

THE *write* STUFF

The **funny, touching, intriguing** and occasionally harrowing stories **behind the stories**



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RITING CAN BE A THANKLESS JOB. There's the scheduling (and often rescheduling) of interviews, hours of staring at a computer screen waiting for creative genius to strike, and just when you think you have every *i* dotted and every *t* crossed, revise requests from your editor. But it is a labor of love. In the end, it all miraculously comes together and you have a concrete body of work that informs, entertains and sometimes even incites the readers. You have impacted the way people see the world, if even for a moment. And that makes it all worth it.

In honor of our sixty-fifth anniversary, we asked some of our longtime writers to take a stroll down memory lane and tell us about the most memorable stories they've written for *GREENWICH*. Needless to say, they had a tough time narrowing it down. Our articles run the gamut—issue pieces on domestic violence and divorce, personality profiles of actors and philanthropists, celebratory stories on teens and triathletes and everything in between. Our goal is to introduce you to the interesting, inspiring and colorful people of our town. And we couldn't do that without the talent and dedication of our writers. Here, a little behind the scenes, peek at what they go through to bring you the story.



The Verdict Is In Timothy Dumas

MICKEY'S MONKEY, OCTOBER 2002

If I lose this case," the criminal defense lawyer Mickey Sherman told me, "I'm gonna hang myself." Sherman was sipping Tanqueray and tonic at the restaurant Barcelona in the spring of 2002. The case in question, just underway, was *State v. Skakel*, and Sherman's TV pundit friends were already predicting he'd rack up a decisive win. No sensible jury, they said, would find Michael Skakel guilty of killing Martha Moxley with his dead mother's six iron twenty-seven years ago.

I spent a good deal of time with Sherman in those days. I enjoyed his company, as most people do, and in the bargain I got a close-up look at the most notorious murder case in Connecticut history. As we made the rounds, there was one thing I witnessed that pundits apparently did not: the widespread assumption of Skakel's guilt. Here was a typical encounter, at the Four Seasons bar in New York:

Attractive Blonde: "You're

Mickey Sherman. I know all about you."

Sherman: "Tell me about me."

Blonde: "You defend child killers."

Sherman: "Alleged child killers."

Blonde: "I used to think you were honorable. But you're so, so... mercenary. [*Blonde introduces Sherman to her girlfriends.*] This is Mickey Sherman. Know who he is? He's defending that f—ing murderer."

Sherman: "Alleged f—ing murderer."

Blonde: "Shut up. You're so cute. Isn't he cute?"

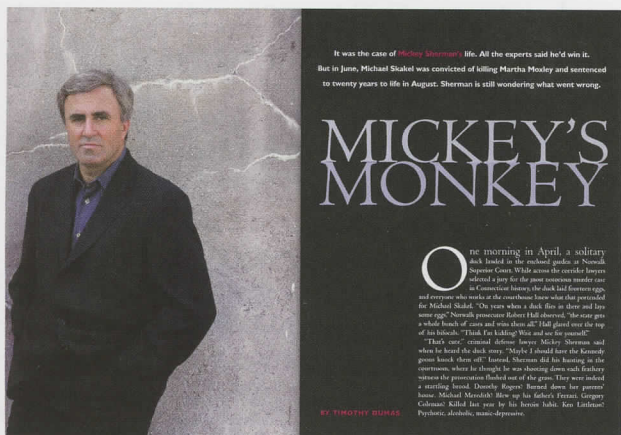
And then Sherman lost. He didn't hang himself, but he did take it hard, having believed strenuously in Skakel's innocence. Almost always, when we profile people in *GREENWICH* magazine, we profile success. Sherman agreed to sit down with me at his most vulnerable, three weeks after losing the case of his life. Intimate views of public figures in defeat are rare. They generally don't want to be seen that way—at their most emotionally naked—even if that is the view that most evokes sympathy.

"I don't think I ever had a chance," Sherman said, looking as if he'd spent nights replaying the trial in his mind. Which he had. "I feel so responsible for him being in jail. I know I did everything I could; I know I did my best, but you don't get credit for doing your best. You get credit for winning. The frightening part," Sherman went on, "is that there's not a lot I would have done differently." He drummed his fingers restlessly on the bar top. "I'm still in a nightmare that I can't wake up from."

“ I don't think I ever had a chance. ”

MICKEY SHERMAN

Skakel's appellate team of Hope Seeley and Hubert Santos is preparing to argue, in a last-ditch bid for a new trial, that Michael Skakel received ineffective counsel back in 2002. So perhaps Sherman's nightmare continues. »





On Cloud Nine Jill Johnson

THE ULTIMATE WINGMAN, NOVEMBER 2010

Hundreds of levers and lights looming on the dashboard in front of me, an air-traffic controller issuing directions through the headphones on my ears, a notebook and pen jiggling on my lap, a Greenwich model citizen seated next to me—I pondered whether this might be one of the most memorable experiences I'd had while researching an article for *GREENWICH* magazine.

I recalled Stuart Weitzman posing in a sea of shoes on the floor of his showroom in New York, cracking jokes and recounting his favorite family game of "Airport Roulette." That was entertaining. Having Lara Spencer's dog hop into my minivan and then chatting with the *Good Morning America* co-host star, as she sat cross-legged on her couch, pooch in lap—surreal. Seeing David Tutera in action at an opulent fundraiser he hosted in his hometown of Port Chester—enchanting. Lunch with designer Reed Krakoff at Barneys—fab. Brioni CEO Joe Barrato, my first interview after relocating from the city to Connecticut, making me feel so welcome in his home—wonderful.



While all the impressions those warm and talented interviewees made are indelible, it's hard to compete with the guy who flew me 15,000 feet up in his Pilatus aircraft to offer an aerial tour of our splendid corner of Connecticut, including two circles past my actual house on Compo Beach. Since 170 of the 180 hours Joe Howley had flown that year were in the capacity of a volunteer pilot for his charity, Patient Airlift Services (PALS), I was flattered to be in the copilot seat for the half-hour of fun flying he might fit in that month. I also had just learned, during an interview in his stately stone Colonial in midcountry Greenwich, that the average 200- to 300-mile PALS flight costs him \$2,500. And I thought filling up the minivan was bad.

At one point during our excursion, red lights on the control panel started blinking and a voice warned, "Traffic alert! Traffic Alert!" I may have panicked about the plane flying 400 feet below us, except I also had just learned that Joe Howley had 2,800 hours of flying time and once landed on a short, gravel airstrip in the middle of Port-de-Paix, in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. (He risked that landing after learning that the orphanage there had been out of food for eight days.)

Knowing Joe Howley spends most of his free time saving lives, I wasn't worried about the safety of mine. He calmly adjusted our altitude. I came down to Earth some hours after we landed.

I never did write anything in that notebook on my lap. No matter. I remember it all by heart.



"WE WILL NEVER FORGET"

by STEPHEN SAWICKI Illustration by BUNKY HURTER

Ten years have passed since Muslim extremists turned commercial jetliners into weapons of mass destruction and 2,976 innocent lives at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where United Airlines Flight 93 crashed. To understand the effect that the attacks had on the United States, one need only look at the outpouring of emotion President Barack Obama told the nation this spring that Navy SEAL killed Osama bin Laden.

The events of September 11th touched every American. An on war in Afghanistan, millions of dollars spent on homeland security a once unimaginable security at the airport are all part of the price each of us continues to pay. Yet those who lost family and friends,



Tribute to the Fallen Stephen Sawicki,

WE WILL NEVER FORGET,
SEPTEMBER 2011

Contrary to what some people seem to believe, few journalists look forward to stories about tragedy or interviewing those who have suffered great loss. If you're doing your job faithfully, every story like that takes a piece of your heart and leaves you wrung out for days. At the same time, for someone to share with you their deepest hurt is a trust and responsibility, even an honor, of high order. That's certainly how I feel about my interviews with family members of the people with ties to Greenwich who were killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The story was for the tenth anniversary of that sad day. But for the individuals I spoke with, the events of 9/11 had hardly dimmed. I talked at length with five survivors.

One had lost her husband. Another would never see her father again. Two suffered the deaths of grown children. Another mourned her brother. They each discussed the day itself. Everyone remembered staring at the television in shock. There were frantic telephone calls to try to reach their loved ones in the Twin Towers. And all recalled waiting in