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Contact: Sue Havlish, 812-327-5494, sue@bigsisterproductions.com, BigSisterProductions.com/whit_hill

Whit Hill's New Book Is NOT ABOUT MADONNA — But It *Is* about Art, Motherhood, and Life after Her College Roommate, Madonna

[NASHVILLE, TN] **NOT ABOUT MADONNA: My Little Pre-Icon Roommate—and Other Memoirs** by Whit Hill will be published in September by Heliotrope Books (272 pages, trade paperback 978-0-9832940-0-9 \$17.95).

"In the fall of 1977, when I came to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to enter the dance program at the University of Michigan, I thought I knew a thing or two. I had acted professionally in New York City, my hometown. I had posed nude for art classes. ... I was a very modern girl. ... When I met Madonna Ciccone, my initial assessment, even as I watched her leg soaring into an effortless front extension, was that I had little to learn from any young whippersnapper from Michigan, safety-pinned earlobes or no. I felt no instant flush of warmth and trust the day we met, no recognition of a kindred spirit — in fact all I recall feeling was an almost seismic wariness. But somehow, a few days later, she was my roommate. ... I never knew what hit me."

So begins Whit Hill's compelling, poignant—and very funny—memoir of her life, as reflected through the lens of her junior year at the University of Michigan—with her roommate Madonna. NOT ABOUT MADONNA it is also the story of the years that followed for Whit, a life of motherhood, dance, music, love, loss, change, and the bizarre experience of unwittingly becoming a semi-professional "Madonna expert."

As close as sisters (yet at times as distant as constellations), these college roommates shared not just a tiny room but experiences of looming adulthood, sexuality, affections, and hard work for their art. Madonna and Whit learned from each other, influenced each other, loved each other—then parted, taking off on their own individual roads.

NOT ABOUT MADONNA is a book about two very different women who lived alongside each other for nine months, about women artists in America, about mothers and daughters, about giving birth — to hot, squirming babies, and to huge, ionospheric pop careers. It is about loss and poverty and hope and happiness and remembrance. And it is, heartbreakingly, about all the ways you can lose your mom.

The book includes a never-before-published, seven-page handwritten letter Madonna wrote Whit during Christmas break, 1977. Intensely personal and beautifully written, the letter is a glimpse inside the mind of a young woman on the brink of something extraordinary.

When asked how the book came about, Whit says, "I've been working on *Not About Madonna* on and off for the last twenty years or so—sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes half-heartedly, sometimes with hope, other times with bewilderment. I'll admit it: I started the project to try and support myself and my kids while trying to be an artist. But then I decided I needed to write something I could be proud of. I just wanted to take the celebrity 'I-Knew-Her-When' schlock and make something beautiful out of it. Like finding a piece of plastic on the beach and incorporating it into a mosaic. I hope I've succeeded." She has.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Whit Hill was born and raised in New York City, where she trained as an actor and dancer, and graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.F.A. For fourteen years she was artistic director of a Michigan-based dance company. A writer and songwriter, she now lives and works in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband, musician Al Hill.

"A **gracefully written memoir** filled with **fascinating portraits** of college days and coming of age and love of family—and what it means to be a woman in this celebrity culture. The narrative is **rich, generous, and very smart**. It's refreshing to spend time with this wonderful book."

—PATRICIA BOSWORTH, Contributing Editor, *Vanity Fair*

Excerpts and more at BigSisterProductions.com/Whit_Hill

For inquiries regarding galleys, review copies, or author interviews, contact:
Sue Havlish, Big Sister Productions, 812-327-5494, sue@bigsisterproductions.com

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