

## Former Child Brides Speak Out About Rape, Torture on *People Magazine Investigates: Cults*

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For Pebbles Rodriguez and Amy Eddy, freedom did not come easily.

The young women grew up in Fouke, Arkansas, on a compound belonging to the Tony Alamo Christian Ministries, a religious organization created by Alamo and his wife, Susan, in Hollywood in the late 1960s.

But after his wife died in 1982, Alamo's behavior grew deviant — and he began preaching the purported righteousness of polygamy and underage brides. In the mid-1990s, Alamo, then 62 years old, "married" Pebbles and Amy. They were 12 and 14.

"I was terrified that if I didn't do what I was supposed to do when he told me to do it — no matter what it was — I'm going to hell," Amy tells PEOPLE, recalling her childhood in the cult.

Pebbles, now 32, and Amy, 34, are sharing their story. The story is featured in this week's issue of PEOPLE and in the premiere episode of *People Magazine Investigates: Cults*, airing on Investigation Discovery at 9 p.m. ET.

• **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 p.m. ET on Investigation Discovery.**

As children, the girls were regularly starved, beaten and raped. They turned to each other for support because they had nobody else, and even created a secret code language — in which they used eye movements to signify letters of the alphabet — to communicate.

"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."

• **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 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."

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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 on June 4 (9 p.m. ET) on

