

Brother Tony Leyva

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Mario Ivan "Tony" Leyva Jr. (May 1946 – March 3, 2005), most commonly known as **Brother Tony Leyva**, was a Pentecostal preacher and convicted pederast and child molester. His crimes are covered in Mike Echols' book *Brother Tony's Boys: The Largest Case of Child Prostitution in U.S. History: The True Story*.

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Biography

Mario Ivan Leyva, Jr. was born in Fletcher, North Carolina in May 1946.^[1] "Tony," as he came to be called, was a victim of child molestation himself. As publicly stated, he was molested once during kindergarten and again when he was 14 on a baseball field near his high school. As a child, he enjoyed visiting his grandparents in Flat Rock, North Carolina, and came to live there in his late childhood. He became a Pentecostal preacher at age 17, and married his childhood sweetheart, Tammy Sue.

Beginnings of Pederasty

During his teen years and early adult years as a Pentecostal preacher, he found himself attracted to younger boys in his church congregation. He would lure boys aged 10 to 14 years to the back roads of Henderson County, North Carolina, with the promise of teaching them how to drive, but instead perform oral sex on them, calling it "God's special way for his people to love each other." Brother Tony, as he came to be called, violated dozens of young boys in the area in this way.

Tony's Boys

During the later 1960s and early 1970s, Tony turned his attention to religious revivals and traveled across the South. He would invite young boys from both his home town and towns along his travels to come with him, promising to teach them the ways of the Bible. The boys would earn their way by setting up lights, playing music, or driving tent trucks for Tony's revival tent. Then, during the night at his motel room in that city, he would molest the boys. The boys' parents were often deceived by Tony's charm, and the boys who were victimized never spoke out of embarrassment. Those who did speak out were often hushed up by disbelief.

The Book

Leyva's conquests as an evangelist / molester are recorded in Mike Echols' book *Brother Tony's Boys: The Largest Case of Child Prostitution in U.S. History: The True Story*.

Arrest

Brother Tony, along with several other known pederasts, was arrested in 1988 several times on child molestation, sodomy, and interstate transport of minors charges.

Life after Release

After Leyva was released from prison in 2002, he apparently fled to Haiti^[2] using forged papers. In August 2003 he was caught and held at the United States Embassy in Port-au-Prince. He was later deported back to the United States.

Death

Leyva died from skin cancer on March 3, 2005, in the infirmary of Powhatan Correctional Center in Virginia. The state medical examiner's office determined he had metastatic melanoma, a form of skin cancer.^[3]

References

- ↑ Smothers, Ronald (1988-11-15). "Preacher's Journey: Long Trail of Abuse" (<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/15/us/preacher-s-journey-long-trail-of-abuse.html?pagewanted=1>). *The New York Times*.
- ↑ **(Dutch)** "Haitian cop captures child molester" (<http://www.heritagekonpa.com/archives/Haitian%20cop%20captures%20child%20molester.htm>). Heritage Konpa. 2003-08-23.
- ↑ Gelineau, Kristen (2005-03-08). "Preacher who molested children dies in prison" (<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1298&dat=20050308&id=wfEyAAAIBAJ&sjid=zAgGAAAIBAJ&pg=4966,1956854>). *The Free Lance–Star*. Retrieved 2010-05-02.

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