

**Mysterious World of Religious Cult is Explored in Evangeline Griego's
Personal Documentary**

GOD WILLING

**Film to air on Public Television Stations Beginning April 2, 2011
(check local listings)**



GOD WILLING begins with a letter from the filmmaker's nephew: *"Dear Family - I've gone off with the missionaries, the bearded ones remember? To serve the Lord. Don't fill out a missing person's report. The Lord comes first - Daniel."*

GOD WILLING is the wrenching story of families who have lost their sons and daughters to the Jim Roberts Group, a nomadic Christian cult also known as the Garbage Eaters, The Church and The Brethren. Told through the journey of filmmaker Evangeline Griego's own family, as well as Sandi and Marsha, two moms whose daughters also joined the cult, the film chronicles the struggles of families whose children turn away from them to become "Brothers" and "Sisters" in the group -- renouncing their past lives and the world often without ever turning back. **GOD WILLING** will air on public television stations nationwide beginning on April 2, 2011 (check local listings or visit <http://www.godwillingmovie.com> for broadcast dates and times.)

Founded in 1971 by the mysterious messianic figure Jim Roberts, the group has survived for decades as a separatist society that preaches a strict path to salvation, proselytizes for new members, adheres to strict ascetic values, subsists on discarded food and refuse, and shuttles its members from town to town, often on the run from concerned parents and family members who try to see or communicate with their children.

GOD WILLING offers a rare inside look at the group through interviews with both family members and former members of The Church. The film shows how Roberts' message appeals to the sincere spiritual yearnings of many young people, and the struggle that some converts face with fellow members and themselves when they find little more comfort in the fold than in their previous lives. It also grippingly presents the anguish of parents and other loved ones who grapple with the urge to pursue and rescue their children, and the psychological, emotional and tactical impediments that so often get in the way of reconciliation. Featuring extensive surveillance footage of the group and rare, candid on-camera encounters with its members, **GOD WILLING** is a powerful examination of families torn asunder, belief systems at war, and the perilous balance of futility and hope.

GOD WILLING is a co-production of About Time Productions and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), in association with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) and KNME/New Mexico PBS with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Visit <http://www.godwillingmovie.com> for more information on the film, resources about cults, a discussion board and more; the DVD is also available for sale on the website.

Director's Statement

"Making **GOD WILLING** was my educational journey to understand why my nephew, and young people like him, abandoned their former lives and families to be in the Jim Roberts Group. I wanted to give voice to the parents' loss and pain as well as convey the cult members' deep conviction and genuine desire to live according to God's wishes. My film provides no clear-cut answers, but does, I hope, give us space and cause to think about cults with fewer preconceived ideas drawn from sensationalized accounts. The Jim Roberts Group is one of many cults based in the US. At its peak it had over a hundred members and now has between 40-60 members. In the last 15 years a parents group has helped about 75 members leave the sect." - Evangeline Griego

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About the Filmmaker

Evangeline Griego is a veteran independent filmmaker, director, and media activist making her feature length documentary directorial debut with **GOD WILLING**. Griego is currently in post production with the independent feature

Sweet Old World, which she produced this past summer, and is in development with the feature documentary *Revolution & Kung Fu* to be co-directed with Renee Tajima-Peña.

Previously, Griego produced *Sir! No Sir!* with David Zeiger which premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival where it won the Audience Award for Best Documentary. It went on to win the Hamptons International Film Festival Jury Award for Best Documentary, the Vermont International Film Festival Jury Award Best Film on War and Peace and was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award. She was also the Producer of the award winning documentary *Calavera Highway*, directed by Renee Tajima-Peña (PBS- *P.O.V.* 2008). Griego's company, About Time Productions, in association with Red Envelope Entertainment (Netflix) and 212Berlin Films, produced the documentary *Chevolution* about the iconic image of Che Guevara. The film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. As Director, she completed the *Breathless in LA* segment of the seven part environmental series *Sierra Club Chronicles* (Sundance Channel) with Executive Producer Robert Greenwald.

With Griego in the director's chair, About Time Productions' other works include the award-winning *Paño Arte: Images from Inside* and the bilingual documentary *Border Visions/Visiones Fronterizas* funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Both were broadcast on PBS. Griego's other documentary credits include segment co-producer for the acclaimed PBS series *The New Americans* (Kartemquin Films), line producer on *My Journey Home* (WETA-PBS), and Supervising Producer of *Art Works* (J. Paul Getty Trust.) Ms. Griego is a founder of the Silver Lake Film Festival in Los Angeles and a member of the board of directors of NALIP, National Association of Latino Independent Producers.

About ITVS

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series Independent Lens on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens, and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and provide for underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

About Latino Public Broadcasting

Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) supports the development, production, acquisition and distribution of public media content that is representative of Latino people, or addresses issues of interest to Latino Americans. These programs, including the series 'VOCES', are produced for dissemination to the public broadcasting stations. Edward James Olmos is founder and Chairman of the LPB Board of Directors. For more information please visit www.lpbp.org and www.voces.tv.

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