

Susie wrapped up in her studies, problems with Tom

(From A6)

its economy for a research paper that she hoped to use to get a degree in anthropology. She wrote to Aunt Susie about her problems. Her aunt called upon Sen. Jesse Helms, who called the foreign ministry in Taiwan, which quickly straightened out the problem.

A month later, Susie's landlady asked for one of her rooms back because more relatives were moving in. Susie gave up the apartment and moved in with Bie's family. Bie had returned home from Greensboro, and Susie spent her last month in Taiwan visiting tourist spots and friends with Bie. She and the boys left for North Carolina on June 25, 1980.

Susie's mother-in-law, Delores, drove to Chicago from Louisville with her maid, Helen Stewart, to greet them at O'Hare Airport and spend a few layover hours with her grandsons. That was the only time Delores ever would remember Susie seeming almost pleased to see her.

On the flight home, Susie thought about how the six months in Taiwan had changed her and the boys.

"We were not the same people who had left," she wrote in a journal she later hoped to turn into a guidebook for women traveling overseas. "We were a family unit; no longer three without a fourth. We had been lonely, tired and sick. We had made friends, worked, played and laughed. We had been pushed to our limits emotionally, but the three of us had held."

Later, Susie spoke differently and darkly about her experiences in Taiwan, leading family and friends to believe she had been trailed by agents who intercepted and read her mail and that she had escaped the country only with the intercession of Senator Helms. Those stories would surprise her friends in Taiwan, who knew of no such happenings.

A bitter battle in court

Susie looked frail, wan and unhealthy on her return home. She and the boys moved back in with her parents, and her mother encouraged her to go see her uncle, Dr. Klenner, in Reidsville. He diagnosed her as having multiple sclerosis and began treating her with B vitamins.

In going for treatments, Susie renewed acquaintance with her cousin, Fritz, who often worked in the clinic. She was seven years older, and they had never been close. She and her other cousins had thought Fritz a little strange.

Fritz was married now, and he told her he was in medical school at Duke University, training to take over his father's practice. An honor student, his father boasted, involved in important research. Susie was impressed. She'd always been impressed with doctors. In fact, Tom was thinking of going to medical school when she met him.



Susie fought bitterly with Tom over custody and visitation of Jim, center above, and John. John and Jim visited their father and his wife Kathy at Christmas, 1983

Susie gradually recovered health but continued Dr. Klenner's vitamin treatments. That summer, she started seeing an old friend from college, a doctor's son, and romance soon blossomed. In September, she began classes at Wake Forest, working toward a graduate degree in anthropology.

Unbeknownst to Susie, Tom had filed for divorce in Albuquerque on the same day she left Taiwan to return home.

By the end of May 1981, Tom was ready to settle matters and get out of the marriage. He had borrowed money from his mother and had a cashier's check drawn to Susie's lawyer for \$15,500, the amount of the property settlement. But negotiations between Tom's lawyer, Michael Rueckhaus, and Susie's lawyer, Sandy Sands, broke down over a \$2,400 student loan Susie had taken out.

Tom hadn't seen the children in nearly two years, and on Sept. 16, 1981, his lawyer filed suit against Susie in Albuquerque to settle visitation and property matters.

Susie was angry and frightened that Tom was going to try to get custody of the boys. She would never let that happen. Telephone conversations between the two had become terse and hostile. She hired a lawyer in Albuquerque, Barbara Shapiro, to represent her there. The ensuing court fight was, in Sands' words, "very bitter, very hard."

On Oct. 10, Shapiro filed a motion to dismiss the case on the grounds that it properly belonged in North Carolina courts, because that was where the boys lived.

"I do not understand why my husband claims that I or anyone has denied him visitation," Susie said in her affidavit. "The children are only 5 and 7 years old. It is my understanding that they cannot travel alone if they have to change planes at that age."

Attached to the motion was an affidavit from Dr. Ron Davis, a psychologist at Wake Forest University,



who had been seeing Susie and the boys. He supported Susie's contention that the boys were too young to travel alone and said that Tom refused to listen when he tried to talk to him about it by telephone.

Tom replied: "Since the separation, I have had considerable problem in making ends meet financially. I have attempted to visit my children but have not been able to afford to exercise such visitation on respondent's terms."

On Nov. 30, Judge Gene Franchini ruled that New Mexico courts had jurisdiction and denied Susie's motion to dismiss the case. Shapiro immediately filed for a rehearing. Sands already had gone to court in Rockingham County on Susie's behalf.

On Dec. 21, another New Mexico judge, Joseph Alarid, ruled that visitation matters belonged in North Carolina courts, divorce and property matters in New Mexico.

Tom, meanwhile, had been negotiating with Susie and Sands to get to see his children for Christmas. On Dec. 18, he signed a consent order demanded by Susie agreeing to post a \$10,000 bond to ensure that he returned the boys. On Dec. 22, he flew to Greensboro, spent a day becoming reacquainted with the boys, then flew with them to Albuquerque. He returned them on Jan. 1.

By the fall of 1981, Susie's romance had faded. It had reached the point of discussing marriage and looking at dream houses, but Susie had become very wrapped up in her studies and her problems with Tom.

Her intended husband thought she was getting wound tighter and tighter, growing more and more bitter. He couldn't understand her virulent hatred for her mother-in-law, and he didn't like it. Eventually, they drifted apart, and Susie wrote to friends expressing her disappointment.

Susie also had become even more protective of John and Jim. She was the only mother in the neighbor-

hood who stood by the street with her children until the school bus arrived. She was the only mother waiting for them when it returned. She worried constantly about their health and dosed them heavily with medicines.

At the beginning of 1982, Susie dropped her anthropology studies at Wake Forest, calling her professors "idiots." She enrolled in the business school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her mother sighed and told a friend, "I think we've got a professional student on our hands."

In June 1982, Tom hired Reidsville lawyer Bill Horsley to represent him. On July 6, Horsley filed a motion in Rockingham County to fix a schedule of visitation. Susie wanted the hearing postponed, but it was held on July 23.

Tom, his mother and sister came to testify. Judge Peter McHugh ruled that Tom could have the boys from July 25 to August 12, but put off a permanent ruling so Susie and her lawyer could take depositions in New Mexico to present at another hearing in October.

The boys stayed with Tom, Delores and Janie on the night of July 24, and the next day Tom flew with them to Albuquerque.

Susie and Sands never took depositions in New Mexico, and the October hearing was canceled. On Nov. 22, Judge McHugh entered his permanent order.

Tom would have the boys 35 days each summer, plus seven days at Christmas and seven days at spring school break every other year. No airline had direct flights to New Mexico, and as Susie requested, the judge ordered that the boys must be accompanied by a parent on at least one leg of their trips to visit their father. That meant Susie must fly to Atlanta where she could put the boys on a direct flight. Or she could put them on a flight to Dallas and Tom would have to meet them and take them to Albuquerque. Tom would pay all expenses.

Bill Horsley had mixed emotions about the judgment. He thought the judge was trying to satisfy everybody. It wasn't bad as a beginning, he said.

Tom had stronger feelings.

The summer visit was too short. He thought the accompaniment stipulation was added just to penalize him. He felt that he'd been "hometowned," that he never could get a fair deal in a town where his wife's aunt, the former chief justice, had so much influence.

On Dec. 21, Tom was granted a divorce in New Mexico, and the settlement check was mailed to Sands. Tom looked forward to a life free of Susie and the problems she had brought him.

At the hearing that summer, Sands had noticed Susie's first cousin, Fritz Klenner, hanging around the courthouse, but thought nothing about it. He did think about something strange Susie told him, but he chose not to bring it up at the hearing.

Susie said Tom was involved with drugs, gambling and underworld characters.

"What in the world gives you that idea?" Sands asked.

She said a friend of the family who was an FBI agent had told her. The FBI was getting ready to go after international smugglers, she said. Tom was just "a small fish in a big pond," but he was apt to get caught up in it. She wouldn't reveal her source.

Not until much later, when it was too late, did Sands realize that the source was her cousin Fritz and that the story was just another of his deceptions. Sands didn't realize what a big influence Fritz was beginning to have in Susie's life.

But her parents did. And her mother set out to do something about it.

國立臺灣師範大學 國語教學中心 上課證



姓名 Susie S. Lynch

國籍 美國

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