

# CULT OF NXIVM SERIES PART 8: THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF ENEMIES

BY FRANK PARLATO

**N**XIVM leader Keith Raniere made it clear that for NXIVM to thrive, its enemies must be destroyed. Lawsuits and criminal indictments were the weapons of choice.

When I worked there, most of the lawyers made it known they despised NXIVM. But they loved the pay. Lawyers are funny: They disliked the injustice Raniere wanted to purchase, but they loved having a million-dollar client who would pay them for injustice.

Here is an example:

Toni Natalie had been Raniere's lover for eight years, (1992-1999) and she helped him launch National Health Network in 1994, a follow up to his failed Consumers Buyline pyramid scheme. Raniere also set up a health food shop in Clifton, NY and put it in his beloved girlfriend Natalie's name. Raniere had told Natalie that he was monogamous and that he would father a child with her who would change the world. They never had the child and but she did find out that he secretly slept with his female followers—some of whom were underage.

When Natalie left him Raniere pleaded with her to come back; he wrote her a lovesick letter [published on my website [www.frankreport.com](http://www.frankreport.com)], laced with threats of her imprisonment or death if she did not return.

She claims Raniere's female followers, "broke into my house; they would come and ring the doorbell at all hours of the day or night. They would tell me that I had to come with them, that he was dying, that if I didn't stay with him, he was going to die."

It soon became evident Natalie wasn't going to return and in revenge she was sued repeatedly over accusations related to the health food shop, which had failed and closed. When her legal bills exceeded her assets, Raniere hired lawyers to block her bankruptcy. That went on for eight years. In 2003, US bankruptcy Judge Robert Littlefield wrote: "This matter smacks of a jilted fellow's attempt at revenge or retaliation against his former girlfriend, with many attempts at tripping her up along the way."

Unable to block her bankruptcy, Raniere assigned Kristin Keeffe, a longtime NXIVM member and mother of Raniere's son, to investigate her. Keeffe, (who has since fled the cult with her son), compiled a 25-page report — delving into Natalie's family, her husband, the restaurant chain they operated, credit-card statements, lease invoices and more. When it was released to the Village Voice, the



Keith Raniere, lying in bed, cooking up schemes to destroy his enemies.

reporter called it "almost frightening in its level of detail".

During this onslaught — funded by Bronfman millions, Raniere hired Interfor, a private investigation firm, to spy on Natalie in her home. Raniere had a lawyer contact the US Attorney and the FBI to encourage an investigation. FBI agents showed up at her home, Natalie said. Evidence recently uncovered strongly indicates Raniere planned a scheme to lure Natalie to Mexico where she was to have been arrested through the influence of NXIVM leader Emiliano Salinas, the son of former Mexican President Carlos Salinas.

A second example:

After Natalie left, Barbara Bouchee was Raniere's lover for nine years (2000-2009). Bouchee was also told by Raniere she would have a child with him that would change the world. Of course that never happened. Bouchee was a NXIVM board member and the financial manager of top ranking NXIVM members. Raniere "borrowed" more than \$1.6 million from her and lost it [he says] in bad investments. According to Bouchee, when she asked to be repaid, he said he thought it was a gift.

Within two years of leaving, Raniere had Clare Bronfman and NXIVM sue Bouchee six times using six different law firms. They accused her of misappropriation of funds and extortion (for asking for her \$1.6 million back). She was also called as a witness in four other cases against other enemies, in three states,



From lover to enemy, Barbara Bouchee became the target of Keith Raniere's hatred.

before eight judges, resulting in over 800 filings, containing over 16,000 pages. The cost of Bouchee's lawyers exceeded \$400,000. She declared bankruptcy.

Bouchee wrote to one judge that what NXIVM did to her "should be considered criminal ... Their abuse of the legal system and the vendetta sought on individuals such as myself needs to stop."

More examples:

Another target was former NXIVM consultant Joseph O'Hara, who quit in 2005 when he said he discovered Raniere was involved in tax evasion schemes and that he hired private investigators to illegally spy on his enemies.

Raniere launched a series of lawsuits that plunged O'Hara into bankruptcy. In 2007, O'Hara was targeted for, allegedly, swindling the Bronfmans out of an investment on a land deal. The Bronfmans spent more money suing O'Hara than he allegedly took from them.

But Raniere wanted O'Hara indicted on a criminal offence. Somehow Kristin M. Keeffe, [the same woman who compiled the report on Natalie], was permitted by the Albany County DA, David Soares, to work as a special volunteer in his office to help build a case against O'Hara—she even had her own desk.

An Albany County grand jury indicted O'Hara on a charge of grand larceny. But a judge threw out the case citing insufficient evidence.

Raniere was disappointed. In September 2007, Raniere offered me a large bonus if I could ini-



Keith Raniere, leader of the Cult of NXIVM, has a stunning, philosophical epiphany.



Happier days. A loving Keith Raniere, with Toni Natalie. Later his love turned to bitter hate and he tormented this woman for 16 years.

tiate efforts to get O'Hara re-indicted. While I was considering the offer, I learned that I had been misled by Raniere about the facts of the case. I concluded it was a civil matter, not a criminal case and declined to pursue the O'Hara indictment. My decision was irrelevant since I was soon fired when I uncovered other likely illegal activities Raniere committed on unrelated matters.

After I left, however, I revealed to interested parties that Soares had allowed Keeffe to secretly work at the DA's office. When Soares ran for reelection his opponent publicized the fact that DA Soares allowed a NXIVM employee to volunteer at his office and have access to secret grand jury information on a NXIVM legal target. His opponent accused Soares of selling out his office to NXIVM to hunt down their enemy. It got considerable traction in local media and almost tipped the election away from the incumbent.

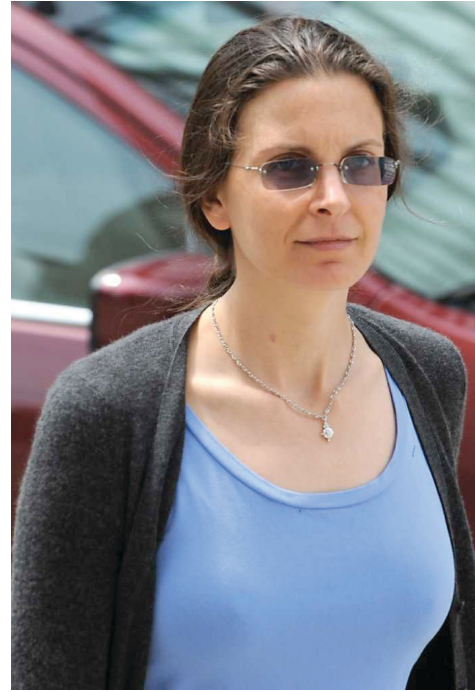
In early 2012, using information I provided to reporter James Odato and a great deal of his own independent investigation, the Albany Times Union published an investigative series — Secrets of NXIVM, which won an AP award



Profile of a deviant? Keith Raniere, leader of NXIVM, has been accused of abusing dozens of women and raping several underage girls.



Albany County District Attorney, David Soares, seems to be ready, willing and able to assist Raniere's vendettas.



Clare Bronfman, the sinister enabler of Raniere's vengeful schemes, has funded Raniere. She may be on the hook for large scale, massive tax evasion, which even her millions may not be able to buy off.

for reporting. The Times Union series included comments from various sources confirming that Raniere is pedophile, an abuser of women, and a man who uses litigation to punish adversaries. It also revealed in gripping detail how Seagram heiresses, Clare and Sara Bronfman fund Raniere's efforts.

#### Keeping lawyers busy:

Shortly after the Times Union series ran, however, the New York State police commenced a criminal investigation into whether one or more people accessed NXIVM's password protected website without authorization. The suspects: Bouchey, Natalie, O'Hara and a blogger, John Tighe, had been named as sources in the Times Union series. Tighe ran a blog called Saratoga in Decline that frequently criticized NXIVM.

The computer trespass investigation was assigned to State Police investigator, Rodger Kirsopp in April 2012. Kirsopp was to soon find out that NXIVM's attorneys, Stephen R. Coffey, Pamela Nichols and Michael P. McDermott were driving the case.

McDermott was the former chief assistant District Attorney for Albany County under David Soares before entering private practice in 2007.

Police records show NXIVM attorneys were in contact with Kirsopp dozens of times, attending interviews with Raniere and other NXIVM employees, delivering documents, computer records and hiring investigators and computer experts to get evidence to use in the case.

Kirsopp's 17,000 word report on the investigation reveals hundreds of instances where

NXIVM attorneys pushed a minor computer trespass case into a major felony investigation.

"I met with [NXIVM attorney] Coffey at SP Clifton Park who inquired on the status of this investigation and whether there would be search warrants of the suspects computers prior to or at the time of arrest," Kirsopp wrote on Aug. 6, 2012. He added that Coffey requested the suspects be arrested, rather than issued appearance tickets.

"I received a call from [NXIVM] Atty McDermott who requested action by 9/10/12 in case the offense only rises to misdemeanor level due to the statute of limitations," states another report Kirsopp filed on Aug. 27.

When Raniere was interviewed by Kirsopp, with NXIVM attorneys present, Raniere said his ex-lover, Natalie, had "mob connections" but "was unable to provide specific names or knowledge of the connection," Kirsopp wrote.

After months of investigating the computer trespass, the Saratoga County District Attorney declined to prosecute. Kirsopp asked the New York State Attorney General to prosecute.

The Attorney General turned down the case. According to Kirsopp's notes, "This information was passed along to (NXIVM) Attorney Pam Nichols."

With state police unable to get anyone to prosecute, McDermott presented the case to his former boss at the Albany DA's office. But DA Soares, remembered the embarrassing controversy over his NXIVM "volunteer" and O'Hara five years before, chose to become the third prosecutor to decline the case.

But the lawyers crafted a solution. Soares would claim a conflict of interest and the case would be referred to a "special prosecutor" in Albany.

That special prosecutor was Holly Trexler, a former Albany County assistant district attorney who, before entering private practice, worked under Soares and McDermott.

Finally, justice was to be purchased. Search warrants were issued; the computers of Natalie, O'Hara and Tighe were seized.

With the help of NXIVM computer experts it was discovered that the targets may have accessed the website. State Police wound up charging them along with Bouchey with E-Felony criminal charges for computer trespass.

It hadn't been easy. It wasn't cheap. Based on what I know of the monthly costs NXIVM paid for lawyers and private investigators, I estimate it cost Clare Bronfman \$2 million to get the four indicted for essentially rooting around a website that hundreds of people had passwords to access.

When New York State police seized blogger Tighe's hard drive from his computer, they unexpectedly found evidence of child pornography. Tighe took a plea deal and is serving five years and 10 months in federal prison on child pornography charges. He also pleaded guilty to the computer trespass charge and was sentenced to a year in jail to be served concurrently with his federal sentence.

Raniere, who is accused by several women of having sex with them when they were under the age of 16, was able to gloat over the pros-

ecution of Tighe who had child porn videos. Ironically, I recently uncovered that Raniere may have had a teenage boy take video of Raniere's sexual episodes with his underage sisters.

Meantime, the computer trespass case against Bouchey, Natalie and O'Hara has not been settled and recent evidence suggests that Clare Bronfman may have perjured herself in court filings about the dates of discovery of the alleged computer trespass.

The remaining defendants have made motions to have the case dismissed. Sources familiar with the case say the evidence is so flimsy that the state may offer an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal for all of them.

Still, Raniere can boast of victory. He further disrupted the lives of his ex-lovers and got them indicted. Created great fear and cost to them. And weakened them for his next attack against them.

The hypocrite, Raniere, loves to speak of compassion. He says, "Humans can be noble. The question is: Will we put forth what is necessary?"

He says, "When we smile, the world smiles with us: each experience of joy is an experience of joy for all people and a victory for human kind."

Yet he has made many people he once promised to love weep.

The relentlessly vengeful Raniere and his enablers the Bronfman sisters are the people the government is calling victims in their federal indictment against me. Did they purchase justice in my case?

It is my job to show who the real victim and the real criminals are. Stay tuned, there is much more to follow...

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