

**MAKE
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THE
GUILTY**

A NOVEL

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

MAKE Mad the Guilty is a new edition of William Norris's novel *The Gonzago Principle*, which first published in December 2001. The story stretched from the '80s through what he considered the near future, 2012. The author's imagination of what would come to pass in coming years did not align fully with reality, and so this book has become something of an alternate history against the author's original intent. Norris set out to place the Lindbergh Trial in a new context that would help readers understand just how shocking and unjust were the circumstances of that infamous history. We defer to our readers to judge the result and beg pardon for what has become the language of a man in an era brought to a close by dramatic cultural shifts over the past two decades.

BOOK ONE

NEW ORLEANS

1988

ONE

THEY WERE the worst seven months of his life. Standing before the television lights night after night, the audience an almost invisible mass behind the cameras, he sweated out the fear of exposure. One word, one hint of his adultery, and he was finished. The media would be on him in a feeding frenzy. The arranged converts for each program were vetted as never before—his producer thought he was crazy, but the possibility of one of these yo-yos shouting out an accusation on camera was too real to be risked. As for the girl, money would keep her mouth shut, but she had adamantly refused his demand that she have an abortion.

It had been an embarrassing scene, one that Grayson did not care to remember. “Damn hypocrite” was the least of her accusations, and however true the charge on both counts, it still hurt. “You’re always preaching the goddamn right to life,” she had railed. “But when it comes right down to the wire, you’d kill my baby without a second thought just to save yourself embarrassment. Think again, preacher. I’m having it,

and you're paying for it. Or else you know what's going to happen."

Grayson had never seen her again. Thank God. He had arranged through a discreet law firm to make generous monthly payments to the girl and tried, without success, to forget that she existed. His wife's own swelling abdomen was a constant reminder of that other fetus, somewhere out there, which could destroy him in an instant. Helen was close to term now. He supposed the girl must be too. Grayson did not wish to know that.

As for Helen, if she noticed the tension in her husband, she was too wrapped up in her own maternity to care. This was going to be the most perfect, most cosseted baby of all time. How could it be otherwise with such a father?

Timmy had been attentive to her every need, perhaps even overprotective: for instance, his insistence that she go alone to a private obstetrician instead of a clinic, where she might meet lots of mothers-to-be. She would have liked that, but Timmy said she couldn't be too careful; she might catch something and hurt the baby. Ah well. She smiled to herself. Timmy knew best.

The labor pains, when they finally arrived, were not as bad as she had feared. Timmy rushed her to the hospital and stayed by her side as she delivered a perfect eight-pound baby girl. The name was already chosen: they would call her Jenny.

That night, before a television congregation of 13 million souls, Rev. Timothy Grayson wept for joy as he told his flock that he had become a father. It was an occasion for celebration, not least because a preliminary analysis of phone calls during and after the broadcast indicated that contributions that week would reach an all-time high. In

consequence, Grayson was less than sober when he unlocked the door to his empty house some time after midnight.

Grayson kicked off his shoes, ripped off his tie, and poured himself a large scotch before settling down to contemplate his triumph. Surely his public image had never been better. Now, at last, he could preach the virtue of family values with the backing of a real American family of his own. Personable, pious, and squeaky clean, the Graysons would become the role models for fundamentalist Christians across the United States. *Hell*, he thought, *why be modest: tomorrow, the world.*

In his mind's eye he could see the satellite hookups into every cable system on the globe. Helen and little Jenny would be beside him on the podium, radiating goodness, and he would preach to the benighted heathen as he had never preached before. Grayson took a large swallow. "Match that, Swaggart," he said to the blank screen on the wall. "And you, Falwell, and you, Roberts, and you, Bakker, with your overpainted floozy. I'll drive the bunch of you off the screen!"

From the corner of his eye, Grayson noticed a blinking red light on the answering machine beside his telephone. He got up unsteadily and pressed the playback button. In an instant he was sober.



THE LAW FIRM OF MARKHAM, MOLOCH, AND FEINSTEIN was housed in a small suite of offices down a side alley in the French Quarter. Even at ten in the morning, Grayson could hear the plaintive sound of a trumpet echoing from nearby

Bourbon Street as he mounted the staircase, glancing furtively behind him to make sure he was not followed.

He wore a shabby raincoat, purchased that morning from the Salvation Army, and the famous blond hair was hidden beneath a black hat. Filthy sneakers peaked out from the frayed bottoms of ragged blue jeans, and dark glasses mocked the cloudy sky. All in all, his flock would have had a hard time recognizing the Reverend Timothy Grayson, which was precisely what he'd hoped for. On the other hand, any self-respecting police officer was liable to arrest him for loitering with intent to commit a felony.

Pushing his way past an alarmed secretary, Grayson threw open the door of the senior partner's office without knocking and entered. Henry Markham looked up in alarm.

"What the devil . . . oh, it's you," he said, as Grayson removed his hat and dark glasses. "Why the disguise?"

"You know damn well why the disguise." Grayson was not in a good mood. "What was the meaning of that message you left on my voice mail last night? I expressly told you never to contact me at home. What if my wife had taken that call?"

"Your wife is otherwise engaged right now," Markham said. "I know it, you know it, and after last night the whole damn world knows it. What they don't know is that you got to be a daddy *twice* yesterday." He leered. "You've been a busy little preacher, Mr. Grayson."

Grayson shrugged. "So what? It was going to happen one of these days, after that damn-fool girl refused an abortion. I've been paying you to take care of that matter and to leave me out of it. You didn't have to call me up and tell me the bastard was born. I don't want to know."

"It's not as simple as that. Not anymore." Markham began shuffling papers. "You see, Mr. Grayson, the girl's dead."

"Good God." Grayson was genuinely shocked. "But that's impossible. I paid for the best medical care, didn't I? Women don't die in childbirth these days."

"This one did. And I'm afraid that's not the end of the matter, Mr. Grayson. You see, she left a will."

Timothy Grayson felt a small shiver pass down his spine. "A will? Why on earth should she make a will? Hell, the girl was only twenty-two, twenty-three at most."

"Standard practice on these occasions, Mr. Grayson. I'm not saying she had a premonition or anything like that. As a matter of fact, I advised her to make it."

"You did what?" Grayson lunged across the desk and seized the lawyer by the shoulders, shaking him until his teeth rattled. "You stupid moron. I suppose you're going to tell me that she named me in this damned will? That thing is going to be on public record, and how the hell do you think I'm going to explain it?"

Markham shook himself free and backed away. "I am the executor of that will, Mr. Grayson. I am legally obliged to ensure that its conditions are carried out."

Grayson subsided. "All right. Put me out of my misery. What does it say?"

The lawyer unfolded a single sheet of paper. "This is a copy, you understand," he said. "The original is in a safe place. Do you want me to read it to you?"

"Go on."

"I, Lisa Emanon, being of sound mind . . ."

"Skip that bit. Tell me the worst."

"Very well. 'I bequest and bequeath all that I possess to

the father of my child, Timothy Grayson, of New Orleans in the state of Louisiana, and do hereby grant him full parental rights in the upbringing of said child until he or she shall attain the age of eighteen years or complete his or her full-time education, whichever shall be later.' That's all."

"It's enough to ruin me," Grayson gloomed. "Does that mean what I think it means?"

"It does. Congratulations, Mr. Grayson. You have a son."

"Now wait a cotton-picking minute. What about our arrangement?"

"Our arrangement, as you put it," said the lawyer smoothly, "was for me to make arms-length payments to Miss Emanon. The lady is now dead. Ergo, our arrangement is at an end. The boy is your responsibility."

"And what if I refuse? What if I deny paternity?"

"You could fight it in court, I suppose. Would you really want to do that? All those DNA tests. All that publicity." Markham grinned slyly. He was enjoying this.

"I get the point. But what the hell else can I do? I can hardly foist the kid off on Helen and pretend she really had twins without noticing. My wife may not be very bright, but she's not that stupid."

Markham let him sweat awhile. "There might be a way . . ." he said finally.

"So, tell me."

"Well, I do happen to know this young couple—actually they live in France—who've been looking for a baby to adopt. With the right incentive, they might be persuaded to overlook some of the legal niceties."

"That's it." Grayson clutched at the idea like a drowning

man. "Get the damned kid out of the country and off my back."

"It'll be expensive," warned Markham. "You'll have to pay for his upkeep and his education. And then there's the matter of my fee . . ."

"I don't care. Do it. And keep my name out of it. That boy is never, ever, to know who his father is. Is that understood?"

"Perfectly," Markham said. "I'll draw up an agreement between the two of us. As far as the young couple are concerned, and the boy when he's old enough, they'll be dealing solely with me. I shall be their benefactor."

"Suits me," grunted Grayson. "One more thing: that will. Can you destroy it?"

"Really, Mr. Grayson." Markham drew himself up to his full height of five feet six inches. "You are asking an officer of the court to commit a felony. However, I think I might stretch a point and keep it in a safe place, away from the public eye. It will be, you might say, my insurance policy. Just in case you ever have a change of heart."

"That's blackmail," Grayson protested.

The lawyer smiled thinly.

TWO

SHE WAS SO LUCKY. Sometimes Helen Grayson had to pinch herself to make sure that life was really happening. She stared with rapt attention at the handsome face of her husband, filling the television screen in a tight close-up. That backlit halo of golden hair, that firm jaw, those steadfast eyes glowing with sincerity. His voice, sometimes cajoling, sometimes thundering, still sent shivers down her spine after nearly three years of marriage. Timothy Grayson had been acclaimed in *Time* magazine as the “Television Evangelist of the Year.” And, as the writer had pointed out with what Helen thought was unnecessary asperity, he had the bank balance to prove it.

Helen shifted to a more comfortable position on the couch and sipped delicately at her glass of crème de menthe. She watched as the camera backed away to expose the choir behind her husband, and fifty young females in virginal shimmering white launched into a triumphant hymn. She reached for the remote control to turn down the volume. Just a little.

They were coming to the bit she liked best: the grand finale, when the sinners would come to be saved. Timothy did it so well, she thought: his arms outstretched in welcome, his face a picture of serene forgiveness as one by one the penitents left the audience to announce to the world that they were born again.

No wonder everyone loved him.

It was a good crop tonight—more than a dozen converts anxious to be saved. That was what Timmy always called it: a crop. He had planted the seeds of the love of Jesus in their hearts, he said, and now he was reaping the harvest. *No doubt about that*, she allowed herself to think irreverently. The harvest had been rich indeed. Helen chided herself for the thought. Wasn't he doing God's work? And didn't the good book say that the laborer was worthy of his hire? All those people who said it was wrong for a preacher to be so wealthy, to drive expensive cars and live in grand houses—they were just jealous, that was all.

At last the final newborn Christian received his blessing, and the Reverend Timothy Grayson launched into his invocation. Less an invocation, really, than an exhortation to the faithful to get out their checkbooks and send more money. *Well*, thought Helen defensively, *everyone has to live*.

Soon the credits would be rolling and the show would be over. Not "show," she told herself firmly, "service." *Remember that, Helen*. Timothy got very cross with people who got that wrong. Anyway, now that the sh . . . service was almost ended he would soon be home. And she had something to tell him.

Helen Grayson opened her dressing gown and laid her hand on her still-flat stomach as though expecting to feel a

heartbeat. Timothy was going to make such a splendid father. She just knew it.

FIVE BLOCKS AWAY, IN AN ANONYMOUS MOTEL ROOM, THE object of her thoughts looked at his watch, swung a well-tanned pair of naked legs out of bed, and headed for the shower. From a mass of tousled hair on the adjacent pillow came a disgruntled voice.

“Hey, Timmy, you’re not running out on me so soon, are you?”

“fraid so, honey. Duty calls. My wife never has caught on to the miracles of television recording, but the show was over five minutes ago, and she knows just how long it takes to get home from the studio.”

“But Timmy . . .” her tone was plaintive, “I need to talk to you. I need to talk to you real bad.”

“Next time, honey. Next time, I promise. We’ll just sit down and talk instead. If that’s what you want.” Grayson laughed. A pillow whistled through the air, missed, and thumped against the wall.

“You bastard.” She was sobbing now.

He hated women who burst into tears at every opportunity. Maybe it was time to end this particular liaison. She was getting too possessive. Could be dangerous.

“I’m going to have a baby, goddamn you! Your baby.”

“Oh shit,” said the Reverend Timothy Grayson.

BOOK TWO

MARS

2010

THREE

JASON VERNE STARED through the small armored-glass porthole at the rapidly growing red disk below him and tried hard to keep his adrenaline level in check. The effort was in vain. From the sensitive electrodes taped to his chest, the spacecraft's telemetry system sent a stream of information back to Earth, betraying his elevated heartbeat.

"Calm down, boy," said a disembodied voice in his ear, "this is no time to get a coronary."

Verne resisted the temptation to giggle. Mission Control was determined to nanny him every inch of the way, as if there were anything they could do to help at a distance of 35 million miles. If he screwed up his landing approach, it would take 188 seconds for the folks at NASA to learn about it, and another 188 seconds to send a signal back, plus whatever time it took them to decide what to do. By then he would be long dead. No, whatever happened now was up to him. The long years of training were about to pay off. Or not, as the case might be.

Verne studied the array of instruments in his cramped

cabin, took careful note of the time, and fired a braking rocket for exactly 1.5 seconds. He was now on his fourth elliptical orbit of the red planet, slowing a little each time around and allowing the Martian gravity to pull him closer to the surface. If all went as planned, his sixth orbit would enable him to begin the final descent. Jason Verne, age thirty-five, American citizen and white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, was about to become the first human being to set foot on Mars.

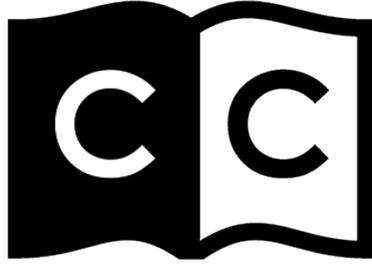
Perhaps. Verne was acutely aware that there was still much that could go wrong. His spacecraft, a highly developed version of the lightweight single-stage NASA rocket that made its first flight in 1993, could easily be damaged on landing. Or the engines might refuse to reignite when he wanted to take off. In either instance he was a dead man. There was no backup mission waiting to take off from Earth to rescue him. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration had stretched its budget to the limit to get this flight off the ground, and Verne was under no illusion that the entire future of the space program rested on his shoulders.

After the disaster of the last unmanned Mars probe, lost without a trace before it could send a single picture back to Earth; the limping space shuttle, long obsolete and seemingly doomed to break down on the launchpad; the myopic Hubble telescope; and the fiasco of the International Space Station, NASA was making one final bid to retrieve its shattered reputation.

As ever, it had taken an outside threat to get Congress off its fat backside and appropriate enough money to do the job. This time, in a virtual replay of the panic caused by the launch of the Soviet Union's *Sputnik* in the 1960s, it was the Chinese who had provided the incentive by announcing that

they intended to put a person on Mars. Just what hazard this would have posed to the United States was never clear; the mere insult to America's supposed technological supremacy had been sufficient to send the politicians running to unlock their wallets. Or rather the taxpayers' wallets. But NASA, it was made clear, had better do it right this time. One more snafu, and the agency would cease to exist.

Even so, compared to the riches lavished on President Kennedy's promise to put a man on the moon, the budget for the Mars project—Operation Athena—was meager. NASA would have liked to launch at least two unmanned probes to the red planet first, to make a thorough survey of possible landing sites, but \$6 billion was all that Congress would spend. It was not enough, but it would have to do.



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THE TRIAL OF THE NEXT CENTURY

Jason Verne is an all-American hero. As the first man to set foot on Mars after a solo journey into space, he quickly became a familiar figure in every living room. His good-will and human courage won over the hearts of many, including the daughter of world-famous televangelist, Timothy Grayson. His meteoric rise didn't end there. While settling into the limelight with his wife and new baby Timmy, he became the perfect candidate to move into the White House.

But this kind of fame and power comes at a price. The midnight kidnapping of Timmy Verne leaves the world aghast. Who would commit the capital offence of breaking the Lindbergh Law?

Then veteran reporter Albert Choate notices suspicious parallels between the kidnapping of the president-elect's only child and another event that occurred almost a hundred years ago—the Lindbergh Kidnapping. History seems to be repeating itself. Is this some sort of twisted coincidence, or could the Trial of the Century be occurring all over again for some other sinister purpose?

William Norris is the author of numerous true crime books and novels inspired by his years as an award-winning investigative journalist. Look at the end of the book for a book club discussion guide and a preview of *The Badger Game*.



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