

# **E** PARTY

**VOL I**  
**“STARTING IN THE MIDDLE”**

**EXCERPT 3**

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*E Party: Vol I "Starting in the Middle"*

by Steven H. Nemerovski

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## CHAPTER TEN

Filed under the category of “it’s better to be lucky than good” was the relationship between Don Colletti and Atlas.

Colletti was the national head of the most powerful union in the country. While union membership across the country was either down or stagnant, his numbers were up. While indexed wages were also down or stagnant—his were up. Not tons, but enough.

On speaking engagements, he offered the canned presentation about hard work, dedication, efficiency, and of course, team work. Behind closed doors, off the record, he talked about his days as a union steward and the impact that Alex “Atlas” Stein had on his path to the top.

They still traveled together on occasion and he would drop his entire schedule on a chance call from Liz offering time in Aspen. Liz never forgot a birthday, and as luck would have it, Don Colletti was born on October 24.

“Mr. Colletti, this is Liz calling for Atlas. Can you take the call?”

“Take the call? Is the Pope Catholic?”

“Don, how’s my favorite union boss?”

“Atlas, old buddy, you just made my year! When I grow up I want to be you—retired in Aspen, drinking beer at those great taverns, enjoying the good life.”

“How many times do I need to remind you? I’m not retired. In fact, I outwork your entire day by 9 a.m. Once a union guy, always a union guy.”

“Well, if you’re not retired, you’re a stupid asshole. Give me your money and I’m sitting on my island sipping beer—like in those commercials.”

“On an actuarial basis, I think your bullshit pension is worth more than anything I own. Anyway, I called to say happy birthday. And I’d love to see you. I’ll call your bluff and have Liz drop us into the Caribbean whenever you’re ready.”

“I’ll see that bet and raise you to two weeks away. Just get me past the elections. As you might expect, we’re balls out in the presidential race.”

“Then it’s a deal. I’ll put Liz to work and you owe me fourteen days after the election. Bring some of the boys and I’ll bring the General.”

“Speaking of which, what’s this I hear about old Hunt causing trouble in Illinois?”

“I’ll fill you in on the trip. But he did want me to ask you a favor.”

“Name it.”

“When the political leaders in Illinois ask the unions to help kick his third party butt, insist that the game gets played straight.”

“Know what? I can do you one better. That Shakespearean tragedy they call the Democratic Party in Illinois has cost us big time. If the call comes, I can serve up some serious lip service. And, I’ll also quietly put out the word. Just promise me I won’t get bit in the ass.”

“Done! Thanks! You’re the best!”

“No, old friend, you’re the best! Tell Liz to bug the crap out of me. I’m already mentally packing my bags.”

\* \* \* \* \*

**E-MAIL**

To: State Central Committee  
From: Elizabeth DiMaggio  
Sent: 10/25 4:30 p.m. (CST)  
Subject: Staying The Course

The E Party’s well-timed and well-financed run at a minority stake in both Houses is projected to produce a seismic shift in the electorate.

However, after careful analysis, I am recommending that we make no changes in our campaign strategy. The exception will be if any one candidate experiences a precipitous drop in polling, in which case we will cut bait and reallocate resources, both field and financial.

Unfortunately, in sticking to plan, we will also be placing members in serious jeopardy. Notwithstanding, our analysis suggests that the financial lift to remain viable is too heavy and would, at best, remain a risky proposition.

There is a silver lining. If the polling for the E Party holds, they will crack the Democrats' majority. This positions us to leverage our votes to create majority positions on issues for which we would otherwise face a brick wall.

More importantly, if we preserve and marshal resources, we position ourselves for a gubernatorial run in two years. The chance to capture the 800 pound gorilla seat at the table is quite enticing.

Please make every effort to participate in this evening's conference call. We will allow one hour for discussion and vote at 9 p.m. sharp.

Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

**E-MAIL**

To: Atlas, General  
From: Mark  
Sent: 10/26 9:14 p.m. (CST)  
Subject: Thank You Stench

Thanks to Mr. Carson and the trailing stories across the state, we have hit our polling targets.

According to Lauren, the web site is getting a gazillion hits from web surfers looking for E Party, the General and Tom. That should explode once Nat goes public with the latest polling.

General, we need to step up the canvass. Now that our PR is out there, the last two weekends are critical. Unless I'm totally off base, we will be the headline story in each daily on multiple occasions over the next two weeks. We're working to schedule T.V. appearances. But, we have to give them the General or Tom to capture their imagination. As you can guess, the loyal opposition is going all-out to suppress.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Elizabeth, it's Danny Ryan."

"Mr. Ryan, to what do I owe this honor. Last time you called me the Cubs were in the World Series."

"I'm calling because I have information that you may find very beneficial to your at-risk incumbents."

"I'm listening."

"My polling has the E Party up at least six points across the board. And, well, my guys are not looking for any new kids at the

playground. Remember, ‘we don’t want nobody that nobody sent,’ and we surely didn’t send for General Smith or Tom Robinson.”

“So, you’re saying I’m the lesser of the evils.”

“Not exactly, but we can leave it there. Anyway, I’m going all-out negative from now until the election and I’m offering you our complete package—mail, radio, TV.—you want it, you got it.”

“Danny, let me give this some thought. After all these years, I need to think through this Trojan horse of yours. But I’m definitely interested. I’ll call you tomorrow. Thanks.”

## **End Excerpt 3**