

Books

Sybil Exposed

by *Debbie Nathan* | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY JUDITH NEWMAN

NON-FICTION

You could not grow up in 1970s America without being aware of *Sybil*, the book (and 1976 movie) about the girl whose childhood of sadistic abuse was so horrific she suffered blackouts and formed 16 separate personalities in order to cope. But thanks to sessions of barbiturate-induced hypnosis with a brilliant young psychiatrist, Sybil was eventually made whole again. The story became a justification for the controversial treatment of recovering memories through sedation and hypnosis. One problem: It was a wild fabrication. "Sybil" was the creative collaboration of an ambitious, narcissistic psychiatrist, a social-climbing journalist and a suggestible, highly neurotic patient named Shirley Mason. Nathan explores just how these three were responsible

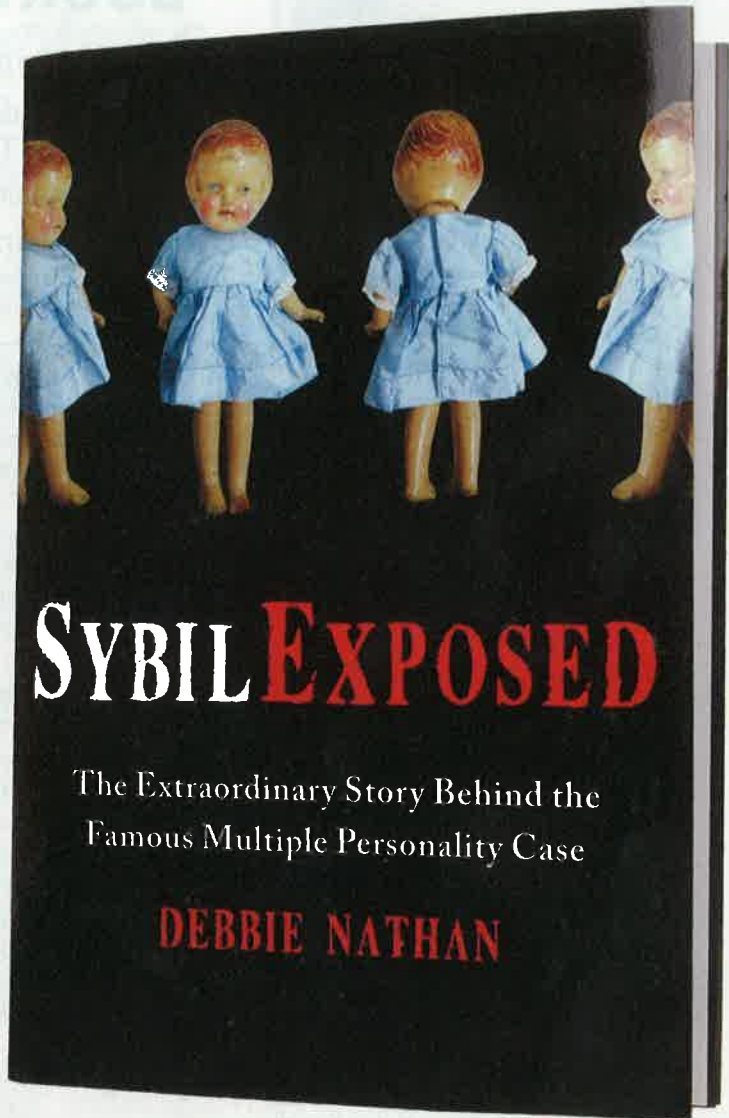
for one of the most damaging frauds in medicine, creating a gripping history of crackpot psychiatry. To read *Sybil Exposed* is to get a real feeling for just how often the inmates were running the asylum.

A searing exposé of one of psychiatry's most renowned, troubling cases

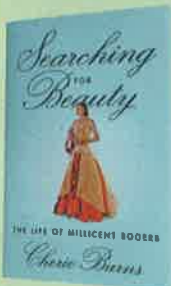
"Sybil" in 1941.



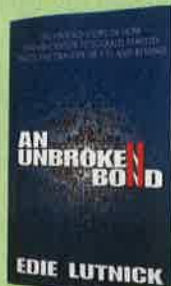
Shirley A. Mason



GREAT READS NONFICTION



SEARCHING FOR BEAUTY
by *Cherie Burns*
A finely stitched portrait of Millicent Rogers, an heiress and early 20th-century fashion icon.



AN UNBROKEN BOND
by *Edie Lutnick*
The author, who cofounded a massive 9/11 relief fund after losing her brother in the attacks, details her vast mission.



ANATOMY OF A KIDNAPPING
by *Steven L. Berk*
A harrowing account of a compassionate doctor's abduction at gunpoint from his own home. Stays with you.

STANLEY GIESEL