

Chapter One

If you really want to hear about me running for president, the first thing you'll probably want to know is what country I was born in, and what my experience holding political office is like, and what my tax returns say, and all that Mitt Romney kind of crap, but I don't feel like talking about any of that, if you want to know the truth. And if I'm being honest—I'm the best at the truth. I really am.

Where I want to start telling is November 6th, two days before the presidential election, when I decided to leave the campaign trail for good. I don't know if you know this, but I was the goddamn nominee of the Republican Party. Very big deal. It was the final push to get people to vote, and I was supposed to be in Pennsylvania or some swing state like that. I don't swing both ways myself, but I guess the Constitution lets the states do what they want these days.

So it was two days before the election when I got up at some rally and spoke my mind about the Mexicans and Syrians and Clintons and whatever. Then, in a meeting, my running mate, old Pencey, he gave me all kinds of crap about how I wasn't supposed to offend people two days before an election. He was saying I flunked foreign policy and hadn't been applying myself out there. He thought he had all the answers, now that everyone wanted him on the top of the ticket and all. He even tried to make me promise to stop offending people when I first picked him—especially after the blondes at Fox News started saying the president should be presidential, which is what China wants you to think, if we're going there. So I guess it looked like I might even get the ax on Election Day. They give guys the ax quite frequently in America. It has very good labor laws, America. It really does.

What I told old Pencey was, if he was so sure he knew what he was doing, then he could run the campaign himself. He has one good debate, and suddenly he's acting like he knows what

the country wants to hear. If I couldn't say whatever came into my mind about anything at any time, what was the point of becoming president, anyway?

So I walked out of the meeting and didn't look back. I skipped all the press conferences and about a thousand other media stunts they'd set up for me. Instead I decided to get on the Trump Force One and head back home to New York. What I figured was, I would say goodbye to all the Americans I met over the last eighteen months. I love Americans, actually, even if sometimes they just give you this look. Like you're trying to make America a little too great or something.

But first I told the pilot to fly around in circles for a few hours—you could see half the country from up there. Half the country, they just love me. And that was just the deplorables. I knew *they* wanted me to become president, but sometimes, at one of my rallies, or a fundraising dinner, or in the middle of a tweet-storm, I kind of wondered: did I even want to be CEO of America?

It's funny, really. I don't even know what I was running for—I guess I just felt like it.

Chapter Two

One of the reasons I was flying to New York City was to get some advice from old Dr. Ben Carson. He's this professor guy I'd hired to teach at Trump U, even though we don't have students anymore. We call it the U because it's a fun nickname, and because it's illegal to call it a university.

We landed the jet and I took the helicopter, which I like to call the Trump Force Other One, over to midtown Manhattan. That's where Dr. Carson had an office, in the old Trump U department of neurosurgery. What a lot of people don't know about real estate is, it's all in your head.

Dr. Carson was in his old office. All the professors had one at Trump U, though sometimes they nicknamed them "closets." And they all had a college degree, or something like that. Old Carson got a real kick out of teaching, even though he was almost in his seventies. I'm in my seventies, but it's a different kind of seventies.

I needed some advice, now that I'd left the campaign. I was dropping in those dirty polls with everyone again, even working-class white males now. When they're saying classy white guys are going for Crooked Hillary, that's how you know the whole thing's rigged. Many people were saying that, actually. I had it from very good sources, some really wonderful sources, that lots of things were rigged.

Take the Democratic National Convention, for example. They'd rigged it for Crooked Hillary to get the nomination, and now everyone talks about her "qualifications" and "years of experience in public office." I used to think women were beautiful, but I guess now they can be crooks too. I didn't say it, I'm just pointing it out.

I walked right into old Carson's office. He was sitting in one of those rolling office chairs. Lumbar support, very important. First step in the door, I knew it was a mistake. He was reading *The New*

Yorker upside-down, or some other lousy liberal rag. I'm not too crazy about liberals, anyway. I actually used to be one, but that's a whole other story.

"I saw the DM you sent," I said. He'd sent me this secret little tweet saying he was sorry how the debates had been going and that I should stop by before the election, because I guess after that there was no going back. But by the time I finished talking, he was already asleep.

Old Carson did that sometimes, nodding off and all. Real absent-minded professor type. He's the only guy I ever met who could take a catnap in the middle of a sentence while talking on live TV. One time he was mumbling something about the 2nd Amendment when it happened, and I wish I was kidding, it took a gunshot to wake him up. Another time he said "Islamic," and then he yawned a little, and then he said, "terrorism." The voters, they ate that stuff up.

"Sit down, Donald," he whispered.

That was the other thing about old Carson. He was always whispering, so you always had to lean in to hear what he was saying. Sometimes you'd lean in just to find out those things he was mumbling weren't even words.

He started stroking his chin. You never saw anybody stroke their chin as much as old Carson did. Very intellectual, Ben Carson. Though sometimes with those intellectuals you don't know if they're stroking their chin because they're thinking or because they're hungry or something like that.

"Have you told your campaign you're not coming back?" he whispered.

"Not yet," I said.

"How do you think they'll feel about it?"

"They won't take it well," I said. "They really won't." It's funny, really, how spontaneous I can be. Just take a few days off the campaign trail in the week before an election. People like that about me. I'm seventy-two years old but I've never had a grey hair.

I really haven't. If you saw my hair you'd understand why I come off as more youthful than I am. Full head of hair, really full.

"You still have a chance," old Carson whispered. "Take a moderate stance or two, compromise."

If there's one word I hate, it's compromise. A word for phonies if there ever was one.

Then old Carson leaned back in his chair, stroking his chin like he had something real good to say. I wanted to leave the room. I could feel a speech coming. I don't mind speeches so much, but the only ones I really trust are my own.

"What happened to you?" he whispered. He whispered it pretty dramatic, for him. "What happened at the debates?"

"All the online polls said I won the first debate. But there was something wrong with the mic that made everything I said sound poorly-informed and barely thought out."

"You lost the debate because you knew absolutely nothing. You probably couldn't have even explained what the pyramids in Egypt were built for."

I nodded, just to get out of there faster.

"And not a single mention of the Constitution," he whispered. That's something that just drives me nuts. When I get up there, tell everyone what I think and what I want to do in this country, and they say I don't know the Constitution. "I don't think you ever once looked at the Constitution, the whole campaign."

"Well, I sort of thought about it a couple of times," I said. I didn't want to tell him that there are more important things than the Constitution. He loved the Constitution, got a real rush out of it.

"You thought about it, huh?" he whispered. "You thought about it."

The odd thing is, though, my mind kind of wandered while he was whispering and all. I live in Manhattan, and I was wondering about the pond in Central Park, up near 60th Street. I was wondering, with all the illegals there, where they went in the winter.

I wondered if some guy from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement came in a truck and took them away to a zoo or something. Or if they just flew away.

It's important in meetings, to be able to talk about one thing and think about another. What's clever is you can just nod, and the other person will think you're listening and start to feel all good about themselves. People usually think of me as a businessman, but really you could say I'm just a guy who makes other guys feel good.

"What are you going to do, Donald? The debates were a bust, the only women who like you are the ones directly related to you, and you're still in some trouble with your tax returns."

"I'm not having too much of a problem with my tax returns," I explained to him. "I didn't have any fines or anything. I just didn't disclose them, or something like that."

"Can I ask why not?"

"Why not? It's a funny story. It's a pretty long one too."

The last thing I wanted was to get lectured by him about it. He wouldn't have understood it. It wasn't his sort of thing at all. One of the biggest reasons I didn't release my tax returns was because I was surrounded by phonies. That's all. For example, I had this debate moderator, Anderson Cooper, the phoniest guy I ever laid eyes on. At that debate, for example, in St. Louis, he's got that terrific smile on, really a terrific smile, as if we're all friends there. Except if you start saying something about money and women. Then they look at you like you've done something wrong when all you've done is speak what's on your mind, and what happened to be on my mind at that point was money and women. That Anderson Cooper, though, he'll listen to you talk about how much you respect money and women, smiling and all, and then when you finish he'll ask if there isn't something a bit wrong about what you said. I can't put up with that stuff. It makes me nuts, it really makes me so nuts. Say a little thing about most Muslims supporting terrorism, and he gives you this look, just this look.

“Do you care at all about your chances on Tuesday?” old Carson whispered. “You’ll have regrets. You’ll wish you thought before you spoke, Donald. Maybe even got a little shuteye first, like me.”

“I’m just speaking my mind,” I said. “I’m a bit of a wild card, Doc. That’s why they like me so much. It’s what the American people want. I should know, anyway. I’m fantastically American. Maybe the most American.”

“Sort of, Donald. Sort of.”

He was using that tone that people use when they think they know something you don’t. So I got up from that swivel chair and stood on my feet. Everyone’s always saying these terrible things about my hands, but what they don’t know is, I’ve got really big feet. Only a very few people know that.

“Can I offer you a sandwich?” he asked. “Some coffee? Maybe one last olive branch to the African-American electorate?”

“Sorry, Doc, but I’ve got to head back to the jet. There’s this hat I have to get. It’s this red campaigning hat I like, with one of those very, very white fonts. This hat, it says it wants to *Make America Great Again*.” I came up with the hat in a dream I had once when I was trying to find something to hide my hair. So I had couple million made. “But thanks for the advice.”

We hugged. All that homosexual crap.

“Try not to insult anybody, Donald. Strong military, protection of civil liberties. Remember the Constitution. If you ever feel an insult coming on, just say ‘I love the Constitution’ instead. Just two more days, Donald. Stay on message.”

I left the closet and was walking out of the office when he shouted something to me, but it was hard to hear. I think he shouted, “Don’t insult the family of a military serviceman killed in action,” which I’m sure he meant in a nice way, and it was terribly good advice, but in another way it reminded me of a really nice time I had a few months back.