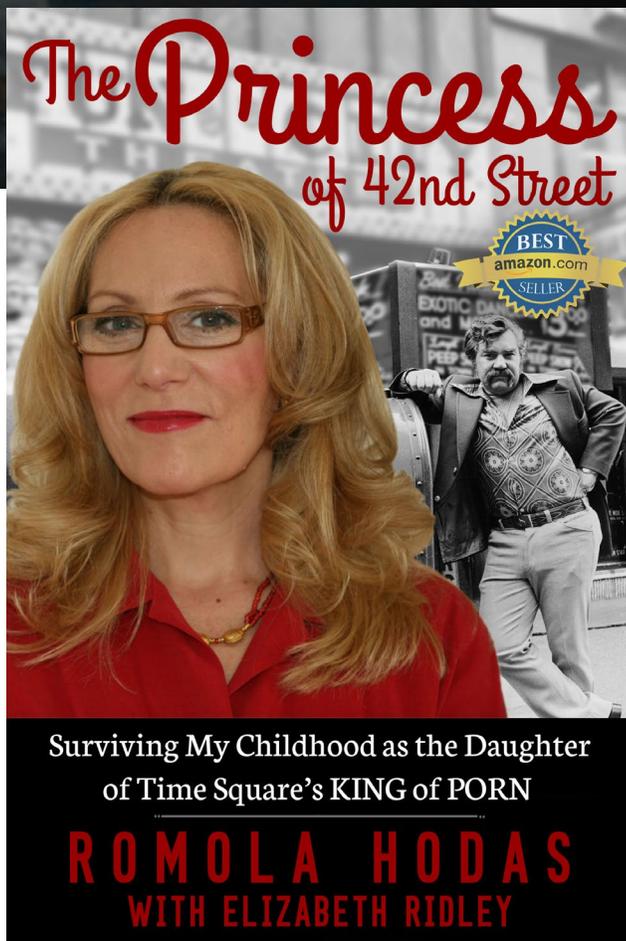


# Living with the King of Porn

BY BROOKE ALLEN

Romola Hodas, the eldest daughter of the “King of Peep Show” porn star Martin Hodas, details her chaotic childhood with an infamous father and bipolar mother in her new book “The Princess of 42nd Street: Surviving My Childhood as the Daughter of Times Square’s King of Porn.” Hodas witnessed countless sexual acts as a child, including a prostitute breastfeeding a cat.



**T**he 61-year-old author grew up in Long Island, New York, where her father built his notable sex business.

Hodas knew from a young age how dysfunctional her childhood truly was. “I knew even before my father became the ‘King of Porn’ that my family was not normal — my mother was a genius, but she [also had] a personality disorder and [was] bipolar and she was mean and violent. I had to protect myself and [my siblings] from her. Also, after [I turned] 8 years old, my father just became brutal with me, and I also had to defend myself and the kids from him, too. It was like living with two monsters.”

Although Hodas’ own trauma haunted her, she always put her siblings first. She constantly stood up to her parents and shielded her siblings from abuse, even when her own mother threatened her.

“[When I was] 5 years old, my mother used to come downstairs in rages and take her arm and just throw everything on the floor, and then go, ‘You pick it up,’ and

I'd go, 'No, Mom, I didn't do it.' She'd look at me and she'd say, 'If you don't pick it up, I'm going to go get the wooden spoon,' and I would say to her, 'You don't hit people, Ma, and if you come near me or any of these kids, I'm going to hit you.' And she would come at me with the wooden spoon and I would feel my adrenaline and I would rip it out of her hand and pop her on her head. I would say, 'How's that? How's that, Ma?' And she freaked out. For a large majority, I was the mother."

Hodas' mother was an artist and musician who "was a prisoner of her own mind" and could not take care of herself or her children. She would beg her mother to leave her bedroom to shower and brush her teeth. Paired with her father's fat-shaming abuse and physical and emotional beatings, Hodas endured a life of misery for years.

As a nine-year-old, Martin Hodas embarrassed Hodas in front of the whole family by forcing her onto a scale and beating her if she weighed too much, in his opinion. If she did not pass his weight test, she would be sent to bed with no food. As her younger siblings witnessed this torture, they too became aware of how mistreated they were. Her sister, Risa, struggled with the relentless suffering and blamed herself for the trauma.

"I would say, 'Honey, it's not us, it's them.' And she just couldn't get it. She couldn't get it," Hodas said. "She [fell] into drugs and drinking for a long time until maybe like 10 years ago."

When she turned about 12, Hodas begged her mother to allow her and her siblings to attend therapy sessions, but her cry for help quickly fell short after meeting her first therapist. "[With] the first therapist... I think we paid his mortgage. He wasn't really a good therapist. I did have somebody to talk to, but he really wasn't teaching me right. You know, that's one thing also that I always was kind of upset about — none of my aunts and uncles came to help us. That was my family."

With his wife's mental state deteriorating year by year, Martin Hodas turned to his daughter for approval of his business. When Hodas was 15 years old, Martin asked her to come to his office where, unbeknownst to her, she could view his work live.

"There was never, ever, ever, ever any sexual anything with me and my dad," Hodas stated, "but in the home, I was like the adult woman because my mother was off her rocker... It's like he wanted my approval of what he was going to show me because he couldn't do it with my mother."

When she met her father at his office in the city, she

walked in on a woman performing oral sex on her father. Martin remained silent as the woman finished. He then led Hodas into a small theatre filled with older men where she viewed his newest business idea in the flesh. "You don't bring your 15-year-old to watch your new invention, which is a live BDSM sex act on stage — I didn't understand," Hodas said.

With the brutality she experienced, she was still able to find hope within herself. "I would say to myself, 'I'm on this earth and I'm going to be happy, and I'm going to find out what that means.' And that's what I did — and I kind of believe that that's really part of the reason that we're all here. We're all going to suffer because life has problems. So, I kind of believe that it's about learning how important you are. [You] better learn how to be loving and kind and great to yourself or life's going to be bad."

After numerous experiences of mental illness within her own family, Hodas pursued a psychology degree at Long Island University and is an advocate for mental illness awareness. "There is so much chemical imbalance because of all the shit in the air. I mean, it's heredity. There's a lot of bipolar going on out there. There's a lot of depression going on out there. This world is not easy. It is not easy. If you're not a strong person, it gets you on your knees. And we need to be able to talk about all this."

Hodas states it takes work to be happy, but it's worth it. "You know, I am happy, and I searched out how to find out how to be happy. It is much easier to be miserable than to be happy, but you got to go out there and do things to make yourself proud."

