

Announcer (00:00):

C13Originals.

Giancarlo Granda (00:10):

So, let's go back to when I first met them. I was 20 years old, working at the Fontainebleau Hotel, working my way through college.

Andrew Jenks (00:20):

This is Giancarlo Granda. He's speaking about the time in March of 2012 when he was working at one of South Beach's most luxurious hotels. Granda was a pool attendant.

Giancarlo Granda (00:34):

I'm talking to some guests, and I had noticed this woman behind me staring at me, and she was noticeably drunk.

Andrew Jenks (00:41):

Granda says the woman, who he described as a "hot cougar," was snapping pictures of him while he worked, and so they began to speak.

Giancarlo Granda (00:50):

She was just flirting with me, and then we started flirting back and forth, and then, toward the end of my work shift, she's like, "Hey, would you want to go back to my hotel room?" And as a single 20-year-old, I'm like, "Yeah, of course." And she's like, "But my husband wants to watch." And immediately, I thought it was a bit strange, and I backed off. She said, "Oh, no, but he's not going to do anything. He's just going to sit in the corner, and he just wants to watch, and it's his thing."

Giancarlo Granda (01:20):

After my work shift, they called me through a blocked number to schedule where to meet, and we met at another hotel. And I walk into the lobby, and Becki's sitting there, waiting for me, and then she offered me whisky to relax, to calm my nerves.

Giancarlo Granda (01:38):

We talked for a bit, I relaxed, and then we went upstairs, and Jerry was laying on the bed. He was laying on the bed, he was drunk, and he was giggling. And I'm kind of weirded out at this moment, and I said, "Hey, if at any point you get jealous, or you want me to back off, just let me know, and I'll walk out of here."

Giancarlo Granda (01:58):

He's like, "No, no, just go for it." And he enjoyed watching me and Becki have sex. He would just sit in the corner, and yeah, he was just enjoying watching us.

Andrew Jenks (02:21):

From C13Originals, a Cadence13 studio, I'm Andrew Jenks, and this is Gangster Capitalism, season three, Jerry Falwell Jr. and Liberty University.

Eli Paperboy Reed (02:42):

(singing)

News Announcer (02:59):

One of the most influential figures in the Christian conservative movement mired in an alleged sex scandal. Falwell says his wife had a Fatal Attraction-type situation with an ambitious young man who was working...

News Announcer 2 (03:10):

The young man saying that is not the real story.

News Announcer 3 (03:13):

Giancarlo Granda calls Falwell a predator, saying he engaged in sexual liaisons with Falwell's wife while Falwell watched.

News Announcer 4 (03:18):

The institution, founded by Falwell's father, that preaches family values and morals, may soon be looking for another president.

Andrew Jenks (03:27):

When Aram Roston of Reuters broke the Granda-Falwell story on August 24th, 2020, it was huge news. The hypocrisy was astonishing. The most powerful of evangelical power couples, who preached sexual austerity, had strayed far from their own rules. The Liberty Way, the school's strict moral code, prohibits, quote, "sexual relations outside of a biblically-ordained marriage between a natural born man and a natural born woman." Here, the president of that university, the person who enforced those rules, was allegedly sitting in a room, watching his wife have sex with another man.

Andrew Jenks (04:14):

Falwell Jr. maintains that although his wife did have an affair with Granda, he neither took part in their relationship, nor had any knowledge of it while it was going on. He told the Washington Post, quote, "I just ordered quesadillas from him at the pool. That's about it."

Andrew Jenks (04:33):

Back to Granda speaking to the media after he went public with his story.

Giancarlo Granda (04:40):

Then the next day, they called me through a blocked number again, and they said, "Hey, come back." And, all right, I went back. And then, after that, then we exchanged numbers, and they told me, "Hey, we like to help young people, and we encourage you to finish school." Because at the time, I was working full-time and going to school part-time, just kind of working my way through college, and he encouraged me to finish school. He emphasized the importance of it. And again, he

said that he helps a lot of young people, and that we should stay in contact. And then, shortly after, Becki is constantly pursuing me. I mean, she was the one that was really pursuing. Sending me songs, sentimental songs that mean a lot to her, and then she would call it “our song.” And this went on.

Giancarlo Granda (05:26):

Shortly after, we had a weekend getaway at Cheeca Resort in the Florida Keys, and this trip, the nature of the relationship continued there. And I mentioned to them that when I was younger, when I was in high school, I suffered with video game addiction. At the time, I was timid, a bit nervous, and I believe now, in hindsight, that they spotted these weaknesses, and made me an ideal target.

Giancarlo Granda (05:50):

I shared this passion project of mine, where it’s a company that would connect video gamers suffering with video game addiction and families with help coaches. And he said, “I think that’s an excellent idea. Actually, you could probably partner up with Liberty. You should come to New York with us. We’re having a business trip, and we could talk more about it.”

Andrew Jenks (06:08):

So, Granda went to New York City with Jerry and Becki. According to Talking Points Memo, he says the three of them stayed at the Gansevoort Hotel, and had dinner at STK Steakhouse, where they shared a decadent dessert, called Carnival “menage A Trois,” and they discussed business.

Giancarlo Granda (06:27):

He said, “Look, I really like your idea, but before you can ever help anyone, you need to make a lot of money yourself.” This is Jerry saying, he’s like, “I have a background in real estate. Pick a property in Miami. Pick a handful of properties. We’ll get the best one, and you’ll get a 25% ownership stake in it.”

Andrew Jenks (06:44):

Jerry promised they’d share a champagne toast when Granda made his first million dollars. As Granda began his search for a real estate property, he continued his relationship with Jerry and Becki Falwell. Talking Points Memo reports that in one very graphic 2012 text, Becki wrote to him, quote, “I was watching some video clips on my phone. Wow. These are two people that are very passionate at lovemaking. But seeing you in person, and looking at you in the eyes makes me want to rip your clothes off and get the shit fucked out of me.”

Andrew Jenks (07:21):

Granda says that’s when he realized that Jerry had been filming them. In response to the question of who filmed the clips that Becki referenced in her text message to Granda, Becki told us, quote, “If I did send that text, it was done as a joke, and no videos were ever created.”

Andrew Jenks (07:44):

In mid-September of 2012, Granda flew up to Lynchburg and met Donald Trump, who had just given a speech to the Liberty student body, advising them to always get a prenup. Granda sat in the front row, next to the Falwell children. Jerry and Becki introduced Granda to the future president as “our friend from the Fontainebleau.”

Andrew Jenks (08:07):

Granda was in unfamiliar surroundings, and rubbing elbows with a powerful circle, but he’d put enough trust in the Falwells to invite his parents to meet them over dinner in Miami Beach. Afterwards, Granda’s mother said to him, “Oh my god, they’re so nice. They’re so charming.” And Granda said, “You see? They just want to help me out.”

Partygoers (08:31):

(singing)

Andrew Jenks (08:52):

This is audio from a YouTube video titled “Partying at Miami Hostel (Alton Road) 2013-12-19.” In it, young men and women are smoking, drinking, and playing beer pong together. One man break dances, and another spills his drink on the floor.

Partygoers (09:12):

I finished my beer.

Andrew Jenks (09:14):

Another man opens up his shirt and simulates having sex with the wall, with the crack of his butt exposed. He received high fives from two other men, before cheering them on to drink more.

Partygoers (09:25):

Drink! Drink! Drink!

Andrew Jenks (09:28):

A Politico article from 2017 calls this hostel “a cesspool of vice.” The writer of the article, a former Liberty student named Brandon Ambrosino, describes the hostel as gay-friendly, and having a stench of general decay and cigarette smoke. “A wall display,” Ambrosino wrote, “held cards advertising local attractions, including adult dancing with full nudity.” A liquor store is attached to the hostel. The article notes that at the time, a sign out front read, “No soliciting, fundraising, politics, salesmen, or religion.”

Andrew Jenks (10:10):

The title of Ambrosino’s article is “My Weekend at the Falwells’ South Beach Flophouse.” This is the business the Falwells, the faces of evangelical Christianity, bought and gave a 24.9% stake to Giancarlo Granda.

Andrew Jenks (10:30):

But there was another party involved, too. Another young man, named Gordon Bello, and Bello, in a lawsuit filed against Falwell Jr., says it was he who brought the hostel idea to Granda and Falwell, and then was cut out of the deal.

Andrew Jenks (10:49):

Other than what is stated in his affidavit, in which Bello says he had a, quote, “personal relationship with Becki Falwell,” he has never discussed his role in the story publicly. But in October of 2019, almost a year before the sex scandal broke, Bello made a phone call to someone who, months earlier, had made news for recording his conversation with Michael Cohen, Tom Arnold. The recording you’re about to hear was given to Gangster Capitalism by Arnold.

Tom Arnold (11:25):

How did you meet him? How did you guys meet? Did Giancarlo meet... How do you come across people like this?

Gordon Bello (11:32):

Giancarlo was, he worked as a pool boy at the Fontaine, a pool attendant.

Tom Arnold (11:37):

Oh, god. A pool boy. What year was that?

Gordon Bello (11:41):

That was in, I guess, in 2012. 2011, 2012. I worked at a hostel, okay? And I was finishing working at a hostel, going into a law firm, around that time.

Andrew Jenks (11:54):

Bello’s court filings say that he was a former best friend of Giancarlo Granda, and here, he describes when Granda first told him about the Falwells.

Gordon Bello (12:04):

He told me that, “Yeah, I met this couple, and they’re paying me.” So, he’s telling me about they’re flying him here, they’re flying him there, and they want to operate a business. He’s got this internet idea, and apparently the internet idea was nothing. They couldn’t do it. And he comes to me in some desperation, and he’s like, “Hey,” he’s like, “I want you to meet the wife. I want you to get involved. I want you to pick something.” He’s like, “Do you know of anything?”

Gordon Bello (12:30):

I’m like, “Yeah, I know exactly what. Let’s do the hostel. Let’s pick from this. I’ll get my dad involved. He’ll find the real estate component, and we’ll make sure that we don’t get fucked. My dad is good in business. And that’s how we’re going to make this happen.” I’ve always been somebody that I know where my faults are, and if I’m a 20-year-old, I’m not going to think that I have the experience to close a deal with a 45-year-old that he’s telling me owns a university, and they’re worth all this

money.

Andrew Jenks (12:54):

Bello says his girlfriend at the time managed a hostel in South Beach, and he worked the front desk, so he was familiar with the business, and he says he convinced Granda to pitch the hostel idea to Jerry Falwell Jr. Here, Gordon Bello describes the night Granda introduced him to Becki Falwell at Monty's Restaurant in South Beach.

Gordon Bello (13:19):

So, the way he introduces me to Becki, we're hanging out, whatever. We go to Monty's on the beach, whatever, this, that. We start to drink, and then he leaves and goes to see Jerry. I stay with Becki at night. We hang out, whatever, you know, things happened, and that's how that went on.

Andrew Jenks (13:37):

In case you missed that, Bello says that he spent the night with Becki, and that things happened. Maybe this is what he meant in his affidavit when he said he had a personal relationship with Becki Falwell. In response to the question of what he meant by personal relationship, Becki Falwell told us that she never even met Bello.

Tom Arnold (14:01):

Like, what kind of things? Like, regular things?

Gordon Bello (14:02):

I don't mind telling you, I just don't want to tell you right now. I want to wait for the settlement and all this stuff.

Tom Arnold (14:07):

You know, I don't have to... I can just... It's fine. I was a young man once. Oh my god.

Gordon Bello (14:13):

She was hot back then. Face, tits. She has the face, tits, with the...

Tom Arnold (14:17):

So, you and Becki had a thing.

Gordon Bello (14:19):

Right. I had something with Becki.

Gordon Bello (14:25):

The other thing happened is then also, at the time, my dad had a lot of financial hardship after the market crash, all of this. I went from having everything I could ever have, to not even having money to pay a cell phone bill. So, I was trying to do whatever I could to get my family out of that situation.

Tom Arnold (14:40):

Right.

Gordon Bello (14:40):

Okay, so, when that opportunity presented itself, I went all out, you know?

Tom Arnold (14:45):

Yeah, of course.

Andrew Jenks (14:47):

Bello says that as he had also begun a relationship with Becki Falwell, Giancarlo Granda had set up a meeting for them to pitch the hostel idea to Jerry Falwell. So, Bello brought his father, a former real estate agent, along to lend his expertise. He says nobody knew about he and Becki during that time.

Tom Arnold (15:09):

Yeah.

Gordon Bello (15:10):

I meet Jerry at the Loews with my father, okay, because at that point, I didn't tell my dad what was going on fully, but I just told him, "Hey, Giancarlo has these people that then..." At that point, that was awkward for me, that meeting, to an extent, because I didn't know if Jerry knew.

Tom Arnold (15:27):

Oh, yeah. Yeah?

Gordon Bello (15:30):

See, because I didn't know. I didn't know him, and I only knew her. The only one that knew him was Giancarlo. But you know what? Super nice guy. Was promising to give us the world, and it was a weird situation for me, but there was money attached to it. So, I played it through for a little while.

Andrew Jenks (15:51):

Bello says that at that meeting at the Loews Hotel, Falwell promised him an equal share in the business that he'd promised Granda.

Gordon Bello (15:59):

And then, what happened was, Jerry started messing around. He didn't really have intentions of closing this deal. I think when my father got involved, it kind of gave him some cold feet.

Tom Arnold (16:08):

Yeah.

Gordon Bello (16:09):

It made Jerry uncomfortable. The reason I got cut out was because I was involved in a situation with the Falwell family that they knew of, and they knew that I was a loose end. And I think ultimately, saying, “Hey, I’m not messing with the wife. I’m not doing this shit anymore. Okay, here’s my money. I want to move on with my fucking life,” plus my dad forced me in the deal and doing certain things, was a lot of what got me cut out.

Andrew Jenks (16:40):

Bello was upset that Falwell didn’t give him a piece of the hostel business, a piece he says he was promised. You may remember from last episode that Donald Trump’s former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, said in his book that it was the pool boy who had filed a lawsuit against Jerry Falwell Jr. Here again is that audio.

Michael Cohen (17:05):

Jerry didn’t fill me in on all the details, only that a deal was never consummated, and the relationship ended with hard feelings. The kid had filed a lawsuit.

Andrew Jenks (17:15):

He said that the pool boy had photos that he was using to extort the Falwells. Again, that audio from episode one.

Michael Cohen (17:25):

Jerry said that the terrible thing was that the pool boy was now threatening to shop the photographs to publications as a way to pressure the Falwells to settle the lawsuit on favorable terms.

Andrew Jenks (17:37):

Cohen wrote that he, quote, “went for the jugular with the pool boy’s attorney,” and he “took care of the situation.” And remember what Cohen himself said to Tom Arnold in their phone call.

Michael Cohen (17:50):

There’s a bunch of photographs, you know, personal photographs that somehow, the guy ended up getting

Tom Arnold (18:01):

Oh.

Michael Cohen (18:01):

Whether it was off of Jerry’s phone, or somehow maybe it got Airdropped, or whatever the hell the whole thing was. And I actually have one of the photos, and it’s terrible.

Andrew Jenks (18:15):

But here’s the thing: Giancarlo Granda never sued Jerry Falwell Jr. Gordon Bello did. If we give Cohen the benefit of the doubt, maybe he was simply confused as

to which person the pool boy was, Granda or Bello. Or maybe, spreading the story that it was Granda who was trying to extort Falwell seemed to be the better play at the time, in case Granda ever decided to go public. Cohen did later admit to CNN that it was Bello and his attorney who he'd negotiated with regarding the photos.

Andrew Jenks (18:54):

Now, we'll go back to the Gordon Bello, Tom Arnold phone call.

Tom Arnold (18:59):

Yeah. You know, Michael Cohen has pictures that he shared with me, that Cherry shared with him. There's groups of these pictures, and Jerry took these pictures, or Jerry's involved with disseminating these pictures. I don't know if he Airdrops them to people. That's what Michael Cohen told me, and there's a tape of me and Michael Cohen talking that I gave to... submitted publicly. You can see it.

Gordon Bello (19:27):

I've heard the tape, and honestly, the tape to me was concerning, and the reason it was concerning to me was because I have some stuff, and the stuff that I have was stuff that I took with Becki, and stuff along those lines, and I know Giancarlo has stuff, and it all exists. But I had all those photos. I had all that stuff.

Tom Arnold (19:52):

Okay, let's put this together, then. You know, after I made that tape, I went and saw Michael in person, and got pictures. And by the way, they have pictures. They have a lot of other people, other situations like this, that Trump... I don't even want to... if you can imagine other people's wives and girlfriends, just over the years. And this is not unusual.

Andrew Jenks (20:20):

Arnold and Bello discuss what Michael Cohen must have meant when he said he "went for the jugular."

Tom Arnold (20:27):

And Michael Cohen's not a badass. He might pretend to be, but he's not.

Gordon Bello (20:32):

Here's the thing with the attorneys that I'll tell you. Look, I myself am an attorney. My father is a businessperson, and I have been raised to not let my emotions get involved with attorneys. And the reason is because if they're dicks, they're being dicks because they're hired to be dicks.

Tom Arnold (20:48):

Yeah.

Gordon Bello (20:48):

And the real dick there is the person behind...

Tom Arnold (20:51):

Oh, yeah, you're right.

Gordon Bello (20:51):

The real dick here is Jerry Falwell.

Tom Arnold (20:52):

You're right.

Gordon Bello (20:54):

Michael Cohen... Listen, Michael Cohen did all those nasty things and all that stuff. I understand it, but there was somebody out there that put that tape out.

Tom Arnold (21:03):

Yeah.

Gordon Bello (21:05):

Okay, that's like, it's no different than these mob stories where you have a mob boss that's pulling all the strings. And yeah, he may not be the one that goes and pulls the trigger, but does that make him not the one that's responsible?

Tom Arnold (21:18):

No.

Gordon Bello (21:18):

So, that's how I look at it, you know? Give me my money, pay me what you owe me, okay, and let me move on with my life. And the reason that I'm resentful towards Falwell is because he did not allow that to happen, and he fought it the entire way through, and I started to realize that a lot of the shit that he did down here was not kosher.

Andrew Jenks (21:43):

Falwell Jr. claimed in court documents that because he wasn't officially listed on the paperwork for the hostel, and therefore was not technically an owner, he had no power to cut Bello into the deal, so any alleged promise to do so was moot. But documents clearly show that Jerry Jr. and his business partner handled the deal every step of the way.

Andrew Jenks (22:08):

Then, in January of 2013, after protracted negotiations, Jerry Jr.'s name was crossed out on the contract under the line listed for buyer. In his place, Becki Falwell's name.

Andrew Jenks (22:25):

On February 1st, an email shows that Jerry and the seller had an agreement. Then, six days later, a new LLC was formed to buy the property, and it listed Jerry and Becki's son, Jerry Falwell III, also known as Trey Falwell, as the manager of the LLC,

distancing Jerry and Becki from the arrangement.

Andrew Jenks (22:51):

In 2017, after Bello's lawsuit had become public, Liberty released a statement saying, quote, "The fact is that Trey and his business partner, Giancarlo Granda, identified a distressed property in Miami Beach, which they purchased with bank financing at a very opportune time."

Gordon Bello (23:14):

So, he needs some sort of plausible deniability to show, "Hey, my son was here. He was meeting people, doing this, that and the third." All lies, okay? His son never met Giancarlo until after, okay? Right around the time that the deal was fully closing. He was not part of the process. He never saw the property. I had never even met Trey Falwell.

Gordon Bello (23:36):

And then they say that Trey was the one that met Giancarlo, and they found the deal together. No, that's not true. It's a full-blown lie. That never happened. I don't know who Trey is. I've never even met him. He showed up at the end, and strategically, in photos everywhere with Giancarlo, like if they met and they did it, and it was a full-blown lie. It was just bringing him to say, "Hey, no, we had kids around. We're helping kids, and they're all Trey's friends," which was all bullshit. It wasn't that. That wasn't the case.

Andrew Jenks (24:05):

A public court proceeding probably wouldn't have been in Falwell's best interest, as Giancarlo Granda likely would have been called as a witness. Falwell ultimately settled the lawsuit with Bello out of court for an undisclosed sum on November 15th of 2019. We've tried to reach Gordon Bello repeatedly through voicemail and text, but received no response. But Bello, who spoke with Tom Arnold just about a month prior to his case settling, thinks it had more to do with the nature of the business deal.

Gordon Bello (24:41):

The reason that the case settled, okay, in my opinion, the reason the case settled is because he cannot allow my case to get to the discovery phase, because he has represented, by affidavit, that he provided a loan to the kids, to his son and to Giancarlo, to purchase the property, and that the bank financed... he put in a little bit of a loan, basically like a down payment, and the bank financed the rest. That is a whole lie. It was an all-cash deal, and about a month later, two weeks to a month later, he took out a mortgage and then started paying.

Gordon Bello (25:16):

Now, why is that important? It's important because if he's got money coming from different areas that aren't clean, or that are coming from the wrong place, the best way to cash out of a deal like that is go purchase the property and put it in

someone else's name, take out a loan off of that money, and cash out, and then just let the property grow in value.

Andrew Jenks (25:38):

Falwell Jr. says in his affidavit that he and his wife laid out \$1 million in cash for the property, and it's encumbered by a \$3.8 million mortgage, which was signed for by their son, Trey Falwell, who was in his early 20s at the time. But documents attached to Bello's affidavit prove that the entire \$4.8 million property, as he says, was purchased with cash two weeks prior to securing the mortgage.

Andrew Jenks (26:09):

Becki Falwell doesn't dispute this. As for where the money came from, she told us that a bank in Lynchburg, that the Falwells have deep ties with, loaned out the \$3.8 million in unsecured cash for the purchase until the mortgage documents could be prepared in Trey's name a couple weeks later.

Andrew Jenks (26:31):

None of this is uncommon, but it does raise the question of why the president of one of the world's largest Christian universities would go so far out of his way to distance himself from the deal, a deal that put Giancarlo Granda on the paperwork with a 24.9% ownership stake.

Giancarlo Granda (27:00):

I think that's how they groom you when you're young. They groom you. They bring you into their family. They make you feel special. They make you feel smart, part of this family, and that's what makes it so difficult to say the truth, because you feel like you're going to betray this family. That's their strategy. They befriend your family. They would actively try to befriend people around me. They disarm people with their charm.

Andrew Jenks (27:27):

By May of 2014, Giancarlo Granda had become close enough to the Falwell family that he was invited to Trey Falwell's wedding. He told Talking Points Memo that during the wedding, he was uncomfortable when Becki Falwell was feeling him up and trying to kiss him. He says Becki told him not to worry about it. Later that year, he got a phone call from Becki.

Giancarlo Granda (27:53):

I'll never forget it. Winter, 2014, Becki called me, and she was like, "Hey, that lawsuit in Florida, those guys that are suing us, don't worry about it. Michael Cohen's going to take care of it." I had no idea who he was. I didn't know him. I'm like, "Okay. All right. Great. We don't have to worry about this." Because again, they were threatening to reveal the nature of this relationship, and I lived through hell at that time. It was a nightmare.

Andrew Jenks (28:18):

Granda says he lived in fear of his name being in the press, and that Jerry told him they'd buy out his stake in the hostel for \$1.1 million, but they needed him on their side for the lawsuit. He says that's when Jerry told him, "Don't forget about the videos." Granda says Jerry threatened to send the videos to Granda's girlfriend at the time. The lawsuit stopped and restarted, and four and a half years later, Jerry's promises to Granda to buy him out never materialized.

Giancarlo Granda (28:54):

Now, in hindsight, as a 29-year-old man, I realized how methodical they were in targeting me. How methodical they were, and then they trapped me. They promised me things, and they trapped me into this business. He secretly recorded me. He was hanging it over my head, and he kept saying, "Look, just be a good soldier, and at some point, we're going to buy your equity, so you can walk away." But in the meantime, he was getting what he wanted: me having sex with Becki while he watched, every single time. So, in the meantime he was getting exactly what he wanted, and to me, that's predatory behavior.

Andrew Jenks (29:26):

According to the Washington Post, a text message to Granda from Becki at this time read, "I miss you so much my heart hurts." And after a visit in 2017, Becki texted, "I couldn't keep my eyes off of you." Granda also shared a screenshot of a FaceTime call with Reuters, in which Becki Falwell was naked while Jerry Falwell Jr. looked on. When a BuzzFeed article in 2018 exposed the business relationship between Granda and Falwell, Jerry Jr. texted him, quote, "We just need everyone to go silent and avoid creating a story where one does not exist."

Giancarlo Granda (30:10):

I felt like I was used over the years. I felt trapped in this relationship, because I'm contractually tethered to this LLC. I was conditioned over the years to feel guilty. Every time I would either pull away from Becki or the business, I would get a phone call from either Becki, crying, or Jerry, saying, "Hey, a certain someone misses you. You should reach out to her." It was just this pattern, year after year after year. I felt like I had an obligation to make her happy, to text her, even though I didn't want to, I just wanted to pull away.

Jerry Falwell Jr. (30:42):

All right.

Becki Falwell (30:42):

Gian's been very busy lately.

Giancarlo Granda (30:49):

Yeah, absolutely.

Andrew Jenks (30:51):

The following is audio of a 2018 phone conversation between Granda and the

Falwells. Becki complains that Granda tells her when he hooks up with other women, and Jerry tells Granda, who he calls Gian, that he's going to make Becki jealous.

Becki Falwell (31:08):

His new thing is like, telling me every time he hooks up with people, like I don't have feelings or something.

Jerry Falwell Jr. (31:13):

Gian, you're going to make her jealous there.

Becki Falwell (31:13):

Yeah.

Giancarlo Granda (31:13):

Aww. I'm not trying to do that.

Becki Falwell (31:17):

Like a week ago, I didn't hear you for a whole freaking day.

Giancarlo Granda (31:21):

Come on.

Becki Falwell (31:21):

He's like, "I hooked up with this girl on Tinder, and then I got her number." And I'm like, just completely depressed.

Andrew Jenks (31:29):

We asked Jerry what he meant by "you're going to make her jealous, Gian." Becki responded to us that this recording happened, quote, "years after Jerry had learned of the affair and forgiven me, to the point that he was joking about it."

Andrew Jenks (31:46):

As stories about the pool boy, as Granda was now known, began to come out, because of the Bello lawsuit naming him, the Washington Post reported that Granda says he became so depressed that he texted Becki Falwell that he was suicidal. "Stay off social media," Becki texted back. "They're all left win nutjobs. That's from Jerry."

Andrew Jenks (32:09):

Granda felt trapped, bound, mentally and financially, to the Falwells. Granda said he had two options: run away or dominate it. So, in June of 2020, he texted Jerry, quote, "Since you're okay with ruining my life, I'm going to take the kamikaze route. It really is a shame, because I wanted to reach a peaceful resolution and just move on with our lives. But if conflict is what you want, then so be it."

Andrew Jenks (32:42):

Jerry responded, “You should by now understand that I will not be extorted. I have always treated you fairly, and been restrained in response to your threats, because I did not wish to ruin your life. Going forward, stop contacting me and my family.”

Andrew Jenks (33:00):

But just a month later, in an unrelated incident, Falwell Jr. found himself in hot water after posting a photo from his family vacation to Instagram. In the photo, taken aboard the mega yacht of a Liberty donor, Falwell Jr. has his pants unzipped, with his belly hanging out, and he’s got his arm around his wife’s pregnant assistant, who has her shirt hiked up and shorts unzipped as well. Falwell Jr. is holding a drink in the photo, which he captioned, “I promise that’s just black water in my glass.”

Andrew Jenks (33:37):

The picture went against everything Liberty University stood for. Here’s Falwell, appearing on a radio show, sounding intoxicated, explaining.

Radio Announcer (33:50):

And I’m just going to throw it to you: What was up with that picture on Instagram?

Jerry Falwell Jr. (33:53):

See, my wife, she’s a sweetheart. I should never have put it up and embarrassed her, because... Anyway, I’ve apologized to everybody. I promised my kids I’m going to try to be... I’m going to try to be a good boy from here on out.

Andrew Jenks (34:15):

The Liberty board announced on August 6th, 2020, that the university and Falwell Jr. had mutually agreed that it would be good for him to take an indefinite leave of absence. A little more than two weeks later, Falwell Jr., still on leave as president of Liberty, was contacted for a comment on the Granda story that was about to break. So, in an attempt to get ahead of the imminent scandal, he released a statement a day before the story came out that was printed in the Washington Examiner. It read, in part...

Jerry Falwell Jr. (34:53):

“During a vacation over eight years ago, Becki and I met an ambitious young man who was working at our hotel, and was saving up his money to go to school. Shortly thereafter, Becki had an inappropriate personal relationship with this person, something in which I was not involved. It was, nonetheless, very upsetting to learn about.

Jerry Falwell Jr. (35:13):

After I learned this, I lost 80 pounds, and people who saw me regularly thought I was physically unwell, when in reality, I was just balancing how to be most supportive of Becki, who I love, while also reflecting and praying about whether there were ways I could have been more supportive of her, and given her proper

attention.

Jerry Falwell Jr. (35:31):

I came to realize that while it may be easy to judge others on their behavior, the King James Bible reminds us, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I sayeth unto you that whoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart.' In fact, there are ways we may all be sinning, but the Lord believes in this self-reflection.

Jerry Falwell Jr. (35:54):

Becki and I forgave each other, because while her indiscretion may have been more obvious and apparent, I realized that there are important smaller things I needed to do better, too."

Andrew Jenks (36:09):

The next day, when the sex scandal broke in Reuters, Falwell resigned as president of Liberty University, telling the press, "The quote that keeps running through my mind is Martin Luther King Jr.: "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last."

Andrew Jenks (36:30):

One former Liberty official summed it all up to us more bluntly, saying, quote, "Everybody knew about the pool boy. You want to live a crazy and perverse lifestyle, that's between you, your God, and your family. But you can't be recording some guy doinking your wife, and be the president of a Christian University."

Andrew Jenks (36:53):

This past April, Liberty sued Jerry Falwell Jr. for more than \$10 million in damages, which could potentially balloon up to \$40 million, claiming that Falwell withheld information about his relationship with Granda, and his personal impairment by alcohol, while negotiating a new contract for himself in 2019.

Andrew Jenks (37:17):

As for Giancarlo Granda, he is still connected to the Falwells through the property. He still owns his 24.9% stake, and they can't take that away from him. Here's Tom Arnold.

Tom Arnold (37:32):

In my opinion, out of all this, Trump, Jerry Falwell Jr., all their people, and even Michael Cohen, the person who comes out of this standing tall, all of this, is Giancarlo Granda. This kid, he's the hero to me. These guys, they're lawyers, all these powerful people tried to crush him, and he could have went away in a heartbeat, just disappeared. And they keep trying to do it, and man, this kid, he's going to come out walking tall out of all of this.

News Announcer (38:04):

Just bringing in Giancarlo Granda right now. Thank you for joining us this morning. Let's begin with their denial. They say that you had an affair with Mrs. Falwell, but that Jerry Falwell Jr. was not involved in any way. But you say, from the start, they were both involved?

Giancarlo Granda (38:19):

First off, thank you for having me on, and Jerry's lying. That was his game plan from the beginning, to just throw her under the bus, which I think speaks a lot about who he is, about his character, and he was aware from day one of our relationship, and he did, in fact, watch.

Andrew Jenks (38:39):

When Granda began to appear on television, Falwell Jr. told the AP during a phone interview, quote, "That's the only reason I resigned, because I don't want something my wife did to harm the school I've spent my whole life building. I never broke a single rule that applies to staff members at Liberty, which I was, so I want everybody to know that."

Giancarlo Granda (39:02):

This has gotten out of control, and there really needs to be an investigation into Liberty University, because it's not just Jerry and Becki and the Falwell family. It's the board. All those people around him that looked the other way and protected him, for years. I think it's absurd. I mean, that's tuition money, donations, federal money. There needs to be an investigation, and hold them accountable.

Andrew Jenks (39:23):

The story of Jerry Falwell Jr. and Liberty University is much bigger than Giancarlo Granda. He's just the tip of the iceberg. But over the course of the next six episodes, we will be doing just what Granda asks: investigating Jerry Falwell Jr. and Liberty University, and holding them accountable.

Andrew Jenks (39:45):

One former high-ranking official at Liberty told us, quote, "I've waited for years for the storm to explode, and it hasn't, yet. We had to wait until the man hung himself." Well guess what? The storm is exploding.

Andrew Jenks (40:06):

On the next episode of Gangster Capitalism, a history of covering up and ignoring sexual assault and harassment at Liberty.

Speaker 17 (40:16):

They say we have one of the safest campuses in America, but I wasn't safe. I wasn't safe anywhere at all.

Speaker 18 (40:22):

I did report many of these instances to my immediate supervisor, and to this day, I

have never received a call or any concern.

Speaker 19 (40:31):

Nothing happened. And when I say nothing, I mean nothing. No one followed up with me.

Andrew Jenks (40:38):

If you have any tips about Jerry Falwell Jr. or Liberty University, you can contact us at tips@gangstercapitalism.com, or our tip line, (347) 674-6980. We can ensure anonymity.

Andrew Jenks (40:56):

This has been a creation and presentation of C13Originals, a Cadence13 studio, executive produced by Chris Corcoran, Zak Levitt and myself. Written, produced and directed by Zak Levitt. Produced by Perry Crowell and myself. Research and production support by Ian Mandt. Editing by Perry Crowell and Bill Schultz. Mixed and mastered by Bill Schultz. Production coordination by Terrence Malangone. Studio coordination by Sean Cherry. Artwork and design by Curt Courtenay. Marketing by Brian Swarth, Josefina Francis and Melissa Wester. And PR by Hillary Schupf. Original music by Joel Goodman. And our theme song, "Your Sins Will Find You Out," is by Eli "Paperboy" Reed.

Eli Paperboy Reed (41:40):

(singing)