

Joshua Safran

Author, Attorney, and Domestic Violence Survivor and Advocate

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Abuse / Domestic Violence
- Jewish Groups
- Journalism / Literary / Author
- Law
- Overcoming Adversity
- Prison Reform

About Joshua Safran

Joshua is an author, attorney, and nationally recognized advocate for survivors of domestic abuse and champion for the wrongfully imprisoned. His 7-year legal odyssey to free an incarcerated survivor of domestic violence from prison was featured in the award-winning documentary film **CRIME AFTER CRIME**, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and on the Oprah Winfrey Network. The film won over 25 awards, including the National Board of Review Freedom of Expression Award and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and was a *New York Times* Critics' Pick.

Joshua's critically-acclaimed memoir, **FREE SPIRIT: Growing Up On the Road and Off the Grid** (Hachette), about his childhood on the dark side of the Age of Aquarius, has been called a "beautiful, powerful memoir. . . reminiscent of David Sedaris's and Augusten Burroughs's best work: introspective, hilarious, and heartbreaking" (*Publishers Weekly* starred review) and "a remarkable account of survival despite the odds" (*Kirkus Reviews*).

Joshua was born to a coven of lesbian witches in a Haight-Ashbury commune. He spent his 1980's childhood hitchhiking through the American West, living in shacks/lean-tos/school buses/ teepees/an ice cream truck and even on tree stump in the forest. He also survived his violent alcoholic stepfather—a guerrilla fighter from Central America—before finally finding his way to law school at U.C. Berkeley.

Safran's essays have appeared in *Salon*, *The Daily Beast*, and *The Huffington Post* and his compelling story has been heard around the world on the BBC, PBS, CBS, NPR, PRX, and Authors@Google.

Select Keynotes

• Customized Speech by Joshua Safran

Joshua Safran grew up homeless and entrenched in hippie society. He spent his childhood hitchhiking across the American West with his counter-cultural mother who associated with colorful individuals and fringe elements of the Age of Aquarius in the Height-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco. His mother later married a violent, alcoholic revolutionary guerrilla leader from El Salvador and they lived off-the-grid in the forest of rural Washington State.

At the age of twelve, Joshua came of age by plotting to kill his abusive stepfather, but by happenstance he and his mother managed to escape. With his newfound freedom, Joshua entered into the education system where he excelled. Later graduating high school and matriculating to Oberlin College on a full ride scholarship. Later he attended UC Berkley Law School and got a job at a top corporate law firm – joining mainstream American society for the first time.

While at the law firm, he took a pro bono case to free an innocent woman who was imprisoned for her role in the death of her abuser. She had already served 20 years before he took her case. Joshua worked on the case for seven years, uncovering corruption in the depths of the legal system.

The story of this case became an award-winning film that was screened at Sundance Film Festival and later purchased by Oprah. Joshua's client urged him to go public with his own story. He followed her advice, releasing a critically acclaimed book, writing articles, and speaking to audiences around the world.



Topics / Facts – Domestic Violence – Violence Toward Women – Women's Issues – Men's Issues – The Criminal Justice System – Bullying – Tells it all through the lens of his life – His talks are very emotional and inspirational with elements of humor.

Select Book Titles

- **2013:** Free Spirit: Growing Up On the Road and Off the Grid

Select Articles

- ["Seeking a Path to Justice" - New York Times](#)

New York Times article about the award-winning Sundance documentary film "Crime After Crime" about Joshua's seven-year legal battle to free a wrongly imprisoned survivor of domestic abuse from prison.

- ["I Had It in Me to Kill Him" - Salon](#)

Joshua Safran's moving first-person account in Salon.com about living in a home with regular domestic abuse and how he employed particular coping mechanisms to cope with it and survive.

- ["The Son, The Goddess, and Leopoldo" - Strangers Podcast](#)

Peabody Award-winner Lea Thau (former Executive and Creative Director of The Moth Radio Hour) hosts Joshua Safran on Strangers, part of Radiotopia from PRX. In this gripping 47-minute long podcast, Joshua tells the story of his life.

- ["From Commune Kid to Corporate Lawyer" - BBC](#)

Interview on the BBC's Outlook about Joshua Safran -- born into a San Francisco commune and brought up on the road - and how he chose his current path advocating for the rights of survivor's of domestic abuse.

- ["Free Spirit: A Childhood of Adventure, Danger" - San Francisco Chronicle](#)

San Francisco Chronicle profile of Joshua Safran's unique and dangerous childhood growing up on the road and off the grid.

- ["My Library Card to Redemption" - Huffington Post](#)

Joshua Safran's piece in the Huffington Post about seeking refuge from the domestic abuse that plagued his home growing up in the public library. There, he is able to research his roots and discover what it means to be Jewish.