



Reluctant Press presents:

Branded For Life



Norman Way

A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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BRANDED FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

Twins. If there is one word that thrills prospective parents and grandparents alike, other than the news that “we’re pregnant,” it certainly is that one. The fact that the miracle of twins seldom occurs is a reason for joy by itself. Whether it is twin boys, twin girls, or one of each really doesn’t matter. A multiple birth is a cause for celebration.

There have been many studies done regarding how and why twins occur once in “x” number of births. Further studies about the relationship between twins and their comparative success rates in life have also been done. What isn’t well understood and what happens

rarely is when twins are born with opposite characteristics.

The female baby is larger than her male counterpart. Growing up, she gets physically larger and quicker than her younger sibling. She will grow to have masculine features like a larger skull, strong jaw-line, a larger physical build, bigger hands and feet while her male counterpart grows up to have small features, build, and a pretty, almost girly, face.

The female baby's personality development may exhibit a domineering side as she grows older while the male remains more submissive. Looking at them in the crib or stroller were it not for the pink or blue clothing, one could easily make a mistake in guessing their genders. At least that was the case with me.

My sister was born first at 6 lb. and 12 oz. I was a minute or so later, weighing in at a modest 3 lb. 10oz. When my mother asked about the size difference, the doctor just shrugged and told her to be happy we were both healthy, squalling babies with ten fingers and ten toes. He was certain I would eventually get bigger and would soon be larger than my sister.

The doctor never used the word "underdeveloped." Everything was where it was supposed to be and working just fine. Of course the doctor didn't mention that things were not always that way in nature.

Momma Robin comes to the nest with a bug in her beak. There are five baby robins stretching their necks to get fed. Over time, one or two of them get more to eat; as a result, they become bigger, stronger and faster than the others. They are able to push the other smaller, weaker babies aside. Eventually the five are reduced to four, then three as the weaker ones die off.

In the wild, babies of all species struggle to find the teat to get the nourishing milk they need. The bigger, stronger ones push the weaker ones aside and as a result they get less milk and soon die off. The law of the jungle is that life is survival of the fittest and the weak soon perish.

Fortunately that do or die scenario is not played out for humans but I would soon learn the importance of standing up for myself.

The first memories from my childhood were of standing in the living room and reaching for a ball that was on the floor. My sister pushed me away. I fell down and began to cry. My mother came to my rescue and reprimanded my sister.

There were other times when my mother wasn't around so I learned to push back when my sister pushed me. This made her madder and she began hitting me. There was no one to rescue me when this happened so I just ran into the other room, crying. I began keeping my distance from her and stayed away as much as possible to avoid another confrontation.

She was always the first at the table to eat our meals, the first to jump in the car when we went somewhere, the first to see the doctor when we got our checkups. Rather than try to be the first at anything we did, I decided it would be less trouble to just let her lead and have her way.

I simply avoided being around her. She liked the noise of radio and TV while I liked the quiet of the outdoors and the library. I spent most of my time alone and liked the solitude. I enjoyed being outdoors in the quiet of the park and the many things the library had to offer in addition to the solitude I found there. I became a voracious reader; as a result I did very well when we

started school, as opposed to my sister who did just enough to get by.

Grade school introduced me to soccer. Due to my small stature, I was knocked around pretty good. It was the first time I ever heard the word "runt." I quit soccer and took up tennis which I found more to my liking. I worked hard and became good at it. I never heard that word in or out of the locker room again.

In addition to practice sessions, I worked out at home as well. My parents had exercise machines in the basement and I made full use of them. My sister avoided them at all costs. Twice a week, my parents had to practically force her to spend as little as fifteen minutes on the treadmill and stationary bike.

We had healthy meals at home. Of course my sister preferred the junk at the fast food restaurants when she was with her friends. By the time we had finished Middle School, I was slim and trim while she was overweight, though much taller than I was. I continued to stay out of her way whenever possible.

We lived within walking distance of school but we never walked together. She was always in a hurry to get there to be with her friends. I was not overtly shy but I continued to keep pretty much to myself. I never felt the need to be the center of attention like my sister did.

I continued to work hard at improving my game. I kept myself motivated by taking out my frustrations with my sister on the ball in practice sessions. In addition I would run on the treadmill or pedal the stationary bike until my legs hurt.

I never spoke to my parents about those occasional conflicts with my sister. I felt that was better than to

have either or both of them speak to her about it, then have to watch my back when they weren't around.

After finishing middle school, my name was mentioned in the local newspapers after I won a tournament for eighth graders. The high school coach was quoted as saying he was looking forward to working with me next year.

My parents were pleased but my sister couldn't have cared less. She wanted to be with her friends rather than accompany our parents to see me play, which suited me just fine.

I spent the summer doing a few odd jobs for cash as I was still too young to get a job. We both helped out at home by sharing chores. She seemed to take great delight in seeing me in Mom's pink apron and rubber gloves when I washed the dishes and she dried.

I rode my bike to tennis practice all summer. Between that and my workouts in the basement, I was as fit as any kid could be. I was looking forward to my freshman year because I knew when tennis began in the spring, the competition would be much stiffer. It would be much more of a test of my abilities than the opponents I had played against in grade school.

School started and once more I settled into the routine of classes, homework and keeping fit. The high school was only several blocks from the middle school so I continued to ride my bike back and forth. When the weather turned cold, I rode the bus while Leann rode with her friends in one of the older girl's car. They were a wild and noisy bunch.

In the spring our tennis team finished third in our conference. Next year was much better as we lost only

two players to graduation. I was very confident that we would make it to the state tournament.

That summer Leann began working at a pizza place in the mall several miles away. A co-worker was going to take her back and forth to work. Dad's brother got me a job at a GM dealership. I had just finished driver education. I drove Mom or Dad's car back and forth to work.

"Auto detailer" is something of a misnomer. Auto janitor is more like it. I drove the used cars through the car wash, then vacuumed and deodorized the interior and cleaned the glass. You wouldn't believe the crap people leave in their cars.

The summer went fast as did my sophomore year. Both Leann and I were too busy with school or work to get in each other's way. They say time flies when you are having fun. School wasn't that much fun and neither was cleaning up other people's crap but I was too busy to care, I guess.

I was making the minimum wage and after paying for gas, I wasn't able to save very much. Leann was making the restaurant minimum but she also got tips and soon she had a small down payment saved up. With Mom and Dad cosigning the loan, she bought a very used Mustang and was soon peeling rubber when she left for work.

I had no close friends outside of the tennis team at school so I kept mostly to myself. Leann had many friends but they were like her: loud, wild and crazy. They were more interested in the mall, thrills, and alcohol and marijuana too, I'm sure.

There was no doubt in my mind that if they spent half as much time on their studies as they did cruising

around and having fun, they probably would have done much better grade-wise. It just didn't seem to matter to them that much. I wondered what Leann thought she was going to do after school with such low grades. Maybe she was planning on working her way up the ladder at the pizza place.

Just before we broke for the Christmas holidays, a classmate asked me if I would help his older brother out. They were going to play a practical joke on some of his brother's college girlfriends. They wanted me to drive them to the sorority house in my car because it was one the girls wouldn't recognize. I saw no harm in helping them out so I agreed.

That Saturday night, I drove my classmate's brother and two of his buddies to the sorority house. I parked two blocks away. About twenty minutes later, I saw the three guys running towards the car. They jumped in and screamed "Get this thing moving!"

I started the car and put it in gear. Four blocks later, a squad car pulled me over. We all got out of the car and the cops began questioning us. It was then I noticed the guys had several pairs of panties they had apparently taken from the sorority house.

I answered all the officer's questions, denying any knowledge of what the boys had intended to do. They let us go but we had to appear before a judge in ten days. My parents were upset with me but there was nothing I could do.

A female judge presided over the hearing. She had a bit of a smirk on her face and I wondered if she had been a member of that sorority when she attended college. The University and the sorority girls agreed to drop all of the charges if each of us would come and clean the sorority house from top to bottom on differ-

ent weekends. We agreed and I figured that was the end of it. After the other three guys spent their Saturday doing their house cleaning, I took my turn.

When I finished, the girls inspected the work I had done, then invited me to join them for a drink. I wanted to go back home but reluctantly agreed. After a couple of sips from the wine glass, I felt a little dizzy. The next thing I knew it was about an hour later and one of the girls was waking me up.

I found myself lying on a bed in one of the upstairs bedrooms.

“Wake up, sleepy head. Come downstairs, we have something to show you on our computer.”

She walked out the door as I swung my legs over the edge of the mattress. I thought I could smell a slight odor of perfume as I got up. I looked at myself in the hallway mirror but I couldn’t see anything out of the ordinary.

When I entered the living room, there were several girls standing by the desk. I looked at the computer screen. It was a picture of me lying on the bed. I was wearing a pink bra, a pair of pink panties, and a pink garter belt was holding up my pink stockings. My cheeks had pink blusher and my lips had a thick coating of bright pink lipstick.

“Okay wise guy, watch this.”

She made several keystrokes and a black bar covered my eyes so you couldn’t tell it was me. Next she uploaded the picture to the sorority’s website under the heading “Local Sissies Who Entertained Us.” I was too stunned to speak. There were three other pictures as well. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that

if the bars were removed, I would see the other three guys that I was with that night.

“If there is more trouble from any of you clowns, those bars will be removed and the whole world will be laughing at you. Got it?”

I nodded without speaking.

“Good, now get lost.”

I turned around and walked out. As I drove home, I wondered if they would keep that bargain. I decided not to think any more about it or even discuss it with my classmate after school resumed. The less said about something like this, the better. School started again and I never gave the incident another thought.

In late January, Leann’s car died after work one night so I drove to pick her up. I arrived just as the tow truck was hauling the Mustang away. I walked inside the pizza place and found her talking with two girls at the counter.

They both had prom magazines in their hands. One of them pointed at a page and they all looked up at me and laughed. As I approached, they closed the magazine so I couldn’t see what they were looking at.

“I’m ready, let’s go,” announced Leann. “I’ll need a lift to the station tomorrow too.”

“No problem,” I answered.

As we drove home, I wondered what the source of their amusement was. Prom magazines were informational, not funny and they had looked at me in a sort of bemused way. If there was something humorous there, I couldn’t see it.

Several days later, I saw the same magazine on the break table at work. I had finished eating my lunch and no one else was around so I began paging through it hoping to find a clue as to what Leann and her friends had found so funny.

The magazine was full of beautiful girls modeling all sorts of prom fashions in many styles and colors. In the middle there was a stunning picture of a very pretty blonde girl wearing a pink satin sheath dress and matching stiletto heel shoes. She was wearing pink blusher, pink nail polish and shiny pink lip gloss. A matching pink purse hung on a gold chain from her shoulder.

I thought back to that picture of me on the bed at the sorority house wearing pink lingerie and makeup. I closed my eyes and imagined myself wearing that lingerie under the pink satin sheath. I heard someone coming so I tossed the magazine aside, unable to figure out what was so amusing.

One of the office girls came into the break room. She retrieved the magazine from the table and walked away. At the door, she handed it to another girl.

"Sorry, I guess I left it in here," she said as the door closed.

I drank the last of my soda and tossed the can in the recycling bin. As I came out of the restroom, the door to the ladies room was just opening and I heard someone remark, "That little runt would look just fabulous in any of those gowns," followed by laughter.

I kept walking back to the service bay. It was the first time I had heard the word "runt" in quite some time. I was puzzled as to why the girls would want to

see me in a dress, high heels and makeup. Was I that unmasculine, I asked myself?

I finished work and went home. When I got inside, the house was empty. I went upstairs and undressed.

After my shower, I stood in front of the mirror. I didn't think I was feminine. My body was nearly hair-free and my skin had always been smooth and soft. I guess you could say it was sort of "girly." I brushed my hair down over my forehead. If I had longer hair, I would definitely look just like a girl.

On the spur of the moment, I walked into my parents' bedroom. A pair of knee-high nylon stockings was draped over my Mom's shoe rack. I slipped them on and then stepped into my mother's black high heel pumps.

I was surprised to find they were just a little big. I took several tissues from the box on her vanity, folded them over and placed one around the inside of each shoe's heel. The fit was almost perfect. I felt confident that I could walk easily in them despite hearing my mom complain that they hurt her feet.

I began walking around the room, trying to act like a girl. It was easier than I had anticipated. I stopped in front of her dresser and opened the top drawer. I set one of the cakes of perfumed soap aside. I held up the nylon tricot half-slip, then stepped into it. It felt good as I brought it up to my waist.

My pulse was accelerating as I put one hand on my hip and began walking around the room. I struck a pose in front of the full-length mirror. I really did look just like a girl. If I was wearing makeup and a dress, I thought I could easily pass for a female. Maybe that is

what the two girls at the pizza place were seeing when they looked at the prom fashions, then back at me.

The sound of Leann's Mustang pulling up to the curb in the front of the house interrupted my thoughts. I panicked and took off the shoes and nylons. I quickly replaced them on the rack exactly as I had found them. I slid the half-slip down and stepped out of it. After folding it carefully, I put it back in the drawer and placed the bar of soap on top of it. I ran back to my room and closed the door. I dressed quickly and walked out to the hallway just as Leann was coming up the stairs.

"You look kinda scared, whatcha up to?" she asked with a grin on her face.

"Nothing," I replied

"Uh huh. You weren't jacking off in there, were you?"

"No, of course not and that was a stupid thing to say," I shot back.

"Yeah, right. On second thought maybe you were in Mom's room trying on her lingerie and heels," she answered with a laugh.

I didn't answer her but swallowed hard as I passed her and went back down stairs. I took a soft drink out of the fridge and looked at my reflection in the small mirror over the kitchen sink. I didn't think I looked guilty of anything but Leann must have seen something or sensed it.

I was half-finished with my drink when Leann left again. As soon as her car was out of sight down the street, I ran back upstairs to my parents' room. I wanted to be certain everything looked OK. The

dresser was fine and the cake of soap on top of the half-slip looked undisturbed.

When I went over to the shoe rack, I was startled to find that in my haste I had left the tissues inside the pumps. I quickly removed them and tossed them in the bathroom waste basket. My heart was pounding as I thought about what Mom might have said if she found the tissues in her shoes. She knew Leann would never be trying on her shoes so I would be the only logical person to ask. I went back downstairs and finished my pop.

I had a hard time getting to sleep that night after such a close call. It was a good thing I hadn't decided to try on some lipstick or blusher. Closing my eyes, I saw myself walking around the room in the half-slip and high heels. I had enjoyed myself. I liked the feel of the half-slip's fabric and the nylon stockings on my skin. I had walked almost effortlessly in Mom's high heels and found them to be very comfortable.

At the end of May, we were runners-up in the state championships. I did win the singles title. Next year would be our best shot at winning the top spot. The press was pretty good even though tennis didn't get the coverage of other sports.

Coaches from several universities had already contacted me by mail. Tennis scholarships were few and far between compared to the other sports but it would go a long way towards saving me from having to pay for my education.

In mid-June, Leann was bringing Mom back from the mall. It was raining heavily when Leann took a freeway exit ramp a little too fast and flipped the Mustang over. Both of them were dead at the scene. Leann having an accident was no surprise to me but getting

herself and Mom killed made things much worse. I know Dad blamed Leann for Mom's death but blame didn't bring her back.

I was more afraid for my father than myself as they had been more than just another married couple. They were truly soul-mates for life. People handle tragedies differently. Some grieve openly, others privately. Some get over the loss of a loved one and some never do. My dad handled things pretty well but I knew he was torn up inside.

Following the funeral, I helped Dad box up Leann and Mom's clothing for the thrift store. Leann's small life insurance policy was given to me and Mom's went to Dad. I took title to Mom's car. Leann only carried liability on her car so we got nothing for the loss.

I had a little money in my checking account and it felt good to have ten thousand dollars in a CD. Since I had no definite plans after high school, it would give me a little cushion if some unexpected expenses should arise.

Dad began working more hours. I did most of the cooking. We didn't talk much and he seemed to be increasingly distant. I kept the house clean and continued to wear Mom's pink apron and gloves. For some strange reason, I liked it.

Occasionally I dreamed about wearing the half-slip with a bra, panties, garter belt, stockings and a lacy camisole under a blouse and skirt. Why I did was a mystery. What was there about wearing feminine apparel that made me feel so good?

One night I typed "cross dresser clothing" in a search engine and found many websites that sold feminine apparel to men. Their links led me to many others

as well as self-help guides, chat rooms, therapists and clinics that treated what they called “transgendered men.”

I was amazed at what I found; as time went on, I put together a file of these sites. I categorized them into two sections. The first was ‘retail’ where I listed the products they sold and the second was ‘professional and informational.’ I did not list the many porn or subscription sites I found.

The holidays came and went. It was a difficult time as there were two less at the table for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. I could tell Dad was still having trouble with Mom’s death. He became more and more distant. He would always pay half the groceries and we were splitting the phone and light bills while he took care of the mortgage payment and taxes.

In my senior year, we hardly talked at all. In late November, the economy went into the toilet. All the risky mortgages and sub-prime loans had contributed to a near world-wide collapse of the financial system.

Dad had enough time in at work so his job would not be in jeopardy but some of the younger employees were worried and each day the news gave them good reason to be. I doubted that my part-time job at the GM dealership would be lost as I had done a good job for them, earning two raises since I had started and several other employees had come and gone since then.

Up to this point I had not socialized much outside of school functions. With school, work, taking care of Dad and the house, I was kept pretty busy. My dates had been between a movie and a burger after a football or basketball game. I liked most of the girls in my class but without sounding paranoid, I don’t think they

liked me very much. I overheard one of the girls ask another, "How was your date with Shorty?"

I was never self-conscious about being short, but I felt I was being labeled. My parents had instilled in me the work ethic as well as maintaining a positive image of myself. "You are as good as anybody," they had both told me at one time or another. I wondered why girls didn't see me that way.

With spring just around the corner, I was looking forward to another championship season. I was one of three seniors who were ranked. I began hearing from college coaches on a regular basis now but I was not really certain what I was going to do.

My father's heart attack at work came as a shock but in retrospect it was no surprise. He hadn't been himself since Mom died. I contacted the attorney that had helped us with Mom's estate and he took care of things for me.

After funeral and legal expenses, I put the ten thousand dollars from his life insurance and another ten thousand dollars from Mom's insurance together with my ten thousand from Leann's insurance in a CD.

I didn't want to keep the house but with the country in financial collapse, I knew it would be hard to sell it so I listed it anyway. I had enough to continue the mortgage payments for about a year. In my spare time, I began getting rid of the accumulation of stuff we had. I was pretty exhausted for the first week or two.

With the prom a month away, I asked several girls and they all responded that they had already been asked. I began to wonder again if my shortness had something to do with it. Finally a girl in my American History class accepted my invitation.

She was a new girl and had transferred here in January. I was happy about my prom date until I overheard one of the girls in another class remark, "Who is going to wear the dress?" followed by giggles.

That night after a shower, I looked at myself in the mirror again. I had lost some more weight with the stress of my father's death but I didn't think I looked overtly feminine. Later I dreamt I was at the prom wearing pink blusher, pink lipstick, pink nail polish, a pink dress, and matching four-inch heel shoes. I was dancing with a tall, muscular girl in a black tuxedo and black leather boots. I woke up with an erection and in the bathroom I masturbated myself to a release.

As I ate breakfast, I tried to understand why I had such a wonderful feeling being cross-dressed and in the arms of a muscular, assertive woman. I was a male and as such I should be the lead when dancing with a girl, I should be the masculine, aggressive party not the submissive, feminine one.

I had felt very comfortable in the submissive role in my dreams. I wondered if I was destined to have a life like that. The way things were in our society, I doubted it very much.

We won the state title. I was singles champion to boot. At the end of the month, Jill and I had a good time at the prom. She wore a pale blue dress. Despite wearing low heel shoes, she was still taller than I was and I had no doubt there were plenty of giggles and talk behind our backs.

I was yet undecided as to the direction my life should take. Money was no longer an issue and the house was yet to be sold. In addition I continued to pursue information about my love of feminine apparel.

It was like some deep, dark secret had been hiding inside me and had now become unlocked. I wasn't sure how I was going to deal with this and lead a "normal" life too. I didn't want to seek out professional help just yet either.

In August I reduced the price of the house, hoping to be able to sell it before the cold weather set in again. Not many homes in the upper Midwest sell after November. I was given extra hours at the dealership and had disposed of most everything in the house I didn't need.

I had told my counselor that I was going to put off going to college for a year, citing my father's death and getting rid of the house as my priorities.

By March of the next year, the housing market and the economy in general were still in shambles. I had lowered the price of the house again in January but there were still no takers. The only positive thing was that I got a chance to move up at the dealership.

The service manager had retired and his assistant had been promoted. I got a nice raise and began learning the shop business while another young man replaced me as the detailer. The first two months went fast, then the bottom fell out.

GM was closing the dealership. We all wondered what we were going to do. I cashed in part of my CD to pay the taxes and it was expensive heating that house in the winter. The house was mostly empty with just a few furniture items and me. It was like heating an empty warehouse.

The owner of the dealership flew to Detroit to talk with GM. We were a small town dealership and didn't have anywhere near the gross that the big dealerships

in the Twin Cities had so they decided to give us the ax.

The boss was the grandson of the founder and had just taken over when his father retired two years earlier. It was a bitter blow for a lot of people. Some of the customers were the grandkids of the dealership's customers when it first opened many years ago.

June 30th would be the last day. We had a big inventory reduction sale during the month of May but with the economy in trouble, most of the vehicles went to other dealerships. The only good news by the end of the month was that I had two bites on the house. I kept my fingers crossed each time the realtor showed up with a client.

All of the employees had begun seeking new jobs as soon the closing had been announced. We all made up resumes, registered with Job Service, contacted other dealerships and used the internet. I had yet to decide whether to attend school in the fall or continue working.

June 1st I filled out a questionnaire sent to me by email from a dealership near San Jose, California. I thought it was a bit odd that they wanted to know my height, weight, eating and drinking habits. I got an immediate answer back and that afternoon had a video cam interview with the dealership's owner and general manager, Connie DelGatto.

The next morning I got an offer to start August 15th. With nothing to lose, I printed out a copy of the offer and replied to accept it. That night when I got home, I found a message on my answering machine from my realtor.

Both parties had made an offer. The first was too low and the realtor refused to even tell me about it. The second was a little better so at the realtor's suggestion, I made a counter offer. I had hoped to sell it quickly so I could go to California without being encumbered with a house to leave behind.

Three days later, the second party called back with another offer. Rather than wait any longer, I decided to accept it and made arrangements for the close. They wanted to move in the last week in July and I agreed to be out by then.

With a first and second mortgage, closing costs, realtor commissions, fees and holdbacks, I didn't have very much money left. I hadn't realized just how deep in debt my parents had been.

After the dealership closed, I got my last check and began getting rid of everything I wasn't going to bring with me to California. I had an estate sale, then donated everything I couldn't sell to the local mission charity.

I checked into a motel for the remaining week before the new owners moved in. I went to the house once each day just to be sure everything was OK. It looked so different now that it was completely empty. I felt a sudden pang of emotion as I remembered growing up there.

The realtor and I made one last "walk-through" of the house, then I locked the doors and handed him the keys. I stopped at AAA and got a membership, maps and travel information for my trip west. That night as I got into bed, I almost cried.

Three days later after closing my bank accounts and transferring the money to a San Jose bank, I got some

travelers checks. Early the next morning, I left for California. It was a bright sunny day and I tried to think of the future I had by going out west as opposed to what I was leaving behind.

It was an uneventful trip. I found a small apartment near the dealership which was adjacent to a new shopping mall. I could bike to work and get groceries. When I was all settled in, I drove to the dealership and asked for Connie Delgatto.

In a few minutes she came out of her office and introduced herself. She was a tall woman who wore a black pantsuit, a plain white blouse and highly polished black flat heel boots. She wore no makeup and didn't smile as she gave me a firm, almost manly handshake, then asked me into her office.

It appeared that this was going to be an all-business relationship instead of the congenial, relaxed atmosphere I had been used to working in. As I took my seat across from her, I decided I would be more guarded in this conversation that I might have been.

She handed me several forms to fill out, then gave me a sheet listing my work hours for the last two weeks of August and the month of September. Another sheet was a confirming letter of hire with my starting wage as well as an employee handbook. Her face was without any expression or emotion as she waited for me to read and sign everything.

"I see you keep yourself in good physical health. You must continue to do so to keep your job here. We are all very health-conscious and you will be expected to maintain a professional as well as a healthy appearance at all times, understood?"

"Yes, ma'am," I answered.

“After you complete your ninety-day probation, you will be eligible for the benefit package which I will discuss with you then. You should know it includes a membership in the health club at the mall nearby. Do you have any questions?”

“No ma’am,” I answered.

“Good. Here is the address of a uniform shop in the mall. All service personnel must wear blue coveralls instead of street clothes. They will measure you and call you when your coveralls are ready for pickup. Wear a clean coverall each day and read the appearance guidelines in the handbook. The second address is where your physical takes place in two hours, don’t be late. See you on the fifteenth.”

I took the slip of paper from her and stood up. We shook hands and I walked out to the car. She was all business all the time, I thought to myself. If the job was going to go anything like the past twenty minutes, maybe I had made the wrong choice in coming here. It was a bit late to second guess myself. I was here and for at least a year, I was going to have to make the best of it.

I drove to the uniform shop. I was ushered into the back room by a man named Don who told me to undress to my T-shirt and briefs to be measured. I did so but was puzzled by the need for head, neck, wrist, sleeve length, and shoe size. I thought that with short-sleeved coveralls, all they would need would be chest, waist and inseam measurements. I said nothing to Don; when I got re-dressed, he said he would call me when the coveralls were ready.

I had lunch at the café court, then drove to the address for my physical several miles away. It was a two-story office building. I went inside and found the

suite number on the sheet Connie had given me. I gave them my name at the front counter and filled out the medical form on the clipboard I was given.

My physical was given by a female doctor. She glanced at the clipboard, then proceeded to give me a thorough going-over. At its conclusion, she made some notes on the sheet, then wrote something on a prescription pad before giving me a shot from a very large needle.

“Everybody gets vitamin and flu shots on a regular basis. Stop at the pharmacy on your way out and give them this.”

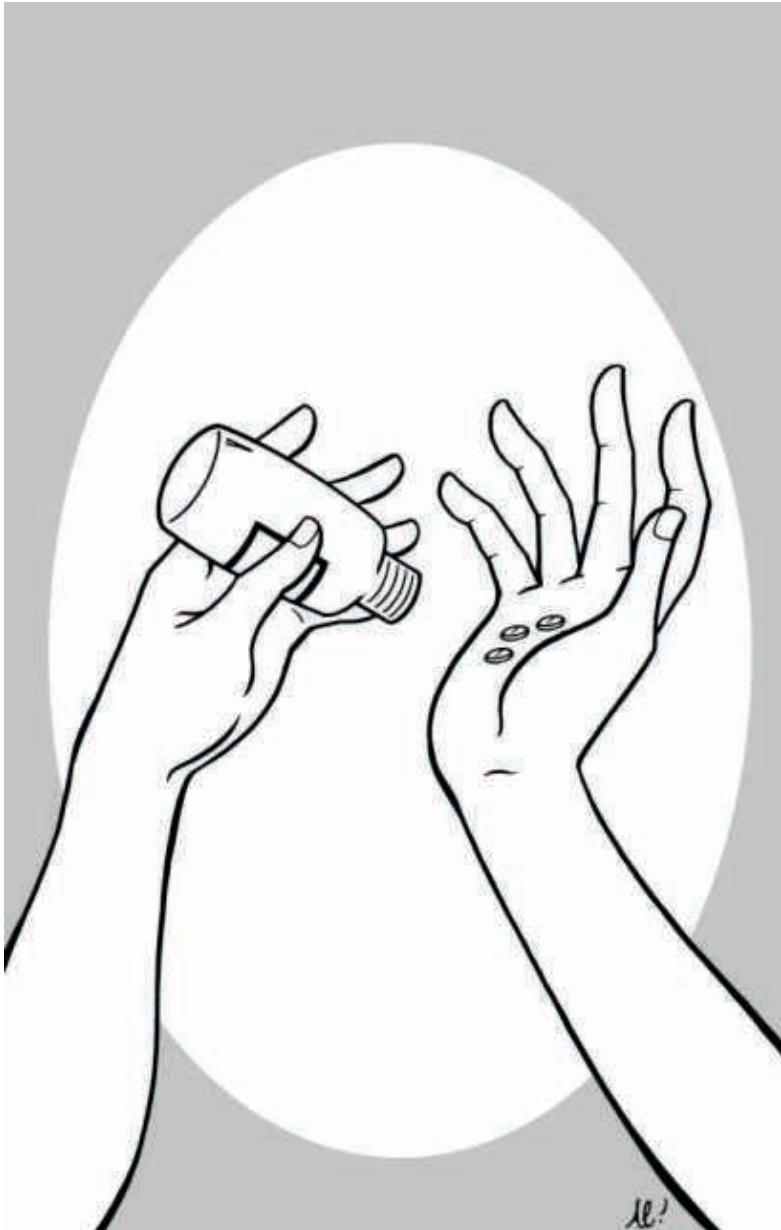
She handed me a prescription sheet. After she left the room, I got dressed and walked to the pharmacy at the front of the building. The female pharmacist handed me a container of pills. As I left, I thought I heard her and a co-worker giggling about something.

At home, I opened the container and examined the pills. They were pink and a little smaller than a dime. The instructions were to take one a day after a meal. I put them in the medicine cabinet. I knew Californians were a pretty health-conscious bunch but I thought giving me an injection and pills to take was a bit much. Nevertheless, “When in Rome...” as the saying goes.

The next two weeks seemed to crawl by. I picked up a large garment bag at the uniform shop at the end of the first week. Inside it I found seven blue coveralls. I tried them on and found they were sharply tailored to fit my body very closely, especially around the buttocks.

At the bottom of the bag were seven pairs of black socks and a pair of black oxfords that fit just as well as

the coveralls. For a pair of black work oxfords, they were as comfortable as any sneaker I had ever worn.



The second week I bought a used bike and began getting to know the general area. I timed myself to the dealership and the shopping mall. It felt good to be getting some exercise as I had not worked out in about six weeks. I was stiff and sore for a couple of days but along with running several miles in a nearby park whenever I could, I felt as good as I ever had.

I purchased a small flat screen TV and set it up with an indoor power antenna. It brought in several local channels which was enough for me as I watched very little TV, preferring to be outdoors or reading. There were several public tennis courts in the area as well as tennis clubs. I decided to wait until my probation was up since the health club had ample court space and it would be free.

My starting day finally arrived. I was a bit apprehensive and didn't sleep all that well the night before. I decided to drive to work instead of biking it. The forecast was for rain later that evening but I didn't want to take a chance on getting caught in a storm on the way home if it came earlier.

I parked my car in the side parking lot. It was six thirty so I sat and listened to the radio for fifteen minutes. I walked in the rear service entrance promptly at six forty-five. A short black man introduced himself as John Hunter, the service manager.

"Go into the break room and grab a soda or coffee. I'll get you started in a few minutes," he said.

I walked into the break room and stopped at the two machines along the wall. One machine contained cans of juice without any sugar and diet sodas without the caffeine. The other offered hot chocolate and either decaffeinated tea or coffee. It didn't surprise me after Connie's lecture about health.

I bought a can of orange juice even though I wasn't thirsty. I sat at the table and waited for John. At the other end of the room were two women. One was a short, muscular blonde with very short hair, almost like a man's crew cut, while the other was a thin, mousey girl with dark brown hair. Both wore coveralls like mine.

I finished my drink and walked to the men's room. When I came back out, the two women were just leaving the room. I heard the blonde say, "What's short stuff going to be doing here?" The door closed before I heard the answer.

John entered the room and I walked out to the service counter. Over the next hour, he explained the computer and phone system. It was pretty much the same as the other GM dealerships had. By lunch time I had a pretty good handle on things.

I lived close by so I drove home for lunch. As I made myself a peanut butter sandwich, I thought about the blonde's remark: "What's short stuff going to be doing here?" It looks like I was being labeled again.

I finished my lunch and drove back to the dealership. When I walked in, John told me that Connie wanted to see me.

"Don't keep this lady waiting," he admonished.

I walked to her office. Her secretary was gone but the door was open. I knocked politely on the door jam rather than just walk in. She got up from her desk and motioned me inside. I stood by the desk and she closed the door.

Standing behind me, she ran her hands over my shoulders and lower back. I was quite surprised that

she would put her hands on my person. She walked around to face me.

“It looks like the uniforms fit you well, how are the shoes?”

“Just fine, in fact for plain work shoes they are very comfortable”

“Good. I trust you have read the employee handbook, particularly the section in the back that deals with the health regime?”

“Yes, I have.”

“OK, now I want you to drop your weight to 140 lb. I know you are in excellent health but you can never be too careful. Your weight was 146 at the physical so another six pounds shouldn’t be too difficult for you to lose, now should it?”

“No,” I answered. I was too afraid to say anything else.

At 5’5” and 146 lb., my BMI would be 24.3. If I dropped to 140 lb., my BMI would be 23.3. Both would be below 25, the recommended number. I could not see why that extra little amount could possibly be that important but I certainly wasn’t in a position to argue with her.

“That’s all for today, you may go back to work,” she said as she turned away from me.

Just as I was about to go, I glanced at the picture on the shelf behind her desk. One of the girls in the picture was at the sorority house where I had cleaned and been photographed in pink lingerie.

I turned away quickly and walked back to the service department. I wondered if there was any connection between that incident and why I got the job here. I

put it out of my mind and concentrated on the rest of the afternoon's work.

That night, after a bike ride and a hot shower, I thought about that picture again. Could it be just a coincidence? I thought for sure a harmless prank of a panty raid would have been long forgotten by the sorority girls.

If the girl in the picture had mentioned it to Connie, why would she be interested in bringing me here? If the sorority girls wanted more revenge, why not refuse to hire me? I drank two light beers before going to bed and they helped get me to sleep.

A month passed and I became settled into a routine. Each first day off from my five days on, I took five coveralls to the uniform shop to be dry cleaned and pressed. They would be ready for an evening pickup in two days. I stopped at the clinic to get weighed and given another shot.

"You are at 140 and a half," said the nurse. "If I were you, I would drop another two or three pounds."

I nodded and got dressed. I couldn't understand what the trouble was with being just a half-pound over but then I remembered John's remark: "Don't keep this lady waiting." I began to wonder just what kind of a boss she was.

That night I put her name in a search engine. It seems Connie Scarlotti was divorced from Alberto Delgatto, the grandson of Dominic Delgatto, one of New Jersey's crime bosses. There was no proven connection between her and the mob but with only two years of college, she had no trouble getting financing to buy this GM dealership.

I decided I would have to watch my P's and Q's very carefully at least until I could get to know the employees a little better so I could ask some questions. The second month passed and I got my weight down to 135, more than I had been expected to lose. I got another shot, which surprised me too.

Friday night about eight, I got a phone call from Connie.

"I need a small favor. I am having some friends over tomorrow afternoon for tennis. One is sick and can't make it. I know you are a very capable tennis player. Could you please come over so we can have a foursome?"

I answered "Sure" without thinking about it. I wrote down the directions to her house.

"Please come about one, I have everything here that you need."

With that, she hung up. I hadn't played for some time but I was sure I could handle a casual match among Connie and her friends.

When I arrived at the address she had given me, I found it was a gated community. I gave my name to the guard at the gate. After making a call, he waved me inside.

I parked on the street in front of the house and walked to the door. I rang the bell and Connie let me in.

"Hi, come right in. I have everything you need in a back bedroom. Follow me."

I closed the door behind me and we walked to the room.

Her house was absolutely gorgeous, as you might expect from a business owner. The lawn and shrubs were manicured and the inside was tastefully furnished. If the dealership wasn't making money, she certainly had been getting it from someplace.

The whole bedroom was done in pink and white. She stopped by a queen-size four-poster bed that was covered with a pink chiffon bedspread. On top of the bedspread was a pink bra, a pair of pink panties and a pink tennis dress. She held the pink tennis dress up against me.

"Looks like it should fit perfectly. Put on your lingerie, the dress, then come out."

She turned and walked out of the bedroom before I had a chance to say anything. Of course she hadn't said anything on the phone about me wearing a women's tennis outfit. It was too late for me to say something now so I undressed.

She had placed two ping pong balls in the bra cups; after I closed the front hooks, I knew they would fill out the front of the dress very well. I slipped on the panties and in my mind saw the picture the sorority girls had taken of me. I smoothed my hand over the four rows of white ruffles along the back. I felt very good as I slipped the dress over my head and walked to the bedroom door.

Connie was standing just outside the door when I opened it. I turned around and she zipped me up. She lifted the skirt up and ran her hands over my buttocks. After smoothing the skirt back over the panties, she ran her hands around my waist. I turned around and she looked me over carefully.

"It looks fine, now please sit at the vanity."