

## “Untied” A Statement

It saddens me to have to write this.

Meredith has imagined her “memoir” as a kind of fairy tale, a section of which concerns our marriage, the birth of our children, and our life together. Following our divorce, over twenty years ago, we were awarded shared physical custody of our children—the twins, then five years old, and an older daughter, 14. During the next eight years or so Meredith conducted a relentless and brutal legal assault, attempting to destroy that arrangement and replace it with herself as sole custodian of the children.

During that time she arrived in court repeatedly with various lawyers and several therapists, “recovered memories,” accusations of abuse, a common charge in custody disputes, and tales of our life together that bore little resemblance to truth-- a mean spirited process that battered us all, especially the children. The court denied her suit on every occasion.

The shared custody arrangement remained in place until the children left for college.

This current recycled version of our family story is no more credible now than it was then. An appalling abuse of the truth.

What seems immensely sad and truly absurd about this “memoir,” especially in its recounting of the history of our 16 year marriage and the birth of our three extraordinary children, is that she is unable to reclaim a single instance of joy or pleasure in all that time, not one occasion of love or delight or accomplishment in our entire life together as we built a family. Not one.

Nothing from our first meeting to divorce. Nothing, in sixteen years.

Really?

This blanket omission, this unrelieved denial of even a single instance of joy or pleasure in the creation of a family, the substance and amazing joy of raising children together, of simply being together with them during that time, is incomprehensible. And sad.

Meredith’s own account of these years is its own rebuke to her credibility.

## **Some thoughts.**

Unfortunately the balance of the book seems to follow the same pattern.

The narrator of the tale begins her story as young woman of some entitlement, who, as she proceeds, seems unable to assume responsibility for the disastrous decisions she makes repeatedly as she moves through her life: drug adventures in high school, the drugs continuing with a late teen marriage and two children and ending in divorce.

A second husband, myself, and the birth of three children—whom she seems to regard with little joy, indeed barely acknowledges (where are they in this memoir?).

A second divorce following her sixteen year marriage, this one followed by years of a bitter, brutal custody assault on her ex-husband, endless court appearances with various lawyers and therapists and accusations of abuse of all kinds. She doesn't mention that her sad case was denied each and every time she went to court.

A third husband, and yet another divorce. Additional legal proceedings. All of this accompanied by a career in television

In addition to her drug experiences, she claims years of alcohol addiction, business conflicts with partners and her manager/third husband, a late series of affairs with women, and a final, apparently, liberating and redeeming “discovery,” announced on television, that she is gay and is in a relationship with a new woman in her life, a new partner.

The list of villains in her tale is long-- all of whom ignore her, belittle her, abuse her-- verbally, emotionally, physically, morally, or financially.

This list includes: her mother, her father, her step father-- who was also her agent-- all sadly no longer alive and unable to speak for themselves; her husbands, the parents of one of the husbands, various lawyers, the family court which found her tales unconvincing, and which categorically rejected her years' long assault on the joint custody arrangement, as well as business partners and managers—the list is comprehensive and exhausting.

Each of the people here had relationships with her of some substance and trust, relationships that were, over a period of time, destroyed. Each of the people, she claims, misused and abused her, time and again; and each relationship ends in a pattern of anger, conflict and betrayal.

One can't help but finally ask, what sad tale is actually being told here as she moves through this emotional carnage? Who is actually being abused?

As I have said before, Meredith's account of these years is its own rebuke to her credibility.

David Birney