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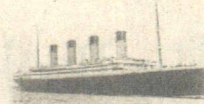


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Book is an Appalachian family saga

BY JOE TENNIS

For author Lisa McGrady Pell, releasing a new book has unfolded some of her Appalachian heritage — and mysterious, yet funny family history.

Much of the story is based in Southwest Virginia, and follows the journey of Lori Pomay, who finds herself on a mission to find her biological father nearly a half century after her mother's pregnancy.



Joe
Tennis

About Books

The author, Pell, was known as Lisa McGrady to WCYB-TV viewers a few years ago, when she served as an overnight editor and anchor.

Today, as Lisa Pell, she works full-time as a consultant for the federal government in Fairfax County, Va.

Pell's book, "Who's Your Daddy, Baby? A Quirky Paternity Mystery with a Facebook Twist" (Aberdeen Bay), is "a family saga," she said. "This story is about Appalachian families with American roots stretching back before the French and Indian War, and a baby being created."

The story follows Lori as she and her husband are trying to conceive a child through in vitro fertilization. Yet, as the medical testing begins for that process, she learns that there is no practical way her dad was actually her biological father. Later, she finds out that, by interviewing her late mother's friends and family members, that there could have been as many as a dozen different men that could have been her father.

And how does she find out all this?

Well, hey — she simply posts her quest on Facebook! She also follows leads through old letters and high school yearbooks. Along the way, too, she gets some men to actually consent with DNA testing.

"Who's Your Daddy, Baby?" is a funny story.

But it's not fluff.

In some ways, too, Pell said, it's "a medical mystery." Another thing: A lot of it's true.

"Back in 2005," Pell said, "I had experienced several miscarriages and decided to try in vitro fertilization. That didn't work, but, for the first time, my blood type was officially confirmed: B-positive. I knew from my late mother's kidney-pancreas transplant she was O-positive, and I had my dad's military dog tags, which read A-positive. Generally, basic biology would suggest A plus O does not equal B, so I embarked on what turned out to be a four-year search to figure out who my daddy was."

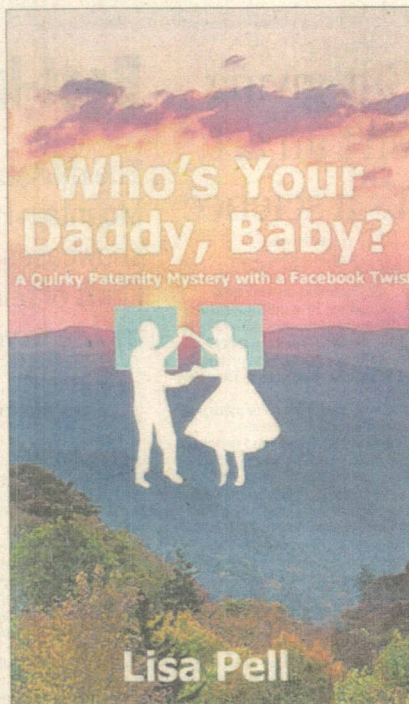
Then, she said, "I decided to have fun with the story and fictionalize it... So many funny things happened during my magical mystery tour of odd situations, and I learned so much about some quirky medical issues, I felt compelled to write about my experience."

Pell remembered the awkward times of asking 70-year-old men about dates that happened a half-century earlier.

"But I think the funniest thing still has to be the conversation that awakened my consciousness on my paternity issue," she said. "When discussing my family medical history with the fertility specialist and noting my parents' blood types, he said, in a lovely French accent, 'I senk you better senk about zee milkman.'"

Ultimately, yes, this story does have a conclusion, but you'll have to read the book to find that out.

"To move the plot along," Pell said, "I compressed events and amalgamated several characters and situations. But my perception of the truth is reasonably depicted, except for the last chapter. If you stop just before the last chapter, you pretty much have my true-life story."



You Should Know

What: Lisa McGrady Pell, author of "Who's Your Daddy, Baby? A Quirky Paternity Mystery with a Facebook Twist"



Lisa Pell

Book Signings: Dec. 20, 3-5 p.m., Bristol Public Library, Goode St., Bristol, Va.; and Dec. 21, 3-6 p.m., Zazzy's, Main Street, Abingdon Va.

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