

A Chapter from

Killing for Krishna

The Danger of Deranged Devotion

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Chapter 11: The Murder

AT APPROXIMATELY ONE A.M. PACIFIC TIME (four a.m. Eastern time), during the night preceding Lord Nrsimhadeva's appearance day, on Thursday, May 22, 1986, a decisive event occurred which ended the life of the protagonist in our story, and inevitably and irrevocably changed the destiny of New Vrindaban. While the 33-year-old Sulochan sat rolling a joint¹ in his rusted 1976 Dodge van, maroon in color, parked near the intersection of Flint and Cardiff Avenues, a half-mile from the Los Angeles ISKCON temple in Culver City, California,² his brains were blown apart by two bullets from a Star Model P .45 caliber hand gun fired through the driver's side window glass at close range.

The coroner reported: "Gunshot wound number one was to the left lower jaw region of the cheek, and it caused injury to the jaw bone, caused injury to a vessel of the carotid artery, and went through the cervical spine, that is, the spine in the neck region, and a bullet was recovered. There was injury to the spinal cord as a result of this gunshot wound. The second gunshot wound . . . also entered the face and the entrance was in a region just in front of the left ear. This gunshot wound went through the cheek region of the left side to a bone called the maxilla, went into the oral cavity and came out through the right maxilla, the cheek bone, and exited, that is came out, in the right cheek region. . . . The bullet was recovered from the musculature behind and lateral to the neck spine on the right side. . . . Surrounding the entrance of gunshot wound number one there were multiple abrasions or scrapes in which there was some glass pieces."³

Through the shattered driver's-side van window, Tirtha observed tiny liquid particles of Sulochan's brain spray out from the bullet holes in his face and splatter inside the vehicle. Tirtha described this in a conversation with Gorby (and also with Tapahpunja) two days later, "Randy, do you remember a scene in the *Deer Hunter* [movie] where they were playing Russian roulette? The brains come out identically that way in slow motion."⁴

After shooting Sulochan twice in the head, Tirtha ran back to his rental car, started the engine, and sped off towards LAX. Krishna-Katha, hiding in the shadows and undoubtedly terrified, also ran back to his car and sped off to his apartment near the temple. Nistraigunya recalled hearing two gunshots and two vehicles starting up soon after his friend Sulochan departed from his house:

After he [Sulochan] left [my house], I turned out the lights and went directly to bed. In the time when I laid down just nodding, not even long enough to drift off, I heard what I thought to be one gunshot, and then a second gunshot. The first one I didn't react, though, and the second one, I did jump out of bed because I heard a car starting up, from what appeared to be the same direction. And I thought something is going on.

I ran out to my front step which was just ten or fifteen feet from my bed. A second vehicle seemed to come from the same area and did go past me while I was standing there. I listened and heard nothing [more] and went back to bed.⁵

After arriving at the airport, Tirtha telephoned his murder accomplice and warned him not to come into the area. (Of course, Krishna-Katha had witnessed the murder and had already left the area, but Tirtha did not know this.) Tirtha always protected his

accomplices, and Krishna-Katha was no exception. Krishna-Katha continued his recollection of the night of the murder:

Around one or two o'clock in the morning I received a phone call from Tirtha. I had to carry on my belt, [a] two-meter F. M. hand-held radio, that I had. One Star made it so that my telephone would ring, it would ring my radio and by pushing certain buttons would access through a phone patch the person calling. So it was like a phone, it was like a radio, it was both. But it wasn't a cellular phone. They had not made those yet.

Tirtha said: "K. K., whatever you do, don't come in the area. I repeat, don't come in the area. I am going to disappear for a while. I will get a hold of you later." And he hung up.⁶

According to Vedic astrology, the time at Sulochan's death was "extraordinarily inauspicious," and "highly favorable to evil acts." Kailasa-Chandra, a sidereal astrologer, commented:

Sulochan was murdered during the fourteenth tithi (lunar phase) of the waxing Moon, during the night preceding Lord Nrsimhadeva's Appearance Day, an extraordinarily inauspicious time. The fourteenth tithi of the waxing Moon, active at the time of the assassination, previous to dawn, highly favors evil acts. This particular tithi is considered the third-most inauspicious of the thirty-phase lunar tithi cycle; surpassed only by the two "Witches' Tithies"—the fourteenth tithi waning Moon and the fifteenth tithi (*amavasya*).

The propaganda that Sulochan was killed on Lord Nrsimhadeva's Appearance Day is false. He was killed on the day before His Lordship's appearance. According to the Vedic calendar, a holy appearance day does not begin until the Sun rises on the eastern horizon. On May 22, 1986, in Los Angeles, the Sun rose many hours after the point-blank hit.⁷

Sulochan's body was cremated in California and his ashes sent to India, as he requested in his will. Mrs. Bryant noted, "My son will be cremated in California. In his will, he stipulated that his ashes be spread over India."⁸

News of the Murder Spreads Quickly: New Vrindaban All A-Buzz

The news of Sulochan's murder traveled fast: lightning fast. The murderer, Bhaktipada's disciple Tirtha, made a speedy getaway from the Los Angeles temple vicinity to the airport (about five miles from the scene of the murder), where he dumped his rental car and made a quick telephone call to New Vrindaban authorities while waiting for the next flight back east. He said, "I went to the airport, dropped off the vehicle, took the first flight out of Los Angeles . . . I guess about an hour and forty-five minutes later. It just happened to be going to Dallas."⁹

That same morning at approximately 7:30 a.m. Pacific time, the Ugly Duckling Rent-A-Car agency received a telephone call from Tirtha, who informed them that he "had left the vehicle parked at one of the parking lots at Los Angeles International Airport, and that he had to leave unexpectedly and fly out." An employee from the agency picked up the car about nine o'clock.¹⁰

During the japa period preceding the *mangala-aroti* morning program at New Vrindaban, the news of Sulochan's death brought great excitement to the devotees in attendance. The news couldn't have taken longer than twenty or thirty minutes to reach them after the murder was committed. When the news was announced, the entire temple

allegedly erupted in “five minutes of applause and cheering.” Tirtha explained, “When it was announced during the morning program at New Vrindaban that Sulochan was dead, a great cheer went up, followed by five minutes of cheering and applause. Then a big kirtan. Not coincidentally, it was Lord Nrsimha’s appearance day. They all took it as a divine omen. Everyone was happy. Though not for long.”¹¹

The sankirtan leader, Dharmatma, also remembered the “excited, jubilant, upbeat, and festive atmosphere” preceding the early morning service at the temple:

It was the morning of Lord Nrsimhadeva’s appearance day. Nrsimha is a form of Krishna that protects the devotees. He is half-man, half-lion. When I came in [the temple room] in the morning everyone was very excited and jubilant and the whole temple was buzzing. Everyone was talking in little circles. It seemed to be a very upbeat mood in the morning. I asked someone, “What is going on?” because it was like a festive atmosphere. The devotee told me, “Haven’t you heard? Sulochan was killed in California last night!”

During the question and answer period after class [a couple days later], a devotee asked Bhaktipada, “How should we understand it when a demon is killed?” Bhaktipada responded that “A devotee isn’t disturbed when a snake is killed.”¹²

New Vrindaban devotees in Philadelphia also heard the news soon after the murder, as did the Philadelphia ISKCON temple leaders. Janmastami, who was living in Philadelphia running his flower-selling business, claimed that the Philadelphia ISKCON temple president, Ravindra-Svarupa, knew about the murder hours before the Los Angeles police discovered the body. Janmastami explained, “Ravindra-Svarupa knew Sulochan was dead several hours before the body was found [by Los Angeles police]. We know that Sulochan was killed at 4 a.m. East-Coast time, and yet by 4:30 a.m. both NVC as well as the NVC devotees in Philly also knew that as well. Stitha-Dhi-Muni dasa [Stewart Kreitzer] (currently of Alachua Fame) was the Temple Commander at the Allens Lane temple when these events took place, and him having heard Tirtha’s phone call to the NVC devotees living in Philly at the time, reported what he had overheard at the payphone to both Ravindra-Svarupa dasa, as well as Sesa dasa (an “Officer of the Court”) before *mangala-aroti* that morning.”¹³ Janmastami continued, “After Sulochan’s murder, no one from NVC was welcome there [at Philadelphia ISKCON] anymore.”¹⁴

As noted in Chapter 8, Ravindra-Svarupa, the ISKCON Philadelphia temple president, confirmed Janmastami’s assertion, “When Sulochan was killed, everybody in ISKCON knew that Kirtanananda was behind it. Because we had New Vrindaban devotees come and tell us, ‘What’s the matter? It was authorized.’ Everybody knew it. No devotee would kill another devotee unless it was authorized (laughter).”¹⁵

Some devotees were shocked to hear the news of Sulochan’s murder. Jamuna dasi, Sulochan’s divorced wife, said, “I was extremely shocked. I hadn’t in the slightest expected that that could have happened.”¹⁶ A devotee artist recalled the shock she experienced upon hearing the news of Sulochan’s death. Saradiya devi dasi (Loetitia S. Lilot) recalled, “In May-June of 1984, my family and I had visited New Vrindaban for about a month. Sulochan asked me to do a painting of Sri Krishna for him and I did, for a minimal amount of money. . . . I was totally shocked when I heard of his death.”¹⁷

One godbrother, who served with Sulochan in Los Angeles (1976), Vrindaban India (c. 1978), and again in Detroit (c. 1982), remembered, “I never saw Sulochan again after

my visit to Detroit. I was very shocked when I found out what they did to him. He was a great person, a very sincere follower of Srila Prabhupada, and a good friend of mine.”¹⁸

Another godbrother remembered, “Sulochan came every day to read *Bhagavad-gita* with me at my apartment on Watseka Avenue; but then one day he inexplicably didn’t show up. I was quite surprised and bewildered; he was so steady. What happened? The next day I found out to my horror and shock that he had been brutally murdered just a few blocks away. He had left his *Gita* in my living room. I lost a good friend.”¹⁹

Others however, such as Radhanath Swami, were pleased to hear the news. Ramachandra dasa (Richard Cousineau), a New Vrindaban sankirtan “picker,” asked the most-senior New Vrindaban sannyasi, Radhanath Swami: “Do you know who killed Sulochan?” Radhanath replied: “I don’t know, but whoever it was, he was doing devotional service to Krishna.”²⁰

Most devotees at the Three Rivers California Krishna community near Visalia thought Sulochan was a “trouble maker,” and would have agreed with Radhanath Swami’s assessment, that whoever killed him was doing devotional service. Jyotir dasa (Tom Greenspan), who lived at the Three Rivers community, said, “He was a trouble maker. . . . Bryant had a lot of enemies within the Krishna movement and was having to move around a lot just to keep from confronting people he had stepped on. . . . Whoever killed him was a hero in [my] eyes and the eyes of Krishna.”²¹

In an e-mail to the author, Tapahpunja Swami recalled, “When the news came that Sulochan had been killed, it came as a shock—and a relief—to everyone back in New Vrindaban.”^{22 23} Dharmatma continued his recollection of the day of the murder: “Later on after the morning functions, I had a discussion with Kuladri. He was quite disturbed. He mentioned . . . how it shouldn’t have been done like that. And that how Radhanath, Hayagriva and Tapahpunja were pushing like crazy for this to happen, and how he had told them not to do it.”²⁴

Janmastami had planned to fly to California the next day, at Tirtha’s request, to again assist his partner-in-crime to “destroy the demon.” But since the mission was already accomplished, Janmastami remained in Philadelphia running his business selling flowers.²⁵ Los Angeles police were notified of the murder about 9:45 a.m. Pacific time when a pedestrian walked past the van, noticed the broken glass, glanced inside and called police.²⁶

From Dallas, Tirtha caught a flight to Cleveland, Ohio, where he probably arrived in the late afternoon or early evening. We do not know what he did for the next 24 hours, but we think he was picked up at the airport by his wife, son and stepson, and taken to their trailer park home in Ravenna, Ohio, to catch up on his rest, as he had not had an opportunity to sleep (except perhaps during the two flights) since Wednesday morning.

Tirtha Told to Go to India

Tirtha was instructed to fly to India with his family, where Bhaktipada’s wealthy disciple, Nathji dasa (Dr. Narendra D. Desai—an industrialist, philanthropist, educationist, and the chairman of APAR Industries), would, it was claimed, provide for their lodging. During a telephone conversation with Randall Gorby recorded by the West Virginia State Police, Tirtha explained:

This is extremely privileged information. They want me to go to India. That’s Number One’s plan. He has a disciple who’s a real wealthy man and he is going

to instruct him first with a Telex that I'm arriving, so on and so forth. And then, when he [Bhaktipada] goes over there, supposedly next month, he will take him aside and explain the whole situation to him. . . .

I'm going [to India] . . . with [my wife] Suzanne and [son] Tapas. . . . We're supposed to go to New York . . . and get all that shit [passport and visa] together. You know, in New York you can do it all in a few days.²⁷

Tirtha's wife, however, was not keen about moving to India permanently. She explained, "I don't think I'm ready for it. [I could go to India] to visit, but I know I couldn't live there. . . . It's hard to live there, I've heard."²⁸

Escape Money Denied to Tirtha

Tirtha had successfully executed the community's objective, but he still had to make his escape: he desperately needed to leave the country until things cooled down. However he didn't have enough money to purchase plane tickets for himself and his family. New Vrindaban still hadn't delivered him in full the promised amount of \$8,000—they owed him about \$5,500—but for some reason, the community was dragging its feet; the money was not forthcoming. Tirtha telephoned Gorby and complained "[I'm] tired of them [New Vrindaban] dribbling it [the money] out."²⁹

Tirtha had little money himself; in fact, according to Tapahpunja Swami, he was in debt. Tapahpunja described Tirtha's financial straits during an interview with a private investigator, who explained, "Drescher told Sheldon that he was financially destitute. Drescher had moved his family into a run down mobile home near Ravenna, Ohio. His credit rating was so bad that he had needed someone to use their name to have a phone installed and the electricity turned on. At this meeting he again offered to sell his white Isuzu [Trooper, a four-wheel-drive SUV] in order to continue living. Sheldon said that he chastised him for his foolhardy spending habits and admonished that unless he made a wholesale change in his life he was a burden to deal with."³⁰

After returning home to Ravenna, Tirtha telephoned Kuladri, Dharmatma, Hayagriva, and Dulal-Chandra (the comptroller of New Vrindaban) and tried to get his money, to no avail. In an e-mail to the author, Tapahpunja explained, "Tirtha tried asking every conceivable New Vrindaban manager to 'get his money,' but no one would even answer his calls. He was, to put it lightly, radioactive. He was really angry and feeling betrayed. I was in contact with him via phone."³¹

Dharmatma Refuses to Give Tirtha Any More Money

Tirtha telephoned Dharmatma on Friday, May 23rd, and demanded the remainder of his promised payment. Tirtha recalled, "I was previously promised that in the event I needed to leave [the country] there would be money available, so I . . . called Dharmatma myself to ask him for some money."³²

However, Dharmatma refused to give Tirtha any more money. Just four days earlier, on May 19th, he had personally given Tirtha \$2,500 in cash to pay for his second trip to California, because Kuladri told him that Bhaktipada had authorized that payment. Dharmatma would not give Tirtha, or anyone else for that matter, any money without authorization from Bhaktipada. In addition, now that Sulochan was dead, Dharmatma was afraid that if he gave Tirtha any more money, he could be further implicated in the murder. Dharmatma explained:

Tirtha called me on the phone and asked me if I had any more money for him. I said, “No. I didn’t know anything about any more money.” He said, “Well, there is supposed to be some more money for me. Talk to ‘Number One’ [Bhaktipada], and I will get back to you.”

When Tirtha called back [later that same day], first of all, he asked if I had talked to ‘Number One.’ And at this point I was really freaked out because the murder happened and I knew that I had given him twenty-five hundred dollars [for his California trip], so I realized somehow I was implicated and I was very frightened. So I told him, “Well, no. I looked for him but I couldn’t find him,” when in fact I had not really looked for him. I didn’t want to involve myself anymore.

Tirtha got very angry at that and said, “You both, you are bull shitting me.” I said, “No, no, you know how he is. He is hard to find. Sometimes I can’t find him.” [Incidentally, Bhaktipada was not in New Vrindaban when Tirtha telephoned Dharmatma; he was returning from Europe and wouldn’t be back until late Friday night.]

And then Tirtha got very angry and he started swearing, and saying, “This is just fucking me around, they are just screwing around with me. Bhaktipada always screws me around. I am supposed to have more money. I got to leave the country. I did the job, you know. I need my money.” He kept yelling and screaming.^{33 34}

Why was Tirtha unable to get the money which Hayagriva had promised him? Dharmatma could have given Tirtha the money if he wanted to; if he thought Bhaktipada had authorized the payment. But Dharmatma had become fearful of incriminating himself further in the murder conspiracy. By the same token, Kuladri could also have authorized the acquisition of funds for Tirtha even in Bhaktipada’s absence; he could have pulled some strings, if he wanted. But it seems that Kuladri now also had second thoughts; he had, like Dharmatma, also become reticent to incriminate himself further. Kuladri had, in effect, pulled another New Vrindaban “Okey-Dokey” on Tirtha, as he had done to so many others in the past: “Promise him everything and deliver nothing.” This was simply “business as usual.” Tirtha was on his own; hardly anyone at New Vrindaban would even talk to him.

Tirtha Speaks to Tapahpunja in Columbus

After hanging up on Dharmatma, Tirtha was upset and worried (and rightly so) that he might not receive the balance of his payment which Hayagriva had promised. What could he do? He thought, “Perhaps my comrade Tapahpunja can help me.” Tirtha got in his SUV and drove to Columbus to the Festival of India sponsored by Ohio State University, arriving during the afternoon. The Columbus ISKCON temple had an exhibit at the festival. Tirtha chatted with the temple president Karusa dasa (Kerry Roth), Tapahpunja Swami and a visiting sannyasi from New Vrindaban, Varshan Maharaja (Jack Mowen, formerly Kasyapa), who were preaching at the festival.³⁵

The most pressing thought on Tirtha’s mind was getting the remainder of the \$8,000 he was promised by Hayagriva for “destroying the demon,” and purchasing air tickets for himself and his family to leave the country. During an August 2003 telephone conversation with the author, Tapahpunja explained, “I was in Columbus when suddenly Tirtha showed up and told me, ‘The tripe is gone.’ I asked, ‘What are you gonna do?’ Tirtha replied, ‘I dunno. Kirtanananda hasn’t finished paying me. He gave me some

expense money, but he still owes me a lot. I've been calling New Vrindaban, Dharmatma, Kuladri and Dulal to get my money, but they just give me the run-around.”³⁶

Twelve years later, in an April 2015 e-mail to the author, Tapahpunja told the same story, “The day . . . Tirtha pulled the trigger, he flew back to Cleveland and then drove to Columbus the next afternoon. I was preaching at Ohio State University’s Festival of India. He told me the horrid details. . . . I shook my head in disbelief and asked him about his plans. Tirtha wanted to take his family and leave for India but not without the remainder of the money owed to him by Kirtanananda Swami. He was stuck and no one [at New Vrindaban] would talk to him.”³⁷

The author asks: can we trust Tapahpunja’s memory? He claimed (twice) that Tirtha told him Kirtanananda promised the money, yet Tirtha didn’t say he called Kirtanananda to get his money, he said he called Dharmatma, Kuladri and Dulal. Why not simply call Kirtanananda, if Kirtanananda had promised him the money? That question is most easily answered if we understand that Hayagriva had promised the money, not Kirtanananda. Tirtha never even talked to Bhaktipada about the murder, much less the “surveillance” expenses which had to be reimbursed.

Later in this chapter, we will discover that Tirtha did call Hayagriva for the money, and to emphasize his dire need, he threatened to do bad things to Hayagriva’s wife and children if he didn’t get the money soon. Either Tapahpunja was confused, or perhaps he was trying to protect the other members of the conspiracy by putting the blame solely on Bhaktipada, where it does not belong.

Regardless, it seemed that Tapahpunja was not able to offer Tirtha much solace. Who could Tirtha turn to? In his mind, Tirtha thought of his friend Gorby, who was like a father to him. Tirtha may have surmised, “Gorby is friends with Hayagriva. Hayagriva has promised me the money. Maybe Gorby can help me by speaking to Hayagriva.” Tirtha telephoned his friend, Randall Gorby, from Columbus, saying: “I am in the Big ‘C,’ and took care of everything in California, and would like to talk to you.”³⁸ The two friends made an appointment to meet at the Dutch Pantry restaurant outside of Youngstown, Ohio.

Bhaktipada is Notified of the Murder

When Sulochan was murdered on Thursday, May 22nd, Bhaktipada was celebrating Lord Nrsimhadeva’s appearance day festival at the Nrsimha-Ksetre (Simhachalam) ISKCON temple/farm in Jandelsbrunn, Germany. On Friday, he began the last leg of his European tour on a LTU (German Charter Airlines) flight from Frankfurt to New York City with Devamrita Swami and two teenage boys, Jayananda and Chaitanya-Mangala. Bhaktipada heard the news of Sulochan’s murder after passing through customs at Kennedy International Airport.³⁹ Madhava-Ghosh picked up Bhaktipada and his entourage at the international terminal and transported them to the domestic terminal for their flight to Pittsburgh. Madhava-Ghosh told Bhaktipada that “Bryant had been killed.”⁴⁰

Bhaktipada’s servant, Chaitanya-Mangala, remembered, “Our traveling party celebrated Nrsimha Chaturdasi at the ISKCON Nrsimha-Ksetre (Simhachalam) temple/farm in Jandelsbrunn, Germany. The next day we flew to New York. As soon as we got in the van at the New York terminal, while still parked curbside, the devotees picking us up eagerly shared news that Sulochan had been killed the day before. This was clearly the first time Kirtanananda was hearing about this. He responded that he saw it as

an auspicious sign, having just come from celebrating Nrsimhadeva's appearance day with great pomp and circumstance at the Simhachalam farm. He added that, like with Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu, it was clear the Lord had simultaneously protected His sincere devotees and killed a demoniac personality. As the van traveled towards the connecting terminal for our flight to Pittsburgh, devotees commented how they saw this as further proof of the Divine intervention of Lord Nrsimhadeva, Who some believed had previously appeared in one of Kirtanananda's medical brain scans."⁴¹

That evening, Kuladri greeted Bhaktipada and his entourage at Pittsburgh International Airport. Devamrita Swami recalled that Kuladri showed Bhaktipada "a newspaper article about Bryant's death" and that Kuladri "acted pleased."⁴² According to Devamrita Swami, it appeared that Kuladri was more pleased to inform Bhaktipada about the murder than Bhaktipada was after hearing about it. Bhaktipada, after all, may not have known it was his men who plotted and executed the assassination, but Kuladri knew. Kuladri had endeavored with determination for months to achieve this end. Kuladri must have been very pleased. However, his satisfaction, as we shall see in the following pages, did not last very long.

Backlash

Sulochan's murder prompted law enforcement agencies to treat his accusations against Bhaktipada seriously; perhaps, they suspected, Bhaktipada was responsible for Sulochan's death. One police officer noted: "Bryant was a martyr for his faith. He was one lone voice in the wilderness and he was killed because he talked about corruption. He went up against the heavyweights and he lost."⁴³

Sulochan's attorney explained, "Bryant's murder was the beginning of a long downhill slide for Swami Kirtanananda, mainly because it happened in California, beyond the reach of his millions. The two investigators assigned to it, Paul 'The Stump' Tippin [a detective for the city of Los Angeles assigned to the Robbery Homicide Division], and [his partner] Leroy Orozco, were experienced Los Angeles detectives who had worked on several high-profile murders. There would be no cover-up."⁴⁴

Even Krishna-Katha (Jeffrey Breier), Tirtha's accomplice and sidekick in Los Angeles, was impressed with the two detectives, Tippin and Orozco, as having "integrity." During a telephone conversation with the author, Breier claimed, "Those two detectives who questioned me became a big influence in my life. I felt they had integrity. I gave them some of Prabhupada's books to read, and I could tell they actually read the books, because their questions to me reflected the knowledge they had acquired from reading Prabhupada's books. After I left ISKCON, I went on to become a police officer myself, and I tried to serve with integrity."⁴⁵

Sergeant Thomas Westfall noted, "Steve Bryant's murder was a catalyst because it gave us [the local Marshall County Sheriff's Department] the chance to get the Federal government involved."⁴⁶ During a lecture at a 1999 ISKCON seminar, Ravindra-Svarupa spoke about the investigation of Sulochan's murder:

So all of a sudden Sulochan is passing around papers about the ISKCON game and stuff and everybody's dismissing him as a nut until he was murdered. His stature increased immensely and his credibility in the eyes of the police. And they [law enforcement agencies] began an investigation into his murder.

And Tirtha, for some reason, left a wide trail leading back to him and New Vrindaban. The car he was using he had rented at the airport, using his photo ID and stuff like that. And so they quickly concluded that this was a professional hit and that New Vrindaban or Kirtanananda was behind it.

Because it started in West Virginia and happened in California, it went across state lines and so the Federal Government came in. The FBI investigated, they started to find out how New Vrindaban was making its money and all of a sudden there's a prosecutor from the Federal Government Justice Department investigating New Vrindaban. . . .

The newspapers were just going to town about this whole thing. This reporter from the *San Jose Mercury News* named John Hubner wrote a two part series called "Crime and the Krishnas." Starting with Kirtanananda . . . Hamsadutta had unburdened his soul to this reporter . . . and he also talked about Kirtanananda and what happened out there.⁴⁷

As Ravindra-Svarupa noted, Tirtha was extremely careless about leaving clues for law enforcement agents to track. Janmastami confirmed, "Tirtha left a trail as wide as a twelve-lane highway, and as the Los Angeles homicide detective Tippin said, 'this was a professional hit; it just wasn't professionally done.'"⁴⁸

ISKCON Leaders Denounce the Murder

ISKCON leaders who were aware of (or supported) the plot to murder Sulochan began to distance themselves from New Vrindaban once the federal government became involved in the investigation. Janmastami confirmed: "Only after the murder had been committed did any of ISKCON's leaders challenge the philosophy that prevailed at New Vrindaban at that time."⁴⁹

For example (as described earlier), in January 1986 Radhanath Swami flew to Los Angeles and met with Ramesvara Maharaja, reportedly to discuss cooperation between the two temples to "destroy the demon." Ramesvara, in turn, ordered his ksatriya security-guard disciple to "cooperate" with the New Vrindaban hit men who were hunting Sulochan in California. He made his orders clear at the Los Angeles ISKCON restaurant, when he emphatically declared, "Sulochan needs a new body."

Yet after the murder, Ramesvara Swami suddenly claimed that he and Sulochan were practically buddies. Ramesvara Swami insisted, "As far as I know, Sulochan didn't have any bad feelings toward myself and similarly, I had no bad feeling toward him. He wasn't disturbing us. He came and went very secretly. A number of our core members attended his funeral in Los Angeles; they wanted to show their sympathy and outrage."⁵⁰ Mukunda Goswami, director of public affairs for ISKCON and senior editor for *ISKCON World Review*, said it was "absolutely absurd to think that our society would have anything to do with the man's murder."⁵¹

ISKCON World Review, known as "the ISKCON propaganda headquarters for the world,"⁵² suddenly became silent regarding New Vrindaban. The *IWR* public relations assistant explained, "Bhutatma [a writer, the general manager and treasurer for the newspaper] called a moratorium on New Vrindaban press releases or any news from New Vrindaban. Our newspaper was silent."⁵³

The editors of the *ISKCON World Review* attempted to "perpetrate denial and disinformation." Nori J. Muster noted, "It was our policy not to report problems because we saw ourselves as gatekeepers who had to maintain the pride and enthusiasm of other

ISKCON members. In effect, our department perpetrated institutional denial and disinformation.”⁵⁴ Despite the silence of *ISKCON World Review*, national and international newspapers enthusiastically covered the murder. Nori J. Muster explained:

The *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, UPI, AP, and most other news organizations reported the murder investigation. In its article “Troubled Karma for the Krishnas,” *Time* magazine quoted Sulochan’s allegation that New Vrindaban “was becoming like the Rev. Jim Jones’ notorious People’s Temple.” The headline in *Hinduism Today*, widely circulated in the Asian community, summarized the unfortunate situation: “Murder Quickens Wider Crisis in Krishna Sect: In-Fighting, Succession Struggle and Demands for Reform Convulse ISKCON.” We [the editors of *ISKCON World Review*] felt the convulsions in the form of telephone calls pouring into the office. What to do about the flood of negative publicity? we were asked.⁵⁵

Ramesvara was livid about the widespread negative publicity because of the Krishna killing hardly a mile from his temple. He telephoned the editors of *ISKCON World Review* and expressed his displeasure:

“What the hell are you going to do about this?” Ramesvara said. “What do you think I’m paying you for?”

“It isn’t my job to make people stop killing each other,” Mukunda said.

“Look, I can cut your budget off if you don’t do something. Get out there and see what’s going on.”⁵⁶

At New Vrindaban, Bhaktipada denied that he had anything to do with Sulochan’s murder and said that the fact that he was in the news did not concern him. He said: “I don’t care what they say about me as long as they say it. All I know is that more people than ever are coming to visit the Palace. Business is wonderful.” Regarding the murdered Sulochan, Bhaktipada said: “He had a lot of enemies. Mostly, he had the Lord as his enemy.”⁵⁷

Bhaktipada attempted to discredit Sulochan: “Who is Bryant? Even his parents admitted he was unstable. For years he wandered around lost; he beat his wife, abused his children—he slowly became crazed, and his only objective in life was to tear down the authorities.”⁵⁸ Another time, Bhaktipada called Sulochan a “crazy fanatic.”⁵⁹

Puranjana and Kailasa-Chandra Fear For Their Lives

Puranjana and Kailasa-Chandra, who had supported Sulochan in his preaching against the zonal acharyas, feared that they may have also been targeted for surveillance, or worse. When he heard about Sulochan’s murder, Puranjana in Berkeley was shocked and saddened, but not surprised. Soon after, he claimed he was attacked by three New Vrindaban enforcers. Puranjana remembered:

A few days later [after the murder], I was informed by a Berkeley devotee, “Sulochan was assassinated, his body was found in his van, it was full of bullets.” I was shocked, saddened, but not really too surprised. I also knew that I was next on their list. . . .

Shortly after that, officer Joe Sanchez came to meet me at the Berkeley temple. He said that the FBI had discovered that Tirtha was planning to assassinate me next. “You are next on their list, they found a note in Tirtha’s pocket with a description of your truck. They are doing surveillance on you,” he said. He wanted me to move away, under a witness protection program perhaps,

but I told him that this would be too complicated since the Krishna devotees find out where other Krishna devotees are—real soon. So I had to call Joe Sanchez every day at a random time so he could check on my welfare.

Meanwhile, three “goons” came from New Vrindaban to beat me up. They were chasing me down the street when officer Joe Sanchez came screeching around the corner in his patrol car with the lights on and the siren blaring. He got out and placed handcuffs on all three. One of them was Hamsadutta’s goon by the way. And he told them all to go back to West Virginia and stay out of Berkeley.⁶⁰

Can we accept Puranjana’s fantastic story at face value? Probably not. He claims he was attacked shortly after Sulochan’s murder, maybe a week or two later. Yet we know that after the murder, and especially after Tirtha’s arrest five days later, the conspirators were paralyzed with fear. They were fearful for their own safety, as they knew they had participated in a grave felony offense and would likely be implicated in criminal charges. (This will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 13). After the murder, none of the New Vrindaban or California hit men would have threatened a fly. They knew that they were, as Janmastami noted later, “in very deep doo-doo.”⁶¹

If Puranjana’s story has any factual basis, who were the three enforcers who chased him down the street? After Tirtha flew from Los Angeles to Cleveland on May 22nd, New Vrindaban had no more hit men left in California. The three men who chased Puranjana could, however, have been Hamsadutta’s men in Berkeley. Five months earlier, Hamsadutta had brought his faithful followers to New Vrindaban to surrender to Bhaktipada. Hamsadutta and Bhaktipada had close ties, and both were known for keeping company with thugs. Perhaps these three Hamsadutta hit men might have lived at New Vrindaban for a time, but they were certainly not working in collaboration with the New Vrindaban murder conspirators. Perhaps they had a personal vendetta against Puranjana, but whatever was their disagreement with him, it was probably not in relation to Sulochan.

Kailasa-Chandra—the brains behind Sulochan’s book, *The Guru Business*—also feared retaliation from New Vrindaban enforcers. Although Sulochan promised to keep his brahmin friend’s identity secret, Kailasa-Chandra’s legal surname—“Jay”—was handwritten in Sulochan’s personal papers. After the Moundsville Sheriff allowed New Vrindaban intelligence to examine his diary and personal papers, some efforts were apparently made by the murder conspirators to discover the identity of “Jay,” but without success. Kailasa-Chandra explained:

When I assisted Sulochan by making suggestions and editing his various documents in the summer of 1985, I made it known that I did not want my involvement in his mission advertised. Since the 1979 Vrindaban debate with the “zonal acaryas,”⁶² I had known about and witnessed the extreme and fanatical mentality possessed by most henchmen of the “new gurus” (not just Kirtanananda), and I was not willing, unlike Sulochan, to make myself an easy target.

This strategy of painstakingly keeping my identity more or less covert proved useful when New Vrindaban attempted to discover who was in cahoots with their arch-nemesis, Sulochan. When he was arrested by deputies of the Marshall County Sheriff’s Department, New Vrindaban authorities were given permission to examine Sulochan’s diary and his other papers. My last name at that time (Jay)

was found amongst these papers, and the New Vrindaban goons attempted to discover my identity—fortunately for me, without success.

I came to know of most of this much later. Some months after Sulochan's murder and the arrest of his murderer, a sergeant with the Berkeley Police Department contacted me and informed me of a cryptic note found on the assassin's person which, citing my last name, questioned who and where I was. Even after Sulochan's murder, for decades I continued to keep my former relationship with him more or less confidential. Only recently have I permitted my collaboration with Sulochan to be more widely known.⁶³

Kailasa-Chandra, while at Mount Kailasa, kept his eyes open for threatening strangers which might cause him to leave at a moment's notice. He recalled, "After Sulochan's assassination, I was especially alert to be always packing while at the isolated Mount Kailasa project in northern California."⁶⁴

Eric Johanson also remembered Kailasa-Chandra's concern regarding strangers at Mount Kailasa and his habit of carrying a gun for protection. Johanson recalled, "At the [Mount Kailasa] farm Kailasa-Chandra dasa always kept a firearm close by, especially after Sulochan dasa's murder. When mysterious vehicles were seen across the elevated mountaintop valley from the extremely isolated and sparsely populated farm of 1987, the usual concern was that it could be someone from New Vrindaban."⁶⁵

Even today, more than thirty years after Sulochan's murder, Kailasa-Chandra still carries a gun on his person. He believes that it is better to be "safe than sorry." Kailasa-Chandra explained, "I am psychologically and practically prepared and able to use lethal force against any 'ISKCON' aggressor should that violent cult mentality rear its ugly head once more, reverting back to its gross, old ways of thuggery, up to and including murder."⁶⁶

As noted earlier, Kailasa-Chandra's concern for imagined retaliation by New Vrindaban hit men was unfounded. Yet Puranjana and Kailasa-Chandra's fears for their personal safety were reasonable, considering that they knew nothing of the widespread dysfunction and paralysis which crippled the determination of the New Vrindaban murder conspirators shortly after the fact.

Marshall County Tax Assessor Buys a Gun

Another person who feared for his safety was the Marshall County tax assessor, Alfred W. "Pinky" Clark. When Sulochan had warned him during a February 5th telephone call that, "Kuladri and Bhaktipada will get you too," Clark had little reason to become alarmed. But after Sulochan's murder, Clark purchased a silver-plated .38-caliber revolver, which he carried in his jacket pocket at all times. The Sheriff's Department also provided surveillance of Clark's Pleasant Valley home, about two miles from New Vrindaban.

Clark was extremely unpopular at New Vrindaban, because he had fought against the community for years through the courts. He attempted to assess the Palace as a business instead of as a non-profit religious organization, and he also attempted to revoke the community's tax-exempt status. If a New Vrindaban "enforcer" killed Sulochan, Clark thought, perhaps he might be next. Clark's suspicion was collaborated by a hired employee at New Vrindaban who said that "the talk [at New Vrindaban] was [that someone was] going to get Clark."⁶⁷

Clark explained why he purchased a gun, “My only involvement with them [New Vrindaban] is the tax case now in litigation. But Bryant said I was ‘involved,’ [he] said I was just like him—being stalked. I’ve been in office twenty years. It’s a damn sad day that I would have to be recommended law enforcement protection. They [the Krishnas] are not the God-fearing, worshiping people they purport to be.”⁶⁸ Clark concluded, “I always keep it [my gun] pretty close. . . . It’s just a matter of time before trouble hits.”⁶⁹

The New Vrindaban spokesman, Tulsi dasa, tried to reassure the media that the tax assessor had nothing to fear. Tulsi explained, “[His fears are] absurd. Clark does not have anything to fear nor does anyone else have anything to fear. . . . To think we could consider hurting someone is preposterous.”⁷⁰

Sulochan’s Attorney Buys a Gun

David Gold, Sulochan’s attorney, also purchased a handgun to protect himself, an aluminum Colt .38, after he was told by Fred Gardener, an assistant prosecuting attorney who worked out of Thomas White’s office, that a high-ranking New Vrindaban resident said that Bhaktipada had put out “a hit” on him. Tirtha had allegedly followed Gold a few times, under the cover of darkness, to his isolated cabin in the woods on Richard Rose’s property. David Gold explained:

[Fred Gardener told me] “We’ve been interviewing devotees recently about the Chuck Saint-Denis murder. Lots of people who are afraid of Drescher are starting to come forward now because they really think we might have him this time. Anyway, we had this one devotee in last week, a pretty high-up guy in the organization. Been at New Vrindaban from the beginning. He had some good corroborating details on the Saint-Denis case, and validated a few things we already knew about the Bryant murder. I could tell he had good information so I asked him if Keith Ham had a hit out on anybody else.”

Fred paused for effect then grinned. “He said, ‘Yeah, that lawyer, David Gold.’ This witness said Drescher used to follow you out to your cabin. You’ve got a cabin out at Rose’s place, right? Dark brown wood, cement block foundation? Sits right above a little stream?” I nodded.

“Yeah, well, that’s the place Drescher described to this witness. Drescher said he followed you out there a few times. . . . Drescher told this guy, ‘The only reason that son-of-a-bitch Jew boy is still alive is I couldn’t find the right spot to blow him away.’”⁷¹

Tirtha denied the accusation that he had stalked David Gold. “Gold may have been approached by Tom White and he may have been told that story of a stalking-murder attempt. I guess it could have been Kuladri who leaked it to them. . . . Or maybe someone else, although it had to be someone very high up. . . . I certainly didn’t know Rose had a cabin there [in the woods]. And I never walked the property looking for Rose or Gold. It makes a good Hollywood script, but isn’t true.”⁷²

Brijabasis Cautioned Not to Speak to Media or Police

Many New Vrindaban devotees correctly guessed that Tirtha was the murderer. During a telephone conversation with Gorby, Tirtha explained, “He [Tapahpunja] said [to me] that half the devotees in New Vrindaban were talking that it was me that did it. So that’s why they want to move me on out [to India]. . . . I would feel a lot more assured if I could meet with Bhaktipada himself just briefly and he just said, ‘Just do like this and do like that.’ I would feel confident then that I was doing the right thing. . . . I could try to do that

[meet with Bhaktipada] but I'm not sure he would even talk to me now. I think the Iron Curtain dropped out there. I think they're covering [their eyes] with both hands again.”⁷³

Scarcely a week after Sulochan's murder, one high-ranking ISKCON sannyasi who had come to live at the community a few months earlier, Devamrita Swami, wrote a feature article for the *New Vrindaban News* titled “A Word To The Wise Is Sufficient” which warned devotees to keep their mouths shut if questioned by the media or police. If anyone knew of any criminal activities, he said, they should report it not to the police nor to the media, but to the temple authorities, who would, it was implied, take whatever action they deemed appropriate. Devamrita Swami preached:

Life in the material world is constantly full of upheavals, and a fruitive worker never ceases his efforts to squeeze out some sense gratification, regardless of whether the situation is one of so-called happiness or so-called distress. Right now the media and some law enforcement officials are amusing themselves by harassing the New Vrindaban Community about the death of one great *vaisnava-aparadhi* (offender) on the west coast.

The media and some police are clearly more interested in creating a sensationalistic atmosphere and profiting from it than in reporting truth or stopping violence. Therefore, if our devotees engage in wild rumors and gossip about the mundane affairs of L. A. street crime, they can actually help the karmis toward their sublime goal of an endless stream of “juicy” news to report and “suspicious” hearsay to interrogate innocent devotees about.

Naturally, if anyone ever has any factual knowledge of someone performing criminal acts, he should inform the temple authorities. Otherwise what is the use of exchanging who-dunit speculations about the illusory activities of the gross materialists? This is called *gramya-katha*, “town talk,” by Sri Jagadananda Pandit [the eternal associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and incarnation of Satyabhauma, who, according to *Caitanya-caritamrita*, prominently assisted in Mahaprabhu's pastimes at Navadvipa and Puri], who warns devotees against indulging in such stale topics.

This is not the first time controversy has been stirred up against the community nor will it be the last. Whenever there is powerful preaching, Maya always supplies resistance. Obviously, the best thing we can do both for ourselves and all other living entities is to absorb the consciousness in talks of devotional service, specifically how to sacrifice everything to build Srila Bhaktipada's project.⁷⁴

More articles warning devotees to keep quiet appeared in other New Vrindaban publications:

MAINTAIN THE PURITY. . . . Srila Bhaktipada has stated that he does not know of any illegal activities in New Vrindaban and he flatly disapproves of such things. Any devotee who may know of illegal activities in New Vrindaban is requested to report them to the community administration. Srila Bhaktipada has also requested that devotees refrain from indulging in idle gossip and rumor-mongering about individuals and issues, and that they maintain the purity of New Vrindaban by speaking of the nectarian pastimes Lord Krishna and His devotees.

⁷⁵

BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TALK TO, PRABHUS—. . . This is a warning to devotees not to talk about these allegations with any unknown men or women who suddenly appear in our community. Although we have nothing to hide, there

are those who will distort even the simplest truths. Also, remember that there is an organized conspiracy to destroy this community, and demons can come in many disguises. Putana [the witch] came as a lovely lady and fooled the residents of Vrindaban, but she came to kill Krishna. The devotee has to be just as desirous to protect Krishna as the demons are to destroy Him. Then the devotee is always victorious. The U. S. Navy has a tagline: Loose lips sink ships.⁷⁶

Kuladri confirmed that standard New Vrindaban policy was not to cooperate with the police. Kuladri said, “This was a continuous policy that Swami recommended: no devotee talk with the police, and he was continually portraying the police as persecutors and demoniac. He said they were not interested in the religious goals of the community, and they were simply hinderances and would stop it [New Vrindaban] if they could, and any problems in the community—he always made an effort to hide them from the police.”⁷⁷

Bhaktipada ordered an internal investigation of Sulochan’s murder. A portion of a trial transcript in the Keith Gordon Ham/Swami Bhaktipada Archive noted, “Overt Act 37. On or about June of 1986, defendant KEITH GORDON HAM, a/k/a NUMBER ONE, told an individual known to the grand jury to conduct an internal investigation of the Stephen Bryant murder.”⁷⁸

Five years later, Bhaktipada was charged with obstructing justice. The trial transcript reported, “It was a further part of the conspiracy that defendant KEITH GORDON HAM, a/k/a NUMBER ONE, would obstruct the murder investigation by having a sham internal murder investigation conducted, and by impeding the flow of information to law enforcement investigators.”⁷⁹

A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing

Tirtha called his friend Randall Gorby on the phone and complained that New Vrindaban was not paying him the balance of the promised \$8,000 for his expenses in eliminating Sulochan. Tirtha explained, “I called him because I needed help and he has always been a close friend to me, but little did I know . . . [that my ‘friend’ Gorby was a snitch.]”⁸⁰

At the time, Tirtha did not realize that some of Gorby’s telephone calls were being recorded by the West Virginia State Police. Gorby had become a government informer. Due to his grievances against New Vrindaban (explained earlier), Gorby had gone to the State Police and offered to become an informant. Gorby did not have recording equipment on his home phone. Whenever he received an important call at his residence, such as a call from Tirtha or Hayagriva, he told the caller that he would call back in fifteen or twenty minutes. Randall then would drive to the State Police office in Wellsburg (about seven miles from his home in Bethany), and call back on their telephone, which had tape recording equipment already set up. (At this time there was no such thing as Caller ID.)

Gorby: Do you have a place to go?

Tirtha: Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Gorby: Well, I’d really get on ‘em. I can’t understand them not coming through with it.

Tirtha: It’s just ridiculous because they’ve got a hundred thousand [dollars] coming in every week.

Gorby: What agreement did you make with. . .

Tirtha: Well, it's just that eight figure [\$8,000].

Gorby: Yeah.

Tirtha: I mean it was just like they, a . . . liked it. They actually thought that was a bargain basement price and they were all happy with it.

Gorby: Yeah.

Tirtha: It was a bargain fuckin' basement. I mean you couldn't go any lower than that.⁸¹

On Saturday, May 24th, Tirtha and Gorby met at the Dutch Pantry restaurant outside of Youngstown, Ohio. Tirtha revealed his desperate predicament: he had accomplished the community's objective, but now they were refusing to pay him the balance due for "doing the deed." Tirtha practically begged Gorby to intercede on his behalf; to help him get the money he needed to leave the country. Later that day, on behalf of Tirtha, Gorby telephoned Hayagriva from the State Police office.

Gorby: Hello, is Howard there please?

Purnamasi: Yes.

Hayagriva: Hello.

Gorby: Hello, Howard. I just talked to Tom. He's impatient.

Hayagriva: Well, I can't discuss this on the phone.

Gorby: Okay, well whatever you decide.⁸²

Hayagriva's wife, Purnamasi, recalled, "We get a phone call. Gorby asks Hayagriva for some money because Tirtha needs money. [Then we get a phone call from] Tirtha [who] threatens my family and tells Hayagriva if he wants to see his family again, he'd better cooperate."⁸³

End Notes

¹ Tirtha reported Sulochan's last activities to both Randall Gorby and Tapahpunja.

² "Thomas Drescher-PC 187" (May 21, 1989), 1.

³ Dr. Lakshmanana Sad Yavagiswaran, *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 3 (March 13, 1991), 637-638.

⁴ Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), cited by Randall C. Gorby, *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 5 (March 15, 1991), 1149-1150.

⁵ Steven John Forbes (Nistraigunya), *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 6 (March 18, 1991), 1439-1440.

⁶ Jeffrey Breier (Krishna-Katha), *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 5 (March 15, 1991), 1342-1343.

⁷ Mark Goodwin (Kailasa-Chandra), e-mail to the author (November 29, 2016).

⁸ Helga Bryant, cited by Robert A. Fernandez, "Krishna dissident is slain on coast," *San Francisco Examiner* (undated, c. May 1986).

⁹ Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), *Trial Transcript VI*, 67.

¹⁰ Gabriel Alon, co-owner of Ugly Duckling Rent-A-Car, Los Angeles Airport branch, *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 4 (March 14, 1991), 1097-1099.

¹¹ Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), letter to the author (July 4, 2017).

¹² Dennis Gorrick (Dharmatma), *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 4 (March 14, 1991), 832-837, 941.

¹³ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), Facebook comment (May 12, 2017).

¹⁴ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), Facebook comment (May 13, 2017).

¹⁵ William H. Deadwyler, III (Ravindra-Svarupa), "The Hidden History of ISKCON," Part 4.

¹⁶ Jane Seward (Jamuna dasi), *Lion Television*.

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- ¹⁷ Loetitia S. Lilot (Saradiya devi dasi), e-mail to the author (November 22, 2016).
- ¹⁸ Anonymous Prabhupada disciple No. 1, Facebook message to the author (October 3, 2017).
- ¹⁹ Anonymous Prabhupada disciple No. 4, telephone conversation with the author (October 12, 2017).
- ²⁰ Richard Cousineau (Ramachandra), conversation with the author at the funeral for Ronald Burstein (Muktakesh) at the Grisell Funeral Home in Moundsville, West Virginia (April 10, 2007).
- ²¹ Richard Lonsford Investigations, “Witness Interview with Tom Greenspan” (September 3, 1989).
- ²² Terry Sheldon (Tapahpunja), e-mail to the author (March 29, 2015).
- ²³ Of course, Tapahpunja may have been surprised but not shocked after hearing the news of Sulochan’s murder. He was “in the loop”—he had helped “engineer” the murder, as he later admitted to the ISKCON temple president of Inis Rath Island in Ireland. In this e-mail, Tapahpunja attempts to deceive the author into believing that Tirtha acted alone.
- ²⁴ Dennis Gorrick (Dharmatma), *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 4 (March 14, 1991), 832-837, 941.
- ²⁵ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), e-mail to the author (July 29, 2008).
- ²⁶ “Thomas Drescher-PC 187” (May 21, 1989), 1.
- ²⁷ Transcript of telephone conversation between Randall C. Gorby and Thomas Drescher (undated).
- ²⁸ Transcript of telephone conversation between Randall C. Gorby and Suzanne Bludeau (undated).
- ²⁹ Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), cited by Randall C. Gorby, *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 5 (March 15, 1991), 1190.
- ³⁰ Richard Lonsford Investigations, “Witness Interview with Terry Sheldon by phone from Malaysia (March 22, 1990).
- ³¹ Terry Sheldon (Tapahpunja), e-mail to the author (April 3, 2015).
- ³² Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), *Trial Transcript VI*, 69.
- ³³ Dennis Gorrick (Dharmatma), *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 4 (March 14, 1991), 832-837, 941.
- ³⁴ *Trial Transcript V* (p. 9) states that Tirtha made two telephone calls to Dharmatma on Friday, May 23rd.
- ³⁵ Sandy Fitzgerald, “Drescher Ordered Extradited,” *The Intelligencer* (August 14, 1987).
- ³⁶ Terry Sheldon (Tapahpunja), telephone conversation with the author (August 5, 2003).
- ³⁷ Terry Sheldon (Tapahpunja), e-mail to the author (April 3, 2015).
- ³⁸ Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), cited by Randall C. Gorby, *Trial Transcript IV*, Day 5 (March 15, 1991), 1149-1150.
- ³⁹ Jay Matsya (Devamrita Swami), cited in “Bryant Death Reports: Gorrick Account vs. Reality,” typewritten document.
- ⁴⁰ Mark Meberg (Madhava-Ghosh), cited in “Bryant Death Reports: Gorrick Account vs. Reality,” typewritten document.
- ⁴¹ Christopher Walker (Chaitanya-Mangala), e-mail to the author (November 22, 2016).
- ⁴² Jay Matsya (Devamrita Swami), cited in “Bryant Death Reports: Gorrick Account vs. Reality,” typewritten document.
- ⁴³ Berkeley police officer Joe Sanchez, cited by Elizabeth Fernandez in “Mysterious Murder Silences a Maverick Krishna,” *San Francisco Examiner* (July 6, 1986), 1.
- ⁴⁴ David Gold, *After the Absolute*, Chapter 17, “Murder.”
- ⁴⁵ Jeffrey Breier (Krishna-Katha), telephone conversation with the author (August 3, 2017).
- ⁴⁶ Thomas Westfall, *Lion Television*.
- ⁴⁷ William H. Deadwyler, III (Ravindra-Svarupa), “The Hidden History of ISKCON,” Part 4.
- ⁴⁸ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), e-mail to the author (April 5, 2015).
- ⁴⁹ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), “New Vrindaban History, for the Record,” *Sampradaya Sun* (December 22, 2006).
- ⁵⁰ Robert Grant (Ramesvara), cited by John Dart in “Killing Sparks Federal Probe of Krishna Sect,” *Los Angeles Times* (July 20, 1986), 32.
- ⁵¹ Michael Grant (Mukunda Goswami), cited by Robert A. Fernandez, “Krishna dissident is slain on coast,” *San Francisco Examiner* (undated, c. May 1986).
- ⁵² Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit*, 95.
- ⁵³ Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit*, 138.

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- ⁵⁴ Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit*, 120.
- ⁵⁵ Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit*, 138.
- ⁵⁶ Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit*, 138.
- ⁵⁷ Keith Gordon Ham (Bhaktipada), cited by Thomas Ferraro in “Krishnas Involved in Seamy Accusations, Including Murder,” *Sunday News-Register* (July 6, 1986).
- ⁵⁸ Keith Gordon Ham (Bhaktipada), cited in “The Fire’s Getting Hotter,” *New Vrindaban News* (October 14, 1986), 2.
- ⁵⁹ Keith Gordon Ham (Bhaktipada), cited in “Srla Bhaktipada’s Press Conference (December 4, 1985),” *New Vrindaban News* (December 7, 1985).
- ⁶⁰ Tim Lee (Puranjana), “ISKCON HISTORY, Detailed Account, Part 3.”
- ⁶¹ John Sinkowski (Janmastami), e-mail to the author (August 1, 2008).
- ⁶² Yasodanandan Swami challenged the zonal acharyas to a debate at the February 1979 GBC meetings in Vrindaban, India. Kailasa-Chandra, who was regarded as a philosophical pundit, was asked to write a position paper for the challengers. This debate will be discussed in detail in my forthcoming book, *Eleven Naked Emperors: The Crisis of Charismatic Succession in ISKCON (1977-1987)*.
- ⁶³ Mark Goodwin (Kailasa-Chandra), e-mail to the author (March 27, 2015).
- ⁶⁴ Mark Goodwin (Kailasa-Chandra), e-mail to the author (March 29, 2015).
- ⁶⁵ Eric Johanson, e-mail to the author (February 8, 2015).
- ⁶⁶ Mark Goodwin (Kailasa-Chandra), e-mail to the author (March 29, 2015).
- ⁶⁷ Unidentified New Vrindaban employee, cited by John Dart, “Killing Sparks Federal Probe of the Krishna Sect,” *The New York Times* (July 20, 1986), 3.
- ⁶⁸ Alfred “Pinky” Clark, cited by Colin McNickle, “Marshall Official Gets Gun Permit For Fear of Violence by Krishnas,” *Wheeling News-Register* (June 15, 1986).
- ⁶⁹ Alfred “Pinky” Clark, cited by Lindsey Gruson, “Friction Over Krishnas In West Virginia’s Hills,” *New York Times* (October 1, 1986), 10.
- ⁷⁰ Dick Dezio (Tulsi), cited by Colin McNickle, “Marshall Official Gets Gun Permit For Fear of Violence by Krishnas,” *Wheeling News-Register* (June 15, 1986).
- ⁷¹ David Gold, *After the Absolute*, Chapter 18, “The Gun.”
- ⁷² Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), letter to the author (August 21, 2003).
- ⁷³ Transcript of telephone conversation between Randall Gorby and Thomas Drescher (undated).
- ⁷⁴ Jay Matsya (Devamrita Swami), “A Word To The Wise Is Sufficient,” *New Vrindaban News* (June 1, 1986).
- ⁷⁵ “MAINTAIN THE PURITY,” *New Vrindaban News* (June 14, 1986)
- ⁷⁶ “BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TALK TO, PRABHUS— ” *Brijabasi Spirit* (March 24, 1987)
- ⁷⁷ Arthur Villa (Kuladri), interview with investigators (undated, c. 1989), Villa GJ2.
- ⁷⁸ “Overt Acts Related to Steven Bryant Murder.”
- ⁷⁹ Photocopied pages from unnamed Trial Transcript (undated).
- ⁸⁰ Page from unnamed Trial Transcript (undated).
- ⁸¹ Transcript of State Police wiretap of a telephone conversation between Randall Gorby and Thomas A. Drescher (Tirtha), *Holy Cow, Swami*.
- ⁸² Transcript of State Police wiretap of a telephone conversation between Randall Gorby and Howard Wheeler (Hayagriva) (undated).
- ⁸³ Susan Joseph (Paurnamasi), “Mother Paurnamasi’s Statements” (September 5, 1992).