

Deprogramming was rough, woman testifies

By Dave Varga
staff writer

Testifying in the trial of three cult "deprogrammers" and five others on kidnapping charges, Elizabeth Chase-Hayner told jurors Tuesday that she was thrown on a bed and restrained by one of her attackers as FBI agents were breaking down the door of the house where she and her sister were held.

"I screamed," Elizabeth said. "She (defendant Jennifer Junge) just grabbed me, threw me on the bed and covered my mouth so I couldn't scream," Elizabeth testified.

Elizabeth and Whitney Chase, now 20, took the stand this week to testify that they were held against their will for four days two years ago.

The prosecution said the eight defendants on trial — three deprogrammers and five "guards" — were hired by Elizabeth's and Whitney's mother and step-father, Karen and Robert Larson of Bloomfield Hills.

Testimony indicated that Karen Larson believed her daughters belonged to a cult and should undergo deprogramming.

The trial of the eight defendants, all out-of-state residents, began Monday before Oakland County Circuit Judge

Francis O'Brien. Testimony continues today.

The Oakland County prosecutor's office declined to press charges against Karen and Robert Larson, who is an executive with Taubman Co.

The sisters told similar stories of how they had become born-again Christians after joining the Assembly of God Church and attending the Culinary Temple School of the Prophets in Sterling, Va. Both denied belonging to a cult.

The sisters lived together in an apartment in Sterling. On December 25, 1982, according to testimony, the sisters went to visit the Larsons in a home the Larsons had bought on Yarbrough Drive in Bloomfield.

The next day their mother told them they were going to the rented house the Larsons had just moved from on Shadow Lane to get some items still stored in the house. At the house the sisters met defendant Richard Barry and other defendants, they said.

"WHEN WE GOT into the dining room," Elizabeth testified, "I felt funny because all of a sudden everyone was staring at me and Whitney. My mother said she wanted us to talk about what we were involved in at church."

"I said I would be glad to talk to her

but she didn't have to lie to get us there," Elizabeth continued.

Both girls testified that they voluntarily talked for about an hour with defendant Bob Brandyberry. According to his attorney Larry Fugate, Brandyberry once held a "state director" position in the Moonies.

The sisters agreed to be split up and were taken to separate rooms where they were shown movies about cults and discussed the movies.

Chase-Hayner said she watched "Can Ellen Be Saved?" and at one point began shaking her head. Defendant Cheryl Breiland stopped the videotape machine they were watching to talk about it.

"I just told her that I couldn't believe it . . . I felt like they were trying to make parallels between me and Ellen," said Elizabeth, who still is a member of the church.

WHEN SHE was told there were a lot of things they had to talk about regarding her beliefs, Elizabeth said she knew she was trapped.

"I asked her, 'We can't do all this tonight, when are we going to do this?' That's when I thought they weren't going to let me leave," Elizabeth said.

Both young women were told they would be kept until they were given a

certain amount of information.

Elizabeth said she "definitely made it clear I didn't want to stay," Whitney, who testified much of Monday and Tuesday, said she stayed voluntarily the first night but wanted to leave after that.

"If I was given the opportunity, I would have left," she told the jury of 10 women and four men. "I wanted my mom to understand that, yeah, sure I was willing to listen . . . I wanted to do what she wanted me to do."

WHITNEY SAID she spent much of the first night talking with the deprogrammers and when she got up from the cot she slept on, she went to the bathroom and tried to go upstairs. However, guarding the stairs was defendant Steven "Bub" Mulvey, who physically blocked her path.

"I realized at that point that I couldn't get out. I said, 'God, this is worse than they do to you in the Moonies,'" Whitney said.

The girls were kept in sparsely furnished rooms — each was equipped with two folding-type beds, a window, a television and videotape equipment. Elizabeth's room had a chair, while Whitney's had a couch. They were fed quality food, but only allowed access to their rooms and nearby bathrooms, they testified.

At one point during her captivity, Elizabeth testified, Brandyberry told her that she was not getting very far in accepting the information they were giving her.

"He said he had people as long as

three weeks. If I didn't comply with what they wanted, it was going to be a long time," she said.

ONE OF THE security guards, Lawrence Iron Moccasin, befriended Elizabeth during her confinement.

They talked frequently, she said. "He said that I wasn't giving in . . . He told me I should because I would be there until I broke . . . Once you break (I said) they take you to a rehabilitation center in Minnesota and it takes six weeks . . ." Elizabeth testified.

Iron Moccasin eventually called the sisters' father — Anthony Whitney, a Washington D.C. attorney — and allegedly offered to tell him where they were being held in exchange for a sum of money. Whitney contacted the authorities.

Whitney testified that Iron Moccasin delivered a note from Elizabeth to her

saying that he was on their side.

"At first I didn't trust him. I thought maybe he was tricking my state . . . Whitney said, 'I just asked him lot of questions about what was going on.'"

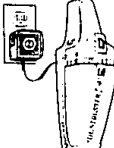
Iron Moccasin later brought Whitney another note, she said, to confirm what Elizabeth thought was the address of the house they were being held in and the telephone number of their father in Washington, D.C.

"He told me that he's been doing this for a long time," Whitney said. He really didn't think me and my sister were in a cult and he wanted to help us get out."

Chase-Hayner said Iron Moccasin was unhappy that he was only being paid \$500 up front, plus \$100 day, while the deprogrammers were being paid more.

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