

THE KIDNAPPING OF REBECCA WESTBROOKS

*... the true story of one woman's encounter with Ted Patrick
and the degrading and deceitful tactics used to deny her of her freedom
to practice her religious beliefs*

January 17, 1980, Chattanooga, Tennessee - Around 3:30 p.m. the police came into the office on McCallie Ave. saying that they had a warrant for my arrest. The charge was possession of marijuana for resale. All they said was, "Stand up and put your hands behind your back." -- which I did. They handcuffed me and took me out to the car. On the way out, the city detective asked me if I had ever seen a man that was with him. He called the man Mr. Myers. I said, "Never." He said that that's not what Mr. Myers said. They took me to the police station on Amnicola Highway. They took me to an office area--the police woman searched me then I was handcuffed to a chair and left alone. After a few minutes, the detective came back and read me my rights then left me alone again for several more minutes. While he was gone, over the loud speaker someone said whoever was holding Rebecca Westbrooks to pick up the line. He then came and took me to the city jail downtown. I gave information about myself and was told I could make one phone call.

I called the community and asked Gary Long to have someone come quickly. He said Judy and Arthur were getting money for my bond and were on their way. The detective came and asked if I was detective Westbrooks' daughter. He then seemed apologetic and said he would take care of the bond. I told him it was okay, either me or my friends would take care of it. I was then taken to the back where mug shots and finger prints were taken. Then, they wanted me to sign my bond but I saw at the top corner that it had written, "Have her father sign." I then hesitated and said I wanted to wait for my friends to come, but the policeman said, "No, hurry up and sign. We haven't much time." So I signed. They told me to be in court at 3:00 Friday.

I walked out the door and there was my daddy with the man called Mr. Myers. I ran back in and started screaming that I wasn't going with him. They came in, my dad handcuffed me and he and Mr. Myers dragged me out to the car where Army and Tim Mahoney (friends of my dad) were waiting. They drove toward Red Bank to the Cherokee Motel (owned by a friend of my dad). There, Mr. Myers got out and we went on. It was there that my sister and her husband began following us in her car. After being on the freeway for awhile, we hit a back road which headed toward Centre, Alabama. A few miles from Centre, my dad stopped to let me use the restroom. They all got out and escorted me. When I was finished, I walked to go to the car but took off running. A car was coming down the street so I put out my thumb as I ran and started screaming. It stopped, but everyone got hold of me and threw me back into my dad's car.

We went on to Centre where Sara Mosely (Naomi Kelley's sister) and her husband, Ronnie, were waiting for us at a church yard. We then followed her to her house. They put me in a back bedroom where the window was nailed shut. The only conversation I can remember that night was between me and my brother-in-law. He asked to talk to me alone for awhile. He told me that he didn't fully agree with this and didn't know about it until that morning. He said they were supposed to have gotten me that morning as I walked to work – but I didn't walk. Ted Patrick was supposed to arrive the next day but could only stay 2 or 3 days because he had to be in court Monday in California. He asked if there was anything he could do. I asked him to call the community and tell them what was happening.

It turned out that he had told the deprogrammers that I had asked him to call. They were upset and belittled me for doing such a thing. Later he said no one answered when he called. The next morning Naomi arrived, a deprogrammer and ex-community member who had been deprogrammed by Patrick. Then, my mother came in with a girl who she introduced as Sue but in actuality was Melinda Horton, an ex-community member who had also been kidnapped and deprogrammed by Ted Patrick a couple of years earlier. All this was hard for me because I had always trusted my family and now I found them lying to me and betraying me and treating me as a criminal or someone insane. It hurt me deeply to know that now I could not trust them and be open with them as I always had before.

In the room, there was a king-sized bed. At night I had to sleep between Melinda and Naomi. There was also a twin bed in the room where someone else slept--sometimes my cousin, aunt, uncle or Tim. At night, the bedroom door was also tied from the outside where it could not be opened. Also, someone slept on a cot or mattress right outside the door. For the first 3 or 4 days, I didn't get to go out of the room and someone had to be in the bathroom with me whenever I used it or took a shower. Naomi, Melinda, and Sara would talk off and on all day about the church--a lot about Gene.

They would make jeering remarks about me - about my not talking and the way I would just lay there. One time, Naomi got mad at me and started speaking loudly in my ear because I didn't show a lot of affection for my dad. The first couple of days, at times I would start crying and pray a little out loud asking God to deliver me and that He would help me not have bitterness in my heart. Whenever I did this they would start shaking me - telling me to stop and would tell my mother that it was a form of self-hypnosis.

On the 12th day, Ted Patrick arrived along with his video cameras. He set up all his equipment, put two chairs in front of the camera and lights - one chair for me, one for him. He would talk and talk about how my mind had been reduced to that less than a two-year old. I had become a zombie, Gene Spriggs was a con man, etc. I was not deprived of food or sleep, but considering the fact that I was taken against my will, locked up, and badgered with words - having everything that I believed in attacked - I felt as if I were fighting for my life mentally, emotionally and spiritually. One thing that disheartened me most was when several times they said that if it took 4 months of my being there, they would do it. They would say the same things over and over again. One of Ted Patrick's noted statements was that power of suggestion is root of all hypnosis. They said all they wanted to do was get me to think for myself, I told them I didn't object to this - I didn't want to be hypnotized or brainwashed by anyone. But the only way I was to prove this was by listening to the tapes they had on cults and read the books they had. So, I consented.

Before I was taken, I had seen a talk show on television where Ted Patrick was speaking. He said that in the deprogramming process he and his associates "snap the mind". When they have accomplished this snapping, they can fill in whatever they want into that person's mind. This is how they deprogram someone. In the books I read during the deprogramming it described the snapping sign as an emotional outburst.

On the 13th day this emotional outburst happened to me. All along I had prayed not to be bitter toward anyone. I remained calm and unresponsive to all the things they said to me. But on this day as I sat there on the bed and they continued to hammer me with the same accusations against the community and belittling me, I could handle no more. I began beating the bed with my fists and screamed over and over, "You want me to get mad, but I'm not, I'm not, I'm not!" It was strange for me because as I was screaming, I was also thinking to myself that this is crazy. I'm telling them that I'm not going to get mad at them, but I'm mad and screaming at them.

It was as if I were two persons - on the outside screaming and uncontrolled, but my mind was totally sane. They smiled at one another as this was to them a sign of my snapping. I had gone crazy and now they could fill my mind with all the lies and accusations that had filled their minds. This was their intention, but I never received these things because in my heart, I knew what I had experienced in my life, how God had led me to this people and although they were not a perfect people, I knew that they had the same heart as I did - a heart which loves our God and only wants to do his will.

For these two weeks I would often lie in the bed at night trying to think how I could escape, but finally I saw the only way out was to go through it. So, on the 14th day I finally consented to go to what they call "Rehab" in San Diego, California. Ted Patrick, Naomi and I were taken to the Atlanta airport where we flew together to California. Before leaving Alabama, they had me sign a power of attorney to my dad and write a note saying that I had been with my family for two weeks and was now on vacation with another girl. I asked why I had to do this. They said the power of attorney was for my dad in case I wanted my possessions from the community. They didn't say anything about the note, but I assume it would be for Ted Patrick's protection in case I took them to court.

We left Atlanta about 1:30 or so in the afternoon. We arrived in San Diego about 10:00 p.m. The first two nights, Naomi and I stayed at the Rehab house where Ted's daughter, Ann, lives. The rest of the two weeks, I was at the Rehab house down the road from Ted's--on Plato Drive. Both Rehab houses have iron bars on the windows and doors which are locked at night. On Rehab, I could go to the beach, to Mexico, out to eat, to movies, to the zoo, etc. But I was not given any money at all, I was watched very closely and Naomi was faithful to reinforce all the things they had said to me during the two weeks in Alabama. All I heard day and night for that month's time was about cults, brainwashing and hypnosis. They make it a point for all people on Rehab to see Dr. Dean's show--a famous hypnotist. Naomi, Maggie (another girl who works for Ted), Martin (a fan of Ted's), Arnie, Rhonda and I went to see Dr. Dean. After the show, Martin talked to Dr. Dean so he wanted all of us to sit down and talk with him. He, Martin and Naomi mostly talked about cults and hypnotism. Arnie and I got up and walked around some--I didn't want to take any chances of being hypnotized.

They say that cults keep people in through guilt and fear. I honestly never felt any guilt or fear until I was taken. Over and over they talked about how much my family loved me, how they proved this love by spending thousands of dollars to get me out of a cult. They told me I had hurt my family so much, that my father was in poor health and how he had stayed awake at night crying over me. They said if I went back to the community, that I would be made to press charges against my dad. This was a tactic of trying to make me feel guilty of causing pain to my family through my involvement in the community and making me feel the pain would greatly increase if I were to return. They were very skillful at using my emotional ties with my family to try and instill guilt that would keep me from returning.

So much I wanted to escape but was afraid of being caught. One morning in San Diego, I got up enough nerve to get up earlier than anyone else (which I usually did) and call the

community in Chattanooga. I told Judy that I was coming home as soon as possible. I was so scared. I was shaking all over and could hardly walk. There were a few times when I possibly could have escaped but I knew I would be taking great chances of getting caught and then I wouldn't know what would happen. I found myself overtaken by fear - a fear that could have ruled my life forever if I had not truly known the One who casts out all fear. I finally concluded that the only way out to take the chance.

On Thursday, February 14th--exactly 4 weeks from the day I was taken, I was taken to the airport where a ticket to my sister's house in Texas was waiting for me. Naomi, Maggie, Arnie and Rhonda took me there. Naomi gave me \$80 that my mom had sent for me to buy clothes. About 1:30 they left me at my gate and went with Rhonda to hers (she was also leaving that day). My plane was to leave at 1:40 p.m., so I had 10 minutes. There was a phone nearby so I called Chattanooga. I didn't know what to do, it was the first time I had really been alone and I wanted to leave for Chattanooga as soon as possible, but was still afraid of getting caught. So, I went ahead and boarded my non-stop plane to Houston. There my sister was waiting. We drove to her house in Beaumont. For those 4 weeks I had to suppress my feelings, thoughts, everything inside me because I couldn't trust anyone. In Beaumont, my emotions began to emerge. I felt very delicate, that I would break at the slightest jar, I felt afraid of people. I knew that I had to get home as soon as possible.

So, the next day, while my sister was at work, I called the community and told them I was leaving and would call as soon as I got to another place. I felt like I was breaking through a thousand barriers--two of which I know was that guilt and fear. There is no bitterness in my heart toward my family, Naomi or Ted Patrick--The Lord answered my prayer. I in no way want to press charges. I only want to be free to live according to the convictions in my heart. I believe that Jesus Christ has called us to live a life according to His teachings. I believe that my life in the community is in accordance with these teachings. My hope in His mercy and faithfulness and my conviction that God spoke to my heart and led me to the church, was the only thing that brought me through those 4 weeks. My earnest desire is to continue living according to these convictions.

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

It's been fifteen years since I was taken in an attempt by my father to have me deprogrammed. Since my arrest by the police was just a means of getting me into the hands of the deprogrammers, I thought that the process of prosecution would end that day. However I was wrong. They actually had planned to follow through with the process, take me to court, find me guilty and put me on probation where I would be under the covering of the state-need to get a job, not go outside of Chattanooga, live with my parents, thus not be able to return to the community. Since the deprogramming is usually accomplished in three days, they had a trial date set for me a few days after I was taken. But since I was not deprogrammed but still held in Alabama, they said I was sick and put another day for my case. That time I was also still not deprogrammed so they said I was undergoing psychiatric treatment in a hospital and again set a new date for the trial.

But the third time I had already returned to the community so proceeded with the hearing with me not present. The court found me guilty and sent a warrant for my arrest to the Vermont state police. Some brothers from the community had actually gone to all three hearings and witnessed the lies that were said about the whole affair. Since I was being falsely accused and sought after by the police it was impossible to let my family know where I was. We hired an attorney in Chattanooga to look into the court record to try to expose the injustice that had happened to me in the court. We discovered one court order for a continuance of my case on which the presiding judge had scribbled a note to another judge saying, " Doug, this is the case of Detective Westbrook's daughter that I told you about. He is having her deprogrammed in Alabama and she won't be here for the hearing." Upon finding out this information, one of the leaders in the community went to one of the judges involved and confronted him with the conspiracy we had uncovered. Once the judge knew that we really knew what had happened, he ordered the court record expunged and the records destroyed.

By this time I was living in one of the communities in Germany. Once my name was cleared, I was able to communicate with my family again, and this made me very happy. However, my father's attitude toward the community never changed. Because of this, I could never fully be restored to him. Although I was able to tell him on the phone that I forgave him shortly before his death three years ago, I never saw him after the deprogramming in Alabama.

Two and a half years ago my mother and two sisters came to Europe to see me. It was the first time in fourteen years that I had been in the community that they had ever come to see for

themselves the life that I had. They came a little apprehensive, but it wasn't long before they saw that all the things they had heard were wrong. They saw clearly that my husband loves and cares for me, that the children are happy, healthy and much loved, and that everyone in the community are normal people and not brain-washed, hypnotized zombies. My mother said that now she sees what I had been trying to tell her for fourteen years. My sister said that she now gets so angry to think of all the lies that she had heard and believed about us. She sees that the result of believing those lies was that our once close relationship; was broken and undue harm came both to me and my family. As we took them to the train station for their return home, they said that they were sorry that my father had never come to see because if he had, they know it would have been different with him. I am so thankful for this visit, that now my family can have peace about my being here. I felt like I had been fighting a battle for fourteen years and the battle finally ended.

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