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The Fountain

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### Author

Shanafelt, Callie

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The Fountain

Author: Callie Shanafelt

**Abstract:**

When I was six years old my dad told me he grew up in a religious cult called Wisdom Knowledge Faith Love Fountain of the World, where a man he called "the master" said he was the second coming of Christ- turns out he wasn't. When my dad was twelve, two disgruntled members, blew up the building my grandparents and uncle were sleeping in and they died. I had a lot of questions, but my dad didn't have many answers because he blocked much of the experience out - as many survivors of trauma do.

This half-hour film documents my quest for the truth of my dad's mysterious childhood. Why did my grandparents join a cult? How did my dad and uncle cope growing up barefoot with long braids in LA public schools during an era of crew cuts? How did they cope with the loss of their parents and assimilation back into mainstream culture?

In order to tell the story I travel with my dad and uncle to the places of their childhood, all the time trying to get my dad to answer questions he couldn't in the past. This story of a daughter probing into family history touches on the early days of a counter culture movement and the effects on one family involved. Even though I set out to understand my grandparents in the end I learned more about my dad and uncle's survival as our relationship deepened through the filmmaking process.