

From the author of *CRAZY FOR GOD...*

AND GOD SAID, "BILLY!"

a novel by Frank Schaeffer

"Schaeffer's gifts as a novelist are more than comic his writing has a deeper river flowing through it, one that is sensual and full of true grace." — **Andre Dubus III**
author of *House of Sand and Fog*

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And God Said, "Billy!"
A Novel
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Advance praise for *AND GOD SAID, "BILLY!"*

"I love this novel. *AND GOD SAID, "BILLY!"* is laugh-out loud funny from page one. It's downright insightful throughout and takes readers deep into the shallow psyche of a sincere Charismatic-Evangelical whose God fails him. That failure turns out, through a hilarious series of tragic-comic reversals, to be – let's just say something close to miraculous." — **Brian D. McLaren**, author/speaker/blogger

And God Said, 'Billy!' is honest, very funny and very serious. It's and sure to rankle those who believe that being human means being certain." — **Kevin Miller** director of *Hellbound?*

PRAISE FOR FRANK SCHAEFFER'S OTHER BOOKS

The God Trilogy (*Crazy for God, Patience With God, Sex, Mom and God*)

"But when the family business is religion, it is especially perilous. That is one of the central laments, anyway, of 'Sex, Mom, & God,' a new memoir by Frank Schaeffer. To secular Americans, the name Frank Schaeffer means nothing. But to millions of evangelical Christians, the Schaeffer name is royal, and Frank is the reluctant, wayward, traitorous prince. His crime is not financial profligacy, like some pastors' sons, but turning his back on Christian conservatives." — *New York Times*

"[Schaeffer's] memoirs have a way of winning a reader's friendship... Schaeffer is a good memoirist, smart and often laugh-out-loud

funny... Frank seems to have been born irreverent, but his memoirs have a serious purpose, and that is to expose the insanity and the corruption of what has become a powerful and frightening force in American politics... Frank has been straightforward and entertaining in his campaign to right the political wrongs he regrets committing in the 1970s and '80s... As someone who has made redemption his work, he has, in fact, shown amazing grace.” — *Washington Post*, **Jane Smiley**

‘The book[s] shine ... A consummate memoirist, Schaeffer fills the narrative with interesting anecdotes... The sage conversation on a New York-bound bus with a distraught Asian girl is warmly resonant and a befitting conclusion to... [a] book of ruminations, memories and frustrated opinion.’ — *Booklist*

‘[A] startlingly honest work, which is part memoir and part religious history... Intriguing fare.’ — *Church of England Newspaper*

‘A work that alternates from heartwarming to thought provoking to laugh out loud funny... Schaeffer brilliantly guides the reader through an exploration of the Bible’s strange, intolerant, and sometimes frightening attitudes about sex, and how these Biblical teachings, through the evangelical grassroots of the Republican Party, have come to dominate the GOP stance... Schaeffer’s writing style combines intelligence, warmth, humor, depth and insight... Sex, Mom, and God is hands down one of the best non-fiction books of the year.’ — *Kirkus Reviews (website)*

‘A fond and sometimes hilarious look back at [Schaeffer’s] mother’s child-rearing methods and the effect they had on him... Schaeffer’s journey demonstrates that the world could be a better place if we were all able to reassess our beliefs and values-to examine them closely and glean only those worth saving.’ — *Library Journal*

“Well worth reading, highly entertaining, and very informative about the recent history of American evangelicalism. It will appeal to readers interested in the world today, memoir, or religion.”

— *Huffington Post*

“Part memoir, part revelation about Evangelical pathology, and part prescription for theological sanity, the book has much to recommend it.” — *Patheos.com*

“Frequently entertaining.” — *The Humanist*

“Part memoir, part theology, and part political commentary... An ambitious undertaking. But Sex, Mom, and God did not disappoint. Alternating between laugh-out-loud episodes and poignant reflections, Schaeffer recounts with candor the influence his mother had on both his beliefs and the beliefs of a generation of Evangelicals... His readers-believers and non-believers alike-will be challenged to reconsider their views about politics, sex, and religion.” — *The Daily Beast*

“An unusual mix-part memoir, part exegesis on Bible-based belief systems, and part prescription for a more compassionate, human-centered politics for both religious and theologically skeptical people. Humor, at times of the laugh-out-loud variety, is abundant. And while readers will likely bristle at some of Schaeffer’s conclusions, his wit, sass and insights make Sex, Mom, & God a valuable and entertaining look at U.S. fundamentalism.” — *San Francisco Book Review*

“Frank Schaeffer reads similarly to George Orwell’s ‘Homage to Catalonia.’ Orwell’s book describes his growing disillusionment as he fought against fascism during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s... like Orwell [Schaeffer] became disillusioned with the extremism he encountered. Schaeffer fled the evangelical scene in the

early 1990s... He now has created a thought-provoking analysis of the social and religious struggles that continue to define American consciousness.” — *The Roanoke Times*



The Calvin Becker Trilogy (*Portofino, Zermatt and Saving Grandma*)

“Poignant and hilarious, Calvin is immensely appealing. . . . Schaeffer . . . is very funny, but we are never far from a sense that harshness and violence are real; we are never entirely sure how things will turn out... Calvin, the irrepressibly endearing hero of Frank Schaeffer’s Calvin Becker Trilogy, is the son of a missionary family, and their trip to Portofino is the highlight of his year. But even in the seductive Italian summer, the Beckers can’t really relax. Calvin’s father could slip into a Bad Mood and start hurling potted plants at any time. His mother has an embarrassing habit of trying to convert “pagans” on the beach. And his sister Janet has a ski sweater and a miniature Bible in her luggage, just in case the Russians invade and send them to Siberia. His dad says everything is part of God’s plan. But this summer, Calvin has some plans of his own.” —**Richard Eder** *Los Angeles Times*

“The wonderful thing about this book is that it feels like a vacation. . . . And, like any really good vacation, it ends too soon.” —*The Richmond Times-Dispatch*

“Beautifully written . . . great insight and unselfconscious humor.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“A wry coming of age tale . . . splendid laugh-out loud moments.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

“A profound and sometimes painful look at the challenges of practicing faith, and a lot of fun to read.” —*Washington Times*

“Calvin Becker is back in a timely, timeless story about the volcanic sexual curiosity of a fourteen-year-old boy born into a fundamentalist family so strict that he has never seen a movie, watched television, or danced (and has to hide his five copies of *Mad* magazine in the attic). It is 1966, and Ralph and Elsa Becker, Reformed Presbyterian missionaries from Kansas, are stationed in Switzerland, and on a modest ski vacation with their three children: tyrannical eighteen-year-old Janet, angelic Rachael, and our narrator, the irrepressible Calvin. But then, while at the Hotel Riffelberg, high above Zermatt, the fourteen-year-old falls into the hands of a waitress who, while bringing him his breakfast each morning, initiates him into ecstasies he can barely begin to comprehend. Told with warmth and humor.”
—*Library Journal (starred)*

“Mr. Schaeffer’s gifts as a novelist are more than comic: *Saving Grandma* has a deeper river flowing through it as well, one that is sensual and loving and full of true grace. This is a wonderful book!”
—**Andre Dubus III, author of *House of Sand and Fog***



Baby Jack (a novel)

“The author lets each character speak in alternating chapters. (In heaven, Jack befriends a down-to-earth God who is a “wannabe

theatre director.”) The reader marvels at how Schaeffer makes this concise chorus of social conviction moving and memorable by emphasizing emotion over description. By no means is *Baby Jack* another *War and Peace*. Think *War and People* instead.”
— *USA Today*

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Other Books by Frank Schaeffer

Fiction

The Calvin Becker Trilogy

PORTOFINO

ZERMATT

SAVING GRANDMA

BABY JACK

AND GOD SAID, "BILLY!"

Nonfiction

KEEPING FAITH: A Father-Son Story About Love and The United States Marine Corps (Coauthored with John Schaeffer)

FAITH OF OUR SONS: A Father's Wartime Diary

VOICES FROM THE FRONT: Letters Home from America's Military Family

AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service—and How It Hurts Our Country (Coauthored with Kathy Roth-Douquet)

The God Trilogy

CRAZY FOR GOD: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back

PATIENCE WITH GOD: Faith for People Who Don't Like Religion (or Atheism)

SEX, MOM, AND GOD: How the Bible's Strange Take on Sex Led to Crazy Politics—and How I Learned to Love Women (and Jesus) Anyway

Please contact Frank Schaeffer at

www.frankschaeffer.com

ALL BOOK CLUBS WELCOME!

Frank *will* participate in book club meetings.

Contact him to arrange an appearance or phone/Skype Q&A at
his website

For Frank Gruber

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“He who seeks beauty will find it.”

Bill Cunningham (*New York Times* photographer)

Chapter 1
My Big Break

My heart skipped a beat as the Lord said, “Billy *this* is the day!” God’s voice was upbeat and cheerful like a car commercial announcer but even classier. He spoke just as I spotted the movie crew vehicles parked across the street from Image Engineering on Victory Boulevard. I’d been begging God to let me complete the task He’d set me in New Midian and allow me to return home to my darling little child before she grew up. Sometimes I got mad at God because everything He does is just so needlessly complicated. Nevertheless June 18, 1988 was an unexpectedly good day. After 3 years in New Midian, the place most people call Hollywood, I was on the verge of my big break.

They had lights on the street including 10-Ks, 2-Ks, even a Brute set up on the sidewalk next to a gun store. The grips were unloading dolly track. I felt that God’s Wonderful Plan for my life was about to happen at last, that I was where He wanted me at the right time and place of His choosing and that NOW I was finally on the last mile of the road back to my little daughter Rebecca!

I’d missed almost 3 years of her childhood because of my obedience to the Lord. Rebecca was 3 when I left home and now she was almost 6! What I’d thought would take a few months had dragged out into years. So by that morning most of the time I didn’t let

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myself get too excited when good things happened. It would just mean that when things fell through as they had so often, I'd get that much more depressed. However on the glorious morning of June 18, 1988 I let myself imagine Rebecca's little arms hugging me again. I felt *so very close* to getting the movie made that God sent me to New Midian to direct.

"Yes Lord!" I screamed as I pulled into the parking lot of a Toys R Us that the crew was using as their base camp. A production assistant or a PA -- like we call the people in *The Business* who are really just interns running around not doing much more than bringing the important crew people coffee -- tried to stop me like I was just some tourist. I rolled down my window and I said in an authoritative voice, "I'm here to see Guy Chesney."

My sophisticated director's smile that I'd practiced for hours in front of my mirror paid off. So did speaking in my coolest laid back confident voice. Whatever it was that opened the door to this new (and as it soon turned out decisive) opportunity my smile let that worldly PA wearing a tight torn-on-purpose pair of Levi's know that I was only driving my 10-year-old Honda Civic because I chose to. My handsome "chiseled face" (like my wife Ruth called it when she declared that I was the handsomest man she'd ever seen), my long blond hair tied back in a ponytail, my using a Navajo handmade hair clip to hold my ponytail, made out of genuine sterling silver and real Sleeping Beauty Turquoise stones that I'd plundered three days before from a the Sharper Image boutique in Brentwood, let the PA standing in my way know that I probably had a new Mercedes someplace and was probably somebody important. That's why I never washed the Civic and drove it dusty and trashed. I was stuck with my car but nevertheless I wanted to turn a debilitating vehicle challenge into an opportunity and make my disgusting little car help me look like the weird-but-brilliant movie director type. I wanted my decrepit excuse of a car to send the message that I was so "into

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my craft” that I didn’t care about what I drove even if (secretly) I was also a prophet of the Lord begging Him for a better ride and naming and claiming an abundance of good things, not to mention a way to complete His task, so that I could return to my wife and daughter.

So I had long since turned my vehicular weakness into strength by manipulating my car’s loathsomeness against itself and instead of covering up the decrepitude of my car accentuating it. I had to signal to everyone in town that the person driving this humble junker was sophisticated even if I was just a wannabe director who had not yet gotten his big break. That’s why I always kept the Matisse art book on my cracked dashboard.

The Lord had spontaneously delivered the art book plunder into my hands at a Borders Bookstore when the girl at the checkout counter was momentarily distracted by a famous actress who had just walked in to do a book signing. At first I’d thought that God had led me to the store to meet the actress and that maybe that meeting would lead to my big break. When her security people wouldn’t let me near her God said that I wasn’t there to meet her but in order that I could plunder the store of several items that would soon be used by Him to further our cause. So the star’s walking in and the way everyone turned to watch her presented a God-given despoiling opportunity to grab a very expensive art book off the “New Releases” table and walk out. I even put post-it notes (also despoiled from that same bookstore along with 3 pens and a package of greeting cards to send notes to Rebecca on) throughout the book to make sure people would think I really was into classy artistic stuff like that.

So anyway, the point is that on THE BIG DAY that PA’s eyes flicked from the art book on the dash to my pile of fresh scripts stacked on the back seat and she shrugged. Then she pointed to the trailers parked in front of a Burger King and said, “Guy’s over there by the honey wagon I think.”

I was in! Yes Lord!

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A *honey wagon* is Movie Business parlance for the truck with the chemical toilets in it used by the actors and crew on location. As I parked next to that toilet truck I named and claimed this Bible verse, “This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,” 1 Samuel 17:46. Then I looked around for Guy Chesney for a while but couldn’t find him. So I just hung out and watched everyone working.

I didn’t know that this day would turn into THE DAY but I was already happy because I was on a set and that gave me a chance to observe and learn. So I had a clear sense of leading and that something big was about to happen. Seeing at least 30 people and 10 equipment trucks made me shiver with joy because if this was their idea of a “low budget second unit shoot” which was how Guy Chesney had described it when we met and he invited me to the set, and if my meeting up with the Chesney worked out, and if he introduced me to his producer, and if Guy’s producer read my stepping stone exploitation genre slasher script and gave me a deal *and* we made my movie *and* they hired me to direct it as my first picture, *and* if my movie did unexpectedly well, then I could count on a great fee package and maybe even some back end points of the profits. And then maybe *that* would open the door to a studio deal for making God’s movie! And when that happened then I could go home to my family! So anyway, to get all this going I was there to meet Guy, the production manager I’d met by “chance” in a restaurant a few days before when I was cruising for door-opening contacts and – for once – had actually met one.

The crew was shooting a car crash gag. A big black 1969 Cadillac veered off the road, across two lanes of traffic and smashed through a break-away sugar-glass window in the gun store location. It was another sign on that day of days! It was the same model of vintage car

I'd decided I'd drive when the Lord blessed me: The front-wheel-drive 1967-1969 Eldorado. God had said He'd give me one (along with the new Mercedes I was asking for) just as soon as I made His Movie.

I had hung around a lot of second unit shoots trying to pick up hands-on knowledge to add to my screenwriting night class learning curve to prepare me for what the Lord had in store for me. I'd noticed that stunt guys like to make a big deal out of what they do. The set was crawling with stunt guys. Stunt men are king on a second unit of an action movie. The stars are nowhere in sight. It's only crew and macho stunt guys with eighteen inches of gut hanging over their Stunt Man Association of America belt buckles that are around when most stunts get shot. The bigger the 'gag,' what they call a stunt, the more dangerous it seems, the more they get paid. That's why every time there's a fall into an air bag or pile of cardboard boxes, a car crash, a slide off a motor cycle, or a full body burn, whatever, the stunt guys limp away. The other stunt guys play along even though the stunt men are the ones who talk the second unit director into doing the stunt in the first place. They say stuff like, "Hey! You only want me to fall sixty feet!?! Shit! That ain't nothin,' last picture I did with Burt I took a hundred and twenty fuckin' foot fall." They still complain about it later though and say that the second unit director was, "An asshole for makin' me do it!"

The crew was checking a dozen or so remote cameras that rolled on the crash, along with one in the front end grill of the car. After the assistant director gave the okay a cheer went up. The stunt driver slowly climbed out of the crashed car holding his knee. Everybody went over to the craft services table to grab coffee, bowls of cereal and packs of gum, whatever. Movie people love to eat free food because crews feel ripped off because the "above the line" important people on the set from the stars and the director to the producers are getting rich while all the crew gets is a paycheck like anybody else.