found out before the last meeting. He was not with us then.”

“Sure, Bob. Chris, I was briefed two months ago by the Army Intelligence and Security Command, INSCOM, based in Virginia. They have told me that we have-- now men this is highly secure information which I could spend a long time in federal prison for divulging this to anyone. My neck is in the noose here if this gets leaked by any of you. I have been told that we have 28 different terrorist groups working in the state of Indiana at this time. Some of these are Al Qaeda cells that G-2 is following right here in our state. Now, we know the average American is so complacent to any terrorist activity, especially since the Libs have signed that treaty agreement with Al Qaeda last year to try to assure no more terrorist acts will be done here in the U.S.”

“It has been a long time since 9-11,” added Bob Hayes.

“Yes, and they have forgotten that you cannot trust terrorists,” continued the Major General. “They will lie back, for years even, collecting more information and building up their weapons, and then strike when we least expect it.”

“And that’s when Joe Hoosier needs his rifle,” reminded Sheriff Henderson.

“So, now that Steve is dead, what is our next step?” The Adjutant turned and faced the senior senator, as did the rest of the men.

They saw the blue eyes of the seventy-one year old statesman who had led their state in Washington for the last two decades. The softness of the eyes is what made Bob Hayes the popular senator of the people...eyes so trusting, so confident...eyes that could see the future unfolding before him and cause him to be believed when explaining what he saw. He placed his right hand upon the back of his head, smoothing out the hoary hair.

The senator addressed the men at the table.

“We are going to delay the amendment on the ballot by sacrificing one of us. This will gain us victory in the short-term, albeit a costly victory. But it will buy us the time we need to recover from Steve’s death and plan what our future strategy will be.”

“What’s the cost, Bob?” General Forrest’s words were seasoned with the loss of troops years before in Iraq. He understood the military principle that a man will die, not necessarily for a cause, but in order for his buddies to live. If one of them were sacrificing themselves, he knew it was for those seated in this room.

“Right now, Mike Harris is Filibustering the senate in Washington. They haven’t realized that is what he is doing, and hopefully he can buy us at least twenty-four hours of time to come up with either another candidate that can defeat Gary Allen, or another plan to foul up the Second Amendment legislation. If nothing else, he will bring national attention to this bill, which we are trusting will pull it off the ballot here in Indiana for now. Mike’s problem is that he is going to make some powerful people very mad over what he is doing. Actually, he is putting his career on the line to give us some time. His career in the senate is over as of now. He knows that; but because of the stakes, he is willing to do this. But, the powers in the senate will be really pushing it to try to find sixty votes for cloture at this time of the year. And I won’t be there to vote, so with Mike and I that takes it down to 60 votes out of 98 possibilities. That decreases the odds somewhat, but we still cannot count on that. So, gentlemen, not only is Mike committing political suicide, but he’s placing himself in physical danger too.”

Several men around the table asked the senator “Why?”

“The stakes are too high. They will realize they cannot shut Mike up with conventional senate rules, which means they may turn to unconventional ways to shut him up.”

“What are you talking about Bob,” the Attorney General asked.

“Well, Mike has a wife and children.” Hayes stated that as matter-of-factly as he could. “Gerald, could you send some of your men to watch Mike’s house in Fort Wayne?”

The sheriff nodded and made some notes.

“Then we had better quickly come up with someone who can beat Allen,” stated the congressman. “Suggestions?”

They looked at each other around the table.

“Why not promote Wayne Riley,” offered the Attorney General.

“Ted, you know Steve was one of us. It would take us too long to bring Riley up to speed on all the issues. And I don’t think he has the persona to pull off an election of this magnitude.” Hayes knew that Bauer was one of Riley’s friends, and that he trusted him. “This is where one slip costs us the whole game.”

“That means it’s someone sitting at this table then, Bob,” the adjutant stated.

“The trouble is, we are all team players, Martin. None of us is either high profile enough, or young enough to take on Allen.” All the men nodded as Hayes stated the reality of the situation. “So, we pick an unknown, or we bring Riley in on it, or we allow Allen to win, if we can get some leverage on him. Let us meditate on these matters and meet back here in three days. Ted, lead us in prayer.”

Heads bowed around the table and hands folded together as the Attorney General of the State called upon the Advocate of the Universe for help.

“Lord, we need discernment right now. Please help us as we continue to meet here, to understand thy will. And please protect Mike as he buys us the time to do what is necessary. Thank you. In Jesus Name, Amen.”

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Randy Jones sat at the desk of his friend and boss, Steve Vorbach, as he reflected on the day. Mrs. Snodgrass had died a few hours after being admitted into intensive care at IU Hospital. Steve’s actions had given the woman a fighting chance. He had spent the afternoon with Steve’s wife and children at their home in Fishers, on the north side of Indianapolis. Judge Jones was there also, and the two of them talked about the future. Randy knew he could have his old job back with his father at any time, but he just wanted to take some time off and collect his life again. His father had understood. *We all lost a great friend*, he thought. His thoughts also went back to the start of the campaign when Steve asked him to be the chairman of his election committee. Randy remembered one somber meeting, which took place in this very office. *Randy, if anything happens to me out of the ordinary—anything—look for the file in my locked cabinet entitled—Anything*. Jones moved to the gray file cabinet in the corner of the office, the only locked one. Taking out his set of keys, he tried several until finally one worked and the lock sprung open. He pulled on the top drawer—*“A” has to be first*—and leafed through the files, stopping at one with the title of “Anything.”

Sitting down at Steve’s desk he opened the folder, and read the cover sheet.

*Randy, if you are reading this, then something has happened that is beyond our control. Please read this entire file, and then call the number below and talk to Senator Bob Hayes. If something has happened to me, you are needed right now in your life more than you will ever know. He will meet with you. Let him see this*

*letter so that he knows that I trust you implicitly, God go with you. Your friend,  
Steve.*