

## LIVING IN THE SHADOWS OF INCEST

# Woman battles abuse, drug use, mental illness

By Robyn H. Jimenez  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
PART 1 of 2

In a 1991 Sorensen and Snow study, researchers reviewed 630 cases of children that had allegedly been sexually abused from 1985 through 1989. One hundred sixteen of them had been confirmed. Seventy-nine percent of the children in the study had initially denied any abuse and were hesitant to disclose information, and 75 percent of those children only did so accidentally. Twenty-two percent eventually withdrew their statements.

According to the Survivors Healing Center in California, 50 percent of the women who reported being raped in 1992 were under the age of 18; 19 percent were under the age of 12. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services conducted a study in 1993, which indicated that one out of three girls and one out of every six boys experienced sexual abuse before age 18.

Marian Jefferson, 37, re-

calls when she became a devastating member of those statistics after being molested at age 8.

Jefferson, her mother and younger sister lived with her grandmother, who was once retired, but re-entered the work force to help care for them. One day, her mother left her and her 6-year-old sister at home alone, while her cousin; Darron Dwayne Taylor, 12, mowed their lawn, which was part of his summer job. They were told not to open the door for anyone, but Taylor banged on the door saying that he was hot and thirsty. Jefferson tried calling her mother, but was not able to reach her.

"And I thought, well, it's just a glass of water. And so I let him in and I went back to my room. I heard noises in the bedroom next to me, which is where my sister was, and when I opened the door, I saw her naked on the bed with him," Jefferson stated. "I begged and pleaded with him to leave her alone and he said 'Fine, but you will have to take her place.'"

*There are as many as 80,000 cases of child molestation reported every year, and many more that go unreported, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The organization states that the cases may go unreported because the child may fear the perpetrator or the consequences of reporting the abuse. The child may also feel ashamed, guilty, embarrassed, dirty and as if something is "wrong" with him or her. Some children feel a sense of loyalty toward the abuser, especially if the person is a relative, authority figure or a close family friend.*

She was too young to fully understand what she had agreed to, but she knew she was the only one that could save her little sister. The younger sister was directed to go to Jefferson's room.

It was on her sister's bed that he began to rape her. Jefferson endured, what she described as excruciating pain that seemed to last a lifetime. She said that she had begged her cousin to stop and even tried fighting him. He became angry and grabbed her hands, placed them over her head and placed a pillow over her face to quiet her down. At times, she said, he

would hit her throughout her body, avoiding her face in case she bruised, in order to control her fighting and whining.

When he finally finished, she laid in a pool of her own blood. He ran a bath and placed her in the tub. He then washed the linen and placed it back on the bed. Afterward, Taylor placed her back in bed and gave her Tylenol from the medicine cabinet.

Thinking back on the meticulous manner in which he cleaned to cover up his actions, she felt he must have done this at least a few times before her.

According to a 1988 study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health, Jefferson was probably correct. It states that the "typical child sex offender molests an average of 117 children, most of who do not report the offense."

When her mother returned home, having no idea what her young daughter had just gone through, she called her lazy for having been in bed all day. But Jefferson's little body had endured such trauma, that it hurt for her to move at all.

Jefferson said that after that day, her cousin continued to make periodic visits to

## Gray area

(Continued from Page 7) embody.

First-generation Americans owe it to our parents to take advantage of this country's resources. But even beyond that, in our midst is the opportunity to erase the rigid lines that separate Africans from our scattered brothers and sisters throughout the Diaspora. As we bridge the gap between all types of Black Americans, the hope is that the black ink that once rigidly defined us culturally will fade away, and soon enough we will all stand together as citizens of the Gray Area.

Caroline Joseph is an intern writing for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder.

have sex with her. He would force his way into the house, in the beginning. Eventually, she allowed him to enter, knowing that he'd find a way in anyway. With her parents divorced and her shaky relationship with her mother, it soon became the only attention that she received. Jefferson continued to have sex with Taylor until she was 16-years-old. However, he continued to pursue her even after he was married and after his divorce.

### The Aftermath

"My saving grace was being admitting to an arts magnet high school for the (See Incest, Page 16)

## Obama unbowed in face of anger over his candidacy

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

- Democratic Presidential Candidate Barack Obama, who has received earliest-ever Secret Service protection — apparently because of race-oriented threats on his life — says he will not be deterred by intimidation. Another former Black presidential candidate says the threats indicate a resistance to change in America.

"It's not something that I'm spending a lot of time worrying about or spending a lot of time talking about," Obama told the NNPA News Service last week. "I think that all candidates for the presidency have some security risks. I don't make these assessments. Others make the assessments for us. And I'm very happy for the professionalism and the dedication of the Secret Service folks who are with me, but I'm just spending most of my time thinking about how I can be the best possible candidate and the best possible president."

Obama, who draws rock

star-type crowds into the thousands, has said little about alleged threats since Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., reportedly said he'd received information, some from a racial standpoint, that caused him concern for Obama's safety. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Republican leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., reportedly spoke to the Secret Service on Obama's behalf. He received the protection a month ago.

Those who have experienced similar threats say the situation is characteristic of America.

"We can't put a false face on fear, hatred and violence," said two-time Democratic presidential candidate the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. "The president is the highest symbolic post of leadership. Forget about politics. It is the highest symbolic post of cultural leadership in this country. And there are a lot of people who want to see that post held by someone who looks like them. And when it looks as though that somebody else doesn't look like

them, it angers them. It leaves a sense of alienation and it sets them off."

Jackson was awarded Secret Service protection because of death threats in 1984 and 1988. He says change is the number one fear of a certain segment of America.

As another example, he points to former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who as chairman of the White House Joint Chiefs of Staff had only hinted at a possible presidential run under the presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush in the early 1990s.

"Colin Powell wasn't even someone who had announced that he would run for President and he had started to get death threats, so much so that his wife was afraid that he was going to get killed," Jackson said. "For some people, the issue of race still touches on extraordinary sensitivity and provokes them to threaten violent behavior."

Jackson says although race may be the key reason in the case of Obama and Powell, it is really change of (See Obama, Page 16)

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