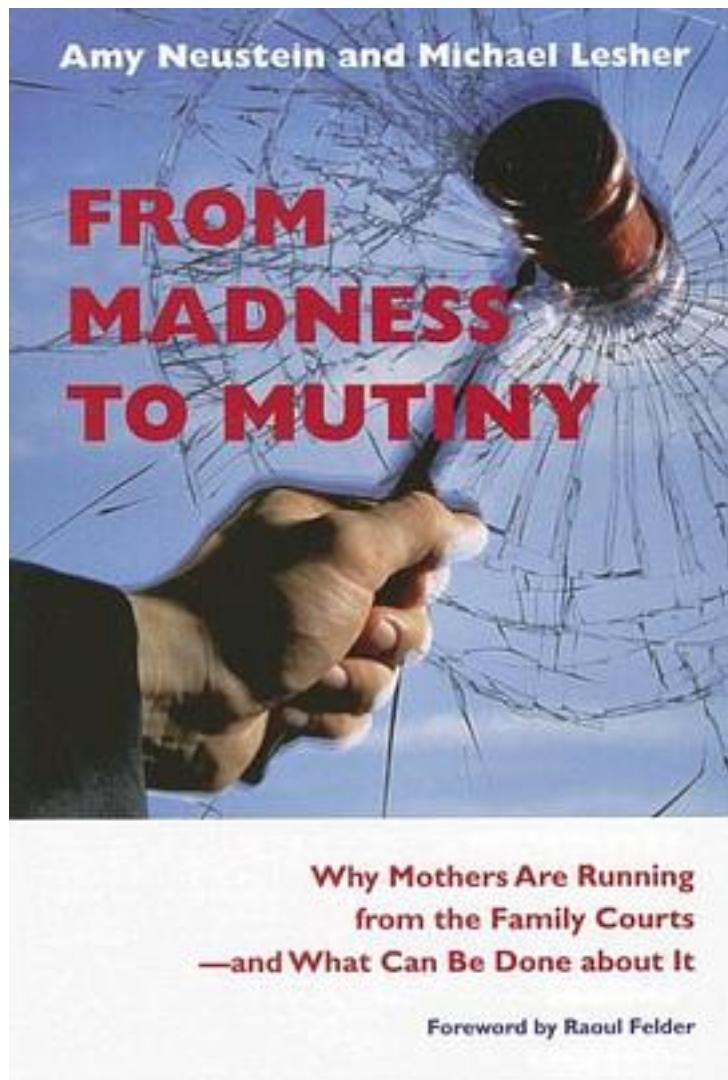


From Madness to Mutiny



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In this astonishing book, sociologist Amy Neustein and attorney Michael Lesher examine the serious dysfunction of the nation's family courts -- a dysfunction that too often results in the courts' failure to protect the people they were designed to help. Specifically, the authors chronicle cases in which mothers who believe their children have been sexually abused by their fathers are disbelieved, ridiculed or punished for trying to protect them. All too often the mother, in such a case, is deemed the unstable parent, and her children are removed from her care, to be placed in foster care or even with the father credibly accused of abusing them. Employing a special form of sociological inquiry known as ethnomethodology, they show how judges, private attorneys, law guardians, child protective service caseworkers and court-appointed mental health experts on a day-to-day basis collaboratively produce a closed and claustrophobic family court setting that makes practical sense to the system's practitioners -- but looks like madness to everyone else. They also describe the social interactive work of mothers trapped inside the system. Faced with judicial rulings that seem to violate their most basic parental values, these mothers litigate furiously, take their stories to the press, go on hunger strikes, or turn fugitive with their children through a modern-day "underground railroad." From Madness to Mutiny offers an overview of family court malfunction and the parental mutiny that results from it. The authors outline the new legal landscape that makes the madness possible and show how the system has failed to react to severe criticism from media and legislators. And they discuss ways to reform the family courts, with the goal of transforming them from instruments of punishment to true institutions of justice.

作者介绍:

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