

Waiting for Sherry Part II:

Who Doesn't Want *From Madness to Mutiny* Published...and Why?

Someone sure wants to stop publication and distribution of the new book by Dr. Amy Neustein and Michael Leshner, *From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done about It*.

Although the book has received a great deal of advance publicity, among the first notices of its impending publication was in the March 2005 issue of *The Jewish Voice and Opinion*. The story on the book's publication was part of an article detailing Dr. Neustein's experience with

the Brooklyn Family Court which, in the mid 1980s, removed her only child from her custody and denied her all visitation rights.

Since the March issue appeared, Dr. Neustein's sister and brother-in-law, who sided with her former husband against her in the custody battle, officials of two prominent Jewish organizations, and even someone who may or may not be the now-grown daughter herself have expended great efforts, contacting the book's publishers or media outlets through which Dr. Neustein seeks

to promote her book. Their message: If you publish or promote this book, you risk trouble, if not a lawsuit.

Investigation

Controlling the publicity may become difficult for them. Not only has the book already been distributed to book stores, the subject matter has drawn the attention of Congressman Steven Rothman (D-NJ) who has asked Dr. Wade Horn, assistant secretary of the Administration on Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services, to investigate the issue of "abused

children by family courts."

"Dr. Neustein's case is just one of many possible examples of the mishandling of abused children by family courts," said Mr. Rothman in his letter to Dr. Horn.

Mr. Rothman said he acted after receiving information from Dr. Neustein, including her new book, as well as reading about her case in *The Jewish Voice*. Dr. Horn oversees the agency responsible for implementing the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and for allocating grants to organizations

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Managing Editor: Sharon Hes, Advertising: Rivkie Lichstein Miller

The Jewish Voice & Opinion (ISSN # 1527-3814), POB 8097, Englewood, NJ 07631, is published monthly in coordination with The Central Fund of Israel. A one-year subscription is \$15. Periodicals postage is paid at Englewood, NJ and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Jewish Voice and Opinion, POB 8097, Englewood, NJ 07631.

All advertising in the Jewish Voice and Opinion must conform to the standards of the Orthodox Rabbinic kashruth. Editorial content reflects the views of the writer and not necessarily any other group. The Jewish Voice is not responsible for typographical errors.

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Important Book

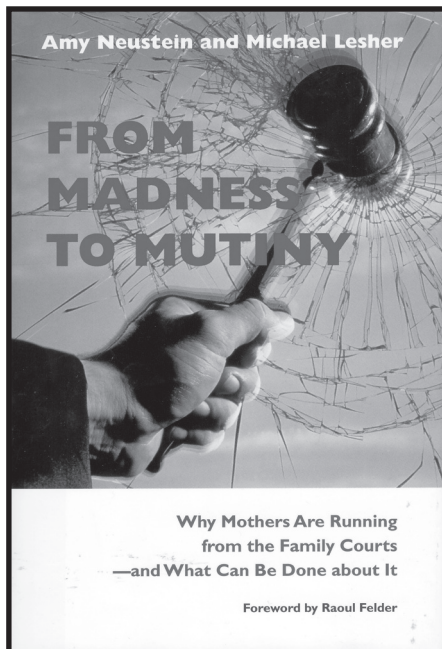
Critics of the system have called the book, which was published last month by University Press of New England (UPNE) with a foreword by renowned attorney Raoul Felder, “groundbreaking,” “astounding” and “perhaps the most highly readable scholarly work in years.”

It is UPNE’s lead title for spring 2005, and the publisher seems to have put large resources behind the book’s promotion. Review copies and press releases have been disseminated to hundreds of news organizations throughout the country, and book fairs and signings have been scheduled.

Housed at Dartmouth College Press in New Hampshire, UPNE is an award-winning university press, supported by a consortium of schools, including Brandeis University, Dartmouth College, the University of New Hampshire, Northeastern University, Tufts University, and the University of Vermont.

Local Authors

In their book, Dr. Neustein, an Edgewater-based sociologist, and Mr. Leshner, a Passaic-based writer and attorney, chronicle cases in which mothers who believe their children have been sexually abused by the fathers are disbe-



lieved, ridiculed, and, like Dr. Neustein herself, punished for trying to protect their young children.

According to UPNE’s website, “All too often the mother, in such a case, is deemed the unstable parent and her children are removed from her care, to be placed in foster care, or even with the father who has been credibly accused of abusing them.”

From Madness to Mutiny is part of UPNE’s Gender, Crime, and Law series, which means it is intended for use in law schools and graduate departments of sociology, social work, and political science. Some 600 copies of the book were pre-ordered even before its publication.

Employing a special form of sociological inquiry known as ethnomethodology, Dr. Neustein and Mr. Leshner demonstrate how judges, private attorneys, law guardians, child protective service caseworkers, and court-appointed mental-health experts, on a day-to-day basis, collaboratively produce a closed and claustrophobic family court setting that makes practical sense to the system’s practitioners—but looks like madness to everyone else.

Trapped Mothers

The one thing Dr. Neustein and Mr. Leshner do not do in this book is directly discuss Dr. Neustein’s own heartbreaking experience with the Brooklyn Family Court in the mid to late 1980s, in which she lost

not only custody of her daughter, Sherry Orbach, now 24, but also visiting privileges with her, supervised or unsupervised.

In fact, none of the principals from her case is named in the book, with the exception of the judge, who has already been the subject of many press accounts. But he is not named in connection with Dr. Neustein.

The fact that she is not mentioned by name anywhere in the book has not stopped Sherry Orbach—or someone purporting to be she—from contacting at least one radio station, two newspapers, and UPNE, threatening some of them with lawsuits. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a current student at Columbia Law School, Ms. Orbach seems to have embarked on her mission to derail her mother’s book without so much as looking for her own name in the index.

Abuse or Brainwashing?

After Dr. Neustein and her husband, Dr. Ozzie Orbach, were divorced in 1983, their daughter resided with her mother, Dr. Neustein, and her grandparents, Rabbi Abraham and Shirley Neustein. Rabbi Neustein was the rav of the Brighton Beach Jewish Center.

In 1986, when she was six years old, Ms. Orbach was removed from her mother’s custody in the wake of Dr. Orbach’s suit against Dr. Neustein for divorce. Despite the fact that they had been already divorced for three years, Dr. Orbach announced that he was seeking custody of their child.

According to court documents, several months before Dr. Orbach began his custody suit, the child’s maternal grandmother claimed she witnessed the father sexually molesting the child during a visit. Despite considerable evidence of alleged abuse, including statements from the child herself, the court found that the father had not been abusive and that the mother was guilty of brainwashing the daughter into thinking that he had been. Despite the fact that no one accused Dr. Neustein or her parents of abusing the child, the mother was denied custody and she and the grandparents were eventually denied any visiting rights with Sherry Orbach.

Medical Attention

The final determination was made *continued on page 8*

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after Dr. Neustein grew sufficiently concerned about her daughter's weight loss to seek medical attention. While living with her mother and grandparents, Ms. Orbach was, even according to her father's testimony, "a well-nourished, happy, normal" six-year-old. By the time she was eight, her physical condition had deteriorated such that Rachel Anolick, the woman who was approved by the court to supervise visitations between Dr. Neustein and her daughter, described the child as looking like a "concentration camp survivor."

Alarmed, Dr. Neustein and Mrs. Anolick brought the child to Kings County Hospital where the pediatrician on-call, Dr. Jeffrey Birnbaum, described Ms. Orbach as "by far the worst case of emaciation I have ever seen."

She was diagnosed with life-threatening anorexia nervosa, dehydration, anemia, hypoglycemia, and hypothermia.

Dr. Birnbaum later testified that "the child was emaciated with very bizarre behavior consistent with anorexia nervosa which is very abnormal in an eight-year-old child."

In his testimony, Dr. Birnbaum was also struck by the child's sexualized behavior. "I remember that Sherry, during her admission to the hospital, used language, some of it of a sexual nature, that seemed grossly inappropriate for a girl her age," he wrote.

Forbidden Attention

The problem was that Dr. Neustein had been forbidden by the family court judge overseeing her case, Judge Leon Deutsch, to seek medi-

cal care for her daughter without Dr. Orbach's permission.

Despite the fact that the child was admitted to Kings County (where doctors said Dr. Neustein's action in seeking medical attention for her daughter may have saved the child's life) and then transferred to Brookdale Hospital, where she remained for six weeks, Judge Deutsch terminated Dr. Neustein's and the grandparents' visitation privileges entirely.

Rabbi and Mrs. Neustein, both of whom have since died, never saw their granddaughter again.

16 Years

Dr. Neustein has not seen her daughter in 16 years. Since 1989, she was prevented by the courts from visiting, or even seeing, her daughter. The court forbade the mother or the grandparents from coming within a block of the child.

In 1993, Dr. Neustein was informed that her daughter would be on a float in the Israel Day Parade. Eager to catch even a glimpse of her child, she made plans to go, but, at the last minute, was informed that she had been set up. She was told that if she were found at the parade, she would be arrested for defying Judge Deutsch's order to stay at least one block away

from her child.

The court's reasoning on this issue has been questioned many times over the years by medical personnel, attorneys, politicians, and media investigators.

Since Ms. Orbach turned 18, she has refused to see or correspond with her mother, who has made valiant efforts to overturn what she sees as the improper, cruel, and unfair judgments of the Brooklyn Family Court. Dr. Neustein maintains that her daughter has been turned against her by those who wanted them separated, including Dr. Orbach, and even Dr. Neustein's own sister and brother-in-law, Frima and Martin Burger of Woodmere, Long Island.

"Jerks"

After *The Jewish Voice and Opinion* wrote a detailed account of Dr. Neustein's case in the March 2005 issue, the paper received a series of calls and emails from Mr. and Mrs. Burger.

Although Mr. Burger began his email correspondence with the paper by insisting that Dr. Neustein did not want his or his wife's proffered help in effecting a reconciliation with her daughter, and, in fact, was not interested in seeing her daughter at all, he soon began



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Dr. Amy Neustein

“As Sherry’s mother, I am deeply pained to see her infected with such hostility toward me, hostility that grew out of my forced absence from her life, hostility that filled the place where we once had a warm, loving mother-daughter relationship. But the hostility toward the book has even deeper roots. I can’t help but surmise it is politically motivated by those who desperately fear public scrutiny and government inquiry into their daily activities. If that is so, why must Sherry once again pay the price for those who harmed her? Are their reputations worth the torture of an innocent young woman?”

a series of tirades against his sister-in-law, labeling her and anyone else who tried to help her over the years as mentally ill and a “jerk.”

His commendations went to all those who either sought to discredit Dr. Neustein or keep her child from her.

He referred to Dr. Neustein’s yearning to see her daughter as “crocodile tears.”

Leaving Orthodoxy

In *The Jewish Voice’s* March article, Mr. Burger took exception to Dr. Neustein’s contention that, as far as she knew, her daughter had cut her ties to the Orthodox-Jewish community in which she had been raised.

“Lie! What nonsense!” wrote Mr. Burger.

Yet, in an email dated April 20, 2005, to UPNE, written either by Ms. Orbach or someone purporting to be she, Ms. Orbach said, “About five years ago, I left Orthodox Judaism, despite my father’s strong wishes that I remain observant.”

“Temporary”

One of the major bones of contention raised by Mr. Burger was whether or not Judge Deutsch’s suspension of all visitation rights for Dr. Neustein and her parents was “temporary” or permanent. Mr. Burger maintained it was

a “temporary” suspension and that Dr. Neustein had done nothing in the ensuing years to regain visitation rights.

“All suspensions of visitation are, in theory, ‘temporary,’” explained Mr. Leshner. “In Amy’s case—again, in theory—she could have sought resumption of her visits with Sherry if she could have convinced Judge Deutsch that circumstances had changed in her favor. But how could she have done that? She could hardly admit that she was insane and had harmed Sherry, and, short of that, what changed circumstances could she have adduced?”

According to Mr. Leshner, when he asked Dr. Neustein’s attorney at the time, Julia Heit, why she had not tried to regain visitation for her client, she said it would have been “pointless.”

“The gist was that it was a waste of time trying to convince a judge who had cut off visits as punishment for trying to save a girl’s life that the mother was ‘less dangerous’ than she had been,” said Mr. Leshner, adding that, based on his own review of the court papers, he agreed.

In any case, no one denies that Dr. Neustein spent hundreds of thousands of dollars—some her own, the

rest borrowed from friends and her parents—to fight for custody and visitation with her daughter. She fought the family court for years, filing appeals to every judicial level in New York and even trying a federal lawsuit, which was denied because of jurisdictional issues.

After exhausting all avenues, she devoted her time to mothers who, like herself, had lost custody of their children after making allegations of abuse.

Killing Stories

In his emails to *The Jewish Voice*, the issue that seemed very important to Mr. Burger was the impending publication of Dr. Neustein’s new book. In one of his emails, Mr. Burger boasted that, over the years, he had been “successful in killing a few stories [on Dr. Neustein’s case] by

nipping it in the bud—but my experience is that once a story is out, or a stand has been taken (this applies especially to politicians)—forget it.”

He claimed to have “killed” a story on Dr. Neustein’s case planned by the Associated Press as well as one for Channel 11 on a judiciary hearing arranged by New York State Senator David Paterson.

In one of his final emails to *The Jewish Voice*, Mr. Burger said he had been in touch with his niece who suggested suing the publication because, he said, she believed *The Jewish Voice* was publishing her mother’s new book. Mr. Burger said his recommendation to her “would be to go after Amy since this would be a lose-lose situation for Amy and would be a stop to this nonsense of ‘if only she could see her mother.’”

Rage

At about the same time that the Burgers began writing to *The Jewish Voice*, Rabbi Pesach Lerner of the National Council of Young Israel informed the editor that his president, Steven (Shlomo) Mostofsky, who, at the time of Dr. Neustein’s ordeal in Brooklyn Family Court, served as Judge Deutsch’s law clerk, was also furious at the March issue article. In the article, nothing is said about *continued on page 10*

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Mr. Mostofsky except that he served as a leader of several Orthodox-Jewish institutions in Brooklyn and, presumably at the behest of Judge Deutsch, had been present at a hearing called by Mr. Paterson on child-abuse cases. Mr. Paterson lodged an ethics complaint against Judge Deutsch because the state senator believed, as he told the *Village Voice*, that Mr. Mostofsky had been sent to the hearing "with the intention of intimidating mothers whose cases were before Judge Deutsch from testifying to the committee."

On the phone with the editor of *The Jewish Voice*, Mr. Mostofsky threatened lawsuits, but when asked directly what it was that bothered him, he at first said, "The whole article," and then focused on Judge Deutsch. When told that the information about his role

in the hearings had come from Mr. Paterson, Mr. Mostofsky said he would probably have to sue him, too.

After blasting Dr. Neustein, Mr. Mostofsky ended the conversation with the "hope" that *The Jewish Voice* had sufficient insurance to pay for the lawsuit he and/or Judge Deutsch would be filing against the paper.

It was unclear why Mr. Mostofsky should bear such animus towards Dr. Neustein.

Emails from "Sherry"

One day later, however, *The Jewish Voice* received its first email from Ms. Orbach or someone purporting to be she. In this letter, the author stressed that she had never been sexually abused by her father and that "upon this false foundation," her mother "has built her web of lies and gross distortions about both

me and my father."

The writer was distressed that she had not been contacted before the article was published and did not seem to know that the paper had left two messages on Dr. Orbach's answering machine asking to be contacted by him and/or his daughter.

She insisted she was writing a letter to the editor, but, she said, she did not trust the paper "to print my letter in its unadulterated form." Therefore, she said, she was sending her letter "to another publication" in which she would "highlight your blatant disregard of principles of ethical journalism."

Identity

The Jewish Voice's editor told the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach that anything she wanted to say would be published, but, because there was no way of ascertaining who she was just from an email, it would be necessary to meet in person. The email author, however, would have none of it.

"Since you [are] a journalist, I expect you to be able to confirm my identity on your own," she wrote. "Thus, your request for a meeting sounds suspicious."

She offered to send "documents" to "confirm my identity" and to arrange for a meeting

with her lawyer, but requests to meet in a public place, such as the Columbia University library, were rebuffed.

Calling the Dean

The person purporting to be Ms. Orbach ended the series of email exchanges by insisting she did not want to submit a letter to the editor, and, further, she said, any attempts to meet with her in person would engender a visit from her lawyer. She said she had met with the dean of Columbia Law School as well as with Columbia Security and any attempts to meet with her would result in the editor's being "removed from campus."

"Given your threat to meet with me without permission, I am no longer comfortable communicating with you directly. Thus, after this message, I will no longer respond to your emails," she wrote.

Spokesmen for the dean's office as well as for Columbia Security said no one had spoken to them about this matter.

Don't Publish

Just as the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach ended her correspondence with *The Jewish Voice*, a new one began, this time with a woman who said her name was Alana Sher Klein. Ms. Klein identified herself as a friend of Ms. Orbach's

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who grew up with her in the Five Towns. Ms. Klein said she, too, was a law student.

In an email, Ms. Klein denied that Ms. Orbach ever acted “sexually provocative” or ever resembled a Holocaust survivor (a reference to Mrs. Anolick’s description).

The next message from Ms. Klein conceded that *The Jewish Voice* believed it was “doing the right thing for Sherry,” but suggested telling Dr. Neustein “not to publish her book that will only further humiliate her daughter.”

Concern for “Accuracy”

For several weeks, there was quiet, and then, shortly before Passover, Mr. Leshner said he was informed through an acquaintance that David Pollock, the assistant director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, wanted to receive the manuscript of the book before it was published so that Ms. Orbach and Judge Deutsch could confirm its accuracy. Mr. Leshner had learned that Sylvia Deutsch, Judge Deutsch’s wife, sits on the JCRC’s board.

Through his attorney, Judge Deutsch denied that either he or his wife had authorized Mr. Pollock to conduct any communications on their behalf. Similarly, they said they had no knowledge of any such communications either.

Mr. Leshner said that when Mr. Pol-

lock contacted him, the JCRC official told him he had met with Ms. Orbach, with whom he claimed a past connection, but would give no details.

Mr. Pollock told *The Jewish*

Voice the call was not his own idea, but, rather, had been suggested by “a mutual friend.”

“Others”

According to Mr. Pollock, he informed Mr. Leshner that Ms. Orbach was “concerned that his upcoming book be accurate and suggested that he share the manuscript with her in order ‘to identify any inaccuracies.’”

“Mr. Leshner stated that he would never do that,” said Mr. Pollock. “He then started to ask me many questions.”

Mr. Leshner recalled that “under my persistent questioning,” Mr. Pollock “admitted that Sherry was accompanied by ‘others’ though he would not say who they were.”

“I suggested Mostofsky, and, by the end of the conversation, he slipped and appeared to acknowledge Mostofsky and Ozzie Orbach. He did not attribute a single comment to Sherry, from which I gather that she was silent,” said Mr. Leshner. “When I told Mr. Pollock that *From Madness to Mutiny* had already been printed by the publisher and that it was too late for any changes, he told me that ‘they’ would be taking legal action against me and my co-author, that we would hear from ‘them’ in court.”

According to Mr. Leshner, Mr. Pollock did not refer to Mr. Deutsch as one of the people who wanted to “confirm the accuracy” of the book.

In response to a telephone message, Dr. Orbach sent an email to *The Jewish Voice* asking to be contacted in the same manner, but, by the time the paper



Michael Leshner, Esq.

“All suspensions of visitation are, in theory, ‘temporary.’ In Amy’s case-again, in theory- she could have sought resumption of her visits with Sherry if she could have convinced Judge Deutsch that circumstances had changed in her favor. But how could she have done that? She could hardly admit that she was insane and had harmed Sherry, and, short of that, what changed circumstances could she have adduced?”

went to press, he had not responded to the questions that had been emailed to him by the editor. Mr. Mostofsky, who was contacted by phone, fax, email, and through the National Council of Young Israel, also did not respond.

“Libelous”

According to Mr. Leshner, Mr. Pollock claimed the March article in *The Jewish Voice* contained “libelous” statements, but when asked to identify them, he said nothing. Mr. Pollock told Mr. Leshner the fact that he could not identify the “libel” was not important.

When pressed to reveal how he had come into contact with Ms. Orbach and what his interest was in her case, Mr. Pollock became “evasive,” said Mr. Leshner.

Towards the end of the conversation, Mr. Pollock read to Mr. Leshner from an e-mail purportedly from Ms. Orbach saying that she had never been sexually abused. Mr. Pollock did not appear to have seen any other correspondence from or to Ms. Orbach.

When questioned by the editor of *The Jewish Voice* about this exchange, Mr. Pollock stated that he did not represent Ms. Orbach and that while he knew of Judge Deutsch, he had not spoken with him about this matter. He denied that the JCRC board member, Sylvia Deutsch, had asked him to contact Mr. Leshner.

Although, according to Mr. Leshner, Mr. Pollock refused to explain why the JCRC was involving itself in this case, when asked the same question by *The Jewish Voice*, Mr. Pollock said he was

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acting only as a "private person." In a written statement on JCRC email stationery, he said that the organization had no role or position in this matter.

Public Apology

But before Mr. Leshner heard from anyone summoning him to court, *The Jewish Voice* received a long letter from Martin Samson, an attorney who has represented the National Council of Young Israel, the organization Mr. Mostofsky serves as president. Mr. Samson wrote as attorney for Mr. Deutsch, and informed the editor that the judge felt the article contained "false and defamatory statements" for which he wanted a retraction and a public apology.

His demands echoed the claims already made by Mr. Mostofsky, but, when asked about any possible ties between Messrs Deutsch and Mostofsky and the law firm, Mr. Samson said his firm, Phillips Nizer, and Judge Deutsch had "an independent attorney/client relationship with no connection with any other individual or organization."

Mr. Samson acknowledged that his firm represents the National Council of Young Israel, but, he said, it does not represent Mr. Mostofsky individually. He said Judge Deutsch has had "a continuing cordial relationship with Steven Mostofsky, who served as his law secretary until the judge retired."

In Mr. Samson's 18-page letter, it appeared there were really only two related issues to which Mr. Deutsch took exception. The first dealt with the timing of his retirement and whether or not it was influenced by complaints about his conduct on the bench. The second dealt with the issue of whether some politicians "forced" him from the bench. (See the clarification and correction on page 17.)

How Did He Get Them?

Perhaps the most troubling issue raised by Mr. Samson's letter is the appearance that, 16 years after the custody case was adjudicated, there was some sort of connection between Judge Deutsch and Ms. Orbach. In his letter, Mr. Samson cited excerpts from two of the emails exchanged between the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach and the editor of *The Jewish Voice*.

When asked how Judge Deutsch had obtained these emails, Mr. Samson said, "Since the conclusion of the trial, Judge

Deutsch has had no verbal or written communication with Dr. Orbach or Sherry Orbach." It therefore remained unclear how the judge or Mr. Samson would have access to these emails without a relationship of some sort with Ms. Orbach, if indeed it was she who had sent them.

Mr. Samson said his firm did not represent Ms. Orbach "at the present time."

A rather non-specific response came in an email from the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach. She said she was responding because her father had sent the questions from *The Jewish Voice* to her. Without mentioning Judge Deutsch or Mr. Mostofsky, the person purporting to

be Ms. Orbach said she had sent some of her emails "to others" because she had "sought their help in stopping my mother from exploiting me." These people, she said, "forwarded my emails to others with my permission."

Asked specifically if one of those people was Mr. Mostofsky, the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach did not respond. Mr. Mostofsky, too, did not respond to the question.

Timing

Mr. Samson, evidently believing the letters had been exchanged before the March article was published, accused

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Still Waiting for Sherry continued from page 13

the editor of failing to bring to readers' attention the fact that the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach said she was never molested by her father.

Mr. Samson mentioned nothing about the email in which the person said she did not want to submit a letter to the editor.

Mr. Samson also quoted from a letter written by the editor to Ms. Orbach (printed in full on page 19). The attorney seemed to infer that the editor's statements about a "highly competitive market," a subject "women could identify with," and an issue that "Jewish publications throughout the country—and maybe even the world—will latch onto" referred to *The Jewish Voice* and its article rather than to the new book by Dr. Neustein and Mr. Leshner.

Rabbi Pesach Lerner, executive vice-president of the National Council of Young Israel, confirmed that Mr. Samson has represented his organization, of which Mr. Mostofsky is president, but added that this was unrelated to his current role representing Judge Deutsch. "I know it looks funny, but it really is just a coincidence," said Rabbi Lerner.

Cease and Desist

On the same day that *The*

Jewish Voice received its letter from Mr. Samson, UPNE received two letters, one from someone purporting to be Ms. Orbach and the other from her father or someone purporting to be he. Both letters asked that publication and/or distribution of Dr. Neustein's new book be halted.

The publishing house forwarded the letters to the book's authors, and they sent them on to *The Jewish Voice*.

In his letter, Dr. Orbach advised the publisher that "for the sake of justice and fairness," it would be advisable for their attorneys to check the material in the book and give him an advance copy so that his attorneys could do the same.

"I am asking that you cease and desist from publishing this book until this matter is clarified," he wrote.

Pleas and Threats

Alternating between pleas and threats, the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach told UPNE that her mother, over the "past 20 years," has "exploited me by lying to the press about both me and my father in her quest for fame."

Stating that her mother "will claim that I am brainwashed and being controlled by my father," the letter-writer tried to convince the edi-

tor that the opposite was the case, citing her travel and educational experience as well as the fact that "about five years ago, I left Orthodox Judaism, despite my father's strong wishes that I remain observant."

She told the editor that, as "a feminist," she understood "the need for a book that takes an honest look at how mothers are treated by the judicial system," but, she said, "I am certain that my mother's publication is not this book." Further, she said, the publishers would "be doing the women's rights and victim's rights movements a great disservice by publishing her book."

"If my mother does touch on some true stories of other families in the book, it would be disrespectful to these families to publish their stories through my mother's lying mouth," said the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach.

Reactions

When shown her daughter's letter to the publisher, Dr. Neustein waxed philosophic.

"As Sherry's mother, I am deeply pained to see her infected with such hostility toward me, hostility that grew out of my forced absence from her life, hostility that filled the place where we once had a warm, loving mother-

daughter relationship. But the hostility toward the book has even deeper roots. I can't help but surmise it is politically motivated by those who desperately fear public scrutiny and government inquiry into their daily activities. If that is so, why must Sherry once again pay the price for those who harmed her? Are their reputations worth the torture of an innocent young woman?" she said.

Marjorie Schecter, a social worker who was based at the New York Legal Aid Society when that organization served as Ms. Orbach's legal guardian, said Ms. Orbach's comments about her mother were "tragic, but not unexpected."

"To survive, a child completely deprived of one parent has to do whatever is necessary to remain in the good graces of the other. Rage such as that which is displayed in those letters may reflect a child who has been told that her mother didn't want her," said Mrs. Schecter, who now resides in Marlboro.

Backing Her Story

But the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach was not through. On May 4, she called WDEL radio in Delaware, home of The Rick Jensen talk show on which Dr. Neustein

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Still Waiting for Sherry continued from page 14

was scheduled to be the featured speaker, discussing her book. Michael Dore, the director of The Nagle Foundation, a private group which organized the program, called Dr. Neustein to report that her participation in the show had been cancelled. According to Mr. Dore, the program had learned from Ms. Orbach that Dr. Neustein was "mentally unstable."

A few minutes later, Dr. Neustein received a call from Mr. Jensen's co-host, Jerry Fulcher, who reported that the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach insisted she had not been sexually abused and then gave the station specific names and phone numbers to confirm her story. Dr. Neustein said Mr. Fulcher told her those named by the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach were her father, Judge Deutsch, Mr. Pollock, and

someone identified simply as "the judge's law clerk," which may or may not have been a reference to Mr. Mostofsky.

Dr. Neustein said Mr. Fulcher told her the person purporting to be Ms. Orbach claimed Dr. Neustein had been "talking about this issue for ten years for the purpose of becoming rich and famous." The caller told the station that "the judge found [my mother] to have a narcissistic personality."

Killing the Show

The person purporting to be Ms. Orbach also emailed guests who were supposed to appear with her mother, including Eileen King, regional director of the Washington, DC, chapter of Justice for Children, and Prof Dana Harrington Conner, an associate professor of law at Widener Law School, telling them that

her mother is "a fraud."

"They made an accusation about you. If it's a plan to kill a show, they succeeded," said Mr. Fulcher, telling Dr. Neustein he "had a call into David Pollock."

Asked why the caller who purported to be Ms. Orbach would involve him in this action, Mr. Pollock said he had no personal knowledge of any call to the Jensen program, was not consulted by anyone about contacting the show, and was never called by anyone from the show. Furthermore, he said, neither Judge nor Mrs. Deutsch asked him to contact the radio program.

Mr. Samson, Judge Deutsch's lawyer, concurred. "Judge and Mrs. Deutsch are totally unaware of any of Ms. Orbach's recent actions," he said, making clear that this included communications with UPNE and with the "Rick Jensen radio program."

Slander

For Dr. Neustein, it was *deja vu* all over again. She recalled that, in December 1987, just before she was to appear on television with Geraldo Rivera to discuss her case, the program received a phone call from Mr. Mostofsky saying that Dr. Neustein was "a paranoid schizophrenic" and that the program would be greatly embarrassed if it persisted in having her as a guest.

"Not even the worst witnesses against me in court gave me such labels," said Dr. Neustein. "This was pure slander, and to be slandered by the person who would become the president of Young Israel was a double stab in my heart as an Orthodox woman."

Reached by phone after he was sent emails and faxes

asking him about this issue, Mr. Mostofsky refused to comment. Messages left for the Geraldo Rivera program were not immediately answered either.

Finding the Truth

Jeremiah B. McKenna, former chief counsel to the New York State Senate Committee on Crime and Correction, who made the Neustein case the principal issue of his mid-1980s investigation into the mistreatment of women in the courts, said the latest developments in her case serve "as proof of a continuing conspiracy to conceal the truth of what happened in this case."

Mr. McKenna said he was suspicious that people involved in the case were currently "keeping a close watch on Sherry in a continued effort to suppress the truth."

While he was pleased with the news that Mr. Rothman may have prompted an investigation, he felt real success would demand "nothing short of an investigation by the US Attorney in the Eastern District of New York."

Mr. Leshner had an additional thought.

"If I'm connecting the dots correctly, the thing that really amazes me in all this is the apparent role of Steve Mostofsky. He seems to be at the center of an effort to interfere with a book Amy and I wrote to show the ugly counterattacks against mothers who bring concerns about sexual abuse of children into family courts. Why? Why would the president of the National Council of Young Israel want to interfere with such a book, or its publicity? What's his stake in this? I think that's a question he should be answering publicly," said Mr. Leshner. S.L.R.

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