

Sneak Attack:

False Accusations, Smear Campaigns, and the Hidden Motives Behind the Attempted Take Down of Marc Gafni

by William Gazecki

I'm a documentary filmmaker. As a rule, documentary filmmakers strive to find, assemble and organize credible information in order to convey the actual truth. We often take on subjects that are unknown or misunderstood in the public; not uncommonly, these are issues of the underdog- the unseen or under-reported struggles and achievements.

My first feature-length documentary was "WACO: The Rules of Engagement", a ground-breaking expose on the deadly 1993 conflagration between the Federal Government and a tiny religious sect in Waco, Texas known as the Branch Davidians. The conflict ended with the deaths of 74 innocent men, women and children. Like most stories of injustice, there are opposing versions of what really happened. One version (via the media) tells us the Branch Davidians were a dangerous religious cult that "stockpiled" guns, who were mindlessly dominated and controlled by their leader (David Koresh). The other version (via members of the Church that survived) is of a visionary spiritual maverick (the same David Koresh), a charismatic evangelical savant and teacher of a radical- but authentic- Christian doctrine. I found that the public record relied heavily on bias and assertion; there were almost no facts to support the most visible and egregious claims. It was also abundantly clear that the government had made glaring tactical errors, resulting in massive accountability issues in the aftermath.

The conflagration started as the execution of a warrant to search the Davidian Church and residence by the BATF (Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms). It grew into a large-scale military-style attack, with over 100 SWAT garbed officers on the ground, and armed helicopters with automatic weapons in the air. Well-armed honorable Texans that they were, and entirely within their rights, the Davidians defended themselves, and in the ensuing gun battle both BATF officers and Branch Davidians were killed. The surviving Davidians refused to leave, fearing what would happen to them if they left their Church. In the end, and after 51 days of relentless negotiation and harassment, the Davidian home was again attacked, this time using military combat equipment and deadly CS nerve gas. Within hours it burned to the ground, with 74 men, women and children left dead inside. It was the largest loss of life in any law enforcement operation in the history of the country. The news media were told by government representatives that they had "brought it upon themselves".

I came into the story in 1995, two years after the place had blown up in '93. It had become a huge international focus. There was tremendous concern about government transparency, and how could that many innocent people be dead without some government culpability. Pressure mounted until hearings in the U.S. House of Representatives were held in Washington, DC. Entirely televised, these were my first days on the job.

The intention of the hearings was to review everything that had happened at Waco, establish accountability for the deaths of the innocent (if possible), deliver findings, recommend new policies, etc. But that's hardly what I saw. Testimony in front of the cameras was one thing, but behind the scenes (outside the Hearing Room) the unbridled maneuvering, positioning, and covert political warfare was obvious. Everyone had an agenda, and establishing accountability for 74 dead men women and children was not it. While testifying in front of the investigating elected officials, the appearance of forthright concern was professed and displayed. But in the hallways, elevators and dining halls, disregard for and animosity towards the Branch Davidians was palpable and acrimonious. There was no sense of equitable fair play, let alone sincere compassion. What mattered was "they lose" so that "we win".

As the hearings progressed, a clear pattern emerged. For every unlawful incident, blame was placed on the Branch Davidians. Over and over again, they were accused, demeaned, discredited and generally demonized. The more they were made to appear guilty, the more the government sought to rationalize their own violent actions. Somehow the Davidians, in just being a being "bad people" (although never arrested, never tried, and never convicted) justified using Army tanks to pump nerve gas into their home and Church, and kill everyone inside.

As a filmmaker I know that I can't resolve every thread of every storyline- and I'm not a judge and jury. I observe real life, document actual events, and craft stories that convey my deduction of the truth. I can't say I know who was guilty or innocent at Waco. What I know is what I saw, which was massive media spin, overt explicit character assassination, ignored evidence and deliberately construed false storylines. All of it was skewed so severely away from any potential government liability that I began to wonder if part of the strategy was to distract the public's attention altogether... but away from what, exactly?

When WACO: The Rules of Engagement Premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, much it was completely different than our original design. Why? Because we found (what I believe was) what the government was hoping to distract everyone's attention away from. On an infra-red videotape, shot from an airplane overlooking the Davidian residence the morning it burnt to the ground, a long single shot from high in the sky shows the building, the Army tanks, the fire... and- upon careful examination- it also shows automatic weapons being fired into the burning building. Machine guns aimed at innocent people trying to escape being burned to death. Again, it's not my place to act as judge or jury. What the film shows is the evidence. After its Premier at Sundance, it went on to be nominated for an Oscar, and won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Investigative Journalism. No one has ever questioned whether it spoke the truth or not.

Portrayal of the Branch Davidians by the press was unfairly sensational and gratuitous. Managed spin wove dark terms like "cult", "compound", "stockpiling" (of weapons), into a web of hot buttons, exploiting public opinion. Clearly the agents on the ground wanted revenge for their fallen peers. There was enormous motivation to find the Davidians

guilty- at least in the Court of Public Opinion- so the government could walk away blameless. Prosecution and incarceration were the only focus. The Davidians would never be given the opportunity to share or explain themselves; they were kept mute and segregated. No one ever came to their aid or defense.

I went on from Waco to other films, but I've never forgotten the challenge or injustice that work entailed. The greatest challenge was mainly in deriving the actual truth as opposed to swallowing the spin; that was overcome with careful diligence. But the injustices remain a bitter realization; so much deliberate wrong and permanent harm done under a veil of self-righteous, intentional deception.

In 2015, I received a call from a fabulously talented filmmaking team out of Boulder, CO. A husband and wife duo, they approached me with a project I immediately found engaging. A documentary called RiseUP! The Movie, the concept is to provide young people ("millennials") with a new approach to success that includes ecological sustainability, service to others, original creative thinking, entrepreneurship, and a profitable income. I was intrigued and impressed, coming on-board as Picture Editor.

Next thing you know I'm in a mile-high edit room nestled on the slopes of the gorgeous Rocky Mountains. Boulder is beautiful and delightfully arty and conscious; a college town that since the 1960s has embraced its many Tibetan immigrants. My employers and creative collaborators, Michael-Shaun Conaway and his partner/wife Alex Melnyk, could not have been more ideal to work with. They have years of experience in print and video production, are tech-savvy and organizationally adept, and have a lovely functional family with 2 bright, sensitive and aware teen-aged daughters (and 2 of the cutest dogs I'd ever seen- Caruso and Timmy). Their company specialty was marketing and branding (Storyworks), with an emphasis on personal growth, social transformation, technology and the development of green businesses. I was in heaven.

Getting into the story in the Edit Room was gradual. There are a lot of characters involved (over 80 people). It took time to get to know everyone. What was exciting was how they started adding up together; the synergy is profound. Not unexpected considering I was working with:

Luke Nosek (Founder of PayPal)

John Mackey (Founder of Whole Foods)

Peter Diamandis (Founder of X Prize and Space X)

Rev. Michael Beckwith (Founder of Agape Church)

Tony Robbins (Personal Growth and Achievement)

Barbara Marx Hubbard (Renowned Author, Lecturer and Futurist)

Jack Canfield (author, "Chicken Soup for the Soul")

Blake Mycoskie (Founder of Tom's Shoes)

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Lynne Twist (founder of the Pachamama Alliance, Soul of Money Institute)

Tom Chi (Technologist and Inventor of Google Glasses)

Moby (Musical Artist)

Dwight Howard (Professional Basketball Player)
John Gray (Author, "Men are from Mars, Women from Venus")

As well as these emerging players:

Marie Forleo, Lisa Nichols, Andy Drish, Jake Ducey, John DeMartini, Maston Kipp, Adam Braun, Miki Agrawal, Zubin Damania, Preston Smiles, Gunnar Lovelace, DJ Spooky, Peta Kelly, Casey Simpson, Dave Logan, Kute Blackson, Vishen Lakhiani, Casey Sheehan

As I came to realize, it's a breathtaking assembly of contributors. They're all innovative, successful entrepreneurs; many are mentors. Some I'd not personally encountered, but once I started Googling and reviewing footage, I was profoundly impressed. As an assembly of almost entirely multi-millionaire business creator/owners, between them are: amazing abilities to articulate, leading edge technical and business skills, high-minded ambitions and courageous values, valiant leadership, and a strong orientation towards life-long public service (and many in their 20s at that!).

RiseUP! The Movie came about while most of these folks were participating in an event titled "The Success 3.0 Summit", a public Conference in Boulder held in the fall of 2014. It was a typical multi-day Conference with speaker-presenters, workshops and breakout sessions. The theme was "A New Vision of Success"- and specifically "Conscious Entrepreneurship". But the core emphasis was on the future. How do we move forward into the next era with new paradigms of sustainable, socially conscious business? And what does doing so with the highest level of integrity and care for the greater good entail?

Each Presenter was videotaped in one-on-one sit-down interviews immediately following their respective presentations- this is the video material I was provided to Edit. One of my first questions for Director Michael Shaun Conaway was, "with all these great people to work with, what is the story are we telling?" What were the "beats"? What ties one idea to another, and from what beginning to what end? He directed me to a folder in the computer, in which were a collection of video clips by one Dr. Marc Gafni. Both the Success Summit and RiseUP! The Movie were conceived by Dr. Gafni. He brought everyone together for the Summit, and the underlying principles and philosophies for both the Summit and the film came from him.

I got to know Dr. Gafni through his recorded sound bytes. He's the co-founder with Ken Wilber of the Center for Integral Wisdom (CIW), a leading edge think tank committed to, "evolving the source code of consciousness and culture". Big ideas, which I began to see were Dr. Gafni's hallmark. He has a proclivity for broad, penetrating, expanded visions. Whole Foods Founder and Success Summit Presenter John Mackey (another big thinker) was the board chair of CIW for several years until he finished his term and passed the baton to, to one of the grand dames of futurism the irrepressible social activist and philosopher, Barbara Marx Hubbard. These are ambitious partners, with Dr. Gafni's work integral throughout. Mackey, Hubbard, Wilber, Beckwith and most of the other major figures associated with the film had been attracted by Gafni and his vision.

At 87 years of age, Barbara Marx Hubbard is unparalleled as the world's most recognized Futurist. For 50-some years she's been an advocate of a plausible and deliberate "evolution of the species", leading to a prodigious and epiphanous "planetary awakening". She and Gafni share a number of core, fundamental views on how we- as beings- are put together, and what we have in us to engage (and cope with) both our personal inner challenges and the daunting macro issues we face collectively. Both embrace the profound power of Eros.

One of the many axioms Barbara and Marc hold in common is the importance and power of Eros. Eros is generally assumed to be a synonym for sex, but in fact refers to a more sophisticated, malleable energy. Eros is a much more personalized, nuanced and individuated version of chi, or prana, or "life force". Barbara and Marc often refer to Eros as, the "evolutionary love which initiates, animates and drives all of reality" As Dr. Gafni's book *Return to Eros* explains, "Eros is the principle of aliveness and magic inherent in all of reality. When you are in Eros, you have no questions about the meaning of life. You are life. Sex is the expression of the evolutionary Eros which animates and drives all of reality. Sex models for us what it means to live in Eros in every facet of our existence." It's a compelling mutual focal point for an 86 year old woman and a 55 year old man to share in a public teaching environment, and continues to be the basis upon which their working relationship has expanded.

As I kept editing RiseUP! The Movie, Dr. Gafni's "dharma" (or teaching) started to take shape in front of me. Having Eros as a primary tool involves both ancient wisdom teachings, as well as plucky audaciousness. His is a cosmology of passion, connection and engagement with the world that by its nature engenders the Planetary Awakening Barbara Marx Hubbard so stoutly advocates. They have a collaborative synergy that begins with Eros but spans a gamut of transformational concepts.

RiseUP! The Movie has a compelling arc of evolving ideas that address from the beginning to the end of one's life, as well as from before to after changing the world. The starting point is what Marc Gafni calls the "[Unique Self](#)". When someone defines and engages their most authentic, personal creative center, accessing their strongest aptitude and talent, they're in touch with aspects that are in fact unique to that person. In Gafni's dharma, Unique Self is the focal point for how one lives in all dimensions of their life, including career. The power of authenticity genuinely expressed only grows.

Effective personal empowerment technology, and "doing what you love" for a career are hardly earth shattering. The game-changer is an element Gafni calls "Outrageous Love". Outrageous Love elevates individual one-on-one inter-personal love into an extended, more transcendent, in-service-to-the-world kind of love. Outrageous Love is not an expansion of ordinary romantic love; it's not about being a better mate or more passionate sexual partner. Outrageous Love is more akin to what the gurus and sages have taught for centuries as Universal Compassion.

Outrageous Love is to use one's vision and aspiration, ambition and creativity- one's Unique Self- as a vehicle to engage and solve the challenges and problems defined by Outrageous Pain. And what is Outrageous Pain? Outrageous Pain refers to the world's big, significant, systemic problems: war, hunger, poverty, refugees, environmental degradation... the big issues that the most people suffer from. Gafni's idea is to first define your Unique Self, then initiate your career and life's work by selecting a component of Outrageous Pain, creating solutions with Outrageous Love, within the innovative creative construct of a Unique Self Symphony.

And what exactly is a "Unique Self Symphony"? A key niche that Gafni and Hubbard endorse wholeheartedly is natural, productive innovative collaboration, and on a really big scale. Barbara and Gafni are by nature planetary-based; they just ordinarily operate at that level. Every discovery and innovation she's involved in is driven by the potential to contribute to Planetary Awakening. Their focus is however also intensely personal - about the irreducibly creative energy that lives in each of us - what Marc calls the Unique Self- being radically alive, engaged and therefore and successful at every level of one's life. Their mutual objective is to engage evolution- human evolution- and collaboration is a fundamental way the bigger game is played. Strategic, focused, well-defined interplay of compatible players has proven- time after time- to yield superior outcomes, especially valuable in designing lucrative innovations. When Unique Selves come together in a common mission, they become a Unique Self Symphony.

Each presentation at the Success Summit- and each interview conducted for RiseUP! The Movie- resonated with these ideas. Marc spoke to every single speaker before the summit to engage them through the prism of these ideas. The speakers I interviewed came away from their deep dives with Gafni inspired not to give their stock speech, but to share their own deepest unique gift. What then naturally emerged at the summit was a stunning display of Unique Self symphony. Each spoke of the deep satisfaction that their unique service to others had come to represent in their lives, and how the typical accumulation of wealth and material possessions had become increasingly anathema to real happiness. Everyone heartfully agreed that the personal benefits of public service- in which you are giving your Unique Gift - far out-weighed the satisfaction derived from accumulating more stuff. This is most powerfully expressed in the new "give-back" business models. A new bottom line for a successful business began to emerge- Success 3.0.

Blake Mycoskie founded Tom's Shoes when he discovered that children in poverty-stricken areas often can't attend school because they don't have shoes. For every pair of shoes Tom's Shoes sells, a pair is donated to someone in need. Everyone wins; customers feel good that their purchase creates a contribution, poor kids get shoes (and an education), and Tom's Shoes is a highly profitable business. As Peter Diamandis (Founder of Space X) said in his interview, "find a problem that affects a million people, and you've just found a million new customers". John Mackey, who is not at all known for being effusive, got up at the end of the event and said from the podium, "this was the most inspiring conference I have ever attended in my life".

We are at this moment at a crossroads in our evolution. We must collectively make a choice: 1) innovate and ambitiously seek advanced technologies, creating social and business models that are sustainable and prosperous; or 2) continue along the path we are already on, consuming more resources than we can replace and ignoring (or ineffectively addressing) the big issues that will eventually kill us. Marc and Barbara are combining their ideas around the nature of creativity, the potential success or failure ahead of us as a species, and the precipice in history we find ourselves at today, into a new pragmatic synergy.

So here I was in lovely Boulder, Colorado, working in the basement of this beautiful home with great employers, spending each day with phenomenal footage from awesome people sharing about concepts and innovations that really could have a plausible, tangible long-term positive impact on the future of the entire planet. And I really believed what I was seeing, which is one reason I was hired- I understood the relevance of- and nuances within- the material. I'd also put similar principles into practice in my own life; as a gifted child who had been allowed to use my innate talents in a self-directed manner towards individual and social benefit. Everything about RiseUP! The Movie not only confirmed what for me had always been a personal intuitive process, they were taking it to a whole new level; a level of practicality and teachable skills, such that massive collective benefit could be realized.

Then one day, my entire sentiment and perspective were almost destroyed. I'm sitting there editing all this wonderful material, when an email pops onto my desktop in early May 2016; it's from the RiseUP! production team. Not expecting anything in particular, I click on a link to an online article in the Huffington Post titled, "Why You Should Boycott Marc Gafni's Movie RiseUP!"... "Oh My God..." as it is wont to do, the adrenalin started rushing all by itself. I'm like, "what in the hell is this?" I was literally almost not able to read what was on the screen, as scandalous and derogatory as it was. Written by someone I was not familiar with, one Stephen Dinan, the article made a powerful impression. The title itself was confrontive. Given my investment in- and professional respect for- the work of Dr. Marc Gafni, the hair on the back of my neck bristled.

For one thing, RiseUP! is not "Marc Gafni's movie". That's actually a naive statement. Certainly not something Gafni would say, whose is all about collaboration and Unique Self symphony. Authorship and ownership of films is a complex matter, always with teams of people utilizing shared creative input as well as multiple financing and, ultimately, ownership. In other words, other than the Director (which for "RiseUP! The Movie" is not Marc Gafni), there are no common conventions that assign the sort of ownership Mr. Dinan was attempting to disparage in his title. This alone started me wondering, "who the hell is Steve Dinan?"

But what was most aggravating was the nauseous feeling I was getting in reading the alleged expose on Dr. Gafni and what a terrible person he supposedly is. I started reading with an open mind. After all maybe I had been duped? For one thing the vitriol and unabashed viciousness was embarrassing; not for him or myself (or RiseUP!), but

for Mr. Dinan the writer. You could- literally- feel the malice in the article. What was driving this? Why he felt the need to spew such antagonism in public, and for no apparent reason other than to discredit good work- and good people- was perplexing. Moreover what I read just did not resonate with my sense of who Gafni was. At this moment I had not yet met Dr. Gafni; but I did feel a sincere affinity with him, and deeply respected everything I'd been introduced to through the work I was doing.

But here is the core of my nauseous feeling. I know propaganda when I see it. You can smell it. To me, it was obvious that the attacks were constructed in a very careful and strategic manner. It's written to evoke reactions of judgment and doubt. Using the most exploitive language, it paints Marc Gafni as some sort of narcissistic deviant, emotionally abusive sexual predator, dangerously manipulative leader, charismatic cultist, etc., etc. Which in turn tacitly assumes that those working with him (and who respect and trust him) are as well a bunch of self-deceived dimwitted blowhards. To say I was bowled over would be an understatement. I didn't know whether to laugh at the absurdity, or be upset at the flagrant intentional smearing of Gafni and everyone around him- not to mention the outright manipulation of the reader.

I felt like I was back in Washington, DC at the Waco hearings. Effective propaganda is carefully contrived, meticulously planned and aggressively presented. It's done a clear and focused strategy, and in this case permeated with vicious, abusive vindictiveness. It was hard to bear- there was a meanness that the public tolerates. The disdain went way beyond any sort of sincere, conscious missive; this was a serious and deliberate attack, planted on Huffington Post as part of a larger strategic plan. Mr. Dinan meant business- it was just such ugly business. Time for me to put on my investigator shoes and take a gander at who Steve Dinan was and what in the world was his real issue with Dr. Marc Gafni?

My first question was, "Why?" Why was this article written, why was it being published... and why now? The timing was particularly weird; there was no obvious motive, which in itself suggested an ulterior one. Dinan claimed that his timing was based on the fact that RiseUP! The Movie was in the middle of a crowdfunding campaign, and that in the best interests of everyone who might potentially donate, he wanted to make absolutely certain that everyone know what a low life Gafni was. Excuse me? You're going to publicly condemn a great piece of work you know absolutely nothing about because for some poorly articulated reason you've decided Marc Gafni is a scumbag? Mr. Dinan was starting to get on my nerves.

Well, turns out that Stephen Dinan is a competitor to many of those appearing in RiseUP! The Movie. His company is an ad-hoc network of therapists, seminar leaders and facilitators called "The Shift Network", and he skims a fee for every hour taught or course sold. "Ah", I thought... "so he has skin in the game." Then I find out there's a major conflict going on between Mr. Dinan and Barbara Marx Hubbard. Barbara has been one of Steve's rock-star "thought leaders" for years, bringing substantial profits into his coffers, and credibility to his reputation. As fate would have it, Barbara had recently decided to leave The Shift Network as her main platform in order to work in a

new comprehensive partnership with- you guessed it- Dr. Marc Gafni. She plays a prominent role in RiseUP! The Movie, as well. The opacity of Stephen Dinan's motives suddenly became transparent.

There is no other connection between Marc Gafni and Steve Dinan other than Barbara Marx Hubbard. The two had never formally met, had never done any business with each other, and yet for all intents and purposes are on the same page philosophically. They're both cut from the same cloth, and supposedly embrace the same high values. While I try to be as generous and forgiving as I can, I could not find anything Steve Dinan had written in regards to Marc Gafni that was anything other than deliberately, punitively demeaning and personally self-serving. Steve Dinan was not altruistically seeking to protect the public from a carnival shill; he was deviously assassinating the character of a credible competitor. Case closed.

Case closed... except, Steve Dinan was not working alone, nor was the Huffington Post article his only volley. It was part of what I would later discover was a well orchestrated smear campaign that for which he was a major catalyst. Dinan was the vanguard for a deluge of absurdly distorted press about Gafni –unprovoked by an new event or news – obviously a take down smear campaign that was deliberately organized.

But I did not know that yet. I did a google search and a shitload of alleged dirt on Marc Gafni seemed to appear; my jaw dropped. Whoa!

Perplexed but undaunted, now I really wanted the truth; I kept digging. Six months prior to Dinan's article, 2 other published articles appeared, written by one Mark Oppenheimer, a journalist who specializes in religious controversy (Gafni was trained as a Rabbi). One was in the New York Times, and one was in a Jewish-themed website called Tablet Magazine. Neither were particularly sensational (certainly not in comparison to Dinan's venom); they both made assertions and supposedly offered "evidence". Again I could not adjudicate the timing. Again there was no event; no clear and present imperative. Oppenheimer's work included exploring Gafni's work and deep background that, overall, do help to explain how he has attracted such evolved and hi-profile collaborators. But he offered very little insight into his motivation as an investigative writer, other than to say that Gafni is "controversial". But then I found the smoking gun. Dinan had called Barara Marx Hubbard's daughter, back in Oct. 2015 told her that she was in Gafni's cult –a self evidently absurd claim, and that- and here is the scary part- he was going to organize a take down article on Gafni in the NY times as part of a larger campaign to "stop Gafni in his tracks" -which is exactly what Dinan tried to do.

It was at this point that I began to see the rabbit-hole Dr. Marc Gafni is mired in. Around the time of the Oppenheimer articles, an online petition was circulated by one Rabbi David Ingber, asking the signator to denounce Dr. Gafni on very nebulous ground without any evidence. Ingber language and the comments on the petition all had the same feel or organized propaganda. How did these people know each other. What was

the back story? I knew Gafni had a background in Rabbinical schooling, what I still did not know was what all the brouhaha towards him was about. There's a few Rabbis and a smattering of women out there who really have a vengeance towards Marc. It's entirely contained within the Jewish religious community- both in Israel and the U.S. This is what Dinan picked up on and exploited, and this is why his attack on Gafni had such a non-sequitor, "where did this come from?" quality to it. Dinan was cannibalizing old news and plundering public opinion with it.

Marc Gafni was born into an orthodox Hassidic Jewish household. By the time he was an adolescent he was studying to become a Rabbi. The orthodox Jewish world is widely known for its strict codes of behavior and belief. It contains some of the most severe covenants are around sexuality and intimate behavior. This is one part of what produced in Israel a sexual harassment law which demands prison for harassment. Physical contact between male and female- of any kind (touching, soothing, holding) prior to marriage is biblical sin in Jewish law. It's all very harsh, and as one might imagine, a psychologically narrow environment riddled with judgment, fear, blame and guilt, especially for teenagers in the throws of their earliest sexual urges.

When Marc was 19 years old (some 36 years ago), he met a girl named Sara. She was 14. He knew her parents. They spent time together alone. They fell in love. They touched, teen age necking. In doing so, they also broke the orthodox "law" prohibiting such contact. A few months later, she sent him a letter espousing her undying love. Marc did not hear anything else about this relationship for twenty five years. Several years later, in his early twenties he had a one time limited sexual flirtation with, Judy 16 year old woman in a teen age program. She was initiatory and asked Gafni to sleep with her. Gafni did not but instead engaged her in a few minutes of sexual play. His mistake for sure which he has long acknowledged. Had Gafni been a run of the mill student or teacher this would have been appropriately owned and healed. But Gafni was deemed heretical, dangerous and too successful since his early twenties. And he was on outsider with no family or communal protection. He was the classical young religious revolutionary – sincere, brash ecstatic, brilliant and of course flawed, but also radically vulnerable. Judy was immediately put in touch with Marc's major political adversary who moved to use the story to destroy Marc instead of to heal the situation. Some twenty five years later this same political adversary would get connected with Sara. He put the two women in touch with each other. Their stories evolved over time to be abuse stories. In the first major smear campaign against Gafni in 2006, to which I will return below, these stories from twenty five years earlier in Marc's youth were recycled one more time. Marc's version of the stories is dramatically different than theirs. What can a man do in this kind of situation? Marc did the best thing possible for relationship that took place in the pre-internet age. He found the best polygraph expert in the United States, Dr. Gordan Barland, former head of polygraph for the department of defense and took an extensive set of polygraph tests. The conclusion. Gafni version of events was true. There was .001 percent chance that he was lying. The women's stories were highly distorted at best or just not true. Not something the politically correct media ever wants to hear.

Marc went on to have more relationships and intimate encounters, not unlike millions of other men. He's been married- and divorced- 3 times. He did become a Rabbi, had prestigious supporters, and for a time headed a Rabbinical school which he had also founded. His mentor, the renowned rabbi Shlomo Riskin, said, "He was one of the most brilliant students I have ever taught". From the very beginning of his studies, Gafni's interests were unconventional. He advocated a Judaism that embraced both Ethos and Eros, the rational and the ecstatic, the masculine and the feminine. He enthused a form of mysticism that was not relegated to obscure texts or private discussion with other rabbis. He let women approach the Torah, embraced same-sex relationship, admitted women to his ordination program, presenced the Goddess when opening ceremonies or prayers. But it is more than that. You cannot get Gafni unless you get that he is a not a run of the mill talented dude. Dozens of people have told me that the depth of his teaching and the beauty and power of his obviously radically loving nature has blown them away. Thousands of people attended his teaching. And yet he had no support structures and no communal protection. Gafni is an outlier. He aroused both primal jealousy and reverence as well as love and professional envy wherever he went. That together with post conventional sexuality in an orthodox and politically correct progressive world, is a cocktail waiting to explode. Gafni is a strange combination of strategic brilliance and child like naiveté. He was not alert to the dangers and did not take steps to protect himself.

As a young and ambitious Rabbinical instructor, he unabashedly challenged established doctrines and power structures, offering what many describe as a much more authentic, vibrant teaching. He was the only person within the Jewish Renewal movement who had begun to ordain students as rabbis outside of the common institutional channels. After only a few short years, the popularity of his classes was second only to the movement's founder, Rabbi Zalman Schachter. Some of the other teachers reacted sharply. Jealous, narrow-minded and protective of their traditions, their attitude towards Gafni became malicious.

In 2006 upon a routine return to Israel, Marc was confronted with assertions that complaints had been filed with the police, asserting that he had behaved inappropriately with a number of women. It was a very serious confrontation, with legal counsel involved and grave, portentous allegations. His ex-wife Chaya Lester whose plea that he remarry her had been refused by Marc just months earlier was in the wings organizing - by her own admission - the complaints. Her accomplice was Rabbi David Ingber, who had been ordained by Gafni until they had a major falling out. Ingber is, according to Gafni, the only student that he had ever had to dismiss from his program – for "egregious ethical violations". This happened in 2005. Gafni clearly occupied the place in Judaism that Ingber wanted for himself. There is a long history of character assassination by students or princes who want the throne before there time has come. Ingber's resentment and anger developed into a bitter lingo like obsession. The woman who initiated the complaints was Ingber's close friend and Ingber was a significant figure in the false complaint story. The confrontation threatening legal action came not as a surprise to Marc but as a devastating shock. With the police involved he could end up in an Israeli jail as a result of false complaints. Israel is the only country in the world where

sexual harassment is felony punishable by jail time. Now before I move forward with the story, here is the big take away. Lester and Ingber, the rejected former wife and dismissed former student are Stephen Dinan's key partners in the 2016 take down campaign. The plot thickens.

Overwhelmed, confused and afraid, Gafni left Israel. Much like the Branch Davidians at Waco, he was facing an almost impenetrable smear campaign. Except instead of conventional media, this was being staged on the internet. The assertions and charges were of the most egregious kind: sexual misconduct, abuse of the student-teacher relationship, and making a false promise to marry. Timelines were collapsed and the old stories from several decades earlier were trotted out again to fuel the deceptive appearance of a pattern, what any good cognitive psychologist would term, false pattern recognition. But on the internet no such discernments exists. False facts and fake news are the order of the day.

Online articles started appearing. One fed another; one writer would build on another's version of the story. The language became especially damning- sociopath, psychopath, sodomy, even the term rape was thrown in. Every opportunity was taken advantage of to portray Marc Gafni in the most suspicious, untrustworthy light as possible. And like what happened with Waco, the worse they made him look, the more leeway they took in casting doubt and enhancing even more allegations. The level of factual distortion and caricature grew bolder in the echo chamber of the internet hatred.

As it turned out, there were no complaints ever filed with the Israeli police. Not a single one. But Gafni was only able to establish this nine years later in 2014. Claims to the contrary- outright assertions in print that Dr. Marc Gafni was "under investigation" by the police- were nothing more than vituperative harassment. Punitive action in Israel was never even a possibility. Even more dramatic, an extensive email record that had been according to expert forensics –intentionally deleted by Marc computer was recovered. The email record, as attested to by several serious articles, a formal investigative report and expert evaluation, showed in stark terms that the claims made by the women had been a lie. There had been no sexual harassment of any kind. Hundreds of recovered emails show peer to peer relationships in which Marc was both loving, kind and respectful. Pretty shocking. The perpetrators or their supporters- many of whom have written articles and posted comments online- to this day refuse to admit their chicanery. It's actually pretty sick, and terribly hypocritical. Upon meticulously organizing volumes of email and correspondence, Gafni can now show the true and actual context of the relationships he has been in that are now claiming impropriety. In every instance the intimacy was consensual and profoundly mutual; he did not use his privilege or power as a spiritual teacher. Several days after he landed in Israel and was overwhelmed with the false complaints he wrote a letter, under emotional duress, in order to stop the lynch mob energy and have time to recover the deleted emails on his computer. He was hoping that those involved in the false complaints would take this as an invitation to share compassion. Instead it was exploited as further ammunition that the claims against him had merit. When he recovered the emails that proved his innocence he recanted the letter.

The more one researches the articles the more it becomes clear that we are talking about hurt that took place with the normal course of human relationships that has been exploited by political adversaries.

Deeper Causes: The Murder of Life Force

But what is the deeper cause of this dramatic story? To start with his attitude and teachings have drawn extensive ire from his orthodox mentors. He has been teaching and disseminating secret Hebrew mystical sexual teachings and practices (“Hebrew tantra” basically) for years, much to the disdain of the orthodoxy in Jerusalem. But that still does not get to the root of it. The root cause is in my opinion lies, in what one thinker, Wilhelm Reich, called “the murder of Christ”. By Christ however Reich did not mean God but life force or Eros. Reich is describing what might be called the murder of Eros or the murder of life force. That is the core to my mind of the Gafni story –the attempted murder of Eros.

I have now met with Gafni for many hours. He is Eros incarnate. You want to be around him because he is radically alive. When you talk to him the meaning of life becomes self-evident just in the radical positivity of his excitement about life.

Outrageous Love:

There is however an even more shocking truth beneath the desire to murder Gafni. Gafni is what might be described in his terminology, an “outrageous lover”. The two most important sentences in his teaching, at least to my mind are, “we live in a world of outrageous pain. The only response to outrageous pain is outrageous love”. He lives that truth. He had gone out with a woman for a few weeks and helped her have a child and now raises the child with her. He is almost insanely generous with his love. And with his money. He falls in love –not romantically –but in love none the less, pretty much all the time. He has dozens of people around the world, men and women that he considers family or beloveds. He views Eros as the core energy of cosmos. He gives profound teaching on a phrase that he uses often, God is Eros. He is much more than sex positive. For him sex is a way of pouring love into a person. He has arrived at a hard earned place where you can feel that he has broken through the insidious shame that surrounds the sexual. It is fair I think to say I think, that he is incarnating in his life a sexual ethos that is at once deeply ethical and at the same time way beyond most social norms.

At the same time, people who I have spoken to who are quite the genius themselves, have spoken of Gafni’s intellectual brilliance in consistently superlative terms. For many of them he is trail blazing the future of love, sex and eros. In fact, at his think tank there are, right now, some ten major volumes being completed which offer a new vision of what it might mean to be a human being. He is undertaking a project as big as that undertaken by Freud when he initiated modern psychology in Vienna. The topics of this

leading edge new library range from sexuality, to psychology to entrepreneurship, but all are around the core themes of unique self, Eros, outrageous love and a politics of empathy. Put simply, Gafni and his colleagues are trying to change the source code of culture. Only when you put all the ingredients together does the Gafni saga begin to make sense: an outrageous lover, post conventional sexual ethos, with some normal mistakes, normal human hurt hijacked for political ends, radical intellectual brilliance on grand scale, all of this thrown in with Gafni's wildly ambitious and envy arousing vision for a new human and new humanity and it is not hard to figure out that attempted social murder or attempted crucifixion might well be in the cards.

Stephen Dinan deliberately chose to plug into the politically correct confirmation bias that powerful men abuse women. He refused to ever meet Gafni. He engaged in no fact checking with Gafni or his team. He refused many invitation to meet and dialogue. Strange behavior for a man whose website declares that he is all about dialogue, healing and reconciliation even in the most difficult of circumstances. Instead Dinan used the old false complaints and distorted stories to launch a smear campaign to bring down someone who in my estimation Dinan would like to be. He demonized Marc Gafni's larger than life, chaotic and post conventional story for his own benefit.

Gafni's issues- such as they are- are rooted in old recycled issues that he has addressed time and again. He is the head of a think tank. Why attack him now? He has been an open book for years with a buyer beware Internet stamped label on him for decades. Dinan's campaign certainly had nothing to do with victim advocacy as he claimed. He did exactly what he claimed Gafni was guilty of: exploitation for personal gain and political power.

The paradox of the whole thing however is that Stephen Dinan's core claim in his post attacking the Rise Up movie was wrong. I found out later that when the smear campaign began in Dec. 2015, Gafni immediately decided to take himself out of Rise Up project in order to let the movie find its way unencumbered by the controversy. Gafni was more interested in the ideas getting out there than in being identified with him, which is of course just the opposite of how the smear campaign has portrayed him.

But the question of why now, is not addressed only by analyzing Dinan's motives. An even deeper set of hidden motives seem to reside in David Ingber, who is the real person behind so much of the distortion in the smear campaign. It is Ingber who, according to a number of well researched articles and documented records of their affiliation, downloaded his demonization of Gafni into Dinan's heart. For example, in early fall 2015, when the smear campaign was being organized, Dinan told Barbara Marx Hubbard to call Ingber, who in turn, gave her his fabricated story of a negative Gafni.

Dinan started with a premise: Ingber's demonization of Gafni was true. From that false premise everything naturally made sense to him, just as it would to you or me if we believed that same premise. In that sense, we can give Dinan some leeway. It is Ingber

who – as [Clint Fuhs points out](#) - was deeply involved directly or indirectly in catalyzing the false complaints against Gafni in Israel in 2006.

Remember, these are the complaints that were not only false but also falsely claimed to be registered by the police. If you ask my conjecture I would say that **this** is what Ingber is hiding! When [David Ingber talks about Marc](#) he rewrites the story as if the false complaints and his involvement in them never happened. But actually, the person who initiated the false complaints was his very good friend. According to what she told Gafni in Spring 2006 just weeks before the false complaints, Ingber was working hard to demonize Gafni in her mind. But Ingber pretends like the entire 2006 story, in which he was central, did not happen. That appears to be his hidden agenda in the 2016 smear campaign. He wants to complete what Lisa Engles called, his [attempted social murder](#) in 2006, but hide what much evidence suggests is his malice stained fingerprints. If he can demonize Gafni sufficiently, he can hide his role in the false complaints and in the false claim made by all of the public reports at the time that there were complaints registered by the police.

Ingber's strategy is reminiscent of how corrupt propaganda machines rewrite history. Create a new narrative, no matter if false, and deflect attention from what is really happening. That is why he has sought to put all the focus on a distorted story from almost four decades ago when Marc was 19, which has [long been repudiated](#). That shifts the focus from what appears to be the pernicious manipulation of –directly or indirectly –catalyzing false complaints. The damage done to so many people in 2006 is incalculable. Ingber has worked very hard to cover up his central role in 2006 under the veneer of victim advocacy. That is always how the victim triangle plays out in psychology. The perpetrator hides his perpetration by pretending to be a rescuer or a victim. Ingber has done both.

Again, the false complaints were put into the public space as true without any fact checking or even elementary investigation. By elementary investigation - talking to both sides and checking evidence from both sides before taking action - it was Ingber who between 2005 and 2017, waged a private obsessive war against Gafni - hidden from a naïve public under the righteous veneer of victim advocacy. What would happen if Ingber's congregants actually took this seriously and demanded accountability from *their* Rabbi?

Gafni has not responded to the public attack other than in one heartfelt piece debunking the story from when he was 19. But a series of well-researched articles exposing the smear campaign have been published. The most comprehensive is a seminal piece by Dr. Clint Fuhs, former president of Ken Wilber's Integral Institute called [Anatomy of a Smear](#). A second [article by Lisa Engles](#) and a [third by Barbara Marx Hubbard](#) do much to tell the story and debunk the core myths of the smear campaign. Marc has offered to meet anyone who is willing to meet, clarify facts and bring healing and transformation to all of this; no one has responded to his interest in this. Not a single person involved in the decades old smear campaign is willing to openly face him, check facts and engage

him in the ensuing dialogue.

Where is Gafni now? 55-year-old Marc Gafni is vibrant and kicking hard. He and Barbara Marx Hubbard have a thriving, successful co-venture happening, which they call [Evolutionary Church](#). The [Center for Integral Wisdom](#) is thriving more than ever before. The circle of collaborators and leadership, which have weathered the attack together with Gafni, seem more committed than ever. Gafni's radical vision which some mock, others call poetry and prophetic. It seems no accident that society moves to turn the poet into a predator in order to avoid being confronted by the new vision. This has happened all through history. No big surprise it is happening now. What I think will also happen is that Gafni's most radical teaching on sexuality will begin to emerge.

His next three books – with co-author Kristina Kincaid – are, *A Return to Eros*, *God is Fuck* and *Sexually Incorrect*. They are serious, funny and revolutionary books which according to many who have read advance versions kinda blow culture up to its next possibility. That pretty much says it all.

See also: <http://www.whoismarcgafni.com/>