

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

A LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE ON
RITUALISTIC, SATANIC, AND OCCULT CRIME

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR LEMI

BY
LT. GRANT H. JACK



ROWLETT POLICE DEPARTMENT
ROWLETT, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER, 1991

#111

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Definitions.....	4
III.	Difficulties in Law Enforcement.....	7
IV.	Symptoms.....	8
V.	Victims.....	11
VI.	Geographical Clues.....	14
VII.	Too Close to Home?.....	15
	Examples in the North Texas Area	
VIII.	Crime Scene Investigation.....	22
	What To Look For	
IX.	A Law Enforcement Perspective.....	27

Introduction

Over the past several years law enforcement has seen a marked increase in occult related crimes. Many of these crimes are attributed to witchcraft and Satanic worship. Some people do not view these practices as religious activities but perceive them to be criminal conduct and abhorrent behavior. Practiced by men and women of all ages, and in many cases, by teenagers, incidents of desecration of cemeteries, grave robbing, leaving or burying strange objects and symbolic curios in cemeteries, sacrificing of animals, and ritualistic graffiti are reported by citizens almost on a weekly basis. Most citizens are frightened by the reports and demand action and protection, yet one sees very little of this in the media. This could be because so many people tend to write off cult-related reports as "hogwash" or insanity. When this type of crime is reported, it is on the back pages of newspapers somewhere between bicycle thefts and criminal mischief. But as time passes, more and more reports are received and the number of cult-related newspaper articles are growing.

Law enforcement has failed to take proper steps to educate officers in this area of investigation. While officers do not necessarily need to be experts in this field, they do need to learn how to recognize this type of crime. Occult crime may be the most difficult area of police work today. These are not simple cases with obvious suspects. Officers

uncover bits and pieces, evidence that goes nowhere, testimony that is always suspect and crimes so bizarre and disgusting that even most police officers do not want to believe it exists. There is no way of knowing how many crimes are cult related because there is no national or state reporting system categorizing cult related crimes. Until recently, police have received little or no training in the recognition and investigation of these crimes, so it is unknown how many cult related cases have been investigated and never recognized for what they were.

In order to investigate occult crimes, one has to set aside personal religious beliefs. This is extremely difficult to do as many police officers are born-again Christians. However, all religions are protected under the Constitution. Police do not investigate religions, they investigate crime.

One of the problems with this type of investigation is that it triggers personal imagination as an officer attempts to "figure it out." This can be a dangerous thing to do. Some officers who specialize in these types of investigations have become so wrapped up in them that they see a Satanist around every corner.

Many police departments in the country will not allow their officers to talk about ritualistic crimes, especially when it involves any type of religious activity. Most prosecutors will not allow testimony referring to the occult to be admitted during a trial. This would give the defense

team grounds to set up an insanity defense.

We had one man in L.A. who killed winos. He drank their blood. We had people say that he was a cannibal. Was this boy right in the head? Probably not. So, if we, the police department said that we had a killer who drank blood, what do you think the news media would do with that? ' Vampire runs rampant in L.A. ' What do you think that does for him when it comes time for his defense? If we called him a cannibal, we would build him a defense, because no one in our society is a cannibal. It's the same with Satanism. If he kills someone let's just call him a killer. (Det. Pat Metoyer, Los Angeles Police Department) (1).

Recently, a flood of law enforcement seminars and conferences have dealt with satanic and ritualistic crime. The typical topics covered in these seminars include crimes committed by self-styled Satanic practitioners ranging from church desecrations to murder, ritualistic abuse of children, and teenage suicide by juveniles dabbling in the occult. The words Satanic, occult, and ritualistic are often used interchangeably in reference to certain types of crime. While there are many different types of witchcraft, Satanic cults, and ritualistic organizations, this paper will make no attempt to examine each different category. Anytime that any activity related to any of these crossover the line and breaks the law, it will be called ritual crime for purposes of simplicity. This paper aims to help law enforcement officers to identify and detect ritualistic types of crimes.

Keep in mind that not all who engage in occult activity are criminals. Many are law abiding citizens; their

activities are considered religious and are protected under the Constitution. Police have found that some of their best sources in relation to occult crimes are those involved in the occult who are eager to rid their own closed communities of the criminal element.

DEFINITIONS

It is difficult to define Satanism, and no attempt will be made to do so, however, it is important to realize how the word Satanism is used by many people. For some people, narrow minded as it may appear, Satanism is any type of religion other than their own.

Occult simply means "hidden." All unreported or unsolved crimes might be regarded as occult, but, in this context, the word means the action or influence of supernatural powers, some secret knowledge of them, or an interest in paranormal phenomena. Occult does not imply Satanism, evil, or even crime. It simply can include frauds perpetrated by fortune tellers and "psychics" who arrange visitations with dead loved ones and commit other financial crimes against the gullible for a fee (2).

Ritual abuse is a brutal form of child abuse involving sexual, physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse and the use of frightening rituals. Parents are usually not aware that anything has happened to their children. Even when they know that "something is wrong" parents often have no clue to the severity or type of abuse involved.

Ritual abuse is most often directed against infants and children under the age of six. While children may be ritually abused by family or friends of the family, much ritual abuse involves child care personnel like baby sitters or pre-school teachers. Typically, ritual abuse is perpetrated by a group of adults, both male and female, against a group of children (3). Keep in mind that this activity is dealt with as child abuse; the offenders are prosecuted for child abuse. No matter the reason the offenses were committed, it is just another form of child abuse and is treated as such in the court system.

Many people feel that ritualistic crimes are always associated with devil worship or some type of religious activity. This may be true in some cases, but not always. From a law enforcement perspective, "ritualistic" means any Satanic or at least spiritually-related crime. It can also refer to a prescribed religious ceremony. However, in its broader meaning, it refers to any customarily-repeated act or series of acts. The need to repeat these acts can be cultural, sexual, or psychological as well as spiritual. Since 1972, Dr. Kenneth Lanning, an FBI agent assigned to the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime at the FBI Academy, has lectured about sexual ritualism, which is nothing more than repeatedly engaging in an act or series of acts in a certain manner because of a sexual need. In order to become aroused or gratified, a person must engage in the act in a certain way. The sexual ritualism can require such

things as specific physical characteristics, age, or gender of the victim, a particular sequence of acts, bringing or taking of specific objects, or the use of certain words or phrases. Ritualism is similar, but goes beyond than the concept of Modus Operandi or Method of Operation (M.O.) as known by police officers. The M.O. is something done by an offender because it produces satisfactory results. Sexual ritual is something done by an offender because it gratifies a sexual need. Deviant acts such as urinating or defecating on a victim are far more likely to be the result of sexual ritualism than religious or Satanic ritualism.

To make things more confusing, religious and sexual ritualism can overlap. Some psychotic people are preoccupied with religious delusions and hear the voice of God or Satan telling them to do things of a religious nature. Offenders who feel little, if any, guilt over their crimes may need little or no justification for their anti-social behavior. As human beings, however, they may have fears, concerns, and anxiety over getting away with their criminal acts. Under normal circumstances, it is difficult to pray to God for success in doing things that are against His commandments.

Ritualistic crime may fulfill the spiritual, sexual, and/or psychological needs of an offender. Crimes may be ritualistically motivated or have ritualistic elements. The ritual behavior may also fulfill basic criminal needs to manipulate victims, eliminate rivals, send a message to enemies, or intimidate co-conspirators. The leaders of a

group may want to play upon the beliefs and superstitions of those around them and try to convince accomplices and enemies that they, the leaders, have special or supernatural powers (4).

DIFFICULTIES IN INVESTIGATION

Although it is difficult to understand why anyone would ritually abuse children, the goal of the perpetrators is the conversion of a child to an upside-down belief system in which good is bad, and bad is good, and the group leaders and their doctrines must be obeyed. Mind-control techniques are applied to destroy the victim's sense of free will. For many, this includes forced submission to worship of the group's god. Child victims are indoctrinated into a system of magic and power-oriented supernatural beliefs involving devils, demons, witches, etc.

Ritual intimidation is used in a systematic program of threats to terrorize the victims into silence. Child victims are made to believe that the abusers and their allies are always around, ever alert to kill or harm children who disclose. Their terrified silence protects abusers and exposes the children to ongoing abuse.

Rituals make criminal prosecution difficult. When a child begins to talk about rituals like devil worship or animal sacrifice, what he or she says seems so unbelievable to those unfamiliar with these crimes that the stories detract from

the credibility. Abusers take advantage of this and the youth of their victims to escape prosecution.

Most parents feel that if they have a good relationship with their children that the children will make an outcry if they are the victims of ritual abuse. This is not always true. Children who have been ritually abused have an extremely difficult time talking about it to anyone, including their parents. Some ritually abused children resist disclosure even when their parents specifically ask about it. These children have been made to believe that their abusers can and will kill them, their family, or their pets if they talk. They keep this painful secret in order to protect the people they love and depend on the most.

A child who has been ritually abused may block out all conscious memories of the abuse because the trauma is so extreme. Although the memories may be blocked, the abused child is still seriously at risk for emotional, behavioral, and relational problems throughout life. Ritually abused children usually require therapy to reclaim their lost memories and to be healed from the severe trauma they have suffered.

SYMPTOMS

Ritual abuse cases have been reported in every region of the United States. Alleged perpetrators include respected members of the community or friends and neighbors of their victims. Some children have been ritually abused by one

parent without the knowledge of the other parent. Ritual abuse has been reported in pre-school day care centers, summer camps, military base child care centers, and various other locations where children gather. One instance, in particular, is the McMartin Day Care Center case which will be discussed later.

Parents have been falsely reassured, about the safety of their children because ritual abusers do not appear obviously abnormal. The abusers typically seem to care for and take interest in the children left in their care. People who abuse the children are often people the parents trust.

No single symptom is proof that a child has been ritually abused. However, some symptoms can be noted of ritually abused children. A child may show signs of sexual abuse, such as genital, urinary, or anal pain. The child may seek or expect sexual contact. Public masturbation may occur, or the child may state that he or she was touched in a sexual way. The child could be afraid of bathing or toileting. There may be some toileting accidents resulting from a non-ritual or "simple" sexual assault; however, further investigation would be warranted in this type of example. In one instance, a child talked about "bad people" who would hurt the family. Sometimes the children will talk about demons or monsters that watch them or live inside their bodies.

There have been instances when children will exhibit extraordinarily destructive behavior. This could include

violent behavior against other children or pets. They may talk about people or animals being killed or mutilated or even consumed. Other instances include a fear of being poisoned, referrals to drinking blood, fear of uniformed or costumed people. Sometimes a child will be excessively fearful of separation from parents. This is usually accompanied by the child speaking of another "real mom and dad."

One of the most frightening aspects of ritual abuse is that most of the victims are children. Even if the children are only psychologically assaulted, there is no way to measure the mental damage that is done to these naive young minds.

We were called in because the nurses in the children's psychiatric ward were hysterical because of what the kids were saying, doing, and drawing. One kid was drawing a picture of his nurse all cut up and in a pot cooking. He was sitting there telling her how he wanted to cook her and eat her. This is a seven-year-old talking. The four-year-old describes how to get rid of the bodies. The kid doesn't even know how to read or write and he's describing three different ways to get rid of bodies. First, the group will eat the body parts, two, they have a dog that eats the body parts, and third, the kid says a crematory. He describes how a crematory operates. I had never been in one so I went to one to check it out. He not only described perfectly how to do it, but when they do what, precisely, step by step. He also described another way to get rid of bodies which is quite ingenious. They go out to the cemetery the day before a funeral and find a grave that has been dug. They dig about a foot down more, put the bodies that they want to get rid of in there and just cover it up lightly. The next morning, the cemetery workers come out there for the burial--no one looks down there--and buries the 'new' body.
(Det. Jack Frasier, pseudonym) (5).

This describes the "brainwashing" technique described earlier. Some of the child victims see nothing wrong with what they are describing which is why they are sometimes so eager to talk about it.

I got into satanism about three years ago through some friends at school. We hold rituals every Friday night and on special holidays. What I like about Satanism is the power that it gives me. The people at school know I'm into it and they don't mess with me. It gives me the power to escape the police when I have to. It also gives me the feeling that I can do anything I put my mind to. ("James" is a self-styled Satanist living in Los Angeles. He is eighteen years old) (6).

Some individuals who are involved in Satanism are called dabblers or fringe people. They are in a little cult group or sometimes just by themselves, and are not attached to any other group. Richard Ramirez who was on trial in California for thirteen murders and forty-three various other felonies, told police that he was a Satanist and flashed a pentagram inscribed in his left palm to reporters covering his arraignment. Ramirez pleaded not guilty, and left the courtroom shouting, "Hail Satan." These fringe people tend to use their religion as a way of justifying their own criminal behavior so they do not have to deal with any guilty feelings (7).

VICTIMS

Approximately six years ago, scores of dazed, frightened

and sickened parents in Manhattan Beach, California, were beginning to learn the heart-wrenching truths about Satanic ritual abuse and their children at the McMartin Day Care Center. This type of crime was generally unknown to the police and treatment professionals and was certainly beyond the grimmest nightmares of the parents who were hearing outcries from their own offspring. Personal trust and long-standing reputations were forever shattered as accounts of repeated torture, sexual perversion and murder within hideous ritual context became the norm. With excruciating slowness, the criminal justice system ground through new issues of investigation, prosecution, defense, and public awareness. Many of the delicate survivors and their families were placed under enormous amounts of stress and frustration because of the "newness" of this type of crime and the lack of experience of the police and prosecution teams. The state's case was eroded on all sides because of the inexperience of police officers and prosecutors. This type of crime seemed to be something out of a fictional "Halloween" movie. The trial finally came and went with dismissals and acquittals for the defendants. The largest multi-perpetrator/multi-victim ritualized abuse of children case in the history of jurisprudence dissolved like graveyard mist because the jurors had not believed the children.

Finally, in April 1990, a team of trained investigators and excavators uncovered evidence at the McMartin Day Care Center site which corroborates the accounts of the children. They

found a system of tunnels emanating from a secret vaulted room underneath the center. The arched room is part of the concrete of the day care center's foundation. Many tunnels honeycomb the ground under the building extending outward toward buildings on adjacent property. Dirt samples from the filled-in tunnels do not match the surrounding soil. More than 2,000 artifacts were recovered from the sifted tunnel dirt including a 1982-83-vintage Disneyland sandwich bag, animal bones, and a child's plastic plate with three pentagrams drawn on it. One tunnel emerged at a tri-plex next door, where the children said they had been taken before being driven to other locations of abuse around town.

Suddenly, how children at the day care center could have been removed and transported (as they claimed) became clear. They had been telling the truth all along, but the adults just could not see nor understand what they were saying. Ted Gunderson, a retired FBI agent who is now a private investigator, lead the team of investigators who searched the building and uncovered subterranean entrances to the tunnels under the bathrooms and classrooms. They also found the windowless inner room at the day care center which had no hardware on the door other than a keyhole. This secret room was located next to Ray Buckey's classroom and was described by survivors as a site of abuse.

At a 1986 occult crime seminar, one McMartin parent stated, " We have to believe the children; they were telling us what had happened all along, we just couldn't understand. We must

believe the children!"

Much of the occult is based on deceit, deception and illusion, mixed with a reality too bizarre to be believed. This comprises the slurry of information through which cult/occult investigators and treatment professionals must wade to get to the truth. Recent psychological research supports the overwhelming truthfulness of child victims of abuse. These studies have documented that child abuse victims characteristically under report the level and severity of their abuse rather than lie and fabricate in lurid sexual fantasies, as many so-called abuse experts and "apologists for Satanism" would suggest. Survivor art, the incredibly graphic drawings done by survivors about their abuse, have been studied and shown to be even more accurate than verbal testimony (8).

GEOGRAPHICAL CLUES

Tunnels sometimes become implements of Satanic ritual abuse providing an unnatural cloak of darkness. Tunnels are often too primitive for the technological mind to even consider as an alternative, yet they are insidiously effective for that very reason. Tunnels have been reported elsewhere in cult cases and should be considered as a possibility in conjunction with underground rooms and chambers in cult crime investigations. In the McMartin case, these questions remained unanswered: How were the tunnels built? Didn't anyone noticed the dirt removed? Are the owners or tenants

of the nearby buildings also involved as participants, lookouts, or guards? Do the other day care facilities believed to be directly linked to the McMartin Day Care Center also have such elaborate subterranean structures? Who will press the expanded investigation?

Ted Gunderson and his associates dug, sifted and collected for 34 days after they obtained legal access to the former McMartin property on April 26, 1990. They have only explored the layers of tunnels closest to the surface. One tunnel, which was filled in when the property was sold and excavated, and is still filled in, headed downward. They incurred \$18,000 in debts related to the employ of experts in various fields and excavation equipment.

What Gunderson and his associates did was to make history. Their discoveries lend important credibility to the active ritual abuse cases across the country which are involved in the investigation or prosecution stages and are not yet available to public disclosure (9).

TOO CLOSE TO HOME?

In October 1986, an Oklahoma jury found Sean Sellars, age 17, guilty of three counts of murder for killing his mother, stepfather and a convenience store clerk in the fall of 1985. Sellars was self-styled Satanist who was obsessed with using human blood in his rituals. He kept several vials hidden in his refrigerator for black masses. He often

carried blood to school and drank it in front of his classmates.

A friend of Sellars's who knew Sellers in Colorado, before he moved to Oklahoma, testified that Sellars had formed a Satanic group called "The Elimination." The witness stayed in touch with Sellars through letters and phone calls from Colorado. During a visit back to Colorado by Sellars, the friend testified that he and Sellars wore black robes, drank their own blood, and conducted the candle-light initiation into Satanism of a third boy. They cut the boy with an athame (ceremonial knife) and used his blood to make a dedication to Satan. During his trial, Sellars told how he held a ceremony in his room, alone, in which he wrote in his own blood: " I renounce God, I renounce Christ, I will serve only Satan. Hail Satan!" He became addicted to Satanic rituals, often staying up late into the night practicing and reading about them. On September 8, 1985, he and another friend, Richard Howard, held one last ritual together before setting out for a human sacrifice. Sellars stole his grandfather's .357 magnum and shot a convenience store clerk who had once refused to sell beer to Sellars.

Sellars became even more obsessed with Satanism; he wrote in a school essay read during the trial, "Satanism made me a better person ... I can kill without remorse, and feel no regret or sorrow, only love compassion, hate, anger, pain, and joy. Only I may understand, but that is enough." Sellars began arguing with his parents over a fifteen-year

old girl whom they forbade him to see. He ran away from home but returned. One night, after going home from his part time job at a pizza store, he performed his nightly Satanic ritual. After drifting in and out of sleep that night he walked quietly into his parent's room and shot them both in the head. Then he went to Richard Howard's house where he stashed the weapon. The next morning he pretended that he had found his parents' bodies and didn't know what had happened. Howard testified for the prosecution and received a minimal sentence for being an accessory after the fact because he did not take an active part in the shooting of the clerk but waited outside the store. Sellars is now the youngest inmate on Oklahoma's death row (10).

In mid-January 1988, an investigator in a urban Dallas County police department began working on a crime that was stranger than he had ever seen. Young girls, from 11 to 14 years old, began telling police about rituals in which men gave them alcohol and drugs, read from a Satanic bible and forced them to participate in dozens of bizarre sexual acts.

At first, the investigator, who asked not to be identified, was incredulous. Most of the girls would not identify their assailants, and there was little other evidence linking anyone to a crime. The alleged victims underwent medical examinations which revealed that 11 girls had been sexually assaulted. Subsequently, a 19 year old man who had been arrested for burglary and was incarcerated in

the Dallas County Jail began substantiating their stories. The 19 year-old was one of the suspects and admitted to the offense. Two other adults were involved.

In December 1986, Fort Worth Police in conjunction with surrounding area police departments formed the Organized Criminal Deviant Movements Network. Their findings have discovered a small, but alarming, pattern of crime. One investigator, who asked not to be identified because of departmental policies, said, "We are not talking about a major crime wave here, but crimes are being committed and its not just kid stuff" (11).

For instance, a 16 year-old boy disappeared from a local theater in Greenville. Police later found his body in a shallow grave. A 20 year-old was arrested, indicted, and convicted for the crime. He admitted luring the youth to a wooded area, beating him with a club, and then stabbing him to death. The 20 year-old has 666, known as the mark of Satan, tattooed on his forehead. Additional evidence linked to him revealed a black robe, black candles, a Satanic bible and various occult literature which was found in his car. According to one investigator, the 16 year-old's blood was used in a ritual (12).

Kennedale police raided an amphetamine lab and arrested an adult woman. There was literature there in reference to animal sacrifices and mutilation rituals. Police Chief David Geeslin said that the lab was adjacent to fields where Arlington police repeatedly had found mutilated animals in

the months before the raid (13).

In February 1987, a lone police officer in an isolated area south of Tarrant County stumbled onto a ritual in progress. He was frightened into leaving after two men blocked his path. The next day, police searched the area and found a clearing with a recently-used fire pit. Just outside the clearing, they found a white robe capable of fitting a 7 to 10 year-old child. Lab tests confirmed that the robe was saturated with human semen. The police believe that child molestations had taken place and probably were interrupted by the officer.

The beliefs of these occult groups are the product of whatever fragments of paganism, witchcraft, or other obscure beliefs that a self-proclaimed leader finds attractive. Through continuous investigation, this network of law enforcement agencies has learned that the worship combines equal parts drugs, staging, and the deification of Satan or an equivalent, socially unacceptable god of darkness touted as capable of giving believers supernatural power. In the worst cases, these rituals become little more than an excuse for self-indulgence and violence ranging from animal mutilations to church desecrations and other vandalism, runaways, suicides, and drug and weapons trafficking (14).

These cases are mirrored by similar crimes in other Texas cities. Since 1985, police have investigated cult-related murders in Houston and San Antonio, allegations of ritual abuse of children in Austin and El Paso, church burglaries

and an arson in Tyler, and several large drug operations throughout the state. In the Waco area, a large methamphetamine lab was raided by DEA in January 1986. There was enough information received at the location of the lab to show sufficient evidence (i.e. satanic graffiti) that the lab was being operated by a small, heavily armed satanic cult (15).

The actual number of identified "cultists" that are actually committing crimes is classified because police intelligence files are not public. However, Ken McBride, a Burleson Baptist Minister who claims to have served as a high priest of a North Dallas Satanic group until he became a Christian, says that he has on file information on over 2,000 area teenagers and adults involved in criminal ritual activities. Some would be skeptical over these figures--and with due cause.

Police agencies throughout the state have evidence that some youth groups are being orchestrated by adults. In September 1986, Fort Worth police identified a teen club opened by adults who attracted teenagers with free alcohol and drugs. Police found that the teenagers were told to learn about Aleister Crowley, an occultist considered to be the father of modern black magic and Satanism. One year later, police in Seagoville found the same type of operation. Since that time, Fort Worth police have found three more. All have been closed with criminal charges filed against the people responsible. Several juveniles were interviewed after

these clubs were closed down by police. Some of these youths claimed that their interest originated with visits to these operations and that after going to the club, they became involved in the organized cult groups by participating in the not necessarily criminal, but organized cult "religious services."

Police have found ritual sites in virtually every county in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and have recovered altars, symbols, robes, ritual books, candles, chalices, and the remains of mutilated animals. While most of these were temporary places used only once, some were very sophisticated. These well-planned areas were isolated, easily protected and almost impossible to spot (16).

Another one of the problems facing law enforcement is the fact that police have difficulty separating what is true from what is spawned by fear, imagination, and drugs. Although a number of these reportings do show actual animal mutilations, blood drinking rituals, and even a few instances of human sacrifice, much of the information received is an offshoot of the faddish popularity of the occult. In nearly every case, when a person claimed participation in Satanic groups, they also admitted to using hallucinogenic drugs during the rituals in which the alleged crimes took place. Every informant interviewed by the network has told of acts by group leaders suggesting that tricks, staging and other mind control tactics were used to enforce discipline and scare would-be deserters.

In one such case, a 13 year-old girl told police of an incident south of Fort Worth in which an adult who claimed supernatural powers set a stock pond on fire during a ritual. Police think the leader spread a flammable liquid on the pond before the ritual then used tricks to disguise how it was ignited. The girl said that she was so scared that she obeyed the leader's order to join 20 to 25 other adults and teenagers in a sexual orgy that included the mutilation of large farm animals, and the consumption of the animals' blood. Claims like this are difficult for police to prove--other than a misdemeanor case of cruelty to animals. Who can prove supernatural happenings and the worship of evil? When criminal acts are in the company of this type of activity, everything is hard to prove. Such cases are also difficult even to investigate.

One officer was forced out of his job in April 1988, after he began, "seeing things" while probing rumors of ritual crime in the small Tarrant County suburb where he had worked for five years. The officer, twice named officer of the year, insists that after he began identifying Satanists, he began having "visions," seeing occult symbols on the walls of his home and experiencing other demonically-inspired phenomena. The officer's supervisor said that he had resigned voluntarily after undergoing physical and psychological testing. The officer claimed that he was seeing things that nobody else could see. The tests results failed to show that there was anything wrong with the

officer (17).

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION - WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Many police officers ask what to look for during the search of the scene of suspected ritual areas. Obviously they should look for evidence of a crime. A pentagram is no more criminally significant than a crucifix unless it corroborates a crime or a criminal conspiracy. If a victim's description of the location or the instruments of a crime includes a pentagram, then the pentagram would be evidence. But the same would be true if the description included a crucifix (18).

Investigators so rarely investigate a ritual crime scene that it is imperative for them to receive training in what to look for to insure that nothing is overlooked. The first thing an officer takes into consideration is the location of the crime scene. Cultists prefer to hold their rituals in private locations away from the prying eyes of "outsiders." If the site is outside, it is usually in an isolated wooded area or perhaps a cemetery. If the crime site is inside, it will usually be a large open room. Churches are sometimes used for cult rituals, especially if the church has stained glass windows--because color is an important feature of a ritual--and a dual purpose is being served, the ritual is performed and a house of God is defiled. Warehouses, abandoned buildings school gymnasiums, a mortuaries, or other large rooms are considered appropriate.

The colors black, white, and green are commonly used on walls or floors. Colors are symbolic; black represents darkness or evil while white represents purity or innocence. Green is synonymous with vegetation or nature. Yellow represents wealth and power. Whenever red is found, it stands for blood, physical life, or passion. An altar is usually located somewhere in the room. The altar can be as simple as a table or an elaborately ornate creation. This is the place of sacrifice, be it a real sacrifice or only a ritualistic sacrifice. Keep in mind that a ritual sacrifice where no death occurs, can still be an offense. There is usually some type of sexual abuse, usually to children, when a ritual sacrifice takes place.

If the scene is fairly fresh and the meeting had just occurred, a distinctive odor may linger about the room. It could be the smell of burning flesh, such as an animal, or the remainder of incense used in traditional ceremonies. Symbols are usually found at the scene. Sometimes these symbols are blatantly obvious while other times they may be deliberately hidden, perhaps under a rug. A circle is usually found in the room. The strict ritualists will insist that the circle will be exactly nine feet in diameter. Less knowledgeable or less rigid cultists may have a circle larger or smaller. Sometimes more than one circle may be found. The circles may or may not be joined together. It is within these circles that the rituals are performed and sacrifices are made. Investigators should always look for ashes, no

matter what amount. Often, cultists try to hide evidence by burning it; however, just as often, fire is used in the rituals themselves. The ashes should be examined for pieces of bone or teeth. The examination should also include laboratory analysis to ascertain if such findings are human or animal. Attention should then be turned to paraphernalia used by cultists. Many items can be found at a crime scene including wands, incense burners, bones, chalices, candles, stolen religious items, phallic symbols, and restraints. Evidence of drugs or alcohol may be present. They are often used to dull the mind of the victim of sexual assault. Animal cages also may be found close to the scene. Chains, string, ribbons or colored rope may be present. These are symbols of the cult's power over the victim of abuse.

The investigator should also take note of the date of the crime. Satanic cults have their own calendar and their own "holy days." Different dates on the calendar represent different types of rituals. It should be noted that rituals are not always held on the exact date that they are supposed to be held on. It is common for the ritualists to hold a particular ritual a few days before or after the calendar dates simply as a matter of convenience (19).

When there is no geographical crime scene, only a corpse, the corpse becomes the crime scene. When viewing a body or animal corpse believed to be a victim of a ritualistic crime, the investigator should look for carvings, bite marks, neck wounds, branding, tattooing or mutilation. Usually, when

animals are involved, the sex organs are completely cut out and missing. Markings, such as pentagrams, drawings of goat's heads, and even words spelled backwards can be found on human corpses. Some of the most common words spelled backwards are nema (amen), natas (Satan) and redrum (murder). Sometimes a suspect may also have these markings on his body. These markings are usually self-inflicted and resemble dark, one color, jailhouse type tattoos (20).

When interviewing victims or witnesses of cult related crimes, the investigator should pay special attention to any mention of the use of these kinds of paraphernalia. He should also note any mention of a woman in white on a black altar. This symbolizes the sacrifice of a virgin, be it real or symbolic. For cult purposes, a virgin is a female until her eighteenth birthday. It actually has nothing to do with the physical sex act. Once a girl reaches her eighteenth birthday, she can be symbolically sacrificed and begin her "new life" as a woman.

Often a witness will mention a man dressed in a black robe, this will represent the high priest of the coven. Sometimes he may only wear a black hood. Specific questions should be asked about the hands of this person. The most powerful high priest often has a missing middle finger, given as a sacrifice to achieve this degree of power.

All law enforcement officers should be extremely alert when investigating this type of case. One must realize that if a person is committing crimes during some type of ritual,

then they must believe wholeheartedly in what they are doing. This makes them very dangerous. Some crime scenes may be booby trapped. Razor blades and hypodermic needles may be hidden in evidence. The actual scene and any observation points overlooking the scene need to be secure. Some extremists may believe that if "holy ground" is violated by an "unbeliever" it is worth going to any measure to retaliate or prevent this from happening. Protective clothing, especially gloves should be worn by investigators.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

We have to remember that the law enforcement perspective must focus on crime and must clearly recognize that just because an activity is "Satanic" or "ritualistic" does not necessarily mean that it is a crime, or that it is not a legitimate religious practice protected by the First Amendment. Within the personal religious belief system of a law enforcement officer, Christianity may be good and Satanism evil. Under the Constitution, both are neutral. This is an important, but difficult, concept for many law enforcement officers to accept. They are paid to uphold the Constitution and enforce the penal code, not the Ten Commandments. The apparently increasing numbers of teenagers and adults dabbling in Satanism and the occult may be cause for concern for parents, school officials, and society. What, however, law enforcement can or should do about it is another matter. Police interference with free exercise of

constitutional rights potentially creates major problems and conflicts.

Law enforcement officers who believe that the investigation of Satanic or occult crime puts them in conflict with supernatural forces of evil should reconsider assignment to these cases. (Maybe they should reconsider if they are suited to be police officers.) If, however, such officers must be or are assigned, they will need the power of their own spiritual belief system in order to deal with the superstition or religious implications of these cases. The religious beliefs of officers should provide spiritual strength and support for them, but should not affect their objectivity and professionalism during the investigation.

There must be a middle ground in this issue. Concern about Satanic or occult activity should not be a joke limited to religious fanatics. On the other hand, law enforcement is now locked in a serious struggle against the supernatural forces of ancient evil. Law enforcement officers need to know something about Satanism and the occult in order to properly evaluate peoples' possible connections to and motivations for criminal activity. Police must know when and how beliefs, symbols, and paraphernalia can be used to corroborate criminal activity. From a community relations perspective, they must also learn to respect spiritual beliefs that may be different or unpopular but that are not illegal. The focus must be on the objective investigation of violations of criminal statutes.

Until hard evidence is obtained and corroborated, the American people should not be frightened into believing that babies are being bred and eaten, that 50,000 missing children are being murdered in human sacrifices, or that Satanists are taking over America's day care centers. While no one can prove with absolute certainty that such activity has not occurred, the burden of proof, however, as it would be in any criminal prosecution, is on those who claim that it has occurred. As law enforcement agencies evaluate and decide what they can or should do about Satanic and occult activity in their own communities, they might want to also consider how to deal with the hype and hysteria of the anti-Satanists. Overreaction to the problem can clearly be worse than the problem. An unjustified crusade against those perceived as Satanists could result in wasted resources, unwarranted damage to reputations, and disruption of civil liberties. It is more appropriate, accurate, and objective to refer to such crimes as cult crimes rather than Satanic, occult, or ritualistic crimes.

Just as those who investigate cult crime have different approaches to the subject, they differ on the future of this area of law enforcement. Some see cult crime starting to take on the tone of organized crime rings. Others see it embracing the political violence of the far right. One thing is clear: more incidents of cult crime and occult activity are being reported, and the police are beginning to understand it better each day. It is still a new area,

however, and law enforcement officers have a long way to go (20).

There is no way of knowing how many crimes are cult related because there is no national or state reporting system categorizing cult related crimes. Because police, have received little or no training in the recognition and investigation of these crimes, until recently it is unknown how many cult related cases have been investigated and never recognized for what they were.

Endnotes

1. Kahaner, Larry. Cults That Kill (New York: Warner Brothers 1988), 43.
2. Lanning, Kenneth. Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime: A Law Enforcement Perspective (Quantico: National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, FBI Academy 1989) 3.
3. Brown, Dee; Cioffi, Marymae Curtis; Sexton, Daniel, MA; Gould, Catherine, PhD; and Laboriel, Lyn, MD. Ritual Abuse (Marshall Resource Center, Southern California Training Center, 1989) 2.
4. Lanning, Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime: A Law Enforcement Perspective, 3.
5. Kahaner, Cults That Kill, 218.
6. Ibid., 90.
7. Ibid., 86.
8. Alamo Area Rape Crisis Center. San Antonio Ritualistic Crime Seminar. 24-25 October, 1991.
9. File 18 Newsletter, Vol. V No.90-3. June 1990. The Cult Information Crime Network, Inc. Boise, Idaho, 4.
10. Kahaner, Cults That Kill, 87-88.
11. " Crimes in the Name of Satan." Dallas Morning News. 20 April 1988.
12. Ibid., 31A.
13. Ibid., 34A.
14. Ibid., 35A.
15. Ibid., 35A.
16. Ibid., 43A.

17. " Crimes in the Name of Satan." Dallas Morning News.
20 April 1988.
18. Lanning, Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime:
A Law Enforcement Perspective, 83.
19. Yates, Patricia. "Cult Related Crime Investigation."
Wichita Falls Police Department, 1992, 21.
20. File 18 Newsletter, Vol. V No. 90-3. June 1990. The Cult
Information Crime Network, Inc, 8.
21. Lanning, Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime: A
Law Enforcement Perspective, 107.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

"Crimes in the Name of Satan." Dallas Morning News.
20 April 1988.

File 18 Newsletter, Vol. V No.90-3. June 1990. The Cult Information Crime Network, Inc. Boise, Idaho.

Gates, David. "Networking to Beat the Devil." Newsweek.
5 December 1988.

Lanning, Kenneth. Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime:
A Law Enforcement Perspective. Quantico: National
Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, FBI Academy,
1989.

Books

Kahaner, Larry. Cults That Kill. New York: Warner Brothers,
1988.

Lyons, Arthur. Satan Wants You: The Cult of Devil Worship in
America. New York: Warner Books, 1988.

Mayer, Robert. Satan's Children. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Other

Alamo Area Rape Crisis Center. San Antonio Ritualistic Crime
Seminar. 24-25 October 1991.

Brown, Dee; Cioffi, Marymae Curtis; Sexton, Daniel MA; Gould,
Catherine PhD; and Laboriel, Lyn MD. "Ritual Abuse."
Marshall Resource Center, Southern California Training
Center, 1989.

Garza, Felipe. "Law Enforcement and the Occult." Kingsville
Police Department. 1992

Yates, Patricia. "Cult Related Crime Investigation." Wichita
Falls Police Department. 1991

Wertheim, Pat A., "Investigation of Ritual Crime Scenes."
Plano Police Department, 1989.

INTERVIEWS

Johnson, Mary self-proclaimed witch, interviewed by Grant
Jack, June, 1992.