

Kathy Johnson: The Capitol Crisis Novel Coincidence

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Kathy Johnson, the author of *Capitol in Crisis*, is facing an unexpected dilemma: the coincidence of fiction mirroring fact. The novel, published in October 2020, had been 15 years in the making, yet the title is now an unforgettable reality which is dominating headlines around the world. To learn more about the book, one may visit the author's website.

One must first note that the novel does not disrespect the democratic process with unpatriotic insurrection, unlike the infraction at the Capitol which is currently in the news, but rather a thrilling journey within the Capitol complex. To provide a brief synopsis of the book, Simone Perez, Architect of the Capitol, is shocked when a terrible explosion rocks the capitol, collapsing the tunnel between the House and Senate Chambers and trapping several people. Simone immediately forms an interagency committee to help her assess the damage to the capitol and start a rescue mission to bring trapped individuals to safety. Simone also assumes responsibility for briefing the press, an immense challenge. As the plot unravels, the committee works together to rescue the survivors.

Throughout the novel, the reader meets many true-to-life characters like Addie Hutchison, the owner of the underground café; Fire Chief Earl Bentsen, a man who wastes little time; and Rob Tate, a slender maintenance worker who is able to access the café through the vent spaces. Through many ups and downs, Simone remains firm, aided by the Speaker of the House, John McIntyre. Although an impossible task at first, their combined efforts result in the victims being reunited with their families.

Kathy Johnson explains how she developed a seasoned imagination to pen this novel. She says, "I worked for the US Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (better known as the Access Board) for 24 years. The Access Board develops Federal accessibility guidelines and standards built environment, transportation, communication and information technology. I followed legislation, wrote several major policies and assisted with numerous public hearings and out-of-town events. These meetings often involved representatives of the American Institute of Architecture and those advocating for an accessible built environment." Her career not only provided her with the inspiration to write this novel, but also the technical knowledge to truly create a believable situation which is easy to immerse oneself in.

Mike McCurry, a former White House Press Secretary and US Senate staffer, has also read *Capitol In Crisis*. He states, "Kathy Johnson takes us deep into the underground of the US Capitol in this riveting novel but, anyone who has worked, visited, or wanted to be there will instantly get some sense of the place and the people there. There are disasters aplenty in our nation's Capital but this is about one that is not political but very real and haunting. A wonderful read." One could say that it is clear that the spirit of deliberate action to build community becomes evident from this read. A sample of the book is also available on the official website.

Kathy Johnson's career as a Government servant was one that spanned more than three decades. In her own words, "I am a Federal retiree who had the privilege to work in and around Capitol Hill for 38 years, first as a Research Assistant to a US Senator, then as a lobbyist for United Cerebral Palsy for seven years. The remainder of my career, I spent as a Congressional Liaison for two small Federal agencies the National Council on Disability and the US Access Board, respectively. Thus, I've spent a good deal of time knocking around the Hill, and I've come to appreciate the plethora of individuals who work in and around our nation's Capitol."

It took Kathy Johnson many years of just having the idea to first begin the process of writing the novel before finally gaining the courage to have it published. She says that one thing she learned from becoming an author was the fact that writing took many unpredictable turns. The characters (who seemingly wrote themselves into the book), the many frustrated moments where the manuscript almost went through the window and some other truths that she struggled to accept were all part of the learning process.

To learn more about the novel and the author, one may visit Kathy Johnson's official site. One may also direct further inquiries to the media team via phone and email.

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Perhaps driving home on the New Jersey Turnpike, I would see a character in a new light. Or I'd rewrite a scene with

clarity after months of struggling. Thus, the book I present to you is the culmination of my creative process.

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