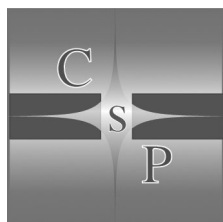


Bad Spirits

Bad Spirits:
A Cultural Explanation for Intimate Family
Violence, Inside One American Indian Family

By

Julie C. Abril



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Bad Spirits: A Cultural Explanation for Intimate Family Violence, Inside One American Indian Family,
by Julie C. Abril

This book first published 2008 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2008 by Julie C. Abril

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-84718-685-8, ISBN (13): 9781847186850

To Leilani (Beautiful Flower)

You will always be safe in the Flower World.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ix
Preface to A Violent Story.....	xi
A Warning	xi
Letter to Selma Police Department	xii
Letter to Fresno Police Department	xvii
Introduction	1

Section I

Chapter One.....	8
Bad Spirits - The Theoretical Framework	
Chapter Two.....	12
My Mom and Dad	
Chapter Three	19
The Earliest Years	
Chapter Four.....	50
The Middle Years	
Chapter Five	
Meeting The People.....	58
Chapter Six	
Leaving the Violence.....	61
Chapter Seven.....	72
Toward an Understanding of the Violence: A Cultural Explanation	
Chapter Eight.....	77
Epilogue	

Section II

After The Violence 83

Section III

Family Violence Among Native American Indians: Research 105

Section IV

Addressing Family Violence and Child Abuse Within the Context
of Federal Law 117

Section V

Listening to My Ancestors 149

Bibliography 151

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The People who are not people speaking words that are not words.

The Woman I Always Talk To In My Head.

My Yoeme People.

Blood.

PREFACE

Many of the events described in this manuscript are currently under investigation by the Homicide Division of the Fresno (CA) Police Department and other Detectives from the Phoenix (AZ) Police Department. A copy of this manuscript has been submitted to these agencies and logged by them as evidence in the investigation of the murder of two infant twins.

A Warning

This manuscript is about family violence as experienced in one urban American Indian family. The violence portrayed throughout this writing is graphic and disturbing. Indeed, violence is disturbing and graphic for those who must live in fear of becoming its victim. I have deliberately chosen to write about the violence in an honest yet graphic fashion for two reasons. First, in much previous research on violence, the graphic details are often left out so as not to offend the reader. In an effort to not offend the reader, readers are left with a distorted view of the reality of violence both as it is exhibited and its consequences on the victims. Sanitizing written material on violence harms both those who seek to understand and prevent it. Second, writing the graphic details of violent episodes has a healing effect. Honesty in portraying what actually transpired, from a victim's perspective, is both empowering and healing. I hope that the readers will be able to 'stomach' the violence that was so pervasive throughout the years living in this family.

* * * * *

Letter to Selma Police Department

Selma Police Department
Thomas H. Whiteside, Chief of Police
1710 Tucker Street
Selma, CA 93662

June, 2001

Subject: Leilani Caroline Abril - Date of Death: May 11, 2001

Dear Chief Whiteside,

My name is Julie Christine Abril and I am the eldest sister of Leilani Caroline Abril. I assume you have probably checked your records to see who Leilani Abril was and the nature of her business with the Selma Police Department. She had attempted suicide at least once while living in your City. I have recently learned that she was finally successful in her efforts to leave this world on May 11, 2001. I understand that Leilani committed suicide and was cremated in Selma's Flora Memorial Crematorium on May 21, 2001. Her ashes were laid there at the site.

Leilani had attempted suicide many times in the past. In fact, she had been hospitalized for many such attempts while a juvenile. By all observable accounts, I am certain, Leilani took her own life. All empirical evidence will point to this and there might even be verbal accounts of her emotional instability. Indeed, her children had been taken away from her by a juvenile court and it is likely that she abused illegal drugs, too. It would not be unreasonable to assume that Leilani was just another mentally unstable person who could not cope with the pressures of life. But, this might not be so as she endured more pressures than most people are able to handle.

For you to understand what I am about to tell you, you must know some things. First, we (Leilani, myself, our sister and brother, and our father) are Yaqui Indian People. Our mother is Cherokee Indian. When asked, most will likely say that they are either "Mexican" or "White". We have been doing this for many decades because there was once a time, several decades ago, where it was accepted to hate Yaqui People. In fact, when I was a very young person, before Leilani was born, our tia Francis told our mother to "*never tell anyone that we are Yaqui because they kill Yaqui here.*" Our tia Francis told my mom [I was in the room] about the story of a murder of a man in the fields in Fresno [we once picked

strawberries for employment]. Only recently, when I obtained my tribal enrollment papers from our tribe, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona, did people in our family begin to make public our true identity.

There are spirit ways of Yaqui People that are not discussed with white people. These spirit ways have not even been discussed amongst ourselves in many decades but they are still practiced. We do not speak of these powers and abilities because doing so is dangerous. Speaking of them makes one think of them and then one starts to 'make tricks'. Since time began, people have been killed for making tricks. I will break a Yaqui cultural law and tell to you some things of our People that will show to you that Leilani's suicide was not, contrary to all visible evidence, a suicide.

I am writing to you today to tell you that Leilani Caroline Abril was murdered. Leilani took her own life in an effort to escape the torturous memories of the things that happened to her and my brother and myself while we were living with our parents. In particular, to escape the memories of rape and torture inflicted by both our father, Charlie Richard Abril and by a cousin, Larry Varella.

The acts that would lead to Leilani's murder I speak of began during her earliest childhood. I will write about only the events to which I was a direct witness. The time frames will be marked by events in my own life as those are the best markers for my own recollections.

(1) I don't remember the year but I was 9 years old and Leilani is a few years younger than me. We were living in the yellow house in Fresno and I was going to Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. Charlie Richard Abril was sexually molesting our youngest sister. It is likely that he was forcing her to perform fellatio on him as this is what he always forced me to do. He was in his bedroom and my mother was in the shower. When my mom came out of the shower, I heard her scream to him, "*Charlie, No! Not the baby, too! I won't let you!*" I heard my mom crying and yelling at my dad. My brothers and I were in the living room watching television when this happened. Our mom came running out of the bedroom with a towel on her head crying "*No, Charlie, No, Charlie!*" She was carrying our baby sister who was only wearing a white diaper. My mom kept screaming to my dad, "*Charlie, what did you do with my keys? Did you take my keys, too! Charlie where are my keys!? Give them back to me!*" She went back to her bedroom and got her car keys from my dad. My

mom took Melinda (our baby sister) outside of the house and got into the car. Our mom drove off with Melinda. When my mom drove off, we all heard him.

Our dad yelled from his room, "*Leilani! Come here!*" We were all scared. We knew what he wanted. I couldn't handle it again, so soon after the last time - I was dying inside. He screamed again, "*Leilani! Come here!*" I looked at Leilani and said, "*He wants you. Go.*" Our brother, who is also named Charlie, said, "*Yeah, Leilani, he wants you! Go.*" These words I said to her will stay with me for the rest of my life.

She was crying and stood up from the floor. She cried all the way to his bedroom. While she was in there, I heard him scream to her, "*Do it! Do it now or I'll hit you!*" We heard the sounds of hitting with his hands. We heard her scream. We could all hear her crying "*No, No*". When he was done, she came out of the bedroom and walked down the hallway to the living room where we were still sitting. Leilani was crying and her face was all red. Her mouth was open and she was gone. We could not help her. This had been happening to us for years before she had been born and now it was her turn.

(2) We were living in Phoenix at the time. I must have been 13 or 14 years old. Our cousin, Larry Varella (my dad's nephew, the son of our tia Francis) came to our house. He talked to my dad. Larry was standing outside of the front door and my dad was standing inside the front door. My mom came out of her bedroom and stood behind my dad. My dad told her to go back to the bedroom. She went back to the bedroom. I was sitting on the brown couch not far from the door. I was kind of laying on it but sat up when I saw Larry at the door. I looked out of the front living room window at Larry's truck. Larry said something to my dad. My dad said something like "*Go get one ... pay one.*" Larry said something like "*Uncle, they cost too much.*" My dad looked around to the living room. I heard Larry say "*Julie?*" My dad said, "*No! She's mine!*" He waited a few seconds and said, "*Take Leilani.*" Larry didn't like Leilani and told my dad so. My dad yelled at Larry, "*No, take Leilani, Julie's mine!*" My dad yelled at Leilani to go with Larry. Leilani started to cry real hard. He raised his arm to backhand her and said, "*You better go now!*" Leilani was crying as she walked past my dad out of the front door. I saw her get into Larry truck. Larry got into his truck. As they were driving away, I looked out of the front window at Leilani. She was looking out of the back window of the truck. She was crying.

My mom came out of her room again. She demanded to know what Larry wanted. My dad just told her to shut up. Tim, our brother, told my mom, "*Larry took Leilani*". My mom said to my dad, "*Is that right? Did you let Larry take Leilani!?*" She was crying. She screamed at my dad, "*Charlie, don't you let Larry take any of these kids! Go get her back!*" My dad told my mom to shut up and he went to his bedroom. Later, Larry brought Leilani back. She was crying and would not talk.

(3) I left that environment (from Phoenix) for the final time on May 8th, 1983, two months after I turned sixteen. I left Leilani behind because I was dying inside. When I left there, I left Leilani to be the focus of my dad's physical and sexual attacks. I know this because I once visited her when she was in the juvenile psychiatric ward of a hospital in Fresno. I brought her a "Swatch" brand watch. It was turquoise blue and because blue was my favorite color, I thought she would like it, too. Leilani and I talked outside in the porch area of the confined hospital ward. Leilani had shown me the large cuts on her wrists. I told Leilani that I understand what was wrong, that I, too, had tried to do the same thing myself many times. In fact, everyone of my brothers and sisters has tried to commit suicide—all for the same reasons. I told Leilani that dad used to do that to me, too. Leilani started to cry then. She said, "*He keeps doing now, even!*" She said, "*And, Larry, too!*" I said, "*Yes, Larry, too.*" I was referring to the times years prior when Larry had raped me, too.

(4) Years later, after Leilani had her first two kids, she was still trying to handle the experiences of what I refer to as 'that life'. She had a hard time with it. She could not even take care of herself much less her kids.

My dad wanted to ruin her because she had "gone with someone else." He began legal proceedings to take her kids away from her. I am certain he used the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provisions to convince the juvenile court judge that the kids had to be given to him and no one else. He had used this same strategy with others years prior when some people tried to take me out of that situation. Those people at that time were unsuccessful because he had invoked ICWA. When he took Leilani's kids from her he killed her soul.

(5) What my dad did next, is not written in any Euro-American law books or found in any modern forensic texts on methods to kill another, but, these are very real methods -- ways to kill. My dad used what could be called, for lack of a better word, 'spiritual' methods to kill Leilani; a

form of black magic. That is, he created an environment whereby she would perform the actual act but he, Charlie Richard Abril is responsible for causing the act to occur through manipulation using Yaqui methods of murder.

The years of sexual abuse and physical torture broke Leilani's spirit down to one that was very fragile. A fragile spirit is one that is most susceptible to Evil Spirit influences. My dad used his ability to cause mental disturbances in Leilani such that she could no longer fight them (the demons he caused to appear or behaviors he made her engage in) or him. These types of spirit influences are most often seen in dreams and, what non-Yaqui People and, certainly what Euro-American people would call, hallucinations. These visions in dreams (and while awake) are caused by another's evil thoughts directed toward the victim. My dad has the ability to think evil thoughts, direct them toward an individual (Leilani) and have that person respond in the manner he desires. We call this power "making tricks." He used these methods to murder Leilani. Leilani was not born with the ability to fight these Spirits nor to make tricks.

Chief Whiteside, the suicide you have on your records will likely remain classified as a "suicide" for all official reporting purposes. Just know this for certain, the death of Leilani Caroline Abril, was not a suicide. The death of Leilani Caroline Abril was a murder, a deliberate act to take the physical life of another.

I know there is nothing in this physical world that can bring Leilani back. I am not even certain bringing her back would be a nice thing for her. But, I know this for certain, her murder was gradual and deliberate. The men most responsible for it are allowed to be free, only because there does not yet exist scientifically accepted methods by which non-Indian people can see the Spirit World.

Before I learned of Leilani's death, I had finished writing a draft of a book. This book was more for my own healing from the past than for anything else. Contained in this book are only a few of the violent events that occurred in my life while I was living with my parents. Some of these events involved Leilani and are not written in this letter. I hope that from reading this book, in particular Chapters 3, 4, and 5, you will be able to see the violent world in which Leilani's murder began.

Leilani is not and will not be the only victim of this type of Yaqui black magic.

Respectfully,
Julie C. Abril, M.S.

* * * * *

Letter to Fresno Police Department

Fresno Police Department
Brad Alcorn, Homicide Detective
2323 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

August, 2001

Dear Detective Alcorn,

These are the facts of an event involving the intentional deaths of two newborn babies. These babies were twins and were born alive. This event occurred about 25 years ago in Fresno, California. I was about 8 or 9 years old at the time. I might have been 10 years old, as the time of the event was also near the time I was in fifth grade. I attended three (3) different schools for fifth grade (Woodrow Wilson Elementary (Fresno, CA), John Muir Elementary (Fresno, CA) and Indian Bend Elementary (Phoenix, AZ) Later in this letter this time frame and these schools will be made more clear.

We were living in the yellow (mustard colored) house in Fresno.

My mom (Susan Fay Abril) was pregnant. My brothers and sisters and I were in the living room when I heard her screaming at my dad. I heard her yelling at him. She was saying things like, "*Charlie! That's gonna be seven kids now! We can't have seven kids! That's too many!*" I heard her scream some more, "*They're coming!*" and "*Charlie, No!*" She kept screaming real loud and hard. I first thought he was hitting her so I didn't get up. We never went around them when they were fighting. If we did, we would end up getting hit, too. So, we stayed in the living room together. My mom was screaming in a different way this time. I heard her scream some more. Then I heard her and my dad (Charlie (aka Charley)

Richard Abril (DOB 04/03/43) yell for me and my brother (Charlie, Jr.) to come to their bedroom.

We walked to their bedroom together. We were scared. Their bedroom door was open and we walked to it. I saw my mom sitting/laying on her bed in her bedroom with her legs apart. My mom yelled at my dad. She said to my dad, "*You have to cut their...*" She yelled again, "*Charlie, you have to, I can't do it.*" My dad yelled at Charlie to go to the kitchen and get a knife. Charlie came back to the bedroom with a knife. Charlie gave the knife to my dad. My dad tried to cut these things that looked like ropes with the knife. He yelled at Charlie. He said the knife was no good. My dad told me to get a different knife, one with edges on it.

Me and Charlie ran to the kitchen. We went to the knife draw and opened it. I picked up a big knife. I looked at Charlie and said, "*Is this Ok?*" He nodded yes. We went back to their bedroom with the knife. I gave the knife to my dad. My dad started to cut those ropes with the knife. My mom was screaming. She said, "*Charlie, you have to do this fast it hurts!*" My dad cut both ropes. Me and Charlie stood there watching my mom and dad. My mom laid back and was moaning into a pillow. Then she sat back up in her bed.

My mom yelled at me and Charlie to come closer. She said, "*Come here you two, I want you to see this.*" My brother and I walked real slow to the end of the bed. My dad was standing at the other end. I didn't want to stand next to him because I thought he was going to hit me. I have drawn a picture of where everyone was standing at this time (Picture A).

My mom sat up and said, "*Come over here and look at these.*" Between her legs were two babies. They were moving their arms and legs around. I have drawn a picture of were these babies were laying when I first saw them between her legs (Picture B).

My mom said to my dad, "*Charlie, they're moving.*" My dad took a blue towel and pushed down on the face of the first baby. He pushed down real hard with both hands. He moved the towel and then the baby didn't move anymore. My mom said, "*See, look, that one's a boy.*" Then she jumped. She said, "*Charlie look, this one's still trying to breath.*" She was pointing to the other baby. My dad took the towel and did the same thing to the second baby. When he moved the towel, the baby was still for a few seconds but then it started to move again. My mom got

scared. She yelled at my dad, "*Charlie, it's still moving!*" My dad looked at her.

My mom yelled at my dad again. She said, "*Charlie, you have to use your hands. Pick it up and use your hands.*" My dad said, "*No, Susan.*" My mom said, "*Charlie, you have to. Just pick it up and twist it.*" My dad picked up the second baby. He said, "*Susan, it's a boy!*" She said, "*Charlie, use a towel to hold it with.*" My dad picked up the blue towel and wrapped it around the baby. He held its body with one hand and its head with the other hand. My mom yelled, "*Charlie, just twist it.*" My dad twisted the baby's head. I saw the baby's body go limp. He put the baby back down on the bed next to the other baby.

My mom said to me and Charlie, "*You kids look at that!*" pointing to the babies. "*I want you to remember this, what your daddy did.*" *You see how easy that was to snap that baby's neck? He'll snap yours too if you every tell anyone what happened here.*" She looked at me and Charlie and said, "*Are you kids gonna tell?*" Me and Charlie moved our heads and said we wouldn't tell. She yelled at us to leave the bedroom. She didn't want to look at us. She said, "*Get out of here, I don't want to look at you.*" We left their bedroom.

Me and Charlie went to the living room. Charlie started to watch tv with Tim (our brother). I sat on the couch.

A little while later, my mom and dad came walking down the hallway. My dad was holding the towel with stuff in it. My mom said, "*He's gonna bury it in the backyard.*" Charlie got up from the floor and walked to the kitchen where my dad was standing. My dad told my mom, "*Keep them inside.*" He yelled at Charlie, "*Stay here!*" We went back to the living room.

I don't know how much longer it was, maybe it happen the next day, I'm not sure.

My dad was at work and we had just got back from school. Charlie went outside to the backyard. I think my mom told him to go pick up the dog poop. He ran back into the house. He was scared. He said the dog un-dug the babies. My mom and me ran outside to see. We saw the hole in the ground and the blue towel. We could see the babies. My mom turned around and said, "*Leilani and Timothy, get back in the house!*"

They walked back to the house. I could see Tim looking out of the back window from inside the house. My mom told us to all go back in the house and to wait for dad to come home.

When my dad came home from work, my mom told him the dog undug the babies. She just called it “*stuff*”. She told him he would have to take “*it*” to work to get rid of it. He said, “*No, Susan*” and went outside to look.

We were in the living room when my mom called all of us to the kitchen. I have drawn a picture of where everyone was standing (Picture C).

My dad brought the babies back into the house. He put them on the counter. They were still in the blue towel so he wouldn’t have to touch them. The knife was with them, too.

My mom said, “*Charlie, show all the kids.*” He picked up the babies from the counter and showed them to me and Charlie again. He kept them in front of our faces. I have drawn a picture of where the babies were when he showed them to me (Picture D).

My mom yelled at Tim to come and look at the babies. Tim and Leilani were crying. Tim said, “*NO!*” My mom hit him and made him walk to see the babies. He was crying real hard when he saw the babies.

My mom said, “*Leilani, you, too. Come over here and look at these.*” Leilani was crying real hard and said “*No, No!*” Leilani had her hands in a fist. She had her fists over her eyes. She was crying really hard. My mom went behind her and moved Leilani’s arms away from her face. My mom yelled at her to open her eyes and look or else she would get hit too. She hit Leilani. Then Leilani looked at the babies because my mom was holding her face at them. Leilani cried louder and moved away fast.

This happened after Melinda was born because Leilani was standing behind the high chair when she finally came out to see the babies.

My mom said to us kids, “*You kids see those babies? That’s what’ll happen to you too if any of you ever tell anyone about what goes on in this house. Your daddy just snapped those babies necks just like that (she snapped her fingers). He’ll do the same to you if you tell anyone what*

happens in this house.” She looked at Tim and said, *“Timothy, you understand me? Don’t tell anyone what happens in this house.”* Tim nodded his head that he understood.

My mom said to Leilani, *“You understand me, Leilani?”* *Don’t tell no one!”* Leilani cried and nodded her head, too.

My mom looked at me and Charlie and said, *“You kids better not tell anyone this!”* We each told her we would not tell anyone.

My mom told my dad that he has to go put them back (the babies back in the ground). We (my mom, dad, Charlie and myself) went back outside to the back yard.

My dad told Charlie to go get a shovel from the truck. My dad gave the babies to my mom to hold. She started to cry. My dad took the shovel from Charlie and dug the same hole deeper. It was pretty deep; maybe four feet deep. My dad turned around and said, *“Susan, give it to me.”* She handed him the babies, they were still in the blue towel. My dad put the babies in the hole, still wrapped in the blue towel. He put the knife in the hole too next to the babies. My mom said to him, *“Charlie, what if someone digs it up?”* My dad looked down at the dog. He said he would put the dog in there, too.

My mom told him to kill the dog and put it on top of the babies. She said if anyone ever was *“diggn’ around over here”* that they would only find old dog bones. I have drawn a picture of the hole and where the babies were in the hole (Picture E). I have drawn a picture of the house and backyard where the babies are buried (Picture F).

A little while later, while my dad was at work, a police officer came to our house. He wanted to talk to our mom. The police officer asked my mom if he could come into the house. She let him inside. He sat on the couch next to the wall. I have drawn a picture of where the police officer was sitting when he was in our house (Picture G).

The police officer asked my mom questions about us kids. He asked her how many kids she had, had she been pregnant recently and other questions. My mom looked at me. She told us kids to go to our rooms while she talked. The police officer told her no that he needed to talk to us, too. We stayed in the living room with the police officer and my mom.

The police officer asked her how old all of us were and when we were born. He wrote down all this information. He asked more questions about if there were anymore kids in this house. She told him no. He put his notes and clipboard back into his brief case. He closed it and got up. The police officer left our house.

When my dad got home from work, my mom told him that she saw real bad demons in the house that day. She told him that we had to move away real fast.

A little while later, we moved to the next house in Fresno, CA. I went to John Muir Elementary School. Charlie and I were in fourth grade. Charlie was about ten years old. In that house, my dad threw Charlie down the stairs into the basement. He was punching Charlie and throwing him real hard; beating him up. That was the first time my dad broke Charlie's arm.

We did not stay in that next house for very long because my mom kept seeing demons in the new house, too. When the police were at our house, she saw demons. When she was alone with me, she saw demons. We would eventually move from there and return to Phoenix, Arizona. I attended Indian Bend Elementary school, again.

All of this happened about 25 years ago, in 1976.

* * * * *

If you go to the schools I have told you about, you should be able to find the addresses of the homes I mentioned, in particular, the yellow (mustard colored) house. It is on Fedora but I don't know the numbers. I have bad memories from those years and the years that followed. But, especially bad are the memories from that yellow house. Many, many other bad things happened there. Charlie cut his wrists there. His blood was all up and down the hallway walls. I was kept in the closet for too many times there. It was a very bad house.

I left Phoenix and my family for the final time, on May 8th, 1983. I was 16 years old. After I left, Leilani started to try to kill herself. Also, after I left there, I had heard (I was living in San Francisco at the time) someone threw some sort of incendiary device into Leilani's bedroom from outside of the window. Her bedroom caught fire. Leilani was

burned. I believe this happened because as she was being treated for her suicide attempt, she might have told about the murder of the babies. In Leilani's hospitalizations for suicide attempts, I hoped she would tell doctors what had happened to her in her life. The address where this event occurred is 3312 E. Voltaire Phoenix, Arizona 85032.

* * * * *

I had been writing a book recently. I had been writing about some of the bad things that had happened to me when I was living with my family. I was writing this more for my own healing than for anything else. A few weeks later, I got a phone call that started this.

I received a call from my mom. I had not heard from her in many years. She called on May 21st to tell me that Leilani had been buried that morning. Apparently, she had committed suicide on May 10th and her body was released to be cremated a week or so later. I was told she was cremated at the Flora Crematorium in Selma, CA. I told my mom, "*You know your husband killed her.*" She said, "*What?*" I said, "*You know, your husband killed her with all the things he did to her in her life.*" My mom just said, "*Well, no one can hurt her anymore.*" My mom told me that Leilani's husband had told her to stay away from his family. She said, "*He just said, 'Don't you people come around here no more.'*" Then I told her, "*Well, don't bother me either.*" I hung up the phone. It was May 21, 2001 and the bad memories came back to me again.

I finished my work as a Teaching Assistant at the end of the spring quarter. I booked a last minute trip to Hawaii. I needed to get away from here and everything that had recently happened. Also, I was having some problems with my disability. I have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the years I lived with my family and the homelessness that followed. My disability was aggravated and I needed to leave.

I was having a terrible time in Hawaii. The memories were coming back fast and I was scared. Then one night I had a nightmare that was strange. I have been having nightmares every night for most of my life but this one was strange. In my nightmare, there was a dead dog and a dead snake nailed to a wooden fence with knives. In my nightmare, I got scared. I asked someone in my nightmare "*What do I do?*" A female voice in my dream said, "*Bury them in the back yard with the two*

babies.” Then I got too scared and woke myself up from the nightmare. I kept saying to myself, “*Two babies? Two babies?*” Then I started to remember what had happened all those years ago.

When I came back from Hawaii, I called the University of California Irvine police department to report what I had remembered. I told the officers that I had just returned home and would need to sleep before I can write about what happened. I told the officers that it is better if I write about these things because I can’t talk about them. The words can’t come to my mouth when I try to talk about things from that time. I never talked to outside people until I left home. I have since had problems talking with my mouth. Most of the time, I just talk in my head.

I gave the police officers a copy of the book I had written so they could see some of the world from which I came. Mostly, I wanted them to see why I had forgotten about that event with the babies and it is only now that I can talk about those years.

INTRODUCTION

“You’re gonna to write a book about me and I’m gonna look terrible!” She was crying and her face was all red. She was in their bedroom sitting at her make-up desk, the one that used to belong to her mom. *“I do the best I can with what I’ve got, Julie. You know, I’ve got other kids, too!”* she yelled at me. *“Tell me, Julie, you won’t write a book about me!”* she yelled. I told her, *“I’m not gonna write a book.”* She didn’t even hit me at all that time. I just walked away. I thought it was kind of neat that she thought I was going to write a book! I remember saying to myself, *“I’m gonna write a book?!”* I laughed to myself. I couldn’t believe it. I was going to write a book, too!

What This Book Is

What is written in this book is raw but it is real. It is violent and graphic and may be offensive. Living with violence is indeed offensive. This book is an account of some of the violent events that have occurred in my own life while I was living with my family. This book is a description of my own responses to those violent events. In this book, I provide a culturally-based explanation for the violence and my responses to those events. I will speak of matters that, among my family, are never spoken. What we call making tricks, others have called sorcery or witchcraft. But what we do is not done in the manner the media or academics have portrayed it to be done. We have Yaqui methods in our blood. I will write of some of these and allude to others.

Information contained within this book comes from my own recollections of these events. Part of my own healing from these experiences involved talking about them with a number of medical professionals. Several of these written recollections emanated from numerous psychotherapy sessions held over the past fifteen years. I found it to be most therapeutic to go beyond just telling this family’s secrets. I found I needed to recount to my doctors and those others who have listened to me exactly what occurred. This meant that I would write and speak about the events in the most infinite detail. When I recounted an event, for example, I described the clothes I and everyone else involved

were wearing, the expressions on their faces, the time of day (if I could tell time) and the colors of things around me. For myself, the process of describing the environment, words used and ‘looks’ provided a means to bring a witness to the events that occurred in private -- events which I had learned too early to keep secret. Even as I wrote this book, I often heard the words my mom would always say to me, *“Don’t you ever tell anyone what goes on in this house!”*

I know that this part of my life may never be closed. I have scars and physical conditions that remain with me from these events. When I walk, for example, I walk ‘bow legged.’ This is a result of one of the earliest rapes where my legs were pulled apart, breaking my hip bones. Today, when my back hurts, I am reminded of why it hurts. I don’t even think about all the times, while growing up and in school, when the other kids would say to me that they *“could tell”* that I *“had sex already”* just from the way I walked or the adults who stopped my dad in the store and demanded to know *“Why does she walk like that?”* And this is just the physical.

The emotional scars from being in the closet those many times have affected many parts of my life including interactions with other people. In spite of these reminders, I hope that this book will be another step to help me to do what I have always wanted to do: get rid of that life and get a new one.

What This Book Is Not

This book is not a discussion of the lives of my two brothers and two sisters. Events involving only my brothers and sisters are not included in this book. While I was witness to many such events, those are the stories they are to tell if and when they are ever in a position to do so, i.e., if they ever desire to do so. Occasionally, I do tell of violent events involving a brother or a sister but I only do so as background for how I became to be involved in the event.

This book is neither a condemnation nor exoneration of any particular individual or group of people. I believe the individuals involved will be judged by the powers of the Spirit World; those that have guided me through this world. There are certain individuals whose names do appear. I have chosen to state the names of those individuals for two reasons: (1) they were directly responsible for the event, i.e., they were my attacker

and, (2) certain of these events can be verified by examination of hospital records, reports and notes made by several school nurses and, in particular in the earliest event of my dad beating my mom, by official police arrest records. This book reports facts as they occurred to me and as I perceived the facts to be.

This book is about my own experiences with violent victimization occurring in the privacy of the home and within the intimacy of an isolated sub-cultural group. To help the reader understand the social and economic context of my family situation, I have written Chapter 2 - My Mom and Dad.

This book is intended for all audiences. I understand that it may not withstand modern empirical analysis by the academic community. The theoretical framework I use to explain these violent events and, in particular, my response to those events, has been discarded by academics for centuries. In fact, this theoretical framework is often used in most introductory level criminology and social deviance college courses as a historical marker to illustrate to students "*where we have been*" in history's explanation for social deviance. Based on my experiences, I maintain that 'where we have been' is still where we are today in regards to the origin of social deviance, in general and, intimate family violence, in particular.

This book does not contain a literature review of the areas of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault or psychological injuries caused by exposure to such violence, in particular, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Chapter 7 – Toward an Understanding of the Violence provides a culturally-based explanation about the etiology of intimate family violence and violent criminal behavior. In Section II, I briefly discuss policy implications of enforcing the federal laws that were designed to address this problem. I hope that this book may provide additional insight into violent behavior and coping mechanisms used by some victims of violent crime in order to guide additional research into these areas.

I acknowledge that it may be many more years before valid and reliable measures are developed to test the hypothesis. Centristic views of social phenomena found within certain cultures may hinder and preclude researchers from constructing appropriate measures. But this might not be so either. There is already an academic and social acceptance of concepts involving intuition and other forms of sensory perception such as those

found during neo-natal research that supports an infant's need for the physical touch of the mother or other human being. That is, the dominant middle-class Euro-American culture has accepted the possibility that other forms of being and perceiving the world may indeed exist. Efforts to understand violence and other forms of deviance occurring within sub-cultures different from those of the average middle-class Euro-American researcher must include efforts to understand the cultural significance of surrounding social phenomena that may be unique to the culture of the sub-population about whose behavior scientists seek to explain.

Purpose Of This Book

The purpose of this book is to provide an inside view of intimate family violence occurring within one culturally and socially isolated suburban American Indian family. I hope this book will be useful for others who have experienced family violence. Students of criminology, psychology and social behavior may be better informed about intimate family violence from this discussion. Important to me is the hope that those people who have devoted their lives to stopping family violence, often people who have themselves been victimized, are comforted by knowing that their efforts are deeply and profoundly appreciated.

A secondary purpose of this book is to open for examination violent events occurring within a family that is a member of a sub-group of the United States population, i.e., American Indians. Because I and the people involved in these events have an American Indian ethnic heritage, the reader should not assume that all American Indians, in general, or Yaqui Indians, in particular, engage in such violence. However, I would strongly encourage all readers to consider the impact of the implementation of certain historical federal Indian policies on the etiology of violent criminal behavior among American Indians. Certainly, federal policies that once promoted forced Indian school attendance, as they were implemented, are but one of the many variables that may have contributed to the etiology of violence among American Indian groups.

I do not claim that the violent events described in this book are solely the domain of American Indians or any other racial or ethnic group. Nor do I claim that *my own responses* to those events are solely the domain of American Indians or any other racial or ethnic group. It would be an egregious error to assume that the forms and severity of the violence

described in this book occur only within a specific racial or ethnic group. Indeed, this violence is found in all levels of all societies.

Structure Of This Book

This book is an auto-ethnography situated within a criminological theoretical framework. Because of the nature of the events, the writing style I use varies throughout the book. Chapters are presented in a 'cluster' format. The time sequence and voice used varies, too. As the violence lacked standardization, it will not be standardized in this book. As stated previously, some of the events are written in extreme detail; whereas others are not. I often do not provide an introduction to the Chapter or to the violent event other than a simple heading. Other times, I provide more headings for certain events than I do in others. My intent is not to show competency in the mechanics of writing. My intent is to tell the reality of my own violent victimization. I feel that "standardizing" the presentation of these violent events to 'fit' what is accepted or defined as appropriate for a publishable piece may take from the reality of the events and distort the message. I acknowledge that among the many critiques of this book I foresee may involve my choice of the style of presentation.

Organization Of This Book

In Section I, I present the information I use to support my contention that deleterious spiritual influences are responsible for violence and criminal behavior. Chapter 1 - Theoretical Framework - "Bad Spirits" describes the criminological framework I use to explain the violent events. I provide a description of the nature and characteristics of the two forms of Bad Spirits: Dead Spirits and Evil Spirits. In Chapter 2 - My Mom and Dad, I provide a background for understanding the social and economic conditions of my family situation. I discuss what I know about my mom and dad. I make the first application of the theory to the circumstances surrounding my own birth. In Chapter 3 - The Earliest Years, I describe some of the violent events. The timeframe for this Chapter covers from my earliest memories. In Chapter 4 - The Middle Years, I write about other related events. In Chapter 5 - Meeting The People, I describe meeting The People who saved my life. In Chapter 6 - Leaving the Violence, I describe the violent events that directly preceded my leaving home first as age 12 then, finally, again at age 16.

In Chapter 7 - Toward an Understanding of the Violence, I restate the hypothesis that severe violent behavior may result from of the influence of Bad Spirits. I apply the theory to the events described in previous Chapters. In Chapter 8 - Epilogue, I discuss the idea that ‘what’ a person is may be more important than ‘who’ the person is perceived by others to be when explaining violent behavior and victimization.

In Section II - After the Violence, I discuss some of the events that occurred after leaving the violence of the home and entering the violence that comes with homelessness. I also discuss some of the more long-term effects of exposure to chronic severe violence and neglect.

In Section III, Addressing Victimization of Native American Indians Through Federal Law, I discuss the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-608) and the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-630). I argue that they have been ineffective in stemming victimization in modern tribal communities and among members of federally-recognized American Indian tribes who reside in urban areas as was illustrated by my own experiences.