

# Son of president was molested at 7 by camp leader

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Reagan, son of President Reagan, says he was sexually molested repeatedly as a 7-year-old by a "father-figure" day-camp leader.

In an outline of an autobiography circulating in New York publishing houses and obtained by the Associated Press on Thursday, Reagan described a lonely and neglected childhood in which he was emotionally unable to resist the molestation.

The president and Nancy Reagan only learned of the molestation when Michael Reagan and his family visited them on Palm Sunday in California.

adopted to please another child, Maureen Reagan, who had asked a brother.

After the divorce of Reagan's actress Jane Wyman, the youth spent them only on alternate weeks, the outline said.

As a result, from the ages of 10, he believed that a black cook was his mother, he wrote in the outline.

He also wrote that a day-camp leader he idolized as a father-figure molested him "for almost a year and once took photographs of him posing nude. He said he was able to tell anyone about the molestation."

"When Dad ran for president, I had visions of him losing those pictures taken 34 years might turn up," Reagan wrote.

He broke the news to his father and stepmother when he, his sister Colleen, and his children, Alexander and Cameron, visited the Reagan ranch to celebrate Ashley's birthday, Crispin said.

The book outline also details a 1983 dispute Michael Reagan had with the Secret Service, which the president and others thought Michael was a kleptomaniac. At the time, reports of a rift in the family were attributed simply to the president's busy schedule.

His father had urged him to see a psychiatrist but would not tell why, according to the outline.

Later, Michael Reagan received a list of things he had purportedly stolen.

The president later apologized and for the second time ever, said "I love you," to his son, Reagan.

"The three of them went off for a walk," said Elaine Crispin, press secretary to Mrs. Reagan. "They had never heard it before, that was the first they knew of it. They feel terribly, terribly sorry for him, that he had to carry this for all these years."

Reagan, 41, of Los Angeles, could not be reached for comment, but his publicist, Dale C. Olson, confirmed in a telephone interview that Reagan was working on the book.

"On the Outside Looking In" is to be published by Zebra Publishing of New York. Hollywood columnist Joe Hyams is collaborating on the book, Olson said.

Olson said he and Reagan "had not been totally aware" that copies of the outline were circulating.

Penthouse magazine first revealed the existence of the outline when it released an article prepared for its June edition on Thursday.

The outline presents the story of a confused and neglected little boy,

# Peer review system pits watchdog groups against rural farmers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rural doctors squared off against government-funded watchdog groups Thursday over a peer review system they say is discriminatory and offers no avenue of appeal.

Nearly 40 doctors have been barred from collecting Medicare payments because peer review organizations, or PROs, reported to the U.S. Health and Human Services Department they were providing poor medical care.

Seventy-five percent of those doctors are from rural areas and two-thirds practice in rural Texas.

Rep. Ralph Hall, a member of the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment that held hearings Thursday, said the sanction decisions are made without giving the doctors adequate chance to defend themselves in closed sessions.

In some states, physicians can't bring an attorney or expert witnesses to the PRO review sessions.

"This total lack of due process has created a very serious concern among the physicians, hospitals and the Medicare patients of our country," said Hall, a three-term Democrat from Rockwall.

Several Texas doctors testifying before the subcommittee echoed Hall's sentiments and said that in addition to the lack of an appeal process, they fear being judged by big-city doctors who don't know the idiosyncrasies of country medicine.

"I can say unequivocally that doctors in rural Texas are confused and are scared about the process of 'peer review' by the PRO," said Dr. Billy Bob Brame, a doctor from the West Texas town of Eldorado and president of the Texas Medical Association.

"I know that there are doctors in West Texas who are afraid to take patients to the hospital because of the excessive scrutiny of their records by urban physicians with very high-tech practice perspectives," Brame testified.

Inspector General Richard Kusserow told the committee sanctioning a doctor was the last sort under the PRO system, comes only after attempts to get the doctor in question.

Kusserow said that of the 10 million Medicare hospital discharges since the PRO program was instituted in 1983, only 6,500 cases involved 2,500 doctors or hospitals have been identified by PROs as involving medical care.

"Yet, through 1987, only 114 were referred by PROs to the office of the inspector general for review and further action," Kusserow said. "Of this number, 40 resulted in the department's exclusion of a provider or practitioner — 39 doctors and one hospital."

In another 22 cases, fines were levied, and in 16 cases the inspector general threw out the PRO's recommendation. There are 26 cases pending.

But Hall said the system needs more flexibility. He has introduced a bill that would give any doctor recommended for sanctions the right to appeal the decision in his local district court.

Reps. Charles Stenholm, Bob Ford, and Beau Boulter, Republican, told the subcommittee they support the concept of peer review that Congress has to do something to ensure doctors get their day in court.

# Illinois plans hospital wing to help mentally ill youths

DECATUR, Ill. (AP) — The pressures working on adolescents around the nation are also at work in Decatur, and a psychiatrist says they can drive some young people into alcoholism or suicide.

Those pressures include single-parent families, the intense competition to get into a good college and to find a job after school.

Dr. Ira Brent, director of psychiatry at St. Mary's Hospital, says more young people nationwide — and in Decatur — are seeking psychiatric help than ever before. To help meet the growing need, St. Mary's plans to open an eight-room unit devoted exclusively to treating youth with mental illnesses.

The adolescent unit, to open in a few months off a hallway near the present psychiatric ward, will have its own recreation area and possibly a classroom where teachers from the Decatur School District can work with groups of students.

Brent and other local experts have an arsenal of statistics to justify the need for the unit.

"Adolescents have their own special needs which make it difficult for them to be mixed in with adults," Brent said. "There's a higher divorce rate, more single parents. There's a breakdown in the family. There's more mobility and transiency."

"Kids struggle with pressures these days . . . that their parents never had to face. Kids are putting themselves over the issue of the ACT (American College Test) to get into college."

Mike Bach, who works with adolescents at Decatur Mental Health Center, said the center last year had an average of one youth per month in its local psychiatric care center, primarily St. Mary's Hospital. The five youths were sent to Adult Mental Health Center in 1986.

"There are a lot of pressures being a kid . . . drug use, sexual activity. Kids see their parents as less in control. Parents see their kids as out of control," Bach said.

Authorities say that the "school" on the proposed psychiatric unit would help ease back into the routine everyday life.

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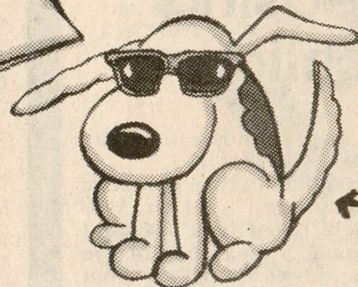
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