

[PDF] My Lobotomy

Charles Fleming, Howard Dully - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Johnny Heller brings the tale of Dully's childhood lobotomy to life in this rugged, clear-cut autobiography. Heller perfectly captures Dully's San Jose accent, adding a grain to words to give a slightly raspy tone. Detailing the author's troubled, often heartbreaking childhood, Heller narrates at a surprisingly swift and unrelenting pace, resulting in an even stronger portrayal of Dully's story as he opts not to hammer each tragic occurrence into the listener's mind. Rather, Heller relates the story in matter-of-factly, as Dully never pauses to mourn his painful adolescence, but chooses to include as much information as he possibly can while speaking of his own experiences. Dully's honest story never pleads for the audience's sympathies, but firmly demands

their attention. Heller does not disappoint as he relates this intriguing and painful tale.
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Review "The lobotomy, although terrible, was not the greatest injury done to him. His greatest misfortune, as his own testimony makes clear, was being raised by parents who could not give him love. The lobotomy, he writes, made him feel like a Frankenstein monster. But that's not quite right. By the age of 12 he already felt that way. It's this that makes *My Lobotomy* one of the saddest stories you'll ever read."

—William Grimes, *The New York Times*

"Dully's tale is a heartbreakingly sad story of a life seriously, tragically interrupted. All Howard Dully wanted was to be normal. His entire life has been a search for normality. He did what he had to do to survive. This book is his legacy, and it is a powerful one."

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

"In *My Lobotomy* Howard Dully tells more of the story that so many found gripping in a National Public Radio broadcast: how his stepmother joined with a doctor willing to slice into his brain with "ice picks" when he was all of 12 years old."

—*New York Daily News*

"[Dully's] memoir is vital and almost too disturbing to bear—a piece of recent history that reads like science fiction... Dully, the only patient to ever request his file, speaks eloquently. It's a voice to crash a server, and to break your heart."

—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"The value of the book is in the indomitable spirit Dully displays throughout his grueling saga...By coming to grips with his past and shining a light into the dark corners of his medical records, Dully shows that regardless of what happened to his brain, his heart and soul are ferociously strong."

—*Chicago-Sun Times*

"Plain-spoken, heart wrenching memoir ..."

—*San Jose Mercury News*

"Gut-wrenching memoir by a man who was lobotomized at the age of 12.

Assisted by journalist/novelist Fleming (*After Havana*, 2003, etc.), Dully recounts a family tragedy whose Sophoclean proportions he could only sketch in his powerful 2005 broadcast on NPR's

All Things Considered.

"In 1960," he writes, "I was given a transorbital, or 'ice pick' lobotomy. My stepmother arranged it. My father agreed to it. Dr. Walter Freeman, the father of the American lobotomy, told me he was going to do some 'tests.' It took ten minutes and cost two hundred dollars." Fellow doctors called Freeman's technique barbaric: an ice pick—like instrument was inserted about three inches into each eye socket and twirled to sever connections from the frontal lobe to the rest of the brain. The procedure was intended to help curb a variety of psychoses by muting emotional responses, but sometimes it irreversibly reduced patients to a childlike state or (in 15% of the operations Freeman performed) killed them outright. Dully's ten-minute "test" did neither, but in some ways it had a far crueller result, since it didn't end the unruly behavior that had set his stepmother against him to begin with.

"I spent the next forty years in and out of insane asylums, jails, and halfway houses," he tells us. "I was homeless, alcoholic, and drug-addicted. I was lost." From all accounts, there was no excuse for the lobotomy. Dully had never been "crazy," and his (not very) bad behavior sounds like the typical acting-up of a child in desperate need of affection. His stepmother responded with unrelenting abuse and neglect, his father allowed her to demonize his son and never admitted his complicity in the lobotomy; Freeman capitalized on their monumental dysfunction. It's a tale of epic horror, and while Dully's courage in telling it inspires awe, readers are left to speculate about what drove supposedly responsible adults to such unconscionable acts.

A profoundly disturbing survivor's tale."

—*Kirkus*

"...Hard to put down."

—*The Record*

From the Hardcover edition.

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