

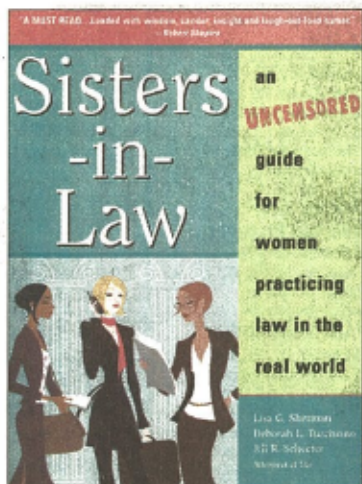
Book Helps 'Sisters' Cope in Male-Dominated Legal World

BY THOMAS ADCOCK

THE CO-AUTHOR of a saucy new survival guide for fresh young female attorneys has borrowed her husband's surname "for purposes of writing this book only." So reads the acknowledgements page of "Sisters-in-Law: an Uncensored Guide for Women Practicing Law in the Real World," hot off the press this month.

Deborah L. Turchiano, 36, a former corporate associate at a large Manhattan firm asks further that the consultancy that now employs her remain nameless, due to her freewheeling prose on delicate matters such as:

- What happens when you lock up hormonally charged lawyers in their 20s and 30s in a building for days at a time, barring any contact



with the outside world? You guessed it, Sister — sex, sex, and more sex.

- The cost of a luxurious lifestyle [at a large firm] is steep. You must be willing to sacrifice leisure for loot, pride for perks, and ego for eternal servitude.

- [I]f you can afford it and it is your calling to be a stay-at-home mommy — by all means do so and do not feel guilty! Your career is not over by a long shot. ... [W]e are blessed with permanent skills that transcend time.

Ms. Turchiano wrote "Sisters" with Los Angeles attorneys Lisa G. Sherman and Jill R. Schecter.

"Our main message is, you're going to be overwhelmed and you're not going to know what's going on and not too many

people are going to help you," Ms. Turchiano, a graduate of the Frederic G. Levin College of Law at the University of Florida, Gainesville, said in an interview. "You're going to make mistakes. You'll be stupid at the beginning. Everybody's been through it. You'll be OK."

The genesis of the book was a 10-year exchange of amusing tales and flat-out rants about life on the job, after which it occurred to the author/attorneys that they had the guts of a book.

"So we bought 'Publishing for Dummies,'" Ms. Turchiano said, "and sent our manuscript all over the place."

All over included the offices of potential male admirers — for blurb value if nothing else.

Los Angeles attorney Robert Shapiro, lead counsel in the murder trial of O.J.

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Guide for Women Lawyers

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Simpson, hailed the book as "loaded with wisdom, candor, insight and laugh-out-loud humor."

Howard Weitzman, a Proskauer Rose partner in Los Angeles, said of the book, "With truth and wit, [it] deals with the many issues females confront daily in a system built around male values."

To take advantage of such a value system, "Sisters" provides numerous tips. For example, under a section entitled "Playing the Pregnant Trump Card," Ms. Turchiano and her colleagues make merry of male supervisors' "deathly fear of *feminine issues*, including, of course, anything having to do with your Possessed state."

Accordingly, there is this recommended course of action for ducking out of the office early: "[S]imply explain to your Y-Factor boss that you're feeling some lower groin pain because your uterus is compressed by the amniotic sac and your elevated progesterone levels."

And to help tenderfoot lawyers quickly understand the basic lay of their respective lands, the book employs a shoe metaphor. Large law firms, for example, are called stilettos. Mid-size firms are comfortable platform heels; ski boots are boutiques. Mary Janes go with "government gigs" and rollerblades are solo practitioners.

Likewise, individual practice areas are satirically defined. Tax law is labeled "the proctology of law practice," trust and estates is "the work that never dies" and bankruptcy law is

"discovering that someone has more irresponsible spending habits than you."

In an endnote to the book, the authors explain their sense of humor as a means of remaining sane:

"The first few years of Sisterhood knocks even the most hardened women off balance, and oftentimes the only thing that keeps us from falling flat on our lasses is another Sister to lean on ... so seek them out."

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The authors make merry of male supervisors' "deathly fear of feminine issues," including anything having to do with pregnancy.
