

May 2002 Meeting ([Click here](#) for photos of the event)
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Debra Levi Holtz

WRITING THE TRUTH - CHOICES IN ART

When **Debra Levi Holtz** decided to write a book about her decade-long search for her parents, she faced a choice many writers confront. When dealing with real-life events, do you novelize or write it as a memoir?

Oakland writer Holtz studied journalism at Northwestern University and worked for many years as a staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. With these credentials, one might expect her first book to be straight non-fiction, but she began it as a novel, only changing it to memoir after hearing critiques of her early work at writers' conferences.

Readers want a happy reunion, but Holtz's tale is more complex and less Hollywood. Helen, Holtz's biological mother, passed her baby thru a car window to Lynn and Manny Skar. Skar, a mobster, was killed only six years later and Holtz grew up knowing little of the Chinese puzzle of her parents. Her quest is stirringly related in *Of Unknown Origin: A Memoir* (Council Oaks Books, May 2001).

Several book [reviews](#). Considerable biographical info in these.

A [search](#) on google.com yielded many of her articles that appeared in the Chronicle and a few book reviews.

More reviews - excerpts - other data at these booksellers' sites



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