



Discretion: A Novel (Anna Curtis Series Book 2)

By Allison Leotta

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For fans of Lisa Scottoline and *Law and Order: SVU*, former federal sex-crimes prosecutor Allison Leotta's novel explores the intersection of sex and power as Anna Curtis investigates the murder of one of DC's highest-paid escorts.

When a beautiful young woman plummets to her death from the balcony of the U.S. Capitol, Assistant U.S. Attorney Anna Curtis is summoned to the scene. The evidence points to a sexual assault and murder. The victim is one of the city's highest-paid escorts. And the balcony belongs to Washington, D.C.'s sole representative to Congress, the most powerful figure in city politics.

The Congressman proclaims his innocence, but he's in the middle of a tough primary fight, and the scandal could cost him the election. For Anna, the high-profile case is an opportunity. But as the political stakes rise, she realizes that a single mistake could end her career.

At the same time, her budding romance with Jack Bailey, the chief homicide prosecutor, is at a crossroads. Determined to gain respect in the office, Anna wants to keep their relationship under wraps. But the mounting pressure and media attention that come with the office's most important case will inevitably expose their relationship—if it doesn't destroy it first.

The investigation leads Anna to Discretion, a high-end escort service that caters to D.C.'s elite. But with each break in the case, the mystery deepens. And the further Anna ventures into D.C.'s red-light underworld, the larger the target on her own back.

From the secret social clubs where Washington's most powerful men escape from public view to the asphalt "track" where the city's most vulnerable women work the streets, *Discretion* is a gripping exploration of sex, power, and the secrets we all keep.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*Discretion* is a first-rate thriller. Leotta nails the trifecta of fiction: plot, pace and character. Ranks right up there with the wonderful Linda Fairstein.” —**David Baldacci**

“Allison Leotta scores big again with *Discretion*, her top-notch follow up to *Law Of Attraction*. Smart and sexy, *Discretion* showcases Leotta’s rock-solid plotting as well as another star turn for her protagonist, Assistant U.S. Attorney Anna Curtis. If you liked *Law Of Attraction*—and who didn’t?—you’ll love this one!” —**John Lescroart**

“Allison Leotta’s *Discretion* is the best legal thriller I’ve read this year, beautifully crafted and frighteningly real. Leotta knows her stuff cold and will bring you into a world of big money, corruption, high-end prostitution and murder. If you’re a fan of Grisham or Richard North Patterson, you simply have to buy this novel.” —**Douglas Preston, #1 bestselling co-author of *The Monster of Florence* and *Cold Vengeance***

“*Discretion* is fresh, fast, and addictive, and Allison Leotta’s experience as a federal sex-crimes prosecutor shines through on every page. The result is a realistic legal thriller that’s as fun to read as it is fascinating.” —**Lisa Scottoline, bestselling author of *Come Home***

“Allison Leotta is quickly making her place at the table of D.C.’s finest crime and legal thriller novelists. She’s an assured and authentic voice, and a highly entertaining storyteller. *Discretion* is another winner from this talented writer.” —**George Pelecanos**

“*Discretion* is a terrific read. Slick, sexy, and very smart. Allison Leotta is a master at creating tension and then mercilessly tightening it. This is the kind of book I love to read, crafted by a wonderfully imaginative writer, who really knows what she is talking about. Allison Leotta is headed to the top of the heap.”

—**Michael Palmer, New York Times bestselling author of *Oath of Office***

“*Discretion* is full of treachery and betrayal, but it’s the characters who rule these pages. Allison Leotta expertly ratchets up the suspense and brings to life a fictional world that is cutting-edge current.” —**Steve Berry**

“Fantastic! Smart, gritty, and fast-paced—*Discretion* is everything a great thriller should be. I’m a Leotta fan for life.” —**Allison Brennan, author of *The Prey***

“Assistant U.S. Attorney Anna Curtis and FBI agent Samantha Randazzo are the dynamic duo who energize *Discretion*, a fast, entertaining thriller that centers on the murder of a high class call girl in the office of a United States Congressman.” —**Phillip Margolin, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Capitol Murder***

“Allison Leotta is by far one of finest new thriller writers today. *Discretion* will have you on the edge of your seat turning page after page, chockfull of twists and turns. The best thriller I’ve read this year.” —**Andrew Gulli, editor of the *Strand Magazine* and *No Rest For The Dead***

“Sex and politics collide in *Discretion*, an intriguing new thriller from Allison Leotta. Leotta, a federal former prosecutor, writes with authority and authenticity. Imagine one of the best episodes of the TV series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, but set in Washington, D.C., instead of New York City. Besides the realistic feel of the courtroom machinations, Leotta also takes readers on a journey inside the elite of Washington and the world of escort services.” —**Associated Press**

Named the Best Suspense Novel of the Year by Romance Reviews Today ()

About the Author

Allison Leotta was a federal sex-crimes prosecutor in Washington, DC, for twelve years. In 2011, she left the Justice Department to pursue writing full time. She is the acclaimed author of *Law of Attraction*, *Discretion*, *Speak of the Devil*, *A Good Killing*, and *The Last Good Girl* and founder of the award-winning blog, The Prime-Time Crime Review. Leotta lives with her husband, Michael, and their two sons outside of Washington, DC. Visit her online at AllisonLeotta.com.

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Discretion

1

Even now, Caroline got nervous before every big job—and this was bigger than most. She knew how to smile past smirking hotel concierges and apartment-building doormen who deliberately looked the other way. The key was looking confident. But committing a crime in the U.S. Capitol was a different experience altogether.

She tried to radiate authority as she strode up the marble steps to the Capitol’s Senate carriage entrance. It helped that she was dolled up like a successful K Street lobbyist: ivory St. John suit, Manolo heels, hair painstakingly highlighted just the right shade of blond. Two men coming out of the portico murmured hello to her, and she smiled as if she greeted congressional staffers all the time. One staffer turned to watch her pass. His glance was appreciative but not shocked; she was young and beautiful, but she looked like she belonged in this world of high-octane political deal-making. Good.

She stepped out of the muggy August twilight and into the air-conditioned cool of the security vestibule. To calm herself, she concentrated on the feeling of lace garters skimming her thighs. This was one of the riskiest moments, so she arranged her face into its brightest smile.

“Hello.” She greeted the two Capitol Police officers with cool professionalism. “I have an appointment with Congressman Lionel.”

Her heart beat like hummingbird wings as she handed her ID to the officer sitting behind the counter. The guard just smiled as he cross-checked the ID against a paper on his clipboard. He scribbled something down and handed back her ID, along with a rectangular sticker that said VISITOR in red. “Just stick that on your suit, ma’am. Your escort will be right down.”

Caroline pressed the sticker onto her jacket as the second guard sent her Fendi bag through the X-ray machine. When she was on the other side of the metal detector, she took her purse off the belt—and exhaled.

She stood in the quiet entranceway, sensing the officers checking out her legs. The hallway was 1800s chic: mosaic floor, arched ceiling, black iron candelabras casting a golden glow on flesh-colored walls. She’d heard that the Capitol was one of the most haunted buildings in D.C., and she imagined the ghost of John Quincy Adams swirling through the corridor. Was it always so empty? This was a private back entrance reserved for congressmen, staffers, and VIP visitors who’d been pre-cleared. And it was almost eight P.M. on a Sunday. Most employees were home. Still, she wished it were busier.

A gangly young man rounded the corner. He wore an ill-fitting suit and sneakers, along with a smudge of tinted Clearasil on his temple. An intern. “Ms. McBride?”

“Yes.” Inwardly, she cringed at the sound of her real name, but she was an expert at keeping a serene face no matter what was in her head. Besides, the kid was harmless, in the way that only a young man wearing his first suit can be. His sleeves were too short, exposing two inches of pale, freckled wrists. He reminded Caroline of her little brother, whom she adored.

“I’m Chester! Congressman Lionel’s intern! I can take you up to his office!”

“Thank you.” She walked with him down the corridor.

“So what are you here to see the Congressman about?”

“Constituent services.” She smoothly changed tacks. “What do you do for the Congressman?”

Men—whatever their age—were always happy to talk about themselves. The intern enthusiastically described the process for answering congressional correspondence. “We can send sixty different form letters, depending on what a constituent asked about!”

He stopped for a breath as they entered the most beautiful corridor Caroline had ever seen. The hallway itself was a work of art.

“These are the Brumidi Corridors,” Chester said in an excited stage whisper. “Originally painted in the eighteen hundreds. Most tourists don’t get to see them.”

Every inch of wall and arched ceiling was covered in elaborate paintings of American history. Chester

pointed to the figures of men sculpted into the railings of a bronze staircase. “The Founding Fathers.” He waved at a lunette painting above a wooden door. “The Goddess of War.” Despite herself, Caroline was impressed.

The clack of her heels echoed off the walls as they walked into a circular chamber, as large and ornate as a cathedral. She remembered coming here ten years ago, on a seventh-grade field trip. This was the Rotunda, the ceremonial heart of the Capitol. She recognized some of the iconic canvases: the Declaration of Independence, the Landing of Columbus. The domed ceiling, 180 feet above, was covered with The Apotheosis of Washington, a fresco painting of the first President depicted as a god among angels.

“Wow,” she whispered.

For the first time that night, Caroline had a real sense of the history of the place. It wasn’t some TV backdrop. So much had happened in this building, so many famous people had made world-changing decisions here. Who was she to be prancing through? She was a fraud.

Then she noticed the paintings of revolutionary America. Among hundreds of soldiers, explorers, and men in white wigs . . . she saw only four women. Of those, two were naked and on their knees.

She felt better. Some things never changed. She wasn’t a fraud—she was a constant.

Chester led her past a sign that said NO VISITORS BEYOND THIS POINT. They went up a series of curved staircases and down some empty white corridors, then stopped in front of an unlabeled door tucked around a corner.

“Here’s the Congressman’s hideaway!”

She had no idea what a hideaway was.

“His personal office,” the intern whispered. “A little oasis. Where he can get away from the hustle-bustle.”

There didn’t seem to be much hustle-bustle at this hour, but Caroline understood the precaution. Her prior appointments, at the Congressman’s regular office in the less glamorous Rayburn Office Building, had caused difficulties. She was glad for the privacy this place afforded.

Chester pushed the door open and gestured for Caroline to go in. He himself stood outside, as if fearful of crossing the threshold. The door clicked shut behind her.

The hideaway was quiet and unoccupied. It looked more like a sitting room in a nice hotel than an office. The walls were deep maroon; the floors were covered in Oriental rugs; a leather couch faced a white marble fireplace. Pictures of the Congressman in action crowded every horizontal surface. An antique desk in the corner seemed less a place to work than a space for displaying more photos.

A door at the back was open to a wide marble balcony overlooking the National Mall. Caroline’s breath caught. The Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial were framed against a fiery sunset. It was a stunning view, better than a postcard.

A man stood on the balcony, his elbows resting on the railing, his back to her. The sunset threw his figure into dark silhouette.

She smoothed her skirt and ran a manicured hand through her hair. This was the part she liked best. She was good at it—great, to be honest. She had a talent for it like nothing else she'd ever tried. It gave her incredible satisfaction.

She smiled and walked out to meet him.

A woman's scream pierced the stillness of the Capitol grounds.

Officer Jeff Cook was on patrol on the Capitol steps. He'd been a Capitol Police officer for twelve years, but he'd never heard a scream like that around here. He put a hand on his holster and turned toward the sound. His eyes flicked over the scenery until they identified the source of the scream. There—up the hill—the third-floor balcony of the Capitol's south wing. A man and woman locked in a jerky dance. Cook couldn't make out the people, but he knew the geography: That was Congressman Lionel's hideaway.

The couple lurched left, then right. The woman shrieked again.

Then the man shoved her over the edge.

The woman seemed to fall in slow motion, emitting an operatic wail the whole way down. Arms flailed in graceful circles, legs kicked in lazy swings, as she dropped past marble flourishes and arched doorways.

A thud. And silence.

She'd landed on the marble terrace in front of the Capitol. Elegant for walking on, it was a disastrous place to fall. What would that slab of rock do to flesh and bones traveling at the speed of gravity?

Cook squinted back up at the balcony. The man was still up there; he peered over the balcony, then turned and disappeared inside.

Cook ran up the Capitol steps.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carol Welch:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information today can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a problem. What people must be consider whenever those information which is inside the former life are hard to be find than now could be taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one typically the resource are convinced. If you obtain the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen within you if you take *Discretion: A Novel* (Anna Curtis Series Book 2) as your daily resource information.

Charles Settles:

Reading a publication tends to be new life style on this era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of

information that could give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world could share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire their own reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the publications. But also they write about advantage about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write with their book. One of them is this *Discretion: A Novel* (Anna Curtis Series Book 2).

Ray Nicolas:

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Robert Rascoe:

What is your hobby? Have you heard in which question when you got pupils? We believe that that question was given by teacher on their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person including reading or as examining become their hobby. You need to know that reading is very important and also book as to be the factor. Book is important thing to include you knowledge, except your own personal teacher or lecturer. You will find good news or update concerning something by book. Different categories of books that can you go onto be your object. One of them is *Discretion: A Novel* (Anna Curtis Series Book 2).

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