

A PECKING ORDER

I'm down to three a day. Even my doctor remarked, "Your ulcer is healed, it's going away." With the airline I had no free will. I was just part of that stupid computer.

I remember when I went to work for the airlines, they said, "You will eat, sleep, and drink airlines. There's no time in your life for ballet, theater, music, anything." My first supervisor told me that. Another agent and I were talking about going to the ballet or something. He overheard us and said we should be talking about work. When you get airline people together, they'll talk about planes. That is all they talk about. That and Johnny Carson. They are TV-oriented people.

I had much more status when I was working for the airlines than I have now. I was always introduced as Beryl Simpson, who works for the airlines. Now I'm reduced to plain old Beryl Simpson. I found this with boy-friends. I knew one who never dates a girl with a name. He never dates Judy, he never dates Joan. He dates a stewardess or a model. He picks girls for the glamor of their jobs. He never tells you their names. When I was with the airlines, I was introduced by my company's name. Now I'm just plain old everyday me, thank God.

I have no status in this man's eyes, even though I probably make twice as much as the ones he's proud of. If I'd start to talk about some of the stocks I hold, he'd be impressed. This is true of every guy I ever dated when I was working on the airlines. I knew I had a dumb, stupid, ridiculous, boring job, and these people were glamorizing it. "Oh, she works for the airlines." Big deal. When I used to go back home, the local paper would run my picture and say that I work for the airlines and that I had recently returned from some exotic trip or something. Romance.

A lot of times we get airline stewardesses into our office who are so disillusioned. We'd like to frame their applications when we get a bright-eyed, starry-eyed kid of eighteen who wants a career in the airlines. Big as life disillusionment. We want to say, "It's not what it's cracked up to be, girlie." If a girl's a stewardess, she might as well forget it after twenty-six. They no longer have compulsory retirement, but the girls get into a rut at that age. A lot of them start showing the rough life they've lived.

JILL TORRANCE

She is a photographer's model, high fashion. Her face is a familiar one in magazine ads as well as on television commercials. She has been engaged in this work for eight years. She earns the city's top rate: fifty dollars an hour.

I do whatever kind of products anyone wants. This week I had a job for some South American product. They said, "We want you to be sexy, coy, pert, but not too effervescent." It always means the same smile and open eyes. For forty-five minutes they tell you what they want. They explain and explain and you sort of tune out and do the same thing.

There are a lot of people there: the person who has the product, the man from the ad agency, a couple of people from the photography studio, the stylist, who poses your dress to make sure it hangs right . . . suddenly there are a dozen people standing around. Each is telling you to do something else. You know they are even more insecure than you. You pretend you're listening and you do what you'd planned to do in the first place. When you've worked before a camera long enough, you know what they want even though they don't.

At first you work very hard to try to discover different looks and hairdos. After a while, you know them all. Someone once asked me, "Why do high-fashion models pose with their mouths open? They look like they're catching flies." (Laughs.) This look has been accepted for a long time. They want everything to be sexy, subtle or overt. After a while, it's automatic.

Now the natural look is in. Jumping up and down or staring out there . . . What's natural about looking into space? They want you natural but posed. (Laughs.) How can you feel natural with three pounds of make-up, in some ridiculous costume, standing there and looking pretty? What they think of as being natural is very phony.

You never know from day to day. I did a job for a snow blower in Michigan. It's a little machine that ladies are able to push to get snow out of the way. It was ten below. We flew over at five thirty in the morning. I had my long underwear on, but I forgot to wear my heavy shoes and I froze my feet. You're either doing fur coats in 110 degrees in the summer or bathing suits in the winter. I do whatever they ask me. I take the money and run.

Someone will call you at seven in the morning and say be ready at eight thirty. Can you be there in forty minutes? You're a basket case trying to get your wardrobe together and be there on time. You're having a cup of coffee, suddenly the phone rings and you have to run. It's terrible. Somehow you manage to make it on time. I'm very seldom late. I'm amazed at myself.

I'd like to say I'm sick and can't make it, but I seldom turn something down unless I think it's really awful. Usually I'm just rushing and do the job. I feel guilty if I say no. When you're working for one agency, they expect you to be on call. Otherwise the client may think you're too pampered.

You go out of your house with your closetful on your arm. Different colors and shoes to match and purses and wigs. Every time I get a taxi, they think I'm going to the airport. They're upset when I'm going ten

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blocks away. I've never found one to help me in or out of a cab. And I'm a good tipper. So I've developed these very strong muscles with one shoulder lower than the other from carrying all the wardrobe about. (Laughs.)

In the middle of the winter it's really horrendous, because you're fighting all the people to get a taxi. I have three or four pieces of luggage. It's pretty heavy. Then I struggle out of the cab and upstairs to the studio. You're supposed to look fresh and your hair is supposed to be sparkling. By the time you get there, you're perspiring like crazy, and it's difficult to feel fresh under all those hot lights when you've had such a struggle to get there.

What's your first reaction when the phone rings in the morning and it's a job call?

Oh, crap.

"I hadn't set out to be a model. I worked as a receptionist in a beauty shop during high school. This was in South Dakota. A woman who had worked for Eileen Ford and had been in Vogue and Harper's Bazaar said to me, 'Why don't you go to New York and be a model?' I didn't know what a model was. I thought they were dummies in catalogues. I thought the people in the photographs were just cutouts. I didn't think they were really people. I paid no attention to advertising.

"I wanted to go to college, but I had saved only three hundred dollars. So I went to New York at eighteen. I had never put anything on but lipstick and had never worn high-heeled shoes. I walked up and down Lexington Avenue for three hours 'cause my room at the Y wasn't ready. I didn't dare turn left or right. I just kept walking. A hamburger in South Dakota was twenty-five cents and in this drugstore suddenly it was a dollar and a quarter."

At Eileen Ford, they told me I was too long-waisted and that maybe I should think about something else, and it was too bad since I had come all the way from South Dakota. I was so green.

I looked in the telephone book. Huntington Hartford had just bought this agency. So I went there. I was so bashful I couldn't even give my name to the receptionist. About a half an hour later, this guy who had just taken over the agency—he'd been a male model—came in. He was the first man I'd seen in New York, close up. I was just staring at him. He said, "You! Come into my office!" I thought I had really been discovered. He probably called me because I was staring at him and he liked himself a lot. (Laughs.)

A week or two later there was a cocktail party. I'd never had a drink in my life. They said you should be there at five o'clock. At five I was the

only person there. They asked me what I wanted to drink. I didn't know. I said, "Bourbon and water is really nice." It was awful. The party was for Sammy Kaye. I'd never heard of Sammy Kaye.

The guy just wanted us to be there. He was having fifteen of his favorite models over. You just go. No pay. If there's an opening at a photography studio or whatever you go, because advertising people are there and you should be seen and you should make sure they remember your face. All the ridiculous things . . . That's what happens to a lot of girls who go into modeling. They're very vulnerable. They don't know what they're doing. Usually they come from very poor families. This seems glamorous. Most of the girls I met were from Ohio or Indiana or some place like that.

I had fifty cents left in my pocket when I got my first job. I worked two hours and made sixty dollars. It was absolutely incredible to me. I pinned a corsage on a guy. It was some hotel ad in a trade magazine. It was a very silly shot that was terribly simple. I was getting all this money for smiling and pinning a flower on a guy. It didn't turn out to be that simple.

Most people have strange feelings about standing before a camera. You have to learn to move and make different designs with your body. Some girls know how to puff their nose in and out to make it change or their lips or cheekbones. They practice in front of a mirror.

Usually you're competing with anywhere from thirty to sixty girls. They're cattle calls. Sometimes they take you in ten at a time. You wait from forty-five minutes to an hour before you're called. They narrow it down and ask for three or four to come back. It's like going out on a job interview every day. Everybody is very insecure. You walk into a room and see thirty beautiful girls and say, "What am I doing here?" Immediately you feel you should leave. But you think you might get three out of fifteen jobs, so . . .

There's no training needed, no kind of background. People spend thousands of dollars going to charm schools to learn make-up. It's ridiculous. They just take money from young girls. You learn while you're working. I didn't think it was funny the first few years because I was so nervous. After you relax, you see how absurd it all is.

I've always had a problem gaining weight. I told a photographer I had gained two pounds. I was happy about it. The agency said, "She's too fat, tell her to lose weight." They wouldn't have known if I hadn't told them.

I think the shyest people get into show business or modeling. They were wallflowers in their classes. You never really feel at ease and you force yourself to do things not natural to you. It's always something that you really aren't, that someone else wants you to be.

You feel like you're someone's clothes hanger. One day someone will say you're great. In the next studio, they'll say you're terrible. It changes from minute to minute: acceptance, rejection. Suddenly it doesn't mean

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anything. Why should you base your whole day on how you look in the morning?

My feelings are ambivalent. I like my life because it does give me freedom. I can have half a day off to do things I like. I couldn't do that if I had a normal job. I could never be a secretary. I make as much money working three hours as a secretary makes in a week. If I had to sit in an office for eight hours a day filing, I would find that more degrading than modeling. I don't look down at secretaries. Most are talented women who could do better jobs than their bosses probably, but will never get the chance—because they're women.

I'd probably join women's lib, but they don't believe in make-up and advertising, so I couldn't very well go to their meetings as I am. At school, where I'm studying photography, they said if I had any interest in women's lib I wouldn't be modeling. I was trying to tell them women are so underpaid that I couldn't earn a comparable wage at any other job. They disagreed, but in the next breath they were talking about something they'd seen advertised and wanted to buy the next day.

I feel guilty because I think people should do something they really like to do in life. I should do something else, but there is nothing I can do really well. I'm established and make a steady living, so it becomes pretty easy. It's not very fulfilling . . . but I'm lazy, I admit it. It's an easier thing to do.

You stop thinking when you're working. But it does take a lot of nervous energy because the camera goes one, two, three very fast, and you have to move very fast. There's a *kind* of thinking about what you're doing. If your left knee is at the right angle . . .

I usually don't tell people that I model. I say I'm an actuary or something. You're a celebrity because your picture is in a magazine or there's the negative connotation. If strippers or whores are arrested, they usually say, "I'm a model." There's also the thing about models being free and easy. I've never had the problem of men making passes at me. I've always managed to maintain a distance. I would never have become a model had I known . . .

Mrs. Paley—what's her name? Babs Paley—said the greatest thing is being very thin and very rich. I'm afraid that turns me off. I don't like to look at my pictures. I don't like to ride by and see some advertisement and tell everyone that's me.

Most models, after one or two years, can't be very interested in it. But they get involved with money, so it's difficult for them to quit. And there's always the possibility of the commercial that's going to make you twenty thousand dollars at one crack. You can work very hard all year on photos and not make as much as you can on two television commercials.

Male models are even worse. They're always talking about that lucky streak. They're usually ex-beach boys or ex-policemen or ex-waiters. They

think they're going to get rich fast. Money and sex are the big things in their life. They talk about these two things constantly. Money more than sex, but sex a lot. Dirty jokes and the fast buck. You see this handsome frame and you find it empty.

I go off into my own world most of the time. It's difficult for me to talk with the others, because most people I work with are very conservative and play it safe. I usually get emotional, so since I'm not going to change them and they're not going to change me, we sort of talk about everyday gossip. You end up smiling and being nice to everyone. You can't afford not to be.

POSTSCRIPT: "When I visit that Baptist family back home, they ask if I drink and what do I drink. When I say, 'Seven-Up,' they don't believe me. When I come home once a year, I try to make my people happy or bring them gifts. Probably like the guilty father who brings gifts for his children . . ."

ANNE BOGAN

We're on the thirty-second floor of a skyscraper, the office of a corporation president. She is his private secretary. The view of the river, railroad yards, bridges, and the city's skyline is astonishing.

"I've been an executive secretary for eight years. However, this is the first time I've been on the corporate end of things, working for the president. I found it a new experience. I love it and I feel I'm learning a lot."

I become very impatient with dreamers. I respect the doers more than the dreamers. So many people, it seems to me, talk about all the things they want to do. They only talk without accomplishing anything. The drifters are worse than the dreamers. Ones who really have no goals, no aspirations at all, just live from day to day . . .

I enjoy one thing more than anything else on this job. That's the association I have with the other executives, not only my boss. There's a tremendous difference in the way they treat me than what I've known before. They treat me more as . . . on the executive level. They consult me on things, and I enjoy this. It stimulates me.

I know myself well enough to know that I've always enjoyed men more than women. Usually I can judge them very quickly when I meet a woman. I can't judge men that quickly. I seek out the few women I think I will