

## Albany Park Theater Project

### Storygathering Transcript

Told October 10 and 14, 2003 by Rachel Floarea

My dad had weapons for each part of your body. He had a weapon for your fingers, which you had to hold like this, and he would like hit you with that. And he had a stick which he used to beat you on your feet. You would have to hold onto something, so your foot would be twisted in the back. If you didn't hold it a proper way, you didn't feel as much pain, and he's like, "It's not straight. Put it straight. Like that. Yeah. You have to hold it like that." And he would beat you harder if you didn't hold it right.



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And, coming home from school with my brothers and sisters, you know, we already knew what was going to happen. That the babies would be in bed, you know, diapers not changed. My dad would be in bed, sleeping. We would have to change the babies. I was a five-year-old kid and I was changing diapers. And we would get beaten for stupid things, you know. Like eating. He actually had a chain and a lock on the refrigerator. And, like not doing our homework. But the real reason we never had time to do our homework was because he made us memorize verses from the bible. Twenty verses every day before you do your homework. Because God wants you to. And I'm thinking, "Oh, it's normal," you know? And when I'd get beaten because I ate something, or because I didn't change the babies, or I didn't finish my verses, I thought it was normal. I used to feel ashamed of myself. I was like, "How could I?" I'd feel so ashamed. I was like praying to God, "Please forgive me."

He measured the milk. He made like a little dot where the milk was left each time. And if that milk passed lower than that line, it means somebody drank it. So one time I took some. And I also took, I think, a cupcake. And my sister, I was crying so bad because I knew he was going to find out. I was over there by the door, I was like, "I can't tell him, I can't tell him I did it." Because I knew how much he hated me. He hated me so much. So my sister, she went in and she told him, "I did it." Like that she did it. And I just, you know, I watched her get beat. And I was just, I felt so guilty.

And he would actually make us beat each other. Like in front of him. Like it was a pleasure or something. So he would say, "Rachel, come here." And then there was my sister, she was one year older than me. So he's like, "Naomi, come here." And then, he would make her hold my ear, and I would hold her ear, and we'd have to bump heads until one of the ears are blue enough. And I went to school and my teacher asked me what happened. I told her I fell down the stairs. And now I look back at it, and I'm like, "What was I thinking?" My teacher's like, "You fell down the stairs." At that moment, she knew something was wrong at home. But she just didn't do anything.

When it came to beating me, he would be like, [in a sing-song voice] "Hey, Rachel. You didn't do this, you didn't do that." And I was this innocent little girl. Because my aunt actually taught me how to be sweet, she taught me how to be respectful. I would be sweet to everybody. And the real thing is that, you know, my dad didn't have to have reasons to beat me. And when it came to any mention of my aunt, he would say, "You don't remember Irina? Do you remember Irina?" And I'd be like, "No." And he's like, [laughing] "You don't remember Irina?" I was like, "No." He's like, "God, she was such a whore." And he would start beating me. And he would be like, he kept asking me that question. And I kept saying no, and he kept beating me and beating me. He's like, "You don't remember her? How can you not remember her?" And he hated my aunt so much. Because she wasn't Pentecostal. Because she smoked. Because she was normal. She wore jewelry, she wore makeup. She was a woman. So he hated her. Sometimes he used to look at me and it's like he used to see her.