

**BIGLAW: HOW TO SURVIVE THE FIRST
TWO YEARS OF PRACTICE
IN A MEGA-FIRM,
OR, THE ART OF DOC REVIEW**

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*To Jeff, for showing me what love is,
and Zoe, for making my life music.*

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Foreword

This book is the product of my experiences as a junior associate. It wasn't just that much that I had to do was unpleasant or that I made mistakes (or at least what I was told were mistakes), but that I couldn't see how it made sense, or how I could exercise any control over my life in the firm. Over time, however, I began to see how the small details of an associate's life fit into a bigger picture — indeed I realized that the often oppressive details are simply the flip side of what appears glamorous and exciting about the world of Biglaw practice. In this book I try to unveil some of the mystery of that world. I show the relationship between the work (and the burdens!) of a Biglaw associate and the nature of the large, elite firm, but I don't do so in theory or through abstractions but by keeping my focus on what actually happens in the first two or three years in Biglaw . . . and what the associate can do about it to maintain her sanity and chart her own course.

I want to thank the many Biglaw associates and friends who shared their daily cringes, mishaps, and small victories with me over the years — especially my friend Wells Bennett, for trudging through the draft and providing invaluable input and enthusiasm as another associate in the ranks. I want to acknowledge, with love and gratitude, my parents Janet and John Sharp, for their love and support, and, in particular, their excitement and enthusiasm for this book. I am deeply grateful to my editor, Elisabeth Lewis Corley, for her wise advice and her painstaking work on this book. Elisabeth brought to the project professional expertise, passion, and a genuine understanding of what I want to communicate.

I'm grateful for my beautiful daughter, Zoe, whose bright and happy spirit gives me hope and joy every day and who is the reason I had to find a humane path on my journey through Biglaw. And this book wouldn't have happened without my husband and sweetheart, Jeff, who always believed I had something valuable to say. His wild romanticism about the law and his unbowed belief in true love still take my breath away.

Finally, for the legions of unnamed senior associates and partners who drove me to write with a passion and a vengeance every morning before work for

months at a time as this little book took shape over the past couple of years, I am grateful for all that I have learned, for the many engaging and brilliant people I have met along the way, and that I will likely never be one of you.