

Judy Strick...Living on the Fault Line...Tales from L.A.



Story № 8

The Woman Who Loved Donald Trump

KOREATOWN

The Donald, I think of him incessantly. I was not looking for love. I had given up such foolish hopes.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Celeste Fryman. I live in a wretched rented condo on the shabby outskirts of Koreatown. Seven years ago I used to have a lovely house in Brentwood. I used to be one of the upwardly mobile middle class; my husband Burton used to be a working stiff at Morgan Stanley and my kids were college bound. Life was good.

Then the market tanked and Burton was out of a job, and a month later I found out that my darling husband was gay. And six months after that, we lost our house. I've been depressed and miserable for the last eight years.

It's been a bit of a slog.

But that's just back-story; because now I am happy, my mind is occupied with more profound thoughts: I have fallen truly and deeply in love with Donald Trump. Some might call it infatuation; not I.

It hit me like a ton of bricks three years ago, when I saw him hosting a Miss Universe Show. Oh not that I hadn't seen him before on TV -- in news clips, or on talk shows, but in the past I'd found him to be a loud mouth, nouveau-riche lout. But that was before I'd seen the beauty pageant of 2012. The man was so dear then; the way he interacted with the gorgeous contestants; no lechery -- just paternal protectiveness. I knew then and there that I was looking at a good man.

I know, I know just what you're thinking. The Donald -- as we call him, sounds like a bit of a sexist pig every now and then, but he's not. He cherishes women and wants to protect us all. Just because he called Rosie O'Donnell a fat disgusting pig, and he said that a bitchy journalist was on the rag... how can you not love the man for saying exactly what's on his mind? Not what he thinks you want to hear. None of this politically correct politeness, the shape shifting and dishonesty, making sure you'll please everybody. What bullshit!

You know what really gets me -- the way they make fun of his hair. That's not right. He's so handsome with his lovely spun gold meringue of a comb-

over and his little rosebud mouth. Bill Maher had once said that The Donald's mouth looked like a puckered pink asshole. Well Donald of course sued the hell out of Bill Maher. He sued Rosie O'Donnell too. He sues anybody that gives him shit. He's like the honey badger; if he wants something -- world watch out. He just picks up his phone and his big shot lawyers jump.

That's another thing I love about the Man. He knows how to work the system. He does it better than anyone. Being richer than anyone helps, and he makes no bones about how rich he is, or how brilliant, or how he's gone to the best schools for only the top of the top; or how many politicians he's bought. He buys politicians of both the right and the left persuasions, to cover his bases. He doesn't hide it at all.

And the best part is that nobody can buy him. He's too wealthy to be bought. Which means that he's incorruptible. What a man!

And now that he's running for President of these United States, I can see him right here, in my living room all the time.

Thank God for TV. You can get to know complete strangers as if they were your own family. I find myself watching "the tube" all the time -- a real junkie.

One big reason I watch so much is that I hate to go out in my neighborhood. I'm used to broad lawns, quiet sidewalks, nobody around except neighbors and mailmen and squirrels. It's scary out here. No squirrels, only nasty pigeons that poop all over everything. It's alien here: noisy, rude, crowded, smelly; everything smells like kimchi or stewing goat. Everyone is Korean, or some kind of Latino: Guatemalan, El Salvadorian, Mexican,

whatever. Their cars and motorcycles are loud, their music is loud, and their voices are loud; people yakety-yakking in the streets outside my window in a million different languages, like the Tower of Babel. And I stay inside and mind my business, and hope that nobody sets a homeless person on fire in the carport, which happened the year after we moved here.

Another reason that I'm a TV addict -- I have trouble walking. I need hip surgery. I don't want hip surgery. I am a large, middle-age woman now. I used to be young and attractive. I used to weigh a hundred and ten pounds. I expected a lot out of life. For a while, by some people's standards, I had it all. But since Burton lost all our savings and then told me he was in love with a man -- a *young* man, I've been eating my way into oblivion. I don't know what else to do with myself but eat and sit around and watch TV. I'm hooked on news: Fox and CNN -- just to keep it balanced. I'm also addicted to reality shows -- "Real Housewives" of anywhere. And my wonderful Kardashians -- now there's a family I wish that I'd known when they lived in Brentwood -- of course they were in the much fancier part. Maybe in the Brentwood days we could've been friends; could've met at Mezzaluna on San Vicente for lunch, when Kris Kardashian and Nicole Simpson were pals.

Mezzaluna is gone now from the Westside, as is Nicole Simpson. As am I. They used to have very good salads at Mezzaluna.

Speaking of food, I love sandwiches -- anything with mayo and bread. I've gained 150 pounds on my sandwich diet. I now weigh 275 pounds and my hips are shot -- which will keep one off one's feet. So I watch all those spoiled people on TV who are as rich as I once fancied I would be -- until Burton

ruined our lives with horrible mistaken investments in hedge funds and shit like that. He's lucky he didn't go to jail. He's lucky I didn't divorce him.

In spite of what one might imagine, we've stayed together, my husband and I, out of financial necessity. No way could we afford a divorce. He has given up his young lover; I have given up the life I had once hoped for. Now we're living on his disability and my meager earnings as a telephone hustler -- not a prostitute -- if only my life were that interesting. I'm a telemarketer. I sell carpeting and floor products, not a great way of making a living; but I can do it from home. Too bad I was a dance major before I dropped out of college to get married.

Burton is on disability because he stepped off a tabletop as he was changing a light bulb in our lovely Brentwood home; it was after he no longer had an office to go to every day; after he told me he was gay. He fell on his head and fractured his skull and he's had headaches ever since. I can't help wondering if his "accident" was a hopelessly inept suicide attempt; perhaps he thought the fall would kill him. Or perhaps, knowing Burton, he forgot to bring a rope to his own hanging. Thank god he now spends most of the day away from home, in Gardena, in the casinos. He used to fly out to Las Vegas or drive out to the Indian Casino near Palm Springs when we had money for travel; we once went to Monaco for a weekend of Baccarat when times were good. I'm glad he's skulking around now in some grim poker den in Gardena instead of hanging out here and getting on my nerves. I'm delighted that he leaves me alone to my TV. He also leaves me alone in the bedroom. Sex is no longer part of our lives, not that it was ever that big a deal. He was not all

that sexual -- although at the time I had no idea that had I been an attractive young man I would be getting laid all the time. Anyway, my fantasy life has always been far richer than my real life. Burton and I married each other, not from profound love; we married because we were both in the right place at the right time; we were ready to be married.

When I was a kid, I'd wanted to be someone special... and do something special. I did not turn out to have any hidden talents or passions or undue beauty. By the time I was halfway through college, I realized that I had not figured out in what way I was special. I had not found my passion, so instead, I decided I had to marry.

And for much the same reasons, so did Burton, who, in retrospect, had needed a "beard."

I wish I had waited for a better fish to swim by -- but it is what it is. And what it is, is a lonely life. I don't have any friends here in the new neighborhood. My husband and I are looked upon as outsiders; ironic isn't it? Both of us third generation citizens, and *we're* the outsiders.

Before we moved I used to have neighborhood friends, PTA friends, friends of friends. But now I have my T.V. friends. The "Housewives" are an unruly lot -- cat fights all the time. But the Kardashians, now they're lovely people. I love my Kardashians and I love my Donald. Oh and Bill O'Reilly; he's a bit of a manly man too. And Anderson Cooper is a charmer. Maybe Anderson will run for President some day; he has enough money to do it; his mother is Gloria Vanderbilt.

Anderson will be probably be interviewing or talking about The Donald today. All the news shows do. Because he wants to be President, I get to sit around with him all the time now.

It used to be once a week. After I'd fallen for him at the Miss Universe pageant, I'd started following him religiously on "The Apprentice," as he boldly issued his forceful edicts about who would live and who would die (so to speak). He was as merciless as an ISIS warlord, as heartless as a Roman emperor. I was dazzled by his arrogant masculine energy, that power, that self-confidence. I admire that in a man.

Sometimes I imagine Burton as a contestant on "The Apprentice," standing there, all humble and mealy-mouthed, as The Donald, looming large behind his enormous desk, says the magic words "You're fired -- for gross incompetence."

Somebody should tell Burton what a loser he is, but not me. I just keep all my anger inside. I'll never get over losing the house, which of course we lost after he got fired from Morgan Stanley. I had no idea that he had mortgaged it to the hilt -- refinancing it several times, to pay for his nasty little gambling problem. He forged my signature on the loans applications. I could have sent him to jail. He owes me. Well, such is life.

And here I sit, day in day out, in front of the television in a recliner. If The Donald's not around, I can always find the Kardashians. That Mama Kris is something -- don't I wish I had kids like that -- beauty queens every one of them: the ones she had with Robert Kardashian, the famous lawyer who was OJ Simpson's best friend, and the kids she had with Bruce Jenner, the all-

time Olympic champion -- those girls are also beauties. The eighteen-year old has her own mansion in Calabasas, and Kim is married to one of the biggest music megastars in the world; and she's famous for having a huge butt -- can you imagine. I have a huge butt now, but nobody says it's beautiful.

They all have retinues: businesses managers and gofers and interns and bodyguards and hangers on, and they still have time to party; and they even get paid for doing that. They don't have anything to worry about that bunch, except of course for Bruce, who has become Caitlin. I guess that's hard to go through no matter how rich you are.

And don't I know about that. My own beautiful children -- twins they are -- boys, well once; now they're men. Denny recently announced he's a woman living in a man's body, and he says that Caitlin Jenner gave him the courage to own his femininity -- he's started working in Walmart as a stock clerk to make enough money for his transition. And Marco, my darling Marco, is a coke addict and fancies himself an performance artist -- which he's not; just a big show off. He works as an Uber driver at night and snorts coke all day. He has gotten his skanky girlfriend pregnant.

Before the market tanked they were both headed for good colleges and bright futures. Now the only ones who have a bright future are the Kardashians and the Trumps. Even half the "Housewives" are going through bankruptcies; Teresa from New Jersey is in jail, and the Duggars' son is a rapist -- I don't know why the world has gone so crazy. A lot of people lost everything. A lot of people are sleeping in their cars, or living on the streets. I guess I should be grateful.

If it had been up to me, we'd still be on Easy Street. Always kept telling Burton we should put our money in real estate, not in the stock market. He ignored me. Donald Trump knew better, which is why he's a gazillionaire, with houses all over the place -- mansions, castles, hotels, casinos, to say nothing of yachts and jets and helicopters and god knows what else. He put it in real estate. He obviously has a great gift for finances. And tell me, what more do we need in a President than the talent to run multiple hugely successful businesses, and mingle with the rich and powerful; somebody who Putin won't try to push around. We certainly don't need another mealy-mouthed politician to turn this country into a bigger mess than it is already; those senators and congressmen and governors, what a bunch of losers they all are, running around groveling for money and attention. It takes power to make power. And Donald has more power than the Koch Brothers, and he's much more attractive.

But his intense masculinity and vast success are not the only reason I'm in love with The Donald. I'm in love him because he makes me think of the magnificent wild black stallion I had seen on my honeymoon with Burton. It was standing on top of a hill, in the Spanish Pyrenees. The stallion was huge, and fierce in demeanor, with a long flowing mane and tail that blew in the wind. He watched from above, while his herd of mares and foals grazed peacefully on the hillsides and meadows over which he watched. They knew he was ferocious and would protect them from marauding stallions and predators and humans.

For a while I had a crush on the stallion -- oh god no, not physical; it was an identification with the mares grazing free and wild in the meadow, not a worry in the bunch, because they knew that they were protected. I thought Burton would be my black stallion.

He was not; he was more like a pony tied to a wheel going around in endless circles. Why did I wind up with an amusement park pony, who was unable to survive the stock market crash with at least a vestige of drive left? Well it's all up to the vagaries of fate. And maybe we have no role models. Our presidents have been either wimpy tools, or stupid, or both, except for Bill Clinton who is a sex maniac, and Barack Obama who god only knows is smart enough, but he has no killer instinct. Which my Donald has an abundance of, in addition to a brilliant mind.

Another one of the Donald's virtues: three wives but he's straight as an arrow with each of them. Oh maybe he cheated on Ivana with wife number two, Marla Maples. But he and Ivana had been together a long time. And now his third wife is a gorgeous model and I'm sure he doesn't cheat on her. He's a family man. And those lovely children of his, little ones, big ones; the grown ones are huge successes. If only Denny had grown up around kids like Donald Trump Junior, or Eric Trump, who are now powerful business men and big game hunters -- if Denny had grown up around friends like that, perhaps my son would have learned a little bit about the manly arts, instead of spending his time trying on women's panties.

Not that I don't adore my children. But one has hopes... I guess I'll never have grandchildren, I suppose it's just as well, the way the world is going:

terrorists, lunatics, global warming -- I know; global warming is controversial, but really, don't you think it's getting a little weird out there -- thunderstorms in July? Heat waves all year around?

No doubt about it. The weather is getting weirder by the moment. But there are so many more important things in the world to worry about. Like getting rid of the illegal aliens who are ruining the country far more than any stupid weather. And gay marriage, what do we think about that? And legalized pot? And people in burkas, and ISIS and terrorists and wars in the Middle East, and people shooting people right and left. You should hear the gunshots around here every night and the police helicopters buzzing overhead like mutant giant insects. Who has time to worry about the weather, when everything else is haywire?

So at six tonight, there's a panel on MSNBC, and they're talking about The Donald, and of course they'll be trying to get him with all those malicious rumors: the bankruptcies, the fact that he's not quite the self-made man he appears to be. So his father was rich -- nothing wrong with that, and the four bankruptcies; he did not do a thing that was illegal. Nothing that wasn't there for everybody to use, if you knew how to look for it. What's wrong with gaming the system? That's what it's there for. It's Darwinian. Only the strong survive. My father was a fifth grade teacher in West Covina. My parents scraped by, being people who followed the rules like sheep. They never took advantage of tax loopholes. And where did it get them? They died in compliant middle class poverty, still thinking this was the best of all possible countries. They wanted nothing more than for their children to move up in the world. My brother

Robert did, He's a dentist. And I'm a nothing. Dentists will never get fired or go out of business. Everybody has teeth.

Dentists and gourmet chefs -- they'll always be around. You've got to have teeth and you've got to eat. Even chefs are becoming millionaires -- the ones on T.V. who cook for the billionaires. Not so dentists or ex- stockbrokers. Not people who majored in dance when they were in college. I loved to dance, as a child. It was another thing I was not gifted at.

Ah childhood, when the world is full of possibilities, even in West Covina. By all rights, I should be living a different life, a genteel existence as I did once. I guess Brentwood was the high point of my existence. I had a garden with three kinds of orange trees, and beautiful roses. I used to love to garden -- it kept me slim. Also not eating sandwiches day and night kept me slim. Being happy kept me slim. Having friends, having no idea that my husband was gay, or that my sons were lost souls...

Just as well that I no longer have a big garden to worry about, what with the drought. Now the water bills are my landlord's problem, not mine. Since he pays the DWP, I can shower as long as I want.

Sometimes though, I really miss our old friends, the ones who drifted away after we lost our house and our savings, and moved to Koreatown. A few of them were in the same spot, but not with such a crappy outcome as ours. None of the other families had a gambling problem. But that's ancient history. Anyway, who needs friends who abandon you when you're down on your uppers? They're a bunch of losers.

And now, well, If I didn't have my Kardashians and my Donald, I don't know what I'd do. I guess I'd have to get a gun and shoot myself. Maybe, while I'm at it, I could shoot a few of my noisy, smelly, illegal-alien neighbors who already hate me. God only knows it would be easy enough to get a gun. There are a few pawnshops just around the corner.

I don't think that The Donald would approve of shooting people just because they're illegal aliens... would he? Although he does seem to approve of shooting endangered species, which of course the illegal aliens are anything but.

It's all of us people who once were middle class, who are an endangered species now. And the Donald is out to help us -- not shoot us. He understands.

Oh Donald: I do love you -- more than I love my Kardashians.

THE END

Please visit [Living on the Fault Line... Tales from L. A.](#) to read all the short stories in this series.

And while there, sign up for a newsletter to receive announcements of upcoming new fiction by Judy Strick.

#1 When Love Congeals (February 2015)

#2 Mick and Lila (March 2015)

#3 Ugly Toes (April 2015)

#4 Buzzed (May 2015)

#5 The Rabbit Hole (June 2015)

#6 Memoirs of a 70 Year Old Stoner (July 2015)

#7 Venus and Mars (August 2015)

#8 The White Cat (September 2015)

... and if you enjoyed “The Woman Who Loved Donald Trump,” please share your thoughts with Judy on her [Facebook page](#) or [via email](#).

To read more by Judy Strick



Please check out Judy Strick’s critically acclaimed debut novel

[Kingdom Come, CA](#)

Read an [excerpt here](#) or on [Amazon](#)

Praise for *Kingdom Come, CA*

“In her debut, Strick successfully writes with the confidence of a seasoned author... A clear new voice offering a startling, memorable debut.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

“Remember the name Judy Strick. She is a riveting teller of tales. *Kingdom Come, CA* is a seductive and compelling journey into magical realism.”

–*Elizabeth Fortsythe Hailey, author of A Woman of Independent Means*

“Touching, magical and haunting, a story about the wounds we futilely try and hide, and all the ways they climb back into the surface.”

– *J. Barton Mitchell, author of The Conquered Earth Series*

“A taut, supernatural thriller, haunting and eerie.”

–*Edward Cohen, author of Israel Catfish*

Judy Strick is a true storyteller. I was immediately taken into a dark, fascinating world of her creation and couldn't follow her fast enough until the last page when I was summarily booted out and left blinking in the sunshine, bereft. I was left with that familiar sweet sorrow on finishing a book I wished I had yet to read.

–*Kendall Hailey, author of The Day I Became an Autodidact*

Kingdom Come, CA is an enticing title for a book that won't let you stop reading. Judy Strick sets up the various mini-denouements with seeming ease and grace, yet each one nevertheless brings a satisfying surprise.

–*Kathy Cohen, screenwriter of Imminent Pearl*