

## *Beware of False Prophets*

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**(1975-2005)**

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The Right Honorable Lord Justice Ward  
London, England

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Your Honor:

I bet you never heard of Blythe, California. I never did either until I saw the sign at the turnoff. All at once, I knew I couldn't go any further. I knew I had to pull off the road and get cleaned up and write to you before I finish it. Yesterday, I thought I could wrap up all the loose ends with that video and a couple of notes I sent to some friends. I was wrong. Dead wrong, like they say in old movies. Just like I was wrong about what killing is like, even killing someone evil, doing the world a favor. It's a lot harder than it looks in the movies, so much harder than you think, no matter how much they deserve to die. I thought I'd feel better, dispensing justice like you should have done. Instead, I just felt sick. Even after I threw up, I still feel sick. Sicker. So sick I know I have to scrap my Big Plan.

Call it Plan A—to go on trial for murder so I could tell the truth to the whole world, make them listen. I would call lots of witnesses to back me up. How many? Just go on the NET, google Holy Family or Children of God or Children of Love, or Xfamily, and count them. But I guess a man your age doesn't get much information off the NET. Not that you needed any more. Hell, you had enough evidence without the NET ten years ago, and you were still blind. Is that why the Statue of Justice holds the scales but wears a blindfold? So she can stay blind to what's out there? Blind to anything that isn't in the law books, in nice, cool, abstract words? Like freedom of religion. Parental rights. Words. Words that give all the answers, good, pure, empty words that help you ignore the evil right in front of you.

So. Plan A was to put myself on trial, not in your London court, but back here in California, where it all started before I was even born. I knew, no matter where the trial was held, you'd hear about it, you couldn't ignore it, or misinterpret it, or believe their

lies, not this time. The whole world would hear about my murder trial, about me, the so-called messiah, the phony savior, who—in spite of the creeps and perverts who created me—really did come through and sacrifice himself to save a few people. So that bitch’s death and my own death would mean something, warn somebody, free somebody.

But now I know I can’t do the court thing. No way I could go through a trial and then spend the rest of my life locked up (no death penalty, they’d find me insane) with nothing to think about but all that blood and that stubborn-stupid look in her eyes, still refusing to figure out what she did to deserve being murdered. Refusing to realize how she had helped to create the insane monster who was killing her. She just didn’t get it, like you didn’t get it, and I’m sick and tired of getting it, and I just want to stop getting anything. So, it’s on to Plan B, to end it now, end myself, as soon I write this last letter on the only paper in this room, pads of cutesy-pink hotel stationery. Using this kind of paper for a suicide note is a final sick joke in my life which has been a twenty-nine-year sick joke.

You don’t know me. You never even laid eyes on me. You probably don’t even remember presiding at a case where you listened to them read out lies about me, about The Family of God, the Holy Family from hell. It’s been ten years since that custody hearing—about that other kid—that little boy, what’s his name? But by the time you get this letter, you’ll have read the newspapers (even if I only make the back pages) and you’ll have to remember my name. That’s right, I was the kid written up by two professors paid by the Holy fucking Family to testify that doing sex on a baby is okay. Raising me watching old men screwing my seven-year-old sister was okay. Or beating her up to drive the devil out of her if she didn’t want to be raped by her grandfather or some other guy, or even if she just wanted to go to school. The Holy Family was okay. Just “freedom of religion,” which meant robbing kids of a normal life, sending them out on the streets of Romania or Bangladesh to sing and beg for money for the great prophet, David Berg, Holy Mo, while the kids had to eat out of some dumpster if they could find one. That’s all okay. Those paid professors “proved” that growing up in the Holy Family didn’t hurt kids. I was their happy, smiling proof. Silent, sick, smiling proof.

The worst of it was, they didn’t really fool you. You found out a lot of the truth anyway. That’s what really gets me. How could you find out all you learned in that custody case—and still rule against the grandmother? How could you decide that it would be okay for that three-year-old kid to stay with his mother in hell—oh, pardon me, in the Family of God home in Leichester (or wherever Blessed Queen Mother Maria skips out to next when the police are on her tail again). Whatever those whore professors told you, there was already so much in black and white.

So you’re probably thinking I should have told those professors, should have said something to support the grandmother of that three-year-old, instead of keeping my mouth shut? I wish I had. I could have told just one or two sick things they did to me, the prince, the heir, the savior. But at nineteen I was like a man who grew up blindfolded, then someone rips off the blindfold, and my first peek at normal life, makes me so dizzy I’m off balance. Too mixed up inside to go against my mother and the whole cult, so scared of leaving The Family that I choked on the words I should have said, about what I was just starting to figure out—that the grandmother was right to want to get that little kid out, fast, as far away from his mother and the whole rotten gang as she could.

But, like I said, you didn't need my testimony. You saw plenty of evidence. Now, ten years later I can't forget for a minute how wrong your judgment was. Wrong. Naïve. Stupid. A judge isn't supposed to be stupid or naïve, believing evil people who say, oh, no, we're not doing that evil thing anymore. A judge is supposed to demand proof. What proof did you have? How did you say it in your opinion?—128 pages describing the shit they did, and then ending with—at that second hearing—your own words, in all the newspapers, burned into my brain: “This was not the sullen young woman of last year. She showed a readiness to admit past error” and then “she is conscious of the danger that zealots within The Family may sacrifice the rights of children on a false altar.” I bet you felt proud of writing that part, almost like something from the Bible. Then, “I am satisfied that she will protect him from the excesses of the group.”

Satisfied? Why? What satisfied you? New evidence? No, a new “attitude.” No “sullen look” at the second hearing. Did that prove anything? So what did you think she would do? Any kid knows that people “make nice” to get what they want. How long does a judge have to sit on the bench until he's too stupid to know that?

That poor grandma. I managed to see her picture in the newspaper (even though reading newspapers wasn't allowed in The Family of God). Poor lady, after trying so hard to get custody, after waiting three whole years for you to study all the documents, all the testimony, even that sick, filthy Book of Davidito (one copy that some hero hung on to after the Prophet Holy Mo ordered the Family to burn all of them). The book was all about raising me—the prophet, the prince, the heir to the founder, the savior of all the members of the Family of God in the coming End Times, when you and everyone else will burn in the fiery furnace of God's wrath. You studied and studied and then wrote practically a whole book of your own, summing up the whole mess. I didn't get to read much of your opinion, just some stuff quoted in the newspaper, because reading it wasn't allowed—even the newspaper had to be sneaked in, then burned before someone reported me for having it. I didn't need to read much. All I had to know was that you decided to let that kid stay with his mother in the cult because they SAID they were no longer screwing kids for fun or screwing pickups (like my father, whoever he is) for money and for more babies to raise the way I was. No, not the way I was. Twisted even worse than I was.

In 1995, it was easy for The Family to keep us from reading your 128-page “opinion.” Now, ten years later, it's on the NET, for anyone who wants to read an example of a judge bending so far over backward to be fair that his brains fall out. Sifting through all the evidence, including the fact that you couldn't even question my mother Karen Zerby, now Blessed Mother Maria, Queen of the Family of God since the Prophet Peter or Moses or Mo (whatever that pig felt like calling himself) drank himself to death—because you can't even find her! She's good at being on the run, good at hiding from frantic families and police (prostitution, fraud, you name it) in one country after another. Of course, The Family doesn't trust me since I got away from them, so even I couldn't find her, hard as I tried, because my mother was the one I really wanted to kill.

You think you're reading a letter from a madman. Right. Driven mad by my mother, by my adoptive father, the great Mo, and by all the devout fuckers in the Family of God, or the Family of Love, whatever they started calling themselves lately.

“You are what you read,” Papa Mo said in one of his Mo Letters. Meaning we were not allowed to go to school. Home Schooling is a right, part of religious freedom, right? Right right right. So what was our home schooling? They taught me to read using cartoon books about doing holy sex on children. After I learned to read, they let me move on to the Bible and the daily Mo Letters. That’s it. Nothing else. Nothing. Nada. You know what the Mo Letters are, the rules and prophecies that lush spewed out. Yeah, he would stagger around shouting and mumbling while a couple of flunkies copied down or tape-recorded every fucking word he said. And every day we were forced to read that crap. That was my education, except for one technical course they made me take at a junior college in the Philippines—because they needed somebody with printing skill—so they could print more lies and more filth.

Sure, I managed to sneak in some other reading when I got into my teens, a few magazines that normal people read. That’s it. Do you call that an education? Did you write anything about that in your longwinded opinion? I don’t think so. Since I got free of that menagerie, I’ve learned that not giving a kid any real education is plenty of grounds for taking him away and giving custody to a relative who will. Why wasn’t that a red flag to show you the way? You’re a man with a good education, the best education England can give—and yet, anyone with common sense could see what you missed—or did your high class education kept you off the streets where real life would have been right in your face—or are you just a coward, afraid of being accused of “religious persecution?” Did your wonderful education only give you words words words to explain away what’s in front of your nose? Like those two professors my Queen Mother paid to talk to me, those psychologists who were so well educated and so smart they could tell I was happy and “well adjusted,” (you can watch murder every day and “adjust” to it. I did. Slow murder.)

One lesson was drummed into me—how to put on an act. Didn’t have to be a good act—those professors were well paid to fall for it. I knew I’d better do it right or—or what? Would they do an exorcism and beat the devil out of me like they did to poor Mene? No, I was almost twenty, a man legally if not mentally. Besides, wasn’t I the prince? the heir? the savior? The Savior of everything that was free and pure and would protect us from the evil of the whole world around The Family. That’s me, right? Or was my mother having second thoughts about me being the savior to carry on the Family of God? Maybe she could see sooner than I could—that something was happening inside my head.

And what was happening inside my head really mixed me up. If I told these professors the truth about our Moses, Mo, The Prophet, Father David—David Berg to you—dead David Berg, the greedy, horny, perverted lush who I couldn’t say had actually raped all those little girls because every one of them I ever talked to told me he couldn’t get it up. That’s why he sent my mother to pick up some hotel waiter who could give her a “Jesus Baby”—that’s what they started calling the babies born from “flirty fishing.” Another cute way of saying prostitution for money and babies. Easier, safer, surer than recruiting members—warp us right from birth. I was the first of the Jesus Babies, and I was heir to the Prophet! I was safe and protected and honored. Wasn’t I? So why was there this wild storm in my brain, and this icy fear in my gut?

I was almost nineteen—nineteen years of having it drummed into me that I had to put up the happy front for those professors, like we were all trained to do when “dealing

with Systemites.” I couldn’t even find the words for all the truths that were hitting me in the face and mixing me up. Because if I did, I’d have to leave The Family. And go where? Do what? I’d be lost outside The Family. I’d never opened a bank account or written a check or tried to rent a room or even paid a bus fare. I was worse off than all the “Jesus babies” born after me—thousands of them—because I was the Prince, part of the inner circle. I’d never been put out on the street like them to sing and dance and pass out literature and beg for money and then beg for something to eat, because every penny, kopak, sou, whatever, had to go to the Inner Circle of The Family. In the Inner Circle we lived in fine houses in Portugal, Switzerland, Malta, Nice, Cape Town. (Did begging on the street make enough to pay for these palaces? No, but have you ever noticed how many rich crazies there are in the world, who just love to turn over an extra house to some real nuts? Especially in your country—those upper-class “eccentrics” with titles you pretend not to be proud of.)

So there we were, the Inner Circle, running from one place to another, one step ahead of the police and the people who were trying to kidnap their sons and daughters, if they had to, to get them and their grandchildren out of The Family. So there was always the fear of all those threats out there and only The Family Inner Circle to protect me.

Another thing keeping me quiet was that every once in a while, as my Queen Mother, voice of the Prophet, moved us around, I’d meet some guy or girl who was doing really good street work, helping kids strung out on drugs, collecting food for the poor. Should I get them in trouble with the law? Should I just warn them, tell them all the money they collected was going to sanctimonious lechers like our Prophet who were fucking little kids like the ones they were helping? Would they even believe me? Hell, I saw it every day, but it took me years to figure out that what I was seeing was wrong—what did I have to compare it with?

You heard about those priests protected by the Catholic Church while they molested little kids (yes, I followed that on the news). Those kids kept quiet for years and years. And they lived with normal parents in normal houses and went to normal schools, and knew what was done to them was wrong. But even THEY kept quiet until they were thirty or forty or fifty. So what do you expect from a kid born in The Family, without normal parents in a normal house and not allowed to go to normal schools or even to know anyone out there in The System? I didn’t know what normal was.

Are you getting it now? Do I make myself clear? Can you imagine being born into a world where nothing is what everyone says it is? Where every word means the opposite of what it says? Like the word LOVE means POWER and GOOD means EVIL and SAFE means FUCKED and the Devil is the voice inside you that keeps saying something’s wrong, wrong, but that’s the Devil telling you, and the Devil must be wrong. Right?

No, I don’t think you will ever understand. My brain was solid rock. Then little cracks appeared, then bigger ones. My mind was cracking open, crumbling, and these expert professors couldn’t pick up one hint of what was happening! So much for Objective Authorities, Expert Opinion for sale to any crook who will pay enough.

So maybe I should be grateful that I’ve hardly ever read a real book and never got “educated” like them—and like you, Your Honor. Yes, you most of all, because those professors only sold “expert opinion,” but you gave a judgment, you held the power of government. You are the law.

No, I don't mean all of that. I'm not glad I never read real books. I wish I had been around books from the start. Getting into real public libraries with all kinds of books, ideas—minds to set against other minds, minds laid out on paper, having a conversation, an argument, in honest words, and if the words weren't honest, some other book would stand up to them, show them up with honest words. Because by the time I could choose my own reading, well, the truth is—I can read newspapers, magazines, the NET, but it's hard to sit down with a real book, words, words, words. It's hard to concentrate. Is that just because my upbringing messed up my brain so much? Or is everyone else getting to be like me now? I saw a TV show on World War II with Germans burning books. It was a big deal. If they burned the books today, would anyone notice? My generation—even normal guys who aren't homicidal maniacs like me—watch the screen, not print.

So I made the video to tell everyone what I was going to do, showing my weapons and all. But it turned out lousy. I just couldn't seem to say what I wanted to say. I was like a bad actor put on TV without a script. Or an actor who forgets his lines and just sits there trying to find the words, but he can't, because he never learned to think. He's mind-fucked. So, in the video I made, nothing was real. It was all pose. Like the Family taught me to do. Can you understand that I couldn't even be real?

That's why I need to follow up with this letter, because something happens when you try to write down words, some deeper digging into your mind to find the true word for this or for that. Words I try and cross out and try again because I'm sort of teaching myself what I really think and am trying to say—and then I write it down. It's hard. I worked hard to write this, to explain better some things to you, from the inside, so you'd know how big a mistake you made letting the mother of that little kid keep him in the Fucking Family of God. Pay attention. No matter how crazy I am. Because you need to know how bad your ten-year-old verdict, was. It helped set me on the path to commit murder. I mean that. Think about it.

Your verdict told me that there was no appeal, no justice out there in the System. It told me, just at the time my mind was finally cracking open, told me that Prophet Mo and my mother were right—the System is absolutely rotten, useless, no help there. The Family and Father Mo were the only shelter now and in the coming End Time Tribulations. Not far off now. You confirmed what they always said.

Not about that End Time crap. By that time I knew it was crap. Your verdict told me they were right about not looking to get help from you, from the System outside, the law, the courts. You can't imagine the helpless feeling you gave me. You were showing me that the last resort was no last resort. You were deaf, dumb, indifferent. That feeling grew into the fear, the rage, the big question: What do I have to do to make a judge out there in the System take me seriously?

So, okay, you already know the history of The Children of God, alias The Family, just one of those cults started up in the 1960s. That's before I was born, so I don't know anything about the sixties except what I hear from old geezers who, after a couple of drinks, talk about the great times they had, the great sex, the great politics, the breakout into—freedom, they always end up with that word, freedom.

But The Family and a lot of other Jesus Freak cults or Krishna cults or whatever—they were never about freedom. Sexual freedom?—it's not freedom when the Prophet says you have to do it to prove how free you are. Or when you're only two years

old, like I was when Sue and a lot of other women did sex on me—to make me free. It's not about freedom when you get sent out on the street to starve for Jesus and make money for "His Prophet." It's not freedom when you're confined in The Holy Family like any convict is confined in prison. Maybe it's freedom to choose slavery to the Prophet—but it's not freedom when you never had a choice, when you're born into it.

You're probably not up on facts about me. Quick summary: born 1975, Canary Islands; age one to five, moved to Portugal to Spain to Switzerland to Malta to France to South Africa to Sri Lanka to Singapore; age five to twelve in the Philippines; then on to Japan, Korea, Canada, Australia, U.S.A. That sounds like I saw a lot of the world, but the truth is just the opposite. I was—all of us kids were—in a cocoon, a Family headquarters, in one place after the other. They kept us apart from normal people, cut off from the real life of every place they took us to. That takes me up to 1993, age eighteen, when The Family paid one of those professors to write me up as proof that being raised by these devils left me fine, just fine. Then off and running with Queen Mother and her new King (Holy Mo had finally drunk himself to death) for another six years.

During that time I got away from her just once, for about a year, doing "fieldwork," in Russia and Hungary. That's how I learned the way most kids in the Family lived—half-frozen in filthy, unheated apartments—out on the streets "witnessing for Jesus" (begging for money to send to the Prophet) while we ate rotted cabbage and moldy potatoes, when we could get them, from the garbage of some store or restaurant. The life was hell, but being away from my mother was heaven.

I first tried leaving the Family in 2000, age 25, but I was lost, couldn't make it, went back. In 2001, I tried again, and finally made it because Elixcia helped me. She was another ex-family member. We got married, like real, normal people. It was a struggle, being normal, especially for me, but we tried.

My mother, the evil bitch-queen, was probably just relieved that she didn't have to keep trying to turn me into the New Prophet. And she knew I'd be lost in the real world. That's why, when Elixcia and I got married, I could work a little blackmail. I told my mother she'd better give me "severance pay" if she wanted me to keep quiet about all the things I saw and knew, and if she wanted me not to suggest places where the police could look for her. You're thinking a real man doesn't put the screws to his own mother, but I don't think you had a mother like mine. Screwing some money out of her was the first smart thing I did. Otherwise I couldn't have survived

For about a year she sent us a check every month, tiding us over while I got into construction work. The checks stopped when I started posting stuff on the NET like the other kids who had been born into that Hell, and had gotten out. The other ex-Family people said it would make me feel better, heal me, maybe stop the flashbacks, if I told the truth on the NET and reached out to others like us, warped from birth and trying to iron out our kinks. It did help a little, for a while. But then I started to feel stuck in the ex-Family, the walking wounded who couldn't talk about anything else. The cult of the ex-cult, escapees, but never free. Stuck in the half-way house from Hell.

So I backed off from them and tried to concentrate on making a normal marriage, a normal home. But I couldn't make that work either. In 2004, I had to leave Elixcia. Not her fault, mine, my fault. I could love her but not live with her, not live with anyone. I was either so depressed I couldn't get out of bed, or so furious I was afraid I might hurt

her. No in between, no warning, just a sudden memory flash, like a switch, setting me off. You read about soldiers with post-traumatic stress? I think it was like that. And it wasn't getting better. It was getting worse. So I left Elixcia, for her own sake, went off alone, first to California, then Tucson. A good electrician could always get work. I was good, and I liked to work long hours. It helped to keep my mind off things.

Like the flashbacks that wouldn't stop, the waking nightmares that came back at me after work, when I was alone. That was when I started thinking about hunting for my mother. No one would tell me where she is, of course, because now I'm one of the people who got out of The Family, and nobody on the inside will talk to us now. I'm a Systemite, part of the rotten System. Maybe the system is rotten, but at least it doesn't pretend to be all good, like the Family of God did. And guess what—some people even manage to live decent lives in the System, like my Aunt Rosemary, my mother's sister, who had no use for The Family. All I wanted to do was to be decent and normal, like her and her kids, but I wasn't equipped. I was like a war veteran, wounded inside—body looked okay, but inside, mind and soul broken, twisted. I was lost everywhere.

I think I might have killed myself then if another defector hadn't helped me. Jake (not his real name) was older than me, the same age as my mother. He was the one who hired me, helped me train as an electrician.

I worked with Alicia, a woman his age, an old friend of his who needed work. She drove me and tools and parts around in an old truck, and she cleaned up after me. A nice woman in her fifties, down on her luck.

He hired Alicia out of a good heart, to tide her over, and he hired me out of a good heart, and a lot of guilt. He told me he had made a bad choice, to join The Family, and after a few years he left and made a real life for a real family. "But you kids, brought in as babies or born inside, you never had a choice." He was there, he saw the little girls being taken by their mothers to that lush's bed. He saw kids being beaten to get the devil out of them. He saw "how they screwed up these little kids who didn't know that The Family wasn't the whole world," and he said he felt like a criminal whenever he met one of us who had gotten out and was floundering around, because he knew how we'd been messed up by our own parents, and he'd been part of it, and he didn't expect me to ever forgive him, but, "please, just let me help you make a new start."

Jake was the one who told me about Jonestown, about how this other so-called prophet had gotten San Francisco politicians to look the other way, by making his People's Temple "family" work in their election campaigns, and how this Jim Jones could convince people—almost like hypnotizing them—that he had a straight line to God, to salvation. That was weird enough, but he got crazier and crazier from drink and drugs, but no one would listen to the people who left, until some magazine started to do a story about the inside stuff, his phony visions and healings and beatings, and the money he was raking in, especially from poor people. Then Jones suddenly flew hundreds of his Temple members to a jungle in South America. Some of them ran away, back to America, with even worse stories about their prophet, and finally some politicians flew down there to take a look. And Jim Jones had his goons shoot them dead, then ordered nearly a thousand people to drink poisoned kool-aid, and those that weren't brain dead enough to obey orders were shot. So that was the end of People's Temple.

The big difference between Jim Jones and our Holy Family Prophet was that People's Temple folks were not allowed to have children. Mostly they recruited people from outside. Maybe cults like the Family of God had trouble getting recruits after the Jonestown mess. So they decided to breed their own recruits, like me, and twist our brains into shape right from the start. And when the End Times didn't come and didn't come, they needed to raise up an heir to the Prophet, a savior to hold their big-money business together—me.

The People's Temple massacre happened in 1978, when I was only three years old. "That's why you lived in so many countries," Jake said, "your mother and Prophet Mo always on the run. Most member of the cult never even saw them. Too bad. If some of them had taken a good look—" Jake had stayed in "too long, eight years," before he left. He's been outside for twenty years, and he never stopped feeling guilty for what he saw happening to the kids born in The Family. That's why he was always trying to help kids who get out.

That takes me up to yesterday, January 8, 2005, age 29, when I killed Angela Smith, AKA Sue Kauton. That's Sue and me in the photo in the Book of Davidito, the book they tried to destroy, but you got to read a salvaged copy. Sue is in her twenties, and I'm about 2 or 3. It's the photo where Sue is undressing me, smiling, bending over me, and reaching into my pants to masturbate me.

Sue was my mother's best friend and follower for twenty-five years, even after the Queen Mother eased her out of the Inner Circle, sent her to work in my grandparents' board-and-care in Tucson. And when Sue left The Family, she left all friendly-like, the way she did everything. Nobody ever had an unkind word to say about Sue because she was such a nice person, such a dumb sheep. (Being "nice" can get to be just another way of being evil. Because if you're nice to everyone all the time, if you never take sides, you're sure to end up being a nice front for some really evil people. You know that, Your Honor. Or you should know it.)

So here's my confession. I committed pre-meditated murder. That makes me worse than nice/stupid Sue. And stupider. Not even nice, just stupid. Because now I think I might have been trying to act out my favorite movie. It's not my favorite anymore. Not since I learned how different real life is from the movies. Sure, I knew that. Everyone knows that. But I didn't really KNOW it.

My favorite movie is one an educated man like you wouldn't know about, Your Honor. If you ever go to movies at all, I'm sure you never went to see "Boondock Saints" when it came out about five or six years ago. It's one of those bloody action movies. Trash. Good trash. Fun trash. An electrician I worked for in Tucson told me about this movie because he knew I like action movies. I rented the DVD and then I bought one and watched it, I don't know how many times. It's these two Irish-Catholic brothers who promise God they will get rid of the scum, the Russian Mafia that's moving on their neighborhood. There's a gay police inspector—you can't imagine how the Prophet Mo hated gays, the only taboo in the Holy Family. How I loved that silly, swishy police inspector. Anyways, he can't seem to nail these Russian killers, so the two brothers go after them. Pretty soon there's bodies all over the place. There's really no suspense because you know the brothers are never going to miss a shot or get hurt, even when

they're twirling around on some spinning chandelier and shooting—the two of them getting a dozen Russia-Mafia guys in one scene. Lots of noise and catsup-blood and laughs. The scum dropping like flies, spewing blood, and the brothers swinging and shooting from some crazy angle like that and never missing—it's funny.

But it's not all fun, it's sick, because it gets serious when the brothers make a promise to God, and the voiceover keeps saying "Oh Lord, here's my flashing sword which mine hand will take—" and stuff like that. And when the police inspector realizes that he can't nail that scum through the legal System, he decides to help the brothers because "the law of God is above the law of man" and the brothers are carrying out God's judgment. I was laughing too much to think! I should have thought, wait a minute!—isn't that what the Family of God and the Prophet Mo and my bitch mother were always saying? And now I was thinking that way. I had caught their evil—I was going to go above the law of man to become the law of God, and kill my mother, if I could, because the legal system couldn't nail her.

The brothers in the movie never get caught. The movie ends with them just going on shooting and praying, "Oh, Lord, raise me up to thy right hand and count me among thy saints."

So did I end up just acting out a trash movie? Questions like that didn't come to me then. What I had to do seemed so simple. But after I did it—after I actually killed Sue, actually took out one piece of scum, I started thinking how David Berg-Holy Mo, the Prophet always said he spoke the will of God. Then I thought about how the Queen, my scum mother, is even channeling Jesus these days (check out the Xfamily website if you don't believe me). So I was acting just like the scum I want to remove because you, Your Honor, didn't see fit to do it? That's no excuse, blaming you. But I never thought of that until after I did it. So who's to blame? Just me? No, I was doing evil to do good. Wasn't I? What's good and what's evil? I don't know anymore. But I never did know the difference, did I? I wasn't supposed to, was I? I was raised up to not know. My knowing could have messed up the Prophet's game.

All I know is that killing someone isn't like killing in a movie, isn't something you do and stay cool, the way I pretended when I talked about my plan in the video. It isn't something that you do with one shot or one stab. It's a long and messy struggle. That's the way a live human body becomes a corpse. Don't worry. I'm not going to describe it. Can't if I tried. Not without getting sick all over again. Got to finish this up.

My decision came after my date with Alisia. We used to ride around from one job to another, we would talk and tell jokes. She thought I was like normal people. She didn't know anything about me, thought I was just a nice kid. I would fool around and flirt with her, but she just laughed. She asked if I was ever married, and I told her about Elixcia and how nice she was but we couldn't stay together, no, I didn't want to talk about why. Once she asked me if I was going to spend the holidays with my mother, I almost lost it. The way I yelled at her scared her. Me too, because I knew she was just being polite. Then she tried again, asked if I had any kids. I said no, and I would never, never have kids because kids just get messed up by their parents. So she was quiet again like she was afraid to say anything and set me off. Poor Alisia, every word she said pressed a trigger, ripped open my skull and spilled out boiling brains. Even saying her name disturbed me because it sounded so much like Elixcia.

One night after work I was alone in my lousy apartment and got my usual lost, empty feeling, thinking about calling Elixia and wishing I could see her, but knowing I had to leave her alone so she could make a decent life, not stuck to a crazy like me. Instead, I called Alisia and said let's go out and have a drink. I wanted to make up for being so moody all the time when she drove me to jobs, and for yelling at her when she tried to be nice. Also, she was about the only person I knew who didn't know I came out of a crazy cult, who just talked about normal things and didn't act like she was avoiding the REAL subject. So we had a couple of drinks and I took her hand, and she pulled it back, but then, after a few tries, she let me hold her hand while we talked and laughed together. Then we went back to her place and sat by a nice fire.

At first she held me off when I tried to kiss her, said she was old enough to be my mother. I just said older women were fine with me, I was used to them. (She had no idea how true that was and I didn't give her any details.) So I got her quieted down, and got her blouse off and pretty soon I could tell she was liking it, touching and talking and lying down in front of the fire.

But then, as soon as I was inside her, something snapped in my head. It was like she was suddenly my mother and Sue and the other women who'd "taught" me to make love, which was really raping a little kid who doesn't understand anything—so it feels good and scary and bad all at the same time, and ruins everything, so that that sex can never become "intimate" the way they tell you it's supposed to be in marriage or when two nice people just like and respect each other. How can I make you understand what I was feeling? How my love-making became suddenly full of rage at the way The Family had said they were raising us for "free love" but had robbed sex of any human feeling. The Family had made it nothing but the urges of animals that stalk and pounce, then go off alone till nature makes them prowl and rape again. I scared Alisia and I scared myself, and I told her I was sorry and I started to cry and said I wasn't fit to live.

She tried to comfort me, but everything she said just showed me that she was right to be scared. When I left her, I knew that I was working up to suicide, like so many others of the first generation born in The Family—we're dropping like flies, you know. Check it out. That was when I decided that I wasn't going to just step off a roof like some of the men, or go into slow suicide on drugs like a lot of the girls stripping in cheap bars and hustling on the streets, which was all they were trained to do in the Holy Family. I was going to make my death count for something, since my life is worth nothing.

Before what happened with Alisia, I had been starting to think I might not go through with my plan to find my mother and kill her. I thought maybe I could get closer to my Aunt Rosemary, who hated The Family and everything that it and her sister stood for. With her and her real family I could gradually get normal, and I'd go back to my wife and we might even have a kid and be real parents. But when that happened with Alisia I knew I was permanently fucked, I was beyond help. No one should take any chances with me.

Then I heard that Sue Kauton was in town. She'd come to Tucson to visit some friends she made while she was working in the board-and-care. It wasn't hard to get the phone number where she was staying. Of course, she was friendly when I called. Sue was always friendly, always so nice. I asked her to come to my apartment for a drink and a

talk, for old times' sake. We made a date, and that was when I made the video, to tell a couple of people what I was going to do.

I was going to make Sue tell me where my mother is, so I could go right out and find her and kill her. Then I would drop my weapons, call the police, surrender, go on trial, tell the world how wrong you had been about The Family, and hope to liberate more people from it and from phony cults and prophets like my mother. Because people would listen now. They'd have to listen. Finally.

But when Sue showed up, things didn't work out that way. She came in all happy and friendly, like there was nothing she ever did that she regretted, now that she was living in upscale Palo Alto and had a normal boyfriend and a normal job. It was like those 25 years of messing up kids, body and soul, never happened. It seemed to me like the only thing The Family ever robbed her of was her conscience.

At first I acted friendly too, but when I asked her about my mother, she looked worried and changed the subject. I kept bringing her back to it and finally repeated it, louder than I meant to: I want to know where my mother is. Now. She started to say she didn't know, and I grabbed her arm and pulled out the knife and said I'd kill her if she didn't tell me. I didn't really mean to use the knife, just scare her. But she looked at me with those stupid wide eyes and shook her head, no, no. I stuck the knife into her ribs, not deep, just enough to scare her, but she just kept shaking her head, and got this little, stupid smile on her face, like, if she just made nice, I'd let her go.

Something about that smile made me think of my mother's smile, the smile everyone imitated, the kindly friendly innocent mask that covered the evil of the Holy Family. The worst thing about that smile was that they didn't even seem to know it was a mask anymore. It had become part of them. The mask had swallowed their brain, eaten their soul. They had become that mask, that innocent, loving, nice, pure evil.

I stabbed and stabbed and stabbed her body—then slit her throat to make sure, all the time terrified—yet removed, off in the distance, watching what I was doing. It was like a hundred of the demons that Holy Mo was always exorcising from poor little Mene had moved into me and had taken over.

No, I don't mean to say I believe in those demons. That would be acting like Sue, like my mother, like everyone who messed kids up and never took any responsibility for what they did. I'm not pleading not guilty by reason of insanity or by reason of demons or anything else, your Honor. I did it. Me. I take responsibility. If there's one shred of humanity left in me, that's it. I'm crazy in a lot of ways, but knew what I was doing. I knew it was wrong, and it was just. You know that too. Guilty.

I don't even remember leaving, or getting into the car. When I looked in the rear view mirror I could see my face all smeared with Sue's blood. I could feel her blood soaking through my jeans into my crotch and drying all thick and stiff on my hands. I looked at the freeway signs and saw I was headed west, back to California where the Prophet Mo and my Holy Mother Maria started.

I called Elixcia on my cell, told her to call the police, and tell them to go get the body at my apartment, and I'd call her again from wherever I stopped and they could send the local police to come and pick me up. She started crying and so did I.

When I reached the Blythe sign, I took the turnoff, stopped at the first hotel, held my duffel bag in front to hide the blood, and checked in. As soon as I got into this room, I took off everything, then I soaked in a tub and scrubbed off all the blood. Then I turned

on the TV and waited. Nothing on the news. I called Elixcia again. All she could do was cry. I told her it was just as well she had waited to call the police because I had to move to Plan B.

I told her I had found out that I'm just not brave or strong enough to live through a trial and tell my story in court and then live the rest of my life in a cage, remembering all that blood. Maybe I'm a phony just like my mother and all the perverts in *The Family*, or maybe I'm just another trash movie. Anyway, that's it. I'm done. I told Elixcia I knew I had to kill myself, and I didn't even have the nerve to do that yet. I begged her not to call the police. They'll just stop me from doing what I have to do as soon as I get up the nerve. If you call police now, I told her, you'll just give me years and years of suffering the way I am now, which is worse than I ever thought possible. I begged her, please Elixcia, don't make me suffer this way much longer.

She cried some more. Then made me promise to call her again before I killed myself. I promised and she said, "Remember the first time we talked, that time in Budapest, when everyone else went out and we were alone in the house and you taught me to play cards? Remember how we talked about angels? Just keep thinking of them, Ricky, the angels that watch over children and . . ." Then I couldn't make out her words, she was sobbing so much. I promised to call her back before I did anything. I don't know if she understood because I was crying too. Right then, I didn't want to tell her that I never did believe in angels. I only said I did to please her.

When I pulled some clean clothes out of my duffel bag, I found a tattered paperback copy of *THE PLAGUE* that a man in Spokane gave me—when he caught me reading when I was supposed to be fixing his toilet. I kept the book because it was a kind, generous act of a good man, giving me that book when books meant so much to him—he must have had thousands of them in that house. He said he had another copy or two of this one, so I should take it. He said I should pay special attention to the last part, where the two guys talk about the plague. But I never got that far. Short attention span for print.

So this time I went through the book until found the pages he must have meant. Where one guy says we all have the plague, everyone (except maybe Jesus, the real Jesus, if there ever was one, not the phony Jesus speaking through my scum mother now). We all have the plague. And it's incurable. The only good man is the man who never forgets he has an incurable disease, who pays attention all the time, who tries not to breathe out or cough out or spew out the plague germs—his own evil—on other people.

Your Honor, you must know that book because you're an educated man, you have read all the books I'll never read now. But did you really understand that book the way I do now? If you did, I can't see how you were ready to believe that *The Family* was an okay place to leave that little kid. You see, what helped *The Holy Family* to be so evil was that they told each other they were all good. They knew the cure for evil. They were all cured. Then they started believing their own lies—giving in to evil.

Good is really simple—but hard, like it says in *THE PLAGUE*. To never ever forget that we're all evil, that we have to pay attention all the time, and hold back our own evil—that's the only way we can be good. There's no easy way, only the hard way, and it's a constant effort. Wears you down. Mo Berg promised an easy way. He and my mother and all the other Inner Circle just abolished evil—just said they were pure and good, and everyone who did what they told them to do could be always pure and good. What a relief! That's how they got power over a lot of screwed up, frightened people,

which I suppose describes most of the people in the world—smart or dumb, educated or not— but the half-way decent, honest, brave ones don't take the easy way out, offered by phony prophets like my mother or Holy Mo.

So easy. Just do what the Prophet says and you'll have your reward soon, soon, when the world comes to an end and everyone else is destroyed. The Family really bought that idea, really loved it—that everyone on earth, but them, would be destroyed. They loved that evil idea. Then they made me the Prince of Evil, the savior of the few who followed them. So here I am, still trying to be the messiah who saves a few people from evil. But all I did was more evil. If that's not screwed up, what is?

If any good comes from the evil thing I did, it'll be that you'll pay more attention, Your Honor. Pay attention to just doing your job—sniffing out evil, seeing through the mask and the sweet words, to the real proof that shows the demons in people like my mother. All I hope for is that by killing Sue and killing myself I hit the front pages and TV and websites all over the world, that my story follows my scum mother, wherever she goes, exposing the rotten Children of God, Family of God, Family of Love—whatever they call themselves now, and stopping them from wrecking more children.

Time to go—while it's still dark. I'll drive until I find some nice place off the freeway, a rest stop—near some trees and water and moonlight, I hope.

Someone will find this letter to you, find me in my car, and put it all together. I can do it if I can just, for a little while, make myself believe in angels, like Elixcia told me. I was brought up to believe in all kinds of crap, so that shouldn't be hard.

Sincerely,  
Rickey Rodriguez

*On January 9, 2005 a worker arriving at the Palo Verde Irrigation District found a car parked in the driveway. Ricky Rodriguez sat slumped in the driver's seat, a bullet through his head. When a cell phone on the seat rang, a police officer answered it, to hear Ricky's wife Elixcia ask, "Is he dead?" Before breaking down, she gave the address of Ricky's apartment in Tucson, where the body of Sue Kauton was found.*

*Immediately after the news broke, several web sites were established, which accumulated hundreds of messages taking opposing sides in assigning responsibility for the murder/suicide. Postings included one by Ricky's mother, Karen Zerby, purportedly channeling Jesus, whom she quoted as saying there was "nothing dark in (Ricky's) past that made him go as far as he did . . . it was his choice to hold onto his pride and rebellion and follow the dark, evil voices."*

*From 1971 to 2001 an estimated 13,000 children were born within the Family of God (later renamed the Family of Love), many of them "Jesus Babies" resulting from "flirting fishing" or "hustling for Jesus."*

*Like the Jonestown Massacre, the murder/suicide of Ricky Rodriguez made headlines and provoked articles exposing such cults, but did not wipe them out. Examples: in September 2008, federal and state agents in Fouke, Arkansas raided the*

*Tony Alamo Christian Ministries, a source of child pornography featuring sexual abuse of 12 to 14-year-old girls. In March 2010 eight people in “Hutari,” an armed “Christian Militia” in Michigan, were arrested before they could carry out a planned attempt to kill law enforcement officers as a first attack on government in “preparing for the end time battles to keep the testimony of Jesus Christ alive.”*

*In 2009 a second sequel to the film Boondock Saints was in production.*

*As of this writing the Family of Love still exists. It is still headed by Ricky’s mother Karen Zerby, whereabouts unknown.*

### References

- Don Lattin            *Jesus Freaks: A True Story of Murder and Madness on the Evangelical Edge* (2007)
- Peter Wilkinson    “The Life and Death of the Chosen One”  
*Rolling Stone* (June 30-July 14, 2005)
- XFamily.org        Website containing many links to others, including the video made by Ricky as he prepared weapons to kill Sue Kauton
- Lord Justice Ward    The complete 314-page opinion in the 1995 custody suit brought by a grandmother of a child born into the cult is also available on the WEB
- Boondock Saints*    Film (1999) available through DVD rental outlets