1

The last thing I wanted to do was to marry my husband. Bob Morgenthau was a widower almost three decades older, came with five children, a cat, and two dogs, and resided in a suburban house barely touched since the death of his wife five years before. It looked like this: On the lowboy in the hall was a mound of unopened mail that a casual breeze could have sent cascading to the floor. The chintz sofa with its fat golden flowers had gone vapid, the illusion of a spring bounty passed to winter gorse. Little crystal bowls were filled with shriveled nuts.

Not only that, this man, the stereotype of the bourgeoisie, had the power to put me in jail.

And this was supposed to be the man of my dreams?

I had barely escaped incarceration anyway, emptying balloons of pig's blood on draft files in various cities, trespassing on government property, and chaining myself to the wrought-iron White House fence.

We couldn't have been more different. In 1961, he had become the formidable U.S. attorney under JFK, sending away members of the Mafia, corrupt politicians, corporate thieves. In 1961, I was pubescent, a budding radical drawn to the black civil rights movement.

By the 1970s, I had become a young woman in a state of rage. I felt a gnawing shame whenever I thought of Vietnam, which was much of the time. An ethos of death permeated my generation. We all knew or knew of someone killed in this excruciatingly stupid war, and our heads were filled with images of what we had done: the ears of Vietnamese women sliced off for souvenirs, babies in flames, faces bubbled black with napalm. That old American men (our parents) had sent fifty thousand young

American men (their sons) to die alone a million miles away because of this fallacious domino theory that had quickly collapsed on itself made me crazy. That long after we were losing the war we were still dropping almost three million tons of bombs on Cambodia made me crazy. That we had killed student protesters for no good reason made me especially crazy. I hated my country. If you were intelligent and young, you were trying to figure out how to be sane in an insane world.

It never occurred to me that a member of the establishment, a man born into the same culture as the deluded architects of the Vietnam War, would be the answer. Bob Morgenthau came from one of New York's prominent and well-to-do German Jewish families who were steeped in politics. I came from a Boston suburb that I loathed, born of an upper-middle-class New England family, thoroughly steeped in Gentile society. He was part of the status quo, and I was a hippie who, in spite of bending to the pleas of my mother to go to charm school and become a Boston debutante, was still ragged at the edges.

I let it all hang out, while he calmly kept it in. He was cautious, steady, a sloop balanced at dead center. I was guileless, eager to take risks, a catamaran racing breakneck through every channel I encountered. While he was aggressively enforcing the law, I had become dedicated to breaking it. The very notion that we should have come together was an oxymoron.

Certainly we appeared to be opposites, but in truth we were hauntingly alike. We were both born of busy parents who were oriented more toward the world than the home. Bob practically raised himself, appearing to be the good middle child but in truth secretly roaring about playing outrageous pranks. When he would confess, his mother assumed he was joking and never gave it another thought. In a more subversive way, I had done the same thing. My father, overly protective, was generally too physically absent to address this; my mother was overly strict, but only when she was paying attention. I would sneak out late at night and commit a variety of sins.

The backdrop of my childhood was the sterile, repressively elegant town of Wellesley, Massachusetts, home to the anti-

Communist John Birch Society, where the men wore yellow pants and red jackets and where the lawns were cut as short as their crew cuts. On my fifth birthday, I remember sitting with my mother on the hot granite of our neighbor's stone wall, having seen a movie of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. "Mom," I asked, "why aren't there any Negroes on our street?" She looked at me, stunned, and replied, "The only thing you have to worry about is yourself, young lady."

My father had come back from World War II broken, full of secrets, and incapable of rekindling his love for my mother. He became an alcoholic with a wandering eye, and she gained almost a hundred pounds. My parents had noisy physical fights. Sometimes I would lock myself into my baby sister's nursery, fearing for us both. As we grew and my mother's marriage further crumbled, the contempt and resentment she felt for my father were displaced onto us. Her talent for cutting us down was unequaled and sometimes so subtle, we didn't know what was happening. When I was nine, I began running away from home, but the police would always find me hiding in a grove of trees that passed for the town's woodland.

Sometimes my mother would forget to pick me up at school or to cook dinner for us while still being intensely ambitious for me, demanding that I bring home high grades on an empty stomach. When I didn't, she'd forbid me to go to the soda shop, pajama parties, dancing parties. I might as well have been in a federal witness protection program.

When I was in seventh grade, I took up with older intellectual kids with progressive ideas. To my father's amused dismay, I brought *The Communist Manifesto* to the dinner table and proceeded to hold forth on the virtues of Lenin over Kropotkin.

By the time I was sixteen, I had learned how to escape my mother. At night I sneaked out with my friends to smoke weed on the country-club green. By day, I would unobtrusively saunter around the back of the house and then race down the block, climb on the back of my boyfriend's Kawasaki motorcycle, and roar up to Boston.

My mother sought to tame me by enrolling me in the socially enviable Junior League. To my delight, the league had just taken on a volunteer project sight unseen, because it was sponsored by Harvard University. Wellmet was an experimental halfway house for volunteer students and newly released mental patients located in bohemian Cambridge. By day, we worked with the patients, and by night we slept together on cots in the attic, breaking more social mores than the patients themselves. The experiment was a success, however; we got patients out into jobs and apartments, and in spite of my mother's idle threats not to pay for my college, I stayed on at Wellmet through my senior year.

When I finally entered Vassar College, I helped found a chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which intensified protests against Vietnam and the draft. I had established myself in a generation whose outer rebellion reflected an inner one, a breaking away from our conventional, hypocritical, overly possessive postwar parents. When I graduated from Vassar, I felt blessedly free, a member of the exhilarating, dream-struck counterculture whose motto was "Don't trust anyone over thirty."

And then our heroes, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, who had been predicted to defeat Nixon for president and finally end the war, were assassinated. With them died the hope that the system could be changed from within. Leaving America seemed to be the only choice. As soon as I graduated from college, I used the money I had saved over the years babysitting, boarded a rickety ship relegated to students who paid cheap fares, and steamed to England to live among saner people. There, I got an apartment with a bunch of fellow exiles in London. Luckily, I had already published a short story, and that helped me get a job at the major wire service United Press International.

I was the only newswoman in the organization's London bureau and was paid as much as a coffee runner. I bought a used motor scooter on which I happily drove to work. By day, I decoded cables from reporters in third-world countries, written in a shortened garble to save the company cents per word, and by night I dallied at the Anarchist Club, one of England's

counterparts to the SDS. I went out and found my own scoops, and since I was not yet a feminist, my skeptical boss finally gave me praise of the highest order: "You write so well, I don't even think of you as a woman anymore."

By the time I was twenty-four, I had been nominated by UPI for the Pulitzer Prize. I was the youngest woman to win the prize and the first to get it for the prestigious category of national reporting. The award was for a series of articles that, like all top-rate stories, was the result of hard work, some skill, and, most important, a huge amount of luck.

It began in May 1970, when a Bryn Mawr graduate named Diana Oughton, who had become a member of the violent antiwar group Weatherman, accidentally blew herself up in a Greenwich Village town house turned into a bomb factory. America was stunned; I was fascinated. Few knew that there were bright, educated children from decent families making crude bombs designed to destroy everything their parents represented. Indeed, psychological analysis might say that as products of these parents they were trying to kill themselves.

After the explosion, my mother went into one of her uniquely effective crisis modes: she had ambitions for me, and she immediately contacted a friend from her hometown of Kankakee, Illinois, who knew Diana's parents. The friend, who was a fan of my writing, told the Oughtons of my similarity to Diana in background and antiwar sentiments. They agreed to talk to me in hopes I could explain why she had turned against everything they represented.

So within a day, I packed a bag and headed back to the United States.

I stayed with the Oughtons, in Diana's room, and tried to help Mr. Oughton understand the depth of the passions our generation had against the war and the hypocrisy of the culture we grew up in. He concluded we were all in the throes of an "intellectual hysteria."

I then followed Diana's steps through the heady underground, full of safe houses and dangerous plans; I ended up identifying

with her so much that I almost tossed my notebook in the trash and joined the groups that shaped her. Everything about her resonated emotionally: she was a good woman, educated, sensitive, highly intelligent, and, like me, drawn to making sacrifices for larger causes. The crucial difference was that Diana had made the ultimate sacrifice and here I was, exploiting her for my own success within the establishment she hated. I felt ashamed.

I ended up deciding not to join Weatherman and to write its story instead. I was clearly more ambitious than I thought, more desirous of pleasing my mother. The five-part series about Diana's odyssey, written with Thomas Powers, was published in some five hundred newspapers around the world. It made me even more uneasy about how intent I was to succeed in the bureaucracy that I was supposed to abhor. I got scant peace of mind by slipping stories sympathetic to the radicals onto the wires.

* * *

In those days in the early 1970s, I had long corn-silk hair, parted in the middle the way Joan Baez did it. I was a fair-skinned, blue-eyed blonde with a round, dimpled face, a five-foot-six-inch curvy endomorph. At the back of my closet hung the Scottish tweed suits with matching hats made for me by my Republican mother; instead, I wore sailor's bell-bottoms and sandals with straps that crossed halfway up my legs. I aspired to being "cool," but to my frustration, every tremor of my heart registered itself on my face. I put myself "out there," according to those who observed me. Whimsical and prone to doing the unexpected, I had a bent toward banana-peel humor.

I was also audacious, idealistic, and aspired to be a person of high principles.

I had heard that after Bob Morgenthau had returned from World War II, in spite of his wry, iconoclastic nature, he moved easily into his parents' powerful social and political sphere. He married, proceeded to have a passel of children, and rose quickly in politics. With a law degree from Yale, he went into private

practice for thirteen years, and by the time he was forty-one, he had been appointed U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York by the man he had campaigned for, President Kennedy.

Meanwhile, Lyndon Johnson's massive escalation of the Vietnam War inflamed Americans, and the protests and riots drove him from seeking a second term. When Nixon was elected president, Bob was investigating Nixon's dealings with Swiss bank accounts. Nixon tried to get rid of him to pick his own U.S. attorney, but Bob stubbornly held on for a year. Twice he made bold if unsuccessful bids to become governor of New York State, attempting to take on the behemoth Nelson Rockefeller. But in 1974, with a reputation as one of the city's leading public officials, he was easily elected district attorney of New York.

He was widely known as being audacious, idealistic, and highly principled.

* * *

In early 1973, I was about to leave for a transfer from London to UPI headquarters in New York after my father called me, deeply distressed: my mother had been diagnosed with terminal cancer, and he was helpless, didn't know what to do about her disease or how to tell her she had it. He asked me to come home, back to Wellesley. So I had asked UPI for a transfer to New York, rather than to Boston, so I could be near them, but not too near.

In London, I had found myself unexpectedly harboring a draft resister. Roger Neville Williams had called attention to himself by writing the first book telling the story of war resisters exiled in Canada and Europe. Thus, this twenty-five-year-old man from a small, unsophisticated town in Ohio was high on the FBI wanted list.

We had bumped into each other while crossing the Hammersmith Bridge in a thick, sharp fog that had trapped the coal smoke coming from the terraced houses of southern London. Just the kind of night beloved by Jack the Ripper. I was grateful when he offered to walk me to my apartment across the Thames in Richmond. We proceeded to see each other for a few months,

pub-hopping on the banks of the Thames, fervently talking politics over pints of lager. Before I knew it, he had arrived at my digs with four suitcases.

When I left for New York, he followed me, uninvited. Angry and domineering, he was possessed by a loathing for Nixon, and the former president occupied the greater part of our lives together. But the sanguine side of this is that I knew he loved me; after all, he had risked arrest to return with me to America. I thought I loved him too, sort of.

Doctrinaire in his hatred of the rich, he nevertheless blithely overruled me when I wanted to live in funky Greenwich Village with the radicals and misfits; he insisted we live in the posh, established Upper East Side. I had never thought him a hypocrite, but I did now. Were others in the movement guilty of such mixed-up thinking? If so, the Cultural Revolution was doomed. As we set up house on East Eighty-First Street, Roger ordained that since we were basically political anarchists of the Kropotkin breed, we should "divide the bowl." In other words, he, who was nearly penniless, should share my bank account. I thought this sounded fair and true and practical, especially since I had never shown much interest in balancing my checking account. Roger was so highly organized, this would be an asset. I began to look askance when he ended up keeping an "Accounts" book that allocated a certain amount of money for food and a larger amount for pot.

Had I not been so adored by this devastatingly handsome and tumultuous man, I might have kicked him out. But I liked his sandy windblown hair, his scratchy, sexy mustache, his intellectual company. I even liked the fact that he was fiercely possessive of me; no man had ever cared so much. No one had ever wanted to make me his project.

* * *

Once I was settled at UPI's New York headquarters in early 1973, the reporters didn't look at me with the beady eyes that they had in London; I was simply the person who had got UPI a Pulitzer. No brows were raised when I was handed the plum assignment

of investigating corruption in the Nixon administration in the wake of Watergate, but I didn't know where to start. I had gone to Britain straight out of college, and I woke up to the fact that I knew very little about the details of American politics.

I was a stereotype of the radicals who thought they knew it all. How few of us had studied the complex history of Vietnam's occupation or the ontology of free enterprise or the discourse of the capitalist system we loathed. Who had read Noam Chomsky or Herbert Marcuse or Nicholas von Hoffman's brilliant book, *We Are the People Our Parents Warned Us Against*? Who even knew that Abbie Hoffman, the revolution's guru, had written numerous tomes laying down his political credo. In some ways, the grown-ups had been right: we were like legions of unarmed children who had run away with ourselves. In spite of the reporter's steel I had somehow developed, I wasn't informed enough to do American government stories.

One day, Roger, who had been hired off the books as a researcher for NBC, came home excited. "I've got something for you. There's this guy, Morgenthau, a Democrat who was U.S. attorney. I just interviewed him, and he's the real deal. Nixon fired him! He found out the creep is hiding money in Swiss banks. And he knows about all his corrupt cronies. You got to go talk to him."

"I don't know. I don't know if I should start with someone so high up. So big. I hardly know anything about Watergate yet."

Roger looked at me hard. "Freak me out, you're scared! Come on, Ms. Toughie. You dodged bullets in Belfast. You risked your life in the underground. And you can't sit down and psych out a guy in a white collar?"

"Don't think so," I mumbled. He was throwing down the gauntlet, trying to teach me one of his lessons, pushing me to fight the insecurity that I had grown up with.

"So get over it. Off your duff!" he exclaimed so forcefully that I started to reach for the phone. "Get Morgenthau and stop wasting time."

* * *

How ironic that Roger's campaign to push me toward Bob Morgenthau would come back to haunt him, to reverse his life, and mine, forever.

I get a little thrill when I think of how one blind infinitesimal act can alter your portion, perhaps deflect the fate that binds you to the commonplace, cause plans to go cockeyed. You can wave, you can wail, to no avail. Chance will always betray the human diagram. It is perverse; it is whimsical. It often brings you to astonishing predicaments. I've had this sense of dazzling confusion only once before, and that was when I was nine, looking through my father's big white telescope, beholding Orion and the Milky Way.

"Dad, what is beyond the stars?" I asked.

"Other galaxies with other stars," he replied.

"But what is beyond the very last galaxy?"

"We just don't know. Maybe nothing."

Instead of going to sleep at night, I would try to imagine nothingness. But my little galaxy was concrete; things had beginnings and endings. Was infinity a whiteness, a blueness, some kind of nice shimmering violet? Did it move, soar past the stars and then empty out? Would I ever know what emptiness looked like? I felt enthralled by the mystery deep inside me.

And that is how I would someday feel about Bob.

* * *

With Roger standing guard, I dialed the number and heard the deep voice of Robert Morgenthau for the first time. He was impatient, rather intimidating, and dead set against seeing me. "I'm sick of talking about the Nixon administration," he said, "and I promised myself that this researcher from NBC was the last one."

"Well, I'm sort of desperate, Mr. Morgenthau," I said, using one of the only weapons a female reporter possessed at the time—the illusion of innocence. "Who else can I go to who knows as much as you?"

And so I defeated him. I had more power than I thought.

Since I always like to take the measure of a subject before I interview him, I gathered some information in earnest. He was clearly one of the city's most skilled movers and shakers, without compromising his loyalty and honor. He was always interceding, helping the young, molding the careers of his prize employees who idolized him and reverently called him the Boss. Eventually, those who worked for him made up half the luminaries in Manhattan; they included Sonia Sotomayor, now a U.S. Supreme Court justice, and Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York. He could assess the character of an applicant in less than an hour, but on occasion his intellectual resolve gave way to hidden passions; he was prone to hiring children of Holocaust survivors, for instance, as well as those who had the gumption to go to law school later in life and hadn't been able to pass the bar exam. They had to be smart and eager, however, for he had no time for fools.

On the morning of my interview, I slogged through an April downpour to Morgenthau's office. My hair was in strings, I was twenty-six, my white knit poncho was soggy, and my nose was raw from a cold. If this mountain of a man even spoke to me, it would be a miracle.

Morgenthau had recently started a one-man law firm, and his secretary, a sullen lady with the hint of a mustache and a slanted gait, greeted me with a series of mumbling grunts. "Sit down until he calls you," she said, and I took the only chair, a narrow Hitchcock antique with a missing rung. There I waited, looking at the bare puce walls, the brown industrial carpet, the vacant spaces where a sofa and table with magazines should have been. His secretary—I had heard she had designs on him and liked to drive away female visitors—kept looking up and glaring at me. I felt as if I were awaiting arraignment. Absently, I tore my tissue into tiny pieces. Minutes went by, then an hour. My poncho was

dry, but the jig was up—I was about to be found out.

When Robert Morgenthau finally came out of his office, all six feet of him, reedy, skin of burnt sienna and a face like an elongated teardrop, he looked at me in surprise. "I thought you had stood me up," he said, and then scowled at his secretary as if he knew she hadn't told him I was there.

He ushered me into his office, which was small, smaller by far than befit his stature. His desk was covered with a three-inch strew of papers that seemed to be in no particular order. I sat down across from him, and sure enough he began talking about government people I had never heard of. He mentioned the name Wright Patman.

"Who?" I asked.

"Wright Patman," he repeated.

"Um, could you spell that?"

"W-r-i-g-h-t P-a-t-m-a-n."

"What is it he does, could you remind me?"

He stared at me. "You don't know who Wright Patman is?"

That was not the only member of the Banking Committee of the U.S. Congress whom I did not know. The consternation in Mr. Morgenthau's voice went up in increments. I was not yet flustered, though, for I was lost in his strange soaring forehead. I had never seen anyone who looked remotely like him. This oddness made me feel more comfortable, especially when I began to detect the melancholy in his eyes, in the corners of his mouth. Behind his confident exterior, he was not a happy man.

No wonder. He had just lost his wife of twenty-nine years to breast cancer, leaving two adult children and two school-age ones for him to raise alone. And now, having been thrown out by Nixon, he would surely see the cases he was developing against the president's cronies be buried by his Republican replacement, Whitney North Seymour.

I identified with him. I too faced the loss of a loved one, my mother, and in my own way I also had felt professional humiliation. When I won the Pulitzer, I was elated—until I came up against the resentment of my male colleagues, who were fiercely unhappy. Many had been driving all their lives toward the fantasy of that elusive prize and they decided that I, a naive hayseed, had stolen it out from under them. I rather agreed with them: How could I have possibly deserved this highest honor in journalism? It must have been an accident, an embarrassment. It took decades before I could feel proud of my role in the Diana series.

"Do you know *anyone* in the Nixon campaign committee?" he asked with weary resignation.

"Oh yes, I know about Maurice Stans, the secretary of commerce," I replied.

"The *former* secretary of commerce."

"Yes, the *former* secretary of commerce. And, like, I know he quit to head up Nixon's finance committee for his 1972 reelection campaign. In fact, I would really appreciate it if you could enlighten me about him. I hear he ran slush funds for the campaign and that you investigated it."

"I'm not talking about that."

"I have information on how he laundered the money, but I just need to check it with you. I don't want to print something that is wrong." *You may think I'm clueless, Mr. Morgenthau, but I am about to outsmart you*.

"No comment."

"I hear he helped Nixon hide a hundred thousand dollars."

"No, no," Morgenthau said. "More like a million."

I nodded encouragingly.

"All right, but this is the last thing I'll tell you on the subject."

Within an hour and a half I had my Watergate story, a good, detailed one too.

I rose, smiled, and offered him my hand goodbye. For some reason, his eyes were averted, and he was glaring. My cheeks grew pink with embarrassment. I thought I had been so clever, but maybe I had been obvious. Maybe *he* had outsmarted me, telling me stuff he wanted to make public. Had I forgotten the lesson that pols use reporters? I turned, bumping into his secretary, who was standing behind me, and quickly left his office. How could I have ever presumed that a Mr. Morgenthau would think well of me? I knew he had friends in high places. Would he tell them that a dense, yammering goose had interviewed him?

In fact, as I found out later, at the time of our interview, he thought I was either the dumbest or the smartest reporter he had ever met. Then, when he read my story, breaking the news that Maurice Stans was believed to have laundered campaign money through Mexico, he decided I was the smartest. He knew that I had used my naïveté to probe deeply, to squeeze more information from him than a lot of reporters could have.

Moreover, he hadn't wanted me to leave his office.

He has always said that that was the day he fell in love with me. Or rather, with my white poncho, which he couldn't get out of his mind.

For the next year, he somehow found the nerve to ring me half a dozen times, only to be foiled by Roger, who, whenever he heard that deep, resonant voice, would claim I was out, though I was twenty feet away in our tiny bedroom, writing my first book. He thought that it was an important enough book—on deserters from the Vietnam War—to keep me in a kind of boot camp. He kept friends away and even discouraged visits from Penelope, my sister, who had just graduated from college and was proud at having found an apartment in my building. Penny, six years younger, and I had a fragile bond. We could be very close and then very distant, and Roger's shunning of her, which she assumed was mine, was a mistake that caused a long rift in our

relationship.

It did not occur to me that Bob had any real interest in me as a reporter, but in late 1973, eight months after I had done the story on him, he called me at the office, on the phone I shared with other UPI reporters.

"Hello, is this Lucinda Franks?" His voice detonated in my ear. "Apparently, *The New York Times* is about to be sued for not having enough women reporters," he said, as though we had been in the middle of an ongoing conversation. But I hadn't heard from him in a long time. Not a whit of small talk after months of silence. His words just came out in a rush: "So they asked me to provide them with some good candidates. I recommended you."

"Oh," I said weakly. "Why me?"

There was a silence, and then he said, "You were the only woman I could think of."

"Oh," I replied, as my blood pressure rose. I felt insulted and complimented at the same time.

"Well, that is very nice of you, Mr. Morgenthau," I said as the images came fast: my mother giddy with joy at the news, my radical friends slit-eyed at my selling out, the anticipation of crafting complex stories two columns long instead of the three-hundred-word wire service wonders. And the chance to have the most exalted job in journalism.

The next day, Arthur Gelb, the *Times'*s city editor, invited me to dinner at Sardi's restaurant. I was excited. I had never been to Sardi's, a landmark off Broadway, near the Times building, a gathering place for *artistes de renom*. I was the first to arrive. The restaurant's deep red walls were covered with excellent caricatures of famous writers and actors, some of whom swished past in full flesh to tables situated so they could be seen. I checked the buttons of my blue shirtwaist dress, smoothed my hair, which was pulled back in a neat bun, and took two deep breaths. I became self-conscious, just standing there alone, so I began studying the history of the restaurant mounted in the

vestibule. Suddenly Gelb was behind me: "The caricatures were drawn by a Russian émigré of the '40s," he said. "He did them in exchange for one meal a day." The city editor was accompanied by two prominent *Times* reporters who shook my hand vigorously. I did all but curtsy.

The maître d' welcomed Gelb as though he were royalty and led us to one of the front tables. Gelb nodded at various actors and then sat down and ordered red wine and steak (which I dislike) for everyone. The three instantly zeroed in on me. "So, why do you want to be on the *Times*?" asked Gelb. "Ah, well, like…" I took a sip of wine and swallowed it the wrong way. As I was choking, I thought, "Do I really want to be on the paper?" How much my rebel friends, who considered the *Times* a decaying tool of the establishment, would hate me!

"What story have you liked in the *Times* recently?" the female reporter asked. "Uh, well, I liked all the stories," I replied, having not read the *Times* in weeks. I wanted to bite back my words. I could do better than this, but I always felt rebellious when I was called upon to perform; it felt as if I were in second grade, facing the kids who would pretend to be my friends and then throw insects down my dress.

The female reporter raised her chin. "How do you think we did covering the peace in Vietnam?" I had heard she had written glowing stories about Kissinger's diplomacy. I chewed my food very slowly, concentrating hard on saying what they wanted me to say, but out of my mouth popped "What peace?" They looked first at me, then at each other. "I mean, there are still U.S. advisers in Saigon," I said, "and we have bombed the hell out of Cambodia; I don't see much print about that."

The next day Gelb reported to Morgenthau. "I think she must have been on drugs," he said (I was *not*). "But thanks anyway for bringing her to my attention."

For some reason beyond me, Morgenthau wanted me to join that paper, and he pressed on, sending Gelb the story I had done on Maurice Stans. "I'd take another look, Arthur," he argued. "She did the trickiest interview with me. She's a highly equipped

journalist."

So, in the spring of 1974, off I went for another interview. Trekking down West Forty-Third Street, I passed hangars sheltering giant rolls of newsprint, and then high above hung a calligraphic sign indicating that you were entering the territory of *The New York Times*. I entered an ink-scented lobby, and who should I meet but the legendary left-wing *Times* reporter Gloria Emerson, a cigarette hanging from her lips, her fingers in a nervous flurry about her coat. We both were veteran voices in the movement; once, we slept on the floor of William Sloane Coffin, the antiwar chaplain of Yale. Now, finally, she had just been fired for her insurrectionist writing.

"If you want the job," she whispered, "just tell Abe Rosenthal that the *Times* is the greatest paper in the world."

I walked into the prodigious office of Rosenthal, the *Times'*s managing editor, with its Chinese rugs and mahogany furniture. Abe, shrunk into an oversized chesterfield chair, waved me into a chair opposite him. He was a short, severe, disquieting man with a pockmarked face. I had heard how he strode up and down the newsroom, hands behind his back, inspiring reporters to type furiously as he walked by. Yet now he uttered an elegiac sermon about the paper, and I realized suddenly how insecure he was. He didn't threaten me as Gelb and the reporters did. He looked like a kid, disappearing into the chair. I realized he needed to feel as though he *were The New York Times.*

"Why do you want to work here?" he asked abruptly.

"Because the *Times* is the greatest newspaper in the world," I replied.

"You really think so, do you?"

"Yes, I do. It's the paper of record, and I would give anything to work here."

"Come on," he said, hoisting himself up, "I'll show you where you'll be sitting."

* * *

It was early 1974, and overnight my life had changed. I was caught up in the intensity of being a high-powered reporter for the *Times*. Though the troops were gone, U.S. advisers were still in Vietnam, and the war there raged on. Patty Hearst was kidnapped and radicalized, and I still attended concerts, burned effigies at agitprop performances, and hung out with a few of my renegade friends in walk-ups down in the Village. When former revolutionaries like Jane Alpert and later Katherine Ann Power, wanted for bombing or driving getaway cars, finally surfaced and turned themselves in, they chose me to talk to about their lives underground. I painted compassionate pictures of these revolutionary lawbreakers, but I got such attention for the very fact they had only talked to me, I felt doubly guilty. My commitment to setting the world right was fading. I had acquired new friends, ambitious men and women whose talent and lively minds I respected. Mary Breasted had become my closest buddy; she had an irreverent sense of humor and was always teasing Arthur Gelb about the former reporter Lacey Fosburgh. Lacey frequently visited the newsroom and would saunter up to the city desk and sit in his lap.

I had left my motor scooter in London, so I bicycled to work through the traffic, winning the amused respect of my fellow reporters. I was losing my self-consciousness, getting a sense of humor. Nick Gage and a few other men in the predominantly male newsroom were constantly kidding Mary and me—mostly about sex. "Lucinda, it's time for us to go to the Ramada Inn," Nick would call out so our esteemed editor would hear it. There had been a time that I would have taken offense at this loud pretense that we were having an affair. But now I simply retorted, "Okay, let's go. I'll bring the Mazola oil." Nick could be serious, however, and he taught me how to be proud and vocal about my accomplishments. This was particularly helpful since I was working on my book and dreaded the reviews should I ever finish it. "You have to realize you're smarter than your lousy reviewer," said Nick in his persuasive Greek-accented voice. "You believe in yourself and just forge on until finally, after you write your third book, you've worn them down. They'll love it."

I had my own big metal desk, in one of twenty-three rows lined up in the *Times* newsroom like a typing pool, and an old-fashioned black phone. Working in the most influential newspaper in the nation, I quickly became accustomed to overtures from the lofty hoping to get their names in the paper. Robert Redford called me three times after I did an interview with him about his filming of *Three Days of the Condor*. Mayor Koch asked me to lunch twice, just to chat.

After about a month, I called Bob Morgenthau to thank him, and he followed up my call with several of his own. He was clearly glad to be my news source: I gave him political gossip, and he sniffed out stories for me. Bob glided stealthily through the political backwaters and unlike the other notables seldom wanted me to publish his name. He was not above using me to further his interests—leaking the unethical practices of one of his opponents, for instance—but mostly it seemed he just wanted to help me.

One day, when I had been working at the *Times* for barely two months, he phoned to say, "Look at the Franklin National Bank. Get what you can on the bank president. Jet-setter by the name of Michele Sindona: he's deeply corrupt; he's into helping the Nixon administration and the Sicilian Mafia and even the Vatican."

Morgenthau gave me one potential source: a bank vice president who he told me would drop clues and confirm or deny, but only after I had gathered as much incriminating information as I could. My experience with financial reporting had not exactly been vast, limited as it was to a color story on three-card monte games in Times Square. So Bob volunteered to brief me on money laundering, foreign bank transfers, and letters of credit, all along suggesting strategies for culling information.

I dug up an accounts manager inside Franklin who was outraged by working amid the corruption. Then, armed with some fishy bank accounts, I got myself up like a moll; I wound my hair into a bun, painted on a heavy layer of makeup, and strode past Sindona's secretaries, my heels clicking as though I were someone as important as one of his mistresses. I ended up

getting a ten-minute interview that did nothing to further the story but gave me invaluable color on what the flamboyant crook was like. When I came out with my exposé, there were desperate squawks and denials from the Franklin Bank. Nevertheless, the reputation of the financial institution was going downhill, and within a few months it finally closed its heavy doors. I was roundly congratulated by the brass for my bank series, and Bob was especially pleased; I suppose it was further proof that I wasn't the dumbest reporter he'd ever met.

Arthur Gelb, the former culture editor, was unique in the annals of city editors. Arthur, who had seemed so tough and intimidating at Sardi's, was actually soft-spoken, refined, and always full of creative ideas. He would come loping down the aisle with one of his "starbursts," ideas, looking for a favorite reporter, like me, and then give the person as much time as needed to report and write it. A chunk of the staff thus worked from home, worked when they felt like it, and then finally pulled several all-nighters to come up with the blockbusters that Arthur wanted. The metropolitan section—which made up about half the newspaper—was king, full of Nick Gage's investigative stories on the Mafia, Molly Ivins's deadly funny profiles, and Mickey Carroll's incisive political exposés. Arthur and his boss, Abe Rosenthal, made the *Times* the kind of crackling, vibrant newspaper that people grabbed fresh off the presses; it was a heyday of the institution.

One day, on my own, I decided to investigate the food dyes that permeated our food supply. I found a lab worker at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) who secretly gave me the results of a test on female rats that revealed cancer-causing effects of Red Dye No. 2. I did follow-up stories, and there was such an outcry that the dye was banned by the FDA and replaced with Red Dye No. 40. After the ban, I wrote more stories: Red Dye No. 40 was also carcinogenic, being based, like No. 2, on coal tar derivatives. My stories provoked a national red dye scare and a decline in the sale of bright red products like maraschino cherries.

Meanwhile, after my mother's illustrious Boston doctors from the Lahey Clinic refused to operate on her "terminal" colon cancer, I took her medical records to New York, to Memorial Sloan-

Kettering, the world's premier cancer center. I had scouted around until I'd finally found a surgeon, Horace Whiteley, who scoffed at the Boston doctors and said he could go in and remove the tumor. He did and gave her the gift of two more years of life. Every six weeks, I would sneak out of work to pick her up at the train station and stay with her at the hospital while she had her chemotherapy. I would go to Wellesley on weekends to be with her and to help my father care for her.

But weekdays I would work overtime to find a kernel of an investigative political story. I often ran this kernel by Bob; he seemed so willing to give me advice that it was hard to get him off the phone.

I was perplexed. Didn't he have better things to do? He was now district attorney of New York County—elected about seven months after the *Times* hired me—and it was a mammoth job. He oversaw hundreds of assistants who tackled thousands of crimes.

But I suspected there was more. Did he have a wee crush on me? If so, I was sure it was innocent; I certainly didn't have any romantic feelings for him, someone *that* old. But I did like it when I picked up the phone and heard his resonating voice: "Bob Morgenthau. Got a pencil?"

After the Red Dye No. 2 story, Arthur Gelb officially anointed me an investigative reporter. Bob was so pleased it seemed as though he had been given the moniker himself. He asked me to lunch to celebrate. It would be the first time we met face-to-face since I did the UPI story on him some three years before.

He suggested dim sum at a spot near his office in the Criminal Courts Building. From the moment we sat down, the rapport we had developed on the phone disappeared. Tension pervaded our booth. I had by now cultivated several news sources, become easy with them and skilled at making them feel easy too, but there was something mystifying here. Sitting, slurping the hot juice from steamed buns, we seemed to have little to say, looking up at each other and then quickly away. I kept peeking at his wide, exquisitely formed mouth, his gracefully large nose, and his dark grayish hair, which looked as if it had been cut with

fingernail scissors. Unaccountably, the sight of him intrigued me. I had always disliked the mundanely gorgeous, the male model, the movie star looks. I like the unusual, the quirky, the kind of man you don't see anywhere else.

As I walked him to his office, I assessed New York's new DA. He wore an outdated green suit with square shoulders and baggy pants that looked as if they might have belonged to his father. Smoke from his cigar, a big, fat smelly one, wafting over to my nose … the cigar, undoubtedly an illegal Cuban, protruding from the side of his mouth, making him look like James Michael Curley, the crooked former Boston mayor I remember from childhood.

This was the heretic prosecutor who as former U.S. Attorney was supposed to handle only New York crimes but had extended an elastic arm into international arenas? The one who prosecuted white-collar criminals who had laundered billions in offshore accounts? This representative of the status quo who was increasingly feared (friends who brought in their corporate clients hoping for leniency were disappointed; in fact, Bob's response could be particularly harsh), wasn't he a kind of revolutionary in his own right? Deliciously subversive, without fanfare or public protest.

No blown-up hair or shoes polished into mirrors. Messy desk, cracked leather. He could've cared less how he came across because he was secure and confident in his ability to slip through the cracks in the system to which he supposedly belonged. To meet someone so comfortable in his own skin, especially when I was not, was dizzying. His scheherazadian personality delighted me.

* * *

It was the fall of 1975. Nixon had resigned a year earlier; the takeover of Vietnam by the Vietcong and the official end of the war had been declared. President Gerald Ford had declared amnesty for draft dodgers, but still Roger was squirreled away in my apartment. NBC had let him go six months after it hired him. "That's what I get for working for the establishment: fired for

being a war resister," he said at the time, but I was not so sure that was how it had happened. The closer we came to peace in Southeast Asia, the more the war protests waned, the more irate Roger became. If Nixon came on the air, for instance, he would hurl my sentimental yellow-quartz ashtray from London at the TV screen. Finally, I threw the ashtray back at him, splitting his lip. The neighbors complained—once they called the police—because our flimsy apartment walls reverberated with our fights. His endless curses about Vietnam finally had a deep effect on me. It made me question what really motivated him. As I listened to the shouts of my comrades burning effigies of Gerald Ford—the only president who had provided some kind of conditional amnesty for draft resisters—it struck me that for many, bringing anarchy to the country was personal. If they were troubled, if they had chaotic minds, then what better place to live than in a nation of chaos.

I had been able to endure Roger's rage against the Vietnam War, the draft, and the system, because he gave as much as he took. He had always understood how much my childhood haunted me, and he knew what to do about it. I usually avoided seeking comfort from my boyfriends; nevertheless, those nights when I woke in a panic, Roger always reached for me. By day, when he saw that look on my face, he knew that if he held me often in his big bear arms, I could finally let go of my sense of low-level dread.

* * *

I suppose today my mother would be labeled bipolar, but when I was a small child, she was simply God. She saw through me to my worst side. "I know it was you who stole half my petits fours on top of the icebox last week," she might suddenly lash out. "Well, sister, God's going to punish you. You're going to walk into a wall," upon which I would stomp off and promptly walk into a wall. When I was older, my beloved daddy was either away on endless "business trips" or at his workbench in the cellar, the sanctum where he could escape my mother and down his endless shots of Dewar's. When I got home from school, I never knew who she would be or why. She could meet me with a smile and a dozen powdered doughnuts or, for no apparent reason, still in

her pastel satin nightgown, chase me around the house with a yardstick. I both loved her and hated her. Since she never seemed to decide whether I was good or bad, I didn't know either. This subconscious state of not knowing never left me.

Like so many berated children, I vowed to make a success of myself, and when I did, my mother switched tacks. She treated me respectfully, almost reverently. I sent her every kudo I got from editors because it made her finally rejoice in me. She subscribed to five papers in case I had an article in them; she shared them with her friends and bragged when I interviewed movie stars or went to Buckingham Palace to meet the queen. She loved every word I wrote. Perhaps I was the tool that finally gave her happiness, status even. But it was too late; she had molded me into a person balanced on the precipice, doomed to be unsure when I woke up in the morning whether I would feel like the confident, successful woman or the dorky kid who had something wrong with her. In fact, both personalities were inside me: the outer bravado of a celebrated journalist and the meekness and self-doubt of a child.

Roger wanted me to talk to Mother, resolve what had happened between us. But now that she was sick and dying, I just couldn't. So he decided he could resolve it for me. He believed he could expunge all the stuff my mother made me believe about myself through the avant-garde therapies of the moment, even the ones that were half-cracked. We tried primal scream. I was supposed to close my eyes and let out my inner anguish in a series of piercing screams. But I was afraid of our already irate neighbors, and all I could produce was a pathetic mewing.

We tried est and we tried Gestalt, both of which advocated taking the power out of memory, accepting your past, and just getting on with life. I went around for days repeating the mantra "I am what I think, I am what I think," but my contrary nature could not put up with the exercise for long. As a joke, I began to say, "I think what I am," causing Roger to fume.

One night he turned off the lights and told me to lie down next to him. "Concentrate as hard as you can on terror," he said. "Try to feel it. Be six years old again. Imagine the boogeyman crawling

in your window. Imagine your mother coming at you with a knife." I gritted my teeth, made my breath come fast, tried to envision myself charged with terror. But the only charge I felt was caused by Roger's muscular thigh touching mine.

Finally, he decided to apply his creativity to reinventing my childhood. He would dissect my memories and, like a father with a child, make them into stories. But he would change the characters so that the little girl who balanced on two chairs to steal the little frosted cakes would be a perfectly nice girl and the mother would be so sane that she would laugh at the girl's ingenuity. He taught me how I became the innocent scapegoat of my mother's misery and convinced me, at least intellectually and at least for a while, that the jury was in: I was the definitive good child.

* * *

At some point, however, all the stories were told. It became increasingly clear that Roger resented me, his woman, who had risen far above him in journalism, a profession he aspired to. He had no job, no money, was living off me in a city he hated. Although Ford, by executive decision, had declared conditional amnesty in September 1974 for draft resisters, Roger resented the requirement that he do two years of public service and continued to be obsessed by Nixon's crimes in Southeast Asia. We were near the end of our affair. I saw finally that his passion to keep Vietnam alive was more personal than political, that he was threatened by the fact that I was no longer the victim of intellectual hysteria: the belief that the people of "Amerika" would rise up and bring on a coup. Those who had given their youth, their prospects, to these enthrallments, what options did they have left? How could they now even survive within the system? Who would hire them?

In late November 1975, he announced he was moving to Telluride, Colorado, a town in the Rockies populated by hippie refugees, ski bums, and trust-funders who were building little Victorian houses in the hills. He had visions of earning enough money writing for alternative magazines to build a little Victorian house too. He tacked a quotation up in our kitchen by the writer

Richard Reeves, who left the *Times* after six years: "I'd rather be writing my novel." It was meant, of course, for me.

He pestered me constantly. "You say you want to write a novel. You'll never write a novel at the *Times*. Come with me and really do something with your life."

For a while, I ignored him. And then, in January 1976, my mother died. With her went my ambitions to rise in journalism.