



PROLOGUE - PSYCHEDELIC PANTS

New York City, March 13, 2013

It was one of those things you know in your gut long before your brain can register what your eyes are seeing. At first, we both tried to explain it away, but before the day was over, the truth of what had happened to us was unimaginable, yet undeniable.

Peter Richardson, my law partner and long-term colleague and friend, and I were walking back to our office after lunch at one of our favorite little French bistros in midtown Manhattan when he called my attention to a young woman in front of us.

“Look at those pants!” he said.

It was, I think, the first time in the three decades we had been working together that he had called my attention to someone on the street—not that you could miss her. She looked like Lisbeth Salander, the title character in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, except, instead of black leather, nose rings, and tattoos, she was wearing the most outrageous pair of psychedelic pants I’d seen since the hippie ’60s. They were neon-bright, a kaleidoscope of colliding colors: swirls of purple, yellow, red, and green striking a bold contrast to the gray overcast of the March sky.

Impossible to miss.

So the very last thing either of us thought at that moment was that she was a spy. Especially since she was in front of us rather than behind.

“Wow, those are bright,” I replied. “But sort of a nice throwback.”

Thinking nothing further of the woman or her pants, we continued on our way. Two blocks farther south, we stopped at the drug store to pick up a prescription. The normal ten-minute wait at the pharmacy ran a little longer than usual; a quarter hour later, back on Third Avenue, we were heading downtown to our office on East 37th Street.

And there she was again.

She'd evidently stopped to read her BlackBerry. I still didn't think too much of it then—I too have been known to stand on the street reading emails—but it was March, still winter, and still cold, and I remember that it crossed my mind that she must have been into one hell of an email exchange.

Now, late for an afternoon conference call, Peter and I hurried by the young woman in the psychedelic pants. Four blocks further south, we turned right, and leaving behind the bustle of Third Avenue, we entered the quiet residential side street where our office was located in the commercial space of a Murray Hill townhouse.

We loved our little office and our two-man law firm. It was a totally different world from the one we'd spent in Big Pharma, each occupying those spacious corner offices with dazzling city views. But we were happy in the simplicity of our new world, with our few clients, and even with the extra responsibility that came with not having any assistants to help us with our daily work. Ours had become a small world, unhurried by corporate deadlines and unstressed by corporate bureaucracy.

Once inside our office, we realized that we'd left the case folder on the subject of our afternoon conference call in my apartment, a block away. So, less than a minute after we'd arrived, we were racing out of the office. And there she was, again, standing just a few feet past our door, to all appearances, still texting. My antennae went into full alert.

“Holy shit!” I exclaimed.

We both stopped dead in our tracks.

I looked at Peter; Peter looked at me.

I knew we were both thinking the same thing but were unable to comprehend that we were beholding that same pair of unusual psychedelic pants in the heart of midtown Manhattan for the third time in less than twenty minutes.

“Peter, what are the odds that she just happened to be standing outside the drug store when we left and now just happens to be standing outside our office?”

“Not very high. I think we’re being followed,” he replied with a sigh. “But, why?”

“I have no idea, but screw that! I’m going to follow her,” I said and took off.

Her back was to me, but almost as if she had seen me coming after her, she started to run. She approached the corner when, without breaking stride, she turned her head around and looked at me. Our eyes locked for a split second. I was expecting her to turn left and continue south downtown when she abruptly turned right and headed back uptown in the same direction from which she’d just come, quickening her pace in the process. I followed suit.

At the next corner, she bolted across the street on the diagonal into four lanes of rapidly approaching traffic on Lexington Avenue, all the while looking at me over her shoulder. No sooner had she hit the sidewalk on the other side when she darted back across the street again, accelerating into a full-out sprint. Breathless, and with my mouth open, I stood on the sidewalk and watched her disappear. There was no way my old body could keep pace with a twenty-something year old.

After the shock wore off, I went to my apartment and called Peter.

“I’d like to think we are simply very popular, but there is only one explanation I can think of for us being followed,” I said while relating the details of my further adventure.

“No doubt about it,” he agreed with my unspoken conclusion. “And now we’ve blown our conference call to boot,” Peter added, always the pragmatist between the two of us.

“Someone had to have been behind us feeding her information,” I said, returning our conversation to the mysterious woman. “That is the only logical explanation for how she knew I’d taken off after her, and why she had turned her head around to look at me.”

“Do you think this is the first time, or have we been followed before?” Peter asked, now clearly upset at what had become undeniable.

“No clue.”

Peter and I were now retired from Pfizer. But we had both spent over thirty years working for the company in the legal division, and we’d been involved in a lot of high-profile litigation over the years, including the Lipitor patent infringement case and its settlement.

“And I’m guessing it’s the same outfit that hacked into my computer,” I said, remembering the unwelcome visitor I’d found scrolling through my *Inflection Point* files in the middle of the night the month before.

I’d been up late, unable to sleep, and had decided to pick off a few emails. Someone had suddenly taken over my computer, in much the same way a remote tech does when fixing it, and the cursor had started moving on its own. I had held my breath as my eyes had followed the cursor to the left side of my monitor, to my personal folders, where it had scrolled down until it had found my book’s file. That was about as much intrusion as I had been able to manage. I’d started hitting the keyboard at random to make the intruder aware of my presence. In an instant, the control of the cursor had been returned to me, and the mysterious interloper had vanished into cyberspace. I’d wondered whether I had chased them off in time, however—before they’d found my secret folder. Their cursor had been close to it.

I couldn't be sure.

"It must have something to do with that Lipitor case," I repeated to Peter in suspended disbelief.

"I can't think of any other explanation," he agreed.

For the next few weeks we both felt uneasy. Was our office being bugged? Were we being watched and followed on a routine basis? We found ourselves looking under our desks and behind picture frames for the telltale signs of little cameras or microphones. We were unnerved when we noticed parked cars with casually waiting drivers outside our apartments, and for a period of time our otherwise ordinary life took on a cloak-and-dagger feel. We became agitated when we saw a strange, camera-like object hanging in the garden at the rear of the house next door to our office. It appeared to be pointed toward our windows. A few days later, it disappeared; we never learned what it was, who had put it there...or why.

Winter was at last giving way to the arrival of spring that end-of-March day when I sat at my desk, lost in thought. With the flowers came the first signs of new life, of hope, of a fresh beginning. I wondered whether I'd ever arrive at my own new beginning, if I'd ever get past the journey that had begun for me over a decade earlier on that cold, snowy January morning. I wondered whether the downward spiral of my life would ever reach the upward curve of the inflection point.

Here we go again...

PART ONE:
BATTLES AND
STRUGGLES

*Courage is not the absence of fear,
but the triumph over it.*
—Nelson Mandela

CHAPTER 1 – WATER LESSONS

Alexandria, Virginia, July 1967

Litigation is binary. You either win or you lose.

So is a swim race.

Unlike a group sport, you either win or lose on your own.

And everyone is watching.

I was only twelve years old when I learned one of the most important lessons of my life. A lesson that I would one day bring with me to New York City, to Corporate America, to the legal division of the world's largest pharmaceutical company.

But that summer, I was still a prepubescent young girl living in Virginia who escaped the summer heat, as well as the difficulties of her life, at the neighborhood swimming pool. As a seasoned competitive swimmer, I had already been stepping up on those starting blocks for six years, having competed in my first race as a six year old. So I was used to the pre-race jitters and had developed a split-second precision ability to take off the moment the start gun fired or, in a relay event, when my teammate's arm pulled out of the water for her final stroke. Even though my feet were not allowed to leave the starting block until her hand touched the wall, I knew by the time it took my brain to send the signal to my body to dive, her hand would be there.

On this particular morning, I was in an all-star relay event. The adrenaline was pumping through my bloodstream, and my brain cells were firing just a little bit faster than

normal, making me trigger-happy. Or maybe it really wasn't the adrenaline after all. Maybe it was what had happened a few hours earlier in my bedroom during the fifteen minutes when my dad had left the house to buy the morning newspaper. Whatever the reason, three other girls depended on what I did. And what I did that morning was false start.

I knew it the instant I took off. Looking down, I could see my teammate's hand hit the wall a split second after my feet left the starting blocks. I knew a false start meant a disqualification even if my team won the race.

I hesitated in the water for half a moment as I weighed the odds—the odds that maybe the referee did not see that my feet had left the starting block early against the odds that if I turned around, swam back, and touched the wall again, my team would lose anyway. The race was already tight. My mind told me to just keep swimming—that the referee would not have seen my false start from her vantage point. But my gut was nagging me. Even at this young age, it was already a powerful force in my life.

Suddenly, I was swimming back down the pool in the wrong direction. I retagged the wall, flip-turned, and shot off in the right direction once again. I could see the other swimmers to my left and right, and they were all ahead of me. The lead I'd had when I'd started my lap was now blown. The only way to make up for the lost time was not to breathe, because each time you turn your face to take a breath, it slows down your pace a fraction of a second. So I turned my head to the side and took one last, giant breath of chlorine-filled summer air, put my face down in the water, and gave it everything I had.

I heard my father yelling his familiar "Pull, Traci" chant from the side of the pool. Inspired by his encouragement, I passed one swimmer after the next. The instant I hit the finish line, I jerked my head up and out of the water with the customary force. Only this time, I was not waiting for the timer to tell me the results of the race or looking over to find

my father's smiling face or his thumb sticking straight up. I already knew our team had won.

This time I was looking up at the sky, mouth open, gasping for air.

As I pulled myself out of the water, my teammates were jumping up and down in excitement. I saw the referee approach. She positioned herself in front of me. My oxygen-starved brain was still disoriented, and I was sure she was going to tell me my team was disqualified even though I had retouched the wall. She placed her hand on my shoulder.

"It's a good thing you swam back and retagged the wall, young lady," she said. "I saw that false start of yours."

And so, I learned a valuable lesson that day in the pool. When my gut told me what to do in life, litigation, or especially in battle, I'd better not ignore it. And with very few exceptions, all of which I ended up regretting, I never did.

CHAPTER 2 - GUIDED MISSILE

New York City, January 2003

Like many ill-fated journeys, mine began with a late train. An icy wind blowing down the frozen train tracks whipped fresh snow around my face. I looked into my cup for the tiniest bit of warmth, but the coffee was already cold. Leaning past my fellow commuters and out over the edge of the station platform farther than was sensible, I looked impatiently for the arrival of the 7:04. The parallel rails merged into a vanishing point as the track disappeared into a vague, misty haze.

Nothing.

It was my first day back to the office after the holiday period, and I knew a lot of work would have accumulated on my desk during my short absence. I was anxious to get the day started.

As I continued to peer down the train track, I felt an uneasy sense of danger and foreboding that I brushed away along with the snowflakes on my eyelashes. One of my fellow commuters became alarmed.

“You’re too close to the edge of the platform,” she advised.

I took a few steps back and away from the platform’s edge, an uncharacteristic show of caution on my part. And a tacit acknowledgement that she was right.

Several minutes later, the train arrived along with a swirl of snow that covered the recently shoveled platform. As we

made our way south, I sat looking out the window at the pristine landscape. Even the city had a deceptively virgin freshness to it, blanketed in the newly-fallen snow. But despite the beauty, the short walk from Grand Central Station to my office at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street proved to be a slippery challenge.

Bitter cold and late trains were going to be the least of the day's challenges, however. Before I returned home that evening, my team and I would be responsible for managing the biggest patent infringement case that the world's largest pharmaceutical company ever had to face. It would be a battle that would test every moral conviction I had, every truth I held self-evident, and every ounce of courage I possessed. It was a war that, in the end, would compromise my health, my mental stability, and my thirty-year career at Pfizer. I would master the art of making difficult sacrifices and overcoming the greatest of setbacks. But, most important of all, the decade-long journey I started that day would also teach me some of the most important lessons I would ever learn and to finally face a painful truth I had carefully hidden even from myself.

* * *

As I walked into my office my assistant jumped up from her desk and waved the morning mail at me.

"Please read this," she implored, following me and shutting the door behind us.

I took the letter she held out to me, but some of the pages dropped from my still frozen hands. My assistant bent down to pick them up. I squatted down as well, to help her shuffle the papers back into the correct order. Crouching together on the floor, facing each other, she caught my eye and held it. The urgency in her expression prompted me to read; it was clear she understood the significance of the letter she had just handed me. I looked down at the first page. One glance at the

opening paragraph was enough. My breath caught in my throat. I found it difficult to stand back up.

Ranbaxy, a little-known generic company based in India, had just commenced a threat to Pfizer's best-selling product, Lipitor, the world's most popular cholesterol-fighting drug. Ranbaxy was challenging all the patents that protected it from generic competition and was seeking immediate approval to market its own copycat version. I tried to collect my thoughts. My assistant must have noticed my disconcertion.

"Traci, are you okay? Should I get you some coffee?"

"No, thanks. I'll go get it."

Still in my coat, I headed down to the cafeteria. Alone in the elevator, I started pacing in the enclosed space. How could this be? After twenty-five years at Pfizer, I had just taken over the job as head of global patent litigation. I'd known it would come with big responsibilities. But I could never have imagined this big.

* * *

Returning from the cafeteria, I picked up Ranbaxy's letter again and walked across the hall to Peter Richardson's office. It would be another eight years before we'd open our own law firm together and another decade before we'd be followed through the streets of New York City by the mysterious woman in psychedelic pants.

He was organizing the mail that had accumulated on his desk over the holidays, making a neat pile of the letters he wanted to keep and ditching the rest in the wastebasket—fastidious as always. He looked up when he saw me enter.

"Hey, good morning. How was your holiday?"

"Good until now," I replied, handing him Ranbaxy's letter.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Read for yourself."

A perplexed look spread across his normally serene face.

Lipitor was the biggest-selling pharmaceutical product of all time. The sales were already high and expected to grow as the headline on John Simon's January 20 *Fortune* magazine article made clear.

"The \$10 Billion Pill: Hold the fries, please. Lipitor, the cholesterol-lowering drug, has become the bestselling pharmaceutical in history. Here's how Pfizer did it."

According to the *Fortune* article, "In 2002, Lipitor achieved estimated sales of \$7.4 billion while commanding a 42% market share in this class of drugs, known as statins."

I was the head of global patent litigation. The responsibility for protecting Lipitor's patents lay in our group, referred to as the Intellectual Property Enforcement team. My brain sprung into high gear, despite the fact that I had not yet finished my morning coffee. Peter glanced up from Ranbaxy's letter, took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes. He looked tired, although it was not yet 9:00 a.m.

* * *

I returned to my office and called Jeff Kindler, Pfizer's general counsel. His assistant picked up.

"Can I speak to Jeff please?"

"He's not here, Traci."

"Please find him." I tried to keep the panic out of my voice.

"He's not here," she repeated. "Do you want to leave a voicemail?"

"Please find him," I repeated.

She got the message.

"Okay. I'll go find him."

Less than a minute later, he was on the phone. Even though he'd been with Pfizer for less than a year, he knew me well enough to understand that I wouldn't be calling so early without a pretty darn good reason. Kindler did not appreciate

long-winded explanations—he was a busy man—and none were necessary that morning.

Kindler was one of the most charismatic men I'd ever met. He had captivated everyone at Pfizer from our board of directors on down. The first day I met him, I thought Pfizer was lucky to have lured him away from his previous employer—MacDonald's—as in the hamburger maker.

I was quick to share my thoughts with Peter.

"Wow, that guy is really great!"

"He sure is," Peter readily agreed.

Among his many skills, Kindler could work a room better than the ablest politician.

At one point during a large meeting, he was doing such a good job of it that one of my colleagues said under her breath, "What office is he running for?"

It proved to be a prescient comment. When, like a handsome senator, he focused his attention on you, you believed there was no one else in the room. And it felt good. With his perpetual tan, keen intelligence, and Harvard education, the package he presented to the company was that of a serious winner.

After concluding my call with Kindler, I sat back in my desk chair and waited for the inevitable call from Hank McKinnell, Pfizer's CEO. Hank was a serious type. Somewhat reserved and a bit aloof, he was nonetheless supportive of employees. He had started at Pfizer as a young man in 1971 and worked his way up the corporate ladder. Though some people found Hank cold, I never saw that side of his personality. I viewed him as the model of a CEO—one of Pfizer's best, brave and bold, and when he made a tough decision, he stuck to it. He was also a big fan of our legal team, often referring to us as his A-team and to me personally as his Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. It proved to be a moniker more appropriate than McKinnell could have possibly imagined.

As I waited for the call from Hank, I gazed out the office window. Despite the scene below, the hustle and bustle of one of the busiest cities in the world, I felt an intense and unfamiliar loneliness. For the first time in my professional life, I was afraid. Even though I was not yet able to define the danger, I knew, without question, that it was real.

A dull, distant drum began to beat in my head. My life was about to change. I knew it at a cellular level, even though I tried to dismiss the mounting siren I heard in my ears.

But it was soon to reveal its true meaning.

A call to the battle that was about to begin.