

This is the story of my pain and recovery. I was shot twice in a violent criminal attack. But I wasn't the only one who was hurt. My family, my friends, and many slight acquaintances had to recover too—and then offer love and support. I got a lot of hugs, believe me.

My publisher says that I can't bore readers with a long list of acknowledgments. So I decided to combine those acknowledgments with an introduction and name the combination of the two, preface and acknowledgments. I'm introducing my book to you and at the same time thanking those who helped me survive.

Too often we see occurrences of crime and physical abuse on television or in the news and we are led to believe that the recovery and the return to normalcy are quick and immediate. Well, I am here to tell you, *that is not true*.

My recovery was neither quick nor complete. I have had to lean (very hard at times) on my family, friends, religious leaders, and trained professionals. My wife Janet can confirm that. The pain of this disturbance in our lives—just eight months after the loss of her mother and *compadre*, Lucille—was a tremendous burden for Janet to bear. I love her very much for her resilience. It has not been an easy burden as I am a high-maintenance husband anyway.

For a long time after the attack, I experienced depression, enhanced anxiety, and physical ailments. Now, just over eleven years after the shooting, I am finally mellowing out. My two children, Robyn and Jarrod, and then daughter-in-law Sandra, have been very supportive. I thank Robyn for the “rubs,” encouragement, and the constant thoughts and ideas about how I can get myself back into the workplace. She has helped me deal not only with résumés and career change ideas, but also with the therapeutic value of those 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles she made me attack.

Jarrod bathed me and helped me cope with therapy and those many doctor visits. I would have been lost without him during those difficult days. He spent every waking moment helping me for those first two weeks, and I will never forget his love, his caring attention, and his constant encouragement. Boy, did he cheer me up.

Sandra was there from the first day in the hospital to rub my feet and to find some loving way to lessen my suffering.

My brother Alan and I have always been close, but have become even closer after the shooting—and as we are growing older. He stayed on his vacation in Baltimore for an additional week to help me. Like my son, he took me everywhere for one week straight. He sat with me for hours waiting for doctors, and then helping me understand what they were telling me.

The Jewish Big Brother Big Sister program introduced me to Paul L. Gibbs, Jr., my “Little Brother.” He became a very important part of our family and was with me almost every weekend during those tough first seven years. By just being with me, he helped the healing and recovery.

I also love and appreciate Irv and Arlene Wasserman for their friendship and devotion. They were the first ones there when Janet didn’t know whom to call or where to turn. They stayed with her on that horrible day.

My cousins Caren and Brian Meritt and I have always have been very close; they, Rachel, Jill, and David were there for me through it all. My cousins, Brian and Caren, cousins were there on the first day, in spite of it being their son’s birthday. They stayed with Janet until God knows when.

My friends Geri and Mark Willen encouraged me to go to Europe very shortly after “The Day” –and helped me by carrying my pillows and paraphernalia and even buttoning my jeans.

My friend Osher Pias, helped make bearable my horrible experience with shock trauma. He provided invaluable medical advice and support to Janet when she was alone and unsure of what decisions should be made on my behalf. He took me to lunch and helped me with so many decisions and personally depressing matters. Once, he flew me to Ocean City and back in one day —wow!

The board of Chestnut Ridge Country Club, especially David Cohen, Michael Shilling, and Arnold Wallenstein, for making it possible for me to use the club at a time of trying financial issues and physical disabilities. The privilege was very important in my rehabilitation as a place of quiet and peaceful escape and reclusion.

Barry Wasserman and I are now close and almost inseparable friends. He was in that chair next to my bed in the hospital from the moment I opened my eyes after those admittance procedures and initial surgery.

My pal Jeff London dragged me to the Ravens games and introduced me to a great bunch of people at pregame tailgating parties. And even when I was too down or suffering too much in pain to want to go, he held and protected my arm, getting me through the throngs and into my seat safely.

Michael Freedman, thank you for your encouragement in the early days when getting started required it.

My good girlfriend Ellen Mogol taught me how to help myself by showing me the path to doing those right-handed crossword puzzles.

I thank all of the members of my physical and emotional rehabilitation team, including Dr. W. Andrew Eglseder who performed his surgical magic on my battered hand no less than five times. He made a functional hand where one was not, both physically and aesthetically.

Gary Kassimir and Steve Freeman of Kassimir Physical Therapy created so many different and unique devices for me to wear in all sorts of circumstances to be protected so that I could try to live some semblance of normalcy during the three-and-a-half years my hand and arm were almost continually encumbered.

And finally, I thank Dr. Harold Steinitz. He helped me heal. No! He made me heal! He eased my pain and taught me how to handle and live with the trauma I underwent and that would clinically be tethered to me for the rest of my life. Equally important, Harold helped me determine that I should write this account and that some parts are particularly important. He showed me how to write in a more developed and subjectively descriptive manner.

Dr. Louis Malinow dispatched his time and advice in an overabundant fashion when I know I must have overtaxed his calm demeanor.

Dr. Sheldon Levin was there at the beginning as both a friend and caretaker, injecting himself into my plan of healing.

My friend, spiritual advisor, and, equally important, teacher, Moshe Shualy provided spiritual leadership and helped sustain me when doubt and questions could have overcome me. He helped me embed and enshrine my father's place in my heart through his ritualistic and spiritual teachings.

Dr. Paul Schneider of the Krieger Schechter Day School provided a place to heal and step back into life in a warm, friendly, and secure environment.

Marci Dickman, Shelly Hendler, Barbara Kirk, and all of the wonderful kids in grades 5–8 provided warmth and fun. I worked at the school over that first winter—a wonderful mitzvah, providing me the opportunity to slip back into a normal life's routine. I learned that I could function in a responsible manner, that I could be somewhere on a regular basis, and that I still had a lot to offer the human race—and most especially, the children.

I could never have gotten through so much of the legal, financial, and business aspects of this whole deal—and believe me, there were many—without Mark Willen (again), Alan Silverberg, Tracy Chado, Michael Limsky, and, yet again, my dear cousin Brian Meritt.

Alan Zukerberg, whose friendship I have come to cherish, gave friendly advice and guidance,

My wonderful friend Arnold Greenspun gave me a place to go and just “be” for hours over the course of hundreds of days when there would have been such a void in my life about where to be or what to do. The food at the bagel shop was great, the atmosphere was healthy and therapeutic for me, and the occasional wiping of the tables, gathering the trash, bagging the bagels, and slicing lemons was truly a godsend!

Additionally, to all of my many friends and various daily associates who I may have omitted in these pages, you are present in my heart!

I acknowledge Chazzan Emanuel (Manny) Perlman last, but you are one of the best. *Thank you.* I cannot adequately express my gratitude for his love, support, encouragement, and friendship. He helped and guided me. He was the main force in making me understand the importance of sharing my experiences through this book. His constant encouragement was a very strong and inspirational force for me. More importantly, he required me to “give more!” Without his specific motivation and prodding, there is little doubt that I would not have completed our project in any reasonable amount of time. His insights and friendship have come to mean so much to me during all the times we have shared together. Lastly, I thank him for being the only one to have read this entire work, helped in editing it, and corrected my errant ways with careful, yet firm, tenderness.

And finally, I thank my publisher, Barry Beckham, for showing me that I really can tell a story rather succinctly, and quite literally, with only half the words.

And now, my story.

The only way to tell it adequately is to recall the details as I remember them over these past eleven years. Some of my story may be unpleasant and even disgusting, but these are the true events as they happened. I have tried to be realistic, truthful, and honest, and not necessarily tactful. After all, I have just thanked descriptively the many people who have helped me recover. Now I want readers to understand that with the right support network that keeps you in a positive frame of mind, you can recover from the most disastrous invasions of your life and health. And you can live to write about it.