

## A Demitasse of Love

Local Celebrity George Molho, author of “Greek Coffee: A Life of Love, Loss, Family, and Freedom—A Memoir”

By Andrea Afra

The purest thing in the world is a child’s unfiltered love for their family. “Greek Coffee” is a love story but not in the romantic sense. It is about a young boy’s unyielding love for an abusive father and the lengths he went through to survive each day. Even small children are forced to lead a double life, an unfortunate survival skill too many have been made to master.

George Molho was not a stranger to me when I first met him. I had read his memoir and felt something akin to friendship before we’d ever spoken. After our first conversation I knew that I had just met a man that carried the weight of the world in his heart, but willingly. After the first interview with George (Issue #15) I learned that his story had hit home with a number of people but not just those with histories of abuse. Middle-aged men living the American dream found George a willing listener to their restless opinions. They had everything but happiness and had come to the point where their definition of success no longer had a price on it.

In “Greek Coffee” George takes himself apart and puts only the pieces that he truly owns back together. In this manner he is able to find the parts that were formed not by his own opinions but by other’s whom he strived to live up to.

The man I met bears no likeness to the father he feared. His sweet simplicity comes from his mother, the stubborn family devotion a gift from his grandmother, and his quiet complexity the badge of his grandfather.

It is odd to meet a person whom you know so much about through their writings. The sensation of knowing their past while they know nothing of you is unnerving. Recognizing the Houston landmarks he writes of increases the reality of the story. I wanted to let George know how deeply I related to his memoir. Without disclosing many personal details I told him that it’s a relief to know that no matter where you’ve

been, who you've loved, how bad you've been hurt or how dark the moment may seem, there is always someone else in the world that can understand your tribulations.

George's mother and father are both of Greek descent. His maternal family provided him the love and balance that would see him through what would be looked back on as a descent into a hell where his father reigned.

Despite the warning signs, George's father, Menos, kidnapped him at the age of seven, stealing him away to the small Greek village where his paternal grandparents resided. The U.S. authorities refused to help recover him, portraying the abduction as a custody issue. George still keeps a letter of apology written to him from President Carter. Luckily for George, his family followed the laws of love and took matters into their own hands. Nothing would keep their George from returning home.

However, a year passes before the reunion and in that time Menos spared his son no mercy. Out of love and fear, little George learned to bear the torture inflicted upon him by the man who is supposed to be his protector. Brainwashed into believing his father's threats of violence against his mother and maternal grandparents, George succumbed to the abuse in secrecy.

Years passed before he disclosed the violence of his father and when he did the dam broke. Confronting his father, forgiving his mother, he realized that he had made the decision to protect what faintly resembled a normal childhood. Love had bound his lips tighter than the cords that bound his wrists in his father's makeshift dungeon. He could have spoken out at any time and ended the horror. But his father threatened and cried and begged for forgiveness, saying he would die if George told on him, if George stopped loving him. So the son chose to endure his father's brutality in return for his father's love.

When it came time for marriage George attracted a woman that didn't know how to love the way he did. She felt smothered by it instead and pushed him away, knowing he would wait and continue to love her no matter what. In this tug-o-love manner, the couple soon learned that they would have to embrace their individual pasts in order to survive the future together. George set off to decipher the cause and effect of his

childhood trauma, finding out the hard way that the past is not behind you, but in you.

After three years of preparation “Greek Coffee” has been loosed upon the world. Starting this fall twenty percent of the book’s sales are going to Trinity Children and Family Services, one of the largest nonprofit providers of childcare services in the country. Their mission statement: To help children heal who have been damaged by abuse, neglect, or abandonment and return to society and family. Sadly, there are children all over the world who haven’t found the voice to speak out and save themselves against those who are supposed to be protecting them. But those who have survived are in the most powerful positions to help the helpless because they truly empathize with their lost little brothers and sisters and have found the strength to bare all.

You can meet George at Niko Niko’s Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004 from two to four p.m. for his second book signing. “Greek Coffee” has been selected by Channel 2 News’ Roseanne Rogers as the gift to give this holiday and you can watch his interview with her Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004 on The Buzz.

**Greek Coffee:**

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Memoir

by George Molho

Available at Barnes and Noble, online or just ask for it at your favorite bookstore.