

On election night, I started watching the election returns at seven. I tried to stay awake until a winner was declared. I reluctantly fell asleep just after midnight with the TV on. The perfect climax came a few hours later. I groggily awoke at five to see Jimmy Carter thanking the American people for his victory. Rosalynn and Jimmy and their family were on the porch of their home in Plains, Georgia.

That image gave me goose bumps. I saw a delighted family that was obviously close. They were humble, hardworking, and had pulled off a miracle. I wished it were my family. I wanted to be in the picture instead of observing it. For just a moment, I felt hopeful.