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The Baker

Murray Durst

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"The Baker" is the true story of Murray Durst, an American original. Born in New York in 1932 to Austrian- and Polish-Jewish immigrants, much of Murray's childhood was typical of New York Jews of the era: after-school Hebrew lessons, a Bar Mitzvah at the swankiest venue his parents could afford, and summers at the "Borscht-Belt" hotels of the Catskills Mountains. Other parts of his early life were somewhat less typical. As the son of a prominent labor leader, the young Murray rubbed elbows with the famous (and infamous): other labor leaders, politicians, and alleged organized crime figures. He has stories about many of them, including three particularly well-known individuals called "Meyer," "Bennie," and "Charlie." Before entering the US Marine Corps during the Korean War, Murray even organized a labor union himself—with their help. After his stint in the Marines, Murray served in a hospital unit in the Army Reserves. There he acquired the medical knowledge which would enable him to become a hospital administrator, and become quite influential and successful. This in turn set the stage for an even greater success later on, when he amassed a small fortune as founder and CEO of companies engaged in medical insurance fraud detection. Finally finding personal happiness with his second wife, Lillian, the great love of his life, Murray, now financially secure, was able to pursue his other life-long love of thoroughbred horse racing as an owner. One of his horses, Lil's Lad, was a precocious colt who won some important races at 2- and 3-years old, and for a time was the favorite for the 1998 Kentucky Derby. Racing fans will undoubtedly remember Murray's "fifteen minutes" as a colorful, Damon Runyon-esque character interviewed on ABC and ESPN sports telecasts. The book is written in Murray's own voice, which, although blunt at times is always honest and engaging. Through it all, Murray is always a one-of-a-kind character, a lovable, rambunctious rascal at the center of stories that are either hilarious or terrifying—or sometimes both. Murray also offers some of his thoughts on the state of America today, where he thinks it's headed, and how to turn things around, so that the next generation can engage in a life's journey as successful and exciting as his has been.

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