

The walk to the Capitol building from the City-County building would take the Jones' family about fifteen minutes. Nancy clung to her husband as the two of them walked in front of the others. She whispered words of encouragement to him from time to time, but from the calm, serene look on his face, she realized that he was not feeling the pressure. He seemed different. The judge was always a strong, unemotional man, but now he seemed to her to have a radiant peace. The quiet smile on his face puzzled her, and yet, she received reassurance from it that all would be well.

"Remember when we first moved here, and you took me for a carriage ride on this street?"

"Um-hm," he replied as the smile grew as he looked at the old, brick street. "It's funny how many times a day I still see those carriages go by, and think to myself that we ought to go again."

"Let's make a date of it."

"Fine." His thoughts turned to Bernie Sallenger sitting somewhere on the bank of a river with his grandson. He thought about restructuring his own priorities. A carriage ride with Nancy seemed a whole lot more fun than anything else that came to mind.

A few steps behind the older couple walked Katie and Brad. The older brother had his arm around his sister's shoulder and spoke nonstop about every subject he could think of. Seeing his sister hurting deeply inside, the older brother knew it was his job to bring her out of it. Bradley used this challenge to keep his own spirits high.

"Sis, where does it say in the plot of this movie that the young girl gets to show everybody what a donkey-face looks like?"

"Shut up." She turned her face away from her brother's, but she had to push back a smile.

"Hey, look here. I'm not gonna allow you to be forlorn, or three-lorn, or even two-lorn. As a matter of fact, I'll lorn you a thing or two before this walk is over."

"No mater what you say, I'm not going to laugh, so just stop it." These were fighting words to her brother. Now the challenge was delivered.

"Do you remember that parade we saw last May over in that little town of Thompsonville? Remember what happened right there in front of us when that group of Shriner's horses went by? Remember the smell?"

Again she turned her face away from his and said nothing.

"Remember the Thompsonville High School band that went by right after the horses? Remember that big, fat tuba player that slipped?"

He could feel her body shaking rhythmically.

"Remember the look on his face as he fell? Remember the whole woodwind section he wiped out? Remember the big dent in the bell of that tuba? Remember how his uniform looked when he got up?"

"Stop it!" She turned a reddened face toward him with a large unwanted smile on it.

"Remember how you and I fell on the ground, rolling and laughing. Remember how we laughed uncontrollably for about an hour, until all the muscles in our faces and sides were hurting so badly?"

Suddenly, the laughter broke her silence as she looked up at her brother and said, "You don't play fair."

"Hey, all I did was ask questions. You didn't have to remember."

The laughing couple in the middle of the group seemed to lighten the walk. Bradley and Katie shared stories of similar escapades in the past. One of his remembrances jarred her memory of another story that she could tell, which reminded him of another. Back and forth they bantered; older brother and younger sister, helping one another forget the reality of the present.

Walking ten paces behind the laughter were Randy and Laura, a most strikingly beautiful couple. His finely chiseled features, muscular look, and light hair was a perfect compliment to her graceful movement, lithe form, and dark, glowing hair. Randy purposely lagged behind the others in order to get to know Laura better and pose some questions which had crossed his mind since he had met her.

As he formed his questions, Laura spoke first.

"Randy, what chance does your father have against these people?"

"About a snowballs chance in..." Stopping suddenly, he seemed embarrassed about saying this to Laura. Funny, he never did embarrass easily before. "Not a very good one," he continued. "But Dad always has a knack for landing on his feet."

"I've only known him for a few days, but I can see how people hold him in such high regard."

"He's quite a man."

"My Dad was like that. He gave up law school when Grandpa died in order to keep up the family business and help Grandma. He sacrificed all his dreams and plans just for his own family. Judge Jones said he knew my Dad back then. He told me that he and Dad were in the same study group in law school, and that my Dad was the main reason for him doing so well."

"Really? Well, it is kind of strange how fate works. They were friends when they were our age, and then fate split them up and took them in two different directions. Now fate brings them back together, through us, so that we can be good friends."

"Randy, I really don't think fate has that much to do with it. My pastor, Reverend Turner, says that fate is like shaking up a thousand little pieces of metal in a bag, and being lucky enough to open the bag and pull out a watch."

"But we're not talking about a watch, Laura. We're talking about people, and circumstances."

"The analogy is there, Randy, for anyone who wishes to see it."

"Sorry, Laura. I suppose I'm just not into listening to preachers anymore."

"And why not?"

"Preachers only want to tell you how to live, and then take your money, and not necessarily in that order. Then, these same guys get into a scandal either by living opposite to how they preach or stealing all the money. To me, they're the hypocrites."

"Randy, that's a very small minority. In fact, it becomes a scandal because it is so rare, and people aren't expecting it to happen. Besides, you don't get mad at the law school for taking your money and telling you how to live, in that order. You do what the professors say because you have chosen to live that way."

"It's still my life."

"Randy, the Bible says that your life is a vapor and will soon disappear."

“I’ll take my chances and have faith in myself.”

“That’s the fallacy, Randy. You say you don’t want to trust in a man who is a preacher to run your life, but you want to trust a man who is a third year law student to run your life. I say you are wrong to have any man run your life. God wants to run your life.”

Randy’s voice changed from argumentative to sincere. “I have absolutely no concept of how I can have faith in a God who I can’t see.”

“Didn’t you study Federal Rules of Evidence, Randy?”

“Sure, last semester... But what...”

“What kind of evidence would it be if I told you that there is a God, because I know Him and have talked to Him?”

“Hearsay... and that’s inadmissible evidence.”

“When is hearsay allowed in court?”

Thinking, he said, “Well, when you want to show the judge probable cause, like in getting a search warrant or an arrest warrant.”

“Why does the judge believe your hearsay?”

“Because he believes you’ll present him the stronger evidence once the search or arrest occurs.”

“Would you at least admit that God is probably there, just on my word?”

“I believe you, Laura...but it is still hearsay.”

“How about on the hearsay of millions of witnesses in every generation and every culture on earth?”

“OK! I give up, counselor. You get your warrant.”

“You think about it, Randy. Now all it takes is for you to want to believe the probable cause I’ve told you about. We haven’t even place into evidence the hundreds of eyewitnesses from the Bible who saw everything first hand. We haven’t even discussed all the circumstantial evidence of Christ being exactly Who He claimed to be.”

“Court’s adjourned for today, Miss Counselor. Besides, ahead looms yon Capitol and the time for jousting appeareth to be closeth.” Although the words were stated lightheartedly, the seriousness in his voice made Laura’s heart grow heavy. Then they both noticed the busses.

Every color of bus imaginable lined Market Street and Senate Avenue. As a red, white, and blue bus with BETHANY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF FORT WAYNE painted on the side pulled up to the red light at the corner, someone on the bus shouted, “There’s Judge Jones.” While stopped at the light, people poured off the bus and headed in the direction of the judge. As they passed the judge and his family, people reached out their hands and offered encouragement to him.

“Give ‘em the truth, Judge.”

“We’re all behind you, Your Honor.”

“We’ll be prayin’ for you.”

“Thank you, thank you,” said the astonished judge to everyone who called out their support to him. Climbing the long steps which led to the main entrance, the judge was met by another delegation of people carrying signs which read, “RANDY JONES, OUR NEXT JUSTICE!”, “PRAY FOR JUDGE JONES”, and “RIGHTEOUS EXALTETH A NATION!”

An attractive, well-dressed woman in her early thirties approached the judge before he entered the building. She held a notepad and a pen.

“Judge Jones, I’m Chris Shackelford, with the Star. May I ask you a few quick questions?”

Looking down at his watch, he noticed that there was still fifteen minutes before he had to be at the hearing.

“I have a few minutes, Miss Shackelford. How may I help you?”

“Your Honor, why all the people attending the hearing?”

“I really do not know.” The judge smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

“Are you saying that you had nothing to do with all of these people showing up here today?”

“Nothing, whatsoever.”

Realizing there was not story to be found in that line of questioning, the experienced reporter went the human interest route.

“Mrs. Jones, what do you think of all these supporters of your husband?”

“I think it’s tremendous,” replied Nancy, not easily containing her excitement.

“Did you imagine that so many people would show up that the hearing would have to be changed to the House of Representatives Chamber?”

“This is a surprise to the Judge and me.”

“Your Honor, one last question. The Governor was not supposed to speak to the committee, and was even planning to be out of town today. He was seen entering the building earlier, and an inside source in his office says that he is going to address the committee at the start of the hearing. Why the change in plans?”

“The Governor told me two days ago that he chose me because of my non-partisan political stance. I have not spoken with him since then, and I never try to guess why politicians do what they do. If you’ll please excuse me, I don’t want to be late to my hearing.”

The judge smiled, grabbed his wife’s hand, and entered the large outer doors of the building.



Mary Sanders and Dolores Blake, the school secretary, sat in the school office, eating their lunches and talking as they had done since the first day of school, four days ago. Mary had waited until the pastor had left for lunch with Mr. Brown before meeting her friend down the hall.

The talk was about the news in their school and church. They spoke of the prayer group which had met earlier that morning in the auditorium. Some of the teachers had pledged to start coming to pray with the others the next morning. Their conversation turned to Mr. Jackson and his new “assignment” given him by the pastor, and how busy this kept Mr. Jackson, along with the regular church duties he had. Mary was sharing a letter from her son Jay who was in Bible college, studying for the ministry, when the door to the school office burst open, revealing two Deputy Sheriffs, and two State Police officers.

“Who’s in charge here?!” roared one of the deputies.

The sudden entry of the men caused Dolores to jump and start shaking. A surprised Mary stood quickly and walked over to the counter which separated her from the officers.

“There is not one in charge here now,” she said as normally as she could. “You’ll need to wait until the pastor or principal returns.”

“Lady, we can’t wait. This warrant states that we must search these premises immediately, before any more children are harmed.”

The church secretary turned. Her knees felt as though they would become jelly at any moment.

“Mrs. Blake, please go and get Mr. Davis. He’s in his Science class.” She turned back and faced the officer. “May I see the warrant, please?”

“Lady, every minute we delay in searching the premises, will be one more minute you’ll be charged with obstructing an officer in the line of duty.” Each time he spoke, the authority of his demanding tone increased.

“Officer, I know you can arrest me. But, I also know that you have to allow me to read and understand the warrant before you can search the buildings. I would be willing to be arrested in order to get you to obey your own procedures. First, I want to know if you are searching the correctly designated areas named on the warrant, and second, I want to see if the warrant is properly drawn up and signed by a judge.”

Not to be outdone or intimidated, the officer continued to threaten. “Lady, if I arrest you, you’ll be taken in, strip searched, and placed in the holding tank with all the male prisoners.”

Mary stood silently with her right hand still held out towards the warrant. She hoped the beating of her heart was not heard by the officer.

Finally, the man threw the paper onto the counter and gruffly said, “Read it, but be quick about it.”

Mary’s eyes scanned the paper. She was much too shaken to read or understand what it said, but she figured at least she was stalling for time, and maybe Pastor or Lee would be here any minute. Mr. Davis walked up behind the secretary.

“What’s up, Mrs. Sanders,” the short, balding teacher whispered over her shoulder.

“It’s a warrant to search the preschool ministry, Larry. Pastor and Lee are gone, and we need someone to accompany these officers; someone who can keep their mouth shut. You’re elected.”

“Thanks,” the first year Science teacher said, with total sarcasm.

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Senator Gary Allen sat behind his desk on the fourth floor on the west side of the Capitol building, directly above the Senate Chambers. He had been poring over all the files given him at his breakfast that morning. Already on the pad before him were questions he could ask the nominee which could shed adverse light on the judge.

Systematically, he placed the questions in four main categories, with sub-questions under each main question. The sub-questions covered any direction in which potential answers would lead, yet always entrapping the one answering. Allen had worked to perfection this system of doggedly pressing a person until the answers he

wanted to hear were given. Then he would use an answer constantly, over and over, in order to beat a person to death with it.

Several were the people over the years he had subdued with this form of attack. The technique had been learned from United States Senator Vance Allen, his father. Vance had one of the sharpest debating minds in the country. The only difference between the two was Vance Allen's gracious personality as opposed to son Gary's malicious one. In other words, the father, as a precise surgeon, could delicately remove his opponent's belief, leaving the person in tact, while the son, with the same precision, would remove his opponent's heart.

His phone buzzed.

"Virginia, I told you I was not to be disturbed for any reason!" His voice was shrill and filled with hatred.

"It's her, Senator."

"I don't even want to speak to my wife. You know that. Now get rid of her!"

"It's not your wife, Senator. It's that Welfare lady."

"I'll get it," He pressed the flashing button. "Anna, how's my girl." His rich baritone was in total contrast to his previous phone voice.

"Great, Gary. How's my handsome Senator?"

"This is going to be a great day. I can feel it."

"Hmmm... I can hardly wait to get you alone if you're in this good a mood."

"Same place same time?"

"That's what I called for. Plus, I wanted to let you know that the Day Care legislation you wrote up looks just great."

"Your man Venchenzo did most of it. I only made it look pretty."

"You make a lot of things look pretty."

"I know, but I gotta have something good to work with first."

"Thank you, Sweet. I have to let you know that you'll hear some opposition when you introduce that Bill. You'll be hearing about a church Day Care being shut down soon."

"Hey, I can handle the religious right. I'll get the press to interview me right as my wife and I exit our church on Sunday."

"You are one sly dog. That's why I love you so much."

"I love you because you have such good taste in men."

"See you later, Sweet."

"Bye, love."

The smile erased off his face as quickly as it came when the senator resumed outlining his questions. A knock came from his office door.

"What!"

The door opened as his secretary, Virginia Gleason, entered and stood across the desk from Allen.

"Yes, Virginia, what may I do for you?" His icy stare and half smile were meant to intimidate.

"I came to hand you my resignation." She placed an envelope on his desk.

"Now, Virginia," his smooth voice consoled, "Let's not be hasty. I know I have been a little testy today, but I have been so busy..."

“It’s not about today. Gary, I was your father’s personal secretary for over fifteen years, ending the day he passed away. He told me just before he died that you needed a good secretary like me to help you.”

“You are a good secretary...”

“Let me speak. Gary, I’ve known you since you were a smart-aleck high school student. Since then, all you’ve added to your personality is deceitfulness. You started out your career with all the brilliant people from your father’s staff. One by one, you alienated all of them, and they left. Gary, when your father was alive, he took up for you whenever any of them approached him about your hypocrisy and two-faced attitude. He never would believe it, even to his dying day. At least I have the consolation of knowing that everybody knows it now, except that two-bit hussy over at Welfare.”

“That’s enough, Gary! I gave you a break because of your father and because you were young. But I still haven’t forgotten the Adam Silver incident. He was the best advisor on your father’s staff. You couldn’t stand him getting so close to your father, so you systematically destroyed him by turning your father against him. I know you went through his mail. You even had him followed. Then you plotted his downfall, and even gloated when it happened. Everyone saw your vindictiveness then, except your father. But everyone else knew. The only reason we were loyal was because of your father, and because you paid us every week when you took Adam Silver’s place as Chief-of-Staff. Don’t worry; someone will always work for you if you give them money. But don’t expect loyalty for anything else but that. Good-bye, Gary... and good riddance.”

“I’ve wanted to get rid of you for a long time, you old witch. I only kept you because of my Father. This just saves me the time for firing you. You’ll never work again, if I have any say about it.”

“You don’t. I start as personal secretary for Senator Vorbach tomorrow.” The older woman moved across the room and closed the door behind her.

Allen made a note to call Vorbach and send him the secret file he kept on Virginia Gleason and her “terrible” work habits. Then he went back to his questions. He would destroy this judge. That would make him feel powerful. Chuckling out loud, he said, “Answer that, ex-Judge Jones.”