

## **CHAPTER ONE - MY BOSSES AND** **MY DUTIES AS DEAN**

The four of them sat there, all smug and powerful, as I sat a bit uncomfortably among them, but in good spirits. It was the day before the first day of school. Various roles were being assigned by the super-boss, Mr. Filatro, to the three female A.P.s. The senior A.P. was Mrs. Bocchino, an upper - fifties traditionally and conservatively dressed woman with a history at 95. As a child she attended 95, with Jimmy Filatro as a classmate for years, then returned over thirty years ago to spend her entire teaching career there. Yes, 95 was “her” school. I imagine that if Filatro retires within the next four years, she’ll inherit the principalship as a tribute to her “history” there. Next was Ms. Tarantino, or should I say LuAnn Tarantino, privileged daughter of two District 21- School Board officials (her father had been its president her mother, its vice president), in her early thirties, having taught E.S.L. for a few years before becoming an administrative assistant to none other than Joseph Silverstone back in ‘96 -‘97 (my last year at that school). Last year, while on sabbatical, I worked with her, mostly over the phone, in scheduling games for the basketball team. Tarantino was sharp, loud, foul-mouthed at times, and very self-confident. (Why not? With the positions of her parents, wasn’t she an “untouchable” in District 21? So why worry?). The last A.P. was the second year administrator, Ms. Jordan, a well-structured black woman near forty years old, who seemed very comfortable in her relatively new position, already extremely friendly with the school’s solid building blocks, both with its staff and with its very influential P.T.A. To me, almost immediately, she acted detached and bossy. And then there was Filatro, the near sixty kingpin of the school, always outspoken, always commanding center stage, the man who demanded “loyalty.” You’d be loyal to him, and he’d always bend over backwards, so he said, to accommodate you. As far as I could see, he

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was very much that way. He told me in private that it was very important to him that his ladies (A.P.s.) be kept happy. "Always listen to them!" he warned me. "I value them. Their loyalty is very important to me!" And I could see why. While they busily ran their academies (the three subdivisions of our school), he, for the most part, looked after his personal business. J.F. was very active in the Council of Supervisory Associates (C.S.A.), and often seemed a lot more involved in its proceedings than in the running of P.S. 95.

Back at our first meeting, Filatro emphasized: "Remember, these three ladies are your bosses. Don't forget that." He asked if any of them had anything to say. Tarantino voiced her concern. She was a little uncomfortable with me, recalling her experiences at 225 when I had been there. Strange, I thought, as she had nothing to do with me then. I was teaching third grade while she handled sixth and seventh grade extracurricular activities. But, she was good friends with my "buddy," J.S. She was well aware that he was pushing me out. Thereby arose her negatives toward me. In District 21 the supervisors are a close-unit group. Tarantino then added that she only had maybe 200 children in her academy, that she really didn't need a dean, that she would handle discipline herself as she had last year. I told her that I would really enjoy helping her in that regard, but she insisted, stating she appreciated my positive attitude but that she just didn't need my help. But, since she would be the supervisor in charge of busing and since the dean administered the busing program, we'd work together to run the busing program.

As dean, I had three major duties. Run the busing program A.M. and P.M., perform the disciplinary duties of a dean, as Mrs. B., and Ms. J. would define for me as we proceeded in September, and be the Recycling Coordinator. Plus, I'd have two lunch duties. I'd be in charge of the Ex-Cel children's lunch (early childhood), and I'd work with Mrs. B. in the lunch room (middle grades). Actually, the R.C. role was clearly the least of it all, as I'd occasionally visit teachers and classes to remind them of the school's recycling program. If I had Dept. of Sanitation materials, I'd distribute them to interested teachers for class instructional purposes. Plus, I ran an unsuccessful fund raising drive in which old, discarded inkjet cartridges were collected to be recycled.