



Bobby Baker

But his most important relationship is with Robert Gene “Bobby” Baker, a South Carolinian who rises from Senate page to trusted confidant. The two men first meet in 1948, as LBJ is about to move from the House to the Senate. “Mr. Baker,” Senator Johnson tells the precocious twenty-year old son of a bitch over there.... You’re the man I want to know.”

Baker is a crook. His net worth is \$11,000 in 1954, with an annual salary of \$12,500. In 1964, Bobby Baker is worth \$2.25 million. He makes his fortune through insider stock trading and sweetheart deals arranged through federal grants, the information gleaned from senators and congressmen eager to take advantage of Baker’s many “services.” Baker controls a private space at the Carroll Arms Hotel adjacent to the Senate Office Building. The “Quorum Club,” as it is known, is reserved only for politicians. There, Baker arranges sexual favors in exchange for congressional votes and government contracts. For those needing privacy, Baker keeps a private condominium where senators can take their “dates.” Time magazine, quoting a hotel worker, notes, “A lot of people used to come through the back door. That struck us as strange.

Most of our guests come through the front door.” Much of the information Baker gathers is passed along to his pal, LBJ. The young pimp is so powerful that his nickname is the “101st Senator.” He briefs Johnson before each Senate vote.

“He is the first person I talk to in the morning and the last one at night,” LBJ states.