

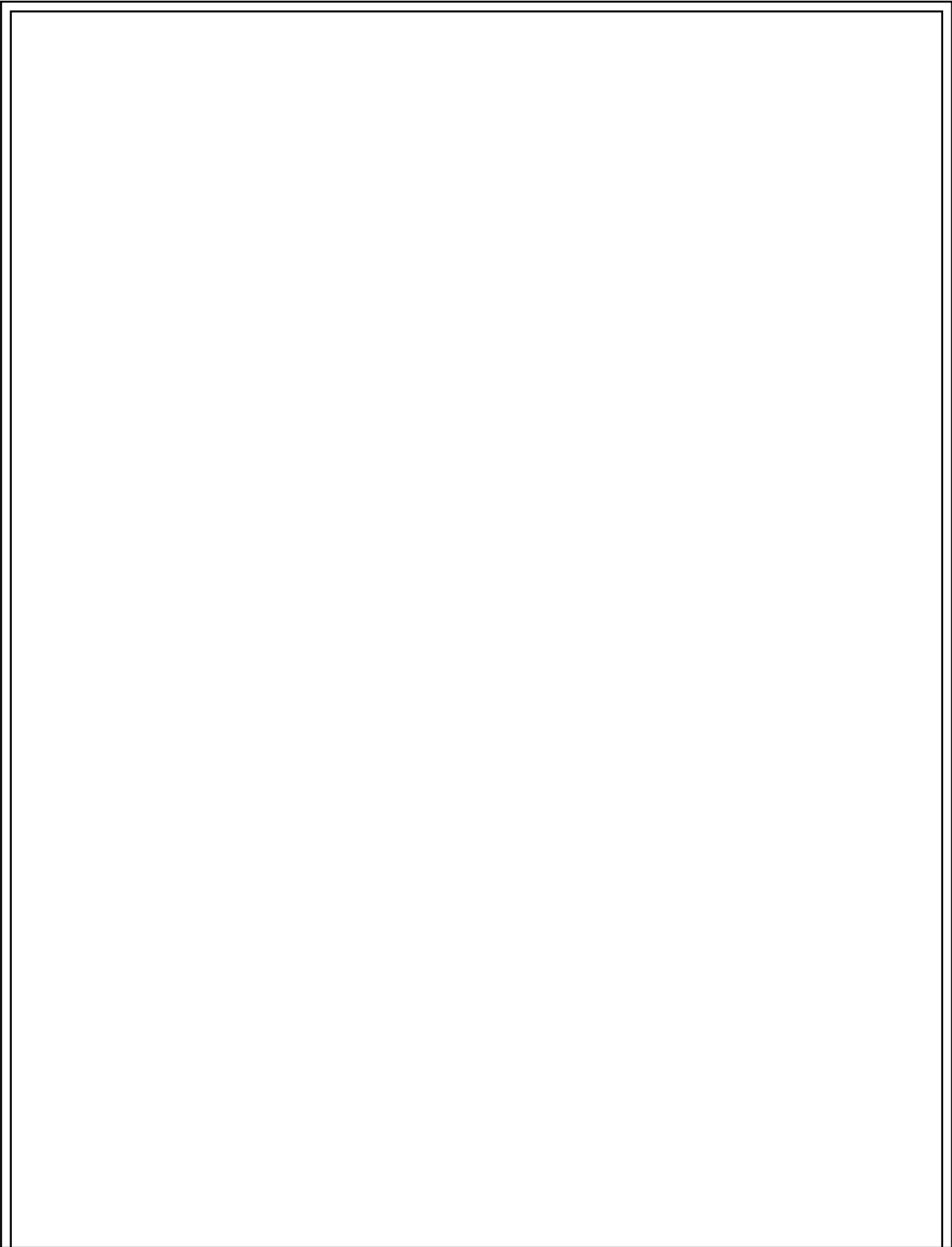
Interview, Portrait: La Toya Jackson Talks Michael Jackson, Celebrity Life

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 28, 2011 - 5:29am

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CHICAGO – La Toya Jackson has been making news for two weeks now, as she tours with her new book, “Starting Over.” In it, she relates that her brother Michael Jackson feared for his life, and his premature demise might have had implications beyond the cause-of-death revelations.

She twisted the story with Matt Lauer on “The Today Show” last week, but gets to the point during her four question interview with HollywoodChicago.com on June 24th. She was in Chicago at Barnes & Noble Clybourn Avenue, where she greeted admirers and signed her new book.





La Toya Jackson at Barnes & Noble Clybourn, Chicago, June 24th, 2011

Photo credit: Joe Arce, Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

La Toya Yvonne Jackson was born in Gary, Indiana, the fifth of nine children born to Joseph and Katherine Jackson. Her brothers – Tito, Jermaine, Jackie, Marlon and Michael – formed the pop group “The Jackson 5” when she was barely 11 years old. La Toya joined the act around the time of her 16th birthday, and carved a show business niche of her own starting around 1980. She has released nine albums since then, and has had international success as a performer.

During that period she was also embroiled in a difficult marriage (starting in 1989) to her manager, Jack Gordon. She survived his Svengali-like control and physical abuse, and divorced him in 1996, under the Violence Against Women Act. Her journey with her brother Michael, whom she lived with for awhile, and her path to true independence is all chronicled in her new book, *Starting Over*.

As well as her musical career, La Toya has participated in three reality TV shows, “Armed and Fabulous, the British “Celebrity Big Brother” and most recently “The Apprentice,” where she became notable for being “fired” by Donald Trump twice (she replaced Jose Canseco when getting reinstated after the first firing, but wasn’t hired by the end). Her appearance on Trump’s show was also characterized by clashes with fellow celebrity NeNe Leakes.

HollywoodChicago.com had time for four questions to La Toya Jackson, and photographer Joe Arce captured her image at the book signing event.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you’ve been all over the news this week promoting your book, I wanted to ask what specifically did your brother Michael and his business associates do that made his enemies so mad that they threatened to kill him? Isn’t business just business in this case? Or how did it get so out of hand that the threats were made?

La Toya Jackson: When you say ‘business is just business,’ in this case business is not just business. The business was robbery, and that’s what they did to my brother. They took advantage of him, they took away his publishing and they took these things because this is what they wanted from him. He didn’t have enemies, they just wanted to take advantage of him and take things away from him. In other words, some people don’t like that he was well off and they just wanted to have it.

HollywoodChicago.com: So it’s about money, as usual.

Jackson: Of course it is.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is still with you regarding your early work in the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Do you still interact with an organized religion because of that early basis in religion?

Jackson: No, actually I’m a very spiritual person and I do believe in God. Personally in my own life I don’t believe in organized religion whatsoever. I believe in God and I think that is more than enough.

HollywoodChicago.com: For years the the focus of your family business was on your brothers and the Jackson 5. Was it difficult for you at first when you were asked to join the family business as an entertainer?

Jackson: I never wanted to be in show business initially, it was my father who kept pushing me. I kept saying ‘no, I don’t want this,’ because I wanted to be an entertainment lawyer, to learn the contracts and business law. So I started to go to school for that and my father took me out and told me I would be in the entertainment business, just like the rest of the family.

Then once he did it, I enjoyed it, because I was there with all my family members, it was wonderful. I started out at 16 years old tap dancing and singing.

HollywoodChicago.com: What connection or work helped you to get over the years of your difficult marriage, and what would you tell women who find themselves in a similar situation?

Jackson: I would definitely tell women who are in an abusive relationship that the first time they are hit, that is one time too many. Because if they do it once they are going to do it again, and it is extremely important for you to get out of that relationship. It’s not going to get any better, it’s only going to get worse. And I want them to know that there is help out there for them. You can go to shelters, there are people you can reach out to and I am willing to help. There are things that you can do, it’s important to start your life over again and not allow this to happen to you. Very important.

HollywoodChicago.com: Thank you very much, from a fellow Hoosier from Michigan City, Indiana.

Jackson: Michigan City!

“Starting Over,” by La Toya Jackson, is available at Barnes & Noble or wherever books are sold.



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