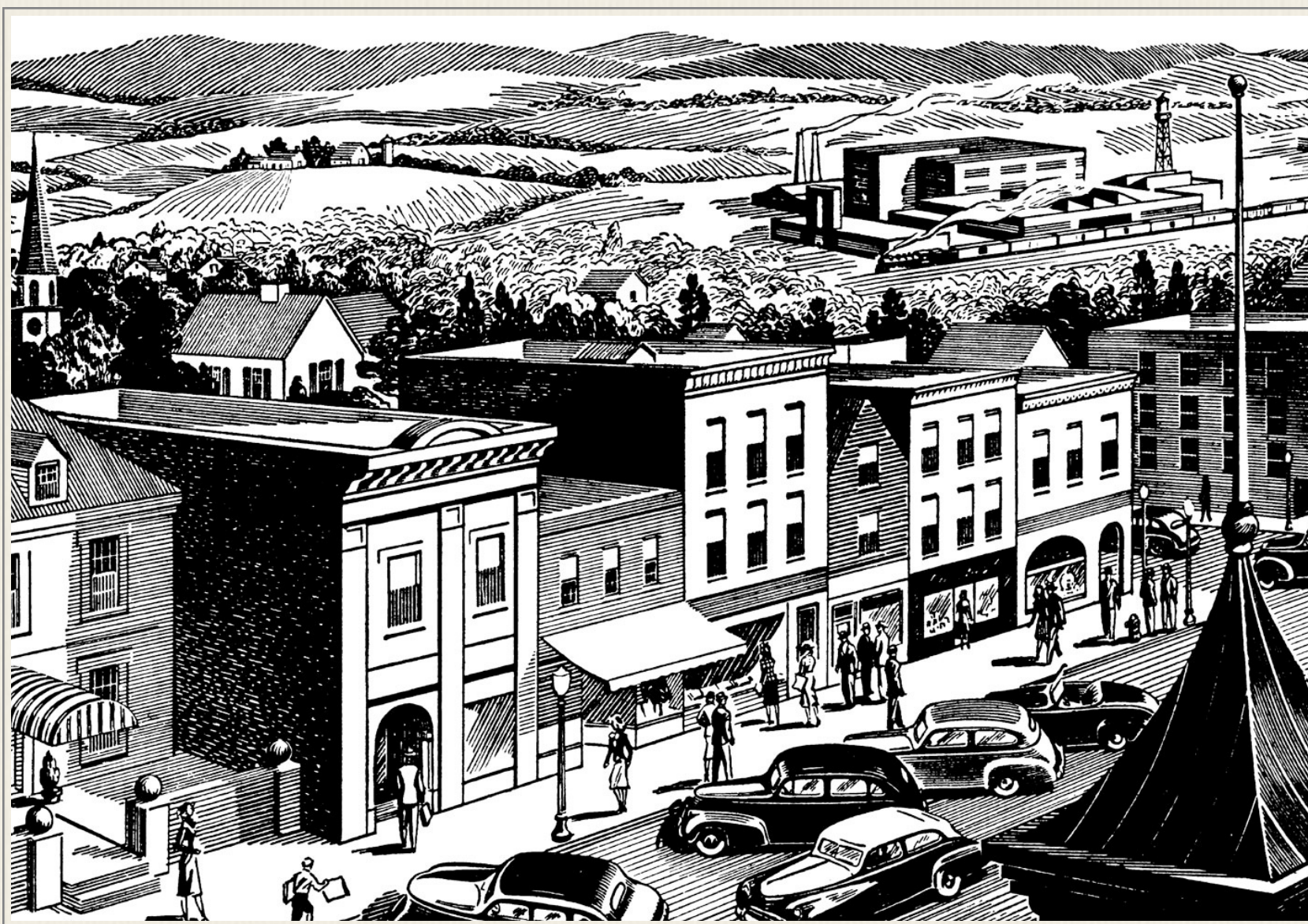




Baltimore



On the plane ride, I struggled with my three boys, I had a glimpse of what my life could be like. JJ had fallen asleep and the others started watching a movie. My heart was racing and suddenly began to hit a steady pace. I closed my eyes, held the pocket book that, Lourdes gave me, it was the “What I know For sure : OPRAH” The plane took off, my boys and I were off to Baltimore.

Home of the Preakness , I knew this since I was 5 . My dad was a horse gambler and my aunts and uncles were addicted to the track as well. Santa Anita was my second home. I ran around with my sister, we were allowed to pick horses , we each were given a five dollar limit, unless I was with uncle Sam who was white and owned beauty salons across Southern California! Uncle Sam allowed me to pick all of his horses.

As the plane came to auto ride and smooth , I asked for a vodka cranberry when the cart came around. Not like in the 70's anymore, where first they came and took your meal and drink order and served those warm meals , basically microwave meals like the ones wrapped in foil that they also served for free at school. I started flying when , I was 5 ! Alone at that , I spoke english very well and learned the proper way to speak it from I Love Lucy, The Brady Bunch, The Waltons, Little House on The Prairie, General Hospital and All My Children. So off they would ship me to my grandfather's in Phoenix , Arizona. They would send me with my red suitcase and my skateboard.

I sipped the vodka , took a deep breath and decided once in for all , I would break the cycle and finally start a new life in Baltimore ! I thought of going to the Preakness , Kentucky Derby and the Belmont. I whispered to JJ. "someday I'm going to buy us a horse! Will have a horse farm and we will be free to ride as we wish!" His face lit up and even though , he smiled I could still see the fear in his eyes, but he was being brave for me.

I had six hundred dollars in my pocket , our luggage and only the memories of the life, I was leaving behind. I pictured overcoming this crisis as , I always have. If i could overcome living the South Side life ,the area called 'The Babylon Of Los Angeles! ' It's a joke amongst the most powerful police force! The Los Angeles County Sheriff's ! At one point in my life prior to joining the NAVY , I wanted to

be cop and save the hood! It didn't quite work out that way, but in essence and reality, I still ended up saving the hood...

The captain announces we were preparing for landing! BUCKLE UP TIME! I felt some sort of energy hit me as if, this electro magnetic force inside me , was taking over. The beautiful East Fall colors in sight and the serenity of a new beginning.

We arrived in the afternoon of October 1st , 2009.....

Two agents awaited our arrival , As we walked off the plane I immediately spotted them , I sized them out from first eye contact. They checked us into a corporate apartment where 99% of the guest were military personnel.

I had chosen Baltimore because what better place for a market comeback then in the middle of Power and Politics! NYC and DC .. I googled Maryland and immediately my research gave me the info , I needed ! The mayor of Baltimore under investigation and Johns Hopkins expanding !! I read about all the history and the corruption in the jails and police department. I also saw opportunity , at least Maryland wasn't broke like CA and they had way better schools in the county .

Baltimore was COLD even in October! I had to catch the shuttle bus to the local mart by BWI and buy coats , pants , gloves, and hats for the boys. We didn't own much winter attire coming from Southern Los Angeles.

Day two I learned the light rails and its path, I caught buses and made it to the Real Estate commission called the DLLR . I got the application for my license, paid the fee to get started and crossed my fingers. That week , when the boys were in bed and I had a moment alone while pretending to be asleep, I fret in a fetal position with my pillow covering my mouth and then, I allowed the pain to surface as my tears ran down my face and into the pillow.

By our third week in Baltimore , I started waking with trouble and unusually fatigue. One night while in my ritual of crying in bed , I had a sudden sharp pain in my chest , it was sharp and felt like a bolt of pain ripping across my left side . I took long deep breaths and sometime in the middle of the night , I awoke the boys

with my cries of pain. They called 911 and I was taken to Harbor View , they gave me a chest x-ray and ekg and said I was most likely having anxiety!

My next task was finding a home for us. One of the agents recommended Columbia , but I learned it was a newer developed community and with out a car was going to be hard to get around.

I chose an area near Patterson park , too bad I didn't know that area was by street change! I was on the wrong side of Fayette . Mikey , my then 12 year old was jumped walking home from school by three black boys and i witnessed it, as I was walking to pick them up, he was holding JJ's hand and I noticed three boys crossing the street towards them and before I knew it they sprang into Mikey , one then two then three of them six fist punching into him and my steps seemed like minutes! As i ran into them , I pulled one off then the other two ran and cursed me and flipped their middle fingers at me. Mikey was in shock and JJ had seen his first string of terror, he was pale and had bubbles of tears held tight , but they ran down his face.

I studied the Maryland Real Estate Law book that night and found a loophole and moved to Rodgers Forge , a small community nestled just over the city line into the county and giving my boys the privilege of going to blue ribbon schools! They were innocent and already going through emotional stress, I mean we just moved 3,000 miles away from our home, family, friends, customs, culture and into a place where it's predominantly black and white. The small population of hispanic's are not Chicano or Mexican-Americanized .. So basically we are a complete minority in Baltimore. Only a Californian, Texan, New Mexican, or Arizonan would understand what , I mean.

I myself alone could have survived living on Milton & Fayette ! It would have been a breeze after growing up in Los Angeles! I can't count how many times I was a bystander in drive by shootings, drug infested area's including Watts, Compton, East L.A , the Florence district. I learned early on how it all worked . What I know for sure is that the Sheriff's department ruled . LAPD also in their area, but the Sheriff had it all essentially.