

Blues Singer's Woman Permitted To Tell Her Side

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CLARKSDALE, MS—Ida Mae Dobbs, longtime woman of Willie "Skipbone" Jackson, called a press conference Tuesday to respond to charges levied against her by the legendary Delta blues singer.



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Ida Mae Dobbs, woman of blues singer Willie "Skipbone" Jackson (inset).

"Despite what Mr. Jackson would have you believe, I am not an evil-hearted woman who will not let him be," Dobbs told reporters. "I repeat: I am not an evil-hearted woman who will not let him be. To the contrary, my lovin' is so sweet, it tastes just like the apple off the tree."

Dobbs, accused of causing Jackson pain and breaking his heart by calling out another man's name, categorically denied treating him in a low-down manner.

"He says he sends for his baby, but I don't come around," Dobbs, a brownskin woman, said. "He says he sends for his baby, but I don't come around. Well, the truth is, I do come, but he is out messing with every gal in town."

During the press conference, Dobbs also disputed an Aug. 27 statement made by Jackson, who compared her to a dresser because someone is always going through her drawers.

"My drawers have not been gone through by any man but Willie "Skipbone" Jackson," Dobbs said. "Neither Slim McGee nor Melvin Brown has ever been in my drawers. Nor has Sonny 'Spoonthumb' Perkins, nor any of those other no-good jokers down by the railroad tracks. My policy has always been to keep my drawers closed to everyone but Mr. Jackson, as I am his woman and would never treat him so unkind."

In addition to denying Jackson's drawer-opening allegations, Dobbs disputed charges of unrestricted sweet-potato-pie distribution, insisting that her pie is available only to Jackson.

"I do not give out my sweet potato pie arbitrarily, as I am not the sort of no-good doney who engages in such objectionable behavior," Dobbs told reporters. "Only one man can taste my sweet potato pie, and I believe I

have made it perfectly clear who that man is." Dobbs noted that the same policy applies to her biscuits, which may be buttered only by Jackson.

While most of the accusations levied against Dobbs relate to her running around town with other men, she does face one far more serious charge, attempted homicide. On May 5, 1998, Jackson was rushed to the hospital and narrowly escaped death after ingesting nearly five ounces of gasoline. Jackson claimed that Dobbs tried to murder him, serving him a glass of the toxic fuel when he requested water. Dobbs dismissed the episode as "an accident."

Dobbs, a short-dress, big-legged woman from Coahoma County, said it is not she but Jackson who should be forced to defend himself. According to Dobbs, Jackson frequently has devilment on his mind, staying up until all hours of the night rolling dice and drinking smokestack lightning.

"Six nights out of seven, he goes off and gets his swerve on while I sit at home by myself. Then he comes knocking on my door at 4 a.m., expecting me to rock him until his back no longer has any bone," Dobbs said. "Is that any way for a man to treat his woman? I don't want to, but if he keeps doing me wrong like this, I am going to take my lovin' and give it to another man."

Added Dobbs: "Skipbone Jackson is going to be the death of me."

Dobbs said that until she receives an apology from Jackson and a full retraction of all accusations, he will not be given any grinding.

"Mr. Jackson says that I stay out all night and that I'm not talking right. He says he has rambling on his mind as a result of my treating him so unkind. He says I want every downtown man I meet and says they shouldn't even let me on the street," Dobbs said. "Well, I refuse to allow my name to be dragged through the mud like this any longer. Unless my man puts an end to these unfair attacks on my character, I will neither rock nor roll him to the break of dawn. I am through with his low-down ways."

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