

THE AUDACITY OF HYPOCRISY

JUNE 1975



RETURNING HOME after six weeks in the Caymans, Lena found her absence had fanned the fire of fame. Paparazzi hovered around the club like vultures. Electra's face was appearing in all the gossip rags, even on television. "Have you seen this woman?" posters dotted the local landscape like Post Office mug shots. Rewards were offered for information leading to her true identity.

Winthrop Rockledge Stedman III had been busy. Since 1970, with influential contacts and sizable war chest, he had climbed the political ladder from student activist at Michigan to partnership in Florida's largest law firm. Through speeches, clever spin doctors and a rabid following, in 1974 he won his first elected office. Congressman Win Stedman represented parts of an area including Orange County and its government seat, Orlando. Typical of most politicians, his voting record and behavior belied an avowed political platform of fiscal tax reform, personal responsibility and decency. Not to worry. A handsome face, buffed abs, clever words and fiery passion were all that mattered to those that flocked to his clarion call: "Change We Can Be Proud Of." Lying for the sake of expediency came as naturally as breathing for the sake of living.

Married to Marcia, his curvaceous trophy wife, and blessed with two handsome offspring, Stedman graced each fund raiser, policy speech and debate with pompous dignity. The minions eagerly accepted his platitudes as gospel, following every word like pipered lemmings. The future was paved with unlimited potential.

Privately, Win Stedman was a different person. He had one potential political flaw—an insatiable need for sexual conquest. His wife knew it, but as long as it didn't affect her plush lifestyle, she looked the other way. His handlers knew it and routinely cleaned up his messes, often with taxpayer money. The press vultures knew it and ignored it, for he was of their political bent.

An endless supply of groupies vied for his charms, eager to be in the company of handsome power. Stedman obliged, plucking proffered pussy like ripe fruit from a tree. Swift sexual denouement followed swifter foreplay, and it was off to the next conquest.

“Win-at-all-costs” Stedman felt constituent pain with televangelist empathy, manipulating minds and procuring sex with the deftness of a pickpocket.

Compared to Vegas and other major cities, Orlando strip clubs were small potatoes. So far the Mafia had kept its distance. Generally, the Orange Blossom Trail strip clubs existed in low profile. Greasing law enforcement and politician palms was an accepted cost of doing business. The sleazy neighborhood in which the clubs thrived seemed removed from the more respectable parts of town. One hand fed the other. Other than the short-lived evangelical flare-up, the engine of free enterprise was allowed to run unfettered.

The legal wrangling surrounding Disney, Diamond Divas and its elusive star Electra not only attracted unusual press attention, it also provided an opportunity for Congressman Stedman to showcase his community involvement with righteous outrage. No matter that Rick Harper and the other club owners had contributed to his war chest. Sexual falderal was red meat to a public servant hungry for promotion.

Accompanied by a phalanx of attorneys, TV reporters and concerned citizens, Win staged a mid-day march on Diamond Divas. Middle-aged female zealots carried a variety of signs—

some blatant, others ambiguous: “Have a Heart – Harlots Depart!”; “Electra-Fry!”; “Abort Nudity – Save the Babes!”; “Stop Midget Abuse – Kiss a Dwarf!”

Armed with a battery-powered megaphone, Stedman stood on a soap box in front of the club and whipped the small crowd into frenzy. Rick Harper braved the onslaught and made a brief appearance, opening the entrance door and peeking out. Encountering a chorus of boos and a blizzard of confetti, he retreated like Punxsutawney Phil after seeing his shadow. Twenty minutes of protest and photo-ops later, the crowd and press dispersed, allowing Stedman and a couple of his legal eagles to quietly enter the establishment and discuss terms of settlement. On top of his list of demands, the congressman wanted to meet this hot commodity Electra. Harper informed him she would be back from vacation in two weeks. Stedman negotiated a private meeting with the dancer. In exchange, further protests would be put on hold.

Stedman looked closely at Electra’s glossy publicity photos. A lecherous grin formed on his face. Massachusetts rose again. Two weeks. Win could hold fire until he saw the whites of *those* thighs.

Rick Harper knew he was at a watershed. He had built Diamond Divas as the top Orlando gentlemen’s club, both in revenue and reputation. It had been a gamble giving Electra free reign with her creative skits—a gamble which paid off handsomely. Sticking it to Disney had been a bonus. The legal wrangling had given the club priceless publicity which generated packed houses every night. All this was in danger with the congressman’s assault. Armed with public opinion backed by the press, Stedman would stop at nothing less than total capitulation—closing down Diamond Divas—the gold mine Rick had worked so hard to build.

Unless....

Unless the political hypocrite stopped himself. He had seen the lust in Win Stedman's eyes. Rick had an idea. He made a call to his Grand Cayman villa.

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“SO YOU WANT ME to take one for the team.” Lena had listened to Rick's problem and plan, commenting on her proposed role. She had heard of the congressman. *Another political windbag*, she thought. “How old is he?”

“Late twenties or early thirties, I'd guess. Married with two kids.”

“Aren't they all?” Lena's reply was more comment than question.

“Any history of violence?” she asked.

“None that I know of,” Harper replied. “But he comes from a New England family like the Kennedys—old money and power, from what I hear. Got a rep as a womanizer, but nothing too scandalous so far. He wants you, Lena. I can see it in his eyes.”

“There are only three kinds of men, Rick. Gays, straights who act out their fantasies and straights who keep it zipped. All three think with their dicks. One hundred percent of the last two types want me. Goes with the territory.”

“I wouldn't want you hurt if this guy turns ugly, Lena,” added Rick.

“Ask Claude if I can handle myself. We've been training together. Besides he'll be in the next room, right?”

“Right.”

“Then make the arrangements and let's do it,” was her confident decision.

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HARPER LIVED in a spacious top floor Orlando flat overlooking Lake Lucerne. A fictitious couple, John and Sarah Gladwin, owned the condo. Their names were on county records and the entrance roster. Two weeks was enough time to redecorate the bedroom and arrange the liaison. “She wants to meet you at her condo, Congressman,” Rick explained on the phone. “As you must be aware, Electra is a very private person and will only do this if you come alone and swear to keep her location a secret.”

Two weeks of pent-up desire outweighed caution as Win negotiated a mid-afternoon meeting. The date was set.

Wearing a demure cotton shift, modest jewelry and casual flats, Electra had dressed to pass as a trophy housewife with a stunning face and knockout figure. Buzzing Stedman through the entrance, she waited with calm assurance for the door chime.

“Congressman,” Electra held out a hand as he entered the condo, “you’re much more handsome than your television image.”

“I’m flattered to meet you, Miss...or is it Mrs. Gladwin?” Win had tried in vain to learn her real name.

“Just call me Electra. There is no Mr. Gladwin, if you must know,” Lena offered coyly.

“Ah, a mystery lady,” Win sighed with a smile. “I like that.”

“May I get you something to drink, sir?” Lena gestured for him to sit on the couch.

“Call me Win, please. No, thank you, Electra.” He was eyeing her hungrily. *Men are so obvious*, she thought.

“Mr. Harper tells me you have a problem with my performances,” Lena changed the subject. “I’m just a girl trying to make a living.” She gave Win a practiced pout of innocence and naughtiness calculated to tease. It worked.

“Nothing that can’t be negotiated.” She noticed a bulge in his pants. Stedman was getting right to his point—literally. “Are you familiar with the term *détente*?”

“I assume by that you mean mutual back scratching,” Electra purred suggestively.

“Scratching would be a bit extreme, wouldn’t you say? I prefer the word ‘massaging,’” he replied with raised eyebrows.

This man is subtle as a brick. Lena marveled at Stedman’s audacity. She could play this game.

“Tell me something, Win,” Lena sat next to him on the couch, sneaking a hand onto his upper leg, looking squarely into his eyes. “This *détente* you mention, what’s in it for me...and the club?” she added.

Massachusetts was primed to form a more perfect union. Stedman answered with a raspy voice, “How about seven inches of permanent amnesty.”

Electra rose and took Stedman by the hand toward the bedroom. “Then let’s get right to the negotiating table, shall we?”

Said the spider to the fly.

“My god, this is....” Win was speechless. Except for the floor, the bedroom was completely mirrored—walls and ceiling. A thick red velvet comforter covered the four-poster king-sized bed with pillows to match.

“Kinky?” Electra finished his sentence and came to him, cradling his bulging crotch with a wanton hand. “How about releasing your seven inch hound,” she whispered in his ear. “This fox needs some chasin’.”

She kicked off her flats and stripped off the shift in one smooth cross-armed motion, revealing the spectacular body countless men had coveted. Falling back on the bed, she produced a condom seemingly out of thin air and wiggled a finger. “Come to your congressional caucus, big boy.”

He was on her in a United Nations minute. Over the next two hours both engaged in mutually assured destruction. Win loosed his full arsenal of weapons—three minuteman missiles, moaning in ecstasy with each launch.

In the dark adjacent room, Claude looked on through a one-way mirror. Filming the entire tryst on his movie camera, he quietly chuckled at the foreplay and zoomed in for close-ups during key coital collisions.

Exhausted, Win Stedman left the condo sated and in love, convinced he had just experienced the best sex of his life—unaware that it would also be the most expensive.

A week later an envelope containing a reel of film arrived by mail at the Stedman household. It was addressed to “The Hon. Winthrop and Mrs. Stedman.” Marcia opened the envelope. With the film reel was a note addressed to her husband.

“Dear Win,” the note read. “I really enjoyed our little get-together last Wednesday. Enclosed is a film that will show you just how much you enjoyed it, too. Please note the following: 1) you will cease and desist now and forever any harassment, harm or legal action against Rick Harper and his Diamond Divas club; 2) you will refrain from any harassment, harm or legal action now and forever against the woman with the stage name “Electra” or her real

person, should you ever discover her name; 3) failure to abide by either of these two demands will result in the release of numerous copies of the enclosed evidence to various branches of the media by myself or unnamed surrogates. My best wishes for a continued political career of corruption and dishonesty. Your cohort in slime, Electra.”

“P.S. Size matters. Fully erect, yours is six inches max, not seven. I eyeballed it.”

That evening, Marcia Stedman threw the reel like a major league fastball at her husband and smashed the note in his face. She filed for divorce the next day, citing infidelity and irreconcilable differences. Win folded like an umbrella in a hurricane. His wife had not sat idly by these past years while he dallied with post-pubescent poon. She possessed more damning evidence than the Vatican archives.

Two years earlier some reporter from Ann Arbor named Stan Coleman had tried to blackmail Stedman with pictures of the van incident in 1969. After Win III negotiated a phone truce with his father, Win II took care of the problem. Coleman’s feet were encased in cement. After six hours of drying, he was dumped alive and screaming into Lake Saint Clair, where his body was consumed by bottom-feeding scavengers. Threats of a similar fate prompted Coleman’s thoroughly cowed wife to give up the negatives and all remaining pictures. The younger Win was spared the details. The reporter’s threat paled in comparison to the danger this Electra posed. The stripper didn’t look like the kind who would bluff.

Win’s investigation of the condo proved even more frustrating. Armed with a search warrant, his team of attorneys stormed the building and combed the apartment. All the glass had been removed from the bedroom, including the one-way mirror. The walls and ceiling showed evidence of recent repair, but were now drywall with off-white paint. The four-poster bed had a rather boring set of paisley coverings. The fictitious owners, Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin, had a

fictitious Cayman Islands address. Neighbors had never seen a couple residing in the apartment, only a non-descript man who limped with a cane.

Harper! Stedman was sure of it. But what could he do? He hesitated to bring this latest tryst to his father's attention, but the divorce forced the issue. After careful thought, both Stedmans agreed to let the matter rest without immediate retribution. If this Electra ever released the film, her life wouldn't be worth a nickel. Money and time would solve this problem just as it had the previous ones. "And keep your damned dick in your drawers!" raged Winthrop Rockledge Stedman II at Winthrop Rockledge Stedman III.