

# Chapter 1

WASHINGTON, D.C. March 2023

I am an Alien-American. Yes, I know the nation does best when we are all just Americans, but if I have to specify my ethnic heritage, I am Alien American. The Alien designation does not reference owing allegiance to a foreign nation or power but conjures up the image of the Alien in a typical 1950s creature feature, except that neither my great, great, great, great, great-grandfather nor I were or are green, slimy predators of puny earthlings, which is not surprising considering that I am a newly elected United States senator.

Six weeks ago I recited my oath of office and occupied my nice, if not opulent, office in the Capitol. The juxtaposition of these two facts forms the basis for my need to create a journal of my daily activities and musings. My family has hidden the origin of our founding father for over 270 years and now because of my new lofty position I am apparently threatened with exposure of our greatest family secret.

Several days ago, John, my chief of staff apologized nervously for scheduling a visitor that would normally not be scheduled without my permission. An important supporter had insisted that John arrange an appointment for a lobbyist advocating for legislation that would be introduced in both the Senate and the House as companion bills. From this point forward in my narrative, I will do my best to quote pertinent conversations as accurately as possible.

"If the backers of these bills have the juice to introduce them as companion bills, my endorsement is of middling significance. I think they should focus on the high visibility members."

"I do not know, Senator, but they probably want your endorsement as a scientist."

"Perhaps, but it is not my field, and from what I know of some of the proposed ideas, I am currently a skeptic, not a supporter."

"I was told that after you heard the visitor's presentation you would be a convert."

"If that is the case, I am cantankerous enough to enjoy picking his proposed projects apart."

The very next day, the tall, husky Gilbert Monroe, who strongly resembled a young Orson Wells, presented an electrifying vision of how our climate change concerns could be ameliorated by geoengineering. Monroe insisted now was the time to aggressively implement multiple approaches, which would minimize property losses and deaths from extreme weather. My objections regarding unexpected side effects adding to our climate woes, as well as possible damage to neighboring countries, were acknowledged but minimized by our visitor, who stuck by his agreement with John to limit his time with us to twenty minutes.

After volunteering to return to address my concerns in detail, Monroe turned abruptly at my office door and said, "I have to say that I feel privileged to be able to advise a United States senator, especially one descended from a man who was present at the Constitutional Convention in 1787."

"Thank you, Mister Monroe. Very few people are aware of my ancestor's role in the Revolutionary War or his contributions after the war. However, he was in Philadelphia at that time acting as private secretary for one of the delegates. He was not allowed in the Hall during the sessions and had no input into drafting the document. My family is proud of his ancillary role nonetheless."

"I hope to learn more about your relative when we next meet," Monroe said with a broad smile as he closed the door.

"What the Hell was that about? I never knew about this relative. I would have milked it during the campaign had I known. How would this guy know and why mention it to you during a brief visit like this?" asked John.

"I do not know. His firm must have skilled researchers to have come up with that connection."

Of course, I do know. Monroe fired a shot across my bow to let me know his firm knows who I am and will disclose my ancestor's true origin if I do not support their legislation. Soon after Monroe's provocative exit, I telephoned my old friend retired Senator Nordhoff and asked him if I could drop by his house this evening. The Senator

immediately said yes, asking no questions other than when he should expect me. I routinely dine every other week with Nordhoff, rarely visiting at other times. He correctly surmised that I needed to discuss a subject that could only be broached in private. Upon leaving my office, I drove toward my townhouse and then in a haphazard way doubled back to make my way to Rock Creek Park, looking carefully for signs of surveillance.

The Senator had lived for decades in a historical mansion at the edge of the Park. The house was a source of fond memories for me. My grandfather and my father were friends of Nordhoff, and I had often visited as a child. My father trusted Nordhoff enough to disclose our family secret to him. Whether Nordhoff believed this was a factual account or a goofy tale passed down through the generations I did not know. Regardless, before I formulated an approach to handling Monroe and his bosses, I needed Nordhoff's advice as a close friend and as a shrewd political operative.

"Senator Crane step into my house. Would you like something to eat? I had my supper a couple of hours ago, but I can have you fed in no time."

"No thanks, Senator, but I would like a drink."

"We will have drinks in my study, while you tell me what is on your mind tonight." After I told Nordhoff about Monroe's visit and parting comment, he asked to see Monroe's business card.

"Your new friend works for some powerful, secretive, and often unscrupulous attorneys. They represent politicians and high-profile businessmen who have developed legal troubles. Lobbying is part of their services, but only when they are very well compensated. These boys mean business. If you do not cooperate with their demands, they will embarrass you with their disclosure."

"The FBI will not help?"

"Not with the present circumstances, but you could work with them to set a trap for Monroe, but I am not convinced he would fall into it, and more importantly you would have to tell the FBI everything, which is not in your best interest."

"Then what do you suggest?"

"Play them for a while. Let Monroe try to persuade you. Do not make it easy. I suspect Monroe believes he can get your cooperation with his facts, statistics, and

computer modeling. If he believes he is making progress, he will ask his bosses for more time to obtain your full support."

"Does it matter if they expose me a week from now or six weeks from now?"

"They are a long way from assembling this legislation. They would be foolish to damage you now when they may not even need your vote for a year. Treat this like any legislative process, appear interested, but withhold full commitment while you and your staff continue to evaluate the facts and you consult with your colleagues."

"Any other sage advice?"

"Yes, do not ever admit that Kurt Crane was extraterrestrial in origin, even in a whisper in the middle of a forest. They can say anything they want. You should not ever appear to affirm their claims."

As I drove home, I pondered Nordhoff's advice and formulated my specific strategy. The first test would come when I next met with Monroe. Would he interact with me as a respectful lobbyist promoting desired legislation or would he make it clear his firm expected my full support? As I entered Connecticut Avenue a large SUV with tinted windows appeared behind me and stayed with me almost all the way home. Subtlety did not seem to be a trait I should expect from Monroe's bosses.

## Chapter 2

John entered my office with a cryptic smile on his face. “You have an interesting invitation.”

“I get a lot of invitations. Most, of which, I regretfully decline.”

“You will not turn this one down.”

“Why?”

“You are cordially invited to Senator James Sunday crab boil at his home in Annapolis in two weeks.”

“I thought it was too early for crabs.”

“Between global warming and Senator James connections, the crabs will be there.”

“Why would a powerhouse Democrat senator ask a lowly Republican Senator to his home?”

“You will have to attend so we both will have the answer to that question.”

“You cannot even formulate a good guess.”

“He has not ever invited new senators of the opposite party to his home so I do not have any idea.”

“Where does he stand on Monroe’s bill?”

“Your cynicism does payoff. He is a strong supporter.”

“If they going to this much trouble to get me on board, there must be some sort of stink associated with the details of this legislation.”

“Perhaps, but Senator James may have financial considerations fueling his interest.”

“Either way, I like this legislation less and less.”

“Well, enjoy the crabs. I hear the Senator gives good parties.”

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I have liked Annapolis since I was a child. I liked the ice cream, the fudge, the dock, the boats, exploring the Irish and Scottish shops and some really odd art studios.

Many things have changed since then, but I still like Annapolis. Senator James's house is only a few miles from downtown Annapolis, but I have never been in this section of town before.

A cacophony of conversations and laughter surged out at me as a slender man in a business suit opened the door to invite me inside.

"I must have misunderstood my invitation. The party appears to have begun some time ago."

"No, Senator, you are right on time. Senator James has hosted this gathering at this time of year for decades. Neighbors, friends, supporters, are invited early and the Senator visits with everyone for a while before retreating to his study with his inner circle where they can converse in private. The Senator wants to introduce you to this group. I am Henry Jacobs. I practice law and occasionally offer advice to Senator James. I am to see that you have some food while enjoying the view in the sunroom and then take you to the study."

Jacobs called out to a middle aged woman as we went down a few steps from the living room to the expansive sunroom, which appeared to run the full length of the back of the house overlooking the water.

"Millie, this is Senator Crane. Please take care of him. I will be back shortly to take him upstairs."

"I have seen your picture in the newspaper. You are even more handsome in person. You being a Republican, I am surprised to see you here. At this yearly event, I do not recall Senator James inviting a senator of the opposite party. You must be special. So, I will take good care of you. Let me show you what we have out here."

"This is a lot of choices, Millie. I will have some of the fried chicken, the crab meat, and green beans."

"Sit here, Senator, while I get your plate. There is a lot of boat traffic today, a pleasant view while having lunch."

"Is that the Chesapeake?"

"No Sir, Lake Ogleton, but it merges with the Chesapeake to your left. When I cater here at the end of the evening while my people are cleaning and loading up, I sit in one of

those large lawn chairs and smoke a cigarette enjoying that spectacular view.”

“You catered all this, Millie?”

“My staff does most of the cooking these days, but supervising and attending to the details is a full time job itself. Senator James always wants everything to be just right.”

“You must be doing an outstanding job for him to use your services for so many years. When did the Senator go up to his study with his friends?”

“About half an hour ago, this is not his usual confidants. He has the room packed with people I have never seen before, and I have only seen Mr. Jacobs once several years ago. You better eat. I suspect Mr. Jacobs will be back soon.”

Senator James’ study was not a small room but was not intended to hold a dozen men and two women comfortably. Jacobs introduced me and, while I stood, went around the room naming everyone present. No one was known to me. I was surprised that none of the names were the names of well-known influence peddlers in the District of Columbia. After Jacobs seated me on a tall, heavy bar stool with arm rests where I could be seen by everyone in the room, Senator James began introductory remarks.

“I would like to thank all of you for your attendance tonight. Several came a considerable distance. We are honored to have you here. All of you know about our executive council’s decision to aggressively combat global warming. I honor this declaration both in my work in the senate and my personal support of pioneering corporations with innovative solutions combatting the causes of climate change. I hope to persuade Senator Crane to join us on our crusade to save the planet, but that is only part of why he is here tonight.”

Senator James looked at me before continuing.

“Senator Crane I know your extended family descends from Kurt Crane, an interplanetary visitor who came to the present day United States about 1767, and you should know I and everyone here tonight are descendants of three men from the same home world who survived a landing in another part of our world in 1860.”

Some in the audience gasped then sat in shocked amazement while others were agitated and angrily muttered to their seat mates.

“I take full responsibility for this unprecedented disclosure of our clan secret to

someone not of the three families, but to save our planet we need to expand the clan to include the fourth family from the old world.”

Judge Thorn stood.

“James, you are not a member of the executive committee. Only they had the right to make this decision after due deliberation. This ill considered revelation puts us all at risk. Your impetuosity and willingness to overstep your authority is why you have never been elected to the executive committee. The fourth family has a different history than our clan, and their leaders never wanted to merge with a group that they believed did not share their values. Only a handful of their people knew of our existence. Our clan strives to have our members in important areas throughout American society, and we work hard to avoid being revealed to avoid accusations of tribalism and AntiAmericanism.”

Judge Thorn stormed out of the room belligerently staring down anyone who came near trying to stop him. Several others followed the Judge, while avoiding looking at the remaining group.

“I hoped not to have drama, but Judge Thorn is wrong to believe I have not had discussions with the executive committee. They are deadlocked over climate change and attempting integration with the fourth family. I have responsibilities to our clan but I, as a senator, also have responsibilities to our country. I believe I have no choice but to lead the way in solving the conundrum of saving our people in a world rushing to extinction due to overpopulation, pollution, and depleted resources. I hope you who have chosen to stay here tonight will join me on my mission. I must go downstairs to rejoin our other guests. Please continue to enjoy our hospitality and wonderful food.”

As Senator James rushed from the room, he grasped my hand and said quietly to me,

“I will see that you get details on the bioengineering proposals and will get together with you after you have studied them.”

I walked to the door and paused so that the remaining attendees would have to pass me to leave. I shook hands and verified their name and where they were from. I tried to keep things moving so no-one would try to bypass me. When only Jacobs and I



remained, he silently escorted me to the front door, only speaking when we were outside as he continued with me to my car.

“I apologize for the disruption that caused Senator James to discontinue his planned remarks about the climate and our hopes for engaging your support and, ultimately, that of your extended family. In spite of the tension, do you see yourself supporting our efforts?”

“I cannot commit to anything until I see the details of all the projects. Senator James mentioned getting together after I have reviewed the material. I can give you an informed reply at that point.”

“Additionally, I knew nothing about the existence of the three families or that someone unknown to me had substantial knowledge of my family. Those disclosures have upended my world. That is foremost in my thoughts, not climate change. I have to have some time to ponder all of this.”

## Chapter 3