

## MICHIGAN CHILDHOOD HOME HELLISH FOR EVANS

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BILOXI, Miss. -- Donald Leroy Evans grew up in a small, quiet town in southwestern Michigan, but his childhood apparently was far from serene.

He was one of nine children born to Faye Lawrence Evans and Juanita Becker Bassett Evans in Watervliet, a blue-collar, bedroom community near Lake Michigan.

According to Lawrence Evans, the oldest son, Juanita Evans abused all nine -- and as a toddler Donald got his share of slaps and shaking.

"I learned to duck quick," said Lawrence Evans, as he tried to protect the younger children from their mother.

"I remember sitting on the couch and my mother was getting ready to pop one of the siblings with a belt," he said. "I grabbed the belt. I enjoyed that for about 10 minutes and I sat on the sofa with my knees up. Every time I got popped on the face I said, 'ouch, ouch, ouch.' She got madder."

Their father turned his head to the abuse.

Lawrence Evans said his parents separated in 1964, when Donald was 7. Donald lived with his mother; Lawrence, then 16, left to live with another family.

When their father remarried in 1970, Donald showed up on the doorstep.

Donald "was a bouncer," said his stepmother, Florence Evans, who lives in Sebring, Calif., with Donald's father.

"Moved from one place to another," she said. "If somebody tried to talk to him, he would go back to his mother in Chicago."

Lawrence Evans remembers his brother as very intelligent. But Donald apparently attended school for the last time while he was in Columbus, Ga. Records there show he dropped out in December 1972, when he was in the ninth grade.

"Why should you finish school," Lawrence Evans asked, "when you are able to con the kids out of their lunch money?"

Donald joined the Marine Corps in 1975, but had unspecified medical problems in basic training and was discharged after less than a year, according to military records.

Lawrence Evans last saw Donald in 1981 when their paternal grandmother died. Donald threatened to burn down his grandmother's house -- with his father and stepmother inside -- because his grandmother didn't include him in her will.

Lawrence Evans said he started getting threatening telephone calls, which he believes came from Donald.

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