

LAW SCHOOL

Every dream is subject to morning reality. Night dreams fade quickly as we regain waking consciousness. The dreams represented in women's stories of finding a place in the world in which one is valued for qualities and skills, where one is recognized and given respect for work are also subject to challenge. The path towards one's dreams and life's work is strewn with obstacles.

CATHY MORGAN

I remember when I used to read poetry and other literature for the sound of the words alone and the images that were created. I used to be artistic--I wrote, drew, and played an instrument. As the verbs I use indicate, these creative accomplishments are now in the past.

Today I read to find "the point," the rule of law, or some kind of conclusion. This means that I skim over the images and sounds, to hurriedly find what I am looking for--a quick answer to a difficult question. I may never see another "leafy bough . . . [glowing] like a flame in the unobstructed splendor . . . [of] the sun."

PATTY MYERS

I hate law school. Law school is like a bad dream that won't go away, no matter how hard I try. It's been the most degrading experience I've ever gone through, and I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

What's wrong with law school? Everything. Probably the most drastic effect of law school has been on my self-esteem. I used to think I was an intelligent human being, now I think I'm incompetent. No matter how hard I study, I don't seem to grasp things as easily as other students. No matter how well I feel I know the course material, my grades are low.

One of the key factors which is so much a part of law school --a factor which infuriates me--is intimidation. The Socratic method of teaching is a good example of

unnecessary intimidation. I literally sat through my first year of classes in a panic. When I was called on, my face would turn bright red, and I could never give answers that were good enough, even though other people seemed to do fine.

The intimidation comes not only from the professors, however. I have found that a lot of it comes from other students, and only recently have I learned how to tune out overbearing, egotistical classmates. At this point in my law school career, I'd like to find a few truly genuine people to call friends, and let the others go. I don't care what hornbooks other people read over the summer. I'm tired of feeling inadequate because my father isn't an attorney (Heaven forbid if someone should find out that neither of my parents went to college!). I'm tired of sharing my hints on studying with others and then realizing that I gave more than I got in return. I think the law school atmosphere lends itself to extreme competitiveness, with the mad dash for good grades and the best job, but I'm not marching to that drummer.

I look at law school as a three-year hazing process. Everyone says practicing law is nothing like law school, and I'm told that when I get out of school, I'll need to start learning everything new. The way I see law school, it's just something I need to get through--as long as I don't flunk out, I'll be okay.

Sometimes I truly think I'm cracking up. With the mental agony of law school and the physical symptoms, I feel like a wreck.

Why go through all this? I want to be an attorney. I just want to get the hazing process over so I can get on with my life and what I think will be a rewarding career.

There are probably some attributes of law school which aren't as negative as the ones I've described, but they are few. First, I feel like I'm really being challenged for the first time in my life. Although I had my ups and downs in undergraduate school, I seem to have really eased through when I compare it to my law school experiences. It's an interesting feeling to be challenged, but I'd like a less steady diet of it! And second, I feel like I'm going somewhere with my life. I look at my friends in the "real" world, and some of them seem to have given up on life. To me, getting married out of boredom, having kids and being a housewife who watches soap operas all day is dreadful! I

think law school has given me a much different perspective on life. I think I've matured more than I would have elsewhere.

DENISE CHAMBERLAIN

Law school has many frustrations. It is easy to see why many women describe law school as a "living nightmare." Our needs are ignored.

The overload of work assignments makes students docile and submissive. Law professors intentionally overload students with assignments. We become so busy trying to understand the material that there is no time to seriously critique the process.

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I don't believe that I was ready for life as a law student. I was surprised when law school turned out to be so dull. Law school is a very formal, dull process. Professors call students by "Mr." or "Miss," and no one is interested in the individual. Too many work assignments prevent students from having time to develop friendships. My strongest sensation was the feeling of loss, because there would be no close relationships with either professors or other students. This was quite a contrast from my undergraduate studies, when professors could be my personal friends and still be challenging and encouraging in the classroom.

In addition, I had a sense that the professors were trying to devalue my past experiences. It was as though nothing matters before a person enters law school. But past experiences are important, because we develop our "sense of self from the past. I wondered about a "law school process" that "devalued" my past. I decided that I was not going to allow 4 or 5 professors to do that. I felt my past was rich with experiences.

Sexism entered my life when I entered law school. I was aware of sexism, and it had been present in some situations, but never to the degree that it is present in law school. In some of my classes, when a woman raises her hand to ask a professor a question, he acknowledges by responding: "Yes, sir?" "Yes, SIR?"!?!?! I have thought

about telling some professors that they say this--but decided that they would probably respond with a sarcastic comment or "witty" insult. (Law school rule: one never stops playing the one-upmanship-game.) So when I hear this response, I smile and think about how the man is making an ass of himself.

Every day I hear that men are the judges, and the corporate officers, and the settlors of trusts. If women are mentioned, it is normally in family law, and then she is the one who is beaten, or needs separate maintenance, so "she won't have to eat grass for 6 months." The "wonderful" comments go on and on, day after day.

In sharp contrast are the few professors who use subtle, inclusive terms when referring to judges, corporate officers, and others in power. Because these men acknowledge women, they have gained my respect.

Since law school was not going to meet my expectations, I decided to shift gears. After a month or so of school, I decided that law school was a rite of passage. If one put up with the "hazing" process, eventually one could become a lawyer. I compared law school with my husband's induction into the Marine Corps. Marines and lawyers both consider themselves to be "the few, the proud." Many slogans from the Marine Corps also apply to law school. For example, the idea that if you are tough enough, you can be one of us. I decided that law school was going to be my basic training. If I did everything in the proper regimented fashion, I could become a lawyer. I had only one fear: what if the entire legal profession is like law school?

RUTH KNIGHT

Leaving the children with grandma and Tom, I drove to Morgantown, West Virginia, pulling a pop-up tent camper. We had contracted to buy a house near the law school, on condition that we sold our house in Virginia. Our house did not sell. I found a campground in Mount Morris, Pennsylvania, opened the tent, set up the jacks, and cooked a can of Ravioli on the little propane stove. I had never driven so far alone. I found a notebook and pencil, made my bed, took a shower in the bath house, and set the alarm clock. All of a sudden I started to laugh and

couldn't stop. Then I couldn't tell whether I was laughing or crying. I pulled the bedding over my head and concentrated on getting control.

I made it to law school orientation on time, disappointed that, unlike teacher orientations, there were no doughnuts. Dean Gee read his well-written speech. None of the speakers wrote anything on the board or showed any charts, so I took no notes. Just as my feet were going to sleep, a trial lawyer from Charleston waltzed in playing the West Virginia fight song on a kazoo attached to a megaphone with a piece of garden hose. He took a guitar from a decal-covered case and sang "Simple Gifts," an old Quaker melody. Then he spoke on "Being Yourself." On being proud to pray to whoever you pray to. To cry. To get close to clients. He spoke of enjoying law school and enjoying life. Finally he talked of his people, the Irish, and recited the second verse of Danny Boy, where Danny's father sends him off to war. Then he took a saw out of worn leather case and played the purest, most haunting strain of Danny Boy I had ever heard. He put so much into the performance that beads of perspiration stood out on his face. I was almost overwhelmed, thinking of my great, great grandmother who walked all the way from Saint Louis to Salt Lake with a handcart and three children, because single women were not allowed in the pioneer wagon trains. She chose a handcart over a polygamous husband.

I searched in vain for a place to live, but everything was full and bursting. The campus housing office was callous. People at church were sympathetic, but offered no solution. I called Tom and found the rash of job applications I had sent out for him had born fruit. As a dependent housewife with small children, the government cutbacks slowly strangling his previous job had been traumatic for me. I was so relieved when a junior high school in Monongalia County had offered him a job. He came with the family, and we camped in the cold drizzling rain. Our clothes mildewed. Still no housing.

One night when we were searching for apartments, the Ford died on us. Tom had no tools along, so we left it at Chico's Dairy and took a taxi to camp. The next morning was the first day of public school. Our second grader's shoes had been left in the Ford. We drove to it in a rush only to find that Tom had forgotten his keys and the shoes were locked inside. We had no time to go back to camp.

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"You drop me off at Central School, the elementary nearest campus married housing and go on." My voice sounded composed. "They probably have a pair of gym shoes someone left. I'll find a way to get to the law school after I register Erika."

I took a deep breath, had Erika take her stockings off so she wouldn't get them dirty, and walked the gauntlet of parents and children waiting to enter the school. I explained the situation to the secretary. She sent me to the principal.

"Just take her home."

I explained why I couldn't.

He said, "Take her to the day care center next door."

The day care refused to take her because she was too old. I returned to the school.

"Go buy her some shoes," the principal suggested.

"Which way is town?" I asked. He pointed. I walked downtown and waited for stores to open. All I could find was a pair of thongs. I bought them. I registered her, and discovered then that the children only went a half day. I returned to the daycare center in distress and talked them into giving her lunch and keeping her until Tom came. The owner of the daycare center treated me the way Anglo farm workers treated Mexican migrants who worked in the spuds when I was a little girl.

By the time I found a way to the law school, dry tears were pouring inside my face. Walking to the law center, I slipped on a steep embankment and fell to the road below, twisting my ankle. Real tears splashed down the front of my dress. A real estate agent stopped and gave me a ride. I hobbled into the building just in time for torts.

Rogers* was at his brilliant, devious best. I willingly forgot my troubles and watched him entertain. Then he called on me. I forgot what the case was about. My brief had been written in the tent at night in the rain. I said something. He called on one of the people who's hands were thrown up so hard I was afraid they would dislocate a shoulder. After class several people commented on how calm I was. I said to myself, "Torts is a picnic." Then I walked until I found an old mobile home with a washing machine and bought it with Tom's retirement money.

*The names of professors and students have been changed.

First year law school was like Listerine. I loved it and I hated it. I loved how the deeper I descended into the bowels of the library, the less it seemed like being in the world, and the more the mysterious volumes beckoned. I felt like Columbus discovering America when I discovered I could find my daily case assignments in the West Reporters, where the syllabus points separated the wheat from the chaff. I hated getting a C on my first writing assignment and having everyone ask what I got. I loved how intelligent and interesting the students were. I hated the way some of them ignored me. I loved the feeling of being a new person. I hated not getting any feedback on my progress.

At first, as an education major, I was appalled by the lack of innovative teaching techniques. I wondered if they had ever heard of an overhead projector. Professor Adams recited as though he had memorized the contents of his three-ring binder. The only visual aide he ever used was his pen, which he solemnly passed from student to student to represent transfer of jewels, land, and seisin. Professor Niles sat at the desk with his feet crossed, and lectured in a monotone for ninety minutes straight. Rogers was entertaining in a diabolical way, but created terrible tension.

One day, Professor Rodgers called on the girl next to me and, to everyone's dismay, she replied in a whine, "You've already called on me twice and there are people in here who have never been called on." Professor Rogers rubbed his hands together in anticipatory glee. "Well, who do you want me to call on, Miss Stevenson. You choose anybody you want." Becky made a tortured sweep around the room with her eyes and said, "Meredith Stone." The class gasped. When Meredith finished, Rodgers put his elbows on his hips and the palms of his hand ceilingward. "With friends like that, Ms. Stone, who needs enemies?" Nervous laughter. Then he turned again to Becky. "Now, Miss Stevenson, since your bookkeeping is so far superior to mine, would you like to pick the next victim?" Tears rose in Becky's eyes. Her lips trembled. Everyone looked away from her in acute discomfort.

Professor French was the only one who really seemed human. He had students introduce themselves. He assured us that he was not smarter than students just because he had already studied the cases. He sometimes wore a pink T-shirt with a big balloon on it, complete with suspenders to

hold up his jeans. He conscientiously tried to be clear. He was knowledgeable and thorough. He often explained difficult things a second time. Sometimes he was nervous. He was seen in the student lounge and talked to students as if they were people. Interestingly enough, students griped about Professor French more than they griped about the other professors. I still don't understand it.

In time, I learned to treat Professor Niles as if he were a book while he was lecturing. His massive knowledge was available to me if I actively listened and did not expect him to tap dance while he presented it. A second-year student gave me an outline for property and it helped.

We had no furniture until the end of October, because some of the floors had to be replaced in the trailer. We used the mattresses and table from the tent-camper. I worked at the law school from eight to five, and came home to be mommy at night and on weekends. Tom brought some of our stuff from a garage in Virginia. I had two vacuum cleaners, no end tables, the drapes from our home in Arizona, and no salt shaker or dictionary.

Students liked me because I posed no threat to them. Many felt much better when I freely admitted I did not know what was going on. So I admitted it a lot.

I did not panic until finals. I had seven notebooks full of unintelligible scribbling. I couldn't even read my own notes. I had patiently waited for the professors to clarify the behavioral objectives of the classes. They never did.

In desperation I tried to rehash the hash by rewriting my notes. As I worked, suddenly, as if by magic, patterns began to emerge, jumping unexpectedly out at me like a chain of Christmas twinkle lights.

I had difficulty even reading the tests and regretted that my magic twinkle light patterns had not emerged sooner so I could have studied them more thoroughly. But I felt growth and a huge sense of accomplishment.

My first-semester grades were respectable. I decided that if I threw out my family-oriented schedule and worked really hard, I could excel. I studied nonstop from seven in the morning until midnight. Sometimes longer. Law was a foreign language. I did not try to understand it all in class; all I could do was frantically write as much of the class dialogue as I could and try to digest it later. I copiously retyped every word the professors said. Where I had not been speechless the semester before, I now became

so, because I tried to speak in the foreign language, and I was at the saturation level most of the time.

Without a word of complaint, Tom cooked meals and washed dishes. Two-year-old Joseph played at my feet with matchbox cars while I studied. Once he dragged his blanket and a large rocking chair all the way down the hall and stood mutely looking at me with wistful eyes. The two girls sensed my urgent state of mind and softly stroked my hair or brought me peanut butter sandwiches and milk. Tom took them all to Virginia for spring break and I kept to the schedule.

One of our new professors second-semester was a bright, handsome man named Jensen who somehow earned a reputation for his arrogance. Once he severely chastised our class for not taking law school seriously, judging from our class participation. He later called on me and I froze. A few weeks after that he called on me again, and I forced myself to focus on my notes and to speak. I felt dull and uncomprehending. I recognized that he was nursing me along, expertly pulling the answers out of me. My face was warm and I could feel the tendons in my neck. Before he finished, he said kindly, "You look confused." I said miserably, "I guess I'm just dumb." The class stood still. He reassured me, pointing out the difficulty of the concept.

After class, students came from all directions to present me such words of wisdom as, "Don't let that arrogant bastard intimidate you. Tell him to go to hell. Shit, I'm on probation. They won't kick you out of here. Don't give him the satisfaction of knowing you're confused."

The more I heard, the more ashamed I became. My grades were better than most of the people's who had tried to comfort me. I had played the wide-eyed innocent act, at the expense of a good professor. At the end of the semester, the class did not applaud him and I thought he looked hurt. Someone put a statuette of a horse's ass on his desk. I quit using the restroom near his office, because I never wanted him to see me again and be reminded.

First-semester most of the professors had not seemed human. Second-semester they did, but I didn't! On Professor Nile's birthday, immediately after his low first-semester grades were posted, students surprised him with a cake, a box of cigars, and a huge display of colorful helium balloons. He was so surprised he just stood gaping

at the decorated desk. His hand shook so much that someone else had to cut his cake.

On the last day of Professor Simon's class, a group of women got to giggling in the student lounge and typed him a note which read, "Instead of applauding, may we all line up and KISS you one by one? Wistfully yours, the female students in your Constitutional Law class." The note was deposited on his podium and he was appropriately embarrassed, much to everyone's delight.

I went through a ream of typing paper to write a sixteen-page brief for Moot Court. I wrote some paragraphs forty or fifty times until they sounded just right. I agonized over it to the point that I began to walk in my sleep and write jabberwocky in the dark of night on odd slips of paper, thinking in my restlessness that I had something so stupendous to say that I had to get it on paper before the morning came and I forgot. I stayed up the two nights before the briefs were handed in and frantically traded copies as soon as they were available.

Then I cried. My brief was not like the others. It was not legal-sounding. It was just a series of little stories I constructed from the facts of the researched cases. I interrupted Professor Peters and told her my teaching assistant had not read my rough draft carefully, that she should have told me I was doing it wrong. Professor Peters patiently told me to hand in my rough draft and she would take that into account when she read my brief. The day of my first argument, Professor Peters told me she wanted to speak with me. I thought I failed. My eyelid began to twitch.

"I knew you were worried about your brief. I just wanted you to know that when I read it, I just had to stop reading briefs." My heart fell. She continued. "I stopped reading and told a colleague, I have just read the best brief I have ever read." She gave me my first A+. I made the Moot Court Board.

Then I turned to preparing for finals with a mania I did not know I possessed. I memorized my copious outlines word for word, hundreds of pages. Hannah Simons had a baby during Moot Court and missed a lot of classes. I went to her house and drilled my outlines into her.

This time I could read the tests. I knew the answers. I wrote a beginning, a middle, and an end to each essay. Constitutional Law was last. I thought, when it was over,

"It could not have been that easy."

I was right. It couldn't and it wasn't. When my grades came in June, I was devastated. My A in Moot Court saved me from ruin. Hannah got all A's and B's. I began to shake, remembering how I had insanely once fasted for two weeks and belittled a fat lady I saw drinking Pepsi and eating a cookie with her lunch. Where was my conceited control now? The day was hot, but my teeth chattered. Tom tried to comfort me. "Ruthie, if it helps any...I know how you feel."

"You couldn't possibly know how I feel," I cried. He had never taken challenging subjects. He had had trouble with plain old undergraduate algebra.

Then, suddenly, as clearly audible as a clavichord played expertly in a silent music hall, my inner voice said, "Yes, he does understand. And he cares, too." Finally, I understood his challenge in being the first in his family to attend college at all. I wanted to recite poetry to him, but I could not think of any profound enough to suit me.

Then Tom broke the quiet. "When you are breaking sod, you get more sore muscles than people do who plow prepared farm land." I laughed and it felt good. He was profound enough for me.

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Unrest in C+ Minor

i want i want more feedbackfeedback on my
writingwriting to get good gradesgrades how
many pagespages must the papers be
anxietyanxiety the same workload for a two
credit class as for a three unfairunfair you said
if we did all the assignments we would get good
grades promisespromises can i trust you
suspicioususpicion what's the minimum for an A
telltellme will i write what you want to read
subjectivesubjective don't put me on an
arbitrary scale of ABCDF pressurepressure i'm
ranked top in my class and you better not mess
up my GPA eliteelite i'm trying the best i know
how confusionconfusion i'm not a very good
writer worryworry my grades are lousy no
matter what i do hopelesshopeless i feel ignored

impersonalimpersonal and unappreciated inse-
cureinsecure why am i so drivendriven to
competecompete silent pain and frustrationfrus-
tration armadillos around me who don't give a
damndamn piercing tensiontension why don't i
escapescape apprehension i am: not properly
appreciated insecurityinsecurity feelings cannot
be graded ABCDF bitterness bitterness
bitterness silent pain and frustration and
armadillos who don't give a damn damn damn
this class should be pass-fail pressure pressure
we got the same assignment load for a two credit
class as for the three credit one last semester
unfair unfair unfair we changed the meeting time
for K and she dropped gripe gripe gripe yousaid
if we handed in all the assignments we would get
As promises promises promises i'm not a very
good writer worry worry worry this has been
going on for over an hour lawschool lawschool
lawschool we cannot escape it

Not again! Not another class agonized away in grade
panic. S has been rage-furious everytime I have seen her
today. Now her face softens into normal-angry as she
voices her opinions on assignment feedback and lack
thereof. C's face stiffens. Lots of people with unrest.
Spewing. Apologizing. Trying to explain. I see N hurting.
Can't we battle elsewhere.

This may drive me to drink. I have never been
drunk. Over thirty and nothing alcholic except cough
medicine. Maybe I should do it to be more well-rounded. It
might relax me and that would be smmooooothe. Or I might
get sick and throw uuuuuuup.' I feel like throwing up
anyway and I am sober and healthy. What else can I
daydream about? Or is it night? I could be home with my
kids reading Where the Wild Things Are for the zillionth
satisfying time.

Two people on Law Review are trying to corner the
professor into giving them A's. Mixing brilliance with
manipulation. They are sincere and paranoid. The law firm
cares. Tests and measurements are more comfortable to
some people than emotion. Once I cried all night because I
got a B and it ruined my straight A average. Then I went
to law school and got a C. And cried, but not all night. I

did not like wearing a scarlet AVERAGE embroidered on my chest. I did not want C's, so I studied like crazy crazy.

In O's class I recorded every word he spoke while others passed notices, dozed, rudely avoided participating, and griped. I retyped O's every word while some others partied, watched T.V., and made love. I memorized his every word while some others slept late. I stared at O's hellish exam while some others wrote all the right answers. I remembered all the case fact-patterns we had been presented in class and reading assignments. But they were not on the test. The test had foreign fact patterns for the rules. I recognized some of the rules, but I did not know their numbers and wasted precious time lost in the wilderness of the statute book I had not thought to map. I did not get done. O would point out that he had no duty to give me any continuing feedback. He gave no feedback to the Law Reviewers either, but they did not complain and fondly patted the statute books they had known to tab and annotate so carefully. Now they panic about the slim risk they take in this class of getting a bit confused and receiving a B and having to cry all night. Maybe the reason I am bored with this discussion is because I have known the scumbag-bottom of the grade barrel and survived. Or maybe I am smug. Teacher liked my work last semester...Blasphemous blasphemous. Purge purge. No no. What I received was definitely not dry, pedagogical feedback to inform me of my progress with regards to honors, future jobs, academic probation, or competition with other students. Not it not it.

I timidly stepped out of the shower with my song and someone clapped...

Could all this jumbled, piercing tension be a kind of song stepping out of repression. Listen, listen to the dissonance and unrest in C+ Minor. Someone should write it down, write it down. It is intensely human and legal-resonating from a poker face palace on a hill.

I wonder wonder what the finale will sound like.

MARY KAY BUCHMELTER

In Torts class last year, Professor Cady would sometimes force us to examine a situation in the way we would have perceived it before coming to law school. This

was the scenario: Cady would come off the platform and saunter up to the front row. He'd put his foot up on the front row desk, loosen his tie and light up a cigarette. He'd instruct us to think about this in the way we would have a year ago, to forget the things we've learned since. "Picture yourself at a bar discussing the law with some of the regular patrons. You're all having a beer and talking about whether someone has grounds for a law-suit or not. The idea was to get you to admit that before you came to law school you believed that a particular behavior would be illegal. "Of course," he would say, "anyone would think that this action is illegal. It has to be, doesn't it?" He'd look at you and smile reassuringly. Everyone smiled back, tentatively at first and then confidently. All over the room, heads would be nodding in agreement. Then he would lean forward, squint, point his finger and SHOUT, "Well, boys and girls, that's not true. It is legal. They don't know over there at the bar what is and isn't legal. And neither did you, before you came here. That's why you came to law school. Those people who think something is legal or illegal because it's right or wrong don't know what they're talking about. They're practicing 'bar stool law.' Law school is where you learn what the law is. This is where you find out what is and isn't legal--what you can and can't do. What the law really is." "Bar stool law" became the catch-phrase to describe that uneasy feeling that something should be illegal, but you didn't quite know why.

Many of us came to law school with "bar stool ethics." Some things are just wrong, immoral, unethical. They're just plain wrong and everyone knows they're wrong. After a short time in law school, you find yourself defending the very things that in pre-law school days you knew were immoral, unethical, and just plain wrong. But this is where we find out what is or isn't right. This is where we find out what we as lawyers can and cannot do. Surely lawyers can't do it if it isn't legal, or right, or ethical. Right?

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During the first year we were so overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the assignments that there was little time to analyze what was happening. Entire weekends would be

spent working furiously in order to avoid falling hopelessly behind, and there was always a pervasive fear of being humiliated in the classroom where all of your classmates would see once and for all that you are stupid. There never seemed to be any answers. The game is trying to guess what the professor wants, and watching as your friends, one by one, attempt and fail. And you thank God it isn't your time to fail. There is a general feeling of isolation and alienation. Everyone talks about the "pressure." It seems as if everyone is doing more work than you are. No one has time for their families and friends. People keep telling you how you've changed, and you know there's some truth to it. There's never enough time or energy to do things right. The isolation and alienation seems to be encouraged. No one dares to help out someone who is trying to answer a question in class. Watching closely, you can see how people physically shift their bodies farther away from the person who is answering.

Throughout, we were being told that this is what life as a lawyer would be like. We were learning how to "budget" our time and get our priorities in order. It doesn't take long to realize that no one can fulfill personal obligations and still have enough time and energy to do law school work competently. The lesson was, if you want to be a successful attorney, don't expect to have time for other things. The "law" is all important--it's going to become your life.

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Most of the qualities that I brought to law school, that I believed were valuable, worthwhile attributes which would contribute to being a good lawyer, have been rejected or trivialized. Law school affects my personal life in ways that confuse and frighten me. I question every innocuous statement, looking for hidden meanings. I'm less able to make decisions. Shouldn't I be becoming more, instead of less, confident? I find myself doubting my own abilities because they don't fit into accepted norms. More frightening is that the qualities that I've perceived as disagreeable flourish. I see aggressiveness, ruthlessness, and quarrelsomeness deified, while compassion, sensitivity,

and sympathy are scorned. The unpleasant characteristics are the ones that are highly rewarded--we're talking money! Everyone in law school knows what is needed to practice corporate law, and how much that pays as opposed to what is needed to do people's law, or domestic law, and how much that pays.

It isn't difficult to figure out the value system here. I guess I came here with "bar stool" qualities, and now know what such qualities are worth.

FRAN HUGHES

To quote the Dean's first lecture in a legal perspective course, "When you leave here, you will have changed. You will think like a lawyer." Law school induces an individual to forego self to become a lawyer and to "get a job." The life of a law student is compartmentalized. Being a student and being a person do not coincide. Law school is goal-oriented. Lawyering is viewed as an occupation where the sole purpose is winning for the client. The result is tunnel vision.

Too often the rigid and linear approach to legal cases results in the lawyer winning the case, and the result has helped the client eliminate the symptoms or consequences of a problem, rather than the problem itself. Divorce cases are an example of the pathology of winning. Without attention to how the client will fare after the divorce, the lawyer adheres to winning the case, to the detriment of the client's long-range interest.

Legal educators should stop perpetuating the aura of mystery that surrounds an attorney's power. A lawyer's power is derived from the fact that she has access to vehicles of change, and knows how to use the system better than other individuals, not that she is more intelligent than her clients, nor that she possesses all the answers. Lawyers and law students have an inflated idea of their own intelligence.

Sometimes, I feel that lawyers and law students do not particularly care about justice. They are so caught up in the status and money they feel a particular job will bring, that they no longer care who or what interest they represent. Law school does nothing to dissuade this type of value system.

During the first year of law school, discussion of a particularly unjust decision will have students clamoring with indignation. During the second year the student adopts the attitude--"well that's the law." This is part of the reason the public is so disillusioned with lawyers.

Law schools also foster "lawyering games." Because of the fierce competition and dog-eat-dog atmosphere, the importance of cooperation among lawyers is lost. During moot court preparation, students were absolutely forbidden to discuss any of their research; to do so was considered a violation of our honor code. I thought this was ridiculous. The message was: do not help each other. This teaches unhealthy competition in a profession which over-values competition.

Law students should be allowed to integrate their past experiences with what they are learning in law school. There was life before law school.

SUSAN DALPORTO

My experience as a law student has been horrifying. In undergraduate school I majored in social work and took philosophy courses. I have been rediscovering myself for the last 10 years. The law school environment during the first year was anti-self and inhumane. It was the antithesis of everything I had learned.

I discovered immediately that law school would totally consume me if I did not fight it. During the first year I existed on approximately 4 hours of restless sleep a night, briefing cases in my sleep.

I was petrified when called on in class, even though rationally I knew that there was nothing wrong with saying "I don't know."

I could feel the satisfaction other students got when someone would "flub up" in class. The competition was intense! I was caught up in it myself. I measured myself by what others were doing. I would see classmates doing research and fear that they were getting something I wasn't. I was sure that everyone else in the class was self-confident, totally prepared, and able to respond to questions the professor asked, while I trembled with dread.

I was always prepared. I always read my assignments. However, I was so tired and paranoid that sometimes I drew

a blank. I still do this even though I know that there is no reason to be upset. It is part of the script. I still tremble with dread.

I use to wake up each morning with an overpowering feeling of impending doom. My stomach would contract to a tight ball. I have recently overcome this feeling. It is truly mind over body. I no longer allow the dread to enter my consciousness.

I am now trying valiantly to live each day to its fullest. I do not mean by this that I spend each day spontaneously. This is not possible in law school. I try not to have negative thoughts of law school. I asked myself, "Do I want to complete law school?" "Yes, I do." My next question was, "Do I want to spend the last year of law school miserable and angry, doing the work grudgingly, and spending a lot of energy bitching and deferring joy until after law school is finished, or do I want to take control of my life and enjoy this year; living it day to day, seeing the irony and comedy in it, and generally having a good time?" My pleasure-seeking self will no longer tolerate the guilt-ridden, miserable lifestyle which I adopted during the first year.

I think the Socratic method of teaching is anti-education, anti-human, and anti-thought. There has not been a creative thought uttered in any class during my entire law school career. The regurgitation of dead cases and theories of law is so anti-human that I fear for society when I think of the dehumanization we are participating in. The law is dehumanized and so are we.

We spend three years being dehumanized and then are foisted upon the public; many of us with inflated egos bolstered by the public's inappropriate response to us as attorneys.

Some law students are frightening. They are guns-for-hire mercenaries. Their amoral attitude is perpetuated by the lack of humanness in the law school experience. This inhumanness is perpetuated by not only the teachers, but also other lawyers, who see law school as an initiation into a club. It is a hazing. Somehow it seems that the more inhumane the path to entering the law community, the more important and valuable the degree. As soon as a student becomes a lawyer there is a switch from loathing the process to idealizing it and making certain that others entering the profession (club) suffer adequately.

As far as being a woman in law school, I really resent the lack of feminist professors. I hate having the male power-trip forced down my throat. It is the same 'ole' story. Men in power, women made to feel inferior, impotent, servile. It gives the male students an edge on self-esteem. They are part of the power structure, and you can bet they feel differently from women in the professor-student relationship. I feel that when we have a fair share of feminist professors we will see a more humanistic approach to the study of law.

Women need courses which focus on social situations and legal problems which are inherently female--rape, abortion, sex discrimination, domestic violence, and medical malpractice.

Look at the law school curriculum. Lo and behold, it is male-dominated! Think about the development of the law school curriculum. Judges, who are predominately male, espouse rules of law which have been formulated in our male-dominated society to protect and perpetuate male principles, values, and morals. Then a publishing company, which I would bet my first-born child is male-dominated, determines which of these case decisions best states these principles, values, and morals. These decisions are then bound into textbooks in order to supply class materials for classes which our all-male administration deems important enough subject areas to be included in the curriculum. Our predominantely male professors complete the bombardment.

Law school has set me back in my quest for self-discovery. During my first year I felt like an insignificant, unintelligent, unattractive, unloveable human. I cried all the time and quit school every day. I remember thinking after the last test of my first semester, "What a farce this whole law school trip is." By my second year I knew I was going to survive as a person because I began to feel anger.

I am just beginning to form an image of myself as a lawyer. Only in the last semester of my last year have I been able to admit that I am going to be a lawyer. I see myself working in a small law firm with one or two other lawyers. They will be willing to help and teach me lawyering skills. As I become more experienced I see myself as an equal in the firm or forming a firm of my own. The work will be a combination of bread-and-butter law and political-action law. I want somehow to be involved in

making law. I want to help spread around the good life, to correct some injustices. I want to protect myself, my family, and friends. I may begin my law practice out of my home. I will not put myself on the block in the traditional interview. I have got to find some other less humiliating way of finding my place.

My hazy self-image is a result of the power phenomenon. I have never thought of myself as a powerful person. One of the reasons I came to law school was to gain power. Power through knowledge and also through recognition from others. But along with this power comes responsibility. I am about to be responsible for myself. I am going to earn my own money.

Sometimes I see myself curling up in a fetal position. The fetal position is a retreat into the traditional woman's role. This is a fantasy, as I know I can never go back. One reason is that I have felt power in the public sphere. I like it. My only fear is that I feel unprepared to practice law. I want desperately to feel that I can do a good job.

My accomplishments have required that I overcome the "I can't do it. I'm inadequate" hurdle. This takes fortitude.

My first year of law school reduced me to mush. Fortunately, my family saw me as powerful. My friends had confidence in my ability. I was the one who lacked confidence.

I was once in a social situation where I was the only one who did not have a college degree. Rationally, I knew that this did not make me less intelligent. I suffered from a lack of self-esteem. Also, most of the men in this social scene were lawyers. Maybe my decision to go to law school was a way of showing the men that I was intelligent. I may also be showing the women that I have more "balls" than they have. Is that Freudian or what?!!

Unfortunately, at this time in my life I still need the societal trappings. Once I have my degree I will feel more powerful. Others will recognize me as more powerful. I like this feeling even if it is bullshit. If I never use my law degree except as a trapping, I will still feel better. All in all it does not mean I am a better person or more worthy; however it will look great on a resume or an obituary.

KRISTI TREADWAY

Once in law school, I experienced the clash of realism and idealism. I felt like a computer programmed with legal information. I felt most sharply the inequalities of race, sex, and economic class. I experienced the overwhelming alienation and insignificance that makes one feel powerless.

As much as I loathed the experience, I considered it a necessary means to an end. In the modern world, where vast amounts of information are required for survival, there seems no time left "to stop and smell the roses." This tunnel vision seems to affect women law students in two ways. First, the intense study required to swallow all the material needed for the beginning of a legal career does not allow for much soul-searching. Secondly, the urgency of a woman's "cause" sometimes overcomes the humor and enjoyment of life. It is these feelings which allow us to accept the "pain" of law school in hopes of a better future.

However, education is a life-long experience, a way of life. If law school makes us give up our quest for truth or even postpone it, our educational achievements are hollow and meaningless. Adrienne Rich writes in Diving Into the Wreck:

Yes my feelings tell a story.
"I came to explore the wreck
The words are purposes.
The words are maps
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail . . .

We are, I am, You are
by cowardice or courage
the ones who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear"

My experience in law school has affected me deeply. The study of law has influenced and altered my economic, intellectual, philosophical, and social views. I have also been frustrated, angry, and discouraged. These feelings

have been a result of the confrontation with both the method and substance of the law.

Learning law and practicing law seem foreign to my ideals and values. I was initiated into law in the first semester of my first year. I walked into a large room without any windows. There were seventy students seated in identical, rigid, plastic chairs facing the front of the room. There, at the front, a plain brown desk sat on a small, raised pedestal/platform. The plain-suited professor made his entrance, late, from the side door, strode squarely to the desk and commenced to tell us of his expectations and the difficulties of law school. He was arrogant, straight-forward, precise, and factual. The students wore square, straight-cut clothes. Later, we talked of superficial things in brown, cold halls. I felt alienated, frustrated, repulsed.

In retrospect, I realize that I have had similar feelings before. Law school intensified them. These were feelings that a woman experiences as she enters the political, economic, religious, and sexual worlds which govern our lives and represent power in our world. As women enter realms other than those traditionally allowed by patriarchy, we are forced to decide and choose to be a woman with ability and potential. Yet, the resources for doing this are those of the patriarchy which forms and filters what makes up my world. As women, we are confronted with something totally foreign and repulsive to our being. My personal experience of law school exemplifies this societal dilemma for women.

Women's lives have been fragmented by patriarchy. Men have pitted us one against another. Our stories and histories are not written or collected or taught in universities. We view ourselves narrowly because we are unaware of other women's feeling. We start to hate other women and envy men. We live the lies, secrets, and silences described by Adrienne Rich in Translations:

You show me the poems of some women
my age, or younger
translated from your language

Certain words occur: enemy, oven, sorrow
enough to let me know
she's a woman of my time

obsessed

with Love, our subject:
we've trained it like ivy to our walls
baked it like bread in our ovens
worn it like lead on our ankles
watched it through binoculars as if
it were a helicopter
bringing food to our famine
or the satellite
of a hostile power

I begin to see that woman
doing things: stirring rice
ironing a skirt
typing a manuscript till dawn

trying to make a call
from a phonebooth

The phone rings unanswered
in a man's bedroom
she hears him telling someone else
Never mind. She'll get tired.
hears him telling her story to her sister

who becomes her enemy
and will in her own time
light her own way to sorrow

ignorant of the fact this way of grief
is shared, unnecessary
and political

SUSAN SPENCER

I felt as though my indoctrination into law would be as gradual as my decision to become a lawyer. I assumed it would be a continuation of my education. I'd go to class each day, take notes, come home to a neat house stocked with groceries, and settle down to a peaceful evening. I knew I would be a lawyer someday, but that was in the

hazy future. When I saw myself as a student it was simple. It had little to do with the finished product--being a lawyer.

My first taste of the Socratic method scared me. Yet, when I bought my books and leafed through the smooth, untouched pages I felt secure in the feeling that I would, after all, be only a student. I knew how to learn, to be a good student. I was confident that nothing else would be expected. As I drove to law school for the first day of classes I was confident and calm.

The first few weeks of law school were hell. Words and concepts were unfamiliar. It was hard to grasp the new method of analysis. As my classmates were interrogated in class, I wondered when it would be my turn. I was not ready to become involved. I had to read until my head hurt to be prepared for class. I had to be prepared to speak in class, even if I didn't feel like it.

I had the most difficulty adjusting to the intrusion of law school on my personal life. My thoughts, even when driving to school, were about law cases. I lost the ability to be spontaneous. Everything and everyone was relegated to a particular time-slot. No time was left for myself, for introspection.

It was hard to learn to "think like a lawyer." It required detachment from other people and circumstances. The analysis depended on abstract rules of law rather than an understanding of people. I was getting cues that other changes were expected. I was expected to be a recipient of knowledge, and become a sharp, analytical person who worried only about a summer job. The qualities emphasized were confidence and competitiveness.

The pressure affected me. I began to yield. I became competitive. Before my first set of exams I felt as though I knew so little, and merely prayed I would pass. Then when I found out that I passed, I felt dissatisfaction that I didn't do better. And then when I did well the second semester, I was upset when I realized that no one saw me as a threat. Friends would ask each other about grades, but no one asked me. People told me their grades and their problems. I began to feel like the welcoming committee, rather than a colleague. I realize now that my feelings were out of hand.

While part of me yielded to the competition, another part cried out in pain. I felt like a pancake in a waffle iron. I could not analyze facts without feeling. My mind

would wander when I needed to concentrate. I longed to be home rather than sitting in the library.

My discomfort turned to anger and disillusionment. I became angry at the system and at certain students who seemed swept up by it. I was also angry at myself for letting it get the best of me. I went through a longer period during my second year where I didn't feel I wanted to be a lawyer. The learning was becoming tedious; and I wasn't sure things would be more interesting when I got out. I became acutely aware of the moral sacrifices I'd have to make as a lawyer.

Law school has been stimulating. And it has helped instill personal strength. Speaking in class has made it easier for me to speak in small groups. It's now easier for me to express anger or dissatisfaction. My dissatisfaction with law school led to introspection, which gave me a better sense of what I want out of life.

I thought that professionalism would give new meaning to my life. In some ways that's true. I am stronger now, more assertive. I have become more self-centered in that I can now think of what I want as well as what others want. But my seeking professionalism has caused a new split in me. I feel as though my personal, "feeling" side is constantly being tugged on, eroded. It takes time and conscious effort to rebuild what has been lost or altered. Thus, instead of being the end of a search, law school has itself created a new search. I am no longer as confident in my detached center, seeing what is best for me. While it saw one side, it failed to adequately compensate for the other. But I feel a little unsettled again, as if my search for self has been renewed. Soon I will be a lawyer and a mother, as well as all that I was before. I am afraid that I will be defined by those new roles, by others as well as myself. I'm afraid I will lose touch with the personal. Maybe this realization is another way my rational core is simply deciding what is best for me as a person. At any rate, that person appears to be more complex than I once thought.

I was disillusioned in other ways about law school. I had no idea of what a sexist institution the law school would itself be. I felt that it would be equally challenging to all, with men and women getting the same opportunities to apply themselves. On the surface it is that way. But law school is subtle in its sexism. There is nothing or no one

that you can easily point your finger at. But the oppression is there.

Law has, of course, been traditionally a field occupied by men. While there has been an influx of women, the maleness remains. All of the qualities valued in a good lawyer are those more often identified as male. They are qualities such as aggressiveness, hardness, and rationality. Women, on the other hand, are usually seen as sensitive and sometimes hesitant--qualities that simply don't make a "good" lawyer. Moreover, they have to work to attain male-like qualities--and that is exactly what is expected of them. Women thus get the message that to fit in and be welcome in the male circle, we must leave our feminity behind. Thus, the oppression is overt. Some women feel that there are no barriers, strive to become men and reap all the benefits waiting for them. I have found myself getting angry at the prospect. I have the chance to attain the success that I've always strived for, and I'm not sure that I want it anymore. The oppression I've felt while in law school has made me re-evaluate my life.

First, I've come to recognize my driven nature. Law school is the perfect place for obsessive/compulsives, and would probably bring out that tendency in anyone with such a predisposition. I, of course, was certainly such a person. During my first year I began to realize that I was staying up late or getting up early to read just so I wouldn't be unprepared for class. It was as if the professors were gods who would call for my bodily sacrifice if I was disobedient. I was letting the personal side of my life be pushed to the side. While my desire to appease lessened along with my fear of law school, my desire to please remained. While I was driving myself, I'm sure that my father, mother, or society at large was always there in the background. In trying to defy sexist conclusions about my future or ability I was pushing myself further away from what I really cared about and towards something I was soon to find actually mattered little to me.

Law school has also made me see my self-deprecating side, as well as my obsession to uphold my "feminine" responsibilities. Of course law school itself fosters self-deprecation, for the system's aim is to strip away all confidence and feeling of self-worth. Perhaps it was my anger at that that made me see that I would have felt inferior anyway, that I would have always compared myself

unfavorably with others. And I also began to see my need to be a perfect housewife. As time got short, instead of letting something drop, I tried to stretch myself into a thinner line. I began to feel resentment towards my husband because I didn't feel he was helping me enough. What I finally came to realize was that my demands and expectations were too great. I simply couldn't, and shouldn't, do it all.

I am hoping now that these realizations will lead me to be a more integrated person. I do feel somewhat freed from sexism. It no longer drives me. I no longer want to be the most successful, the most busy. I'm not even sure at this point how I want to integrate law into my life. I really want to be happy above all else. And that means accepting myself as I am. It does not mean falling back on long-seen flaws and doing nothing. It simply means being involved in what I'm interested in, and letting that interest itself give me confidence. Part of being in touch with that interest also means allowing myself to be feminine--though no longer in a driven way. I truly love to cook, and sometimes clean. And I like being sensitive and emotional. I realize now, that those qualities aren't incompatible with work. Knowing this allows me freedom. Freedom from imprisonment in either the masculine or feminine worlds. Hopefully I will attain an androgenous self, my own self, through this freedom.

ANN SPANER

In my experience (personal and shared) the major recurring theme for women in law school is that we are up against something--something formidable. The women who have written about their law school experience describe what it is women are up against. For Barbara Jordan it was overcoming racial and class barriers. For Helen Schwartz it was overt sexism (now covert). Priscilla Fox and Anne Bloomdahl express a common fear and loathing of the process of legal education. Some of the criticisms could have been voiced by men--but most seemed to emanate from a feminine perspective. Men, as they enter law school, may feel they are up against the challenge of a demanding and rigorous professional discipline--with the concomitant promise of a lucrative career, prestige, and power. Women, while they share some of the vision of the payoff, can add

to the list of what they're up against: men.

Law is a male-dominated bastion. In order to maintain control over law (and thus much of life) men must man its institutions; the powerful corporate law firms, banks, industry, and government. These institutions are only beginning to allow women into the inner circle. Many men don't like it. It's not that they don't like women--or that they wouldn't want their daughter, sister, or woman friend to have access to a legal education, but they don't relish the idea of sharing control.

I see women's story of law school as one of struggle, pain, and perseverance. My own experience has been mixed--but what I remember and continue to experience most vividly is the agony.

When I started law school, the assigned readings were like a foreign language. Suddenly we were expected to have mastered the new tongue and to converse intelligently. The expectations exceeded my capabilities.

During the first few weeks of law school I cried a lot. I felt terribly alienated from everyone and everything going on around me. I had a fear of being co-opted. I still fear a slow, almost imperceptible daily process of co-optation as I finish law school. I cried not because I was tired from staying up late to do assignments or even from the embarrassment and humiliation of public displays of ignorance and imperfection. I cried because being in law school made me unhappy.

Occasionally the unhappiness would engulf me and swallow me whole. On one such occasion I went to the associate dean and admitted needing help. He made an appointment at the counseling service, and once a week for a year I talked to a counselor about how law school made me unhappy. I was able, through that process, to get back in touch with some of the reasons that brought me to law school. They were still there, still valid. But being surrounded by others whose reasons for attending law school are antithetical to my own, and getting caught up in the competitive furor and frenzy that they create made me lose sight of my own goals and how to go about achieving them.

I used to enjoy being a student, sitting up front of the classroom, raising questions. Throughout undergraduate school, being a woman seemed to be of no significance in the classroom. I have images of myself and other women

participating in classroom discussions as actively and meaningfully as men did.

That is not true of my experience as a law student. Being a woman adds to my fear and insecurity in the law school setting. Men may also be intimidated and uneasy, but it seems easier for them. There is an expectation that they can take it. The same expectation doesn't hold for women. Some women dropped out of law school in the first few months--I envy them.

As first-year law students we were told repeatedly to put aside childish, emotional feelings about right and wrong and begin to think coolly, rationally, and systematically about resolving disputes. I rebelled. I trust my emotions, not exclusively, because thinking and reasoning can enhance and augment an emotional response. I resent the attempt of law teaching to divorce our thoughts from our feelings. I appreciate that a reasoned, logical exposition of a position is more persuasive than a blubbing, sentimental outburst, unsubstantiated by fact or reason.

Law is a demanding and cerebral pursuit--but it need not exist exclusively in the head. The attempt to focus all energy on brain-functioning is one reason why I (dare I generalize to the others of my gender?) find legal education so provoking.

The "something" that I feel we (as woman law students) are up against is culture, socialization, economic and political reenforcement of the status quo. We are challenging the established order by attempting to infuse the legal profession with a feminist perspective--a perspective oppressed throughout history in the form of property law, family law, estate and gift law, and social welfare law. Women must demonstrate exceptional capabilities in order to be taken seriously in the business world. We must walk a very thin line to maintain our feminine identities while striving to win the respect of the men we call colleagues. It isn't easy to do both.

My experience in law school has reinforced a positive self-image. I've wanted to quit but have not. On the other hand, when I experience setbacks and disappointments in law school, I feel devastated.

There is something to be said for the struggle. I view it as an exercise in character building. Women who come to law school, by and large, are strong women. Many of us have a history of character-building, others come to law

school to build character. It's difficult, but exciting to receive confirmation that I can do it and that many other women can do it as well.

MICHELE WIDMER

Have you ever seen the children's movie, "Willie Wonka and The Chocolate Factory"? That movie reflects my first year of law school. Like Willie Wonka, I was a child in a candy factory. Everyday seemed like a new and more wonderful time. I was finally experiencing the dream I had sought for almost nine years. It was all a new experience, an experience I thoroughly enjoyed. But somewhere near the end of my second semester the magic wore off. I wasn't prepared for the next step. As I took that next step I felt myself falling. Down, down, I fell, sinking in the frustrations of law school.

First, my world outside law school greatly changed. I lost the feeling of being carefree. I was labeled by friends and peers as a woman in law school. Law school made me an oddity to the single men I met. I was encountered as either a threat or a challenge, but not a woman. I began to doubt my identity.

As far as my peers in law school were concerned, COMPETITION was the name of the game. The object of the game was to win. I found myself at war with male students. Men would ask about my job status, my grades, my comprehension of the subjects and anything else they could use for a comparison. No longer was I an individual, but a female to be conquered. I grew hard. I fought back. If it is a battle they want, then they might as well realize that they are up against a tiger.

It is obvious that law school and the people associated with it have frustrated me. However, the most distressing thing I have realized is that my entire personality has changed. I am not the same happy-go-lucky girl who walked in the doors two years ago. Yes, I am stronger and wiser. But I feel I have lost a sense of innocence that I long to retrieve, the belief and trust in other people that I once had. I'm a fighter now. Perhaps I've just grown up. I do know one thing--law school has ceased to be the dream world I once knew. It is now stark reality. Law school is no longer an education but a battle, a battle I am

determined to win.

CHRISTY FARRIS

My primary surprise in law school has been the lack of terror I was told I would experience. I haven't felt "Big Brother" every step of the way. I haven't felt the overwhelming sense of fear that was supposed to have permeated my being. But I did feel frustrated and sometimes defeated, in learning how to study again. Being out of academic life for five years hindered rather than helped. I had forgotten what it was like to read assigned material, rather than literature of my own choosing, to write about someone else's theories, and lose a good night's sleep thinking. It was difficult to concentrate for any length of time, so I filled the gaps by eating and watching TV sitcoms. I've analyzed, reasoned, and researched logistics for most of my adult life and suddenly found it all tedious. I guess my first honest feeling in being here was boredom. I had expected every class to inspire me, excite me, arouse me. I was told that law school would teach me how to "think like a lawyer." And initially I felt as if I were getting nothing else.

As those first few weeks and months dragged on, I gradually came to terms with myself and my new environment, and pulled myself out of that cynical rut. But I still felt isolated and alone somehow. I don't think it was because I was a female in a traditionally male-oriented program; at least forty per-cent of my class is female. To me this is simply a three year extension of college life.

Within the school, I've never felt inadequate because I am a woman. Outside the ivory tower is another matter. Old friends, former colleagues, some business associates, older family members all expressed "concern" with my pursuit. "It's so hard for a woman." "When are you going to settle down?" "Aren't you ever going to grow up?" "It's impossible to compete with a man." "Who ever heard of a successful female attorney?"

Then some of my closest friends began to tell me I was changing. I began mulling over each word and weighing its potential consequence before I spoke. I became pensive and moody. I became impatient with them when they didn't "come to the point" quickly enough to suit me. Yet when I

would relate an event, I became obsessed with details and tangential issues and was encouraged to "get to the point."

In the last few months, I've reordered my priorities. I have lost the cynicism that I came here with, and substituted healthy skepticism. I am inspired and excited again. I think that was born of being able to select the courses that interest me. I feel I've learned and, more important, I feel I've contributed.

DEBBY WHITE

What has it been like for me to be a law student? It has involved a total abdication of self. I mean that truly. "Law school is awful." For me it has been a series of "no-win" alternatives. It has been a time of continuous emotional dilemma, of life situations with no acceptable alternatives. Law school has also involved a real struggle to make time to spend with my daughter. I have made a conscious choice to sacrifice my grades because my daughter comes first.

Being a woman law student is different because of the demands made upon my out-of-class time. Every week, I have to do the grocery shopping, the laundry, the cleaning. The stark reality of the situation hit me last year as I observed a close male friend in the third-year class. He took his laundry to the cleaners, he ate out almost every day, he cleaned his apartment once a semester. I was envious of the time and energy he had available to devote to classes and to extra-curricular activities.

I remember the first time I met him. He asked me what I did (He already knew I was a law student because I had bought a used case book from him.) My reply was something like, "Nothing else, that's it. I feel guilty enough being away from home as much as I am now. I simply can not justify being away another minute." I wonder--would any man have said that? Being a woman law student means I've made sacrifices, sacrifices which will make me less competitive in the job market. In an interview for a job last year, a job that I really wanted, the interviewer looked at my grades and said, "We don't accept anyone who is not in the top half of their class. Therefore, we could not even consider you."

I can't write this story without relating my experience

in Cady's Torts class. The first day of class, Cady ripped two women to shreds. One of them dropped out at the end of the first week. He called on me five times that semester. I was called on to recite more times than any other person. (Cady picks on women.) I was surprised I could even speak, I was so scared. It was "baptism by fire and intimidation." The third time he called on me I gave the correct answer. After that he would fire a question and I responded with the correct answer. I matched him answer for question. Was that a good feeling! Nevertheless, the last class he literally crucified me. He interrogated me for 45 minutes non-stop. He reduced me to a blubbing idiot. After it was over, I remember thinking that I was glad it had happened the last day instead of the first.

By the end of the first semester, I had developed coping mechanisms. I learned to look at law school as a game. If you stick it out, just on sheer intestinal fortitude, at the end of the game they give you your degree, as is the reward for playing the game.

I was not prepared for the trauma Jim Elkins aptly labels "the pathology" of law school. Not having any relatives or close friends who attended any professional school, I honestly had no expectations of the impact of law school upon my life. I do remember wondering if I had the intellectual capacity to "make it" here and some anxiety over how time-consuming school would be. I had been out of school for seven years and completely out of touch with academia. Looking back, I think I was just ignorant of the changes law school would make upon my life.

Because of my ignorance, I was totally unprepared for the harsh realities of law school. One of the realities is the competitiveness and the consuming drive to make the "A" at whatever cost. In pursuit of "A's," students hoard outlines and hide hornbooks. It doesn't end there. Moot court turns perfectly civilized human beings into sheer animals. Those people make me so angry I want to shout at them. Is this place totally void of altruism? Is my class populated by a generation of egotists?

After grades came out first semester, I was depressed and overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and inadequacy. I went home and unplugged my phone for three days. I didn't want to explain to my mother or anyone else that I had barely escaped academic probation. When I plugged my phone in, the first call I got was from my sister. She

called to tell me that my mother was in the hospital and scheduled for surgery the next morning and where the hell had I been for three days? (Another reason to do some guilt-tripping.)

I'm still battling my feelings of inadequacy about grades. When grades came out first semester second year, I was so depressed I couldn't study for three weeks. During this time, I had my first legal job interview. I was getting positive feedback from the interviewer when he asked me what my class rank was. I told him. He responded, "I'm sorry but we don't consider anyone who isn't in the top half of their class." The interview ended abruptly.

Now I wonder. "So what if I graduate, I'll never find a job because of my grades." It's hard to psyche yourself up for interviewing. I also felt anxious about what the hell I'm gonna do when I graduate. Certainly nobody is willing to help me deal with that anxiety.

Law school teaches women to extinguish sensitive, empathic, caring behavior and to replace it with cold, analytical, problem-solving ability. Legal education sanctifies thinking over feeling, technique over tenderness. Last week, one of my classmates said to me, "I am immediately suspect of anyone who begins a sentence with 'I feel.'" Doesn't he realize that there is a world beyond casebooks and judicial decisions?

I get angry when I think about the lack of support systems, such as the nonexistent child care. I also get angry when I think about the total lack of practical knowledge in legal education. When I went to work in the summer, it was six weeks before I knew what I was doing. I was definitely more of a liability than an asset. My boss kept saying to me, "Don't they teach you anything at that law school?"

Like Mark Twain, I sometimes wonder whether what I have gained has been worth what I've lost in learning my trade.

FRAN HUGHES

Law school, on the whole, is a demeaning experience. Worth is measured by your class-standing. Conversations are one-dimensional. I would like to transcend the usual attempts at conversation and exchange some meaningful

dialogue with fellow students.

One particularly irritating experience has been having teachers close to my own age judge my intellectual ability solely on my knowledge of the law. Just because they know more about the law does not mean they are more intelligent. Most conversations with faculty members are limited to the discussion of law, which sets me up in an inferior position. I would appreciate having a conversation with the faculty about subjects on which we are on equal footing.

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It is difficult for me to admit that I want to be a lawyer, because I don't want to be a lawyer, accepting a job just to launch my career, but I want to be a particular kind of lawyer, a good, really good, criminal attorney. I wonder why I cannot ever use the word great. I have never put myself to the test of greatness. I always have a handy excuse for failure. For some reason, it is easier and less insulting to the ego to fail without trying, than to have tried and failed.