



Reluctant Press presents:

Secretary For Life

Norman Way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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SECRETARY FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

My parents' marriage had been rocky from the start. Counseling didn't help matters at all. In an effort to salvage the marriage, my mom got pregnant with me in the hope that another kid might bring her and my dad closer together. I was what they called a "late" baby. Though my father never said anything, I'm sure he resented being saddled with the responsibility of raising one more.

I was a frail child. Maybe the stress of a marriage going sour or the worry about whether or not this was the best thing to do contributed to my being born "small," weighing in at a mere three and a half pounds.

Growing up, my older brother didn't have much time for me, describing me as a "little tyke." He was a rough and tumble guy who had excelled in sports and later joined the Army. I was not athletic by any means; because of the fact that I was small, I could not try out for football. Despite being short, I tried out for basketball, fracturing my ankle coming down with a rebound. A few months later, I broke my arm in a collision at home plate while trying out for the baseball team.

The doctors have a term for it consisting of most of the letters of the alphabet. Essentially the translation was "brittle bones." So despite a healthy diet and a strong willingness to try, I found myself relegated to non-contact sports. I wasn't particularly fond of either golf or tennis but I chose tennis and managed to make the junior high squad even though my brother called them "sissy sports."

I did have a love of Rock and Roll. After pounding on the chairs, sofa and mattresses enough, my parents broke down and bought me a set of drums at a pawnshop. I loved beating out various rhythms, using them to take out the normal frustrations every kid has. My music teacher called me a "natural" and with his encouragement I became an accomplished musician by the time I entered high school.

I turned sixteen on June First as I finished my sophomore year. I had had a number of chances to join a couple of local rock groups but I shied away from them as many of the band members were older and my parents seemed to think I would be falling in with the “wrong crowd.”

I got my driver's license and began working for my dad shortly thereafter at the call center where he was the manager. The call center took inbound orders for a number of companies but most notable for a large women's department store with a mail order affiliate. The center occupied the entire top floor of a large two-story office building not far from where we lived, making my commute back and forth to work a very pleasant bicycle ride in the summer.

I started taking orders for a mail order electronics company specializing in car stereos, speakers and related equipment. I could see why my father's philandering was so easy. Most of the employees were women who took orders for the women's clothing store and many of them were young college students working part-time around their class schedules. My father had a good eye. Except for a few middle-aged women and some who were retired, the majority of the females were very good-looking.

A year went by. Just as things seemed to have stabilized, my brother came back from the Middle East in a box. After the funeral, my mom became more and more distant. My father didn't seem to care. I felt powerless to do anything about it; I continued to work and play my drums. I enjoyed my job and soon my own car sported a new stereo and a great set of speakers.

Another affair surfaced and this time Mom filed for separation. I was very uncertain of my future at that point, knowing I would have to live with one of my parents. My problem was solved when, coming home late from work one night, Mom lost control of her car, crashed through a bridge railing, rolled down an embankment and into a creek.

Her death was ruled an accident. Despite her normally moderate use of alcohol, her blood alcohol level was almost twice the legal limit. Afterwards there were rumors and speculation that the cause of death was what the cops call “auto-cide.” Deliberately getting loaded and running off the road to kill her self.

She had switched the life insurance beneficiary from my dad to me and thirty days after the funeral, I found myself with a check for twenty-thousand dollars. Because of my age, the money was placed in trust until I was eighteen. My father said nothing; he seemed to be impatient about getting the funeral over with and getting on with our lives.

Dad decided to sell the house and we rented a small two-bedroom duplex about the same distance from work. I had not been aware of it but my parents had been mortgaged to the hilt and the sale resulted in very little net cash in my father's pocket after the sale was completed.

We had very little money but no debts either. I continued to work part-time and got good grades in school though my drumming was now relegated to daylight hours in the basement of our rented duplex.

As graduation neared, I still had not decided on a career path. I had seen lots of people who jumped from high school right into college and then either couldn't find the job they wanted, or found the job they wanted but it didn't pay much and they couldn't find any-

thing else. I decided to work full-time for a year and then consider my options. In addition to my job, I was now filling in occasionally for a number of local rock groups. The extra money would come in handy.

A month from graduation, my world collapsed around me. My father and one of the female employees were shot to death outside a motel about thirty miles away. The woman's ex-boyfriend set the car on fire and then shot him self in the head.

Following the funeral, I got rid of a lot of stuff in the apartment. My dad's life insurance was minimal but it covered all the expenses with a little left over. The insurance company said the car wasn't worth much but they gave me a little over three grand for it. With the leftover money, I bought a used subcompact car for the winter commute to work.

A corporate guy came in to run the place and brought news that a buyout was in the works. There would be layoffs due to more orders being placed over the Internet; about 60% of the employees would probably be retained. I had concerns about that word "probably."

A week before graduation, all employees were required to attend one of two meetings at a local motor lodge where we would be given information about our status and the changes that would be implemented by the new owners.

I attended the second meeting on a Sunday morning. Several members of the Walworth department store were there, including the manager. She was a tall silver-haired woman, immaculately groomed and impeccably dressed. From the podium she spoke briefly about the company, its goals for us and the new wage and benefit package they offered. Following the short speech, each of us met briefly with one of the company reps who answered questions and passed out benefit literature.

Following the meeting, I played at a graduation party. I don't remember much about the party because I didn't have much experience with alcohol and it cost me. I woke up Monday morning under the bleachers with my pants down around my ankles. In addition to my virginity, I had also been relieved of my watch and \$37.00. I'm sure my father would have gotten a laugh out of my first experience. I managed to drive home slowly and with the help of an ice pack and some hot coffee, I was feeling well enough to go to work at 3 PM.

Arriving at work, I was greeted by a stocky blonde woman with a stern look on her face.

"You are?" she asked in a husky voice.

"Carl Winston, ma'am," I answered.

"I am pleased to meet you, Carl. I am Donna Price, the new manager. From now on you will address me as Ms. Price, understood?"

"Yes, Ms. Price," I answered. I had the feeling the relaxed atmosphere my father had operated under had just gone out the window.

"Good. Please step into my office, there are some things we need to go over before you start work."

She turned away and I followed her into what had once been my dad's office. I noticed the desk did not have its usual mess on the top and that a large, nearly full garbage bag was on the floor next to it.

"Please take a seat. I have been doing some house cleaning and purging the filing cabinets of some of the things we won't need. Please take the bag out to the dumpster when you leave work tonight. Now then, have you read the benefit book?"

I nodded. I had hoped they would keep me on full-time until I could decide on a career path.

"Do you have any questions?" she asked

"No, Ms. Price," I answered.

"Good. I want you to understand I run a disciplined organization and I will not tolerate insubordinate behavior by anyone. Punctuality is important as well. I want you to be at your terminal, on time as you are scheduled. I'm fully aware of the recent tragedies in your life. Those things are in the past and we must move on. Your father ran a rather loose ship here. On occasion, he saw fit to dip his pen in the company ink, as they say. That will not be tolerated either. I expect you to conduct yourself like an adult. Behave yourself, do your job and we will get along just fine. Is that perfectly clear, Carl?"

"Yes, Ms. Price, it is."

"Excellent. Your wage will be the same but we are offering a substantial bonus for those who exceed their sales goals. Now get to work,"

I got up, went to my station and logged on the computer. On my breaks, there was no conversation about the new ownership or the new manager. Most people had a "wait and see" attitude. The first week went by quickly and the transition seemed to be going smoothly.

Saturday's mail included a notification of a rent increase. I had two months to decide whether to renew the lease or find a different place. I liked the area but thought it wouldn't hurt to look at a few one-bedroom apartments to see what was available. I looked at several places before reporting to the clinic for the required pre-employment physical. I passed and was surprised at having to get an early flu shot. It was a very large and unpleasant hypo shot in the buttocks. I was also given a three-month supply of vitamin tablets with the instructions to take two a day without fail.

There was something funny about the way the female doctor and the nurse smiled at me as I got dressed to leave their office, as well as the doctor's admonition that I could stand to lose a few more pounds. Between tennis and biking, I thought I had kept myself pretty trim but maybe to keep my job and be on good terms with the company management, I should lay off the pizza, burgers, and fries for awhile.

That night I played another gig and slept in late Sunday morning. I spent the afternoon looking at a couple more places but found nothing I liked as much as the roomy duplex I was in now. It was more expensive but the thought of packing up stuff and moving as well as changing over the utilities to another address kept me from making a decision right away.

On Monday morning, I reported for work on the day shift and immediately sensed something was wrong. I walked in the door and saw two female police officers talking with Donna in her office. Several of the women looked up at me, then quickly looked away.

I walked to my work station and was about to log on when Donna waved me into her office. The two police officers walked outside and waited by the door.

“Sit down, Carl, we have important things to discuss,” she said with an expressionless face.

I took my seat and said, “What’s up?”

“I understand you had a great time after your graduation party gig?”

Her face was serious. I couldn’t understand what that had to do with my work at the center.

“Well I’m not sure what you mean,” I answered.

“Oh come now, dear boy. Who is kidding who here? Did you see those two cops who were just here and who are waiting out in the hallway?”

“Well, yes, I did see them,” I replied. “But what does that have to do with my work here?” I asked

“Did you enjoy yourself under the bleachers?” she queried.

“I don’t think that is any of your business!” I shouted.

“Oh, but it is, dear boy! It seemed the young lady celebrated her birthday and loss of virginity on the same day you did! Now I have good news and bad news. The bad news is it was your 18th birthday but her 16th birthday. In this state, do you know what that means?”

“Wait a minute, that little hot pants trick and I had consensual sex under the bleachers...”

She cut off my words with a wave of her hand.

“Consensual or not, in this state, do you know what happens to adults who screw children?”

The serious expression on her face gave me a sinking feeling in my gut. I didn’t know what to say so I just kept quiet.

“I take it by your silence that you admit what happened and want some help getting yourself out of this mess?” she asked.

“Yes ma'am, I would,” was the only answer I could give.

“Well then, I do have some good news.” She had a smirk on her face as she finished the statement.

“First and foremost, you will have to undergo some behavior modification and sensitivity training. In addition to changing your attitude towards women, much like your father, you will also under go physical training to conform to our standards here. By agreeing to do this, you will avoid prosecution on a sexual assault of a minor charge. The

only other alternative is to go to trial where you will most assuredly be found guilty and sent to prison where you will spend some time keeping your cell mates Leroy and Bubba happy. Do I make myself clear?"

I was stunned to say the least. I saw no options except to agree to this woman's terms so I nodded meekly and asked simply, "What do you want me to do?"

She smiled a tight little smile. "There are going to be some personnel changes as you were told at the meeting. Right now we are reducing the size of the call center due to more orders being placed over the Internet as well as an increase in our department store sales. Therefore, effective immediately, you are being laid off from your job receiving inbound calls. Since you haven't been here very long, you won't be eligible for unemployment but I would like to keep you here to fill a new position. I know you want to make amends for your recent dalliance under the bleachers. I suggest you take it to remain on good terms with me and the company."

"What exactly would this job be?" I inquired.

She smiled again. "You will be my personal secretary. Just for a short time, of course. You are well organized, have excellent communication skills, are computer literate, get along well with others and can handle multiple tasks with relative ease."

"But that's a woman's job! I'm not..."

Her stern looks stopped me cold. "There is no such thing as women's work or men's work anymore! That's something else you and other men have to learn. It's a different world today. Everybody is equal. There are no sexual definitions as far as work or job descriptions are concerned. You should feel lucky we are keeping you at all. You will have a slight reduction in your salary until you complete the training program. Then you will get a raise and your benefits kick in."

I nodded. "All right," I said glumly. "What do I have to do?"

Over the next thirty minutes, she went over the job responsibilities I would have as well as the hours I would be putting in. When she finished, she looked at me and said:

"Do you have any questions about what we are going to require you to do?"

I shook my head. "No, I can't think of anything offhand."

"Very good, I'm glad to see you are cooperating with us. Now there is one other thing. As I stated earlier, there are no sexual connotations to any jobs, however in this instance, corporate prefers to have a female in the position. Therefore you will be required to dress and act like a female. You will have the assistance of several people to transform you, temporarily of course."

"Wait just a minute here!" I interrupted her. "I'm not going to come to work dressed like a girl. I can work dressed just like I am today. Further more, I..."

Her icy glare cut me off once again and she got close to my face and spoke softly.

"Perhaps you would like to have me call those two police officers in the hall back in here and have them take you down to your holding cell?"

She had a deadly serious look on her face and I knew this was no time for an argument.

“No, I guess not” I stammered.

“Good. I am so glad we understand each other, Carla. Now your new job begins in thirty days. I know you keep your hair long because of your association with rock groups, but it is still too short so let it grow out more as well as your nails. Also, you have a soft voice, which is fine, but try modulating it just a little so you sound more like a girl. Here is a list of things for you to do, the people who will help you, and a schedule that you ABSOLUTELY MUST KEEP. Do you understand, Carla?”

I winced at being called Carla instead of Carl but nodded in agreement.

She smiled broadly. “Here is your itinerary for the next month. Be back here in thirty days ready to start work and I will give you another one. At ninety days, corporate will be here to see how I am handling things and I want you good and ready for them. Don’t screw this up for me. I’ve worked long and hard for this company and I won’t let some twit like you mess up my future. Anytime you feel like quitting on me, just remember one thing: working for me can be a bitch, but a dozen years downstate and you will be everybody’s bitch!”

She was very convincing. “Yes, Ms. Price,” I squeaked out. My mouth had dried up and I couldn’t believe the mess I had gotten myself into. She stood up.

“Go home and get started. By the way, at the bottom is the name of a nice little old lady. She has a small apartment for rent that is cheaper than the duplex you are renting now and closer to work. You should consider moving since it will be a month before you get paid and your new salary is less than you are making now.”

I said nothing as I walked out of her office. At the door, the two female cops chatted briefly with Donna, then broke into laughter as I went out the door. At home, I tossed the itinerary on the table and plopped down on the sofa, contemplating what my next move was going to be. I wasn’t sure how all this was going to shake out. I got up and went to down the basement to beat the skins for a while but that didn’t help either. After making lunch, I sat down on the sofa and read through the list of things she wanted me to do.

The first item was the word “move.” I glanced at the name at the bottom of the page and decided to call her in the morning to see the apartment.

The second item was to maintain my diet and exercise regimen. I looked at the second page and found a list of foods to eat and what to avoid, as well as portion size. I never kept much food stock in the kitchen but most of what I had was on the “avoid” list.

The third item was a list of appointments to be kept. The first one on the list was for that night at 8:30 PM at a beauty salon in the mall across the highway from the call center and the second was for 10 PM at the Walworth department store in the same mall. The words “back door” were in parenthesis. To say I was apprehensive was an understatement.

I decided to see the apartment that afternoon instead of waiting. A Miss Everts answered the phone and said I should come right over.

When I arrived, she walked me around the back to the entrance. Once inside, I saw that this place was quite a bit smaller than the one I had but completely furnished. I could sell all of the old furniture I had which needed to be replaced soon anyway. The decor was

something else. The whole place was done in pastels. The small kitchen-dining area was pale yellow with white trim. The living room was all white with white curtains and a cream-colored sofa and chair. The bedroom and full bath were pink with white trim. The large dresser and lighted vanity were white with gold trim. The four-poster bed was draped in pink chiffon. It was a very femmy place, to say the least, but not wanting to get on the wrong side of Ms. Price again, I said I would take the place.

I wrote out a check for a month's rent and the security deposit and was given a set of keys. I went home and wrote a letter of notice to my landlord that I would be leaving and spent the rest of the day packing up some non-essential items and storing them in the basement of my new place.

After supper that night, I watched some TV and then drove to the mall. Promptly at 8:25, I pushed the buzzer at the back door of the beauty salon. The door opened and a short, chunky woman let me in.

"I'm glad you're on time, Carla. I'm Ms. Baines, the manager. We are ready for you, so come with me, please."

I followed her inside where she motioned me to the small restroom adjacent to the office. She handed me a large brown envelope.

"Take off your clothes, put this on and come out when you are ready, Carla." Sensing my apprehension, she added, "The shop is closed now so just relax. There are no customers just me and two staff members."

I stepped inside and closed the door. After undressing, I opened the envelope. I found a paper jock strap inside. I put it on carefully, then opened the door and walked to the front of the salon. I could hear giggles as I approached.

"Carla, please stand in the middle of the floor here," motioned Ms. Baines.

I walked to where she pointed, still uncomfortable with being nearly naked in front of strangers as well as being addressed as "Carla."

The other two women, each holding an electric clipper in one hand, knelt at my feet and began removing what little body hair I had. Next they put on wax strips. Much to their amusement, I winced and almost cried out as they yanked them off. Ms. Baines inspected me after they were finished and nodded her approval.

"Okay Carla, sit down here please," said Ms. Baines as she gestured to one of the shops chairs.

I sat in the chair she had indicated. In short order my ears were pierced and my eyelashes were curled. Next, one of the attendants turned on a machine behind me. She held up a device with a small needle at the end and began inserting the needle in my eyebrows. She worked quickly and when she was finished with both eyebrows, she held up a mirror so I could see the results of her work. My eyebrows had been thinned out and trailed off to a fine line as well as having a slight arch to them.

Standing behind the operator, Ms. Baines commented, "Fabulous." "Leave the hair and nails for now. The beard is last."