

Letters to the Editor

Still Waiting for Sherry

Kudos to *the Jewish Voice and Opinion* for the rare *chutzpah* shown in your adept handling of the counter-attack on Dr. Amy Neustein [“Waiting for Sherry, Part II: Who Doesn’t Want From Madness to Mutiny Published, and Why?” May 2005]

Instead of rolling over and submitting to the threats and intimidation tactics lodged, apparently by the same family court agents who hijacked Neustein’s motherhood some 20 years ago, you had the courage to dig more deeply into the facts of this case.

You demonstrated Solomon-like wisdom in reporting enough information to show that Sherry Neustein’s attack on her mother’s credibility appears to be nothing more than a tragic display of the depths to which some public officials will sink to cover up the evidence of their own wrongdoing—which includes, in this case, the apparent brainwashing of a motherless young woman.

These people are sinners. Thank you for making that eminently clear.

Mo Therese Hannah, Ph.D.
Chair, Battered Mothers Custody Conference
www.batteredmotherscustodyconference.org
Albany, New York

I have known Amy Neustein for about 14 years. I went before the same judge on my own case that she did, and found he was biased against me before I opened my mouth. Dr. Neustein assisted me with my problem, and my case turned out okay. Despite her own problems, she helped me.

I truly believe Dr. Neustein was treated unfairly by the courts. I myself was a supervisor in Child Welfare and had a lot of experience before Family Court judges in that capacity. Even before I had my own case and later met Dr. Neustein, I believed a lot of changes were needed, and that the court was not very fair.

She hasn’t given up the battle, but unfortunately she has people angry at her for telling what I believe is the truth. I publicly criticized Child Welfare on national TV, and the city suspended me for a month without pay and health coverage. Many people agreed that I was telling the truth, but was being punished for it anyway.

I eventually went to court with the New York Civil Liberties Union representing me. I was defending my First Amendment rights, and, down the road, I won. I still had people trying to discredit me after it was all over.

I can understand Dr. Neustein’s position. All she wants is to make things better for herself, her daughter, and other mothers who went through what she did. However, those whom she feels contributed to her tragedy are trying to discredit her and make her look like the bad one. I liken it to a mugger who runs away after stealing a purse and then who acts as though he is the victim.

Dr. Neustein has been through too much. I was at a recent book signing and she suffered palpitations stating because it brought back all the pain she had been through.

Rosalie Harman
Brooklyn, NY

I was fascinated by your story “Who Doesn’t Want From Madness to Mutiny Published. . . and Why?” It raised extremely troubling issues that are important to the larger Jewish community.

I am writing to express my concerns and to commend your publication on its balanced, thorough, and reasoned approach to a story that appears to be a minefield. Your excruciating precision as to the details of who may have written to whom and when was impressive.

The idea of attempting to suppress a book of scholarly research is on its face dangerous and antithetical to the spirit of free inquiry that is a vital part of the Jewish ethos. Although it does seem rather quixotic to attempt to suppress a book after it has already been distributed nationwide, that has not prevented it from occurring. Worse yet, you also state that anyone in the media who promotes this book is threatened with “trouble” by various enemies of disclosure. That type of conduct should be totally unacceptable today. At a time that one of the greatest mysteries in the history of investigative journalism, the identity of Deep Throat, is finally solved, we should be reminded that shining a light on the murky dealings of government institutions is an absolutely necessary part of the role of a free press.

As someone who has long been active in national Jewish organizations where I live, it is also unsettling to read in your report that a staff member of a major Jewish agency, even as a “private person,” attempted to obtain a prepublication manuscript and conveyed threats of legal action. And while the relationships you described are somewhat obscured, your story indicates that Orthodox organizations and/or their leaders may be involved in similar efforts.

As this book is about problems in secular institutions of government and secular laws throughout the nation, I find it worrisome that Jewish entities may be expending their time or resources in an attempt to stop an inquiry into the legal system we all must live under. What part of the mission of a Jewish agency does that fall under?

Out here in the hinterlands, New Yorkers have a reputation for being self-obsessed to the point of ignoring the rest of the world. So I would also note that most of the court systems analyzed in the book, and most of its present and future readers in graduate schools, are in other states. You cited one member of Congress who has asked the federal government to investigate the family courts, because federal grant money flows to agencies that deal with child abuse. Clearly this is a national issue. Whether or not a few individuals believe they have been described, even if not by name, in the book, should not be the principal topic here. The subject of family courts and child abuse is—and it needs to be aired.

It is usually true that when some persons are willing to go to such lengths to threaten journalists for merely publishing accounts of a dispute, sound journalism requires even more comprehensive scrutiny of the players and their motives. I would urge your publication to continue its diligent investigation into the facts, and attempt to answer the question you raised quite succinctly in the title of your May article.

Larry Molton
Castro Valley, CA

“Thought Is the World of Freedom” (R’ Dov Ber of Mazeritch)

I’ve just read your May article, “Waiting for Sherry: Part II,” for the second time. Twice, because I could hardly believe that a judge in our court system, aided and abetted by his law clerk, could make such a total mockery of justice and get away with it, for nearly 20 years. But it is appallingly clear that that is exactly what happened.

This did not happen just to Dr. Amy Neustein, but has been the experience of many other protective parents, as Dr. Neustein and her co-author, attorney Michael Leshner, have documented so well in *From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done about It*. In fact, the book doesn’t even talk about Dr. Neustein’s own experience. Yet, she has been attacked for writing it by the same people who acted as accessories-after-the-fact to her ex-husband’s sexual abuse of their daughter.

These are strong words, but in my opinion the evidence fully supports them. I commend the editor of *The Jewish Voice and Opinion* for her diligent investigative reporting, clearly something for which the perpetrators were unprepared. Their own words, as reported, go a long way toward convicting them. Their apparent use of pseudonyms, notably that of Dr. Neustein’s abused daughter, and their inability to keep their stories in any reasonable agreement, are significant indicators of the shame and guilt they must be attempting to hide. Very, very sad.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Never again must we allow such abusive behavior toward our children to pass unchallenged. And thank you, Dr. Neustein, for the courage and fortitude you have demonstrated over the last 20 years, and for exposing the full extent of this judicial malfeasance to public scrutiny. At last.

Jeremy H. Griffith
Boulder Creek, CA

The Jewish Voice and Opinion welcomes letters, especially if they are typed, double-spaced, and legible. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and style.

Please send all correspondence to POB 8097, Englewood, NJ 07631.

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Trouble at Ben-Gurion University

Recently one evening, while eating diner, I picked up the phone and was told that I was being called from Jerusalem from the “IDT Call Center” to help the UJA “with their important work.”

The person who called me, claimed he was a 35-year-old assistant professor in the economics department at Ben-Gurion University. While talking to him and questioning him on what the UJA does, it became clear to me he was proud of being a post-Zionist and was concerned more about Arab rights than about a Jewish state.

I could not believe that he was using the UJA for his platform, but I controlled myself and hung up.

I then sat in my club chair and, low-and-behold, opened up the May issue of *The Jewish Voice* and read about Ben-Gurion University [“Does Ben-Gurion University Really Have a ‘Disloyalty Pledge?’” May 2005].

We must realize that this faction is taking control of all Jewish organizations and must be stopped. This is ruining Israel as much as Arab bullets.

Thanks for *The Jewish Voice*.

Bob Jacobs
Englewood, NJ

Seeking a Kidney

I am seeking a kidney donor for my 42-year-old brother, Neil Diamond. The father of two young children, Neil has been on dialysis for close to two years.

His kidneys failed as a result of a rare cancer he was diagnosed with almost two years ago. Our family has tried everything to obtain a matching donor to no avail yet.

After my brother received a stem cell transplant (his own cells), putting his cancer into remission, doctors told him he could start the search for a kidney. He hasn’t been able to work as a result of chemo., dialysis, hospital stays, and feeling sick more often than not.

His blood type is A, and he can receive A or O type blood.

Until this horror happened to him, he was always healthy—never smoked, did drugs, drank rarely, and was an avid ball player.

If you would like to help us and be tested to see if you are a match to donate a kidney to save his life, please contact me at liildeb413@aol.com.

Debbie Diamond
Queens, NY

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