



Ted Stevens, Congressional Dick

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Someone had betrayed America. My job was to figure out who.

The name's Ted Stevens. I represent a little state you may have heard of—Alaska. It's known for gold, caribou, and giving Texas a Cadillac-sized inferiority complex. My beliefs are simple, as my constituents know: I support God, George W. Bush, and America, in that order.

So when Senate bill 453, the Tough on Terrormurderers Act, which mandated the extrajudicial rendition of illegal immigrants to the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to aid the war on terror by manning pumping stations used to fuel tax cuts for the wealthiest one percent and the manufacture of inflammable American flags, passed one vote short of being unanimous, the party knew who to call on to track down the traitor.

There are 100 members of the United States Congress, but fifty-five are Republicans, which left me with only forty-five to turn the screws on. I didn't have any leads, though, so I hopped a cab over to the cut-and-run side of town, looking for a little donkey I thought might bray.

She was eyeballing poll numbers when the intern led me in, while he was sitting in an armchair, daydreaming about afternoons spent playing hide the goldfish with nineteen-year-olds from Little Rock he picked up at the bus station. On seeing me, they both stood up and met at the middle of the room, gripping hands to present a united front. "Senator Stevens," she said, each syllable chipped out as with an icepick. "What can we help you with today?"

I slipped the intern a twenty and held up two fingers to indicate how much scotch to pour. It wasn't until the first gulp hit my stomach that I answered. "I was hoping to ask you a few questions."

Hands still locked, they stretched out to arm's length, then extended their other arm diagonally to meet over their heads, forming a nice isosceles. They held the pose for a few seconds before she spoke. "I didn't vote for the bill."

"Sounds like someone's feeling guilty," I told her.

"I know how you think," she answered. "You wouldn't be here if you weren't fishing for something. Let's get to the point."

"I need to know who voted against Bill 453."

"Why should we help you?"

"I'd ask John Q. Polaroid to answer that question for you. It seems that blondes are particularly photogenic this time of year."

She bit. They gripped hands again, more urgently this time, moving both arms in the sky toward a nice equilateral. When they pulled apart, she wrote a name on a piece of paper and handed it to me. "I can't tell you who voted against it," she said, "but they probably can."

"Thanks for the Scotch." I walked away.

The name on the piece of paper wasn't really a name at all, but was instead some kind of business—the Congressional Records Office. We were practically neighbors, it turned out—the CRO had an office in my building. Heading over, I found a weasel behind the desk; he had clammy hands and was wearing the kind of glasses that encouraged Bin Laden in thinking we'd all be speaking Arabic in a couple years.

I walked up to the "Can I help you" sign and rapped my knuckles on the counter. "I need to know who voted against bill 453," I told him.

"Congressional votes are a matter of public record," he said.

"Don't get coy with me, boyo," I spit out. "You have a nice little Records Office here—it'd be a shame if anything happened to it because you were down in Gitmo."

That loosened him up. "Senator, the records are right here," he stammered. He handed me a folder. Scanning its contents, I made out the rat: Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut.

All the pieces were falling together. The only question I had was whether Dodd was working alone or whether it was part of some bigger conspiracy. I turned it over in my head as I paced the halls of Congress, walking, lost in thought, until I finally bumped into a stranger in a five-figure suit.

"Sorry about that, buddy," I said, looking up, but all I saw was a pair of brass knuckles coming right at me. They connected, and I went down like I was reading a bill on tort reform. Everything went black.

When the lights came back on, I was tied to a chair in what looked like some sort of abandoned law library. The gorilla who'd poked me earlier was standing by, along with a friend. Both were tall and slim, and they looked like the kind to spend too much on a haircut.

"Rise and shine, Senator," said knuckles. "I'm sorry to have been so rough with you, but you just had to keep poking your nose where it doesn't belong."

"Call me crazy, but I think treason is everyone's business."

“You’re such an idealist,” he sighed. “I’ll be sad to see you replaced when we help the terrorists win. Of course, if you don’t call off this little investigation, I don’t think you’re going to be around that long.”

“Don’t think you can intimidate me, boys. Ted Stevens isn’t some potpourri pansy. Do your worst.”

He smiled. “Tell me Senator, do you know what your wife is doing right now?”

“You leave Catherine out of this!”

Still smiling, he walked over to the other goon. “I’ll tell you what she’s doing. She’s browsing the internet.” He gripped the other goon’s hand and began to stroke it tenderly. “Hmm...now she’s noticed an internet personal ad in the corner of her eye. I wonder if she’s going to click on it.” The two thugs shared a brief kiss. “Oh, I guess so. She’s reading the profiles now. Walks on the beach, wine by the fireplace—some of these men are real romantics, not ugly, shuttered souls like you.”

“Stop it,” I shouted. “Leave my marriage alone!”

“Why would we want to do that when it’s so much more fun to ruin it,” he giggled. They kissed again, longer this time. “Oh, now she’s moved on to the No Strings Attached section. She’s beginning to post a profile: Hot Senate Mama Looking for Big Backdoor Act...” He was interrupted by the door being knocked down, and a squad of Secret Service rushing in, pistols drawn. The boys in black handcuffed the goons and cut me loose from my chair.

“Looks like my wife’s going to have to finish that profile some other time, boys,” I chuckled.

“How did they find you?” knuckles shouted.

I held up my Congressional pin. “This little baby has a signal device that operates outside the range of homo hearing. But don’t worry—I believe in rehabilitation, not prison, for your kind.” Nodding to the head Secret Service agent, I said, “Take them away boys.”

The chin music had cleared my head; I knew what I had to do now. I grabbed some dumb muscle, three pages from a town in the Arctic Circle where they coped with six months of darkness by going on a bender and wailing on each other, and went to Dodd’s office.

We knocked, but the door was open. Walking in, I saw the Senator hurriedly packing a suitcase. “Going somewhere?” I asked him.

He gulped. “Oh, you know, time to hit the campaign trail. Kiss hands, shake babies—that kind of thing.”

“Your sudden trip wouldn’t have anything to do with your vote against Bill 453, would it?”

Sweat stains started to seep through the armpits of his dress shirt. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he squeaked.

I nodded. “You look a little thirsty there, Senator. How about a drink?” Two of the boys grabbed him, while another shoved a rag over his mouth and nose. They leaned him back, and I snatched a glass pitcher from his desk; it bore the Senate seal. “You don’t deserve this seal on your glassware,” I growled. Tipping the pitcher roughly, I began to pour. “Now tell me who put you up to this! I know you don’t have the brains to think of this on your own.”

“I don’t know...” he sputtered, but he was interrupted by a coughing fit. I kept the water coming as he struggled for breath.

“Tell me!”

“Stop! Stop! I’ll tell you,” he choked. I stopped, and he started pouring out his own secrets. “It was Feingold. I wanted to support the bill, but he convinced me to play Devil’s Advocate so we could make sure the bill was as good as it could possibly be. I never knew it would go as far as a vote, Ted.” He started to blubber. “You gotta believe me—I never knew it would go that far.”

I handed him a towel to cover his tears. “It’s all right Dodd—you were just confused.” I stayed with him until the Capitol police came to take him away.

The raid on Feingold’s office revealed, among other things, some burqa erotica and a ham radio we believe he’d used to communicate with Bin Laden. He started screaming as we led him away, saying, “You may have got me, but there are more of us who hate this nation. I’m not alone! We won’t rest until we see her in ruins.”

Letting my mind wander over my scotch that night, I realized that while this case was closed, as long as there were opposition parties out there I’d have to keep working to protect America. It just shows the day never ends for a Congressional dick.