

# Chapter 26

Chapter 26 marks a particularly dark period of my life when everything seemed to be falling apart. Without my children, I felt a profound sense of loss, and my world became unmanageable. I didn't know how to care for myself, and every day felt like a struggle. After the divorce, I had to leave the home I had cherished and found myself in a random English-style cottage in Beverly Hills. The paparazzi, sensing vulnerability, surrounded me like sharks sensing blood in the water, and their presence felt even more invasive during this time. I was drowning in the constant scrutiny and pressure, and despite the external success of my career, the internal chaos was consuming me.

In the midst of this turmoil, I made the impulsive decision to shave my head, a moment that felt strangely cathartic. For a brief moment, it was like a release, a way to disconnect from everything. The act itself felt almost spiritual, as if I was shedding the old version of myself. However, the repercussions of this act were immediate and relentless. To try and regain some semblance of control, I purchased seven wigs, all short bobs, to hide my shaved head. But even though I sought isolation, the paparazzi still found me. When I visited Kevin's place to try and see my children, it wasn't a quiet moment of reconnection but an opportunity for the media to exploit my grief. A photographer, tipped off about my visit, began snapping pictures relentlessly. As I sat in the passenger seat of the car, heartbroken, waiting for my cousin Alli to return, I was asked intrusive questions by the photographer. They kept pressing, relentlessly asking me how I was doing, making it clear that my suffering was just a commodity to be exploited.

After leaving Kevin's house, we were still followed by the photographers, who didn't stop until they got the footage they wanted. The situation escalated further when they continued to approach the car, with one of the photographers insisting on questioning me despite my obvious distress. Alli pleaded with them, asking them to leave us alone,

but their disregard for her pleas only intensified the tension. The more I tried to avoid them, the more they pushed, sensing that any emotional reaction would be their "money shot." The photographer's actions felt inhumane, and his persistence only fueled my frustration. At that moment, I snapped. I grabbed the nearest object I could find, which was a green umbrella, and in a fit of desperation, I jumped out of the car. I wasn't trying to hurt anyone, but I lashed out at the closest object I could reach—his car. It was a pathetic attempt, fueled by my desperation, but it didn't stop the paparazzi from further ridiculing me. Later, I felt embarrassed and sent an apology to the photo agency, explaining that I wasn't myself due to the intense pressure I was under. The truth was, I was struggling—desperately trying to find control in a situation that left me powerless.

The paparazzi, however, didn't care about my pain. One of them later stated in a documentary interview about me, "That was not a good night for her... But it was a good night for us—'cause we got the money shot." That statement, chillingly candid, summed up the entire experience. In that moment, I realized how little humanity was involved in their actions. They didn't see me as a person but as a means to make money off my suffering. Years later, my husband Hesam would reflect on the situation differently, saying that shaving my head had become a symbol for many—an act of defiance against the expectations placed on me. To him, it represented a refusal to conform, a choice to reject the image of beauty and femininity that had been imposed on me. It was empowering in a way, but the world around me wasn't ready to understand it, and instead, it became just another spectacle for others to exploit.