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Shamed and Silenced for Years, a Sexual Abuse Survivor Speaks Out in New Memoir

LAKEVILLE, NY — May 17, 2022 — A victim of years of sexual assault has revealed the details of her past in a new book, using her long-silenced voice as a torch that illuminates difficult truths as well as a path forward.

In *[The Man Behind the Curtain: A Memoir](#)* (Possibilities Press, April 2022), coauthor Valerie Dimino shapes the story of Jessica Renee, who was 11 years old when her stepfather began routinely raping and sexually assaulting her. Only when she was 15 and her boyfriend asked the right questions did the truth come to light — a terrible truth that her mother chose not to believe. Backed by a church community that believed a woman's duty was to support her husband above all else, Renee's mother and countless other family and friends turned against her, labeling her a sinner even as her rapist was convicted.

Throughout the long road to that conviction, Renee often felt she didn't have a voice, as she was continually questioned, criticized, and cast aside. In sharing her story through this memoir, she is making her voice heard and providing a guiding light for other victims still searching for hope. Calling attention to sexual abuse happening at home, by a family member the victim loved and trusted, Renee's story is a powerful addition to the Me Too movement and a rallying cry for survivors and allies to rise from the ashes of silence.

"I'm amazed by the strength and growth I've seen in Jessica," says Dimino. "To report years of abuse only to face another kind of abuse in the aftermath would be enough to break a person down, retreating further into silence. But Jessica has allowed her past to bolster her without defining her. The flock that worked against her throughout those years is still doing so today, yet she stands tall and stands by her truth, and I stand with her proudly. It's an honor to help her find her voice and utilize it in sharing this astonishing story."

Dimino earned bachelor's and master's degrees in creative writing from SUNY Brockport and has 14 years of professional writing, editing, and marketing experience in higher education, performing arts, and medical informatics. She is a copy editor at Rochester-based VisualDx and lives in Lakeville, NY, with her partner, Rich. This is her first book.

The Man Behind the Curtain: A Memoir is available through [IndieBound](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Amazon](#), [Apple Books](#), and [other online retailers](#), or through [direct purchase](#) from the authors. Review copies are available [upon request](#).

Paperback: \$18, 246 pages, 5.5x8.5, ISBN 979-8-9859400-1-5

Hardcover: \$28, 230 pages, 6x9, ISBN: 979-8-9859400-0-8

E-book: \$9.99, ISBN: 979-8-9859400-2-2

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