

The Family

By Chris Johnston and Rosie Jones

'*The Family* is remarkably clear-sighted. The writers have a gift for temperate yet compelling prose that unflinchingly reveals the delusions and unreflective righteousness of much of what emerged from the counterculture. In this book, the best of what journalism should be – honest, unsentimental, incisive – is combined with the craft and storytelling skills of born writers.' – **Christos Tsiolkas**

'Harrowing but humane. An extraordinary story, impeccably researched.' **Martin McKenzie-Murray**

A powerful work of investigative journalism that reveals the legacy of a notorious cult.

The apocalyptic group The Family and their guru, Anne Hamilton-Byrne — one of few female cult leaders — captured headlines throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Hamilton-Byrne, who some followers believed was Jesus Christ, was glamorous and charismatic — and, many allege, very dangerous. From her base in a quiet suburb, she recruited wealthy professionals to join her cult, including doctors, lawyers, nurses, architects, and scientists. She acquired children and raised them as her own, bleaching their hair to make them look like siblings, and her group became surrounded by rumours of LSD use, child abuse, and strange spiritual rituals.

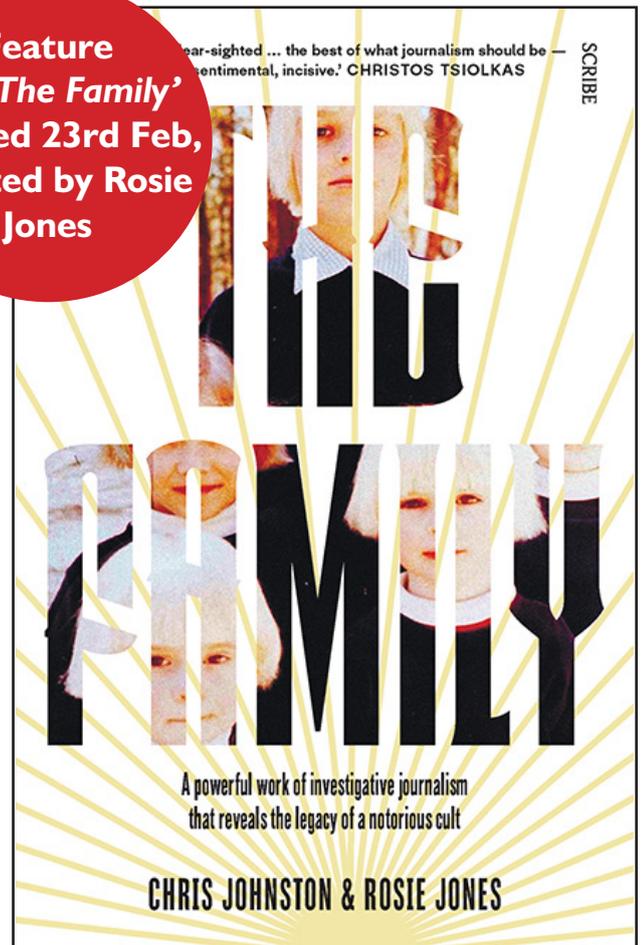
In 1987, police swooped on The Family's lakeside compound and rescued children who claimed they were part of Anne's future master race. The children recounted terrible stories of near starvation, emotional manipulation, and physical abuse. But Anne could not be found, sparking an international police hunt. Could they bring Anne to justice?

How did such a notorious group come to flourish? How did Anne maintain a hold over her followers? Drawing on revelatory new research, including police files, diary entries, and interviews with survivors, *The Family* tells the strange and shocking story of one of the most bizarre cults in modern history.

Chris Johnston is a senior writer for *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, based in Melbourne. He has been covering developments related to The Family for several years.

Rosie Jones Rosie Jones is an award-winning writer, director and editor. Her most recent feature documentary, *The Family*, premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival in July 2016.

Feature film 'The Family' released 23rd Feb, directed by Rosie Jones



Title: *The Family*
Author: Chris Johnston and Rosie Jones
Publication: 13 February 2017
Extent: 288
Category: True crime/religion/cults
ISBN: 9781925321678
Price: AUD \$32.99/NZD \$40.00
Format: Paperback
Ebook: Available

- Featuring original interviews with many survivors of The Family, as well as police and current and former members, *The Family* brings to light previously unheard stories, revealing the deception and cover-ups that allowed the cult to flourish
- For readers of Lawrence Wright's *Going Clear*, Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven*, and Sarah Moore's *Unseen, Unheard, Unknown* (a 1995 memoir by a former member of The Family that became a bestseller in Australia).



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