In Revenge and Physics, Time Does Not Exist

By Sydney White

On the 18th of October, the crowd in the book store was overflowing to the doors. The enormous cake for the 72nd birthday of Lee Harvey Oswald was in the centre and Judyth Vary Baker was cutting the first piece. She had kept her promise to Lee, that she would clear his name and let his children know that he was not the killer of President Kennedy but a young man who had tried to stop it. Her book, “Lee and Me” was selling like hotcakes, and the line-up for autographed copies lasted two hours. I bought a copy and read it before my interview with her on Friday, October 21st.

Over the next two days, I was drawn so completely into the book that I cancelled two events and several meetings. It was not written like a textbook or an affidavit, but was more like a diary of what happened to a naive school girl caught up in a conspiracy that was beyond her understanding. She was a student with an aptitude for science who wanted to find a cure for cancer. She was twenty and Lee was twenty-three, when they met, fell in love and were married. They went to Vietnam, where they were both wounded and used their knowledge of high-level electronics to work on CIA projects. It was not written like a textbook or an affidavit, but was more like a diary of what happened to a naive school girl caught up in a conspiracy that was beyond her understanding.

I arrived at the hotel around 4 on the 21st and was invited by Judith to her “celebration” family dinner where she said we could talk in an informal atmosphere. Little did I know of their library, but she asked that I sit next to her at the head of the table where she related conversations with Lee, as if they were yesterday... “Lee said that you could never own your own house, because they could take it from you for taxes.” She loved the heart system in Sweden. She would love to get another dog but “would not outlive another dog”. I replied that of course she would. She replied “No, I would not.”

The celebration was still going on; they could not see or hear what had transpired at the head of the table. They only realized what had happened when they heard me ask the manager to call an ambulance. There was obviously glass in Judith’s throat and possibly in her stomach. In fact, there were smaller sand sized pieces of glass throughout the meat on her plate. I explained to the manager that this lady was not a Canadian and had no health insurance here. After a slight hesitation he said that the hotel would pay for her emergency care. Judith anxiously asked if I were in the ambulance with her; the family were told where she was going so they could meet her at the hospital. Her reunion celebration ended as daughters, sons, grandchildren and her stepfather, knocked, went to their cars. In the ambulance, she had some difficulty swallowing as there seemed to be glass stuck in her throat. At the hospital, she was immediately taken to the triage room where her daughter was the only one allowed to sit beside her. The room was full. In spite of this frightening end to the reunion she had looked forward to for so long, Judith was determined to get to her book signing in Montreal the next day. I wondered, as her son drove me home, how this night would end.

I heard from her agent on the weekend, that indeed, this determined lady was in Montreal the next day. I salute Judith for your honesty and your true grit.

Judyth Vary Baker

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