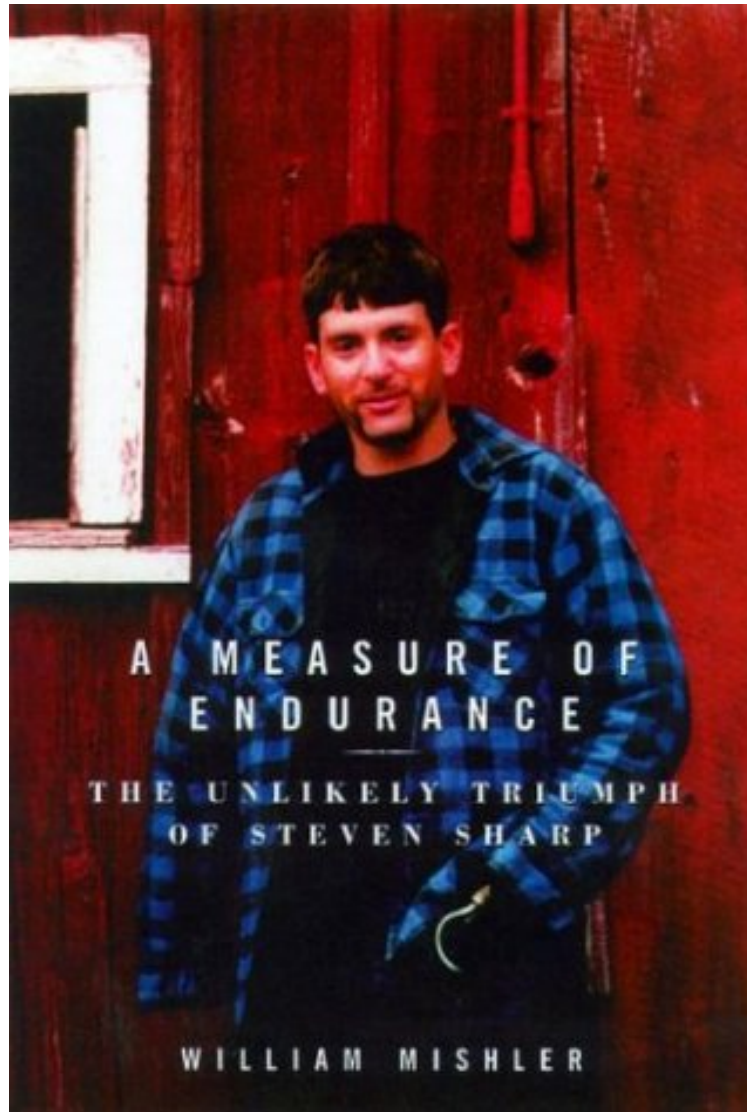


## A Measure of Endurance: The Unlikely Triumph of Steven Sharp

*William Mishler*

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**William Mishler : A Measure of Endurance: The Unlikely Triumph of Steven Sharp** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Measure of Endurance: The Unlikely Triumph of Steven Sharp:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An amazing story.By CustomerMy second copy because I can't get the first one back from my friends...LOL10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A Young Man's CourageBy Peter W. LockThis is an extraordinary narrative in its subject matter and in its writing. As the author, William Mishler, says, it is "a contemporary American story well worth telling, " and he relates this true drama with a

sympathy and an energy that do full justice to the enduring courage and resilience of its hero. We are carried along vividly from a quiet, small town in Oregon to a contentious courtroom in Wisconsin, where a dramatic trial takes place. Steven Sharp lives in aptly named Eagle Valley in Eastern Oregon, where the rhythms of country life and hunting and fishing form his character and his destiny. He suffers a horrendous accident with a defective tractor and baler, in which he loses both arms in an attempt to clear some hay from the baler. His agony is described in stark detail as he desperately yet deliberately uses razor-sharp metal in the machine to sever both arms that are being mercilessly pulled into the baler; he then finds the courage to cauterize the stumps on one of the red-hot rollers. Steven tells his story to the author and in the courtroom with a calm and modest conviction that he did what had to be done to save his life and his sanity. He earns our immense admiration and empathy for this act of bravery and for his persistence in helping his team of lawyers bring a successful lawsuit against the Case Corporation of Wisconsin. Case brought all their wealth and power in an attempt to deny Steven his due, but owing to a committed team of Minneapolis lawyers and Steven's and his family's perseverance, Case lost in court and in subsequent appeals. A note at the end of the book indicates that three years after the final verdict, Case has done absolutely nothing to warn their customers of the life-threatening dangers of their machine. William Mishler, a fine poet and writer, becomes deeply involved in the human and legal aspects of the drama, which he describes with a superb attention to detail in an intensely absorbing narrative of great imaginative power.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Riviting Story By James Jonathan Banzer  
If ever there were a story of ultimate courage in modern-day life, this is it. Steven Sharp lost both his arms in a farming accident when he was just a teenager, and years later he sued the Case farm equipment company and won. It was an accident that should not have happened. Steven was very careful about safety while doing farm work. The machine with which he was bailing hay suddenly started up and both of his hands were pulled in. He managed to sever both of his arms in one of the most courageous acts that one can imagine, then he walked back to a farm house for help. The agony is difficult to imagine. This is a story not just about Steven, but also about a company which deserved to be sued. Steven moved on with his life without feeling sorry for himself. This is a true story of bravery written by William Mishler, who died in December, 2002 following a brief illness. It's sad that Mishler could not have lived to write more stories of real life events. I can't say enough about the pleasure I got from reading this book. The pleasure came from knowing that there are still good people in this world such as Steven Sharp.

This is the remarkable, heartwarming story of a courageous teenage boy who, after being gravely injured while using a farm machine, takes on its powerful manufacturer and wins. Steven Sharp was a hardworking, energetic sixteen-year-old, growing up happily in a tiny farming community in the eastern Oregon high desert. His family was his harbor. Nothing pleased him more than the outdoor life, fending for himself in the nearby mountains. In the last hour of the last day of a summer job on a local ranch, his life was changed forever when a huge baler suddenly and mysteriously turned itself on and severed both his arms. Slipping in and out of consciousness and stumbling through a field, he followed a fence to a nearby house. Soon he was on an airplane and hoping time was on his side. His recovery was amazing. He maintained his optimism and zest for living and returned to school, joking to reassure his classmates on what could have been an awkward first day back. Eventually, he was back in his beloved mountains, hunting and fishing with the hospital's prosthetics and his own rigged-up rifle compensating for his missing arms. He was always convinced that the machine had malfunctioned, but had no intention to seek redress. Farm life has its risks and compensations. By a quirk of fate, however, a friend recalled a notice in a three-year-old magazine and he learned that others had been injured while using the same kind of machine. How, with the help of a brilliant and idealistic trial lawyer named Bill Manning whose commitment to Steven seemed something of a completion of his own spiritual journey, Steven took on the multinational, multibillion-dollar company, withstood their counterattack, and emerged triumphant. (Read an interview with Bill Manning, in which he discusses Steven Sharp, the case, Anthroposophy, and his friend, author William Mishler.) *A Measure of Endurance* is gripping, poignant, and truly unforgettable.

From Publishers Weekly  
This is a well-paced, vibrant chronicle of the trials, both physical and legal, endured by Steven Sharp, a farm boy from rural Oregon who, at the age of 17, lost both of his arms in an accident involving a defective hay baler. Given the emotional nature of the topic, Mishler does a fine job of telling a compelling story without indulging in purple prose or mawkishness. That's not to say, however, that he doesn't highlight the tragedy of Sharp's ordeal. After all, Sharp was an athletic, outdoorsy kid who was specifically chosen to run the baler because of his presence of mind and attention to safety. That Mishler never gets carried away with melodrama, however, may owe to Sharp himself and his nearly stoic reaction to his plight. The people of the community come across as real rather than bucolic stereotypes, and the dialogue, filled though it is with phrases like "I ain't" and "It don't," is not overdone. Mishler keeps the legal struggle between Sharp and the manufacturer animated, though it drags a bit at times, particularly since the crux of the issue comes down to one's definition of the word "off" (as in, had Sharp really turned the baler off before trying to clean it). The defense attorneys are not rendered in a favorable light, but they're hardly demonized. In all, Mishler offers an absorbing account of a tenuous legal battle and, more strikingly, a resonant portrait of a determined individual for whom some small measure of victory was recouped for all that he lost.

Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist At 16 years old, Steven Sharp was horribly injured in a machinery accident in his rural farming community in eastern Oregon. On the last day of his summer job at a local ranch, Sharp stopped to inspect the huge hay baler he had been operating. The machine suddenly turned itself on, catching his hands and, finally, severing his arms. The bucolic community, used to farm-machinery accidents, accepted Sharp's misfortune as a tragic fact of life. Sharp, stoic by nature, focused on recovery and returning as much as possible to the active life he had led before his accident. When his family learned of a law firm investigating the manufacturer of the hay baler and claims that the machinery was defective, Steven decided to join the effort to hold the manufacturer accountable. Mishler provides a compelling, heartrending portrait of a singularly determined young man and the tense courtroom drama that pitted farmers against a heartless multibillion-dollar corporation. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A Measure of Endurance knocked me down. I read it in two sittings, fascinated by its harrowing story and its tale of courage and integrity but anything I say about it pales in comparison to the triumph of Steven Sharp, his family and their lawyers. This is one of those rare books which proves once more the worth of the human spirit, at its best, when most challenged." Kent Haruf, author of Plainsong