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Jacko Lived With New Jersey Family for Three Months

Monday, November 19, 2007

By Roger Friedman FOX NEWS

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Jacko Lived With New Jersey Family for Three Months

Michael Jackson, homeless and drifting — and still in default on a \$23 million loan against his Neverland Ranch — spent the last three months living in Franklin Lakes, N.J., in a family's private home, trying to be normal.

Nov. 8, 2007: Michael Jackson on the red carpet during the RainbowPUSH Coalition Los Angeles 10th annual awards dinner in Los Angeles. Nov. 8, 2007: Michael Jackson on the red carpet during the RainbowPUSH Coalition Los Angeles 10th annual awards dinner in Los Angeles.



Sources — not anyone from the actual family — have confirmed for me that Jackson showed up on the doorstep of Dominick and Connie Cascio in mid-August and stayed until the day he left for Los Angeles and Jesse Jackson's birthday party around Nov. 7.

Jackson had been spotted on Halloween day at a costume shop in Wyckoff, N.J. That was the tip-off that a new weird chapter in Jackson's soap opera was being written. But the visit got little buzz and the news mostly faded before it left the confines of the Garden State.

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Jackson has had a long association with the Cascios. He met Dominick in the mid-'80s when the latter worked for the Helmsley Palace Hotel. Jackson immediately became fast friends with the Cascios, staying in their home and adopting them as his surrogate family.

Frank Cascio, now known as Frank Tyson, the eldest of five children, worked for Jackson starting when he was 18. Tyson was one of five unnamed co-conspirators in the Santa Barbara District Attorney's failed prosecution of Jackson in 2005. In fact, it was Tyson's meticulous record-keeping that probably saved Jackson from the state's conspiracy charges.

Since the end of the trial in June 2005, Jackson and the Cascios have had little contact, sources say. In December 2005, Jackson had Prince Abdullah of Bahrain fly over members of the family to help him celebrate Christmas. The Prince is now suing Jackson in London's High Court for \$7 million plus damages.

According to insiders, Jackson — after being booted from his Las Vegas digs last spring — first relocated to the Northern Virginia area at the behest of his Washington, D.C.-based publicist/manager Raymone Bain. But by mid-August he'd had enough, and escaped Bain's control. He arrived in Franklin Lakes with his three kids, a tutor and security.

"He just showed up, a driver brought them, and left," reports an observer, who says Jackson and kids may have also had pets with them.

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For the three months, the Cascios simply absorbed the Jackson contingent into their home and daily life. Four of the Cascio children still live in the Franklin Lakes home. Occasionally, Jackson was seen eating at the family's Italian restaurant in neighboring Wyckoff, N.J. The stay, according to sources, did not include nanny **Grace Rwaramba**, who remains in her luxury condo in Las Vegas.

Calls to Tyson and to the Cascios were not returned.

So where is Jackson now? "He left for the Jesse Jackson party but he didn't want to go," says a source. Speculation is that he is now residing in his parents' home in Encino, Calif., called "Hayvenhurst" for its address.

And why not? Jackson has a \$4 million mortgage on the place. Meanwhile, he remains in default on a \$23 million loan secured by his Neverland Ranch. He has until Jan. 19, 2008, to refinance or see the famous venue sold at auction.

There is a silver lining to all this: according to my sources, despite suffering from bouts of depression, Jackson remained drug-free at the Cascios, and appeared to be clear-eyed and focused. His children, say observers, also seemed to be in good shape and received tutoring from a teacher who was lodged at a nearby motel.

Jessica Alba Wants Eight Months Off

Is she pregnant or just burned out? Gorgeous, well-spoken, charming **Jessica Alba**, star this week of a new drama called "Awake," wants an eight-month break.

Alba is probably not pregnant by boyfriend **Cash Warren** — or anyone else — but she told me the other night after the "Awake" premiere in New York that she's ready for a break and she's going to take it. The length of the break sounds like a maternity leave, but it's not.

"I've worked the last two and a half years without stopping," she said. "This is the time to do it."

The 26-year-old actress is a little worried about burnout. This sounds a little premature for a young person, but she's actually been working constantly since she was 13, including the two "Fantastic Four" movies, a hit series with "Dark Angel" and the long-ago remake of the series "Flipper."

In "Awake," Jessica gets psychologically heavy opposite **Hayden Christensen** and **Lena Olin**, but don't worry, she's still got her sense of humor. She's filming "The Love Guru" with **Mike Myers** right now, which she says is as funny as "Austin Powers," if not more so.

"I can't keep a straight face most of the time because he's doing what he can to crack me up," Alba said.

She's also got a thriller in the can called "The Eye" with **Alessandro Nivola** and **Parker Posey**. It's co-produced by **Paula Wagner**, **Tom Cruise's** partner for Lions Gate.

Jessica said the part came about from her meeting with Cruise to play the **Keri Russell** part in "Mission: Impossible 3." She didn't get it, but Cruise liked her so much he recommended her to Wagner for "The Eye." Then there's "Sin City 2," which put Alba in an all-star cast.

And then it's time for a break. What will she do, I wondered?

"Read," she replied, among other things. "That would be nice."

Stevie Wonder's 'Magical' All-Star Rave-Up

Only the great **Stevie Wonder**, a megawatt genius with an outsized career and staggering song catalog, could have pulled off his concert on Saturday night at Madison Square Garden.

For one thing, he only booked it a month ago; tickets sold out in 45 minutes. You could tell: the backdrop was a white sheet pinned up behind the band, and two projection screens hastily thrown up on either side of the stage.

For another, his guest stars were only **Prince** — who played a wicked guitar solo on "Superstition" — and the really legendary 81-year-old **Tony Bennett**, who joined him for a historic duet on their shared hit from the late '60s, "For Once in My Life."

Otherwise, in two and a half hours, Wonder jammed in as many of his numerous hits as possible and still left out several popular ones, including "Isn't She Lovely?" and "Until You Come Back to Me." Those will have to wait for a return bout.

In the meantime, Stevie managed to strike a balance between his earlier and later Motown years, and even featured his great singer of a daughter, **Aisha**, for whom the unsung "Isn't She Lovely?" was written.

He opened the show with "Love's in Need of Love Today" featuring Aisha, after doing something a little different: first he talked to the audience about his mother **Lula Mae Hardaway** and dedicated the show to her memory. He then rolled smartly through hit after hit, mostly showcasing his unprecedented run of classic albums from 1972 through the late '80s.

This isn't easy, because a lot of Stevie's songs are long. To get a lot of them in meant some careful editing, but in the end it was worth it to hear shortened versions of "Superstition" and "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" from "Talking Book"; "Higher Ground," "Too High," "Visions," "You and I," "Don'tcha Worry 'Bout a Thing" and a magnificent rendition of "Golden Lady" from "Innervisions"; "Boogie on Reggae Woman" from "Fullfullingness' First Finale"; "I Wish," "Sir Duke," "Always" and a stunning almost a cappella version of "If It's Magic" from "Songs in the Key of Life"; "Overjoyed" from "In Square Circle"; and "Master Blaster Jammin'" and "Lately" from "Hotter Than July."

And that's not all. Stevie didn't forget his Motown roots. Besides "For Once In My Life," he treated the audience to "My Cherie Amour" and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours)." He jokingly showed off a country version of the latter ("I think this song could be a hit all over again! If anyone from Nashville is listening...") and conducted a descant singalong with the audience on "Ribbon in the Sky."

With Aisha — who should have her own album by now — he performed the only number from his most recent — and overlooked — album, "A Time 2 Love," called "How Will I Know?"

At a relatively young 57, Stevie still commands a full and supple voice that many have tried to imitate but none have achieved. He showed off his enormous octave range several times, an achievement in itself as he moved easily from intimate ballads to anthems to out and out rockin' funk.



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A two and a half hour show wasn't the end of the night, either: some of Stevie's guests — including his beautiful wife, designer **Kai Milla**, comic **Chris Tucker**, pop legends **Ashford & Simpson**, actor **Anthony Mackie**, attorney **Londell McMillan**, **Spike Lee's wife Tonya**, Warner Music's **Kevin Liles**, BET's **Steven Hill**, Essence magazine's **Susan Taylor** — all headed to a private dinner at Mr. Chow's that didn't commence until about 1 a.m.

Some of the other guests, like Tony Bennett, Motown chief **Sylvia Rhone** and opera great **Kathleen Battle**, who was in the audience, went home to bed, shockingly enough! Prince simply disappeared.

Before he left, I asked Tony — whose power, phrasing and soul on "For Once in My Life" literally made the MSG crowd go crazy — who did the song first?

"I did," he said. "**Ron Miller** from Motown wrote it, but I heard it and recorded it. Then **Berry Gordy** said Stevie was going to do it. But there's room for everyone and I always loved his version."

And then there was Stevie, heading up one of the five or six tables at Mr. Chow's, patiently listening and joking with each of the dinner guests as they came to pay respects later and tell him what an incredible night they'd had. "It was magical," he told me. "I could feel it, too."

The show is magic, and it's not static by any means. Stevie doesn't spend the whole night seated behind the piano, either. At one point, standing, he and guest artist **Frederic Yonnet** — a Wonder disciple — had a crazy harmonica duel that almost sent Stevie flying off the stage in a frenzy.

Mailer's Farewell; Say Goodnight, Ronnie

Norman Mailer's getting all kinds of tributes since his death 10 days ago. The best one by far is from famed documentary filmmaker **D.A. Pennebaker**, who included Mailer in his early political films in the 60s. You can read it at www.phfilms.com. ...

Ronnie Burns died last week. The adopted son of George and **Gracie Burns** was 72, although it's hard to imagine him older than his lanky youth from "The Burns and Allen Show" when he played himself from 1950 to 1958.

Reading about Ronnie's death made me nostalgic for the characters from that great show that broke the "fourth wall," like **Harry von Zell**, **Fred Clark** and **Bea Benaderet**. What a gang, and now the last of them is gone. TV never gets this good now. ...

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