

Satanic Ritual Abuse

I. Introduction

- A. It was a recent subject of the television show *Prime Time Live* (Jan. '93), many talk shows, and the subject of at least a half-dozen recent evangelical books. Psychologists (some Christian) are now concentrating their entire practice on treating SRA.
- B. Non-Christians are also writing on the subject. See *Surviving the Unbelievable* in *Ms* (Jan. Feb. 1993) and the following books *When Rabbit Howls*, *Satan's Children*, and *Suffer the Child*.
- C. Some believe that those who have undergone therapy for SRA number in six figures (see *The Satanism Scare*, by Richardson, Best, and Bromley.) Bob Larson, who has a nationally syndicated radio call-in show that frequently features SRA, believes there are hundreds of thousands of adults who have been so abused (See also his book: *Satanism: The Seduction of American Youth*).

II. Satanic Ritual Abuse: A Definition

- A. The Abusers: According to those who believe in the reality of SRA, there is a nation-wide, multi-generational, satanic cult that is so secretive it is nearly invincible. These people engage in rituals that are so bizarre and depraved as to be almost unbelievable. The people involved could be your neighbor next door. There are reportedly, doctors, lawyers, judges, morticians, policemen, clergy, professors, people in high places, in the cult. People, who in their everyday lives, would not be suspect. This secretive and conspiratorial cult is large and growing rapidly.
- B. The victims: They are mostly (except for a few males) young females, children and early teens, who are forcibly made to participate in brutal ritual connected with Satan worship over an extended period of time. They are initiated as early as 4 years old, and in most cases the victims implicate members of their own family. Young girls and women are most often the victims, due to the cult's focus on fertility and sexuality in their ceremonies. When males are abused it is usually to instill fear for purposes of control (secrecy).
- C. The Nature of the abuse: The abuse may involve any or all of the following: drinking blood (animal or human), or urine, cannibalism, watching or

participating in human sacrifice, bestiality, sexual torture, and abuse almost beyond description, and becoming baby breeders so the cult can use the fetuses for its rituals. There seems to be no limit to the depravity in the account of the victims. See *Moody Monthly* Mar. 1989, for the alleged account of one victim.

- D. The results: For the most part, the experiences have so damaged the psyche of the abused that memories of the events are repressed. Often they exhibit multiple personalities (Multiple Personality Disorder).

III. The Problem

- A. If a cult such as described above actually exists it is not unreasonable to conclude that thousands of murders (some say as high as 50,000 a year!) are occurring in this country. Despite vigorous investigations by the FBI (over a period of 10 years) and others, **there is no evidence** that any such cult exists, or that these women are actually being abused in the manner they describe.
- B. When *former victims* have brought their abusers to court (mostly their parents or day-care personnel) they have almost always been exonerated due to lack of evidence.
- C. In some celebrated cases in which the testimony of victims has received widespread publicity, careful investigation by experts has proven the stories to be fabrications (See the Grady Case in *The Seduction of Gloria Grady* in *D Magazine* Oct. 1992, and the Lauren Stratford case in *The True Lauren Stratford Story* in *Cornerstone* Vol. 18, Issue 90.).
- D. Despite the above, hundreds (maybe thousands) of therapists, clinicians, and pastoral counselors believe their patient's stories. This belief is not confined to the evangelical community. It is also a subject of much discussion in the secular press and in the Catholic Church.

IV. Concerns

We are not talking about something minor!

- A. The victims of SRA are often in therapy for up to two years! SRA victims make up the bulk of some therapist's clientele. In other words, the treatment of SRA is a booming business in the counseling industry.

- B. Some reputable and big-named Christian publishers have published books on the phenomenon. These books have sold in the hundreds of thousands of copies. Some of these publishers are Moody Press, Here's Life Publishers, Multnomah Press, Thomas Nelson, Word Books, and Harvest House.
 - C. If the conspiracy claims are true we have a national crisis on our hands. If it isn't true, there is another crisis, one of integrity, one that the evangelical community can ill-afford.
- V. A Closer Look: What is really happening?
- A. Historical Background
 1. In the late sixties and early seventies the counter-culture became enamored with the occult and ancient nature religions (witchcraft). Charles Manson, reputed to be a Satanist, was convicted of mass-murder. Anton LeVey, an ex-carnival worker, wrote the *Satanic Bible*. Many Christian books were written on the occult. Many were testimonial in nature, or accounts of experiences by missionaries or counselors. (see books by Unger and Koch).
 2. In 1972, *The Satan Seller* was published. It purports to be an account of a man (Mike Warnke) who was deep into a large, powerful Satanic cult that was described as conspiratorial in nature that reached into the upper echelons of society. He was converted to Christianity and escaped the cult with much difficulty. Later, he initiated a large ministry warning people about the occult. The book became a best-seller and is still in print. The book details the elaborate and bizarre rituals of this cult. The author warns that covens of this cult are in every community. (See Conclusion)
 3. In 1980, the book *Michelle Remembers* was published followed by *Satan's Underground* in '88. Both are accounts of women who came out of satanic cults and were alleged victims of ritual abuse.
 4. Due to the popularity of Books like Hal Lindsey's *Late, Great, Planet Earth*, large numbers of Christians became convinced that we were living in the last days and Satan worship would be the harbinger of the religion of the Beast and False Prophet spoken of in Revelation. The accounts given by SRA victims are exactly what some said would

happen. (Hence its believability).

5. Currently, SRA victims are receiving much publicity by talk-show hosts (both Christian and non-christian) all over the country. Also, it is a most popular subject of workshops, seminars, and support groups.

B. Reasons for the Phenomena: A better explanation

1. Police, private investigators, journalists and other researchers have yet to substantiate one authentic case of Satanic Ritual Abuse. This does not mean that none are, only that in every case so far, no proof was found to substantiate any of the accounts. We are also not denying the existence of occult groups or religions that engage in bizarre rituals. There are immigrant groups from Haiti and Cuba that sacrifice animals as part of their religious practice. There are also drug-crazed youths who go to extremes and commit ritual murder. What we are denying here is that there is evidence (currently) for a nation-wide devil-worshipping conspiracy.
2. There are better explanations to account for the stories of the victims that can be proved by experimental evidence. The SRA phenomenon is actually parallel to the stories of UFO abductions, and the past-lives stories. They arise when a certain personality profile meets a counselor or therapist with certain distinctive methods.

a. Victim profile

Almost 100% of the victims who seek counseling do so initially for eating disorders, depression, marital problems, etc. It is not until their *repressed memories* are recalled that they are treated for SRA. A typical victim of SRA is what researchers call a *Type Five Syndrome*. According to studies, one out of twelve Americans is susceptible to creating a memory out of the thin air! According to these studies, grade five persons share the following traits:

- (1) Compulsive compliance. They have an overwhelming urge to comply with someone suggesting a new or variant viewpoint.
- (2) Source amnesia. When a type five comes up with

information they are generally unable to recall where it came from.

- (3) Rationalization. It occurs when there is logical opposition to their viewpoint. They have highly empathetic abilities which makes them particularly vulnerable to introspective techniques. In addition, they are highly manipulative, try very hard to please, and are easily hypnotized into trance states. For a more complete explanation and list of documentation, see *The Grade Five Syndrome* by Jon Trott in *Cornerstone* vol. 12, issue 96.

b. Methodological aberration

- (1) The first and foremost ingredient is that the therapist agrees uncritically with the details of the abuse as described by the patient. In other words, he subscribes to the conspiracy theory.
- (2) Details are planted in the patient's mind; they then fill in the details. For example: a counselor might say something like *One of my other patients had this happen to her. Did this happen to you?* This is also called *cross-germinization*
- (3) Counselors use highly questionable techniques such as hypnotism, visualization, and meditation to get them to recall repressed memories.
- (4) According to recent studies, many counselors themselves are *Type Five* persons!

VI. Conclusion:

Evangelicals frequently give credence to the secular press who describe them as gullible fundamentalists. Remember: John Todd, Alberto, the rebuilding of the Temple, the whale that swallowed a man off the coast of South America, the discovery of Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant, the missing day of Joshua, Darwin's repentance, Soviets who drilled into Hell? All of the former have resulted in egg on the faces of evangelicals (some prominent) because in all of the above, there is not one scintilla of truth to any of these formerly sensational stories. In fact, new ones are constantly being invented. In recent

months, Mike Warnke's story in *The Satan Seller* has been proven to be a total fabrication. Bob Larson's entire ministry has been shown to be much less than represented (See *World*, Jan. 23, 1993). Whether or not there will be further repercussions in the press over the SRA phenomenon we can't predict. However, we feel we are safe in saying that there are hurting people out there (the alleged victims of SRA) who are not getting the help and support they really need. Christian credibility is being questioned from within and without. Satan is given more credit than he is due, and perhaps the greatest evil is the families that are being broken up by the false charges and the reputations that are being destroyed. There is also the possibility of an over-reaction that could result in cases of honest sexual abuse being overlooked.

VII. For Further Reading and Documentation

Journal of Psychology and Theology. Vol. 20, no. 3. entire issue is about SRA.

Christian Research Journal. Winter 1992. *Bold Facts about Satanic Ritual Abuse.*

Cornerstone. Vol. 20, no. 95. *Satanic Panic.*

Cornerstone. Vol. 20, No. 96. *The Grade Five Syndrome.* and *Interview with Sherrill Mulhern.*

Cornerstone. Vol. 18, no. 90. *The True Lauren Stratford Story.*

Child Abuse and Neglect. Vol 15, 1991. *Commentary of Ritual Abuse: A Law Enforcement View or Perspective.* The FBI report.