

The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

YIDDISH GUIDE TO LAWYER, LAURA A. WASSER, THE DISSO* QUEEN

*The term “DISSO” means “dissolution of marriage
The Yiddish word for “attorney” is “advokat.”

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe



Syosset, New York

All the newspapers and magazines have reported that Oscar-winner, Angelina Jolie, is divorcing her film-star husband, Brad Pitt. And who will be representing her? The “celebrity of celebrity” Jewish divorce lawyer, Laura A. Wasser, a partner in the law firm of Wasser, Cooperman & Carter. They are located in Los Angeles, California.

Shown below is the Yiddish guide to Laura A. Wasser:

“geboyrn-tog” (birthday): May 23, 1968

“eyntsik” (single)

Wasser is single and the mother of two sons—Luke and Jack—from separate relationships.

“get” (divorce)

Wasser's parents got divorced when she was 16 years old. She says her dad always did right by her mom. "They still speak on the phone probably once a week, and they have been at both of my children's births together hugging and crying. They taught me what the meaning of family is—even beyond a divorce."

(Wasser quote) Source: www.interviewmagazine.com, 9/23/16.

"tate" (father)

Wasser is the daughter of Dennis Wasser, another famed divorce lawyer, who represented Tom Cruise and Steven Spielberg in ending their respective marriages. He gave his daughter the middle name ("nomen"), Allison, so her initials would spell L.A.W.

Dennis Wasser has a sign reading "The End" in his office.

"khinukh" (education)

Loyola Law School, J.D., 1994

Admitted to the California Bar, 1994

"mazdik" (lucky)

"I'm very lucky. Part of my success was being a young woman. There are crops of young people who are now coming into family law. I am fifteen years younger than most family law attorneys practicing with the socioeconomic level of clients our firm assists. I have a lot of clients in the entertainment industry who don't want to see a seventy year old in a suit. My clients can relate to me because we are closer in age and often have kids who are similar in age."

(Wasser quote) Source: "Catching Up With Laura Wasser: The Most-Fashionable Family Law Lawyer in the Business," by Nabeal Twereet, lawcrossing.com.

"bukh" (book)

Wasser is the author of a 2013 book titled, “It Doesn’t Have to Be That Way: How to Divorce Without Destroying Your Family or Bankrupting Yourself.”

“tsunemenish” (nickname)

Laura Wasser earned her nickname, the “Disso Queen” by handling marriage dissolutions on behalf of some of Hollywood’s biggest names.

Her first (“ersht”) high-profile client was Stevie Wonder. She represented Wonder in a \$30 million (“milyon”) palimony suit filed by his girlfriend. She handled Maria Shriver’s divorce (“der get”) from Arnold Schwarzenegger due to his admitted affair with a former housekeeper, who later gave birth to his child.

In the entertainment (“di farvaylung”) business, she’s represented Britney Spears, Ryan Reynolds, Kiefer Sutherland, Kim Kardashian and Heidi Klum. She’s also represented the former wives of both Kobe Bryant and Mel Gibson, as well as Johnny Depp’s acrimonious divorce from actress Amber Heard. It was settled for \$7 million.

“yunger” clients (younger clients)

“I text a lot, which is good for a lot of my younger clients, especially the athletes. Athletes are big texters, for some reason.”

(Wasser quote)

“optsol” (fee)

Wasser usually charges a retainer of \$25,000, plus \$850 an hour.

“L’chei-im!” (Here’s to you! (Toast)

Wasser holds an “AV” (pre-eminent) Martindale-Hubbell rating, which is the highest rating presented to any

individual lawyer.

“eyn mol” (one time)

“Everybody should get married—once.” (She handled the dissolution of her own marriage in 1993.) (Wasser quote)

“tsveyter khasene” (second marriage)

“My personal feelings on marriage? Samuel Johnson once said that second marriages—although I could probably say this about any marriage—are about the

triumph of hope over experience. I think that’s true.

I don’t know that human beings were meant to mate for life or be monogamous...” (Wasser quote)

“opgehit” (careful)

“I have to be very careful when I’m filing something because that document is there for the world to read.”

(Wasser quote)

“eytse” (advice)

“I tell them [clients] that a) your therapist costs less than I do, and b) what do I know? I’ve got two kids with two different dads, I’m not the person to give you relationship advice.”

quote. Source: “Dame Magazine”

“eytsn” (to counsel); therapy

“I find that there are very few clients I have who aren’t already in therapy or haven’t tried therapy, whether it was marriage counseling with their spouse or on their own. I don’t try to be a therapist.”

(Wasser quote)

Wasser said, “I’ve also represented four of the five members from the band Korn for their divorced and custody case...Now I’m working with the fifth member. That’s sad in a way. But they’re all really nice guys—

good fathers, too.”

“mishpokhe” (family)

Laura Wasser said, “The definition of family has changed and the law is changing. It needs to change more, and it needs to change more quickly.”

“legaler” consultant (legal consultant)

Wasser served as an on-set legal consultant for the movie, “Liar Liar.”

“teier” (costly)

“umglik” (misfortune)

“I love going to court. I get a rush out of it. But for the most part, if I’m here, it’s costing somebody a lot of money. If my client was here today, he would have said something like, ‘Jesus Christ! I can’t believe how much this is costing me for you to just sit around.’ And we do make our money by cashing in on other people’s misfortune. But it’s a tremendous service, and I like doing it.”

(Wasser quote)

“khorev makhn di perzon” (to ruin the person)

“If a client wants to go public with things that I think are detrimental to the whole family, I’ll say, ‘I get it, it’s strategic, but in the long run, your kids can read, and it’s not going to help you. I don’t feel comfortable when the desire to ruin the other person is so great.’”

(Wasser quote) Source: “8 Things About Angelina Jolie’s A-List Jewish Divorce Lawyers,” by Thea Glassman, [forward.com](http://www.forward.com), Sept. 21, 2016.

“tsunoyfdrikn” (to crush/to compress)

“I know I had a reputation for being a pit bull, but I’m really results oriented. What you want in a lawyer is someone who really tries to get it resolved out of court, but if it just can’t, then let’s go. Let’s go and let’s crush.”

(Wasser quote)

“tayve” (passion)

“I’m just as passionate representing Joe Schmoe as I am representing Joe Superstar.”

(Wasser quote) Source: “Star Trekking with Laura Wasser,” by Anthony Head, published in Southern California Rising Stars, Sept 2004.

“zhurnal” (magazine)

“When Wasser has several clients she knows will wind up on the cover of Us Weekly, no matter what she does, she submits their cases together, so media will be diluted.”

(Wasser quote) Source: Bloomberg Businessweek, March 2, 2016

“libe” (love)

“I don’t want you to think I’m anti-love, because I’m not. I know plenty of people with wonderful, lifelong marriages.”

(Wasser quote)

“tsurik in shule” (back to school)

Wasser says in her book that she “believes that couples should take an educational course about marriage before tying the knot.” BTW, Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe took a course titled, “Marriage and the Family” at NYU in 1957. The tuition: \$25 a credit!

“vog” (weight)

“beybe” (baby)

“yerlekh” (annual)

Wasser says that one client asked if he could add a clause to his prenuptial agreement stipulating that “his wife lose her baby weight within a certain period if she wanted to receive her annual bonus.”

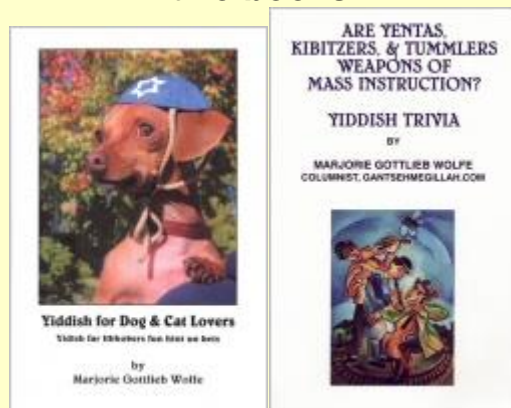
“fodern” (to demand/ask for)

Wasser says that she's had clients who have asked for an AIDS test in exchange for a get—a Jewish divorce. Others fight over a parrot (“papugay”) and dogs.

MARJORIE WOLFE remembers other media figures: Ben Brafman, Roy Cohn, Ed Koch, Scooter Libby, Robert Shapiro, Joseph Wapner, Jerry and Judith Sheindlin, and Alan Dershowitz (“Chutzpah”). Dershowitz told the old joke about the nineteenth-century Polish Jew from Warsaw, who tells his friend that he is moving to America. The friend exclaims: “But that’s so far away.” To which the rootless Jew responds, “From what?”

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Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:



"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com

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