



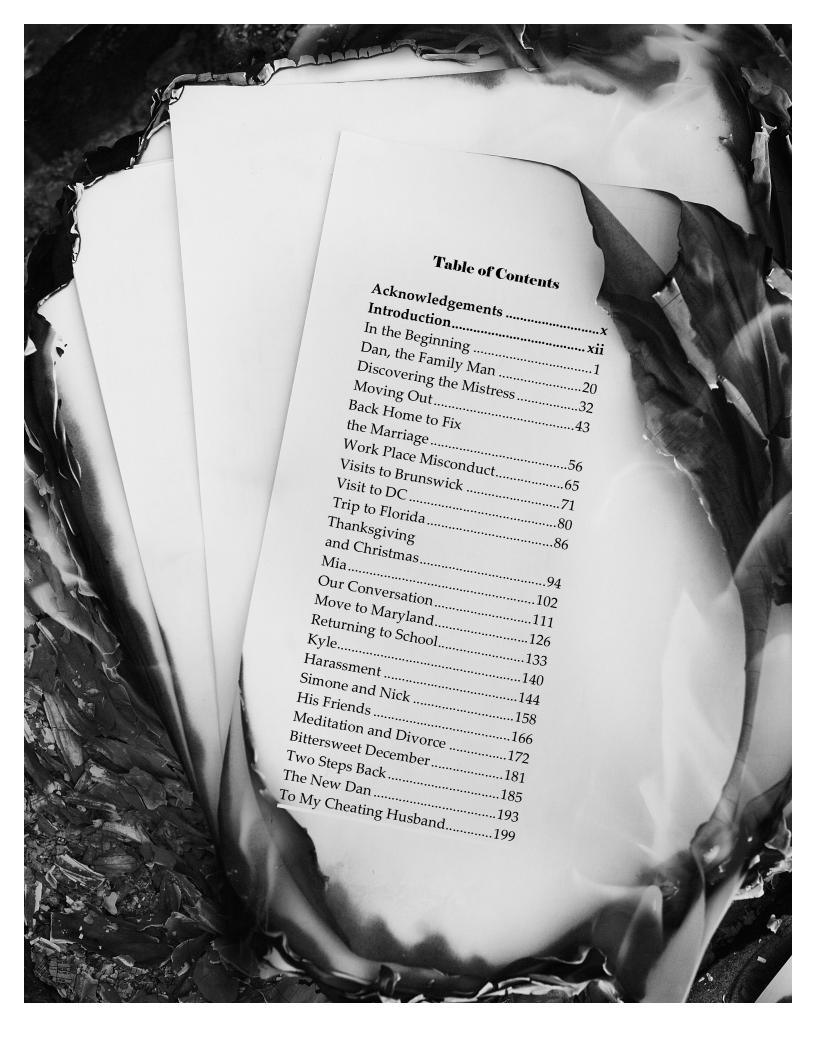


## Letter's to My Husband's Mistress

In memory of my beloved parents,

who instilled great morals and values in my life

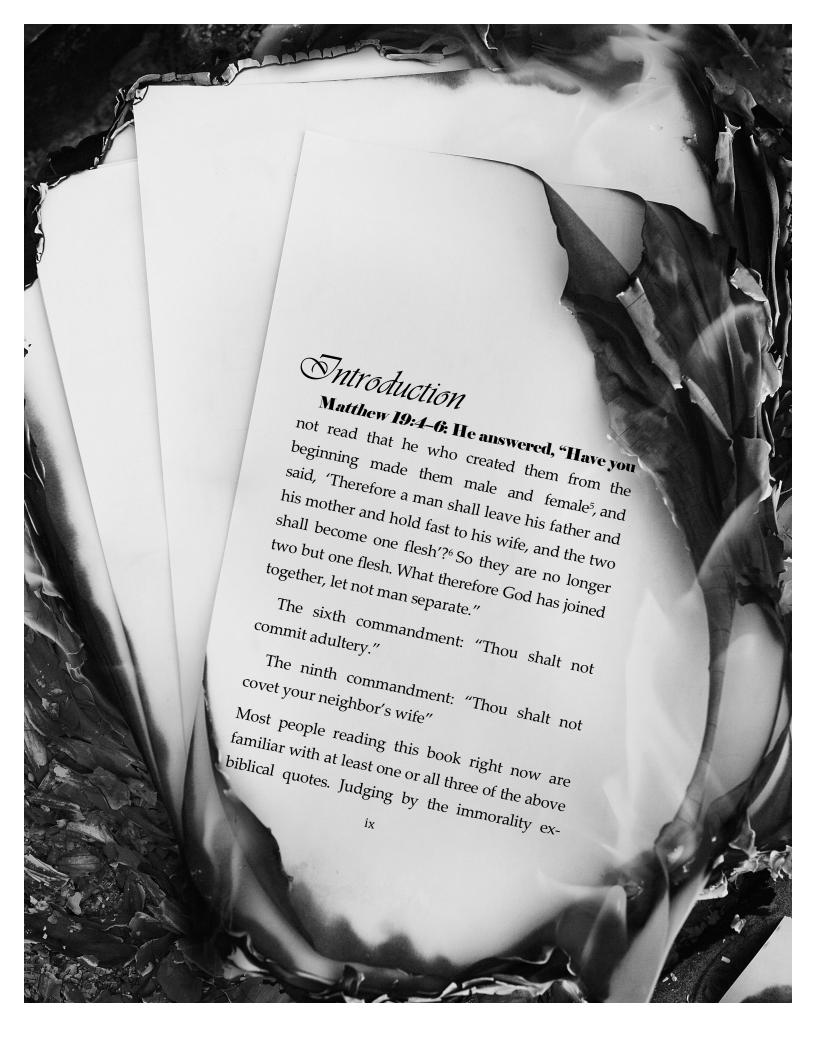






And professional associates as well. Everyone in my life stood on the sidelines and cheered my on. I assure you I would not be where I am today had it not been for the love and support of every one of my family members and friends. I consider each and every one of you to be the blessings in my life and the wind beneath my wings. You all gave me the strength to get out of bed every day and be productive. At no time during my ordeal did I ever feel that I was alone. All that I have accomplished, since my life had the sudden change of direction, I credit to my family and friends, who were determined to see me become victorious in spite of life's vicissitudes.

My thanks is also extended to my therapist and friend; my doctor who managed all the health issues I developed during this time; my professor at my university who helped me to see myself as an inspiration to others; my friend and attorney who assisted me in the early stages in my divorce; my friend, Romeo, who helped me with most matters pertaining to mine and my daughter's vehicle and became a truly good friend in the process; my friend Gary for helping me with numerous problems related to household and computer repairs; Dionne, for being so wonderful to me in many ways, but most importantly, she typed my book once it was written; and Debbie Lawrence, the author of *Your Year of Turn Around: Forty Days of Encouragement*, who was my inspiration and became my self-appointed coach, mentor, and motivator.



sion taking place in our society right now, it makes me ask the question, does anyone care what is said in the bible?

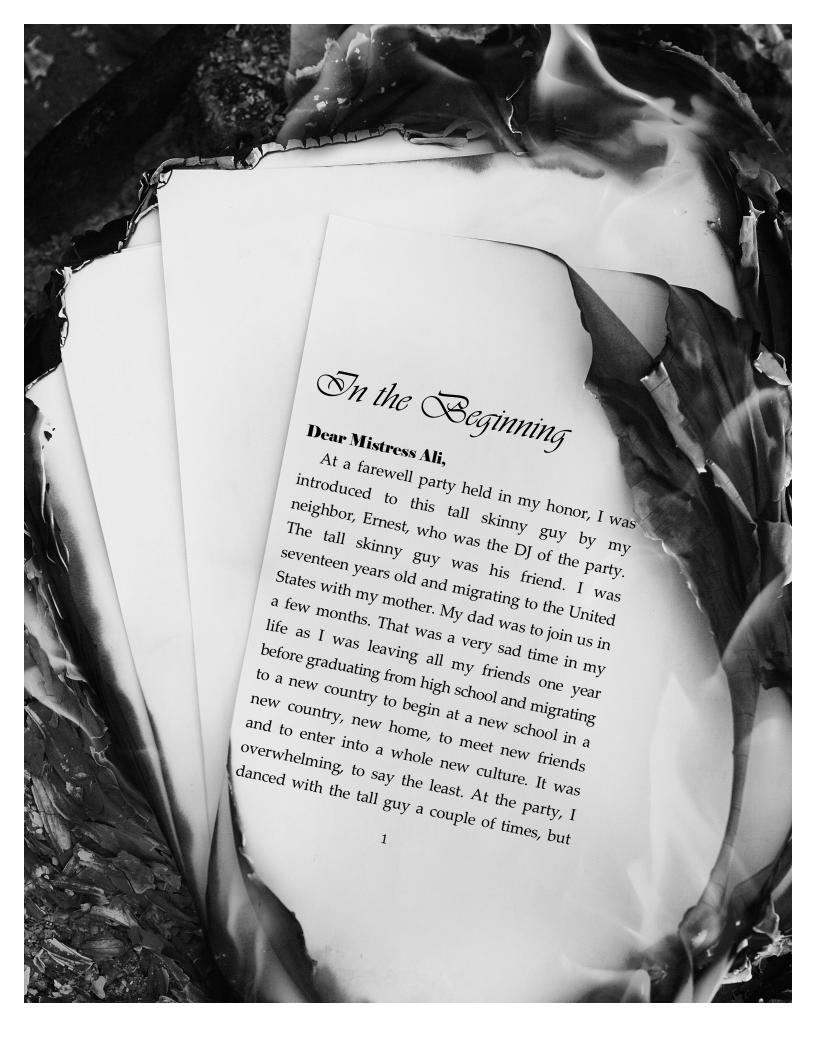
I embarked on this project of writing my book and telling my story for several reasons.

- 1. Infedelity is wrong and it does not matter how long it has been around and how many people are it; it is painful and destructive.
- 2. In today's society, cheating seems to have become a sport and the participants seem to have no shame.
- 3. The world is really in a sad place when women who are mistresses are
- A. proud and unashamed of their position as a mistress.
  - B. given the forum on live television programs to speak about themselves and their adulterous relationships. Some even write books and speak negatively about the wife of their married lover; how sad!

We are all privy to information about Tiger Woods and his multitude of mistresses, John Edwards and Rielle Hunter, Arnold Schwarzenegger and his nanny, Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, Elliott Spitzer and Ashley Dupree, just to name a few. The sad situation behind all these affairs is that there are wives and children. No one ever hears about them. They are the silent victims of infidelity who are never given an opportunity to express their pain and explain to all the women out there who think it is acceptable to sleep with a married man what their immorality has done and what pain it has caused.

I was with my husband for thirty-nine years at the time of my divorce and married for thirty-six. It goes to show that no one is immune or exempt from infidelity no matter how long you were married.

I want to tell my story to be the voice for all those women who have walked in my shoes, whether your marriage survived the affair or not. I want women to know that there is life after an affair or a divorce. I want to tell my story so I can be of some support to women and children who are the victims of cheating husbands and their mistresses. Wives, do not be ashamed. You have done nothing wrong. My husband's mistress fought me for my husband with the help of her family, my husband's boss, and a campaign of harassment executed by her sister. The sad thing is that both my ex-husband and his mistress/ wife are living a lie, giving the world the impression that their marriage was built on love. Well, my children, my family, my friends and I are here to let the world know that their marriage was built on other people's pain. I want my ex-husband and his mistress/wife and their family to know everything about what pain they caused my children and I, and the truth about the lie they are living.



nothing was memorable about him other than the fact that he had on a blue shirt. He was so tall it hurt my neck to dance with him. My real memories of that night were bing with all my friends and having fun.

One year later, I returned to my homeland to attend and be a part of my friends' graduation party. My best friend, Hannah, was attending the party with my friend, neighbor, and DJ from my farewell party, Ernest. Upon realizing that he would be attending the party with both girls, I think Ernest thought three's a crowd, so he quickly made contact with his friend, the tall skinny guy whose name was Dan and invited him to the graduation party. We all had a lot of fun at the party, but I had the best time of all being reunited with all of my high school friends whom I had kept in touch with by writing letters every day for the entire year that I was in the United States. Being at that graduation party had me in a state of complete euphoria, in contrast to my twelfth grade year, which I spent in a new school, in a new culture, where I felt lonely and isolated.

I stayed in Trinidad for two and a half weeks after the graduation party and found myself in the company of Dan every day for the duration of my vacation. My neighbor Ernest was dating my friend Hannah who, according to her parents, was not allowed to date. However, her parents approved of our friendship, and as a result, had no problem with Hannah spending the entire three weeks with me while I was in Trinidad on vacation. Neither Hannah nor I felt it was okay for her to go out with Ernest alone, so I tagged along. Ernest had no intentions of having me along every time he ventured out

on a date with my friend, so he decided to bring along his friend to keep me occupied while he walked on the beach, danced in the club, or attended the movies with Hannah alone. Dan was forced to interact with me, and I with him. We talked and laughed together and often found humor in the fact that we were not dating but we were together every day at every place that Ernest and Hannah went on their date. The more time Dan and I spent together, the more we talked and the more interesting he became, and pretty soon the words *tall* and *skinny* were replaced with *handsome* and *sweet*.

During the course of our many conversations, I learned that sweet, handsome Dan was migrating to the United States the following month. The prospect of continuing our friendship when he came to the United States was very exciting to me, and apparently it was to him also, because the night before I left to return home to the US Dan told me that he would love to continue seeing me when he comes to the US and made me laugh when he said, "Thank God this time it would be voluntary and without Ernest and Hannah." I was really excited at that thought and we exchanged phone numbers.

The very day Dan arrived in the US, he called me and we began dating the following week. We spoke on the phone daily for hours and saw each other as often as we could. We quickly became best friends and really enjoyed each other's company. At the time, Dan lived in the Bronx and I lived in Brooklyn. Dan did not have a car at the time, so riding the New York subway was his mode of transportation. That did not stop him from visiting me every week when he was off

from work.

Dan was the guy I've been dreaming of. He was caring, thoughtful, very romantic, and treated me like a queen. Because of Dan's easygoing disposition, he quickly became close friends with my brother Allen. Many times my brother would allow him to stay overnight at his home instead of getting on the subway after one of our dates. I was happy about that because I always felt a bit guilty. After our dates, he would take me home and then he had to make a two-hour commute to go to his home in the Bronx. As a result of my brother's kindness toward Dan, they established a close friendship that lasted a bit longer than my marriage. About one year after dating, Dan and I were madly in love and we began to talk about spending the rest of our lives together. We became officially engaged two and a half years later on December 31, 1974. We were married three years and one month after the day we met on July 26, 1975. (Ernest and Hannah both married different people.)

My wedding was quite a spectacular affair, with family and friends coming from everywhere to be part of the celebration. Our marriage was blessed by both our parents. I loved Dan's family and they loved me. His mother was the best mother-in-law any girl could have hoped for. His sisters and brothers were wonderful to me. I was happy and in love. I was not only loved by my husband, but also by his entire family. Dan also loved and respected my parents and siblings. Everyone in my family, in turn, loved Dan as well. Because Dan and I dated for three years and one month before we tied the knot, close relationships between himself and my family

members were formed long before our wedding. My parents, whom I loved and respected more than anything, were very happy with my choice of husband. My two older brothers, who were very protective of their sister, not only loved Dan but also thought of him as a brother before we were even married. My oldest brother, who still considered me to be his baby sister, was a little more resistant to that brotherly love so early in the friendship. Dan made no special effort to win him over, but it was not long before my oldest brother accepted him into our family without any reservations.

As newlyweds do, Dan and I made plans together about our future. I had taken a medical leave of absence from college in my freshman year and Dan started at a different college around the same time. As we were now a married couple, we decided that it wouldn't make much sense for both of us to work and attend school at the same time. It would make more sense for him to work and go to school and I would just work until he graduated. Then, I would go to school and he would work, assuming that upon graduation he would have been in a position to secure a much better paying job. Well, my mother always said, "If you want to hear God laugh, make a plan." That statement was so apropos. On May 25, 1977, the day of Dan's final exam before graduation, our precious son Nick was born. To say that Dan and I were ecstatic would be an understatement. Fortunately, my pregnancy was what I defined as a great experience. I was not sick, not one day in the entire nine months, and was fortunate to have been able to continue working until just one week before our son was born.

Fifteen months later, Dan had still not found that "better

paying job" and I was then pregnant with our second child. Dan had been working two jobs in order to support his family. At times he became a bit frustrated and tired of the routine, but we prayed every day that the job he was so desperately seeking would be found. With a nineteen-month-old baby and another on the way, we decided to take a trip to Trinidad while we still could to visit our friends and family for Christmas. This trip changed our lives in a way that we could not have expected or anticipated. While in Trinidad, thanks to a friend, Dan was offered a job with a very lucrative compensation package. He accepted the job. Needless to say, at this point all my plans of returning to college to complete my degree were now derailed.

Dan returned to the US in January to shop, pack, and ship our household belongings. He worked for a couple more months, resigned both his jobs, and returned to Trinidad in time for our baby's arrival, which was met with as much excitement and joy as our firstborn's, though neither of us thought that was possible. On May 17, 1979, we welcomed our precious, beautiful baby girl Simone.

Dan and I continued to reside in Trinidad for another seven years, during which time we gave birth to Kyle, born on July 17, 1984, another one of God's gifts. When Kyle was two years old, there was a drastic change in the economy in Trinidad and Tobago. Dan's mom and some of his siblings were living in the US, so we made a decision to return there. Dan had been working at a very demanding job in Trinidad where he gained a wealth of knowledge and experience and decided to give the US job market one more try. Seven years after living in Trinidad, we migrated to Queens, New York. We lived in New

York for one short year.

The transition was a difficult one for each of us, but we got through it as a family. Dan and I shared the same priorities, which were our children. We did whatever worked for them; no matter the sacrifice, we worked as a team. We were fortunate to attain employment with Pan Am Airlines shortly after we found an apartment. I worked from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and Dan worked from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. We made a decision to put our two older children in Catholic school to help with their adjustment because that's what they were accustomed to in Trinidad. Needless to say, it was quite expensive to have one child in nursery school and two children in Catholic school. The money we were making was just not enough. Since I only worked a few hours at Pan Am, we decided and agreed that I should get another job.

I got another job, working from 7:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. That was not easy, but it was necessary. I left to go to work at 6:00 p.m. and came home at 3:45 a.m., then left for my other job at 5:15 a.m. and returned home at 10:30 a.m. I would sleep for about four hours and then go pick up the children from school. Once we came home, I prepared dinner and we ate before I had to leave for work again at 6:00 p.m. Dan took care of the kids' afterschool and bedtime routine, laundry, and cleaned up after dinner. I never complained, and neither did he. We just did what it took. It was no different from when we were first married and Dan worked full-time and attended university full-time as well.

After one year of this routine, Dan decided that he wanted

to move to Atlanta, but I wanted to move to Florida, where all my siblings were living. In July, we took a weekend trip to Atlanta for our anniversary. By the end of the three-day visit to Atlanta, I was sold on the idea of moving there too. I got a transfer with Pan Am, and by August the children and I were living in Atlanta so that they could start the school year. Dan found a job and moved in November that year.

When we moved to Atlanta and gave birth to our fourth child, Mia, Dan did not want me to work. Apart from his nine-to-five, he had a part-time job on evenings and weekends. With four children, two jobs just afforded us the ability to pay our bills and feed and clothe ourselves and our children. Neither of us complained as we always tried to make life easier for one another. We had dinner as a family every night before Dan left for his part-time job. When it came to disciplining the kids, we supported each other in front of the kids even though we may have disagreed behind closed doors. Dan was pretty strict with the boys but much more lenient with the girls. I cooked. Dan cooked. I did laundry. Dan did laundry. I cleaned. Dan cleaned. We both loved to entertain. When the kids were younger, both Dan and I shared the household responsibilities; not necessarily 50/50, but fair enough. I did not share the financial responsibility 50/50 either, but it was also fair enough.

When my last daughter started school in 1995, I went back out to work. Dan did not like the idea, but we made it work for a while. Dan was not the one in our relationship that had the responsibility of the children's school activities and academic progress. An example of this was when Mia started school. Dan had the job of getting her registered as I had just started a new job. About two weeks after school began, I took Mia to school and wanted to meet her teacher.

While walking toward the kindergarten hall with Mia to go to her class, she kept saying, "This is not the way to my class."

I ignored her. When we actually got to the kindergarten hall I asked, "Which classroom is yours?"

Again she said, "This is not the way to my class."

Bewildered at this point, I instructed her to take me to her class. Upon arriving, I saw written in big letters on the wall next to the door "First Grade." I walked in and introduced myself to the teacher, who expressed her pleasure to meet me and continued to let me know that she was going to give me a call sometime that week, her reason being that all of the rosters were finally complete and Mia's name was not on hers. Just to be 100 percent sure I asked what grade this was and she told me first. I had to explain to the teacher that my husband was the one who registered Mia. Clearly he was out of his league in this area and had no idea what he was doing. Mia turned five the very week school opened in August, but when he registered her he put her in first grade. We were both amused by this incident, and the teacher even suggested Mia remain in first grade because she was academically on level with the other children in the class. I did not choose that option as Mia was still my baby, who just turned five and needed to be with the babies in kindergarten.

By the end of the first term in December of that year, I with-

drew Mia from kindergarten and homeschooled her because her kindergarten teacher called me in for a conference to let me know that Mia was way too advanced for kindergarten and she did not think it was beneficial to keep her there. The principal, however, would not allow the move to first grade because of her age, so I did what was best for Mia. It was the best decision I could have ever made. As a result, I had to change my shift at work to 5:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. Dan got his wish in a way because I was home all day. We both were happy with this new schedule. On my way to work, I dropped the children off for swimming lessons, and Dan picked them up on his way home from work. Eventually we agreed to homeschool Kyle also. I was no longer there for dinnertime but Dan was. That was just the sacrifice we had to make for our children and we were both in agreement.

This arrangement worked for four years until I developed adult onset asthma. I worked at a car rental company and fortunately—or unfortunately, depending on who is looking at it—one of my triggers was the fumes from the cars on the job. I was forced to quit my job. Less than one month later, I was offered a job with an airline. Dan was opposed to this as he did not want me working again. I have always loved traveling, and since we had four children and limited disposable income, I thought it would be a great opportunity for the family to have. Dan disagreed; he had some valid points. Working with the airlines involved working possibly different shifts every time there was a shift bid. Some of the shifts began as early as 4:30 a.m., and the last shift was scheduled to end at 11:00 p.m. but could really end later, especially in the wintertime.

After a lot of discussion between Dan and me, we still could not agree. By this time our children's ages were twenty-one, nineteen, fourteen, and eight. We decided to have a family discussion. I really wanted to accept the job and Dan really did not want me to take it. It was just part-time, so I could not understand his opposition. Together with the kids, we discussed the pros and cons of taking a part-time job with the airlines. We all discussed the fact that every child would have more responsibility as I would be working on weekends and not available for some of my regular weekend chores. I think all that my children got out of the discussion was the fact that they could have an opportunity to travel and see different parts of the world that they otherwise would not be able to see.

At the end of the discussion, it was agreed by all, including Dan, that I would take the job. I worked with that airline for ten years and Dan never took advantage of the benefits, not even one time. I sometimes wondered if that was him being passive-aggressive about not getting his way. However, thanks to the airlines my children and I have collectively visited Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, Hawaii, Canada, France, Spain, Scotland, Wales, Switzerland, Ireland, England, Italy, the Bahamas, Mexico, Beijing, St. Martin, Ghana, Martinique, Aruba, Anguilla, St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, and St. Vincent. That is just internationally. We traveled domestically to too many places to mention.

Nick, being twenty-one when I started working with the airlines, did not have an opportunity to travel with us as he

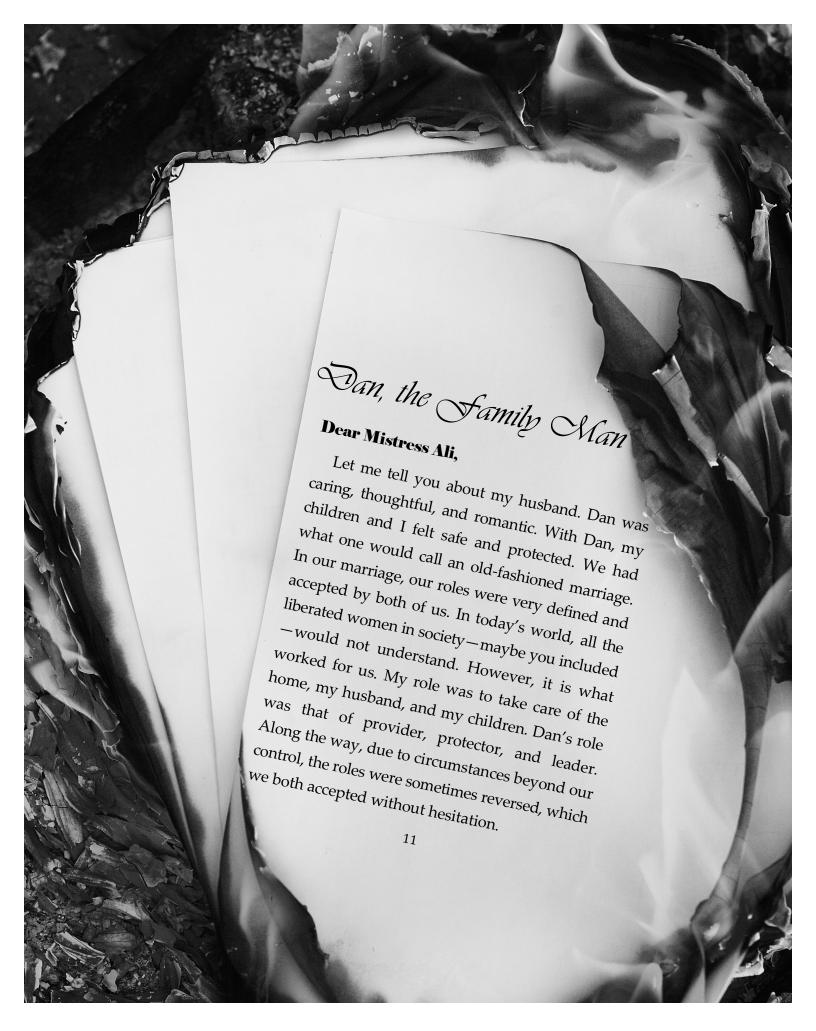
had an independent life living on his own. The two younger children did the most traveling. Simone went to Paris to study the summer before her senior year of college. Dan promised he was going to accompany us when we visited her, but he never did. I paid \$63 (USD) for three first-class round-trip tickets to Paris. At \$21 a person, Dan still refused to go, much to the annoyance of my friends and family, who could not understand my degree of tolerance. What no one knew was that Dan was petrified of flying. I traveled with Dan a couple of times to Trinidad and once to Martinique and the experience was horrendous. I really believed in my heart that if I insisted on Dan traveling with us each time, that I could cause him to have a heart attack from the experience and I did not want that responsibility.

Whenever Dan did travel, he had to take either a valium or an alcoholic drink. For days prior to a trip he would be in a different mood. When he worked in Atlanta, he only had to travel once a year, usually to his job's head office in Utah. He never got used to the trip. Every year he would try to talk himself into why he should not go, but he went anyway. The kids and I always felt sorry for him, though they still begged him to come with us on trips at different times. In the end, we all accepted that his extreme fear and anxiety of flying could be detrimental to his wellbeing. It was not a responsibility we cared to have.

We went to Jamaica many times, only paying \$9 a person round-trip, and again we traveled first class. That was a twohour flight out of Atlanta, and Dan had a close friend who

## Letters to My Husband's Mistress

lived in Jamaica that he never visited. As a family, the only time we all ever traveled together was on the way back from my dad's funeral, six months after I started to work with the airlines.



Dan was not what one would call a modern-day dad who was friends with his children. Dan was the kind of dad that I grew up with. My mom was a stay-at-home mom and my dad was the bread-winner and disciplinarian. They raised seven children with morals and values, with family being a priority. My parents were married for fifty-seven years when my dad passed away.

Family was important to Dan. He was loved by his nieces and nephews, my nieces and nephews. He had close relationships with his sisters. He was not as close with his two brothers, but he loved them and they loved him. When Mia was baptized on Thanksgiving weekend in 1990, my entire family, which consisted of twenty-nine people at the time, drove up from Florida and everyone stayed at our home. That weekend, which consisted of four days, will be remembered as one of the most fun, memorable weekends of our life. Dan cooked and entertained for the entire weekend. I had the young baby at the time, so I was of little help to him. Dan had no complaints about all that work. As a matter of fact, as a result of that weekend, we made it a new family tradition for everyone to come to Atlanta for Thanksgiving. In addition to our immediate family, Dan and I extended invitations to anyone who had nowhere to go for Thanksgiving. To this day, twenty-four years later, the tradition continues. Of course the family has more than tripled in size, so the younger generation may spend the holiday weekend with their respective families. My siblings and their spouses, together with some of their children, continue to come.

Sunday at our home was always a day spent with family and our friends who visited, either invited or uninvited, it never mattered to us. If we had friends who lived alone, they were always invited to our home for dinner on a Sunday. When my nephew Morehouse university, he was always welcomed at our home with any of his friends who had a desire to have a home-cooked meal, whether it was just for the weekend or a holiday. Dan and I were always in agreement, helping anyone anytime we needed to. When our older children attended college, their friends were also always welcomed.

When a friend of Dan's was experiencing problems during her divorce, Dan and I kept her children almost every weekend as she had to work two jobs to survive and we did not want the children to be alone on the weekend. I sometimes worked on the weekend, especially on some Saturdays. That made no difference to Dan. He let the children come over and everyone was fed and supervised and taken care of.

We had another friend who had problems with her husband. Who did she turn to for help and advice? No other than Dan. There were several occasions when my friend and her husband came over to talk to Dan as he was respected and kind and always seemed to make an impact in a positive way.

We also had two friends who were single parents of two teenage boys who were beginning to exhibit some discipline issues in school and at home. The mothers felt frustrated and alone. They turned to Dan, who in turn would go to the respective homes and have a talk with the young men. Again, there was always a positive outcome and the mothers could not stop thanking Dan for his help, advice, and support.

Neither Dan nor our four children liked store-bought bread. As far back as I could remember, the first year in our marriage, Dan began to bake bread every Saturday night. This became a tradition that was developed and continued for as many years as we were married. Every Saturday night, when the kids were growing up, we would watch television while Dan made the bread. The children would be tired and sleepy, but it was literally impossible to get any of them to go to bed until that bread came out of the oven. No matter how they were falling asleep on themselves, once I suggested that they go to bed they became wide awake until that bread came out of the oven and they had a couple of slices of hot bread with butter. Sometimes they would have the bread with cheese, but usually everyone just wanted bread and butter. After we had devoured a couple of loaves, then and only then would any of the children willingly go to bed.

Dan was also wonderful to my parents. When my dad was getting on in age, he began to be less inclined to accept invitations from his friends to visit them at their homes. My mom, on the other hand, was always ready to accept the invitations. This caused a little conflict between them sometimes. On one occasion when we visited my parents, they were having a discussion and my mom was upset. Upon inquiring about the situation, it was explained to Dan and me that my parents were invited to a friend's house for dinner. My parents got dressed, but when my uncle arrived to transport my parents my dad decided that he did not want to go anymore. My uncle left and my parents were left at home, much to my mom's annoyance. Dan listened to the story, then tried to coax and encourage my dad to

change his mind. Dan told me to go and open the car door, and before anyone could blink, he picked my dad up in his arms as if he were a six-month-old baby and put him in the car. All the while, my dad kept saying, "Put me down, put me down." Dan joked, "Dad, I gave you an opportunity to do it the easy way or the hard way. You chose the hard way." My mom got into the car and Dan drove them to the friend's house. My mom could not stop laughing. Even my dad had to laugh. After that day, any time my dad was being stubborn for no reason, my mom would say, "Do you want me to call Dan?" That usually took care of the issue. My parents loved Dan like a son instead of a son-in-law and he would have done anything for them.

One day while I was at work, one of my coworkers came and told me about one of her friends from another airline who was recently diagnosed with cancer. She also told me that the young lady with cancer was having a very difficult time financially. She mentioned this to a few of us, so we made a decision to try and help the young lady. After some discussion, we decided to have a fundraiser selling hotdogs or something. I immediately volunteered my husband to help cook the food. I could make that offer without even discussing it with Dan beforehand because that was the kind of man he was. When I did come home and ask him if he would help, the only thing he wanted to know was how many lunches we were trying to sell. I told him as many as he wanted. Dan cooked food, set it up in the serving pans, packed it in my vehicle for me to transport to the airport, and told me what to do when we were ready to serve. Together with the other coworkers who cooked, we made over \$1,300 on that day and the young lady with the cancer diagnosis was forever grateful.

Together with contributions from other coworkers and Dan, we repeated this on another occasion when one of our coworker's mother passed away suddenly. The mother's body had to be sent to another state for burial. This coworker was one of the youngest employees in our company, so everyone got involved to help with the cost of the funeral and service.

As I mentioned earlier, Dan was a real family man and dad. Every Christmas, as long as we had been a family, we drove to Florida. Even though I had airline benefits for the last ten years of our life together, as I also mentioned earlier, Dan was petrified of flying. We usually left on the last day that Dan worked before Christmas. Dan would come home from work and go directly to bed. While he slept, the children and I would clean the house, do all the laundry, pack for the trip by making sandwiches, and then the boys would pack the car. When we were all ready, we would wake Dan. We would get into the car with our pillows and blankets and we would leave for Florida around midnight. Dan preferred this time as he liked to drive when everyone else was sleeping and he could drive in peace and quiet with just his music for company. We did this every year while we were married and we continued the tradition to this day, except now we leave in the day instead of the night.

When I worked with the airline in Atlanta, I usually worked the early morning shift, which started at 4:30 a.m. I did this for ten years and I left home at 3:45 every day. There was not one day in the ten years that I did this shift that Dan

did not interrupt his sleep at 3:45 a.m. every morning to stand at the door and tell me goodbye and see me get into my car and drive off. In the beginning I felt bad seeing him get out of his bed and interrupt his sleep. Dan assured me, however, that he can go right back to sleep, so it does not matter. He hated that I had that shift but recognized that it worked better for the children as I was home by 1:30 p.m. I was home in time to take a nap, prepare dinner, and pick the kids up from school. This was Dan, the good guy and loving father, son, and son-in-law.

When we were married for twenty-five years, Dan decided to have a huge anniversary party. At first I was reluctant about having the party as I felt it was going to be too much of a financial strain, but Dan insisted and since he was the one who managed our finances, being an accountant by profession, it was not long before I was on board with the party idea. Dan had begun making plans with our oldest daughter and I had limited input except for finding the venue. Our family and friends came from Trinidad, Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida to attend the event. It was a great party, and in the end I was truly happy that Dan had insisted. During the planning stage, Dan, in an effort to surprise me, found and purchased the tune we danced to at our wedding, "Make it with You," sung by a group called Bread. Some of the words to the tune are as follows:

Life can be short or long

Love can be right or wrong

And if I chose the one I'd like to help me through I'd like to make it with you
I really think that we could make it, girl

I had not heard that tune in several years. In 2000, things were not as accessible as they are today on YouTube and the Internet. Imagine my complete surprise when during Dan's speech at the party he began to tell our guests about the song we danced to at our wedding and he broke into song. Pretending to have difficulty singing, he turned to the DJ and said, "DJ, help me out," and then the DJ began to play our tune. I was truly overcome with emotion when I got up to dance to our tune that we had danced to twenty-five years ago. I will never forget the feeling I had at that moment as I considered that to have been the most romantic thing that Dan had done for me, and he was a romantic guy. That moment made the party, the expenses, and the work in preparation all worth it.

Some friends and family contributed to the magic of that night with speeches in which they all congratulated Dan and me on our twenty-fifth-year milestone. Everyone expressed love and support; some were serious, some were humorous, but they were all appreciated. My younger brother ended his speech with the line, "Once again, I would like to congratulate Dan and Eva for reaching this milestone and raising four wonderful children. I wish them another twenty-five happy years; however, if Eva and Dan should ever end in divorce, we want Dan."

Never in a million years could I or anyone at that party have imagined that six years following that magical, romantic night I would be in a position where I would be fighting to save my crumbling marriage, six years after Dan stood before all our close friends and family members and publicly professed his love to his wife and children. Dan described me as the peak in the marriage and he described himself as the valley. Dan described me as having a great personality and being a good-times person, while he considered himself to be more reserved and the person responsible for holding everything together. When he spoke about the children, he said, "Over the years, we have raised four children and that has been a challenge; however, I would not trade anyone in my family for the world. Even though my wife and children find me to be a little picky, when I look at my kids I am proud of who they are. I am not going to change for the simple reason that it works. I love my wife and my kids 'til death do us part."