

**MELANIA**



**MELANIA**

**MELANIA**

**MELANIA**

Copyright © 2024 by Melania Trump

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without the express written consent of the publisher, except in the case of brief excerpts in critical reviews or articles.

Skyhorse® and Skyhorse Publishing® are registered trademarks of Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.®, a Delaware corporation.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024944380

Print ISBN: 978-1-5107-8269-3

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-5107-8270-9

Printed in the United States of America

## **Contents**

[AUTHOR'S NOTE](#)

[CHAPTER 1: USA](#)

[CHAPTER 2: The Win](#)

[CHAPTER 3: April 26, 1970](#)

[CHAPTER 4: Lights, Camera, Model](#)

[CHAPTER 5: “Hi, I’m Donald Trump.”](#)

[CHAPTER 6: All Business](#)

[CHAPTER 7: It Is Official](#)

[CHAPTER 8: Why Was the Speech Not Vetted?](#)

[PHOTOS](#)

[CHAPTER 9: On My Way](#)

[CHAPTER 10: My Husband, the President](#)

[CHAPTER 11: In the White House](#)

[CHAPTER 12: Welcome to the White House](#)

[CHAPTER 13: Be Best](#)

[CHAPTER 14: Going Global](#)

[CHAPTER 15: Moments of Crisis](#)

[CHAPTER 16: 2020](#)

[CHAPTER 17: Fostering the Future](#)

[CHAPTER 18: “Good Luck and Be Safe”](#)

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

**MELANIA**

## **Author's Note**

Dear Reader,

Writing this memoir has been a deeply personal and reflective journey for me.

Throughout my life, I have witnessed many extraordinary events and have met incredible people. There have been moments of joy and triumph, as well as challenges and heartaches. In sharing my story, I hope to show you the woman behind the public persona, to illuminate the values and experiences that have shaped me, and to offer insights into the complexities of life in the public eye. It is my sincere wish that you will find inspiration in my journey, recognizing the universal themes of resilience, love, and the pursuit of one's dreams.

I believe it is important to share my perspective, the truth, especially in these times of division and uncertainty. As a private person who has often been the subject of public scrutiny and misrepresentation, I feel a responsibility to set the record straight and to provide the actual account of my experiences. My hope is that by sharing my story, I can contribute to a greater sense of understanding and hope for the future among us all.

Sincerely,

Melania

## **Chapter 1**

### **USA**

“Prepare for landing . . .” the pilot announced. I pressed the off button on my Walkman and gazed out the window, hoping to catch a glimpse of New York

City in the distance. My heart pounded with excitement. I was twenty-six years old, and while I had traveled everywhere in Europe, I had never been on a journey quite like this.

This was America . . . New York! A different world altogether.

I had made the decision to test my skills in the American modeling market carefully, after weighing all the professional and personal implications. There were risks, yes, but buoyed by an internal sense of confidence and the ongoing support of my family, I was certain I could succeed. The potential rewards would outweigh the uncertainties.

I had embraced such risks many times in the past, but this gamble felt more significant. I packed my apartment in Paris, met with my agent in Milan, and said goodbye to my family in Slovenia. My life was now two suitcases and a carry-on, containing only essentials: clothing, shoes, cosmetics, my passport, and my portfolio. The portfolio, a culmination of nearly a decade of dedicated modeling work across Italy, France, and Germany, was my most valued asset.

Ten hours before touching down in New York, I had checked my suitcase at Linate Airport in Milan where I navigated through the noisy crowds of tourists, all returning home at the end of the European summer holiday. It felt as though I was swimming against the tide, moving in the opposite direction of everyone around me.

In Europe, where traveling between countries is commonplace, I was at home anywhere on the continent. Which was precisely why leaving and embracing a new

challenge felt exhilarating and exciting. But the distance between America and Europe felt immense and my family and I had found these goodbyes particularly difficult. Still, I was grateful for their trust, which strengthened

my decision, and motivated by their encouragement. “Good luck,” they said, as we hugged. We held each other tightly. “Be safe. Let us know when you arrive.”

As I boarded the plane, I thought of them and fingered a necklace they had given me engraved with the German words “*Ich liebe dich*”—I love you. I carried their love with me as I stepped into the unknown.

Tuesday afternoon . . . JFK Airport. The airport was crowded. After a long walk, I finally reached immigration and customs. There were two lines: one for US

citizens, and one for visitors. I joined the visitors’ line, which moved significantly slower than the other one as the guards meticulously examined every detail of each passenger’s papers, holding up passports, tilting their heads to the left and right, flipping pages, and deciphering stamps. Some of the people ahead of me had trouble that needed sorting out, which slowed things down even further. The line was crawling. I waited patiently. There were twenty people ahead of me at first. Then ten

. . . five . . . two. . . . Finally, it was my turn. The agent waved me to the booth. He didn’t say much, but he looked me up and down, up and down. He checked back and forth between my passport photo and the face in front of him. I felt confident.

My documentation was in order, and my English was proficient.

“First time here?” he asked. “Yes,” I said. “First time.”

He smiled at me, stamped my passport, and handed it back to me. I looked at the date: August 27, 1996.

“Welcome to the United States,” he said.

Despite the fog of jet lag, I recognized the importance of this moment. My life had shifted direction, presenting new opportunities, and I was ready to embrace the path ahead.

After retrieving my luggage, I proceeded to the exit. The heat and humidity enveloped my face. The sound of honking vehicles filled the air, accompanied by a persistent haze of exhaust fumes. I stood by the curb and concentrated on locating the driver sent by the agency, scanning the crowd for any sign of him. Just as I

wanted to turn away to find a phone booth to make a call, a long black limousine arrived, and the driver lowered the window.

“Melania Knauss?” he asked.

“Yes. Hello. Are you from Metropolitan Models?” I inquired.

“Yes, ma’am.”

He opened the door. I stepped into the back seat. I felt a sense of relief to be away from the noisy chaos of the curb. The interior of the limousine exuded elegance. I felt an immediate sense of comfort and ease.

Within a minute we were on the road. The din of JFK faded into the background, and I finally took a deep, calming breath.

Traffic was heavy on the way into the city, so it took a while before the skyline came into view. When it did, my heart leapt. The Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the Twin Towers stood proudly against the horizon. Having only seen this iconic view in magazines and films, witnessing it in

person was exhilarating. The scale and vibrancy of Manhattan were overwhelming, and with each passing moment, my excitement grew. Any second thoughts about my decision to come here dissipated; this is where I was meant to be.

Reflecting on that pivotal day in my life, I recognize the profound significance of that decision to move to New York. Now I am struck by my youthful confidence!

Life's circumstances shape you in many ways, often entirely beyond your control—

your birth, parental influences, and the world in which you grow up. As an adult, there comes a moment when you become solely responsible for the life you lead.

You must take charge, embrace that responsibility, and become the architect of your own future. Coming to America, coming to New York City? That was my moment.

Another pivotal moment came as I raised my right hand and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, ten years after my initial arrival, in July 2006, and became an American citizen.

It was not an easy process. And my personal experience dealing with the trials of the immigration process opened my eyes to the difficulties faced by all who wish to become US citizens. I felt a sense of pride and accomplishment. Reaching the milestone of American citizenship marked the sunrise of certainty.

I had become a true citizen of the world, at home wherever I was. And now, with gratitude—in my heart and on paper—I was, finally, also an American.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Win**

On the morning of Tuesday, November 8, 2016, I had gotten up early. The city was quiet, calm. I love early, peaceful mornings—peace I would especially need in the coming hours. Barron was still asleep when I entered his room and gave him a gentle kiss on the forehead. Taking an extra moment to look at him, knowing his world had already undergone so much transformation since his father’s decision to run for president, I realized this day would begin changes none of us could predict. I made a commitment then and there that if we were headed to the White House, I would fiercely protect my beautiful son in every way I could.

Donald had poured his heart and soul into building a movement that could bring about real change. The campaign had grown into a powerful force, driven by his vision, plus the support of the American people. Now, it was up to the American people to decide if they would trust my husband to lead our country. We had done everything we could to convince the public that Donald was the right choice to be our nation’s 45th president, and for now, there was nothing left to do but wait—and vote.

At 10 a.m., Donald and I made our way downstairs and passed a large group of supporters on the street who were waiting for a glimpse of us as we left Trump Tower. The air was filled with the resounding cheers of “TRUMP! TRUMP!

TRUMP!” as we stepped into the car. The motorcade moved slowly, drawing the attention of New York City as we passed by.

When Donald and I arrived at the voting station, we discovered another significant gathering of admirers, journalists, and law enforcement officials.

Plus a few dissenters, of course. I was pleased to hear my name also being cheered, amid

the clamor. This Manhattan scene was a true testament to the passion, commitment, and enthusiasm of our incredible fan base and supporters across America.

Inside the polling station, election workers greeted us. We entered the privacy of the voting booth. Standing beside my husband and seeing his name on the ballot, I felt a surge of pride and amazement. It was a moment filled with emotion and significance for me, representing yet another peak of our journey together so far.

I marked my ballot for Donald Trump, then took a moment to land back on Earth where I could carefully consider the other races. After my husband waited patiently for his methodical wife, we walked together to submit our ballots. Handing over those pieces of paper, we completed a significant step in the American democratic process that I had grown up admiring from afar, a process I was now squarely in the middle of, a process that would soon thrill me, and sometimes in the coming years, confuse me—like it did millions of other Americans.

By noon, we were back home at Trump Tower, waiting impatiently for the election's outcome. With little to do until the results began to trickle in later that evening, we entered a new phase of anticipation. In the wake of our morning's frenzy, I carried on with my usual responsibilities, knowing that the outcome was ultimately in the hands of the American people. While I was hoping for a victory for Donald, I had also prepared myself for the possibility of a different result.

Regardless of the outcome, I knew that my family and I would be just fine.

I devoted time that day to Barron and my parents; I knew Donald was busy going to his campaign office, then home again, then the office again. Each time we were together that day, I was impressed by his calm. He was focused and relaxed.

This man is remarkably confident under pressure, and the pressure test was just beginning.

By 7 p.m., the major polls and pundits had all but crowned Hillary the victor, and our family waited, along with millions of others, to see if they were right. But as the evening progressed, the mood began to shift. Donald gained momentum in key battleground states, surprising many who had predicted a different outcome. By 10

p.m., it became clear that this election would not be as straightforward as had been initially reported by the media. Excitement filled the room as the results continued to come in in Donald's favor. The media, the pollsters, the pundits—they had all

gotten it wrong. Donald was defying the odds, inching closer to victory. And then, it was official. At 2:30 a.m., Wisconsin's results confirmed it: Donald had won the presidency. The room erupted in a mix of cheers, gasps, and hugs. The world as we knew it was about to change. What an extraordinary moment it was. I vividly recall Bret Baier's announcement, "The president-elect is Donald J. Trump." We were momentarily speechless, absorbing the weight of what had just transpired.

"Can you believe it!?" Donald's voice reflected a mix of astonishment and excitement as he hugged me. "Can you believe it?" I responded, "Of course I can!"

I'd believed in his victory all along, knowing his unwavering dedication to making America great again.

Despite the late hour, we made our way to the Hilton Hotel, where Donald would deliver his victory speech. The atmosphere was electric as we waited for Hillary Clinton to concede the election. Finally, at 2:40 a.m. the call came in, and within a few moments Donald took the stage. Barron and I stood beside him, proud and ready for the next chapter.

"I've just received a call from Secretary Clinton," he said. "She congratulated us on our victory, and I congratulated her and her family on a very, very hard-fought campaign. Now it's time for America to bind the wounds of division; we have to get together. To all Republicans and Democrats and independents across this nation, I say it is time for us to come together as one united people."

Donald struck the perfect tone, transitioning from his combative campaign persona to a unifying leader. He recognized the need for healing and unity in America. It was a moment that showcased his ability to rise above partisanship and bring the country together.

"It's time," he said. "I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be president for all Americans, and this is so important to me. For those who have chosen not to support me in the past, of which there were a few people, I'm reaching out to you for your guidance and your help so that we can work together and unify our great country. . . . As I've said from the beginning, ours was not a campaign, but rather an incredible and great movement made up of millions of hard-working men and women who love their country and want a better, brighter future for themselves and for their families. . . . It's a movement comprised of Americans from all races,

religions, backgrounds, and beliefs who want and expect our government to serve the people and serve the people it will. . . . We're going to get to work immediately for the American people. And we're going to be doing a job that hopefully you will be so proud of your president. You'll be so proud. Again, it's my honor. It was an amazing evening. It's been an amazing two-year period. And I love this country.”

While the joy of our victory was overwhelming, my mind quickly shifted to the multitude of tasks before us, as I contemplated the weight of responsibility and the challenges that lay ahead. I also couldn't help but think about Barron and how this new stage in our lives would impact him. As I considered the many roles I now had to balance—mother, wife, First Lady, daughter, sister, friend—I knew that careful planning and organization would be key in navigating this new journey. The media's scrutiny only added to the weight of these responsibilities, but I was determined to rise to the challenge and ensure that our family transitioned smoothly into our new reality.

I finally closed my eyes around 5:00 a.m. and opened them just two hours later.

In the half-light of the morning, my thoughts turned to my own journey as an American, born far away, like so many others.

## **Chapter 3**

### **April 26, 1970**

My mother, Amalija, was born on July 9, 1945, in the Austrian town of Judendorf-Strabengel, where her family, like so many others, had been displaced during the turbulent years of World War II. Although they faced challenges, my grandfather Anton, a skilled shoemaker and innovative farmer, never lost sight of his dreams.

When they returned to their village of Raka, nestled in the serene countryside just south of Sevnica, Anton wasted no time in pursuing his passion for agriculture.

It was here that he would go on to breed a culinary masterpiece—the renowned *raska čebula*, or Raka onion, a sweet red variety that quickly became a favorite among the Slovenian people.

From a young age, my mother’s innate talent and boundless creativity as an artist, patternmaker, and tailor shone brightly. It came as no surprise that when she finished Fashion Design and Pattern School, she was handpicked to join the design studio of the Jutranjka children’s clothing factory in Sevnica, a mere twenty minutes from her hometown. At Jutranjka, my mother was the artisan behind the scenes, transforming the designers’ sketches into exquisite patterns fit for the runway. With impeccable taste and confidence, she took pride in her work, thriving in the world of fashion.

My mother was the epitome of elegance. She often emphasized that self-care was essential not only to a person’s well-being but also to being able to effectively care for others, and she instilled this conviction in me from an early age, teaching me the importance of attending to one’s appearance before venturing into the world.

I have always found joy in the process of making myself presentable and getting ready.

“If I don’t take care of myself,” she would say, “how would I know how to care for others?” The value of self-care remains a guiding principle in my life.

My father, Viktor, was confident and industrious and had a strong desire to explore new destinations. He had an outgoing personality and was known for

his ability to connect with others. In my childhood memories, he is constantly moving and working with those around him.

Much like my mother, my father hailed from a lineage of hardworking and enterprising Slovenians. My father's roots can be traced back to the town of Radeče, just a stone's throw away from Sevnica. Despite the tumultuous times brought on by war, my grandfather managed to secure a position as production manager at the local Piatnik factory, allowing the family to weather the war. Born on November 23, 1941, in the midst of the German occupation, my father was christened Viktor Waldemar Knaus.

My father's passion for automobiles and motorcycles was a love affair that began in his youth and blossomed into a lifelong devotion. His expertise in all things mechanical was unmatched, and he could effortlessly repair and enhance any vehicle.

Starting out as a driver in the Yugoslavian Army, he honed his skills behind the wheel and quickly advanced to chauffeuring high-profile individuals, such as the mayor of a nearby town.

He met my mother in 1966, when his career trajectory shifted toward a new direction. Transitioning from a driver to a sales professional at Slovenija Avto, he quickly ascended the corporate ladder. His drive propelled him to great heights within the company, securing his reputation as a respected and influential figure in the industry. Following the independence of Slovenia, my father seized the opportunity to realize his lifelong dream of owning his own business. Through hard work, perseverance, and a deep-rooted passion for all things automotive, my father would go on to build a successful career and business.

My parents married in a civil ceremony and held their reception at the Podvin Castle. However, my mother, a true traditionalist, longed for a Catholic