

# ALMIGHTY GOD: MURDER IN A McDONALD'S

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**A**T AROUND 9:00PM, on 28 May 2014, five people attacked and killed a woman in a McDonald's restaurant in Zhaoyuan 招远, Shandong province. A bystander filmed the murder on a mobile phone and the footage spread rapidly on the Internet. Within days, the police announced that the suspected killers were all members of the Church of Almighty God (also known as Eastern Lightning



On 21 August 2014, members of Church of Almighty God were put on trial for homicide and 'using a cult to undermine the law'. State media widely publicised the trial

Photo: Weibo/news.sohu.com

东方闪电 or The Real God 实际神), an organisation founded in 1990 by a physics teacher named Zhao Weishan 赵维山 and banned as a cult in 1995.

On 31 May, CCTV aired footage from an interview with the main culprit, Zhang Lidong 张立冬, who said that his group wanted to convert the victim, but she refused to give them her phone number. He expressed no remorse, calling the victim a 'demon' 魔鬼. Shortly after the incident, state-run media published a list of fourteen illegal cults.

On 21 August, the five suspects were put on trial in Yantai, Shandong province. All of them were accused of intentional homicide, and three of them of 'using a cult to undermine the law'. State media widely publicised the trial.

On 11 October, two of the five accused, including Zhang Lidong, received death sentences. Another received life without parole, and the remaining two accomplices received seven and ten years respectively.

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