



After leaving her parents, Susie got an apartment at 28-L Hunt Club Road, upper right



The boys visited with Delores in 1983



When Florence retired from Rutledge College in late 1984, Susie was still estranged from her mother. Bob usually took Florence away on minor holidays to help ease the pain of Susie's ignoring her.

For Susie and her mother, the arguments about Fritz were major

(From A1)

"We didn't get to go," Fritz said, crestfallen. "I got down there, and Fritz was sick and throwing up. All I did was sit and hold his head while he threw up all night."

Florence Newsom was not at all happy about Susie's relationship with Fritz. She thought Susie was becoming too dependent on him. At first, she wouldn't let herself believe the relationship might be more than just an unhealthy dependence. That would be scandalous.

As 1982 wore on, Fritz was coming more often to see Susie and the boys, often dropping by in the middle of the night. He'd always kept unusual hours, sleeping long into the day and prowling into the night.

The late-night visits didn't seem to bother Susie, but they disturbed Florence and her husband, Bob. Florence and Bob also were bothered when they returned from spending weekends with Bob's mother near Winston-Salem to find Fritz at their house. When Florence learned that Fritz sometimes had stayed overnight in their absence, she decided to put a stop to the whole business.

She talked to Annie Hill Klenner, her sister and Fritz's mother, hoping to enlist her help in doing something. But Annie Hill seemed to think the relationship harmless and didn't want to talk about it.

Florence confronted her daughter alone.

In some ways, Florence and Susie were much alike, both strong-willed, independent and outspoken. When their wills clashed, battle was inevitable. They'd had minor disagreements since Susie had moved back home, but the arguments about Fritz became major.

Whatever was going on between Susie and Fritz — and Florence had come to suspect the worst — Florence no longer would tolerate it under her roof. Susie was not about to let her mother tell her how to live her life.

After a confrontation in January 1983, Susie took her sons and stormed out of her parents' house for good. By then her divorce was final, and she had received her \$15,500 settlement from Tom. For \$475 a month, utilities included, she rented a two-bedroom upstairs apartment at Friendly Hills Apartments, 28-L Hunt Club Road in Guilford College. For weeks, her parents didn't even know her whereabouts.

Susie's estrangement from her mother was complete, and Florence was distraught. One day Florence spotted John and Jim in a shopping center parking lot and hurried over to chat. Susie showed up from a nearby store, angrily snatched up the boys and led them away, leaving Florence in tears.

Susie showed contempt for all attempts at reconciliation. When Florence mailed checks to buy clothes or gifts for the boys, they came back torn to bits.

Susie also backed off from other family members as well, even her grandmother, Nana, whom she'd always adored, and her favorite aunt, Susie Sharp, the former Supreme Court chief justice, Su-Su to Susie.

In 1968, after her graduation from college, Susie had written her aunt to thank her for a gift.

"But more especially," she wrote, "I want to thank you for being a constant guiding force, for being someone I could always trust and depend on, for being that one person whom I knew no matter what happened I could always turn to."

When trouble had come, though, Susie not only failed to turn to Su-Su, she rejected her.

Susie Sharp used the occasion of John's ninth birthday in August 1983 to try to re-establish contact with her niece. She invited Susie to bring the boys to Raleigh, and Susie accepted. They had birthday cake and went to Pullen Park for the afternoon.

But Susie refused to talk about the things her aunt wanted to discuss. At the mention of Fritz, Susie bristled; a cold fire came to her eyes, and her aunt backed off. But Su-Su was determined not to let Susie leave without making some effort toward family harmony.

"Susie," her aunt said at departure, "make peace with your mother."

The next Joe Di Maggio

Susie was growing paranoid and fearful, more protective of her sons than ever. She bought a black chow puppy, a male, and named him Shiao Shiong, Chinese for "little bear." The boys called him Showie. He grew to enormous size and became as protective of Susie and the boys as Fritz was.

Showie would bark and snarl ferociously at anybody who came near them. If anybody approached their apartment door, Showie would hit it from the other side like a fullback crashing the line. Sometimes he wouldn't allow visitors into the apartment until he had been appeased with huge hunks of cheese.

Later, Susie bought another black chow to keep Showie company, a female named Mai Ling. The boys called her Maizie.

On June 11, 1983, Tom Lynch married his former dental assistant, Kathy Anderson. Less than three weeks later, his sons arrived in Albuquerque for their first summer visit.

The boys looked sickly, and Tom was disgusted with their plaque-encrusted teeth. The boys came loaded down with vitamin pills and medicines sent by their mother. The huge doses of vitamins sometimes made them nauseous, but the boys insisted they had to take them or their mother would be furious. Tom threw most of the pills away and assured them their mother never would know.

The boys were reticent at first, fearful of saying

the wrong things. John sometimes elbowed Jim when he began to say something, and Jim would check himself.

Tom tried to spend as much time as possible with the boys. He took them on the world's longest tram up Sandia Mountain, 10,600 feet high. He went with them on the Wild Water Slide and to Uncle Cliff's Amusement Park, where John stepped into the cage to face a baseball-pitching machine and knocked the first pitch out of the park.

"He's going to be the next Joe Di Maggio," Tom predicted.

John clearly was his father's son. He looked like Tom and, like his dad, was a natural athlete. He loved sports. He could do anything with a ball and was the fastest kid in his class. But he never got to play sports, except during school recess. His mother wouldn't allow it. She rarely let the boys out of the apartment, and they had no friends.

John, sensitive and highly competitive, was frustrated and on edge most of the time. He also craved affection. Every afternoon before leaving school, he'd give his second-grade teacher, Shirley Thorne, a big hug.

Both John and Jim were bright and studious and did well in school, but Jim was a poet, an artist, a philosopher, a peacemaker. He saw things in the clouds. He always was trying to quell the acrimony between his mother and father.

Jim was a ladies' man, too, a charmer. Girls seemed to gravitate to him. He quickly made friends with several in the neighborhood. Jim's first-grade teacher, Julia Cooper, called him the "most caring child" she'd ever taught.

"No one could help but love Jim," she wrote his father.

Near the end of the boys' visit that summer, Tom borrowed a motor home from friends and took Kathy and the boys to Kentucky to see his mother. Delores never got to talk to her grandsons on the phone anymore. Susie wouldn't allow it. Delores often made fudge and cookies for the boys and mailed it to them, but she said their mother threw it out because it might be poisoned.

Delores thought Tom had gotten a raw deal in the courts of Rockingham County, and she was pushing to have something done about it. She was particularly upset because Tom had to buy airline tickets for Susie to fly part of the way with the boys when they visited Tom. Delores claimed Susie was cashing in the tickets. That stipulation was nothing more than spite, Delores said, an attempt to break Tom. Delores was helping pay for those tickets.

"There's no justification for spending \$1,500 to fly her around when she has a broomstick," Delores told Tom's Reidsville lawyer, Bill Horsley. "I'm no lady. I'm a she-wolf, and I'll defend my cub if I have to."

The boys enjoyed their visit with Delores. She rented a hotel suite for several days so they would have a swimming pool to play in. They went to Mammoth Cave. They played with miniature donkeys. Delores let the boys bang on her piano and run in their socks and slide on her highly polished floors.

She felt closer to the boys after their short stay and longed to see them more. She thought that she should have some visitation rights herself and said so to her son's lawyer.

The boys liked their Uncle Fritz

That summer John and Jim began to tell their daddy about "Uncle Fritz." They had mentioned Fritz a few times before, but Tom hadn't paid much attention. He'd seen Fritz only a couple of times, knew that he was Susie's cousin and that something was peculiar about him. He'd noticed Fritz at the custody hearing the summer before. That had struck him as odd, but other things were on his mind, and he didn't think much about it.

Now the boys told him that Uncle Fritz was living with them some of the time, that he took them camping and to gun shows. They liked him; that was clear.

Tom wasn't sure that he liked Fritz having an influence on his sons, but he didn't know what to do about it. He would bide his time. His hope was that when the boys were older they would choose to live with him.

While the boys were in New Mexico, Fritz began telling a woman with whom he was having an affair about Susie and her boys. He was having to look after them, he said, because her parents had thrown her and the boys out of the house and wouldn't help them. He didn't like for the boys to be with their father, because their father used them as a front for hauling drugs into the country from Mexico. He knew a border guard who'd told him all about it.

Fritz continued working in his father's clinic after leaving the dental lab classes at Durham Technical Institute in 1983. Many patients thought he was going to make a fine doctor. His bedside manner was perfect. And he could give a shot so deftly that it was never felt. His touch was even better than his father's, some said.

After Dr. Klenner died in May 1984, Fritz continued treating some patients at the clinic. But his aunt Susie Sharp had become suspicious. She asked her friend Terry Sanford, the former governor and president of Duke University, to check on her nephew. When Sanford reported that Fritz never had been at Duke, Susie Sharp had a talk with her sister, Annie Hill, Fritz's mother, and with the family's lawyer.

Soon afterward, Dr. Klenner's clinic was closed for

good. Many patients were left desperate for their treatments and wondering what had happened to "young Dr. Klenner."

Susie Sharp also told Florence and Bob what she had discovered about Fritz. They debated whether to tell Susie but decided she wouldn't believe them. They feared that she would think it was just a ploy to get her away from Fritz and that it would drive her further from them.

Fritz, meanwhile, was getting closer to Susie. In late August 1983, he called one woman with whom he'd been having an affair, the one with the daughter, and told her that he wouldn't be seeing her anymore. His work was taking him into some highly secret and dangerous activities, he said, and he just didn't want to risk involving her and her daughter in it. She thought he'd come back after awhile, but he didn't. By the next summer, he had ended the other two relationships as well.

Flowers for the funeral

Tom had a full schedule planned when his sons came to Albuquerque for their second summer visit in 1984. He was concerned when the boys arrived with fresh scars on their faces where Uncle Fritz had cut off moles. It was all right, the boys assured him. Uncle Fritz was a doctor.

Tom taught them to ride bikes. He and Kathy took them to the Grand Canyon, and they rode donkeys down its sides. They returned to find a gift mailed to the boys by their mother — T-shirts. They had a picture of Clint Eastwood, peering over a .44-caliber Magnum. "Go ahead," the shirts declared, "make my day." Tom threw the shirts away.

Tom and Kathy also took the boys to a dude ranch in the Colorado mountains with Jerry Montgomery and his new wife. They had just returned from the ranch and were planning to leave the next weekend for Kentucky so the boys could visit Tom's mother.

Then word came on July 24 that Delores and Janie Lynch had been murdered.

Tom called Susie and asked if the boys could stay a little longer. He needed them.

No, she said coldly, she had planned a camping trip for the boys, and she couldn't reschedule it. She offered no sympathy.

The next morning, Susie called her lawyer in Reidsville, Sandy Sands. She was nearly hysterical. She told him that Tom's mother and sister had been found in a "gangland-style killing."

She was scared because the boys were with Tom. Something else was going to happen, she feared. Mobsters had killed the Lynches, she said, because Tom owed them money and needed his family inheritance to pay.

At the time, nobody had said anything about a gangland-style killing. Kentucky police were saying the murders appeared to be the result of a robbery.

On Aug. 5, on schedule, Tom flew with the boys to Dallas so they could catch a direct flight to Greensboro. In the airport during their wait, he got a pocketful of quarters and played video games with the boys. John beat him badly, and he was proud when he got to put his initials in the list of top scorers on one machine.

Tom couldn't bring himself to believe that his former wife might have had anything to do with the murders of his mother and sister. He, too, thought the murders were the result of a botched robbery. Even though Susie didn't express sympathy, she did send flowers for the funeral.

Florence wrote Tom a letter of condolence, and Tom used it as an opportunity to re-establish contact.

"I've wanted to correspond with you before this, but I felt awkward," he wrote on Aug. 27 in a five-page handwritten letter. "Since the divorce, I wasn't sure how you felt about communicating with me . . ."

"I believe that in order for children of divorce to come out of the experience as well as possible, it is vital for them to have a strong relationship with their father as well as their mother."

Tom went on to express concerns about the children's teeth, about them having no beds and sleeping on the floor and about taking too many vitamins and medicines.

"The thing that worries me most is the boys' mental state," he wrote. "I am told by the boys that they are not allowed to call us collect, say prayers about me, send school pictures, send cards or letters, or even talk about us. I see absolutely no reason for this . . . I've never received any mail from them, and neither did my family. We've never gotten thank-you notes for gifts or money we've sent the boys. We've never gotten birthday, Father's Day or Christmas cards. If I didn't call them once a week, I'd never get to hear from them."

"I have to write their teachers every year to get a progress report and copies of their report cards. I've given the boys money for school pictures and have never received any. In light of all that's happened in the last few weeks, I received no card or phone call on my birthday. I needed to hear from my boys and didn't."

Florence responded on Sept. 14.

"Yes, we agree it is very important that the boys have a strong and good relation with their father. We hope you and Susie can have good communication so the boys will not play one parent against the other. Often in divorce, parents try to 'out do' each other instead of cooperating — that is a bad situation. Parents should try to work together for the best interest of the children."

Florence went on to note that she'd offered Susie two bedroom suites for the boys' room.

"We were told the apartment was too crowded for another bedroom suite or beds," she wrote. "They are here any time they are asked for . . ."

"We do what we can to maintain contact and have told Susie and the boys to call us at anytime they need us. We are here to help when our help is wanted or needed."

'Susie can be awfully stubborn'

Tom also had written a long letter to Louise Sharp, Susie's outspoken aunt in Reidsville. It was almost identical to the one he sent the Newsoms.

Louise responded that she hadn't seen Susie and the boys since Dr. Klenner's death.

"Florence rarely sees her," she wrote of Susie, "so she can give me little news. One-sided communications are hard to pursue. I don't know why Susie is being so difficult. Florence feels that she is making her a scapegoat for her unhappiness. Of course, we don't know what happened in Albuquerque to break up your home. Susie can be awfully bossy and stubborn."

After that, Louise and Kathy began to correspond regularly in long and chatty letters.

That fall, Tom notified Susie and her lawyer that he was coming to North Carolina to visit the boys for five days during the first week in November. The court order allowed him to visit the boys in North Carolina at any time so long as he gave two weeks written notice. He decided to get an apartment instead of a hotel room so the boys would have plenty of room. He rented one at Guest Quarters, not realizing that it was in the same complex as Susie's apartment.

Tom had two aims. He wanted to see the boys, but he also wanted to try to win support from Bob, Florence and Louise for extended visits. He and Kathy took the boys to movies and a football game, bought them kick balls, visited their teachers. They also had lunch at the Reidsville Country Club with Bob, Florence and Louise. Annie Hill happened by and joined them.

Tom returned to Albuquerque feeling good about the visit.

Susie was upset by it.

Shortly before Tom arrived, she went to see her brother Rob and had a long talk about her fears. She told him that Tom had mob connections and that was why his mother and sister had been killed. She told him that she knew this because Fritz was in the CIA and had access to such information.

Rob asked if she'd told authorities about this. She said she'd told Kentucky officers, the FBI and federal drug officers. In fact, she had told none.

Susie said she was afraid that she might be killed and showed Rob a .25-caliber Browning pistol she carried in her purse.

Rob asked about her relationship with Fritz. She said he just visited often to make sure that she and the boys were OK. She said she felt safer with him around. The boys liked him, she said, and they all went camping together.

She and the boys had seen a psychiatrist, she said, and the boys were continuing to see him.

Rob was bothered by the visit. He couldn't believe Tom was involved in criminal activities. He called his father and told him that Susie was behaving irrationally. She seemed deluded. Her family was concerned but didn't know what to do about it. Susie was lost to them. She had taken the Klenners as her family.

After Tom's visit, Susie Sharp called her niece and made a date for lunch at the K&W Cafeteria. Susie arrived with Rob. Her aunt noted that the boys needed beds, told her to order bunk beds and send the bill to her. She tried to convince Susie to have a check-up at Bowman Gray School of Medicine. And she stressed that closer relations between Susie's boys and her family would be in Susie's best interest.

The boys got bunk beds, argued about who would get the top one, and ended up taking turns in it. Susie also took the boys to her parents' house for Thanksgiving dinner. Fritz wrote a long letter to Bob and Florence and said that Tom thought their trip had prompted both actions.

"We hope they show for Christmas, too," Kathy said.

She went on to report that the boys still weren't allowed to communicate with their father.

"Life is too short, and John and Jim should be able to correspond freely with their father and be permitted to have a relationship with Tom regardless of what their situation is in Greensboro. Tom says he just wants the chance to be a good and loving father to his sons. He wants to be a part of their lives, especially now while they are growing up so fast. He wants to have a positive influence on them because he feels he has a lot to offer the boys. Jim and John say they want to spend more time with us but are afraid to tell anyone."

Florence wrote back four days before Christmas to tell about going to a school Christmas program in which the boys had sung.

"Susie and the boys walked to the car with us to pick up some Christmas cookies, and we drove them home . . . We are looking forward to our Christmas Eve dinner here . . . Susie and the boys are coming, and we are delighted."

The Newsoms had a crowd for Christmas — Rob

(Continued on A9)