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Spanish Translation

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"Silent Children"

Speak from the anchorman:

A father abusing his own children sexually is some of the most cruel situations that exist.

Something most of us reject and that we if we hear about it wants the social securities to investigate so the victims can get the proper help and so that the guilty will be prosecuted.

But that is not the reaction everywhere.

In this program that you will see several women tell about sexual abuse. And in their need for help they went to their elders in the Jehovah's Witnesses and were told to be silent.

A double punishment that according to several witnesses is not unusual in the closed environment within the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Intro the anchorman speaks along with the first pictures of Dorothy in kitchen.

We are going to the north of Jutland . Here we meet Dorothy Tveiti 38, married and mother to three children. Two years ago she started remembering her childhood a childhood that has marked her for life.

Dorothy:

I was lying in my bed at night about to go to sleep. I always took my blanket so it covered my head, and I would sweat, but I did not dare pulling away the blanket because I was shaking. Some times I shook so much that the bed was tumbling.

Reporter:

Dorothy Tveiti is the youngest of three sisters. She is brought up on a farm in the little village Morum Northjutland.

Dorothy:

One of the first things I remember was that I was sitting on a couch in the living room and Henry my father came towards me and forced me to have oral sex that is the first memory.

How old were you?

I was four years old.

Reporter:

The father Henry was a farmer and the mother was a housekeeper in the small society where everybody took care of their own business. Dorothy tried one time to tell about the abuse but the father got to know about it.

Dorothy:

He beat me up very bad. He said why have you told about it? It was the stable where he beat me till finally I start coughing up blood. He beat me up real bad.

Reporter:

The abuse continued and culminated when Dorothy Tveiti was 12 years old. She got pregnant with her father's child.

Dorothy:

So I say "Dad what do we do with this child" and he says "I will fix that" and then I know what will happen since he is a very violent man. I know that he will simply kill that child. The night that I deliver the baby it is between 11 and 1 pm, then he takes the baby and goes to the kitchen, it is a little girl she is healthy.

What happens then?

He walks to the kitchen and closes the door, then after a few seconds she stops crying.

Why did you not do anything?

What could I do? I was trapped, I could not do anything, and he would lie about it, I did not think about doing anything since I was so used to being abused.

What did your mother do?

She cleaned up after the delivery, washed me, and then she came to the couch and gave me a glass of milk and some bread with cheese and then she goes to the kitchen. I can hear them talk and after a while both of them come into the living room and then he says, "It is dead" and we will never talk about this again.

And you never spoke about it afterwards?

Never.

Reporter:

Two years ago, 24 years after it happened, Dorothy came forward with the accusations. But she had the odds against her. Nobody could confirm her pregnancy.

Reporter:

It is a tough accusation that involves murder and abuse, you come forward so many years after it actually happened. A typical person might ask, can this be true?

Dorothy:

Yes I know it is hard to accept but I can in detail remember what happened, what clothes I was wearing, where we were in the room, the feelings I had, the smell of the milk and the cheese I had, I can remember everything.

Yes, but after 20 years?

Yes but it has been so hard that I had to forget it, I simply could not stand thinking about it.

Reporter:

Dorothy stands weak in her accusations, since she first has memories about pregnancy and abuse so many years after it actually happened. But she has some witnesses that confirm her explanation. For example Dorothy's big brother wants to be anonymous but while he was living at home he witnessed several episodes.

Henning:

My father was tongue kissing my little sister it was gross looking at.

Reporter:

Dorothy is not alone in her accusations against her father. Her big sister also accuses the father of sexual abuse. She does not want to be interviewed because of personal reasons. And now the father's grandchild tells about being abused also.

Randy :

It was in the mouth that he did it.

That does not sound nice. Did you ever tell him to stop it or that you wanted to go home?

Randy :

Yes once when he did it on my little brother I tried to push him away and then he grabbed me by my neck and said that if I told my mom and dad he would kill me.

The two women's story is quite bizarre but their family is also members of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Apparently several witnesses had second thoughts about the father's behaviour but nobody reacted.

Henning:

They came to me and said that it was strange how my father kissed my little sister.

Why did they not do anything about it?

I do not know why because they definitely noticed the wrong behaviour but I guess that is a part of being a Jehovah's Witness that you remain silent.

Reporter:

The church's law dictates members to seek counselling with the leaders of the local congregation the so called elders, if there is problems within the family. And Dorothy followed the congregation rules. She went for help with two elders, a factory worker and a window washer. Their fear was mainly concern about how the public would react.

Dorothy:

They said you do not want to tell the police because then you will have journalists lined up in front of your house. And the investigation will take a long time, it was as if we would be better off if we did not report this, we felt it was a threat in the way they said it.

Why do you think they reacted that way?

They want to cover up that such things happen, instead of taking care of it they want to hide it.

Reporter:

And Randy Frederiksen also tried to get help from the elders at the local congregation. Their reaction was totally negative.

Randy :

They said they did not believe us and they treated us very bad.

Reporter:

Dorothy Tveiti and her sister were advised to confront the father with the accusations here in at Jehovah's Witnesses church at Aars in Northjotland. The father denied the accusations and since allegation stood against allegation Jehovah's Witness would not do anything about it. Dorothy Tveiti finally went to the police. When this occurred only then did the elders establish an investigation. A half year later their conclusion was:

Dorothy:

My father was to be looked upon as being innocent and the case was closed, nobody must ever talk about it again, and we were not allowed to talk about it.

Randy :

They say that it never happened, they nothing they could do about it, we shall respect him, he is such an old man and we should feel pity for him.

Reporter:

The two women's experience with Jehovah's Witness dealing with the matter is not unique. Right now the police in Scotland press charges against Jehovah's Witness for withholding information regarding a father who abused his children sexually.

In USA there are several cases where Jehovah's Witnesses try to cover up cases about sexual abuse.

Bill Bowen was two years ago an elder in a Jehovah's Witness congregation in the USA state of Kentucky . As an elder he came to acknowledge about fellow member who abused children.

Bill Bowen:

So in my attempts to protect that child as well as warn the congregation that he was a child molester I was told by the organization, the legal department to leave it in God's hands and not to report the matter.

Reporter:

When an elder receives information about abuse in the congregation, he is required to call the main office Watchtower in Brooklyn NY about how to deal with the matter. Jehovah's Witnesses guidelines MUST be followed by the local congregations it's a law, which is above, man's law.

Bill Bowen:

So if the governing body says theocratic procedure requires you do not report this, and you do not obey, you disobey God.

Reporter:

But Bill Bowen decided to go against the guidelines of Jehovah's Witnesses. He came forward to the public and told about the organizations cover up on child abuse.

Bill Bowen:

The policy by the Watchtower and the Jehovah's Witnesses by their leadership is 100 % the same in any country in the entire world. So if you are in Denmark or in Kentucky you WILL follow the policy on how child abuse is investigated and how it is handled.

I think the same problem that exists in the USA will continue to exist in Denmark and across other countries. Children are going to be molested, child molesters are going to be protected, so the paedophile paradise is alive and well in the USA and Denmark has their own paedophile paradise created by Watchtower policy.

Reporter:

Dorothy Tveiti is better after long treatment. She will soon start an education as a social worker. Randy Fredriksen starts in January at the nursing school. They are both still member of the Jehovah's Witnesses though they do not go to meetings in the congregation.

Randy :

They do not want to be with me, even though I am not rejected, some of my friends just do not contact me anymore, and some has directly told me that I am bad association.

Dorothy Tveiti:

In the organisation that you have always led to believe that justice would happen in the congregation, such people are not to be tolerated, and then you find out that nothing happens it's at least nothing happened with my father, he is just to be considered innocent, and we are not to talk about it anymore, it is like having your feet swept off the floor.

Reporter:

After a long investigation the case against Dorothy Tveit's father was shelved. The accusations about abuse are outdated. It has not been possible to find the remains of Dorothy Tveit's daughter. She still hopes that someday her daughter will be found.

Dorothy:

I think about her everyday, she is still a part of me.

What would bring you closure?

If I found her, so I had a place to go, that would bring me closure.

The anchorman there after has an interview with Erik Jorgensen the press speaker of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Denmark . He denies everything.

The anchorman after the interview says:

We have of course tried to get in touch with Dorothy Tveit's father, but he does not answer our phone calls.