

## Cult Leader Controlled Girls' Lives, Forcing Them to Create Secret Code: We Spoke With Our Eyes

ELAINE ARADILLAS June 01, 2018 01:00 PM

Pebbles Rodriguez and Amy Eddy often turned to each other for comfort and support because no one else could imagine the horror they were going through.

Pebbles and Amy, then ages 12 and 14, were "married" to Tony Alamo, then 62 years old and a spiritual leader of the Tony Alamo Christian Ministries, an apocalyptic group with a compound in Fouke, Arkansas.

For about a decade beginning in the mid-1990s, the girls were raped, beaten and starved at the whim of Alamo, whose behavior grew more sadistic as the years went on. Because they weren't allowed to commiserate without the fear of being punished, Pebbles and Amy would communicate through a secret code — using their eye movements to spell letters of the alphabet.

"This sounds really ridiculous, but we had to literally write the alphabet with our eyes," Pebbles tells PEOPLE. "We had to come up with our own code just to communicate."

Amy says, "It was our way of supporting each other."

Pebbles, now 32, and Amy, 34, are sharing their story, which is also featured in the premiere episode of *People Magazine Investigates: Cults*, airing June 4 on Investigation Discovery.

• *For more about the harrowing experiences of Amy Eddy and Pebbles Rodriguez and how they reclaimed their lives, watch tonight's episode of People Magazine Investigates: Cults at 9 o'clock ET on Investigation Discovery.*

Alamo and his wife Susan created the group after they were married in 1966. They amassed their following on the streets of Hollywood, where they preached salvation and offered people what they purported to be a peaceful existence on a commune.

**WATCH: Cult Leaders & Child Brides: Breaking Down 'People Magazine Investigates: Cults'**

After Susan died in 1982, Alamo's behavior took a dark twist as he began extolling the purported righteousness of polygamy and underage brides.

• *For more on former child brides Amy Eddy and Pebbles Rodriguez, subscribe now to PEOPLE or pick up this week's issue, on newsstands now.*

Amy and Pebbles were among several of Tony's child brides, a group that included an 8-year-old.

The girls were finally freed from their torture in 2008 when Alamo was arrested and charged with 10 counts of interstate transportation of minors for illicit sexual purposes.

Convicted one year later, he died in federal prison in 2017 at 82.

Amy and Pebbles still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, in which seemingly normal activities can sometimes trigger panic attacks and feelings of fear and loneliness.

"Every day is a milestone," Amy says. "Some days are easier than others."

Pebbles agrees. "I don't think it will ever be easy. There are things that are out of my control, like recurring nightmares," she says. "There is nothing I can do to make it go away, but I try my hardest."

The two live states apart: Pebbles, a stay-at-home mom who is in the process of getting a divorce, is in the Phoenix area with her two young sons, while Amy is studying to get into college in Oklahoma City, where she raises two boys with her boyfriend. But they are forever linked and speak with each other every day.

*People Magazine Investigates: Cults* premieres Monday (9 p.m. ET) on Investigation Discovery.