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## *ABOUT US*

WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

# UNBOXING A LAWYER AT 37 (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Authored By- Neha Irene Saluja

IIMT College Of Law



## Background

I come from a Middle-Class family and that too a Single Parent (**My Mom – Catherine Walter**). My parents got separated when I was only 6 months old. Gradually time passed and I grew up and so did the talk with my friends. Some of them talked about their fathers and I pondered how it felt to be your father at your side? Every time they talked and I smiled to stash my feelings about not having a father, not being loved by my father. After the mutual separation well not official, he came to visit us but only to ruin everything which we have convened. I did not acquire a single gift from him to flaunt amongst my friends. Well, it was hard enough for a child of 9 years of age to stash

everything from this world. I stashed from most of the people that my father was separated and the fear of getting caught would petrify me. I was in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade that time but far more mature than the other kids. I was witnessing the struggle which my mom was going through. She worked at three different things in one day just to make sure that my school fee and our house rent is paid on time.

One of the reasons for not telling my friends that my father is not with us is - that I did not want that pity from others or didn't want to put them in a situation in which they feel awkward because of me. I did not share my feelings fully with my mother also so that she doesn't get hurt either. But when I came home every day after school, I witnessed the loneliness in my house.

That was the time when I first thought that one day, I would become a lawyer. I will fight for my mother's rights, which she doesn't even thought of, being busy in her work and worrying about my studies. It was the first time that I wrote a poem, a small poem about lawyers, their attire and the fact that they fight for justice especially for the society. The ray of light of being a lawyer began at that point of time.

As I grew up, I decided to let go of the guilt of not having a father. Why should I feel guilty? Why should I be ashamed of it? I began to accept that he was not there with us, not to share our happy moments or sorrows. After accepting this to myself I began to move on talk about it to others. I told my friends that my father was never with us, my friends understood my emotions and they supported me. I always wanted a complete family like every kid, but my destiny reserved other good things for me. As the time passed, I became straightforward and told everyone that we are separated but there is nothing to worry about it. I did become habitual of telling it to others and I strictly stopped those people who sympathised. I began to feel strong to admit and let go what was not in my hands. But I told Jesus that next time I want a complete family and specially a father.

Eventually my dream of becoming a lawyer was becoming more stronger as I was growing. I thought that after completing my higher secondary I will definitely pursue my dream. But my dream came to a full stop when I realised that the finances were not enough with us to get a law degree.



## **What's Trending These Days As A Career Option?**

I wept and finally I boxed my dream of being a lawyer. I decided to complete my Bachelor's Degree in Commerce. After completing the bachelor's degree, a cousin told to pursue MBA as everyone at that time was doing so. MBA was trending that time. This is one bitter truth that many times we choose a particular field or profession only because that course is trending, as if it is a hot topic or fashion that everybody at that time opted for MBA. But we forget that no matter what we select but finally it is us and it is all about us and not about trending of a particular course.

Well, there was no one to guide me so I thought maybe my cousin is experienced and I should look forward towards his opinion. My dream was still in that box. I took admission in MBA Distance Learning with speciality in Human Resources. I had a lot of time to study and I utilized that time and studies hard and got around 70% in MBA. Well, it is hard to admit but I was an average student since the starting point and I was definitely not a book worm. I did not like to study a lot. Studying a few days just before the examination is still my forte. I never woke at 4:00 AM in the morning to study. My mom tried but all her efforts went in vain as I slept with the book on my face.

After completing MBA, I got a lot of oppurtunies to work as a HR. But be it any field the competition is high always. My most interesting job as a HR was in a domestic BPO where my profile was to give induction, Orientation, Full & final settlements and handing employee grievances. I was really good in handling disputes and grievances of the employees.

Mic was my best buddy so I did voice overs also. I did put a lot of effort in retaining employees. But this journey ended here when I left this organisation.

## **Marriage & Responsibilities**

The happiest and yet crucial part of a girl is when she gets hitched and so was it mine. I too had some ambitions and resolutions but as the time passed my aims, ambitions and resolutions went into that box in which my dream was still lying dead. I married my best friend who is still my best friend but the most sensitive part of my marriage was that we follow different religions. The family and their traditions were new to me and so was I to them. Different religions and cultures were compiled together.

But as the life swapped its second gear, everything came on pace. I gave birth to my elder son and it was a glorious moment of my life but few things which were missing, were – my aims, my ambitions and my career goals which were still locked in that box and I was unable to find the key. It is very difficult for a woman to put aside her career and lock it up. I was aimless but a good mother. As I was all alone during my childhood which affected me greatly, I decided to have another child. God gifted me with two boys.

But my challenges were not finished yet as my younger son had a heart defect by birth. I was traumatised the very moment I gave birth to my younger son, as I came to know that he had a heart defect called TOF in which a child suffers from 4 defects in his heart. For the first three months I did not spoke a work as if I got in depression but after those 3 months, I gathered all my strength and decided to fight again. My little one was not ready to give up and I decided to stand by him, with full support of my husband, mom and other family members.

One day I was watching a daily soap on my mobile phone to divert my mind and my husband asked - Is this what you want to do? Stop worrying about the baby as he will be fine because well are here for him. He asked, “what are your plans? And what do you want to do?”. I said, “I don’t have any plan and I want to do nothing”. I just wanted to be a good mother and especially at this point of time when our baby entails my full time and attention. My husband was not at all satisfied with my answer. So, he asked again, “Is there anything or was there anything which you wanted to do in your life?”.

I laughed and said yes, since I was a kid, I wanted to become a lawyer and I still laughed at my dream and I told him that may be this was the reason that my favourite colour is black. I was astonished to hear his answer. He said, “If it was your dream at that time, then why not now?”. I was silent and confused and I asked him that you want me to pursue my dream? He said, “why not?”. I took a little time to understand what he just said. I was turned into a person with no aims or objectives. A person who doesn’t want to look forward to open up the box.

I finally decided to open up that box and pursue my dream of being a lawyer. As moved forward and got admitted in IIMT College of Law, some people were anxious about my decision and some thought maybe I am not a good mother and I should be giving my time to my kids, some said that

pursuing law demands a lot of study and they posed a doubt on my capabilities, some did not expect me to pursue law at this point of time or at this age. The society tried to put me down by adjudging me. But my husband motivated me every time and he said, "It's better to be late than never" and I believed in his belief. He was pretty sure that I can handle things altogether.

## **Blessing In Disguise**

As the pandemic hit the world, families began to stay together, situations were contrary for individuals. On one hand people were trying different dishes, while on the other hand they were weeping for their loved ones. The cases of domestic violence raised the bar and many were left unemployed. Schools and Colleges found the new way of teaching which was never before and people began to work from home to be safe.

Well in my life everything changed during the pandemic. Everyone in my family was at home and my online classes began to take place. My first class began with brushing my teeth, second class - while making breakfast for my family, third class - while giving shower to my kids, fourth one - while preparing lunch and the last one ended by making my younger one sleep on my lap. My professors were very co-operative during the classes and their motivation and trust in me was helping me a lot.

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## **Examination Pressure**

As I have already told my readers that I was not a book worm, so I study a few days before examination, mostly a month before. One month was left before my third semester exams which usually is the high time for me to get going for the exams and suddenly, we got the date for my younger ones Heart Surgery. He was hospitalised for almost a month. I had a lot of time in the hospital but the mother inside me was not in her senses as my child was on ventilator for almost 10 days. But thankfully everything went well, my son came home just 3 days before my first exam so I decided to leave the first exam and destiny was on my side so the next two exams got postponed leaving sufficient time to preparation.

My friends extended their hands of gesture by downloading study materials, notes and my hall ticket so that I don't face any difficulty. Everything went well!

## Extra-Curricular

To be a student you not only have to be good in studies but you must also be active in extra-curricular activities. I am always eager to participate in competitions, quiz etc. I won many prizes which made me feel proud and I also took online internships, which helped me a lot in understanding the Acts and how to interpret the legal language, writing articles, blogs and court order interpretations. My first internship was with Leykeen and my second internship was with P Legal - Parashurami Legal.

I also started pursuing courses from LawSikho. This gave a boom to my skills and I started working harder in completing my assignments. Hard work never gets squandered, I got the title of **“Student of the month”** for November’ 21 from **LawSikho**. And my recent achievement is that my paper titled **“Google LLC V Oracle America”** has been awarded as the **“Best paper of the Issue”** by **White Black Legal Journal** and I also received a **Gold Medal** for it. My whole Journey would have not been possible if my husband – **CA ROHIT SALUJA** would not have asked that question to me.



## Women Empowerment

To be very honest, I wrote an essay in my Legal Language exam and there one thing that struck my mind was an honest example of myself. My husband is a Chartered Accountant by profession and he supported and helped me to fulfil my dream so that I can become a lawyer. Both the professions repel as we all know. Our personalities are very different, purely opposite. But do you know the reason behind it that why my husband encouraged me to fulfil my dream? Love of course, but another reason is **“EDUCATION”**. For empowerment of women, we should not only focus on every woman to get educated but also the **men of our society** because education is the key to success. If the people are well educated, they educate their families and in return the whole nation gets educated. Education helps us to agnize our rights and duties towards our family, neighbourhood, country and most importantly our rights for ourselves.

Every person has a story, the struggles of their life, the challenges which they have faced each day, sometimes a fight with the society and with ourselves. We need to have confidence and we need to support each other in whatsoever situation. I am lucky that I got support of my husband, my mom,



friends and family. But there are many women who lack support of their loved ones. The expectation is not only from women but from men also. Encourage your female family members so that they can surprise you with the most astonishing side of their which even they might not be aware of.

Its high time that we stand for each other by supporting and encouraging those people who have given up. I hope I will be able to motive people especially those who have given upon on their dreams and ambitions. All they need is the support of their family, a gentle push and an encouraging pat.



**This is my Autobiography at 37.**

**Thank You**

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