

Inquiry in Walls sex case leaves Scout's dad bitter

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ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

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(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles about former Boy Scout leader Jack Walls III, who preyed for years on Lonoke boys. He was convicted in 1998 in Lonoke Circuit Court of sexually assaulting six boys. Today, families of many of his victims think that if authorities had taken action in 1992-1993 when a boy first accused Walls of soliciting sex from him, the outcome would not have been so tragic.)

LONOKE -- In the late hours of Dec. 29, 1992, Scout leader Jack Walls III made eye contact with one of his Boy Scouts camping at Walls' father's Lonoke farm.

"Jack said, 'Let's take a walk,' " the young man recalled nearly six years later. "Jack nodded toward the woods."

The two were already drunk. Walls had given the youth, who was about 13 at the time, several glasses of "jungle juice," a concoction of pure grain alcohol mixed with cola.

Earlier, Walls had provided the boy with reading material. It could have been one of a selection of pornographic books Walls kept on hand, including *The Girl From S.E.X.* The boy said he read the book in his tent by the light of a lantern.

"Then he came and got me. I dreaded it. I knew what was going to happen. He took me down to an old broken-down school bus parked on the farm," the boy said.

"He raped me when we got there," he said, his gaze drifting down to the table in front of him.

That was only one of the nearly 150 times the boy estimates he was sexually assaulted or sodomized by Walls over eight years.

"He raped me at the farm, his house, a shed at his house and even at my house," the boy said. "He used to crawl through my window after my family went to bed and rape me."

But on Dec. 29, 1992, as on many other nights, one sexual encounter wasn't enough for the then-52-year-old Walls.

He approached another Boy Scout, Doug Hogan of Carlisle, then 16, shortly after the first victim had gone back to his tent.

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Hogan and several other Boy Scouts were camping in preparation for a summer trip to Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, N.M. "I was lying down by the fire," Hogan recalled as if it happened yesterday. "He had given me some wine, but I poured it out."

Hogan said Walls lay down next to him with Walls' feet at Hogan's head.

"Jack asked me what I was thinking about," Hogan added, anger still simmering in his eyes six years later. "I told him no one in particular."

And then the unthinkable began to happen.

"Jack started unbuckling my belt. I didn't know what to do. I told him to stop," Hogan said.

But Walls was persistent.

"I thought we were going to masturbate," Hogan said Walls told him. "I said, 'No, that's not my thing.' Jack said, 'Well, how about me?' I said, 'No.' "

That was the beginning of the unraveling of a nightmare, a terrible, dark and shocking secret that had been kept in this small east Arkansas farming community by at least two generations and by at least 50 victims, some now in their late 30s, according to documents obtained by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Most were members of the Boy Scouts' elite Order of the Arrow and the Brotherhood, which were led by Walls, a Scouting member and adult volunteer for more than 30 years. The young male participants called themselves members of Walls' "group."

Instead of camp-outs where nature walks and merit badges were the order of business, Walls' special group of Scouts was taken down a different path, one that included alcohol, pornography, sex -- with Walls, with one another, with prostitutes and even with animals. Walls sometimes put on a dress and wig, blindfolding his victims, telling them that a prostitute would soon take care of their sexual needs.

All of Walls' victims adhered to a code of silence.

"I never told anybody," one boy said. "Jack threatened me. He told me I'd end up dead."

While Hogan was the first to publicly speak up, he wouldn't be the one that sent Walls to prison. That wouldn't happen for five more years, when one of the boys finally put a gun to Walls' head and made Walls tell his parents "how you've screwed up my life."

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That happened in summer 1997. The horrible secret became public and ended with Walls pleading guilty in January 1998 to five counts of rape and pleading no contest to a charge of raping Heath Stocks, whom Circuit-Chancery Judge Lance Hanshaw of Lonoke referred to as Walls' "finest creation."

That statement was one of the reasons that, on March 4, a split state Supreme Court overturned Walls' sentences -- four life terms and two 40-year terms. A new sentencing date has not been set.

Stocks is serving a life sentence for killing his mother and father, Barbara and Joe Stocks, and his sister Heather on Jan. 17, 1997, in their Lonoke County home. Heath Stocks was 20 years old at the time and was still having sex with Walls.

Stocks, along with at least two other Boy Scouts, have admitted that Walls also ordered them to kill Hogan and his father, Cledis Hogan, both of whom spent nearly five years trying to expose and punish the Scout leader for what he had done to the younger Hogan.

The Hogans' effort would incite Walls, who has been diagnosed with pedophilia, into a frenzy, causing him to reach a new level of manipulating, controlling and even threatening his young victims. Pedophilia is defined as an abnormal condition in which an adult has a sexual desire for children.

A PLEA FOR HELP

Cledis Hogan said he anguishes now over why the authorities failed to do their jobs in 1992-1993.

"All of this could have been prevented if the authorities had only done their job," Cledis Hogan said.

But the authorities, including the Department of Human Services, the Arkansas State Police and former Lonoke County Prosecuting Attorney Larry Cook of Cabot, were "incompetent at best and corrupt at worst," Cledis Hogan said.

Beginning on the last day of December 1992, the Hogans, with the help of others, went to each of these authorities asking them to prosecute Walls. But none of the authorities found that Walls had violated any Arkansas laws or had abused a child according to state Human Services Department regulations.

"You'll never convince me that it wasn't power and money that kept Jack out of trouble," Cledis Hogan said during a recent interview.

Jack Walls' father, Charles Walls Jr., was a municipal and circuit judge in Lonoke.

But Cledis Hogan's relentless search for justice finally paid off last week when the Human Services Department fired its investigator, Ken Murphy, who was in charge of the 1993 Hogan investigation, six years after Murphy said there was no basis for Doug Hogan's allegations against Walls.

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"We are well aware the events surrounding this case have caused a great deal of pain for many families," Joe Quinn, a department spokesman, said Wednesday when he notified a reporter that Murphy had been fired.

"Internal investigations have shown that our caseworker could have responded more aggressively during the early stages of this case. ... We sincerely hope that this case has helped us improve our mechanism for communicating with police agencies in child abuse cases."

But Quinn and others could not explain why it took six years to figure out that Murphy "could have responded more aggressively."

The agency fired Murphy one day after a reporter showed agency officials documents, which the officials admitted they had never read, that showed Murphy had not only failed to do his job but had broken the law in the Hogan investigation.

State police refused earlier last week to allow a reporter to interview them about a 1993 investigation they conducted in the Hogan case. On Thursday, Lt. Col. Dan Oldham, commander of field operations for the state police, issued a one-paragraph statement that said the agency was refusing to comment on whether the 1993 Hogan investigation "was handled appropriately" until all the cases involving Walls "have been resolved through their respective appeal processes."

Oldham said the 1993 Hogan case and other Walls cases have "some direct connections" and discussing them could have an impact on the outcome of "pending litigation."

Hogan's complaints to the governor's office late last year and to the Human Services Department prompted the agency to open two investigations. One, which was conducted by department's Children and Family Services Division, has not been made public, Quinn said. The second investigation was opened in October 1998 by Lloyd Warford, an attorney and investigator with the department's Office of Chief Council.

That report was released to Hogan.

HOGANS SEEK JUSTICE

On Dec. 30, 1992, when Doug Hogan came home from the camp-out, he told his father what happened.

Another Scout at the same camp out, Marc McConnell, then 15, told his stepmother what happened.

McConnell was one of two Scouts that Hogan had awakened at the camp and told about the incident. The other Scout was Chris Houchens, then 15. Both talked to Walls shortly after the incident occurred.

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McConnell's stepmother, Joann McConnell, said she made telephone calls on Dec. 30, 1992, to report the incident to the Human Services Department's Child Abuse Hotline and to the Lonoke Police Department, which referred her to the Lonoke County sheriff's office because the incident occurred on a farm south of the city. She also called the sheriff's office, Cledis Hogan said.

The hot-line report states, "Scout leader tried to get the boy drunk and tried to get the boy's pants off. Scout leader gave the boy several drinks of wine."

According to Warford's report, the allegation was referred to Murphy, who was working in the Lonoke office of the Children and Family Services Division. Murphy was told to initiate an investigation.

Warford noted that the hot-line allegation was classified as "abuse" and not "sexual abuse," despite the sexual connotations in the report.

"The practical difference between the allegation's being accepted as possible 'abuse' rather than 'sexual abuse' is that had the original complaint been considered 'sexual abuse,' it would have been immediately referred to law enforcement," Warford wrote. "Instead, it was taken as an abuse allegation and referred to the local DCFS office for investigation."

Cledis Hogan said he called Walls on Dec. 30, 1992, and demanded an apology.

Walls responded by writing a letter to Cledis Hogan on Dec. 31, 1992.

Part of the letter reads:

"I want to apologize to all of you for the incident at camp Tuesday night. It showed a flaw in my character that must be corrected and I must begin immediately.

"There is a great amount of trust placed in a man who works with young people as I did, and I violated it. I am ashamed of this as I have let everyone down from the Scouts through my own family. It's now up to me to change my life."

Walls ended the letter by telling Hogan that he was resigning from all of his Scouting positions.

Walls would later say that he wrote the letter because Hogan threatened him, but Stocks said that isn't true.

"I was the first one to read the letter," Stocks said. "Jack called me to come over to his shop because he wanted me to check out the letter and see if it made him seem guilty. He told me he wrote the letter to get that whole thing squashed before it went public. He said he wrote it so that he could look like the good guy Jack, the Boy Scout leader that everyone trusted before Mr. Cledis got a chance to make it public.

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"I told him it sounded two ways -- 'it sounds like you're either admitting to this or you could be admitting to something else, like the alcohol.' He said, 'Exactly. I'm covering myself.' "

But neither the state police nor Murphy ever talked to Stocks, who was known as an active Boy Scout in Walls "group."

Cledis Hogan then reported the incident to Jeffrie A. Herrmann, an executive with the Boy Scouts' Quapaw Area Council in Little Rock, on Jan 4, 1993.

Herrmann didn't waste any time in taking action. On Jan. 5, 1993, Herrmann notified Walls the organization was revoking and severing its relationship with him.

Within a two-week period, the Boy Scouts also notified the Human Services Department about the Hogan and Walls incident three times. They notified the agency's hot line on Jan. 14, 1993, Warford said.

Herrmann also called Murphy on Jan. 19, 1993, and discussed the case with him. He also followed up the telephone conversation with a letter to Murphy stating there was enough supporting evidence for Hogan's allegations that the Boy Scouts had terminated Walls' volunteer status. Herrmann also enclosed a copy of the letter Walls had written to Hogan.

Even with four notifications, Murphy took no action, Warford said. That, he said, is against the law.

"The law [Act 1208 of 1991] required Mr. Murphy to initiate an investigation within 72 hours and to complete the investigation within 30 days," Warford wrote. "This did not occur."

In fact, it would take 147 days -- until May 26, 1993 -- before Murphy initiated an investigation. He finally took action after six reports had been made to the department, two of which were to the hot line.

"Murphy acted only then after a second report was made to the hot line and the victim's father complained to Murphy's supervisor," Warford wrote.

And even then, Murphy interviewed only Cledis and Doug Hogan.

After that, Murphy turned the investigation over to Cook, the prosecuting attorney, who asked for a state police investigation.

Jim Rainbolt, a criminal investigator with the state police, met with Cook, Cledis Hogan and Hogan's attorney, Chip Welch, on June 1, 1993. The same day, Rainbolt also interviewed Doug Hogan, who told the investigator that the Scout leader had sexually solicited him and provided him with alcohol.

However, after interviewing Doug Hogan, Rainbolt labeled the case file as a "false imprisonment" investigation.

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It would be 57 days later, on July 28, 1993, before Rainbolt conducted his second interview, this time with Walls. In a written statement he provided Rainbolt, Walls denied that he had conducted himself in any improper way with Hogan.

But during an interview, Walls told the investigator, "I don't recall saying anything to Doug Hogan that would have any sexual solicitation. I did not ask for or offer to give [oral sex] or to do masturbation with Doug Hogan."

Instead, Walls claimed that he chastised Hogan for his treatment of girls and "hit him on the belt buckle with the back of hand" and told him to go to bed.

Nearly three weeks later, after Cledis Hogan complained to Rainbolt that nothing "was happening," Rainbolt interviewed the two Scouts who had talked to Hogan and Walls after the incident.

McConnell and Houchens both told Rainbolt that Walls admitted he solicited sex from Hogan.

"When we got to the campfire, Jack told his side of the story," Houchens said. The three boys were preparing to leave the camp early on Dec. 30, 1992, because Hogan was upset, the boys said. Walls said he heard their truck start and stopped the boys from leaving.

"Jack said he and Doug were talking about girls," Houchens said. "The subject turned to masturbation. Jack asked Doug if he wanted to masturbate. Doug said, 'No.' Jack asked if Doug would do him. Doug said, 'No.' "

McConnell told the investigator that "Jack said he did it, but he was only playing."

Rainbolt never talked to any other Boy Scouts or Scout leaders, and he never asked the two boys about the presence of alcohol at the camp-out.

Officials with the state police would not discuss last week whether sexual solicitation of a minor is illegal, why Rainbolt labeled the investigation "false imprisonment" or why no other interviews took place.

On Oct. 8, 1993, Rainbolt closed his investigation, saying that Cook "determined that the actions of the suspect in this case do not constitute a crime."

Cook refused last week to discuss the case. "I have no comment," he said to a reporter at his Cabot office.

But the Hogans wouldn't give up.

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Cledis Hogan persuaded a municipal judge in Carlisle on Nov. 18, 1993, to sign two warrants against Walls on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and third-degree assault, both misdemeanors.

On Nov. 22, 1993, Walls was arrested on those charges.

Murphy resurfaced again the next day.

On Nov. 23, 1993, Murphy wrote a "narrative" in which he said that after discussing the case with Rainbolt and "review of the interview of the alleged perpetrator, worker [Murphy] will unfound the allegation of sexual abuse that took place on Dec. 30, 1992. Mr. Walls had a reasonable explanation of the events that supposedly took place and the police investigator that interviewed him and others also feel that no sexual abuse took place or was intended."

Murphy does not explain who the "others" are that he mentioned in his narrative. He closed his file on the case.

Quinn said it is against state law for anyone to obtain a copy of a Human Services Department investigation. "This is the last bastion of where children are protected. Those reports are confidential, and no one by Arkansas law can get them," he said.

But on Nov. 30, 1993, a person listed only as "Walls" on the form requested and received a copy of the department's investigative file in the Hogan case.

"I have no idea how this happened," Quinn said when he learned that such a file had been given to someone accused of soliciting sex from a minor.

Finally, on April 8, 1994, the Hogans had their day in court with special Municipal Judge Gary Rogers presiding in the Carlisle courtroom.

Five boys sat ready to testify on behalf of Walls. More boys were present to testify if needed. No officials had inquired, but at that time all but one of the boys were being sexually assaulted by Walls.

The case was prosecuted by Angela A. Alexander, a deputy prosecuting attorney in Cook's office. Phillip Witeaker, another deputy prosecuting attorney from the office, was in attendance.

Cook refused last week to explain why deputy prosecutors from his office were prosecuting a municipal case in Carlisle.

In 1997, Cook removed himself from Walls' sexual assault case, saying he had a conflict of interest because he had practiced law before former Judge Charles Walls Jr., Jack Walls' father.

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But the victims' parents remember seeing a letter in 1997, when the investigation was at its peak, written by police to the judge in which the police claimed Cook was doing things to thwart the investigation.

"We all wanted Cook off the case," one father said recently. "It was clear he wasn't out to see that there was justice in the Walls' case."

In 1994, court records show that Cook never said he had a conflict of interest. And even though Cook had "determined that actions of the subject in this case do not constitute a crime" to the state police, his deputy prosecuting attorney represented the "plaintiff," which would have been Doug Hogan, at the Carlisle trial.

In the Carlisle courtroom on that day in April 1994, boy after boy walked up to the stand and testified on behalf of Walls.

"I was told if I didn't testify for him, I would end up dead," one victim said.

Later, it was learned that Walls considered calling Murphy as one of his witnesses, but for reasons that have never been explained, Walls changed his mind.

Former state Rep. Bill I. Fletcher, among several others, appeared in the Carlisle courtroom as a character witness for Walls and, after hours of testimony, Walls was found innocent by the judge.

However, Rogers was not satisfied with the proceedings.

"I personally believe that there may be other charges that may have been filed, but weren't. ... I'm not making any determination on whether there were any sexual advances or not. That, again, was not before the court," Rogers told the courtroom.

But no authority took action on Rogers' statements and no other charges were filed.

Even though the trial was over, it wasn't over for either the Hogans or Walls.

"At first, Jack said he would give \$150 to the first person that beat Doug up," Stocks said. "But as time passed, it became an obsession of Jack's to kill Doug and Cledis. They had dared to try and expose him."

Stocks and other Scouts have described how they were ordered by Walls to obtain the license plate numbers of the Hogans' vehicles, start a fire in Cledis Hogan's truck and burn him to death, or cut the brake lines in their vehicles. It was also suggested that the boys simply shoot the Hogans.

"But by the grace of God, I'm still alive," Cledis Hogan said.

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And all of this time, Walls was continuing his activities in the Boy Scouts.

"Jack didn't tell anybody he was kicked out," Stocks said. "We were still doing the camp-outs... and everything else."

Graph: Jack Walls time line

Photo: Jack Walls III