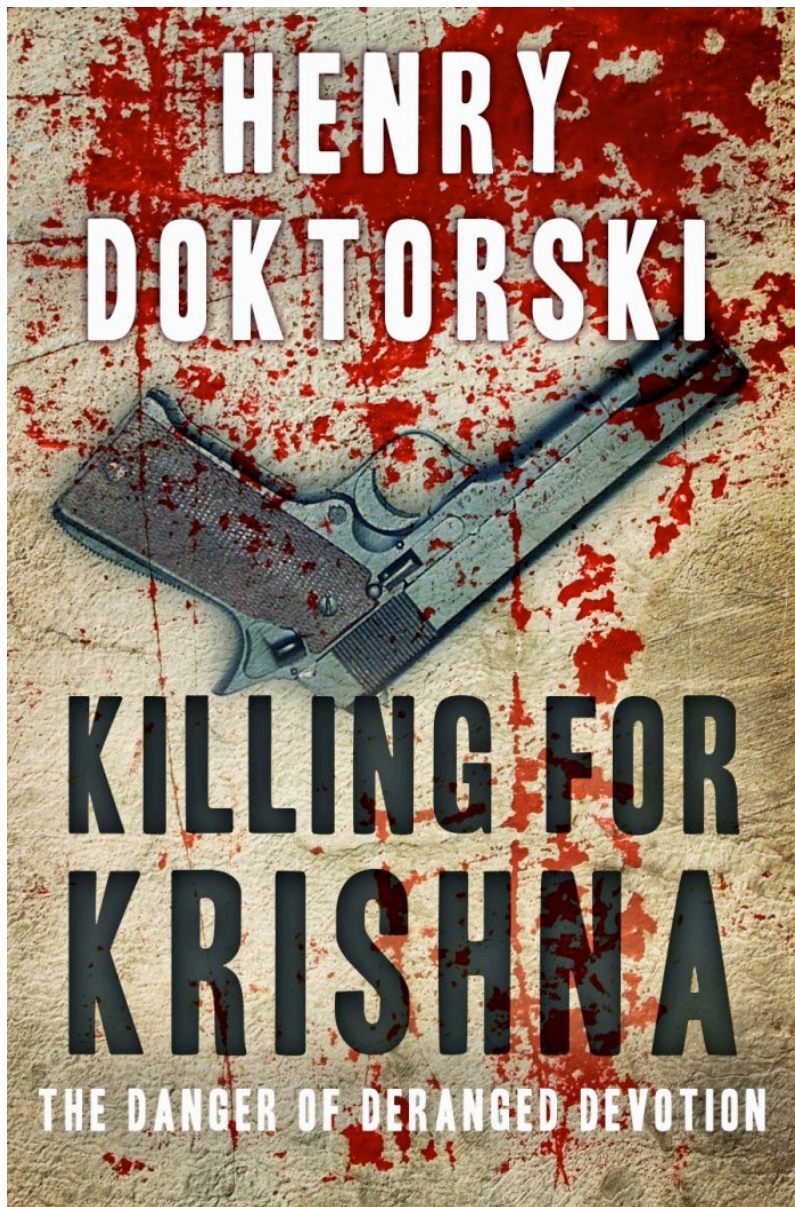


An Outline of

Killing For Krishna

The Danger of Deranged Devotion



A 660-page book by Henry Doktorski

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SUMMARY

The 1986 murder of Steven Bryant (Sulochan dasa) was arguably the darkest moment in the fifty-two year history of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—a new branch of the Chaitanya-Bengali-Vaishnava religion founded in New York City in 1966 by an Indian spiritual teacher and guru, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977). A mere nine years after the disappearance of this beloved spiritual father, one of their own was hunted down and assassinated. This brutal killing was achieved through a cooperative effort by “spiritual” leaders, senior managers and hit men enforcers from West Virginia, Ohio, and Southern California ISKCON temples.

The murdered whistle-blower had discovered many secrets and threatened to reveal to the world the immoral acts and criminal dealings of a set of self-appointed, illegitimate successors to Swami Prabhupada: a corrupt oligarchy of new ISKCON “gurus.” He had also, perhaps foolishly, advocated using violence against the gurus to evict them from their posts. ISKCON leaders took his threats seriously, and they hunted down and assassinated the passionate reformer. How did the peaceful, shaven-headed, saffron-clad Hare Krishna devotees regress from their blissful activities of chanting, dancing, and selling incense in the streets to this?

The author, himself a former ISKCON devotee, probes deeply into the disturbing direction of a new religious movement. In this book, he exposes the danger of philosophical errors and deranged devotion that practically ensured that bloody tragedy would eventually occur. The author has engaged in years of painstaking research by poring over tens of thousands of pages of trial transcripts, newspaper and magazine articles, ISKCON publications, and confidential ISKCON documents, while also interviewing dozens of eyewitnesses. His effort culminates in a thoroughly-engaging and extremely well-documented thesis exposing the hidden inside story of the conspiracy to murder Steven Bryant, including its genesis, development, blunders involved in it, execution, cover up, as well as a stunning aftermath after the deed was done.

PREFACE

The author discusses his endeavor to uncover the truth regarding the behind-the-scenes conspiracy to murder Steven Bryant despite the decades-long cover up. He also reflects on his personal memories of the members of the murder conspiracy, some of whom he knew very well. He also reflects on one of the members of the conspiracy, Radhanath Swami, who denies any involvement in the conspiracy, and has subsequently become an important and powerful ISKCON guru with tens of thousands of disciples.

INTRODUCTION

The author introduces the two main characters of the story. Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada (Keith Ham), a 49-year-old ISKCON guru who is arguably one of the most powerful, respected, and (behind the scenes) ruthless of the eleven ISKCON gurus who self-appointed themselves as spiritual masters in 1977-1978, after the death of the founder of ISKCON, Swami Prabhupada. Bhaktipada is the co-founder of the New Vrindaban Hare Krishna Community, a 5,000-acre rural commune in the wooded hills and hollows of Marshall County, West Virginia, inhabited by several hundred devotee residents. Bhaktipada is also the mastermind behind Prabhupada's Palace of Gold, billed as the "Taj Mahal of the West," a gold and marble shrine for the founder of ISKCON which is the second most popular tourist attraction in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. The charismatic Swami Bhaktipada has power and millions of dollars, a considerable portion generated through secret illegal enterprises, such as a recreational drug smuggling ring (1977-1980) which essentially paid for most of the marble, gold leaf, and supplies for the construction for Prabhupada's Palace, and an international panhandling operation which generated 12.5 million dollars between 1981 and 1985.

Steven Bryant, on the other hand, a 33-year-old Krishna devotee, married with two children, living at New Vrindaban, is not respected by many. He is known to be a faultfinder and prone to argument. He has little money. He regularly slaps his wife for reasons only known to him. She claims it was to keep her submissive. When his wife leaves him, he becomes angry at Swami Bhaktipada (accusing him of "wife-stealing"), he leaves New Vrindaban, and begins conducting research which ultimately results in his writing a book, *The Guru Business*, which attempts to expose corruption in ISKCON. His campaign, however, has little success. Steven knows that Bhaktipada's henchmen would kill him if they could, so he attempts to hide (wearing disguises) while he distributes his exposé among devotees and mainstream news media. At one point (May 1986), he realizes that he can only succeed in his mission by his death, and so he stops hiding and allows himself to be murdered in Los Angeles.

CHAPTER ONE: A THORN IN BHAKTIPADA'S SIDE

A short biography of Steven Bryant is presented: his conversion to ISKCON in 1974 at the age of twenty, his friendship with Terry Sheldon, who 12 years later "engineers" Bryant's murder, an unwelcome homosexual act with a senior godbrother who later becomes a certified ISKCON guru, a description of the 1976

Los Angeles incident when Bryant is personally chastised by Swami Prabhupada, after which he abandons his service in Los Angeles in great embarrassment and moves to India, where he serves as the Temple Commander at the Krishna-Balaram Mandir in Vrindaban. He later moves to London, where he serves at the ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Manor temple as a pujari (priest).

Steve marries a young British hippy (Jane) and he asks her to move to New Vrindaban, West Virginia, while he travels on business to India. He joins her at New Vrindaban later, where he plans to raise his family, including their two very young children and another child from Jane's earlier relationship with another man. However, after first arriving at New Vrindaban, in her husband's absence, she is pressured by temple authorities to accept Swami Bhaktipada as her spiritual master. She is initiated on Christmas day 1980, without her husband's permission.

Steve lives at New Vrindaban with his wife for about year, then moves his family to California, returning back to New Vrindaban in December 1983. He becomes one of the top tour guides at the Palace. However, Steve gets into arguments with community management and decides to leave New Vrindaban for good. His wife refuses to join him. Steve takes his two young children from her and begins driving to his parents' home near Detroit. Jane asks Swami Bhaktipada for help, and three armed New Vrindaban "enforcers," along with Jane, speed after Steve in hot pursuit. When Steve pulls into a shopping center and enters the grocery store to purchase diapers for his baby son, the mother retrieves her children. When Steve comes out of the store, the three enforcers brandish their weapons, and Steve, outgunned, is forced to admit defeat.

In Los Angeles, Steve acquires a pirate collection of the collected letters of Swami Prabhupada, which are carefully guarded by ISKCON leaders and off limits to ordinary devotees. In the secret letters, Steve discovers that the ISKCON founder did not trust his leading disciples, yet now they claim to be on the same level as the founder: pure and selfless self-realized souls. Steve discovers they are cheaters and usurpers. He discovers dozens of letters by Swami Prabhupada criticizing Swami Bhaktipada, even calling him "a crazy man." Steve tries to warn his wife about the corrupt ISKCON gurus and get her to return to him with his two sons, but she has become infatuated with Swami Bhaktipada and she refuses.

While showing these secret letters to other devotees, Steve hears reports of abuses at New Vrindaban, including child abuse and molestation, wife beating, a recreational drug smuggling business which funded the construction of Prabhupada's Palace, and even a murder on community property (the murder of Charles Saint-Denis), ordered by Swami Bhaktipada. Steve compiles his research into a book, *The Guru Business*, and advocates violence against the ISKCON gurus, but especially against Swami Bhaktipada. He purchases two firearms and hones his marksmanship skills by target shooting at a picture of Swami Bhaktipada.

CHAPTER TWO: THE KIRTANANANDA EXPOSÉ

Bryant self-publishes his book, *The Guru Business*, and distributes copies by word of mouth. The book changes the lives of some devotees, who begin to see the ISKCON gurus for what they are: pretenders. Others, however, condemn Bryant for twisting the facts to make Swami Bhaktipada look bad. Steve writes about his mortal enemy, Swami Bhaktipada (who he thinks has stolen his wife's affections) in Chapter ten: "The Kirtanananda Exposé." Steve claims Bhaktipada is nothing more than a "rogue," "a pseudo-religionist," and "nothing but a sense gratifier." Although many of Bryant's sources are accurate, some of his claims are off the mark.

The highest committee of ISKCON, the Governing Body Commission (GBC), begins to express concern about Swami Bhaktipada deviating from the teachings of the founder. The GBC reluctantly permits Bhaktipada to worship the statue of Prabhupada in his Palace as a king (a practice Bhaktipada inaugurated on Christmas Day 1980), but a few months later, Bhaktipada removes the gold crown, mace, jeweled tilak and velvet cape from the statue of Prabhupada after one irate godbrother, who serves as the Palace Manager, confronts Bhaktipada about the practice and threatens to reveal to ISKCON the negative things one of Prabhupada's godbrothers told him about the crown. Steve continues his campaign against Bhaktipada, and Bhaktipada threatens to resign from the GBC if Steve is not silenced.

CHAPTER THREE: THE GURU REFORM MOVEMENT

This chapter describes the efforts of members of the "Guru Reform Movement," basically ISKCON temple presidents in the United States and Canada, to combat the abuses of the eleven ISKCON gurus, who had appointed themselves in that capacity against the wishes of the founder. The extravagant abuses of the eleven are described, as well as the inauguration of the Guru Reform Movement. A leader of the movement writes a paper titled, "Ending the Fratricidal War." Many Prabhupada disciples become disillusioned with the eleven, and leave (or are shunned by) ISKCON.

The Guru Reform Movement gathers steam at the August 1985 Emergency GBC meetings at New Vrindaban, when a brahmachari in Atlanta claims that one of the ISKCON gurus had homosexual relations with him. A leader of the Guru Reform Movement writes another paper, "Under My Order." Conflict between the ISKCON gurus and their supporters, and the guru reformers, reaches a climax at the September North American GBC and Temple Presidents Meeting at New Vrindaban. Swami Bhaktipada reads his paper, "On My Order," a rebuttal to the earlier guru-reform paper "Under My Order."

CHAPTER FOUR: PREACHING FROM A JAIL CELL

Bryant, encouraged by the momentum generated against the ISKCON gurus by the Guru Reform Movement, wishes to participate in the New Vrindaban meetings, but decides not to attend due to legitimate concerns about his safety. He instead checks himself into the Marshall County Jail under protective custody. He publishes a paper, "Jonestown In Moundsville? The Truth Behind the Palace of Gold," which he mails to devotees at the conference, news media and also to prominent local Marshall County non-devotee residents. High ranking leaders at New Vrindaban retaliate by publishing a six page pamphlet titled, "The Story of A Cheater: The Real Facts About Sulochan [Bryant]." New Vrindaban leaders begin talk about assassinating Bryant.

Bryant lodges a formal complaint to the GBC against Swami Bhaktipada for initiating his wife without his consent. The GBC rules that Bhaktipada erred by doing so. In response to Bhaktipada's complaints about Bryant, the GBC expels Bryant from ISKCON for issuing death threats in "abhorrent" and "blasphemous" language. Steve's best friend in California attempts to negotiate with New Vrindaban leaders to permit Steve to have access to his two sons. Initial talks are encouraging, but one violent event on October 27, 1985, causes New Vrindaban leaders to reconsider the tentative negotiations with Bryant.

CHAPTER FIVE: AN ATTACK AT THE HEART OF ISKCON

This chapter tells the story of the October 27, 1985 attack on Bhaktipada by Michael Shockman, a mentally-disturbed devotee who came to New Vrindaban to attend the September 1985 meetings. He quietly walks up to Bhaktipada from behind during an outdoor brick-laying marathon, in the midst of dozens of devotees, and strikes him once in the head and twice in the back with a three-foot-long iron bar reported to weigh 20 pounds. Bhaktipada falls unconscious to the pavement with life-threatening head injuries. Shockman runs away, and is quickly tackled by the New Vrindaban temple president. The temple president instructs devotees to call the Marshall County sheriff to come and arrest Shockman (who is transported to the Marshall County Jail where he is held for fourteen months).

The temple president also transports the unconscious spiritual master to the nearest hospital, Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Glen Dale, West Virginia. The emergency room doctor, seeing the severity of Bhaktipada's injuries, orders an ambulance to take Bhaktipada to Wheeling Hospital where an emergency craniotomy is performed to relieve hemorrhaging on the brain. Four days later, Bhaktipada is transported by helicopter to Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh where a second operation is performed to remove a blood clot in his brain. Bhaktipada is unconscious in a coma for ten days and listed on the critical list for almost three weeks.

New Vrindaban residents are devastated and hold 24-hour kirtan chanting in the temple to petition the Lord to heal their master. Practically all of ISKCON prays for Bhaktipada's recovery. ISKCON leaders offer support and visit New Vrindaban. One of the eleven ISKCON gurus writes, "He [Bhaktipada] has done more than anyone in building that [New Vrindaban] community, and an attack on his life is an attack at the heart of ISKCON."

Bhaktipada awakens from his coma on November 6, 1985, and returns home on November 22nd, where he is greeted with great love, excitement and affection by his adoring disciples and followers. It is as if the love of the devotees' lives returns from the dead. Everyone is joyous, but not for long. During this time, Prabhupada's statue at the Palace is once again adorned with gold crown, tilak, scepter and cape.

CHAPTER 6: HE WAS A VERY, VERY DIFFERENT PERSON

The speed of Bhaktipada's recovery is phenomenal. Although his vocal chords are partially paralyzed and he can barely speak, and he has frequent head aches and lapses of memory, he feels well enough to travel to India for a two-week preaching tour in January. In February he visits New Orleans. In February/March, he travels to India, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. In May he travels to Italy, and later to Germany and The Netherlands.

Unfortunately, although most devotees are not aware of it, Bhaktipada suffers considerable brain damage which results in anterograde amnesia; a condition in which new events contained in the immediate memory are not transferred to the permanent as long-term memory. Bhaktipada becomes unusually forgetful, and some also say his personality becomes less compassionate, more callous. In order to keep up appearances, Bhaktipada and his personal servant devise a secret system of verbal and non-verbal signals to help Bhaktipada remember conversations only a few days apart. New Vrindaban and ISKCON devotees practically insist that he continue to lead the community, and they pretend that everything is alright with Bhaktipada. All engage in mutual denial. This results in unsound decisions being made which negatively affect the community and Bhaktipada's other preaching centers. Bhaktipada's Narcissistic Personality Disorder also appears to intensify.

Most devotees are unable to recognize these symptoms because of their great emotional investment in their spiritual master, who they believe is pure and perfect. They cannot comprehend that his mental and emotional faculties have been compromised. They rationalize his bewildering behavior and say Bhaktipada is exhibiting the symptoms of a self-realized saint, whose activities cannot be comprehended by ordinary people. Some, due to lesser emotional investment, are

able to recognize Bhaktipada's compromised abilities and they leave New Vrindaban and move to other ISKCON temples. Some others stay with Bhaktipada, although they are aware of his discrepancies, because they think he may make a full recovery in time. Unfortunately, Bhaktipada never makes a full recovery. When he is accused, on occasion, of being inconsistent, he blames it on Krishna, "If Krishna changes, I change. What can I do?"

CHAPTER 7: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

In this chapter, the author pauses the dramatic action to discover more about the backgrounds and personalities of the main characters of the murder conspiracy, including:

- (1) Swami Bhaktipada (who orders the hit but does not directly involve himself in the conspiracy),
- (2) Howard Wheeler (Bhaktipada's college roommate and homosexual lover, a co-founder of New Vrindaban), who acts as the intermediary between Bhaktipada and the other members of the conspiracy,
- (3) Terry Sheldon, (the Cleveland ISKCON temple president), who helps "engineer" the murder, coordinates surveillance, acquires funding for the hit man, etc.,
- (4) Arthur Villa, (the New Vrindaban temple president), who supports the murder conspiracy in administrative capacities, providing funding, preaching to the hit man, working with the Marshall County sheriff, etc.,
- (5) Randall Gorby, (a non-devotee friend of New Vrindaban), who continually supports the assassination attempt and assists in the surveillance of Bryant,
- (6) Thomas Drescher, (the New Vrindaban bus driver and chief enforcer): the hit man who pulls the trigger,
- (7) John Sinkowski, (who operates a lucrative flower-selling business in Philadelphia), and serves as Drescher's assistant, hunting Bryant in California,
- (8) Radhanath Swami, (who preaches that devotees have to do "whatever it takes" to protect Bhaktipada), and recruits Sinkowski into the conspiracy,
- (9) Dennis Gorrick (the director of New Vrindaban's multi-million dollar international panhandling operation), who provides funding for the assassin's travel expenses and get-away money,
- (10) Ramesvara Swami, (the ISKCON guru for Southern California), who orders his security guard disciple to cooperate with the New Vrindaban hit men who are hunting Bryant in Los Angeles, and
- (11) Jeffrey Breier, (Ramesvara's principal security guard), who carries a gun and helps Drescher spy on Bryant and follow his movements in Los Angeles.

CHAPTER 8: MURDER CONSPIRACY

This chapter describes the formation and development of the conspiracy to assassinate Bryant from October to December 1985. The conspiracy begins in earnest soon after Shockman's devastating October 27th attack on Bhaktipada. Drescher notes, "[Shockman's attack] changed everything. It was no longer a war of words; it injected an element of violence. Naturally, as a good disciple, I couldn't sit by idly and wait for the job to be finished."

Bryant praises Shockman's attack on Bhaktipada and congratulates him. Bryant also writes a 15-page essay, "Violence in ISKCON: Caution," and claims that Bhaktipada deserves death. He writes, "It is only a matter of time before each 'guru' is dead or wishes he were." Bryant, currently living in California, boasts that he is going to kill Bhaktipada. He frightens his friends by waving his guns in the air and proclaiming, "Death to the gurus." Even Bryant's former wife, now remarried to a loyal Bhaktipada follower and pregnant again, prays that Drescher will kill her former husband, because Bryant threatens to kill her and her new husband.

Investigators conclude that Shockman acted alone, he had not been in league with Bryant, but admit he might have been influenced by Bryant's writings. Secret meetings in late October, November and December, are held at New Vrindaban to discuss the best way to keep track of Bryant and assassinate him at an opportune time. Drescher explains, "At several high-level management meetings, I was invited to attend. It was jointly agreed that Sulochan [Bryant] posed a clear and present danger to Kirtanananda (others also). The top men concluded that it was preferable to deal with the fallout of Sulochan's death than Kirtanananda's. No one thought they could continue on without Kirtanananda. He was that important to them. It was as if their lives depended on him. To a man they agreed they couldn't imagine going on—as a community or as devotees—if Kirtanananda was killed. The only solution presented was that Sulochan be eliminated."

Drescher is recruited as the principal hit man, but he does not realize that one of his best friends—Randall Gorby—who encourages devotees to murder Bryant, has become a government informer whose phone calls are recorded by the West Virginia State Police. Another Bhaktipada disciple, John Sinkowski, is also recruited to assassinate Bryant.

Devotees support their decision to assassinate Bryant by consulting the Vedic scriptures, which state that killing another human being is sometimes authorized. For instance, the *Manu-Samhita* enjoins that six types of aggressors may be killed with no punishment awarded to the executioner. *Srimad-bhagavatam* instructs, "One should by force cut out the blasphemer's tongue and kill the offender." Swami Prabhupada explained, "[Even a] meek and humble devotee" "should be angry as fire" "if there is blasphemy against one's guru." The conspirators are confident that their actions are authorized by the guru, by saintly persons and by scripture (guru,

sadhu, sastra). Even if they must die in the course of their duty, perhaps killed by Bryant, or executed by the state after a murder trial, they believe their souls will “ascend to the heavenly planets.”

CHAPTER 9: THE KEYSTONE COPS SURVEILLANCE TEAM

In January 1986, Sinkowski is dispatched to California where he watches the Berkeley post office, where Bryant has a mailing address, in hopes of locating Bryant. After a few days without success, he gives up and heads south to Los Angeles. He does not realize that Bryant has flown to Michigan to stay with his parents. Terry Sheldon, the president of Cleveland ISKCON, flies to San Diego, with funding provided by the New Vrindaban temple president, meets with a Ramesvara “enforcer” and attempts to recruit him into the conspiracy. The “enforcer” says he’ll give Bryant a heroin overdose for \$5,000. Sheldon balks at the price and returns to Cleveland. Around the same time, Radhanath Swami flies to Los Angeles, reportedly to discuss the proposed assassination with the Southern California ISKCON guru, Ramesvara Swami, and secure the cooperation of his California “enforcers.” Ramesvara says, “Bryant needs a new body.”

On January 26th, Bryant drives from his parents’ home in Michigan to a motel near Saint Clairsville, Ohio, about 25 miles from New Vrindaban, where he works on press releases for the media. He telephones the New Vrindaban temple president and says he is “coming to Moundsville to destroy Kirtanananda and the New Vrindaban Community.” High-ranking New Vrindaban leaders are struck by fear; they think Bryant will hide in the woods around New Vrindaban and kill Bhaktipada with a high-power rifle. Bryant, however, has no such intentions. He left his rifle in Los Angeles. He intends to destroy the community by publicizing through the media the criminal and immoral activities taking place there.

The New Vrindaban temple president, fearful for Bhaktipada, contacts the Marshall County sheriff with his concerns. The sheriff agrees to help protect Bhaktipada and the community. The sheriff tells the temple president to search for Bryant and to report his movements to the sheriff, so the sheriff can arrest him for issuing death threats. However, unknown to the temple president, the sheriff already knows Bryant’s movements, because Bryant calls the sheriff daily on the phone, as a safety precaution. Bryant does not know that the sheriff is in league with New Vrindaban.

Sheldon and Drescher, eager to protect Bhaktipada, drive to Michigan to search for Bryant, but they do not know he is in a motel in the Ohio Valley. Upon arriving in Detroit, Sheldon telephones Bryant’s mother, pretends to be Bryant’s best friend, and tricks Mrs. Bryant into revealing her son’s location in the motel near Saint

Clairsville, Ohio. Sheldon and Drescher drive back, meet their buddy Randall Gorby at the motel and spy on Bryant. Bryant checks out of the motel and drives to the Wheeling Federal Building, where he meets with the FBI and attempts to convince them to investigate New Vrindaban. The FBI shows little interest. The three members of the surveillance team follow Bryant into Wheeling, and quietly park behind his car. Drescher says to Gorby, "That son of a bitch is going to the police and he is going to have to be killed, and I am the one that is going to do it."

After leaving the FBI office some seven hours later, Bryant speeds off west on I-70, going so fast that he left his pursuer in the dust. The member of the surveillance team is patient however, and stays in the area. He eventually sees Bryant checking into another motel a few miles from the first motel. The next day, Randall Gorby spies on Bryant. Bryant, realizing that he is being hunted, checks out of the motel and drives west again on I-70 at a high rate of speed, eluding his pursuers again. After some time, Bryant doubles back, crosses the Ohio River, enters West Virginia, and finds a boarding house with rooms for rent a few miles south of Moundsville, where he checks in.

The next morning, Drescher, convinced that Bryant is heading back to California, receives \$2,500 in cash from Sheldon and flies to Los Angeles, where he meets up with Sinkowski, who is already in the area looking for contacts to help them hunt Bryant. Sheldon meets with Bhaktipada and informs him that Drescher and Sinkowski are in California to kill Bryant. Bhaktipada says, "Maybe that's what Krishna wants."

That same morning, Gorby telephones the New Vrindaban temple president and "informs" him of Bryant's new hideout. In retrospect, it seems obvious that Gorby had discovered Bryant's location by telephoning the Marshall County sheriff, who Bryant kept in touch with. This indicates that New Vrindaban and the sheriff were in league together against Bryant, a fact later corroborated by Bryant's Moundsville attorney.

The temple president meets with the Marshall County magistrate who writes out a warrant for Bryant's arrest, although it is not a crime to make verbal threats in West Virginia. That night, the New Vrindaban temple president calls the sheriff and "informs" him of Bryant's location. Of course, unknown to the temple president, the sheriff already knows where Bryant is hiding. Two of his deputies had visited Bryant at the boarding house earlier that afternoon.

CHAPTER 10: THE DEMON JAILED

At 12:28 am during the morning of February 6, 1986, two Marshall County sheriff's deputies arrest Bryant at the boarding house. He is taken to jail and charged with assault and carrying a deadly weapon (a .45 pistol which he carried for protection). The article, "Demon Discredited," is published in the *New Vrindaban News*, relating the story of the surveillance team spying on Bryant, the writing of the arrest warrant, and the arrest.

The next day, New Vrindaban leaders, with the permission of the sheriff and chief deputy, examine Bryant's papers, an extremely unprofessional and irresponsible decision. Drescher later noted, "Included among his [Bryant's] memoirs were his thoughts and plans for committing murder, along with the names and addresses of his family, friends and confederates he plotted with. A veritable road map for anyone interested in locating and eliminating Sulochan and his co-conspirators. It was a fantastic and truly unprecedented gift." Later, the sheriff is accused of facilitating the murder of Bryant.

Back in California, Drescher and Sinkowski make important contacts amongst the Los Angeles ISKCON security people and enlist them in helping them track Bryant with the intention of assassinating him. They discuss various ways of killing Bryant: giving him an overdose heroin injection, killing him and dropping the body down an abandoned mine shaft, even chain-sawing the body and depositing the body parts in dumpsters throughout Los Angeles. Drescher, Sinkowski, and two of Ramesvara's security guard disciples travel to the Mojave Desert where they examine abandoned mine shafts where they think they might dispose of the body.

Earlier in January, before flying out to Michigan to see his parents, Bryant had tried to enter the ISKCON Los Angeles vegetarian restaurant with a .45 pistol tucked in the front of his pants, while the guru Ramesvara was inside. Bryant is denied entrance by security. Ramesvara prophetically utters, "Bryant needs a new body," which in devotee terms, means to transfer the soul from one body to another, by killing him. Ramesvara subsequently orders his security guard disciple to cooperate with the New Vrindaban hit men. Ramesvara is aware of the New Vrindaban hit men in Los Angeles searching for Bryant, but does nothing to warn Bryant. He wants Bryant dead. He tells one of his security guard disciples, "Not to get involved, but if people from New Vrindaban were there to give Sulochan another body, then let them do it."

The two hit men leave California on February 9th. When Drescher returns to the east, Sheldon gives him \$1,700 for expense money. Drescher complains, "Hey, they are jerking me around on what I was supposed to get. . . Seventeen hundred? Why—I was supposed to get two thousand!"

CHAPTER 11: A REAL PAIN

Bryant is not a model prisoner in the Marshall County jail. He gets in frequent confrontations with the other inmates, he complains about his living conditions to jail officials, he is disrespectful toward jail employees, and utters obscenities to correctional officers. He throws a plate of spaghetti against the wall because he is afraid someone is trying to poison him. One correctional officer calls Bryant a “real pain.” On March 9th, Bryant fires his attorney; now he has to represent himself in court.

Bryant meets Shockman, who had tried to kill Bhaktipada five months earlier, and the two become friendly. Bryant borrows or begs money from Shockman to replenish his inmate account so he can purchase cigarettes. Bryant becomes paranoid and asks Shockman to make his plate in the jail kitchen and personally bring him his meals, so he will not be poisoned. Bryant trusts Shockman; after all, he chants Hare Krishna and had tried to kill Bhaktipada. During this time, or soon after, Marshall County jail officials, probably the sheriff and/or the chief deputy, make photocopies of Bryant’s mail, requisitions and the log books of correctional officers, and give the copies to New Vrindaban. This is against all prisoner regulations. It appears that the sheriff is trying to help New Vrindaban assassinate Bryant.

On April 3, Bryant is found guilty by a Marshall County Magistrate Court on a charge of carrying a deadly weapon. Bryant is devastated. He thought he had been on a religious crusade pointing out corruption amongst the ISKCON gurus, and now he has been painted as a killer, not a savior. Bryant’s attorney says, “He said he didn’t want to live if this sort of thing could happen.”

After his release from jail, Bryant goes to his parents’ home in Michigan. At New Vrindaban, high-ranking leaders again speak to Drescher about assassinating Bryant. Drescher is reluctant to continue the effort, but after making some calculations, he agrees to kill Bryant if the community reimburses him \$8,000 for his expenses. Drescher later says, “They thought it was a bargain fucking basement price.”

Drescher and Gorby drive to Michigan and spy on Bryant. They put a Snoopy bumper sticker on Bryant’s bumper, take photos of his vehicle, and return to Ohio. Bryant sees the sticker, recognizes it as Krishna fund-raising paraphernalia, and knows he is being watched. He tells his parents he must leave immediately, for his safety and his parents’ safety. Bryant drives to California.

At New Vrindaban, on May 18th, an important meeting is held among high-ranking conspirators, who ask Bhaktipada to authorize \$4,000 for Drescher to hunt Bryant in California. Bhaktipada refuses and leaves. The conspirators continue to discuss possible sources of funding. That night, the New Vrindaban temple president claims Bhaktipada told him to authorize a \$2,500 payment, which Drescher receives from

the fundraising director the next morning. Drescher flies to Los Angeles and rents a car. He telephones Ramesvara's security guard disciple, who tells him Bryant was last seen driving north on I-5, apparently headed for San Francisco. Drescher heads north on the freeway.

Bryant visits his godsister/fiancée near Sequoia National Park, and tells her he is about to be killed because of his mission to point out corruption in ISKCON. He says, "Upon my death, that's when everything will unfold." Bryant then drives to Berkeley where he meets with his best friend and says, "I have the sudden feeling that I am not going to ever see you again." Bryant returns to Los Angeles, where he is spotted by the security guard disciple, who notifies Drescher in San Francisco. Drescher returns to Los Angeles. In two days he puts 1,082 miles on his rented car.

Drescher arrives in Los Angeles and meets with the security guard disciple shortly after noon on May 21st. The security guard disciple hunts for Bryant, and eventually discovers him near the ISKCON temple. The two watch Bryant for the rest of the day and into the night. In the evening, Bryant visits a friend who lives near the temple. Bryant tells him that he is, more or less, giving up his crusade against the ISKCON gurus. He has not attracted a following and he is painted as a killer. Why should he care if ISKCON doesn't care? And he has found another woman that he wants to marry. Perhaps now he can have the family he so much desires.

His friend invites him to spend the night in his house, but Bryant declines, saying that he doesn't want to put his friend in danger, as he knows he is being pursued by New Vrindaban hit men. Bryant departs, drives a short distance in his van, and parks on a side street, where he intends to go in the back of his van, crawl into his sleeping bag, and spend the night. Drescher and the security guard disciple follow him in the distance.

The security guard disciple leaves Drescher, returns to the temple and speaks to his assistant, who prays, "Let's get it [the murder] over with, because it is a nasty thing." The security guard disciple quietly returns to the scene where Drescher stalks Bryant, but hides in the shadows watching and waiting. Bryant rolls a joint while sitting in the driver's seat of his van, when Drescher walks up, saying, "Chant Hare Krishna because you're about to die," and shoots two bullets through the window glass into Bryant's head about 1 am on Thursday, May 22nd. Bryant is instantly killed. Drescher observes tiny liquid particles of Bryant's brain spray out from the bullet holes in his head.

CHAPTER 12: THE MURDER

Drescher quickly gets into his rented car, drives to the airport, ditches the car, and purchases a ticket on the next flight out of Los Angeles; it happens to be going to Dallas. From the LAX airport, he telephones New Vrindaban and informs them that Bryant is dead. The news spreads quickly. At the New Vrindaban 4:30 am temple service, the news is announced, and the members of the congregation erupt into spontaneous applause.

Drescher returns to Ohio and attempts to get the balance of the promised \$8,000 for his expenses. He needs to leave immediately with his wife and son for India, where they are instructed to contact one of Bhaktipada's wealthy Indian disciples who will shelter them. Drescher telephones New Vrindaban, but no one will help him get his payment. The murder conspirators are now fearful for their lives, because they are now involved in a murder, and they fear retribution from law enforcement. Drescher is frantic. He drives to Columbus, Ohio, and meets with his comrade, Sheldon, who says he will try to help him get his escape money. Drescher also meets with Gorby at a restaurant near Youngstown, Ohio. Gorby also promises to help Drescher get his escape money.

Bhaktipada is notified of the murder on Friday, May 23rd, at JFK airport in New York City, after returning from a tour in Germany and The Netherlands. He says, "The Lord simultaneously protected his sincere devotees and killed a demoniac personality." However, Bryant's murder unleashes a powerful and concerted government investigation which puts all the murder conspirators at risk. Drescher's partner in crime who helped him track Bryant in Los Angeles, Ramesvara's security disciple, cooperates with investigators and fingers Drescher and New Vrindaban as the killers. The FBI becomes involved.

ISKCON leaders denounce the murder and distance themselves from New Vrindaban. Ramesvara Swami, who earlier declared, "Bryant needs a new body," and asked his security guard disciple to cooperate with the New Vrindaban hit men, now claims to the press that he and Bryant were practically buddies. Bryant's best friend in Berkeley, and also Bryant's editor for *The Guru Business*, fear for their lives. Others also fear for their lives, such as Marshall County Tax Assessor and Bryant's attorney, who both purchase guns for their own protection.

Back at New Vrindaban, community leaders admonish residents not to talk to the police or the media. At this time, Randall Gorby's phone calls are recorded by state police. Drescher is recorded asking for the balance of his promised payment of \$8,000.

CHAPTER 13: THE CAVALRY COMES TO THE RESCUE

On Sunday morning, May 25th, Randall Gorby drives to New Vrindaban and meets with Howard Wheeler to inquire about the balance from the \$8,000 he promised Drescher. Wheeler says, "We will do it through the normal procedure and we're trying to set up the delivery." In the meantime, Sheldon drives from Ohio to New Vrindaban and spends "ten hours" with Bhaktipada trying to convince him to authorize the release of funds for Drescher's escape to India. At first, Bhaktipada says, "I don't want to hear about it!" Sheldon persists, however, and Bhaktipada finally agrees to get the money. They go to Bhaktipada's house, but he doesn't have enough money (normally he only keeps \$500 to \$1,000 in cash in his personal safe).

Bhaktipada and Radhanath (who we believe was with Sheldon the entire time) drive to the sankirtan leader's house and ask him to give them \$6,000. The sankirtan leader complies, and asks them, "What is this? So they [Drescher and Sheldon] can get out of the country?" Bhaktipada and Radhanath smile and nod their heads, "Yes." Radhanath and Sheldon drive to Ohio and give the money to Drescher. Drescher later complains to Gorby, that they only gave him \$3,500. What happened to the other \$2,500?

On Monday night, Drescher is "packed and ready to fucking go," but he considers stopping in New Vrindaban the next morning on his way to New York City to shake down the sankirtan leader for the balance of his promised payment. The next morning, Drescher, his wife and son, and Sheldon, stop at a Kent, Ohio vegetarian restaurant, perhaps for a gourmet breakfast, because their pockets are stuffed with cash. Little do they know that just minutes earlier, the Kent Police Department received a warrant for Drescher's arrest for the unsolved disappearance of another New Vrindaban resident, Charles Saint-Denis, three years earlier. The Kent police find Drescher in the parking lot of a Kent bank, where the hit man and conspirator intended to change \$4,000 in small bills for big bills. They should have left Monday night for New York, and exchanged their bills at a Brooklyn or Manhattan bank. Their delay costs them dearly.

CHAPTER 14: THE RATS JUMP OFF THE SINKING SHIP

Drescher and Sheldon are arrested; Sheldon is later released on bail, but Drescher is not released. As soon as the New Vrindaban temple president hears the news of the arrest, he flees from New Vrindaban in great anxiety and hides out with a friend at the New Vrindaban satellite center in Brooklyn. Soon after, Sheldon flees from the United States, and hides out at first in Ireland, then Australia, then India, then Malaysia. He is finally apprehended by U. S. marshals and transported back to the U. S. in custody in 1990.

While in jail awaiting his trial, Drescher claims that six federal agents plus the Marshall County sheriff offered him a deal if he implicates Swami Bhaktipada in the murder of Saint-Denis. Drescher, however, refuses to implicate his spiritual master in the murder, nor the other conspirators. Drescher suffers great emotional anguish in jail, but survives due to the preaching of Radhanath Swami and others. Drescher and Radhanath are extremely close. Their emotional attachment is discussed in this chapter. Radhanath is the first person to visit Drescher in jail.

The day following Drescher's arrest, a gas explosion at Randall Gorby's house nearly kills him. He is in coma for weeks, and seven weeks in intensive care. Four years later, Gorby is found dead in his pickup truck, asphyxiated from carbon monoxide intoxication. The police label his death a suicide, but others think he was murdered.

In July 1986 in Bombay, Bhaktipada meets with conspirators Radhanath, Sheldon and Sinkowski and they discuss what to say if there are subpoenaed to appear in court. Bhaktipada blames Sheldon for the mess that they are in. After this, New Vrindaban leaders who were involved in the murder conspiracy leave the community, some never to return. In California, the other devotees who participated in the murder conspiracy also jump ship. Ramesvara abandons his service in Los Angeles, moves to Long Island, and starts working for his father's real estate business. Ramesvara's security disciple also leaves Los Angeles, moves to Brazil, then Hawaii, and later gets a job as a police officer in Santa Paula, a town between Los Angeles and Ventura.

The New Vrindaban temple president hires an expensive Pittsburgh law firm to represent him in court, and pays a \$10,000 retainer, probably through a loan or gift from his wealthy family. Drescher, however, is abandoned and saddled with a public defender. All money at New Vrindaban goes to Bhaktipada's legal fund. All projects are neglected, including the dairy, and cows die from starvation or disease.

The ISKCON GBC pressures Bhaktipada to resign from the GBC if he is indicted. Bhaktipada agrees, but when he is indicted he refuses to resign. In September 1986, New Vrindaban lays off their entire work force of 187 employees. That month a Grand Jury meets to investigate the possible connection between New Vrindaban members and the murder of Bryant. In November, the North American temple presidents recommend that the GBC expel Bhaktipada from ISKCON. Later that month, Bryant's youngest son drowns in a pond on New Vrindaban property. It is labeled an accident.

CHAPTER 15: IT'S PERSECUTION, PURE AND SIMPLE

Thomas Drescher's trial for the 1983 murder of Charles Saint-Denis begins on December 2, 1986. The day before the trial, the Marshall County prosecutor orchestrates a publicity stunt with a television crew: a human body is exhumed from an unmarked grave on wooded property belonging to the community. The body belonged to a brahmacari who had lived at the Old Vrindaban Farm some 11-12 years earlier, who had died in an accident. Since no one knew his next of kin, he was unceremoniously buried in the woods.

On December 5, 1986, the jury of the Circuit Court of Preston County pronounces Drescher guilty of murdering Saint-Denis, although no body had been discovered. A month later, Drescher's partner in the murder, Daniel Reid, leads police to the buried body, in return for a lesser sentence. Drescher is given life in prison, as West Virginia has no death penalty. Drescher claims that he is tortured in the Marshall County jail by being stripped to his shorts, having no mattress but sleeping on the springs of the bed, with an open window in winter. The sheriff claims that Drescher's cell has no window.

Because Drescher refused to implicate Swami Bhaktipada in the murder of Saint-Denis, he becomes a folk hero to many at New Vrindaban. He writes two books while in prison. Radhanath Swami glorifies Drescher's book from India.

On January 5, 1987, fifty FBI, IRS, state and local agents raid New Vrindaban's administrative offices, fundraising house and printing press building. They fill three semi trailer trucks with computers, financial records, filing cabinets, cash, and bumper stickers and baseball caps bearing the names and logos of professional and college sports teams used by the traveling "pickers" to collect donations totaling 12 million dollars between 1981 and 1985. Bhaktipada claims the government is trying "to get rid of us." "They are trying to get rid of the cults."

To protest the raid, the New Vrindaban school is closed and 40 children enroll in Marshall County public schools. Bhaktipada inaugurates a year-long "First Amendment Freedom Tour," during which he appears on 90 radio shows and 60 television shows, including CBS Evening News with Dan Rather, Larry King Live, the Sally Jesse Raphael Show and West 57th Street. He speaks reportedly to 90 million people. New Vrindaban inaugurates an aggressive direct mail marketing program to tens of thousands of Indian families in the United States and Canada. ISKCON interprets Bhaktipada's media tour as a "preparation for Bhaktipada's breaking away to form his own sect."

In March 1987, four buried bodies (2 adults and 2 children) in unmarked graves on New Vrindaban property are exhumed and investigated by the West Virginia State Medical Examiner. No foul play is discovered.

Also in March 1987, Bhaktipada is expelled from ISKCON during the annual meeting of the GBC. They claim he acted in defiance of ISKCON's policies and also attempted to establish himself as the sole spiritual heir to Prabhupada's movement. Bhaktipada is inwardly pleased by his expulsion, and forms his own society: The Eternal Order of the Holy Name—League of Devotees. He also gets the idea to create 12 "Cities of God." Soon he begins de-Indianizing, or Christianizing the prayers and music for the temple services, and the attire and appearance of the devotees, to a classical European Franciscan style.

In April 1987, *Rolling Stone* publishes an article titled "Dial Om For Murder," about the murders of Charles Saint-Denis and Steven Bryant. The authors claim that Bhaktipada ordered the assassination of Bryant to silence him from sharing information about Bhaktipada's illegal and immoral activities.

In June 1987, attorneys for 26 major league baseball teams and United Features Syndicate file a suit against New Vrindaban for illegally using their trademarks in a multi-million dollar nationwide panhandling operation. New Vrindaban sends their fundraising "pickers" overseas to Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong, where the "pickers" can say any damn thing they please to get unsuspecting people to give donations without worrying about legal action. The Far-Eastern "pickers" allegedly collect \$5 million between 1990 and 1993. Most money is channeled into Bhaktipada's legal defense fund. The cows at New Vrindaban go hungry. Some die.

Within a week after Drescher's arrest, his wife leaves him, and moves in with another man. When Drescher in jail hears about this, he asks his partner in crime, Sinkowski, to "whack him." Sinkowski refuses. Drescher then accepts the honored order of Swami from one of Bhaktipada's associates in a ceremony at the West Virginia Penitentiary in June 1987. ISKCON condemns the action of awarding the Swami title to a convicted murderer.

In November 1988, the book *Monkey On A Stick: Murder, Madness and the Hare Krishnas* is published. New Vrindaban claims the book is "a spurious, malicious attack on a religion new to America." In May 1990, a federal grand jury returns an 11-count indictment charging Bhaktipada with racketeering: conspiring to murder Charles Saint-Denis and Steven Bryant, running a fraudulent charity scam, mail fraud and kidnapping.

Bhaktipada pleads not guilty and claims, at different times, that six different antagonists are trying to destroy the New Vrindaban Community: (1) a U. S. Attorney, (2) the anti-cult movement, (3) the U. S. government, (4) the Consolidated Coal Company, (5) "powerful financial interests" who control the "global economy" and "world governments," and (6) ISKCON. He claims he is totally innocent and the trials and tribulations are simply a form of "religious persecution." Most New Vrindaban devotees believe the charges against their spiritual master are "rumors and hearsay." They are blinded by their great emotional investment, by their "deranged devotion."

CHAPTER 16: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

On August 13, 1987, at a hearing in Marshall County Circuit Court, the judge orders that Drescher be extradited to Los Angeles to face a charge of first-degree murder for the death of Steven Bryant, despite the testimony of four New Vrindaban devotees who claim they saw him in Columbus on the day of the murder. Prosecuting Attorney Thomas White says, "I believe it [the Krishna testimony] is fabricated." On Thanksgiving Day, Drescher is extradited to California where he pleads not guilty. Drescher says his time in the West Virginia Penitentiary, where he had a private but small one-man cell, looked "real good" compared to the Los Angeles Jail, where six men are housed in a four-man cell and he has to sleep on the floor.

Drescher's first trial in November/December 1990 ends in a mistrial, as the jury deadlocks. One of his jurors becomes a devotee and is initiated by Drescher in jail. In August 1991, jurors at Drescher's second trial pronounce him guilty. He is sentenced to life in prison. Drescher remarks, "I am neither bitter nor regretful for anything that happened. What I did was for the benefit of the devotees and the world."

Bhaktipada goes to trial in Martinsburg, West Virginia, in March 1991. The prosecuting attorney, William Kolibash claims that Bhaktipada had authorized Bryant's murder because he was afraid that Bryant would expose him as a pedophile. If the New Vrindaban residents discovered that their spiritual master had fallen from his vows of celibacy and molested boys and young men, they would reject him and he would lose his position of absolute power and preeminence. Bhaktipada defends himself, "We don't kill even animals. Then how could I condone or encourage the killing of a human being?"

The new New Vrindaban leaders, who had replaced the Old Guard who were involved in the murder conspiracy and jumped ship, staunchly defend Bhaktipada in conversations, lectures and articles in New Vrindaban publications. The author tells of his experience being called as a defense witness on the stand during Bhaktipada's trial. One New Vrindaban publication notes, "Needless to say there is a conspiracy in this world to stop the Krishna consciousness movement. A lot of lies and deception were used by the prosecution to try to bring down a great devotee of the Lord."

Bhaktipada is convicted of racketeering on Good Friday, 1991. The prosecutors allegedly celebrate with a champagne party. Devotees consider it the darkest day in the history of New Vrindaban. They compare Bhaktipada to Jesus Christ, who was crucified on Good Friday. Bhaktipada calls the trial a "witch hunt," and is incarcerated at the Eastern Regional Jail in Martinsburg, where he makes a motion to appeal the case. In June, the judge announces Bhaktipada's sentence: 30 years in prison. Bhaktipada is released on \$250,000 bail pending appeal, but is not permitted to return to New Vrindaban. He lives under house arrest in a rented house in Wheeling.

At considerable expense (\$495/hour plus \$100,000 retainer), Bhaktipada hires the law firm of Alan Dershowitz—a well-known criminal law professor at Harvard University who successfully defended celebrated and wealthy clients such as Claus von Bulow, Mike Tyson, and O. J. Simpson—to represent his case. In July 1993, the Fourth U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturns the 1991 conviction on the basis of irrelevant testimony being introduced which may have swayed the jury. Bhaktipada returns to New Vrindaban in August 1993 in great triumph. New Vrindaban residents hang a huge sign on the greenhouse, “Welcome Home, Master.” Devotees regard the overturning of Bhaktipada’s conviction as proof that their spiritual master is innocent on all charges.

On the way home from the Parliament of the World’s Religions centennial celebration in Chicago, Bhaktipada is observed by the driver of his Winnebago van engaging in sensuous activities with a teenage male Malaysian disciple, inappropriate for a swami. The driver shares the news with others after returning to New Vrindaban, and the community splits into two nearly-equal camps: one believes the accusations are rumor and defends Bhaktipada’s honor, while the other group regards the accusations as legitimate, and want to expel Bhaktipada from his leadership position. Tensions flare. One angry disciple announces, “Coffins should be procured for the blasphemers who dare to spread slanderous lies about the spiritual master, Krishna’s pure devotee.” The driver of the Winnebago van leaves the community, never to return. Radhanath Swami also leaves in haste. Bhaktipada spends most of his time in his cabin at Silent Mountain, an abandoned stone quarry near Littleton, West Virginia, where he continues to enjoy performing daily fellatio on his 24-year old man servant.

In March 1994 Bhaktipada refuses a plea bargain offered by the prosecutors. Sheldon, who is charged with Bhaktipada as a co-conspirator in the Bryant murder, accepts the offer and serves about five years in a Kentucky prison. Bhaktipada’s refusal to accept the plea bargain puts the community at risk of forfeiture if he loses the case, and this angers Drescher and Sheldon, who abandon their spiritual master and testify against him. Their undying love for Bhaktipada evaporates. Drescher now claims that Bhaktipada ordered the murders of Saint-Denis and Bryant. Drescher’s statements crush Bhaktipada’s case, and Bhaktipada pleads guilty to one count of mail fraud in April 1996. Bhaktipada remains defiant toward ISKCON. “It’s a religious war. They look on me as a demon who has contaminated the pure nectar that Krishna gave us.” Bhaktipada is sentenced to 30 years in prison and fined \$250,000.

In January 1997, Bhaktipada is locked down in solitary confinement for two weeks after his cell mate reported him to prison authorities allegedly for making sexual advances. Drescher in prison tries to reconnect with ISKCON, but few will give him the time of day, except for Radhanath Swami, who Drescher says is “my best friend.”

CHAPTER 17: THE COVER UP CONTINUES

Although Bhaktipada and Sheldon go to prison (and a few others, such as the sankirtan leader and the manager of Palace Press for the copyright case, and Reid for the Saint-Denis murder), other members of the conspiracy to murder Bryant, such as Radhanath Swami, Ramesvara Swami and Sinkowski, get away scot free. (The temple president and Ramesvara's security disciple received immunity.) After leaving New Vrindaban, Radhanath becomes an ISKCON GBC and guru, and serves as GBC or co-GBC for New Vrindaban from 1995-2007. After being released from prison, Sheldon sets up an organic garden at New Vrindaban on 12 acres of land using community funding. A reliable source says that Sheldon receives \$2,000 per month "hush money" from Radhanath Swami to keep quiet about Radhanath's involvement in the Bryant murder.

In 2000, another prominent member of the murder conspiracy, the former New Vrindaban temple president (Arthur Villa), returns to New Vrindaban to serve in the capacity of General Manager (with essentially the same duties as the temple president). It is reported that he receives a salary between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per year, an enormous sum by devotee standards. Radhanath, the co-GBC at New Vrindaban, verily "insists" that Villa be given the lucrative position. When Radhanath, Villa and Sheldon are given prominent positions in ISKCON, others who are aware of their involvement in Bryant's murder feel betrayed.

Sinkowski and Radhanath are subpoenaed to appear before a Grand Jury in the Spring of 1993. Radhanath goes to visit his wealthy father in Chicago, and it seems that all his legal problems disappear. Sinkowski believes Radhanath's father used his political and financial influence to protect his son from prosecution. Sinkowski then threatens Radhanath Swami for "lying" and "blaspheming" against Bhaktipada.

After a time, Sinkowski's deranged devotion to Bhaktipada is turned by one of his employees, a young man who grew up at New Vrindaban who tells him, "Stop defending Bhaktipada. You look like an asshole. Everyone else knows that the rumors [of Bhaktipada molesting boys and young men] are true, except you!" After that, Sinkowski begins threatening those who had once supported Bhaktipada. He mails out postcards which promise death to the receivers, but only in the capacity of karmic reactions. Sinkowski does not personally threaten his victims.

When Radhanath returns to ISKCON in 1994 and is granted powerful positions as a GBC member and guru, the GBC stipulates one condition: "provided the United States Government does not indict him [Radhanath] in its case now pending against Kirtanananda Swami." ISKCON leaders know who had participated in the murder; they need that clause to protect themselves. In any case, Radhanath is not indicted.

In June 2004, after eight years in prison, Bhaktipada is released early, due to poor health, and goes to live with his last remaining U. S. disciples in New York City. In

August 2005, Bhaktipada is accused of attempting to fondle the genitals of a visiting young man, and the devotees in New York split into two camps: those who consider the accusation a rumor invented by envious ISKCON devotees, and those who believe the rumor is true, and try to evict Bhaktipada from the building.

New Vrindaban publishes five books written by Drescher in prison. Radhanath Swami attempts to visit Drescher in prison but is denied entrance because a drug detection dog becomes alerted to his presence. In December 2006, Sinkowski, after twenty years of silence, accuses Radhanath of recruiting him into the Bryant murder conspiracy. Radhanath denies the accusation, and attempts to discredit Sinkowski, calling him a “mad man.”

In 2008 Radhanath’s first book, *Autobiography of an America Swami*, is published. Two years later, in June of 2010, he visits the former New Vrindaban sankirtan leader and attempts to convince him to retract his statement made 22 years earlier that Radhanath and Bhaktipada had come to his house after Bryant’s murder to get money so Drescher could flee the country. The sankirtan leader refuses to retract his testimony.

Three months later, in September 2010, Radhanath Swami attempts to discourage a respected scholar of ISKCON from collaborating with the author in writing a New Vrindaban history book. Radhanath is afraid that the author (Doktorski) will say that he (Radhanath) was involved in the murder plot. Radhanath tells the professor that the professor’s professional “integrity would be at stake.” The scholar of ISKCON declines to write a book about New Vrindaban with Doktorski as co-author.

In March 2008, Bhaktipada moves permanently to India with his confidant. He says, “There is no sense in staying where I’m not wanted.” In India, he is worshiped as the Jagad Guru by his Indian and Pakistani disciples, who have been protected from doubt by Bhaktipada’s confidant. Bhaktipada lives the last two-and-a-half years of his life surrounded by doting disciples. He dies of kidney failure in October 2011. Drescher in prison writes, “One thing was certain: either people loved or hated the man. His death bringing sorrow for some, great elation to others.”

In November 2012, a television crew from The Investigative Discovery Channel comes to New Vrindaban to film an episode about the murder of Bryant . The temple president warns devotees, “Please do not speak to the crew or give them any information.” The show was broadcast in July 2013.

The author sums up *Killing For Krishna* by briefly discussing the teachings of Swami Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, regarding killing for Krishna, such as killing plants, killing animals, and killing human beings. In essence, Prabhupada says that killing for Krishna is a good thing, but killing for one’s own personal gratification is heinous. The author asks, “Who can legitimately authorize killing for Krishna?” and discusses the implications.

The author concludes his book, *Killing For Krishna*, with a warning: wherever deranged devotion exists, there also exists the potential for killing in the name of God. He recommends that charismatic relationships in ISKCON be watched carefully by those who have not invested their emotions in the charismatic leader. Wherever charismatic relationships exist in ISKCON, dispassionate, critical, watch-dog observers should regularly monitor such charismatic gurus and their disciples. They must be watched constantly and offenders must be disciplined, if necessary. Only in this way, the author suggests, can the atrocities of the past never manifest again.

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To purchase *Killing For Krishna*, go to <http://henrydoktorski.com/Killing4Krishna.html>