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## Minister's son says dad looks, acts guilty

### Daughter claims sexual abuse lasted 8 years

BY JANICE MORSE  
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Rev. Bell

HAMILTON — Though the Rev. Darrell S. Bell never admitted he sexually abused his daughter, "he was guilty in his face and in his actions," his eldest son, Darrell S. Bell II, said Tuesday in Butler County Common Pleas Court.

The 22-year-old student at Miami University-Middletown said he never witnessed any sexual conduct between his father and sister, Dawn, but "I can tell by the way my father acts that he's guilty."

The testimony came during the second day of the Rev. Mr. Bell's retrial on 13 sex charges. Last fall, a jury acquitted him on a single rape charge but couldn't decide five other counts of rape, five counts of sexual battery and three counts of felonious sexual penetration. The charges are felonies that could put the 44-year-old Middletown minister in prison for decades if he is convicted.

Dawn Bell, who turns 21 on Sunday, is a former Middletown High School prom queen, homecoming queen, athlete and honor student who alleges that her father began having sexual intercourse with her when she was 10 and that it continued until she turned 18 and moved away to attend Bowling Green State University.

"It took me to get away — to go to college — to understand what happened to me ... that it was wrong," Ms. Bell said Tuesday, when defense lawyer Robert Bostick of Dayton asked why she waited to disclose the alleged abuse.

Mr. Bostick has asserted that the allegations are false and were fueled by a vengeful ex-wife who was about \$11,000 behind in child support. But Ms. Bell and her brothers have denied that their mother, Rosalyn Canty of North Carolina, persuaded them to make allegations against their father.

*The Cincinnati Enquirer* usually withholds names of complaining witnesses in sexual assault cases, but Ms. Bell consented to publication, saying she wanted to be an example to other women.

The trial is expected to continue at least until Monday. Mr. Bostick will begin presenting defense witnesses today, but the witness list remains uncertain because of an unusual twist in the case.

Judge H.J. Bressler is considering whether to disqualify the defendant's wife, Jewel, because her testimony may have been contaminated during an incident that a victim's advocate described Tuesday.

The advocate, Estella Jackson, reported she saw a courtroom spectator taking notes during Dawn Bell's testimony and later saw the spectator appear to be discussing the notes with Mrs. Bell in a hallway outside the courtroom.

Mrs. Jackson described the incident in a brief hearing outside the jury's presence. Mrs. Bell and the spectator, family friend Marlene Pringle, also took the stand and denied sharing the information, which would violate court rules.

Mrs. Pringle testified that Mrs. Jackson, the victim advocate, "just told an outright lie, because she has never seen that (note pad) outside (the courtroom)." The judge took the note pad as evidence and commented that it appeared to display a detailed account of Dawn Bell's testimony.

When Assistant Prosecutor Patricia Downing asked Mrs. Pringle whether she was discussing the case with Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Pringle replied, "No, we talk about the weather."

Judge Bressler barred Mrs. Pringle and Mrs. Jackson from watching any more of the trial, saying they have become potential witnesses in the case.

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