

Breaking shell of silence helps woman deal with life of abuse

A young woman's story of abusive childhood offers lesson from which all can learn

Editor's Note: The following "short story" was submitted anonymously. Though unsigned, other than with "The Abused", the message is strong, clear and important. It offers a lesson we can all appreciate. To the Editor and people of Warm Springs,

Enclosed is a short story I wish to have printed. It is a true story about my life as an abused child, teenager, woman. I want the community to become aware of what I went through as a child and of the evident, so called tell-tale signs of abuse, I showed. To all the children, parents, policemen, doctors, teachers, judges, counselors and child welfare workers: Had we known then what we know now, just think what my life could have been.

I do not wish to be known yet. I don't seek pity. I just want this to be known. In case you know of an abused child, don't hesitate to intervene, for without help, they could end up like me. No child should be made to carry such a heavy burden throughout life.

**Thank you,
The Abused**

"Once there was a small girl child of seven or eight years. She was taken from the warmth and security of her grandmother's home and placed in her mother's care and household.

"Her mother had once again remarried, so the little girl now had a stepfather. Thus began a life of pain, humiliation, suffering, secrets and rejection. For what began next was to be the foundation for a hard, lonely life for this small girl child.

"In the beginning, life seemed good for the small girl child. She almost caught the feeling of security, of truly belonging to a family of love. But, as she was soon to find out, all good things come to an end.

"It seemed the stepfather could not accept another man's child as his own. He started with light spankings that soon became pure torture. Once the stepfather had the girl scared into silence with a mere glance, the real pain began.

"Since the mother worked evenings and some nights, the stepfather was in the home to "care" for the small girl child.

It was at a time like this, that the stepfather summoned the girl child to his bedroom. Upon entering the master's domain, the girl child was told to remove her clothing and lay on the bed, the very bed the stepfather shared with her mother. He then proceeded to torture the girl

child in the worst possible way by raping her. As the girl child lay under her stepfather, a part of her died. Her being was now shattered and lost forever.

"After that first time, the stepfather continued to rape the girl child continuously, never fearing of getting caught for the mother never once suspected a thing was wrong.

"The girl child started showing disturbing signs of what she was enduring at the hand of her stepfather. She would cry and cling to her mother as she left to go to work, begging to be taken along. She was so traumatized, the mere thought of asking to use the bathroom during school was unthinkable. Many times during her third grade year, she had accidents right there in her classroom, in front of all her classmates. She started running away

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from home, hoping to escape the private hell it had become. She ran to friends' homes, but mostly to her real father, who lived only two blocks away from her. She tried to tell of what was happening to her, but all that would come out of her mouth was the physical abuse. By this time, she felt

too ashamed and dirty to tell the real reason, and her fear was too deep. She had run so many times, that the police were involved. The mother and stepfather had convinced the police that nothing was wrong, and that the small girl child was only exaggerating.

The sexual abuse stopped when the small girl child was 10.... "But the cycle had begun and would continue, this time the demon was her own brother. He began where the stepfather left off."

"When the small girl child reached age 10, the father stopped the sexual abuse, fearing the girl child was about to break her shell of silence. "The small girl child had a glimmer of hope, hope of a new peaceful beginning. But the cycle had begun and would continue, this time the demon was her own brother. He began where the stepfather left off. It went on for at least another year, until the mother "caught" the brother in the act.

"She did very little to reprimand the small girl child's brother, but by this time it didn't matter. The small girl child continued to run away from home and ended up becoming a ward of the tribal court. At every court hearing the mother told of how the small girl child was beyond control. The small girl child still held hope of living with her real father, but the mother always convinced the judge that the father was a

worthless drunkard. The small girl child was eventually placed in the group home. She tried to turn her life around by talking with counselors. She tried to tell of the evil done to her, but it just wouldn't come out. Frustrated by this, the small girl child gave up and took another road out: The road to self-destruction through running away, alcohol and drugs. She continued this through-out her teen years.

There was so much alcohol and so many different men using her body, they were all just a blurry circle of faces. "When the small girl child turned 18, she confronted her mother and stepfather about the sexual abuse. The stepfather flat-out denied any wrong doing, but what really broke the small girl child's heart was when her own mother chose to believe her husband over her child. The small girl child came out of her shell of silence only to be pushed back in it even further.

"Three years and two children later, the small girl child was still looking for someone to love her, even if it was only for one night. "When the small girl child was 21-years-old, she finally

settled down with one man. Not much had changed, for he became her new abuser, thus continued the cycle of abuse. She had four children with this man, and was with him for eight-and-one-half years. The first three years were full of physical and mental abuse.

After that, it was mostly mental abuse. He never let her forget that she was less than a whore, a completely unfit mother, unworthy of him.

"Toward the end of this time, the small girl child, who was now a woman of 30 years, tried to figure out her life, and why it had become what it was. She realized all the pain, abuse and heartache began that one night so many

years ago. She also realized it was time to come out of her shell of silence, for it was not healthy anymore for herself, or her four small children. She knew she was a good mother, for her children loved her and she them. They were the reason to keep moving forward. She began by writing a story about a small girl child, hoping to end her cycle of abuse and begin cleansing and healing her broken being.

"The small girl child has finally found courage and strength to break out of her shell of silence.

The end. And the hope of a new beginning"

Conflagration Act allowed for outside fire protection

Editor's Note: Warm Springs Fire and Safety Chief Danny Martinez submitted the following letter to help clarify, and put on record, the chain of events which occurred early on in the Simnasho Fire.

Martinez stated that 13 task forces, totaling 494 personnel, were brought to Warm Springs to help protect structures in housing subdivisions and around the reservation. Sixty-eight communities helped with the effort. He also added that it was he who contacted the State Fire Marshall's Office and called for the initiation of the State Conflagration Act.

Cost of structure protection, apparatus, manpower and equipment associated with the Conflagration Act is between \$2.8 and \$3.5 million. This is included in the estimated \$5.1 million is has cost so far to contain and control the fire. Additional costs, for reforestation and rehabilitation, are expected to reach into the millions of dollars as well.

"As of August 10, 1996, at 2000 hours, the Confederated Tribes and the BIA have delegated the authority and responsibility for the complete management of the Simnasho Complex Incident. Doug Porter is assigned

as the Incident Commander along with the Porter Interagency Incident Management Team. Porter has full authority and responsibility for managing the wildland fire suppression activities within the framework of tribal laws, agency policy, and direction provided in the Escaped Fire Situation Analysis and the Line Officer briefing.

"On August 11, Daniel Martinez, Tribal Fire Chief, requested of the Oregon State Fire Marshall to enact the State Conflagration Act. The Oregon State Fire Marshall concurred with this request. By enacting the Conflagration Act, this committed the State Structural Protection Resources to be assigned and used on the Reservation for fire protection on all tribal, private, federal structures, which are in danger from the Simnasho Wildland Fire Incident.

"With the initiation of this, the Confederated Tribes and the BIA request your active involvement, participation, assistance, advice to provide sound strategies and resources for the protection of tribal, private, federal structures, which are in danger from the Simnasho Wildland Fire Incident. This incident was initiated as a federal Wildland Fire

Incident, as such federal management will take precedence, which is consistent with the US Government's trust responsibility to the Confederated Tribes. Therefore, all State Structural Protection Resources will be assigned and committed to the Porter Incident Management Team.

"All specific direction and assignments for the State Structural Protection Resources committed to the Simnasho Wildland Fire Incident covering human life, firefighter safety, structure protection, natural, traditional, cultural, environmental and social concerns will come from Porter and the Incident Management Team. The following specific direction will be:

"1. We would request the State Fire Marshall to designate one person, who would report directly to Porter and provide direct supervision over the State Structural Protection Resources. Porter and the Incident Management Team will provide specific direction and assignments of the State Structural Protection Resources.

"2. The State Fire Marshall designate will need to attend all strategy meetings and briefings of the Incident Management Team. The times

of these meetings and briefings will be provided by the Incident Commander.

"3. Coordinate all activities, resource, logistical needs to Porter or the appropriate Incident Management Team Section Chiefs.

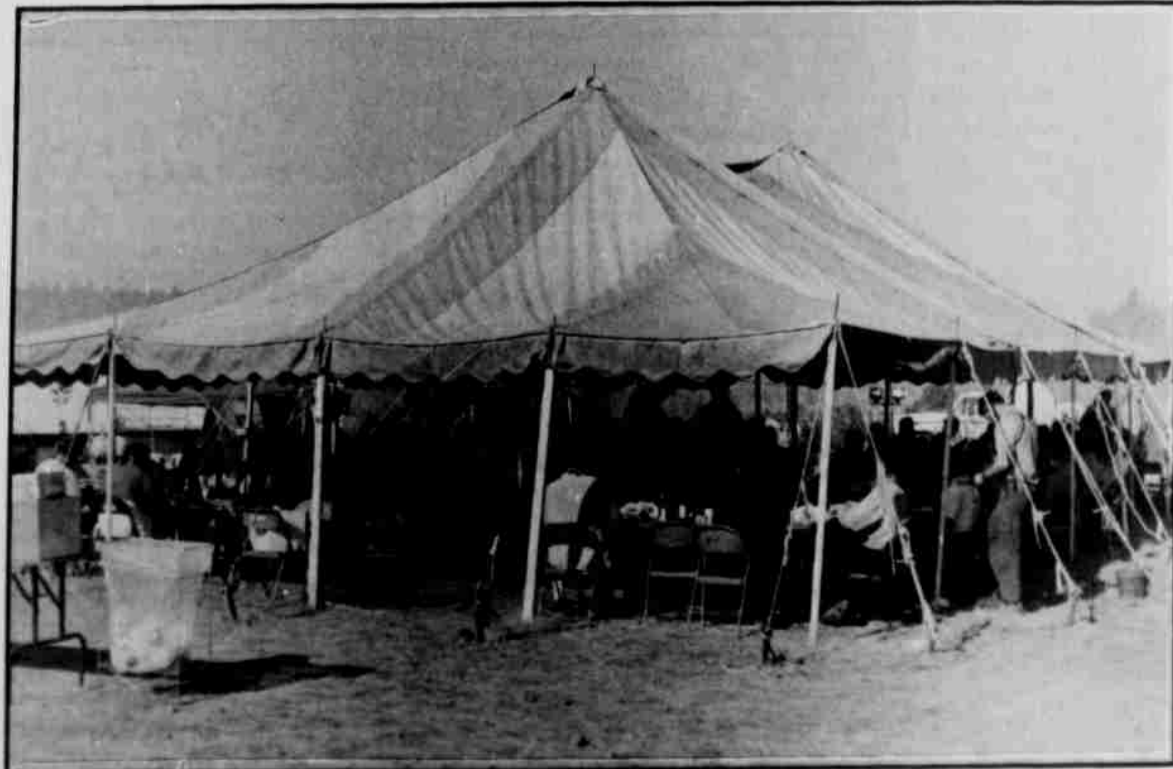
"4. The State Fire Marshall designate will need to interface with the Incident Management Team Section Chiefs.

"5. Porter will determine when the "threat of the wildland fire danger" is over for structural protection, according to the wildland fire behavior and weather of the Simnasho Fire Incident and the demobilization of the Structural Protection Resources.

"6. Porter's and the Incident Management Team #1 priority will be firefighter safety, protection of human life, even at the expense of structures and acres burned; #2 priority will be the protection and saving of all structures; #3 priority will be avoid damaging or disturbing cultural, archaeological, traditional and historic sites/areas on tribal lands.

"We appreciate your assistance and to follow this delegation of authority letter. Thank you for your assistance."

**Raymond Calica, Sr.,
Secretary/Treasurer
Gordon Cannon, BIA
Superintendent
Dated August 16, 1996**



At the Simnasho Fire camp, over 1,000 fire personnel ate in the instant dining hall behind the grade school.

Circumstances bring out the heroes of the community

To the editor,

Every now and then we hear of unexpected and heroic acts that people do. Many of us don't know the untapped strength that lies within each of us, under inevitable unusual circumstances. I like to refer to this as the reserve power which we are born with and are unaware of, until a situation presents itself and catches us off guard.

There are such people amidst us in Warm Springs who have had predicaments present themselves in which something very precious was at risk and could be lost, if action wasn't taken immediately.

One of these incidents was a young female tribal member whose young child became entrapped under a heavy duty iron panel; the mother was the only person in the immediate vicinity and had no choice but to grab the panel with one hand, lift it off and remove her. The child was rushed to the hospital and diagnosed as having a fractured arm. Later this young mother went back to the scene, tried to lift the panel and was unable to.

A young male married into the tribe came upon a scene on the highway where another Indian male had been trying to fix a flat tire; the jack slipped and the car fell on top of his chest. There were other people stopped at the scene and witnessed the slipping of the jack, with the car's weight landing on the man's

chest. Not knowing what to do and evidently frozen in a state of shock, they did nothing. This MIT ran over, grabbed the car by the fender and lifted it off the man's chest alone, while the others pulled out the entrapped man from underneath the car and got medical help.

A young tribal member family of four lives west of highway 3 near Simnasho. The fire spread so fast that it reached and jumped highway 3 in seemingly a matter of couple of hours. The fire came toward the family's house; the father and young son had gone into town for food and supplies; the young mother and daughter were home alone when the fire jumped the highway. It was within a few hundred feet of the home; fortunately, the mother had learned during childhood years how to operate farm machinery and other implements. Luckily, a tractor and blade were at the small ranch. This young mother, without thinking, went into immediate action. She attached the blade to the tractor, considering the weight of the blade, then built a fireline completely surrounding the house and corrals. If this hadn't been done, the loss might have been complete, including human lives. She kept the water sprinkler running and kept the ground as wet as possible.

Down the road about five miles away another family and home were

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