

True confessions of a used and abused Kelsy girl

By Peg Sheldrick

The following is an excerpt from the forthcoming expose "The Story of K—Confessions of a Kelsy Girl," a gritty first-hand account of one of America's most notorious temporary employment rackets.

You've heard of Kelsy. The one to call when your secretary's out of town, your receptionist gets the flu, the typing pool runs dry. . . Anytime you need something a little—out of the ordinary. Yeah, you've heard of Kelsy. You call the number, tell them what you need, and they send someone. Someone you know you'll never see again. So you ask them to do things. . . things you know no one else would do for you.

humor

You probably never wondered where those "someones" come from. Just another pair of hands to type to you. Never mind what they used to do before they came to you. Never mind what they do when they leave you. Yeah, that's Kelsy. I should know. It wasn't that long ago I was a Kelsy Girl myself.

That's all behind me now, but I'll never forget the first day I walked into that

office, a scared little rabbit with a steno book in my hand and a lot to learn about life in the office.

Found myself

I found myself seated in a dingy little cubbyhole, fidgeting nervously while the personnel manager walked around my chair and looked me up and down.

"You ever done this kind of thing before?" he rasped, puffing contemptuously on an old cigar butt.

"No—I mean yes—well, sort of. . . I mean, when I was a child we used to play 'secretary'."

"This ain't no kid's game. Everybody's done that. I'm talking the real thing."

"Well, no I guess not."

"Oh, a nice girl. Just what I needed. I suppose you expected you'd get a permanent position first, right?"

"Well, yes."

"Yeah, yeah, settle into some vine-covered office building with Mr. Right. Well it ain't gonna happen, sis, so get that straight right now." He chomped angrily on his cigar.

"You work for me, you're gonna be doin' it for a lotta bosses. From now on, you're public property. You've made your desk and now you'll have to sit in it, heh, heh, heh. Lissen, you been out there. You know the score. You've tried the job market. Otherwise you wouldn't be here in this

joint, am I right, girly? Heh heh heh."

All too true

I felt my face redden. It was humiliating—but all too true. With nothing to offer but a summa cum laude degree in history and music theory, I knew that no decent office would hire me. He had me pegged, alright.

He could tell he had hit home. His laugh was vicious, cruel.

"Now that we got the charades out of the way, let's get down to brass tacks. What about experience? I mean the real thing."

"Well, I guess I started in high school. . . school. . ."

"Tell me about it."

I could feel the blush on my cheeks. "There—there were these boys—on the football team—do I really have to tell you this?"

"Everything. Otherwise I won't know where to—place you. Heh heh heh."

"Well, they—they had an English assignment due and—and—well, they asked me to—do it for them. What could I say? I was a lonely, desperate kid. I didn't know any better. . . I said yes."

"And I suppose they wanted footnotes, too."

"Y-yes. But how did you know?"

"Heh heh heh. They always do. Heh heh heh."

It was a long time before I could go on. "Uh, after that, of course, my reputation was shot. The boys were always asking me after that—bibliographies, essays, even note cards. It got so I could hardly walk through the halls. It was a nightmare."

Everything told

Soon I found myself telling about everything—the filing, the envelope stuffing I did in college in exchange for good grades and access to the faculty restroom. . . and even about that one professor who was into research. By the time I reached the end of my narrative I was in tears. The manager was not impressed.

"Dry up, kid. Think you're the only tomato ever gave service to get along? Geez, I heard stories that make you sound like Mary Tyler Moore."

And that's how it began—the whole squalid mess. I was just a kid then, trying to play it fast and loose. I had no idea then where it would lead—endless parade of filing cabinets, the coffee pots to fill, and those wretched, humiliating statistical jobs. . . I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

Dance instructor improvises

By Penelope Smith

For eight weeks Centennial College's new artist-in-residence, Irene Wachtel, is helping her students improve their movement and the way they approach it in their environment.

Wachtel, along with her friend Margaurite Fishman, is co-founder of Dancers For Passersby, a company which has appeared in various spots throughout Lincoln performing works choreographed for different environments.

Wachtel also has taught classes at First Plymouth Church, in Lincoln, which Wachtel called "very supportive of the arts."

Wachtel was originally from Alsace, France and came to the United States after graduating from high school.

Wachtel became interested in dance through a class at Middlebury College in Vermont but she said there was no strong dance program at Middlebury.

No background

"It was really good for me to be in a school without a dance program. I really got to do a lot for somebody who had no background, because nobody else knew what they were doing either."

Wachtel decided dance was the career she wanted to pursue. She did her master's degree work in modern dance at Ohio State University. While there she studied a technique which was to have a profound effect on her teaching and choreography.

"The Alexander technique has a lot to do with your posture, but actually posture isn't the most important part. It has to do with the quality of your movement. Basically it will improve your efficiency in any activity you do so that you have the

right amount of tension for the activity."

Laban's philosophy

The other noticeable influence on Wachtel's teaching and choreography is a written one. She is deeply interested in the philosophy of the early 20th century theoretician Rudolf Laban.

Laban formulated a philosophy of movement and analyzing movement in terms of intensity, speed, and direction in three-dimensional space.

Wachtel said Laban's work has a very positive influence on her.

"It opens up my mind. I don't get stuck in the way I do things."

Wachtel said she lets the environment influence her in what she does. Her students, some of whom are professors, are taught this approach in small classes because, she said she likes to watch everybody.

In a room that resembles a living room because studios sometimes are a "sterile environment," Wachtel helps her students gain a new awareness of their space through their performance of improvisations done to percussion and string instruments.

Penitentiary classes

As part of her contract Wachtel also teaches three days a week at the State Penal Complex to a volunteer class that is a bit different from her regular classes.

"They (regular students) are open to me and not very inhibited. At the penitentiary I must be more structured because they are very inhibited," Wachtel said. "I have to be very specific in improvisation."

Wachtel said since she started teaching at the penitentiary she has noticed improvement in her students and a lessening of their inhibitions.

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