

A Look Inside the Home

By ABE PECK

(C) 1978, Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO — At age 36, the Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson is among America's best-known social activists. As founder, executive director and national president of Operation PUSH, the black leader has been the subject of much media attention.

But little has been written about Jesse Jackson, family man. Recently though, Jackson invited The Chicago Sun-Times to his home to talk with him about family life as he sees it in society, and in his personal life.

The Jacksons live in a comfortable house in the South Shore area. During our conversation, Jackson and I sat in a spacious, red-carpeted living room decorated in what might be called tasteful eclecticism. A picture of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. hung on a wall, as did a metalwork figure of a black woman with a baby visible in her belly and a wooden jigsaw map of Africa. A golden Buddha sat on a night table, across from a large gong.

As we spoke, Jackson's wife, Jacqueline, their five children and a dog named Snicker came and went from the room. Jackson expressed respect for his wife's "intelligence and maturity," and described his children as follows:

"Sanita is 14, and she was born in Greensboro. Jesse Jr. is 13. I was coming out of Selma, Ala., and called back to Birmingham — he was momentous to me because he was born in the midst of that struggle. My next son, Jonathan, is 12; his full name is Jonathan Luther Jackson, and Dr. King was his godfather. Yusef is 7. Jacqueline Lavinia the second is 2½. She was born on Sept. 28, and that was the last date of the last Expo."

Our conversation lasted one hour, an encounter brief enough to argue for presenting his words as he said them rather than attempting to "evaluate" his life. But several impressions remain: During our time together, he and his children hugged and kissed in a way that seemed natural and admirable. He was highly articulate, and often answered questions before they were asked.

Then again, Jackson tended to speak in catch-phrases, which, away from the microphoned pulpit, sounded more like slogans than statements. And while his

rather traditional view of the male-female relationship and his unrelenting desire for excellence in his children are ultimately a Jackson family affair. It was disappointing when Mrs. Jackson's sole statement of the day turned out to be: "Whatever my husband said, he said for me, too."

SUN-TIMES: Every man and every woman goes through temptation, and I was wondering if you could talk about why a strong monogamous relationship in a family is important?

JACKSON: I think that a man and a woman, if they try, are capable of infinitely satisfying each other. Maturity teaches us that sex is not the only thrill.

Sometimes I come home late at night, off the road, and maybe my greatest thrill is when I come in and Jackie is asleep and the baby's in the bed with her, and I go in the back of the house — all of my children are asleep and all is silent, and I'll meditate.

So monogamous doesn't have to be monotonous.

SUN-TIMES: How has it been to live your life in public?

JACKSON: Jackie and I met when both of us were in college (North Carolina A&T State University, in Greensboro, from which he graduated with a B.A. in sociology). I was terribly impressed with her mind, and a sense of maturity beyond her years. We were married, and we grew up in the public spotlight.

SUN-TIMES: How has life inside the pressure cooker worked?

JACKSON: We didn't look up and find this tremendous visibility robbing us of some privacy we once had. We've never really had it.

Lately my travel has extended, but Jackie's maturity, and her commitment to raising our children, has been a tremendous balancing factor. I think the reason we've survived is that both of us are determined to protect our marriage. One of my ambitions as a

Sunday, September 3, 1978

of a Social

The Times-Picayune ★ Sec. 3—Pg.

Activist

child was to have a marriage that worked.

SUN-TIMES: Was there any particular reason for that?

JACKSON: Well, I grew up in a community where there were a lot of broken homes, and a lot of broken hearts, and broken lives. I grew up in a home of love, and I try to share with the broader community the depths of my experiences.

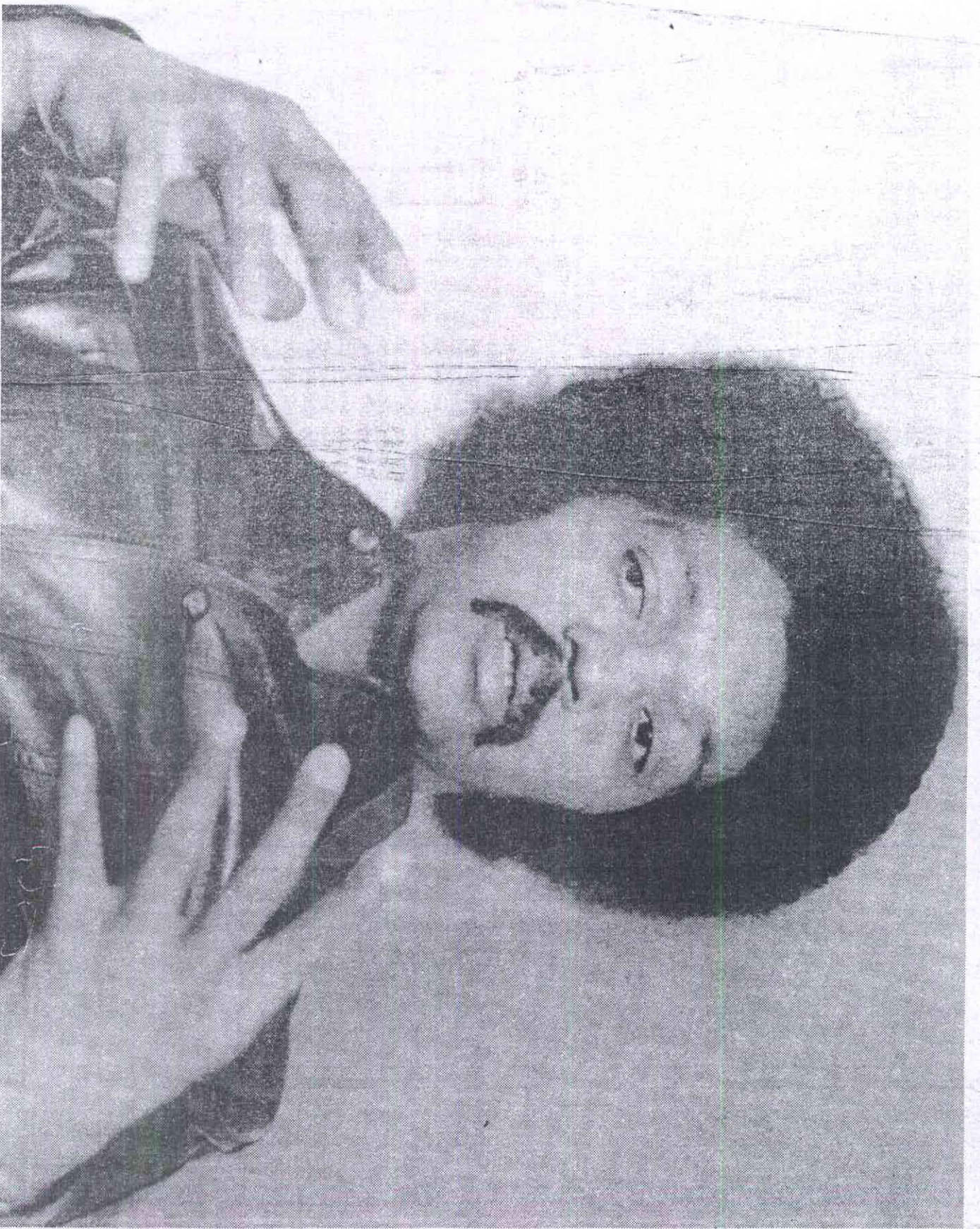
One of the things that impresses me about staying in a neighborhood that is essentially black is that one of my forms of relaxation is basketball. Sometimes I may come home from Washington, from doing Meet the Press or 60 Minutes, and the kids around the neighborhood have my presence — I'm accessible — and as a model. Some of them want to sit down and talk in the backyard with me about going to college or other things they can do.

SUN-TIMES: Given that you're traveling more these days, do you try to structure time with your wife and kids when you come home?

JACKSON: I think that parents ought to do at least four things:

One, meet the child's teacher the first week at school and exchange home numbers.

Two, they ought to monitor their children's study hours, at least two



Jesse Jackson Discusses His Family Life

—AP Wirephoto

makes our children entertained rather than educated, and we suffer the consequences.

Thirdly, their parents should pick up report cards, not just have their children bring them home. When possible, the fathers ought to sign those cards.

SUN-TIMES: What's the meaning of that to you?

JACKSON: The mother tends to be more available in the first place, and sometimes they need the softness and sensibility of the mother. But they need the strength, just strength, of their father, his caring power.

Last, parents ought to go to the Board of Education and pick up their children's test scores. We shouldn't come up in the 12th grade and see our child reading on the 7th grade level. We ought to know in the 8th grade that a child is reading at the 7th grade level.

I just think these are very basic things. 'Cause if you don't have time to communicate with the teacher, you will have time to communicate with the judge and the jailer.

My point to my children is that they must make decisions, and they will have to accept the consequences of their decisions. I try to teach them that the most common characteristic of all champions is discipline and character, that little stuff on the inside that gives you the fourth-quarter edge.

SUN-TIMES: How do you instill that in your kids?

JACKSON: Through repetition, and example.

I came in the house last night, and on the porch was a can with some gas in it. I don't know how it got there. Somebody had been cutting grass, or something. Jackie asked one of the children how it got there, and one of them said, 'Momma, Jesse — or whoever — left it there.'

So I said, 'But what does it matter? Will not a match from anybody make it explode and hurt somebody?' I said, 'That's what I mean by making excuses.' And they said, 'Oh, OK.'

SUN-TIMES: How do chores work in your house? Do your kids have assigned chores?

JACKSON: The boys, they take out the garbage, and they cut grass, and they take care of the baby. I teach them the value of work: That is, you should not be servile, because that means that you are serving against your will, that you are being exploited. You ought to be of service, because service is power, and service you do at your will.

SUN-TIMES: How about your girls? What kind of chores do they do?

JACKSON: Well, the one 2½, her only chore is to keep from disturbing

us. My older daughter, she sews most of her clothes and she helps her mother with the kitchen work. But she is basically devoted to the academic world, and we allow her to stretch out in that sense.

SUN-TIMES: The academic world aside, most of the chores seem traditionally sex-based. Do your boys cook? Does your daughter mow the lawn?

JACKSON: The boys know enough about cooking to cook a meal for themselves as a matter of survival, and they prepare breakfast sometimes and bring it to their mother in bed. They've been taught to take care of themselves, but Sandy's not too likely to be cutting any hedges.

SUN-TIMES: Do you believe in corporal punishment?

JACKSON: No. I believe in parental responsibility. The difference between being a brute and simply communicating through some form of spanking, or whippin' is according to your own maturity. I would never hit one of my own children while I'm angry at them. But I think that a healthy sense of rewards and punishments by someone who is healthy is in order.

SUN-TIMES: Do you ever have problems with your kids having sibling rivalries?

JACKSON: Interestingly enough, Jesse and Johnny were born 10 months

apart, and at one point, we were concerned that one may be victim of the other's presence because of the closeness. For example, both of them have the initials 'JLJ' — Jesse Luther Jackson and Jonathan Luther Jackson.

Jesse Jr. is very aggressive, a very dynamic personality — a leadership type. And because his name is Jesse Jr., plus being aggressive, he tends to demand more attention. We could see Jonathan by comparison tending to be less aggressive and getting too little attention.

So, my nickname being "The Country Preacher," I started calling Johnny "the country preacher." All of a sudden Johnny had him a handle! When some of the people started talking about "little country preacher," Jesse would say, "I'm 'little country preacher' because I'm Jesse Jr." Jonathan said, "No man. You're 'Jr.' You are Jesse Jackson Jr. I am 'little country preacher.'"

Jonathan advanced rather rapidly. But during that period, it really got him over the hump.

SUN-TIMES: You talk a lot about economics, and obviously in this country, class and race affect how people bring up their families. Can you speak about that now?

JACKSON: I grew up in the projects, and I took my first bath in a bathtub at

age 14. Up until that time, we had hot water faucets in the backyard, and all the other features of real poverty. But I was a junior in college before they taught me what "a ghetto" was, because I grew up in a neighborhood with a lot of neighbors, a community, a place of common units. So I've never been poor. We didn't have any money, but we were not poor.

SUN-TIMES: Your older children are at the age where they're going to start dating, and sexuality will come up for them. What's your thinking on that?

JACKSON: My first responsibility is to teach them about the power of their body, and to teach them to take away the superstition from around sex. Sex is too beautiful to be made ugly by ignorance and greed. And it is too powerful to be left in the realm of the superstitious. So our children must be taught about their bodies just in terms of pure biology.

But then, beyond studying about them biologically, they may be taught character so that sex becomes a function of love, not just one of sensation. So I teach 'em the difference between sex and love.

SUN-TIMES: What kind of sex education do you convey?

JACKSON: I teach my children that boys and girls can make babies, but it

takes men and women to raise babies, and that the baby you make deserves your presence and your teaching and your love and your caring.

If by chance, however, my sons or my daughter were to make a mistake, I would not want them to panic, be afraid to talk to me, go running to some abortion clinic for fear that it's going to embarrass me. It will not embarrass me, nor will it humiliate me, and such disappointment as I will have will be my concern for their making an adjustment. It doesn't require an adjustment on my part.

SUN-TIMES: Say a few years down the line you found that your daughter was having an affair. Would you be concerned with the nature of the affair, or would you have a problem with the fact that she was engaged in sexual behavior?

JACKSON: I discourage premature sex because I know it increases the chances of broken hearts, confused minds and premature pregnancy. I would be concerned about my child not making errors with consequences greater than their capacity to live with. That's why I try to deal in preventive medicine.

But I am not so caught up in my own sense of self-righteousness that my children must follow my map totally, or I have to wipe them off the map. I hope that she would not (make a mistake), but if she communicates with me she will find a listening ear.

SUN-TIMES: Did you once take one of your kids to a Parliament-Funkadelic (a black funk music group) concert and not like what you heard?

JACKSON: No I took four of my children and about five of the kids from the neighborhood — paid their way in the whole bit — to see Quincy Jones and The Brothers Johnson. Quincy's a friend of the family, and the Brothers Johnson had just come off the road with the Parliament-Funkadelic.

They were great, and they really had the crowd moving, but then The Brothers Johnson said, "Everybody stand, and repeat after me: 'S---, goddamn, get off your --- and jam.'" I looked back, and the marijuana smoke

Correction

In a limited number of copies of today's issue, there is an error in the column by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson in Sec. 3, Page 7. All the information in the 10th paragraph of those copies is incorrect, advises Universal Press Syndicate, which distributes the column. We regret the incorrect material appeared in some copies and we apologize for the error.

was so thick you couldn't see the top of the place, I saw 4,000 kids, most of whom were under age 18, throwing out all their inhibitions with this decadent refrain, and I said to myself, "When school opens Monday, school will not have their minds, because their minds are being destroyed."

The Brothers Johnson came to the house the next day and had dinner, and I said, "You guys have not been the kind of models you ought to be to contribute to the social development of our children." So when they came back out, they didn't do it.

I contrast that with, say, Stevie Wonder singing "Songs In The Key of Life." When our last baby was born — we were very concerned. How is a new baby going to fit into the scheme of things? Stevie came out with "Songs in the Key of Life," and one of the songs on it was "Isn't She Lovely," with the baby crying.

This provoked questions like, "Where does the baby come from?" and "How is the baby born?" and in the house, she became the object of love because Stevie had convinced the children through that song that the baby is lovely. The tremendous power of (musical) transmission cannot be the bearer of the death song.

SUN-TIMES: To conclude, what do you see as a marital role model?

JACKSON: In our home, the issue between my wife and I — don't seek equality. We seek compatibility. That (equality) is a bad concept for a man and a woman to get caught up in, because you invariably get caught up in quid pro quo; which is very political.

You can set up a corporation where both of you invest in and try to get profits out. But a marriage should be a co-operation that's based more on spirit than on legality.

I mean, my wife cannot at once say how gratified she is at raising our children in the role that she serves and then double back and say that she has given up the best years of her life raising children while I do something else. Raising children is gratifying. What else could she have done in this period greater than developing five children? Well, nothing.

7
1

Black Is Duitful

Ray Not Issue

By JESSE L. JACKSON



TIMES-PICAYUNE

9/31/78

(© 1978, Universal Press Syndicate)

Now that James Earl Ray has testified publicly and under oath before the House Special Committee Assassinations, where do we stand? 1) We now KNOW some things about Ray; and 2) there is developing the outer shape of a conspiracy.

We now know that Ray is a pathological liar. He lied to his lawyers, to journalists, to me when I visited with him, and under oath to the Special House Committee. I think he even lies to himself.

He said he wasn't in Atlanta on April 1, 1968. A laundry slip and witnesses prove that he was. He said he didn't rob a London bank. The committee produced the robber's note with his fingerprints on it. Ray said witnesses at a gas station in Memphis would place him away from the murder scene, but when produced, they denied it.

Even though the committee didn't quite put Ray's finger on the trigger, they did carve away his alibis, refute his lies and circumstantially build a virtually airtight case establishing Ray as the actual assassin.

Does Ray deserve a trial? Only incidentally. The truth, not Ray, is the critical issue. The Assassinations Committee, under the outstanding and competent leadership of its chairman, Louis Stokes, has interviewed more than 2,000 people, gathered hundreds of hours of testimony and conducted a credible hearing.

In early September, Congress should give the Assassinations Committee the \$790,000 it needs to complete its investigation. If that committee is allowed to complete its work, there may be no need for a special prosecutor or a trial. The real issue is to establish the truth of who killed Dr. King and any legal means necessary to establish that ought to be used.

The committee, through the questioning of a congressman and former aide to Dr. King, Walter Fauntroy, will consider 21 different conspiracy theories when it again returns in November to public hearings in the King assassination. What is publicly known, and the direction the committee now seems to be headed, points to the outer shape of

a conspiracy involving a Southeast right-wing political connection, possibly centered in Alabama.

Ray's first attorney, whom he called to represent him from London, was Arthur Hanes, of Birmingham, Ala. Hanes is the same lawyer who represented (successfully) the three Ku Klux Klan members accused of killing Detroit housewife and civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo. He is also the same attorney who worked closely with "Bull" Connor during the 1963 Birmingham demonstrations when dogs and firehoses were unleashed on innocent men, women and children.

The mysterious "Raoul" (whom Ray spent considerable time with, but can't identify very clearly) may actually be Jerry Ray, James Earl's closest brother. Jerry Ray, an outspoken racist, is a bodyguard and errand boy for J. B. Stoner, head of the National States' Rights Party, an extreme right-wing and racist political group.

Some have said that Ray becomes "tense" and "devious" when pressed for information about Raoul. James Earl Ray seems to be protecting

someone, either someone he loves (possibly his brother) or someone he fears. The theory that Raoul may actually be his brother Jerry is given further credence by the fact that much of what James Earl Ray has said about his contact with his brother Jerry prior to the assassination parallels much of what he has told of his contacts with Raoul.

For example, Ray now says that Raoul instructed him to purchase first one gun and then, the next day, what turned out to be the murder weapon. But salesman Donald Woods, of the Aeromarine Supply Company in Birmingham, said Ray told him when he returned with the first gun that "he'd spoken with his brother who told him he'd got the wrong gun."

It is important that the issue of Dr. King's murder be kept visible and alive, for only when the truth is known can we fully be about the business of healing ourselves as a nation.

In my next column, I will deal with why I still believe the government, especially the FBI, was implicated in Dr. King's death.