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Feb 8, 1994 6:39 p.m. Don is laying in bed beside me with one of his "sick headaches." He gets one every two or three months. He gets sick, throws up, and can't hardly speak due to the pain. No doctor has been able to tell him what it is or what we can do to prevent it. He can't work through one, which bothers him more than the pain, so his only choice is to try and sleep it off.

I think its stress related. He had a busy and stressful day. At 6 am until 7:30 am he was on the phone telling Richard, Danny, D. and D's brother and Tony what to do for the day. He fed the hoofstock, checked on the cats, ate breakfast, and left for Newport Richey by 9:30. He checked out a foreclosure, looked at it and got outbid by 11:30. He recorded a deed, picked up cat and llama food and met with a very rich, very hateful and very stupid competitor at Wendell Williams urging. Don and this guy often bid against each other because he won't work with us. I don't know how successful the meeting was, but Don said the guy wants to buy all of our rentals in St. Pete that don't have lease options on them. I wonder how anyone so dumb ever became rich and powerful? St. Pete is being completely overtaken with the worst kind of vermin and renters are the lowest sub-specie.

Don has had a hard time of letting go of three "deals" in bad areas, but he is coming to realize that they are so labor intensive they quickly cost more than they are worth. A typical case is a duplex on Columbus Dr. in Ybor. He bought it for \$2500.00 and rented out each side for \$150.00/month for two years. The numbers are great but Don takes eviction notices by almost every month. It takes time to type them, serve them and follow up with filing suit (my part), but the part that makes this unbearable is that the area is so dangerous no one will deliver the notices except Don. He is the last person who should even drive thru these areas. With his fair skin and blonde hair and slight build he is just screaming to be mugged. I've been begging him to get out of these death traps even if he has to give them away. He sold the duplexes I just mentioned for a little more than he paid for them. He's sold a dozen of these little junk heaps in the past year, and only bought two, one of which was pre-sold.

Don's mother once told him that his father was happiest when he was surrounded by mongrels in the midst of a junkyard. I wonder how much is genetic and how much of Don's similar behavior is due to wanting to follow in his father's footsteps. I can only guess what it was like to be raised by a single, crippled woman, having no father and no known "history". The only other picture of his father Don has shared with me was again, portrayed by his mom. She told Don his father was a drunk, so lacking in ambition that the only real job he ever had was to drive the horse drawn hearse out to the burial ground,

because the horse knew the way and he could drink himself to sleep. I wonder why she, a hard working and well liked member of a small town community, decided in 1937 to have a baby out of wedlock with him, in a time when women just didn't do that sort of thing.

Don is more than just another pretty face. He is the ultimate charmer. He has held my heart in the palm of his hand for the entire 13 years I've known him. I've loved him at times when a sane woman would've walked away and never looked back. Could this be Don's father's one great attribute? Drunks are often geniuses who can't cope with the small thinking of their time. Don is a genius. Everyone, even people who don't want to like him, all agree that he has a unique and enviable mind. I think his father was a much better man than anyone ever gave credit. I wish I'd known his parents better, so that I could understand him more.

* He does come by his slovenliness honestly, but even that he is trying to curb. Little by little he's hauling the broken down equipment out of our yard and out of our lives. I love him so much.

Feb 10, 8:45 p.m. Don's looking thru the Hot Sheet for deals and I'm so tired I didn't want to write. Little Feather, a 9 month old Bobcat is in a lovey-dovey mood, and won't leave me alone. Bobcat love is a dangerous thing. They purr, and knead and push their head against you just like a cat, but it's just an irresistible Bobcat sort of urge to bite. Even our tamest kittens will bite in their painfully loving way.

There is so much work in getting this place into shape. My mother saw the house Monday for the first time in several weeks and said, "This place is living proof that if you have enough money you can make anything livable." The most recent stage has been landscaping, so each day, when I finish my work, I've been planting ferns, philodendrons, bird of paradise, and transplanting pines. Don always says to have his crew do that sort of thing, but I enjoy yard work and vent a lot of anger and frustration in the yard. I try to use plants that are already here to keep the cost down and keep it looking natural. I love the natural, tropical paradise of this place.

Feb. 11, 1994 Jamie's wanted cable TV ever since we left the condo in Mar. of 1991, but Don has blown off her requests. The Cable Company was running a special on installation, \$9.95 with a \$38.00 a month charge for the channels she wants. She loves the old re-runs of Father Knows Best, Leave it to beaver and other 60's staples. She often asks me why I can't be like the TV moms who stay home with an apron on and serve big sit-down dinners. The women's movement sure left husbands and children out in the cold.

Don's often told me that he knows he's too cheap and that it's better that he doesn't know what I spend. He's never asked to see my

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checkbook and only once asked to see my Visa statement. Every charge on it was business or vet bills so he never asked me again. He knows that I can't spend too much, because his weekly check of \$518.28 is all I get to deposit. Sometimes I feel angry at being restricted because I do half the work, at least. I never have the time to goof off like he does. I don't spend much anyway. That's not the issue. It's a matter of recognition and respect. I don't get much of either.

At any rate, Don's been foaming at the mouth all day. Any other Friday, he'd be out looking at equipment and fooling at equipment and fooling around with his junk-yard buddies all day, but today he came home long enough to drop off a dog he found and eat lunch. He asked who was paying for it and I told him Jamie agreed to feed all the animals 6 days a month. He has ranted and raved and threatened all evening. I feel so overwhelmed by him, all I can do is cry and try to stay out of his way. I try to explain myself, but it really doesn't matter to him what I feel or what I say. I try to make him think for himself, but I don't believe he does.

I ask him "Do I demand that you behave in a certain way and punish you with restrictions or threats if you don't?" His response was that he's raised his children to be responsible adults and that it is his duty to see that Jamie is raised in the same hard-working atmosphere. I resist the urge to point out that his son is about to be fired by us because he's a thief and too lazy to even discuss. I don't mention the fact that Lynda's paid \$250.00 a week to do only a few hours worth of logging figures into a computer. I don't mention Donna who's a drug addict and sits home painting nails, and I especially didn't mention his favorite daughter Gale, whose never worked a day in her life. Instead I asked him why he feels it's his responsibility to raise Jamie like his children were raised and he begins raving about "As long as she's under my roof she's going to live by my laws!"

This brings me back to the issue of respect. Why do I work so hard? I'm not allowed to give nice things to my daughter. Don really hates it if I buy nice gifts for my family. And I'm not allowed to have nice things myself. My jewelry is from yard sales, my clothes are from Goodwill and I work from daylight to dark. I love Don very much. I wish he loved me as much.

Feb. 14, 1994 7:25 p.m. Valentine's Day and I'm being loved to death by a Bobcat. Raindance has a coat like water spotted silk and a personality to match. Only her mate, Bob martin, was sweeter. He died a few weeks ago from Lippadosis and Raindance still holds on by a hope and a prayer. I loved Bob martin and mourn his passing.

Bob Martin came by his name as an inside joke. We bought him from a furrier when he was only a few days old. He was being raised

3 daughters
1 son(?)
Danny

DA

by a house cat and was unrelated to all the other kittens we bought from Tom Kavan. Danny Lewis wanted a pair of kittens to raise, so I selected him and a female (Raindance) from a litter of five, hoping she would be predisposed to large litters. Neither were exceptional looking kittens, but Bob was fat as a butterball.

Five months later Danny was separated from his wife Janice and brought the cats back to us. We couldn't believe these were the same two cats. They were maturing into so much better cats then we could ever imagine. They didn't have names so we named the female -

pages missing

Meeting Don

"This man is going to kill me, and I don't even care." I'd always been weird about not letting people touch me, especially around my throat but I didn't flinch. He rubbed my shoulders much to my surprise.

Later on he took me to a cheap motel frequented by truckers and prostitutes. He promised not to try anything and I agreed to go. He barricaded the door, brushed his teeth and was getting ready for bed. Not wanting to get anything started, I didn't undress. He assured me that he wouldn't look, or touch, but I didn't believe him. He dug out his baggy pajamas and offered them to me. I felt ridiculous but was more comfortable in them. I fell in love with him then and there.

He was true to his word and we did not have sex. I'd never been treated this way before. No one had ever cared about me without wanting something in return. I went home in the early morning.

Don let me out a couple blocks from my house at my request. I gave him my phone number. Within half a block a big ugly man in a station wagon with a shotgun ordered me into his car. I was still dancing on clouds and didn't know what to do. The big burly man pointed the gun at me and ordered me into the car.

From behind the car Don told me to run. He was on foot and had his gun out. He told the man to move on and hollered at me again to run. The man in the car began to drive off and I ran home.

After that Don and I began seeing each other once or twice a week, and he called everyday for hours at a time. I even knitted a cushion for the earpiece of his phone. I loved him so much. He told me if I needed him in an emergency I could call where he worked and asked Anne to go get Bob Martin. I tried not to call unless I had to.

He called me from home one weekend using conversation to sound like a business call. I'd never heard any such thing before and was terrified. I thought he was being held for ransom and was scared to death. He couldn't give me a straight answer because there were

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others in the room, but he knew he had scared me and called me back later to assure me he was ok.

There was an old, beat up trailer on the lot where he worked, and this is where we would get together. I'd park in a large store lot, where Don would pick me up and I'd lay on the floor until we drove in the back of the lot. I thought I was hiding from his boss.

One day I called and Mary answered the phone. Anne wasn't there, so I asked for Bob Martin. Mary acted confused and asked me to describe him. I said he was about 6', Blonde hair, blue eyes, and was the lot boy for Don Lewis. She began laughing and said that no one there was named Bob Martin and that I had just described Don Lewis.

The next time I saw him I asked him why he had not been truthful with me. He said he wanted to be loved for the man he was inside and that when women knew how rich he was he never knew if they loved him or his money. In my case, he was sure that my move was pure, because I loved him even though I believed him to be poor.

It was a long time before I knew just how rich and powerful he was. This past year was the closest I've come to knowing just how well off we are. It was a long time before I could get used to calling him Don instead of Bob. Years later when Mary Young & I lived together, she knew about how we met and always referred to him as DonBob. She even named our puppy that Don gave us, D-B.

Falling in love with Bob Martin turned out to be much better than I originally thought. The same was true of the BobCat and thus the name. I sure miss him. Little did I know, all those years ago, how wonderful my life with Don/Bob would someday be. Today closed with no card or flowers, but with many beautiful memories.

Feb 17, 1994 7:00 p.m. Don is on the bed next to me re-webbing a net. The news clip just came on telling cat owners to beware of cat scratch fever. I wish that were all we had to worry about. Yesterday, we called Dr. Garcia who couldn't come out until today, about a little kid who died yesterday. It seems there's a virus going through the flock causing still births, and the death of baby goats.

Morgan, our oldest cougar, and Rupa, our newest Caracal, haven't eaten in three days and won't come out of their dens. Dr. Stacie Wadsworth came out and told me we have an airborne virus going through the cats. This is the worst news I ever thought I'd hear. There are no symptoms until the cat quits eating. Once they quit eating, you can't medicate them. We have over 60 big cats right now, 26 of which can not be handled. Any sick cat requires 3 shots a day, which is going to be a real challenge on a cat we can't touch.

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I love these guys so much! I hate the illness going through them. They all need their shots and ears treated, so we'll do it all at the same time. This will be a hard week ahead. I've prayed and prayed, and god has shown the answer, but he's going to make me work for it. I don't mind the work, I don't mind the work, but I don't like my cats feeling bad.

We nearly completed a larger Lemur pen and a walk-in pen for the ring-tailed cats. Now all they need are doors. This has been so crowded. We're blessed not to have had more illness than we have.

A taxidermist used the phrase "I'm so mad I could whip my weight in Wildcats." I didn't know how mad that would be until it took 4 experienced adults to hold down a 15 lb., tame Caracal. Don used a catchpole very well today. At dinner he admitted that it was the first time he'd ever used it. No fear. He didn't have the good sense to fear flying and it nearly killed him. He has no natural fear of these animals. Fortunately none of ours are big enough to kill him.

Feb 20, 1994. If "some days are diamonds and some days are stones" then yesterday and today were diamonds. Last night at 5:30, I slumped down on the ground where Don was finishing up a walk-in cage for the ring-tailed cats and he asked "How tired are you?" to which I responded "I'm tired, I'm very tired. Why, what kind of screwball thing are you wanting to do now?" Don never runs out of energy. What he wanted, and what he did, was to take me to the Outback Steakhouse for a wonderful, romantic meal. He even waited 45 minutes to get a table, but in typical "Don-like" fashion he managed to get us a "bloomin onion" appetizer to eat while we waited.

Today, Sunday, was a very productive day. We separated 2 male bobcats, which were very unhappy next to each other. We moved 2 lynx girls who hated each other AND we had our first litter of baby Servals born here. Don loves the Servals more than any others. Morgan & Rupa are doing much better, and I believe, with god's help, will all live through this virus.

Feb. 28, 1994 Don's more interested in a Kung Fu movie than planning his estate. Death is something no one likes to talk about, especially there own, but Don takes inconsiderateness to a higher art form. I don't like conflict. I like to plan ahead and make sure that the "machine" can plod along without me. I like to plan trips, make reservations, have health certificates a week in hand before, have sitters and pet keepers and everything and everyone all lined up.

Don, on the other hand, will announce at 4:30 in the afternoon that he needs the vet to make an emergency call for the health papers and then we're hopping in the van to drive all night to be at a auction in Ohio the next day. If I weren't so flexible, we wouldn't get along at all.

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He's been in a rotten mood all day. The workers have hid from him all day, Anne was nearly in tears after a couple hours of him and was glad to see him leave after lunch, and after a long morning of going over his year end figures. The books say our assets equal 5 mil and our own net income was over 500K. We haven't had an oven that works in 3 months. Our dryer falls open unless we flip a crude bar, screwed to the front. I get the third degree for buying chicken when "we have all that good chicken" bought to feed to the exotics.

I'm happy to see just how well we were doing. I work hard and take no time to enjoy myself. The least I'm entitled to is to momentarily enjoy looking at the year end report. The same good news makes Don go ballistic. He pouts and sulks and accuses the rest of us (Anne & Lynda) of lying to him, misrepresenting his net worth and screwing up his books. He says there's no way he's worth that much, no way he's made that much, and most importantly, no way he owes that much in income taxes.

He wears yard sale clothes, drives an old rusted out van, eats out of dumpsters and will drive clear across town to save a penny @ gallon on diesel. ? "I have no desire to live the high life, but I would like to live as well as our poorest tenants. I work hard enough to deserve it."

I try to draw Don out to understand him better, but he doesn't communicate well, or doesn't want to, or doesn't care....who knows?

The Serval kittens are doing great. We will pull them Wed. to hand raise as tame, loving pets. I spent the afternoon gathering the myriad of kitten rearing supplies. I'm looking forward to having babies in the house again, but dreading the every two-hour bottle schedule and all of the anxiety.

Last week was busy. Thursday I wormed 60 cats. Friday, Don, Danny and D. held down 21 of the big cats while I vaccinated and treated all their ears for mites. Saturday Jamie held 12 domestic cats and the bobcat Little Feather while I vaccinated and treated ears. There's still 27 left that I'll need at least two assistants with. I'm glad this only has to be done twice a year.

March 10, 1994 Thurs. 8:21 p.m. There is much tension in the air. I feel so fidgety I'm just coming unglued. Don got very mad that I was gone all day. That's what he said his problem was but I find it hard to believe. I'm often gone all day. We're both work-a-holics and it hasn't been an issue in 4 years so what was different about today? I accounted for every minute I was gone, highlighting the fact that for the first time in four years I took almost a whole hour to shop around a statuary & nursery that I've always wanted to see, but never took the time.

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I felt guilty enough taking this precious hour to myself, but to come home and be treated like an unfaithful spouse was enough to make me cry. Don hasn't been able to sleep for the last couple weeks. He had to feed kittens 2 days in a row because I've been researching Polk County tax deeds for us and I guess the combination of responsibility and sleep deprivation have overcome his good sense. Surely he knows that I would never bring shame to our marriage. How can he live with me day in and day out and not know that God lays the rules out for me, and that I follow those rules, no matter what Don's influence.

Two springs ago, Don, Jamie and I were buying fancy chickens from a man in East Tampa on LoCicero. A scrawny, cream tabby kitten cried her way into Jaime's heart. He said it was a stray so we took her home, cleaned and fattened her up and Jamie named her Breezy. She grew into a beautiful and loving cat and last summer she helped me raise Little Feather.

She lived in the cat yard here at Easy Street, until Jamie got settled in. She'd stay with Jamie and then beg to be let in the cat yard, and then beg to go back. She always wanted to be where Jamie was, and Jamie wasn't around, then she wanted to be with Little Feather. **Sunday, Breezy was in the cat yard and begging to go back to Jamie's house.** I asked Jamie to take her back but she said she wanted to leave her there a day or two to see if that might break her of going back and forth, and I agreed.

Monday, as I went out to feed, I saw Breezy begging at the fence. Thirty minutes later as I was returning I saw all of the Servals gathered around and Fluffy was pulling Breezy by the paw. I dropped the wheelbarrow and ran screaming to the fence. Breezy's head was caught in the chain link. Her eyes were open but blood was trickling from the corner of her mouth. The Serval dropped her paw and as I scanned the circle of cats my eyes fell on Little Feather who was sitting next to Breezy. My eyes welled up as I saw this pitiful expression on her face that desperately pleaded with me to save her "mom".

I couldn't free Breezy who was hanging there motionless. I ran around to the inside of the fence to see if there was anyway to free her. By this time, Don, who had heard me screaming, had reached the outside of the fence.

As I picked Breezy up, I realized that she wasn't breathing and her gaze was fixed. It took both Don & I to push, pull and stretch the links to get her head untangled. Apparently, she had pushed her head through one link and when she couldn't pull her ears back through, tried to push forward thru another link. When she couldn't get her ears back thru the second link she probably felt the pressure on her windpipe and panicked, breaking her neck.

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When we freed her from the fence, I carried her into the cat room (a room of our house adjoining the cat yard) and put her on the counter. She wasn't breathing, her heart had stopped, but her tongue was still pink. Her neck didn't have any strength to it. I held my mouth over hers and over the nose. I gave short, quick breaths in until I could hear a noise something like when you blow lightly into a balloon. I pressed up and down on her side just under her arm, but she grew paler and paler.

I had revived newborn kittens who were stuck in the birth canal too long, but had never given CPR to an adult before. I was stunned to lose her. I felt that I did all I could, but it wasn't enough. I see her, hanging in that fence, every time I shut my eyes. I see it even when I blink. I can see her hanging there every time I walk by the fence, which is probably 10 times a day.

I've lost precious pets before, but Breezy haunts me like no other. I wrapped her in a pillowcase and called Jamie. I would rather have buried her and waited a few days to tell Jamie to distance the blow, but I thought she may think the exotics had killed her if she doesn't have the chance to look her over. I had yelled at the Servals when I first came upon the scene, but in retrospect, I think they were trying to pull her out of the fence. They had not punctured her skin and they seemed genuinely concerned.

The first thing Jamie said was "It's all my fault, I should've..." I told her it was not her fault and that no one could move Breezy every time she wanted to be moved, and that she could have done it from either side of the fence. It's been four days and Jamie is still crying and blaming herself. I keep reassuring her that there's nothing she could have done to prevent this. I try to cheer her by reminding her that breezy had a very good two years. She was never sick or hungry or hurt or scared and a lot of cats would trade their long unhappy lives for the two great ones breezy had shared with us. We'll all miss her.

March 11, 1994 Friday 8:17 p.m. Don's next to me with the 2 leopard cubs in a carrier in his lap, feeding them sliced chicken from a spoon. They're only 11 weeks old and were very tame, but they didn't make the move well. Few exotics do. I hope we can re-tame them. They are so gorgeous.

Don has been so mean lately that it seems like I'm always crying. Tonight I wanted to make things nice for him when he came home. I had fed the cats and went in to boil lobster, because I don't have an oven. When Don came in I told him that I couldn't get the Lift of Stay filed because the debtors attorney had given me bad case numbers and had failed to provide a mailing matrix. He got mad and told me he was fed up with me because I always screw everything up.

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Escape of Sundance

I've been chained to my desk in a corner all day, interrupted only by feeding his kittens every four hours. He didn't help until the 7pm feeding. I put in a hard nine-hour day. I'm tired and lonely and too depressed to even keep writing.

March 21, 1994 8:35 p.m. Jamie has had a hard year. Don and I were late coming in last Thursday from the auto auction. We had to bring the leopards and Raindance the bobcat in, but our usual gate was closed off due to wet paint so we had to use a far gate with no safety entrance. It was dark and we were working by flashlight, Don had two carriers and I was walking Little Feather and Glory who were crowding the gate, but did not see Sundance who scooted out of the gate under the shadow of one of the carriers. We could not get close enough to net her, so we set the humane traps and waited for the morning light.

I let Jamie stay home the next day because Sundance, or "Bobcat" as Jamie calls her - is her favorite. Only Jamie can hold her or even pet her and I think her obvious preference of Jamie is what endeared her, so tonight Jamie said she can't "feel" her here anymore. I began feeling that way yesterday. I don't want to give up on her. I keep praying and advised Jamie to do the same. She asked if god is punishing her, but I told her that god doesn't punish until judgement day. She asked if Satan was allowed to punish us and I explained Job and how Satan has the power to inflict great pain and sorrow in an attempt to tempt us to curse god or lose faith. I told her there may be a lesson to learn here, but that I hadn't figured it out yet. She asked me to clue her in if I do.

I'm not happy with the way I look. For 3 months I've been on a vitamin/diet regimen that has made me feel better, but I haven't lost any weight because I'm not exercising as I should. Yesterday I walked a mile in 18 minutes. Tonight I shoveled 7 wheelbarrow loads of mulch and planted 21 impatiens. Then I ate a pizza. Now I feel guilty, fat and ache like nobody's business. It's a vicious cycle, but I'm going to break it. This time - it's for me.

March 30, 1994 I bought a hammock. I knew I'd never have time to use it, but I hoped that seeing it might bring a little peace into my life. It's 10:05 in the morning. Don is in surgery to repair the tear duct he obliterated in his plane crash from a few years back and 6 blocks away in an oxygen tent at the vets office our 5 week old Serval kitten Tribal Princess is gasping for life. Before leaving the house this morning Don fired his son Danny and demanded return of all his vehicles, tools and equipment. Danny's been stealing from him and the other workers and is emotionally retarded. He has a horrible attitude and is as lazy as they come, but he's kind to the animals and I like him. Tracy says Danny reminds him of his own problems while

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growing up and working with his father. He says Danny can't go on to be a man while he's still a little boy looking for praise from his father.

I suggested to Don that he find good in Danny and to tell him he loves him, but Don doesn't know how to love. He says he loves me more than he has ever been able to love anyone, and I believe it. Some people just have a hard time expressing love, but Don has a hard time feeling it.

God presents us with lessons, daily, and I think all these animals are here to teach Don how to love. It's been a gradual process, beginning with the pheasants, chickens, peafowl and swans, where Don started learning to put the needs of a live animal ahead of his own. The raccoons, squirrels and foxes taught him patience in dealing with animals who don't think like him. The exotic cats seem to be teaching him that life is more important than money and that the money we have is well spent in providing comfort for others.

I see love in his face as he's giving a midnight bottle to a kitten. I see love in his face as he rushes a sick cat to the vet. His favorite daily ritual is to give every cat a little "treat" each morning. The whole world can just stop until he's had his morning time with his cats. Maybe one day he will be able to love his own kind.

@ 10:10 p.m. - Please Lord, no more days like today! I paid Don's bill as he was going into the recovery room because I knew he'd be in a hurry to go home. It was 10:30 am. I asked if I could sit with him while he woke up and was obliged. When I reached his room he looked dead and had knocked his oxygen mask off. The attendant snapped it back on and left the room.

Don's breathing was so shallow that I couldn't even detect it. No fog on the mask, no movement of his body, his jaw would drop down like a fish gasping but his chest & stomach did not move. He was cold and clammy and blue. Instinctively, I said "BREATHE!!" and he did about 3 times and then he'd regress. I tried breathing with him, holding my breath when he didn't breathe to make sure I wasn't over reacting. I wasn't. No one can live on so little air. For 3 hours I told him to breathe. That's good - you're doing good and each time he heard me, or I shook him, or I squeezed his hand he would breathe. If I stopped - he stopped.

Don had told the Dr. that he couldn't take much anesthesia, but when I came in to talk to the Dr. after surgery he said he had to throw in everything but the kitchen sink to put Don under. I knew then we were in trouble. The doctor left us there with a hostile receptionist and a rude nurse.

I was afraid to say anything about Don's condition for fear they'd pump him full of drugs to wake him up and really mess him up. I

figured as long as talking and handling him was keeping him breathing, it was the safer route.

As Don started coming around he called for me over and over. I assured him I was there. He kept saying "Something's wrong, I can't remember to breathe, something's goofy, I'm getting farther away..." I'm scared enough and he's adding to it. Sometimes he'd ask how our Serval was doing, did she drink her milk, can she breathe?" He kept asking me to describe the place where he was, the walls, the bed, where the phone was. I hope for Don's sake there are phones in heaven!

April 5, 1994 7:20 p.m. Jamie and her two friends Mike & Lisa are all at a Christian Skating Party. My early diaries virtually revolve around Christian Skating Parties of my childhood. It was the highlight of my month. I loved to skate and my mother took me to everyone. She'd sit there for hours crocheting or reading, occasionally skating herself, and then she'd listen to me babble on and on all the way home. We used to laugh until we cried. She was the perfect mother and I tell her so, but not near enough.

The first time a boy held my hand was during a "couples skate". The first date I was allowed out on was with the same boy, Ch? McGuire. When I ran away from home at 15 it was with an employee of the skating rink where we had the Christian skating parties. It's been over 20 years ago since those innocent days where has my whole life gone. Days, weeks, months go rushing by, but I can't account for the time. I'm so sad and lonely.

April 9, 1994 11:45 p.m. When we feed the kittens we put them in deep buckets of hay to keep track of who's eating what. Last night Don left Shatia, a year old Canadian Lynx in our bedroom just before feeding time. I've explained to him dozens of times that letting cats in the same room with kittens is what causes all the illnesses we've been treating, and he acts like he understands but the next day, sometimes within an hour, he'll do it again. I try so hard not to speak down to him but last night as Shatia climbed into one of his buckets while we were feeding, I lost my composure and said "Get her out of there!" Don's reply sounded like the voice of a little boy on the defensive; "There's no kitten in that bucket." With all the restrain I could muster I explained for the umpteenth time about germs and fleas and disease being spread by allowing the big cats in. He began screeching at me saying that I don't approve of anything he does. I don't like the car he drives or the car he gives me to drive. I don't like the way he cages animals. I don't like the fact that he travels without me. (most of this is true.) When we finished feeding the kittens I went to my office to work on the piles of legal work and record keeping he dumps on me.

The work needed doing and I needed time to gather my composure before I said a lot of things I'd regret.

It was almost midnight and I had calmed down and had done about all I could when I heard Don drop the iron bar across our bedroom door, locking me out. I didn't think much of it because our sliding glass door to the cat yard is always unlocked and I could get in through there. For the first time in 6 months he'd locked that door. I slept in my office.

For the next few days Don was hateful, if not completely ignoring me. Sometimes he can be very difficult to be with. I still can't help but love him.

April 19, 1994 8:36 p.m. Tuesday. Don stayed gone tonight until after I'd fed the cats and the kittens, just in time for dinner. We've been back on good terms for quite a while now, but he still seems to enjoy sticking me with all the work. He leaves in the middle of the day and as soon as he goes all production around here stops. The 2 newest workers spent 3 hours on a 30 minute job, and D stood in a field leaning on a shovel until he'd catch sight of me, then he'd swing it towards the ground a couple of times. I have way too much to do to baby-sit his goons while he's gone.

I've enjoyed working on this video we're making called "Exotic Cats as Housepets" but I'm in the audio dubbing phase and can't get enough peace and quiet to finish it. At 6:30 am we're up feeding kittens, by 7:30 am there are workers wondering thru the house. At 8:00 I take Jamie to school and at 8:30 Don and I eat. We have no privacy and a dwindling love life. He's on the phone all day, all night, and now, talking cats.

May 7, 1994 8:59pm The cats are fed, the weeds are pulled, my work is caught up and I even got a letter off to Sandy Witkopp, and the phone rings and its someone looking for Don, who's in the shower.

On April 22, 1994 GRC MiCarCo's I won the toss died in her sleep in the kitchen cabinet (her favorite place to sleep) She was 10 years old and has been with me thru the best and worst of my life. Her mother was a blue cream Himalayan named Colorama/Kaledi? And her father was Citation who was owned by my friend Marge at the time of the breeding. There were three kittens in the litter; a breathtaking show stopping seal point, her nearly as good seal point sister and an ugly black male. Marge and I decided to toss a coin for pick of the litter, and I won. I named mine "I Won the Toss" and Marge named hers "I Lost the Toss". They competed against each other often in the show ring and Marge and I really enjoyed stumping the judges. The two kittens hit the show circuit in kitten classes at about 4 months and after washing Toss for a show one day I put her in one of the cattery pens to dry while I washed some more cats. The cattery pens were 8'

tall, 4' wide and 2' deep and had 2 shelves and a window to the outside. (The cattery was AC and heated) Sopping wet, Toss had been in her typical "I hate cages" behavior, but I didn't pay too much attention to her because I knew she'd only have to stay in there long enough for me to wash a couple more cats. I saw her go skidding off the top shelf because after slopping water all over the shower-board surface it was slick, but she climbed right back up there so I didn't think much of it. The next morning she was frantic as usual over her food, but she wasn't opening her mouth, The only food she would ever eat is Iams dry and she was pushing her face in it, but wasn't eating. I tried to look in her mouth but couldn't pry it open, but I took blood and stool samples and got 2 vets who said they'd never seen anything so bizarre. One wanted to put her to sleep to autopsy her in eager anticipation of naming some new disease after herself. Toss was treated for muscle atrophy and I kept her in a sling inside my shirt day and night for 6 months while she grew, but got no better.

With a syringe I could squeeze pureed Iams and baby food into the side of her mouth. I fed her a little, very often, because I feared her vomiting and choking. For six months I carried my cat/child and worried the whole time. None of our other cats caught this mysterious disease and the vets agreed there was no virus, so I kept her in show condition, often taking best of breed ribbons. I cried every time she won thinking I could lose her any day to this insidious malady.

Jamie was four years old and I decided to try the last possible thing. The Vet College in Gainesville agreed to let me stay with her while they'd poke and prod and try to figure her problem out. They requested her x-rays from when she first went to the vets, the week before she and I were to go to Gainesville. A man who went over the x-rays found a hairline fracture in the jaw and sent me to a vet in St. Pete. This vet re-broke the jaw and told me to keep working her mouth, because her muscles had withered, but over night it would heal shut. I took her back and was told her jaw would have to be continuously re-broken or the joint would have to be removed.

I opted for the surgery and her mouth was crooked thereafter, but she did great. She'd scoop up a mouthful of Iams and sling her head back to swallow.

The vet told me that she wouldn't live long because she'd never be able to eat well enough to sustain herself. Except for her horrible table manners and slobbery face she was still the perfect kitten and went on to obtain her CFA Championship and ACFA Grand Championship with her half sister MiCarCo's Careless Navigation (Citation x Collonade)

Gator died in 1990 from a toxic reaction to hartz flea shampoo. Both Gator and Toss had one litter of kittens before I spayed them.

They were with me through my divorce from Mike. They lived with me at Roy's although they had to live in the guesthouse. They lived in the barn with me when I had the horses and they lived with me through Don's divorce and his on again off again approach to our life together, Gator died and is buried behind the house at Smither Road.

Don gave me a lovely oriental jewelry box and a wreath with her photo in it, which hangs in my office, to show me he cared. Toss was with me through our marriage and has moved with me twelve times. She became lost in a crowd of bobcats and Servals and her last couple of weeks I knew she was getting near the end. She was losing weight and slept ALL the time, so I let her live in the house and ignored the hair she'd shed all over everything so that she could die in peace. I miss her,

June 18, 1994 (Sat) 4:11 p.m. I got caught in the rain, as I was washing down cat pens, and decided to come to bed for an hour before its time to feed kittens again. On May 16, after much protest from me, Don & I went to LeCenter, MN and he bought 58 kittens with the provision that all but 6-8 would be dropped off on the return trip. The trip itself was a nightmare., Don got sick and couldn't drive or help and some people didn't show up for their cubs.

June 19, 1994 7:00 p.m. Don wrecked a rental van on the return trip as he turned to get a coke, while driving over a bridge, without his glasses and in the dark. It's a wonder he didn't kill us all. It would've been a kinder fate to many of the kittens. I had asked him not to rent a van because we make such a mess on trips. I had purchased third party insurance because Don's driving is so bad, but I did not buy insurance to cover the damage we might do to the van because I knew Don would gripe, which he did before the accident.

July 9, 1994 (Sat) 9:39 I've been listening to tapes called "The Angry Marriage" in an effort to understand how I can love a man I can't stand to be around. I've tried to listen to him rant and rave over things like how I overcooked the lobster (this went on for 2 days) and try to look at life through the eyes of a poor little barefoot bastard child of a ruthless, self-pitying mother. My patience and long suffering are qualities for which I am known but there is a limit to what I can stand. I try to look at Don's complaints about me and observe how his reflection could give me some insight into my own character flaws. His petty complaints - i.e. I can't cook and I can't sew don't mean much to me because I do things for us financially no other woman can and I keep him out of trouble to the best of any humans ability.

He saddles me with financial responsibilities that I don't want. I don't want to be rich, I just want some peace and tranquility in my life. He dumps loads of kittens on me, and then won't help care for them and whines incessantly when we have to hire help. We have

I may be steaming inside, but I haven't returned to smoking and I reassured him of the latter. I did step out of bounds and went on to say "What's the matter? You can't find any real reason to be dissatisfied with me so you had to dream something up?" I said it in a playful tone but it was a Freudian slip I should've kept to myself.

July 9
Next weekend is Jamie's birthday, but Don made plans for us to go to the MO auction do tonight, at Jaime's request, I took her and her friend Michael to the Melting Pot. When I came home Don asked if I had gone out with Roy Persons. Now why on earth would I go out with Roy to celebrate Jamie's birthday when she dislikes him even more than she dislikes Don? I didn't ask Don to come because last year when Mom made arrangements to have a boat/dinner party for her birthday, Don made such a stink that he ruined it for all of us. He did the same thing on my birthday last year and again this year, so I had made up my mind, no matter what, he would not get the opportunity to make her and everyone else miserable.

So, why do I love him? Why do I love a man who alienates my daughter, my family, my acquaintances? Why do I love a man who works me to death and who takes all the glory for what I do? Why do I love a man who keeps me in tears and feeling so empty that I try to fill the void with food? What is my sick need that I'm trying to fill with this venomous man? I've asked forever but still don't know.

July 21, 1994 Don went to the Lolli Bros. Sale on the 15th and 16th by himself. He was gone from the 14th to the 18th and when he got back he said he wanted hugging and loving. I guess I've gone beyond mad beyond outrage all the way out to resignation. Being compliant, silent and subservient has made my life much easier to cope with. I do my work and much of his, and look forward to some peace and quiet, far away from here. I like the Florida Keys and would like to go there alone and come back when I feel better - but I can't do that. What I may do is take Jamie down for 3 or 4 days. She's had only one vacation in her 14 years, and she works harder than any kid I've known. She's worked 6 weeks full time, cleaning our house and cooking our meals & so far, has only asked for \$11.00 of her pay. I'm lucky to have her for a daughter and I don't show it near often enough. I have so much to write but am too tired to move the pen. It's 9:43 and the kittens were just fed.

August 6, 1994 I am on the vacation I have promised myself all year. Don has taken five road trips and promised to take me, yet always finding some reason to leave me behind. I have been left behind each time because of the responsibility of caring for some kitten or ailing cat. I have seen death and heartache and pushed myself to keep going even when I was so tired by the end of the day (10:30 - 11:00 p.m.) that I could only stagger from pen to pen. What

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got me thru all of the stress was telling myself as soon as the babies were off the bottle, and I could find a window in which no one was sick, I would leave. While holding an IV in a cougar all night so that she couldn't chew it out, I'd envision myself basking in some tropical island paradise while medicating sick cats. I'd be thinking about a place where I had no responsibilities. While buying the little ones I loved, but lost, I'd fight back the tears and tell myself that as soon as this was all over, I'd go somewhere, far away and sleep all day. I'd go somewhere to grieve, recover, and recuperate. I settled on the Florida Keys.

I'm writing a t7:30 am from a quiet little bed and breakfast called Courtney's place in the heart of old town Key West. I had been to Key West for an art show about 7 years ago and had been impressed with the attitude of "key time". No one was in a hurry. It didn't look like anyone was in a hurry, except me, and within a day or two I was starting to unwind. I still get up at 7:00 am, but I am starting to relax.

Jamie hasn't had a real vacation since we wen to Washington, DC some six years ago so I hired Katie French to look after Nirvana, my little Ocelot who is still on the bottle, and asked her to take care of Jaime's 2 dogs, 5 cats and squirrel. I feel safe with everyone in Katie's care as she truly loves animals more than money and more than self. Jamie has been great company.

True to my nature, I had to justify taking some time off with some sort of work, so we drove from Tampa to Naples to deliver \$1600.00 for a pair of river otters from Frank and Ellen Weed, and we will pick them up on the return trip. Since our arrival, I can't help but notice real estate for sale, abandoned properties and the like. Building lots here range from \$120K to \$400K and houses (falling down) on zero lot lines run 500K+. We are here in the off season so prices are not ridiculously high for room and board and we've been able to do many things that often require 6 weeks reservations.

We arrived around 7 p.m. on Thursday and stayed at the Tavernier which is a historical little bed and breakfast on the key for which it was named. It had been one of the few buildings to survive the hurricane of 1935 and had been the salvation to the islands inhabitants who had sought refuge there, The keeper was a delightful British woman ??? the room she had just spent "all of her advertising money redecorating". You could tell she really wanted to share her handiwork, but she looked at our van; old, filthy, rusting "bullet holes" down its side & 3 carriers big enough for pumas in it and said she really wanted the room to stay nice a while. I told her she could check and see that the carriers were empty and that we were not the vagabonds we appeared. I have a net worth of 5 million dollars and to

look at me or my things, people are afraid I'll steal from them. I really find this amusing and never let on that I have or am anything more than they see. I feel like Howard Hughes.

We ate lasagna at the little Italian restaurant next door until we nearly puked and then watched 6 episodes of "I Dream of Jeannie" until we fell asleep.

Friday morning I expected to sleep until noon, but by 7:00 am was wide-awake. I read brochures and tried to map out a plan of relaxation. Old habits are hard to break. Jamie wants to swim with the dolphins, so even though it looked like an overdone tourist trap, we went to adventures of the sea, but they don't do the Dolphin swimming thing on Fridays so we saw their dolphin show and their sea lion show and took their land tour of sharks, turtles, key fish, owls, crocodiles and petting tank where we both petted a baby nurse shark. In their extensive gift shop, I gave Jamie a \$20.00 limit but she only spent \$4.00. I spent \$40.00 for a necklace and earring set of pearl inlaid lion's heads. There were cats everywhere!

We drove down to Bahia Honda Key, which has one of the 10 most beautiful beaches in the world and laid in knee-deep water the rest of the day. I buried my hands in the white sand so I wouldn't drift away and floated, motionless, thoughtless, oblivious....Jamie kept busy digging up shells and broken coral and looking for sharks and shark teeth,

My life was on a downward spiral when I was 14, after being raped and losing my self worth and self-respect. It took me 15 years to regain what I lost in a few brief moments. I look at Jamie with her youthful innocence and enthusiasm and both relish it and worry about the day she could lose it all. That last line just leaves me stunned...

As the sun begins to set we headed to Mallory Square in Key West for the Sunset Celebration. Jamie navigated in a blistery rainstorm, much better than I thought she could. She had picked 6 places for us to check out to stay. I had forgotten how cramped Key West is and how scarce parking was. We made our decision based upon where we could park this big ugly van, and chose Courtney's Place. It turned out to be a great choice. The owners are friendly and have 10 cats. The other guests are friendly and love cats. The cottages are fully equipped, even with a grill and they provided me with the equipment and supplies to make the best coffee I've ever had. The cottages are hard wood floored, colorfully decorated and have private yards, a/c, cable, phones, gorgeous tiled baths, a lush tropical pool setting and free passes to a local health club.

The rain cleared and we walked down to the Sunset Celebration. We saw a breathtaking sunset, a sword swallower and a pet cat act by Pete and Chaki, and a really weird little man. Jamie's ready to train

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her cats as she said "not for money, but to entertain my friends."
"Little Feather and Midnight both do/did and know/knew more and better "tricks" but would have been freaked out by crowds of applauding people. Jamie trained both of them and has a special way with animals,

Jamie was amazed by the way people down here behave. Most of the people here are tourists but "changes in latitudes - changes in attitudes" is the way of life here.

Dec 29, 1994 This year for our third anniversary I knew that Don would ignore me, and the day and I did nothing to mark the day, resigning myself ahead of time to the fact that Don would use his cheapness as a weapon. I didn't want things, only the acknowledgement of the occasion. I must have been pretty well prepared because I didn't cry a single tear when he chose to go to an auto auction.

In late October thru the first couple weeks in November we experienced a blissful union unlike anything I could ever remember. We fired Debbie and our love life became much more intense. We began to make love every day again, something we hadn't done since we moved here, I felt so close to Don and began to trust him again. We spent all our time together and were getting along great.

I had been taking flying lessons since Sept. after nearly dying with Don on one of his straight up and back driving trips to Macon, NO. I got sick on that trip and I still can't shake it. I was afraid Don was planning on going back up in a plane because he was talking about it all the time and he had started loaning money secured by planes and spending time at airports. I knew it was only a matter of time and I began the lessons, without telling him, so that if he did start flying again, I could protect him from his own bad judgment.

During our month of heavenly bliss, I told him what I had been doing after he told me that he would have been so much more careful if he had known that he would lose his license. He seemed happier with me then he's ever been. He called me his "Buzz Bunny" and was very supportive of my efforts and without my asking he took a lot of the legal workload off of me and gave it to Sheldon.

I studied in between cases; I read every night until I fell asleep. I practiced and practiced and still took care of him and the cats and went through the loss of my fax & printer. I bought a new computer & fax & printer that was portable so that I could keep up the work (which Sheldon was failing miserably at) and still spend time with Don, because he wanted my company more than ever before. The new computer uses different software that will make my work more efficient, but it takes time to learn.

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Now I was studying to teach myself new computer skills, how to fly safely, and because Don was unhappy with our Attorney's performance, I was again taking on more work. I didn't care. My love was being kind to me and really seemed to care. Life was so good.

Thursday before Christmas Don asked me to take care of a MFC sale at the courthouse and I told him I was going to pick up his checkbook from Anne before 3pm so she could leave on vacation. I did the sale, got groceries so that I could cook something for Don, came home to unload and start the crock pot going, and intended to be at the office by 3pm. When I arrived home at noon, Don asked if I had picked up an affidavit from Anne for Alex to sign saying that he overheard Vernon Yates say he wouldn't charge Don for keeping our leopards. I explained that I hadn't been to the office yet because I wanted to cook something for Don. (I abhor cooking but I wanted to please him) I typed the affidavit myself, but Don told Alex to leave before I got done. Afterwards, Don said that I was useless. He said that I never do anything right. He said that he didn't want to live under the same roof with anyone as stupid as me. He said he'd rather I leave, or at least move in with Jamie. I asked him to name one time when I wasn't working frantically on something for his benefit. He couldn't, but it didn't matter, he still wanted me gone.

I moved into Jamie's trailer for the night. I figured he must have had a bad day and I'd let him calm down before trying to reason with him. I usually brush my hair and put on my make up while driving down the road because I can't take time away from serving Don to do so like a normal person. Even at Jamie's I studied by the glow of my little laptops LED screen so that I could be a little more useful for Don. The evening of the next day, Don apologized for what he said, and said had just had a bad day. It felt so good to snuggle close to him that night. That was Dec 23rd and he had already made arrangements to fly to California by himself and Christmas Eve & Day to look at a plane for sale. I not only was not invited, but told flatly that \$300,00 round trip too much to pay just so I could be with him for the holiday.

At H Jamie was living alone in a trailer

I told myself that Christmas is just another day and that maybe with him gone, he wouldn't deliberately try to hurt my feelings. I pretended to myself that he hadn't already.

Don had bought a 61' Commanche and a 68' Cardinal for me to train in. The cardinal had a lot of problems and after flying it twice I decide to have it annualled and repaired. It had one cylinder cracked all the way through and cracks in the other three. The repair estimate was \$3,500.00 and I authorized the work.

Don came home from California & said he would've flown the arrow home himself, but couldn't come to terms - price wise - with

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the seller. I knew then that he was completely incapable of making a competent decision. Against all of our agreements that he would not fly until properly licensed, nor would he even fly alone, he tells me that he intended to fly a strange plane all the way across this country in the dead of winter by himself. The man should be committed.

This morning he tells me that he's going to have some unlicensed pilot fly him out to Toledo to pick up another Cardinal that he would pilot home solo. I forbid him to do something so reckless because he's never flown a Cardinal. His answer to my protests was that he'd do a few touch and goes in our Cardinal before leaving. I told him the Cardinal was sitting in pieces awaiting a top overhaul. He threw a temper tantrum and called the airport telling them to roll it out of their garage and he'd have Chuck Heinz at Pilot Country put it back together. I knew Don would make a stupid judgment like that. Chuck is the one who convinced Don to buy the cardinal, knowing it needed extensive repair, which Don agreed to let Chuck do. Chuck has a bad reputation for signing aircraft off when they're unsafe. He works on them outside in the elements with no protection. An annual, which had to be done by this month, requires the entire plane be broken down and gone over with a fine toothed comb. There is no way this could be safely done by Chuck at Pilot Country.

Before I authorized any of the work I read extensively on the matter and thoroughly picked Don's brain on previous, similar work he has had done on planes before. The prices quoted me for the work involved were well within what Don had approved before and I felt that if Don had found out (which ultimately I knew he would) he'd be mad, but at least I wouldn't have to tell him that I feel he was too incompetent to make a good decision. I wanted to be safe and legal without the necessity of insulting my beloved. Apparently I made a bad decision if I believed that Don could see or appreciate the position I'm in. I asked him what he would've done had I consulted him prior to doing what I had done and he said he would have let Chuck do the work no matter what. He said it's all his money and he is the only one who makes the decisions on how to spend it. I reminded him that I work right along side of him every day and asked if that didn't give me the right to make such a simple call on a plane that he'd bought for me? He said that he had warned me that when I had central heat & air installed in Jaime's trailer that I was never to spend any of "his" money without his consent. He said that it was the last straw that I had allowed Jamie to subscribe to cable. We've had that argument a hundred times and he keeps forgetting that she pays for that herself. He threw the thing about the horses at me again, but he keeps forgetting it was my efforts that repaid him every dime and how he lost nearly 4 million to Pam.

I had quietly explained what I had done and why and tried to make him feel that he had contributed to the good thing I had done with his previous experience he had shared, and how I knew he'd care about my safety. There was no pacifying him.

He said he was leaving & wouldn't be back tonight. It's 9:30 and he did come home but he's "not speaking". He said that he wants me to get Jamie and get out of here because he doesn't want to worry about me spending his money. He accused me of stealing the \$8,300.00 he lost a couple of weeks ago. He had accused our housekeeper before and although I have never so much as slipped a \$100.00 from his wallet, I think he believes I stole from him now.

I've cried all afternoon while I worked up a \$126,000.00 deal for him, learned how to send and receive faxes through a computer, trimmed all of the roses, cut away grass & weeds that are choking the plants that accent his Serval pens, and fed all of the animals. I didn't lash back, but again resigned myself to wait out his evil temper. I listened while he told me that all of the money is his and that everything we have he earned by himself and brought into this marriage by himself. He said there's nothing I do for him that he couldn't pay any flunky \$350-400.00 a week for. He said that he doesn't trust me and doesn't want to live with me anymore, and that he will furnish me with a place to move out to and give me \$500.00 a week to live on. How generous.

I'm still crying so I guess I still care. I'd love so much to die and not hurt anymore but I've got Jamie and she'd have no one if I died. It's no use to leave him, I'd only come back. He's all I've ever known and the only man I've ever loved. I hope Jamie never finds herself in such a sick and perverted relationship. I wish there were some way out for me.

Did she find a way out?

All she's ever known? He was husband #2!