

Chapter 4

Goldwater 1964

—*Republican campaign sticker*

Goldwater 1864

—*Democratic campaign sticker*

September/October 1964
Air Force One

...“Senator Goldwater, sir?” spoke up Patrick. Barry looked over. “Patrick Hennessey, *Washington Post*,” he introduced himself. As he received an acknowledging glance from Barry, he said, “Sir, just yesterday a number of people were arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi, for the killing of those three civil rights workers who had gone missing and were then found murdered. I wonder if you would comment on that in relation to your vote regarding the Civil Rights Act of this last year?”

“Well, Mr....?”

“Hennessey, sir,” answered Patrick. “The *Post*.”

“Yeah, Hennessey, as you should know, I have been a strong supporter of civil rights over the years,” started Goldwater.

“But you voted against the Civil Rights Act, sir,” interjected Mr. Smith brusquely.

“I am quite aware of my vote, and you are quite aware of why I voted that way, Smitty,” said Goldwater. His manner indicated that was the last he wished to hear from him. Returning his attention to Patrick, he continued, “I strongly support the Negroes and their rights as equal members of society. But I do *not* believe the federal government should be in the business of dictating to the states how that balance should be achieved. I voted against the Civil Rights Act because it overreached and intruded into the cultures of individual states and their rights to come to their own changes—voluntarily. You cannot dictate humanitarianism. And regardless of what a bunch of over-idealistic college kids might believe, you cannot force open a person’s heart to accept equality of the races. The authorities in states that have difficulties with this issue should be able to work it out without the federal government bearing down on them.”

JFK put his hand on Salinger’s sleeve to indicate a moment of pause as he became aware of the conversation brewing. He was looking at Patrick now.

“But, sir,” said Patrick evenly, “the eighteen people indicted included the chief of police, numerous police deputies, the town’s mayor and its main business leaders, basically the entire civil authority structure of Philadelphia, Mississippi. All are members of the Ku Klux Klan. From these indictments it would seem this town, with

county and state support, was promoting the murder of these three college students who were trying to inform Negroes of their right to vote. Many are left wondering how segregationist states can be trusted to address this problem if it is the members of the state and local governments who perpetuate the crime. Who else *but* the federal government would be able to step in and demand an accounting?”

“I trust that incident is an aberration for this area,” said the senator sadly, “and even though it is tragic, it can be resolved within Mississippi’s legal system. It might take time for this to play out, but I am certain that it will.”

“Sir,” continued Patrick, “Governor Johnson of Mississippi stated that the NAACP stood for ‘niggers, apes, alligators, coons and possums.’ If you were a Negro whose entire life, and that of your family, has been lived under the thumb of brutal racist thugs running your state, your county and your own town, how long do you think you should wait before striking back, since you are receiving no civil protection?”

“Are you suggesting that these Negroes should riot, Mr. Hennessey?”

“Mr. Goldwater, respectfully sir, you speak of the individual rights of man toward freedom and the up-by-the-bootstraps approach to getting ahead—you know, not counting on the government for a handout. Well, doesn’t that apply in this situation? I am suggesting, sir, that they already live *within* a riot, one directed by their communities against them. Their resistance would simply be standing up for their rights as human beings.” Patrick was well aware of turning Goldwater’s words against him, but he wanted to show that those statements held a price.