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Hare Krishna Freed With Beliefs Intact

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Martin Rosenthal strode from a psychiatric hospital Monday, a Hare Krishna cultist at his side, his wife Marsha wailing in his ear.

Rosenthal and Marsha — both members of the Krishna sect — were abducted 12 days ago and separated. Pressured to renounce his faith, Rosenthal rebelled and was committed.

Monday he saw his wife for the first time since the abduction and learned for the first time that she had abandoned Krishna.

Moments after a long, tearful embrace in the crowded hall of Coral Ridge psychiatric hospital, the two parted again in a chorus of screams.

Freed by court order, the gangling Krishna monk walked out toward a car, in the company of a shaved-headed, orange-robed fellow cultist.

"Come with us, come with us," Rosenthal begged his small, red-haired wife.

Sobbing deeply, she refused.

"Madhava, Madhava," Marsha Rosenthal screamed, calling out her husband's religious name and nearly falling to the asphalt of the sunny parking lot.

Martin rolled up the car's window as his mother, whom he blames for the forcible attempt to change his beliefs, tried to lean inside.

"She's not going with you," Edith Rosenthal shouted.

"Stay with me," Marsha shrieked.

The tiny brown car rolled away, out of sight.

Meanwhile, Dr. Charles Saporito climbed into his car, a Mercedes convertible bearing the word PSYCHE on the license plate. He had just signed a second batch of papers to have Martin Rosenthal committed against his will.

The goateed psychiatrist had inadvertently signed papers committing Rosenthal June 12 without examining him first, he said. Circuit Judge Paul Marko III ordered Rosenthal released.

Saporito said he did not know who called him shortly before June 12 to ask for Rosenthal's committal. But Paul Kramer, the father of another cultist who was persuaded to quit, told The Herald that Rosenthal was at his home in Plantation before being confined in the hospital.

Lester Rosenthal, Martin's father, wouldn't say if he and Kramer collaborated in what his son calls a kidnaping and a deprogramming attempt.

"We arranged to have him picked up," he said. "I don't know any names. I don't know any addresses."

When he contacted the media last week, Martin staunchly described himself as a wronged believer in an unpopular faith. He had never made any threats that merited his forcible confinement, he said.

But Monday, his doctor and his family contended his mental problems far exceed his devotion to a sect that requires constant chanting and faith in an obscure "spiritual master."

Lester Rosenthal stared down the street after his son's car disappeared. "I feel he desperately needs psychiatric care," the father sighed. "At the very least, he's a danger to himself. He's a danger to his wife, to his unborn child and he's a danger to society."



PE TE CROSS / Miami Herald Staff

Marsha Rosenthal Renounced Hare Krishna Faith
...her husband, Martin, stood fast to the cult