

Treacher Trent, an arms manufacturer desperate to control America's Presidency, convinces a woman, Summer Thompson, to run for that post, intending to murder her after the election and replace her with the Vice-President, who is under his control.

Farewell, Madam President

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3093.html?s=pdf>

Farewell, Madam President

Richard Lemmon

Copyright © 2007 Richard Lemmon

ISBN-13 978-1-60145-271-9

ISBN-10 1-60145-271-3

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Booklocker.com, Inc.

2007

CHAPTER 1

"Presidency Up for Grabs"
Washington Post, January 8, 2009

Through the mind-numbing swish of the wipers, a baggy-eyed Senator Haywood McCormick stared through the windshield at the nine-story statue of Abe Lincoln. As Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, he wouldn't have come out on a night like this to meet old Abe himself, much less an asshole like Fred Maxwell, Treacher Trent's 'Hey-Boy.' But whatever Treacher wanted, Treacher got. Outside the window of his Lincoln Town Car--a gift from Treacher--the puddles were deepening as he glanced at his watch.

"Much longer?" his young and attractive assistant, Tampa Fredericks asked, nervously glancing up at the patient Abe Lincoln.

"Why? You're otherwise engaged?"

"No, sir, it's just that he," she pointed to the statue, "is kind of frowning at me." Tampa, fresh out of Wellesley, had been hired by the Senator as one of his interns. Much to the distress of her parents, former Clinton supporters. But their time to influence anything in Tampa's life had long gone by the boards.

"You don't like the way old Abe looks at you, look elsewhere," McCormick snapped. "But that was quite a man, like him or not. Do you realize the patience that man waited fifty years to become President? Nowadays you get it when it's offered or it's gone. You're finished, go home."

"You'll make it this time, sir. I pray for that every night."

McCormick laughed. "If I left my career up to God I'd be selling newspapers. No. You want something in this country, you take the bull by the horns and go get it. One chance, that's what you got. Remember that." He flipped down the visor mirror and carefully rearranged the puffed strands of gray hair.

"You can't lose with Mr. Trent's backing."

“You’re right there, little darling. First rule in Presidential politics, go out and get yourself a Sugar Daddy and never let him go. And speaking of my possible candidacy, what do you hear about the opposition? For example, Senator Williams? Guys like him come out of the woodwork only when you got a lame duck President.”

“Only that he’s running for sure.”

McCormick sighed and shook his head. Talking to Tampa was like talking in an echo chamber. You got back what you sent out. But then tits and intelligence hardly ever came together. Shifting his stare from her to the puddle, he tried to will away the building migraine. Twenty-five years in the Senate, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and always reelected by a landslide, he shouldn’t have to be dependent on the likes of Trent. But as a Presidential candidate there’s no getting away from the need for money. A hell of a lot more than the hometown machine could deliver and that was where his symbiotic relationship with Treacher came into play. Tanks, planes and gun contracts on one side, money on the other. So simple.

“Headlights,” Tampa warned, shaking his arm.

“About time.” McCormick buttoned his raincoat, took a healthy swig from the flask in his pocket and opened the passenger door, waiting..

Tampa watched the Chrysler’s headlights pull alongside and whispered, “He’s here, sir.”

McCormick took a deep breath, stepped out and slogged through the water to meet Treacher’s Hey-Boy. Watching him approach, Fred Maxwell leaned across the seat and opened the door. “You look like a drowned rat, Haywood.”

“Next time we meet,” McCormick snapped, “you take the rain walk.” Inside McCormick brushed the rain off his coat and studied Maxwell. A lobbyist according to his tax returns, his one and only client was Trent.

“Is that Tampa I see behind the wheel?”

“Could be why?”

“Nice piece of meat, Haywood. Ever think of sharing your interns with the less fortunate?”

“Lay off my private stock, Maxwell.”

Farewell, Madam President

Maxwell's smile faltered. "Fuck you too, Mister Senator Big-Shot But speaking of private stock," he pointed to a gin bottle on the seat, "that's good stuff there alongside you. A little hair of the dog before we get started?"

"You'd like nothing more than to report me as an alcoholic to your boss, would you? Well you're wrong, so forget it. Now why the meeting on the night like this?"

"As you might guess, it's about your proposal that Treacher finance your Presidential bid."

"You look happy so that has to mean bad news. Spit it out."

"Let's put it this way." Maxwell's smile broadened. "Imagine you're taking a multiple quiz test on what Treacher thinks about spending his money on you. Here are your two choices. A, Treacher doesn't think you can win so why waste it or, B, Treacher doesn't think you can win so why waste it."

McCormick closed his eyes and fought to control the urge to hit him. Harder than he'd ever hit anybody in his life. But now, like Abe Lincoln, was the time for patience. He took a deep breath and imagined himself to be on the floor of the Senate. He was at the lectern announcing his intent to run, dressed for the occasion in a tuxedo and behind him on the raised platform, the Vice-President was applauding while the network cameras were—

"You want me to tell our boss that you took the bad news and went to sleep?"

McCormick's eyes popped open and he forced a smile. "Trent and I go back a long way and he won't desert me. There has to be more to this than just a flat no, Hey-Boy. So lay out the details."

McCormick nodded. "Much as I hate to say it, because I lobbied otherwise, you're right, old buddy. There is more to it. A hell of a lot more and you're going to be surprised. Maybe even pleasantly surprised."

McCormick's smile widened. "I knew it. Treacher's not the type to forget that his factories run full up thanks mainly to me. So, yeah, lets have the details by all means."

"Fine. Treacher has authorized me to tell you that although he will not support you directly, he will be happy to support you

indirectly. The way he sees it at this time, as much as you might think otherwise, you wouldn't stand a chance in today's political environment. Thus the indirect approach. He's thinking of a detour."

McCormick reached out and grabbed Maxwell's coat lapels. "At my age, I don't take detours. I face things head-on. Do you have any idea how much of my life I've got invested in running? Who was it saved Trent's ass when the Army wanted to cancel his tank contract? Or the Air Force wanted to buy Grumman's new fighter? I've got focus group info

"My heart bleeds for you, old buddy." Maxwell pulled back and shook loose from McCormick's grip. "But nobody with a lick of sense believes the results of your focus group, least of all, Trent. And he's the one who has to believe for the 2012 race. He's conducted his own focus group and his own poll. Something Saddam, God rest his soul, would have called 'The Mother of all Polls'. He's spent more than a million dollars sampling two-hundred and fifty thousand people close up and personal."

"I've got polls, he's got polls, hell, all God's children have polls!"

"Each interview checked and cross-checked. An error rate well under 1%. And the results? You'd lose. Big. No, this is going to take more than our old male pro running against their old male pro. Our countrymen, as you like to call them, have confessed a preference for females this time. They're disgusted with male politics and male infighting. And being you are a male, however insignificant in my view, that would seem to leave you out in the cold."

"So how come the 2004 Congressional races all went to males?"

"That was then, this is now."

"I can make myself into whatever's required. You want a man who hates Washington, here I am. A conservative? Remind the voters I back school prayer. A liberal? I'm for a national health care plan."

"You'd have to have a sex operation," Maxwell said. "Because that's what it would take. So lets move on. Think. No one's deserting you. Au contraire, this just isn't the time for aging party hacks to be rewarded for hanging around. Right now, assuming Trent's poll is right, all the money in the world couldn't get you in. Later maybe yes,

Farewell, Madam President

now a definite no. What's needed now is someone who can guide the female of our choice through the jumps. A pro who can provide our fickle electorate exactly what they think they want."

"Leaving me on the outside looking in?" McCormick's face turned a beet red.

"Leaving you, as our female's presumed choice for her Vice-President, waiting until after the election to take over. After the election."

"Are you nuts!"

"Listen and learn. You follow the guidelines set by our polling and you can have your dream. Buck it and you lose. The female, and it has to be a female to get elected, being politically naive, will depend on you and will therefore choose you as her Vice-President. End of story, beginning of your dream. She chooses you as her VP, ready to step in should anything happen to the new President. A Trojan Horse election."

McCormick laughed. "We're playing this like a goddamn fairy tale. All this money, all this effort, patterned after a fable?"

"You're slowing down a bit, Haywood. Booze or age? Never mind, just tell me what Truman, Johnson and Ford all had in common."

"Ex-Presidents and assholes."

Maxwell sighed. "And how did these assholes become President? They were all dragged into the White House hidden in a Trojan horse. For example, Nixon who effectively died in office appointed the bumbler from Michigan. Truman in when Roosevelt died, same for Johnson when Kennedy died. All of them, VP to President when the President died. Get it?"

McCormick shook his head. "Spell it out. What are you saying?"

"I'm saying that should anything happen to our first female President, her trusty Vice-President would have to step in and take her place."

"Should anything happen?"

"Did I say should?" Maxwell smiled. "Sorry, perhaps I meant when."

“So no more questions along that line,” McCormick said. “But now we’re down to my demands. Which are simple. I run the show as I see fit, no second guessing.”

“You’re the expert all the way.”

McCormick looked out the window, smiled at Lincoln and then turned back to Maxwell, hand extended. “Done, but I’ll need a copy of that fancy-dan poll as soon as you can get it.”

Maxwell reached into a briefcase and passed a leather bound notebook to McCormick. “One copy for you, one for Trent, one for me. There are no others.”

McCormick studied the summary sheet and groaned. “No lawyers and the candidate has to be an unknown female? Unknown? That’s a tall order.”

“What the polling says, we do. And as for the candidate being an unknown, remember Trent also owns the United Broadcasting Company, where unknowns become knowns over night.”

“Right off the top,” McCormick added, “she’ll have to be an Independent. Otherwise, she’d have to get in line behind the more established politicians to get on their party’s ballot.” He closed the notebook and put it under the raincoat. “This could be harder than finding an honest politician. What kind of bankroll does Trent envision?”

“He mentioned \$300,000,000.”

Halfway out of the car, McCormick paused as the rain began to slacken. “That’s more than Compton and Nottingham spent in ‘96 combined! You’re sure I’ll be the one in charge of spending that bankroll?”

“With Mr. Trent’s only suggestion that you filter it into the campaign as if it came from an army of donors. But even more important, make sure she chooses you as her Vice-Presidential candidate.”

“What’s Trent getting out of this if I pull it off?”

“He’ll be this nation’s prime defense contractor, and as such will oversee the rearming of America. As you know, it’s his present view that the nation is under-armed and vulnerable.”

Farewell, Madam President

McCormick nodded, slammed the door and ran for the Lincoln. Inside, Tampa gunned the engine then rolled down the window when Maxwell's car pulled alongside. "I forgot to tell you no booze or it's all off, Haywood."

McCormick leaned forward, shot Maxwell the finger and directed Tampa to drive on. "We've got a lot to do on the computer before dawn. And by the way, don't get excited, but our friend Maxwell seems to have taken a liking to you."

"A liking?" Her face went "He gives me the creeps." Her foot came off the accelerator as they coasted through a red light. "Reminds me of the guy who played the Godfather. Puffy cheeks, guttural voice, beady eyes, don't do that to me, Haywood."

McCormick patted her knee. "In life, we never know who we might have to be nice to. We both suffer Maxwell together if we have to."

On a side street off Constitution Avenue, Maxwell chuckled softly into his cellular phone. "He agreed, sir."

"You gave him the poll notebook and no more boozing?"
Traicher Trent asked.

"He guarantees it. According to him, he's no alcoholic."

"One drunken misquote could be disastrous."

"Understood." The phone went dead.

CHAPTER 2

"Local Educator Honored"
Houston Chronicle, March 3, 2009

Inside Houston's Reliant Stadium, forty-thousand educators from around the world leaped to their feet to applaud the next speaker. A tall, gangly woman in her mid-forties. Dr. Summer Ann Thompson, the President of Rice University, acknowledged the rising furor and strode briskly down the ramp, bound for the bunting-draped stage. Glancing left and right, face frozen in a professional grin, she'd won dozens of similar awards and hundreds of lesser ones, but this was special.

On-stage after fighting through her admiring constituents, she paused to accept a dozen roses from the moderator and return his perfunctory kiss. Kisses finished, she waved her roses and smiled for the TV cameras, fighting the urge to pitch them and get back to doing something meaningful for the teachers quietly working in their classrooms.

"The sooner you all settle down," the moderator was back on the mike, "the sooner we get to listen to this year's winner of a Pulitzer for her book on privatizing public education. So without any more ado," he held up his hands, "it's my pleasure to present this year's Distinguished Educator, Dr. Summer Ann Thompson."

Summer waited for the crowd to quiet and then, "Fellow educators, fellow Americans, it's my pleasure, on behalf of our children, to thank you and accept..." On and on.

Early the next morning, back in her spacious office overlooking the Rice campus, Summer watched a group of students through her windows. She often found herself at the same window, wondering the same thoughts. There were a lot of problems facing her anyone in the

Farewell, Madam President

office. The lawn for example. In theory someone else's worry but everything that had to do with Rice had to do with her. If the grass was too brown, the classes too liberal, the health plan too expensive...it was all up to her. Too many groundkeepers doing nothing because the union, her responsibility, protected them. Too many tenured professors running on nothing but fumes and long ago laurels, her's again to contend with. But the times had changed and with it her ability to cope. She shifted her attention next to the onrushing rain. The students, caught by surprise, had taken off, running around the bird-splattered statue of William Rice Marsh, bound for the quadrangle. Too bad she couldn't run for cover, especially from the worry about what to do with the school's financial crisis.

Back at her desk she settled into the tall leather chair she brought with her from Wellesley and considered the problem once again. Martin Kendrick, the university's well-respected financial advisor had turned the budget upside down. For over twenty years he'd managed to come through. A dollar here, a dollar there and a dollar put aside for the future. Until he'd suddenly invested too many of those dollars into bond derivatives. Never mind his intentions had been an honest effort to fund a new health plan by capturing higher returns. He'd failed and with that failure—

Aware of a sudden draft on her back, she spun around to watch her assistant, Agnes Gatell walk, almost waddle, across the rug to her familiar chair in front of the desk. "Agnes, please, I thought we'd agreed you'd knock." Her friend of over twenty years sighed, shook her head and sat down. "How's the new diet going?"

"It isn't," Agnes said. "What are you doing sitting thinking so hard on? Your last boring speech?"

"It wasn't boring and it went over pretty well, but if you really want to know, I'm still trying to figure a way around Kendrick's good intentions."

Agnes shrugged. "Relax. It's his hole, not yours."

Summer shook her head. "My hole too since I'm supposed be in charge of oversight. And I'm also the one who nominally approved of his rosy projections on donations."

"Our esteemed Board of Directors didn't also approve?"

The window was beginning to rattle as the storm coming in from the Gulf intensified and Summer closed it and returned to her desk. "I'm not interested in fixing blame so much as I'm interested in saving our health insurance plan. Kendrick had that in mind too and now it's my hot potato. That and I now have to live with a hostile Board."

"You want help, ask the University employees, moi included, if they'd contribute to the health program. Our present plan sucks."

Summer shook her head, framing a long oval face in a wealth of black hair. "If they had to contribute it would be act like a cut in the salary where I'd like to raise it. And I'm not talking about the faculty; I'm talking the people who work in the cafeteria, the library and the office help. The so-called little folks. I can't go along with robbing Peter to pay Paul."

"So what about a fund-raiser?" Agnes asked, watching Summer begin to pace around the room. "Get Houston's esteemed Mayor Robinson involved with our problem. He's got a fundraiser coming up. Go pat his back, help him, and put it on him then to help us. A tit for tat. Politicians live and die on pay-backs."

"I don't like being helping people who trade city contracts for kick-backs."

"Fine. Don't help then but at least ask him to get one of his Washington cronies on our side. Besides, as Captain of the good ship Rice, you have to go out and show the flag every now and again."

"How in the sweet name of God could I have failed to keep track of our financial advisor? Intended or not, this school was damaged and it happened on my watch."

"You feel responsible, then fix it. Have a fund raiser."

"I told you I don't like fund raisers."

"Then call it a gala in honor of our latest crop of National Merit scholars. Get the Mayor to line up a big Washington politician as a speaker."

"I hate politicians."

"Fine, Miss Proud One. Then don't have that fundraiser and by all means don't get a speaker that can pull in the big donations. Quit and become a consultant. You may not realize this, Oh Proud One, but

Farewell, Madam President

the nation has come to trust you with their kids. You don't want to stay in the education field, find a rich man, retire to a mountain with him and ski to your heart's content."

Summer rolled her steel gray eyes and smiled. "One marriage is enough for me."

"Did I say you had to marry the guy? You don't want the mountain, go back to the Cape. Make up with Mom. I never did understand what came between the two of you after your Father died anyway." Agnes heaved herself up and started for the door.

"It would have to be something that helps kids," Summer said.

Agnes paused at the door. "Figure it out."

"I will. But in the meantime, I'll take your suggestion and do the Mayor thing. Your tit for tat idea."

"Our Mayor," Agnes marveled. "God so loveth a cheerful scum-bag. And while you're making nice with politicians, consider the Mayor's main guest, Senator Haywood McCormick. Now there's a good Texan who could really help us raise money."

"Another politician?"

"Politician with a capital P," Agnes corrected, still in the doorway. "A guy like McCormick can really raise the big bucks if he wants to. So jump off your high horse, hold your nose, and scuffle in the mud. Just don't use the event for another of your educational diatribes."

"Diatribes?" Summer's eyebrows shot up.

"Strike 'diatribe', substitute 'boring'."

Treacher Trent, an arms manufacturer desperate to control America's Presidency, convinces a woman, Summer Thompson, to run for that post, intending to murder her after the election and replace her with the Vice-President, who is under his control.

Farewell, Madam President

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3093.html?s=pdf>