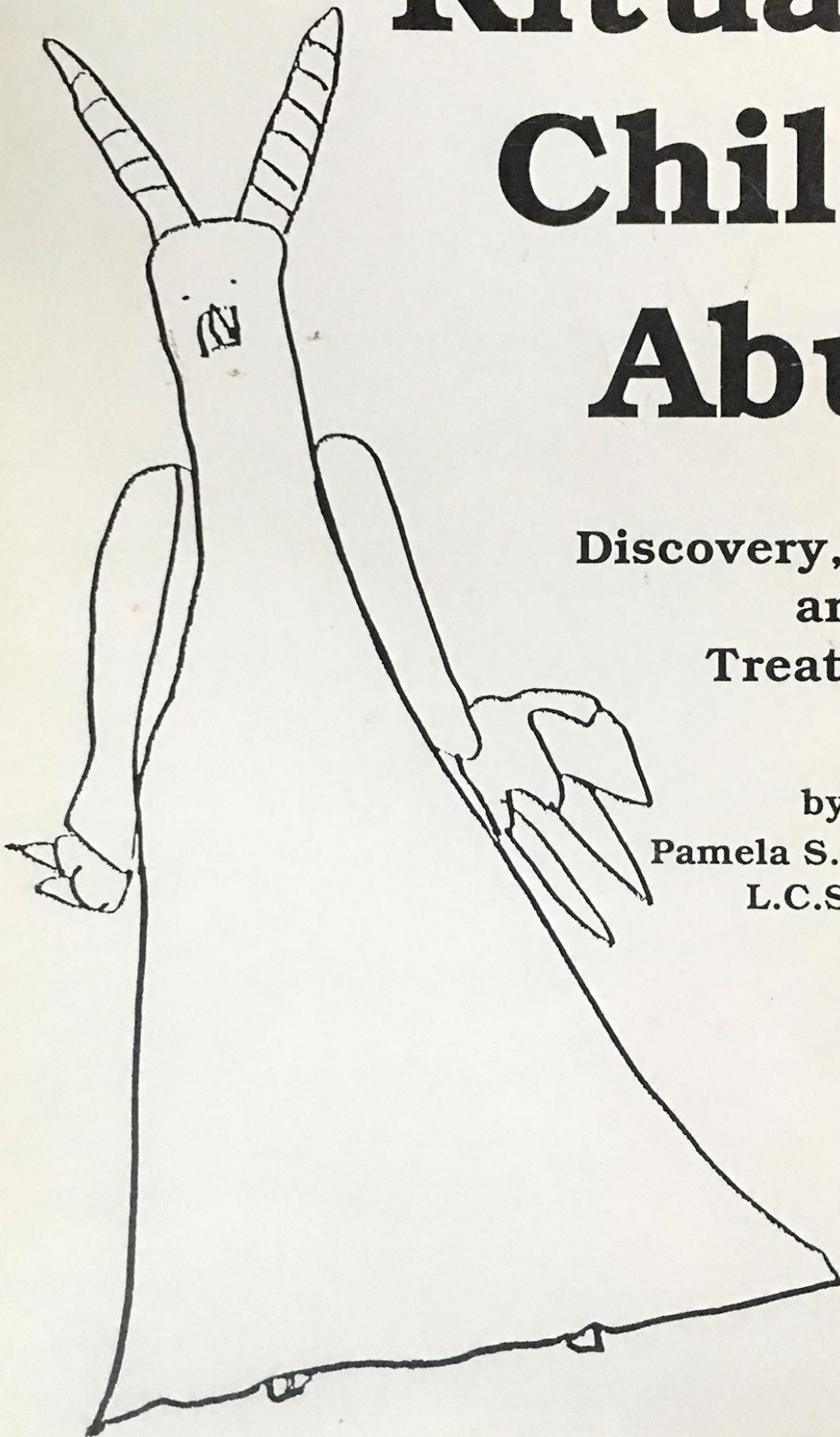


Ritual Child Abuse

Discovery, Diagnosis
and
Treatment

by
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RITUAL CHILD ABUSE: A SURVEY OF SYMPTOMS AND ALLEGATIONS

Starting late in 1984 and continuing through to the present time, I have been seeing both in my private practice, and also within my work as a child therapist for a public mental health agency, children who present a consistent picture of symptoms and allegations which are commensurate with the newest phenomenon in the field of child abuse, ritual child abuse. In discussing these cases with colleagues in the mental health profession, law enforcement, and children's protective service workers, I find that while these cases are unusual, they do exist and the fact that the media has devoted considerable attention to them for two years has encouraged other victims of ritual abuse to come forth. Consequently, we are likely to see more ritual abuse survivors in our caseloads, before the courts, and in foster homes. It seems that the mental health professional needs to develop a body of knowledge and effective treatment approaches to better prepare for the growing numbers of these victims. A necessary component of such knowledge is the willingness of professionals to share their work and openly discuss approaches to such cases. Greater dialogue between therapists and other disciplines working throughout the United States may be facilitated by the new professional organization, The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.

To further the data base, I conducted a telephone survey in April, 1988. This survey utilized my own sample population of twenty-four children to formulate the list of symptoms most frequently noted in these cases and the allegations or reports given by these children to either their parents or their therapists. I then telephoned parents whose names were

given to me by: a) private organization: Believe the Children, b) word of mouth, parent to parent, c) parents who heard of me and initiated a contact with me. No parent knew I was calling them beforehand and while some knew one another, they had no opportunity to compare responses before my telephone call. Except for my own sample, the data given was from the parent, not the child. Each case represents one child from a given day care center, or a child living with non-offending custodial parent (the offending non-custodial parent was identified by these children as the perpetrator), or, one case in which a private babysitter abused the child under her care. The fact that this sample does not include a case of a child living with offending parents is unfortunate because I am certain that this group comprises the largest population in our country and these children are in the gravest danger, not only for abuse, but for their lives. However, these parents are not likely to cooperate with this survey as it would leave them open to prosecution. As long as these children are captives, therapists cannot reach them. I have spoken with four adult survivors of ritual abuse who report that in the course of these rituals they observed or participated in the torture and killing of their own or other babies. These women were former Satanists who have since left that cult and are in therapy.

The average age of the children in this survey at the time of the abuse ranged from eighteen months to three-and-one-half. Today they range from four to fourteen, with an average lapse between last incident of abuse and today being eleven months to three years. Both boys and girls are represented among the victims. The families are comprised of families of one biological parent and one stepparent, two biological parents, and single-parent families.

An experienced child therapist will observe that all but one of the Symptom Clusters can generally be found in any sexually assaulted child. It is the combining of these symptoms

with the allegations which indicates the possibility of ritual abuse. The exceptional symptom in ritual abuse cases is the sudden eating disorder demonstrated by these children. Besides being revolted by meat, catsup, spaghetti and tomatoes (which resemble organs), I had a case of a twenty-month-old girl suddenly start to throw away her baby bottle. When she was older she said the perpetrator urinated into her baby bottle during his visits with her. Later, she spoke of witnessing the death of a baby girl. In my experience young children forced to perform fellatio can develop a refusal to swallow saliva, an easy gag reflex, and complain of abdominal pain.

The Fort Bragg case consists of twenty-four children seen and/or treated by myself. This population was found to present the following symptoms and allegations.

A. <u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Yes RSP*</u>
1. Acting out the sexual abuse	13/24
2. Sudden extreme fear of the bathroom, bathing, washing hair.	10/24
3. Nightmares; night-terrors.	12/24
4. High anxiety disorder, separation anxiety.	16/24
5. Temper tantrums; oppositional behavior.	12/24
B. <u>Allegations</u>	
1. Other children molested them.	11/24
2. Strangers, day care workers, parent.	11/24
C. <u>Reported Physical and Psychological Abuses</u>	13/24**
1. Was locked in a cage or "jail."	
2. Was told that their parents, pets or younger sibling would be killed if they told anyone of the abuse.	

3. Being buried in coffins in the ground which they called "boxes."
4. Being held underwater.
5. Being threatened with guns and knives.
6. Being injected with needles, bled, drugged.
7. Being photographed during the abuse.
8. Being tied upside down over a star, hung from a pole or hook, burnt with candles.
9. Report perpetrators wearing black robes, masks.
10. Report participating in mock marriage.
11. Report being defecated and urinated upon.
12. Observed animals killed.
13. Observed torture and molestation of other children (two children fainted during torture).
14. Report seeing children and babies killed. 4/24
15. Report having blood poured on their heads.
16. Were taken to churches, other day care settings, graveyards and peoples' homes for the ritual abuse.

* RSP indicates total number of respondents.

** Section "C", with the exception of item #14, shows 13 of the respondents reported one or more of the 16 forms of abuse.

We will now return to the attached National Survey* and its allegations. Items I and II are self-explanatory. What shall follow is an enlargement on the physical and psychological abuse described.

*See appendix

III. 1. **Cage**

10/11

The confinement theme seems to occur in rituals whether it be a closet or a cage such as that used to hold large dogs. Children in widely separated communities add that a lion was in the cage with them. Perhaps a domestic cat and/or sound effects played while the cage was draped convinced the three-year-old. The other possibility is that the child was given an hallucinogen, sound effects were utilized to stimulate their imaginations - while, of course, being told that there is a lion in the cage. Ritually abused children in Holland have also reported being put into a cage with a lion. However the "lion" turned out to be an adult wearing a lion costume. Small children did not notice the zippered costume, older children did. A former Satanic priestess explained to this writer that the heavier steel cage is used to hold the various victims sometimes as long as three days, while the cage with slender steel bars is used not only to confine the victim but it is the group's latrine. The child is urinated and defecated upon while caged. The West Point child could not stay in her crib because the bars caused her a flashback.

2. **Threats**

11/11

Children from widely separated communities all report being threatened with murder of themselves, their parents, pets even an unborn sibling if they revealed to anyone their ritual abuse. The McMartin child reported that her own pet cat was stolen and killed in her presence.

In the babysitter case the child was told that unless she kept silent, the family would disappear. The Gallup case child was threatened with his house being burned down. In the Presidio case, the child was not only threatened by the death of all his family, but also that of his mother's developing fetus. The Parent in coven (Washington) case had one child see his pet turtle killed, the other his pet hamster. The perpetrators warned them if they did

not get them another person would. So they were afraid to tell of their experiences.

3. **Buried alive in caskets, coffins, boxes**

6/11

The case of one Parent in a coven described being buried in a trunk then in a coffin with a rubber hose coming into it and a green tank at the other end. I am assuming that a box confinement occurred in the Campbell case. The Alabama child reported confinement in a closet and a casket. The Gallup Day Care case reported being confined in a large appliance packing crate and a freezer chest. The Presidio child said she was put inside a box. The Fort Bragg case added the fact that while in the freezer chest, her feet were emersed in ice cubes and ice was poured on her head.

4. **Water torture**

7/11

The Parent in coven child reported being held underwater with what sounds like catheter tubes placed in penis. The East Valley case in El Paso, Texas and the St. Cross Episcopal Day care child in Hermosa Beach, California, said they were held underwater in a backyard swimming pool. One child (Presidio case) reported being shoved head-first into the toilet bowl. Another implied being held under running water in the bathtub. The Fort Bragg, California, children speak about being placed in a cage which is lowered into the Pacific Ocean or having a sack put over their head and being submerged in a local boating pond. The McMartin case referred to being in a boat in a pool. The West Point child developed a fear of a toy or soap in the bathtub and said she was held underwater. The Campbell child refused baths and refused swimming classes.

5. **Threatened with guns or knives**

10/11

McMartin case parents stated "definitely" when asked about daughter reporting threats with guns or knives. The West Point Child became so fearful of guns she got up and left a wild west show. She stated she was threatened with both guns and knives. In the

Parent in coven case, both children speak of guns and daggers. Gallup child, St. Cross, Presidio and Fort Bragg children all report threats with guns and knives. The Campbell child is very young, but since her experience he has become obsessed with killing and plays killing games using both toy weapons. One child tried to stab their younger brother with a knife. Fort Bragg children report both weapons were either held to their head or fired over their heads.

6. **Injected with drugs**

10/11

McMartin child has scars on her knees and eyebrows from injections. The West Point child reports observing shots given to others and a dog was bled to death. The Campbell child reports shots given in anus, groin and buttocks. The Parent in coven, two boys, report being injected in hands, in ankles, and blood drained from wrists. The Alabama case reports being drugged with Kool-Aid, but no shots. The Gallup child reported drugs administered with Q-tips soaked in some chemical and then placed in the corner of their eyes, also a syringe used under their tongue. The St. Cross child stated she was injected in her "bottom," her thumb and vagina. The Presidio child said he was cut so blood would come out of his mouth and a pencil was inserted into his bottom (anus). The Fort Bragg children reported needles both to bleed them and inject them. Areas generally reported were groin, between toes, scrotum. They too, reported that pencils were inserted into their anus. Some children witnessed these procedures. One girl fainted during a bleeding. The children were told she was being taken to the hospital, but the hospital has no record of treating her. The Parent in coven children reported observing people whose legs were cut off bleed to death.

7. **Filming and Photography**

11/11

The Parent in coven boy had to pose in the nude for numerous pictures, some taken while he was being sodomized by cult leader. His buttocks were a frequent subject for films.

The McMartin child reports being both video taped and still photographed as do those from Fort Bragg, Oregon and Campbell. The West Point child appears programmed to "pose sexy." Whenever a particular form of music comes on the radio, she strikes pornographic poses. Clearly the act of filming the rituals, sexual activities and tortures is characteristic of this form of abuse. One Fort Bragg child immediately regressed and became agitated when his picture was taken on his first day of school.

8. **Hung from hooks, tied, placed in closets, spread-eagled over pentagrams, tied to upside-down crosses.**

7/11

The McMartin and St. Cross children report being tied, the former put into a closet, the latter hung from a cross. Parent in coven and the Fort Bragg children report being tied and strung up from hooks or poles. The Fort Bragg children report observing others being hung and one child fainting. The Oregon child said one child in the Gallup Christian Day Care would be tied, drugged and placed in the middle of a fringed carpet with a cobra design in the center. The other children had to sit around in a circle and either sing or chant while staring at the drugged child who was said to be dead. When the day care operator revived the child, he brought him/her "back from the dead." The very young child in the Babysitter case plays bondage games.

9. **Abusers wore masks and robes, carried candles**

11/11

Besides wearing black robes, the West Point child reported that some men wore women's wigs. The Alabama child called the abuser a scary monster with a devil face. The Babysitter child described black robes lined in red tied with a purple rope. The child in Texas describes robes and devil faces, as do the children in the Oregon case. The Campbell child, Presidio child and Fort Bragg children describe perpetrators wearing black robes and masks like that of an animal such as a cat. The Fort Bragg child said, "They wore robes and

their beauties were hanging out." Beauties is her word for breasts. Besides the robed/masked people there were children who showed symptoms of being terrified of policemen, doctors and Santa Claus. It is obvious that the perpetrators tried to destroy the child's trust in law enforcement and the medical community. One McMartin child said the judge was there. My belief is that perpetrators don costumes of society's authority figures or children's heros, then abuse the child to condition them to mistrust or fear these people. The result is agitation/anxiety around Christmas time and noncooperation during investigation or trial.

10. **Mock Marriages**

6/11

The West Point child, Campbell child and Fort Bragg child reported being dressed in a princess costume and being "married" in a ceremony to little boys. The Fort Bragg child said she was the Princess of Darkness and married the Prince of Light (the boy corroborated her story). The Campbell child continues to talk about her "Princess Power" experience. The Campbell child speaks of a box full of costumes which the adults made them put on then photographed them in various poses. The West Point child experienced a flashback during her first holy communion. When she put on her veil, she immediately regressed into infantile baby talk and became agitated and fearful. This ceremony apparently dedicates the children to one another, possibly in the name of Satan. It is followed by a procedure which no child has yet been able to recall or describe. When these children actually get married in adulthood, perhaps they will either recall the events surrounding this ceremony or become phobic against marriage rituals of any sort. Hopefully, therapy will alleviate a crisis at this point in their lives.

11. **Defecated, urinated upon, forced to ingest both**

10/11

Gallup child reports having to drink a "pee" punch. The McMartin child consumed

the "devils's round." The Washington children said feces was smeared on them, they were urinated upon, had to drink/eat both, and urine/feces was injected into them. The Campbell child said she had to drink her pee and eat her "poo." If she refused, the woman who called herself a witch spit in her face, pinched her all over and said, "You won't be going home to your mother. Your mother is mean and we'll kill her." The Fort Bragg children spoke of having to lie down while the perpetrator stood above them, legs spread apart and defecated into their mouth. Other children said it was mixed into their day care hot food. A Santa Rosa, California, child, not included in this survey, reported the perpetrators said something to the effect that "God is good, God made shit, so it must be good" while forcing her to swallow feces. There was a higher than average incidence of encopresis among those children seen from the Fort Bragg day care setting which may mean withholding defecating to prevent the painful event of having to eat it. This area deserves further research with ritual abuse survivors. The net effect is the degradation or humiliation of the victim. The children feel dirty inside. Because this abuse occurs at the age children are trying to establish bowel and bladder control, it has a potent effect on their personality development.

12. **Observed animals tortured and killed**

10/11

The West Point child reports observing a dog electrocuted to death. The Fort Bragg children speak of a dog burned either with a cigarette or cattle prod. "Maybe this will make you think," is supposedly what the day care operator said to the children who watched her torture the dog. One boy said he and a puppy hung together. The puppy strangled. Manhattan Beach case described rabbits and birds being killed. The Gallup child talks about being forced to view the torture and killing of cows, horses, elk, chickens and rabbits. The Presidio child speaks of a cat being killed. The McMartin child, spoke of the perpetrators first poking nails or pencils into the rabbit or cat's eyes, then cutting off legs,

then cutting the throat to bleed the animal, also cutting the chest cavity. One Fort Bragg child would go about his home sticking pencils into the eyes of people whose photographs were about the house.

13. **Fake Operations**

6/11

Washington children were "operated" upon and told that the perpetrators placed a box with teeth inside from which a ghost will escape and kill all their relatives should they ever tell anyone what happened to them. The Gallup child was told by a "doctor" that he put something inside her heart. The St. Cross child was told that there is a bomb implanted inside of her which will cause her to blow up if she told, also that her heart and brain were switched. The Presidio child, while not disclosing an operation, seems fearful of snakes, possibly being inside of her. A Fort Bragg case reported his heart had been removed or replaced by the day care operator.

14. **Child describes the torture and sexual assault of others or of themselves.**

10/11

The majority of the cases described either being sexually assaulted themselves and/or observing this happen to other children. The children were also expected to mutually masturbate or pretend to penetrate one another. Earlier in this paper I have described children witnessing other children being bled or hung by feet or wrists until they fainted. One Fort Bragg child was "cooked" in hot water. This may have been a hot tub, however, the psychological effect upon the victim and the observers is that the omnipotent day care operator would cook you if she willed it. The West Point child described seeing adults tied with wires to trees and then burned to death. Her parents later found a tree, partly burned with electric cables around its trunk.

15. **Evidential medical examinations:**

Findings commensurate with sexual assault

11/11

All the children showed scarring both vaginal and/or rectal. This finding indicates that sexual assault has occurred in all eleven cases. Although this factor is a symptom and not an allegation, it was more comfortable for parents to answer this question at this point in the survey.

16. **Babies, small children killed,
carved up and parts eaten**

9/11

This allegation generally reduces the credibility of those cases being presented in courts; however, it seems to be a common event in ritual abuse cases. Each child describes variations on the theme and few will admit to eating human flesh themselves, but several talk of the ritual sacrifice of babies and children. The children whose non-custodial parent had them for awhile describe adults being bled, carved up, parts eaten and the rest burned. They also reported witnessing a woman give birth at a meeting and the newborn was ritualistically sacrificed. The McMartin child speaks of seeing babies' eyes cut out, the bodies burned in a crematorium and showed her parent the crematorium. The West Point child mentioned seeing the burning of live people. The Oregon child describes observing a baby ritualistically killed and buried in a shoebox. She said its parents were crying. Presidio child spoke of a black baby killed. St. Cross child said that the baby was boiled, hung on a cross and cut. Fort Bragg cases described viewing the killing of about four children, none of whom were known to the children. They included a "brown baby and a peach baby," a "little fella," and a small girl named "Tessie." The children said these children were talking, walking, or crying prior and during their murders which were generally that of being cut open. One Fort Bragg child showed me how the day care operator's hand over

her own made her push the knife into the baby's chest. This child worries that one day she will go to jail for murder. Another child told me that the day care operator "steals kids." Several Fort Bragg children developed eating disorders. This could be due to the trauma observing the taking of human or animal life and watching others eat the flesh; or, it could be due to the fact that they had to both participate in the killings and to consume part of the sacrificial victim.

17. **Children report being transported elsewhere
for abuse, various methods of transport**

10/11

Two cases, Campbell and Fort Bragg, report that the children were told they were being taken to Disneyland where, it turns out, they were abused. I showed a series of photographs of Disneyland to one Fort Bragg child who immediately identified that as the actual Disneyland, not the place she was taken, which the perpetrators called Disneyland. One so-called Disneyland site was underground. Another title perpetrators gave locations for abuse or ceremonies included the "haunted house." I believe these titles are disinformation designed to discredit the small child's story. It would be commensurate with their abuse for perpetrators to tell preschool children they were being taken to Sesame Street, Alice in Wonderland, the Wizard of Oz, Santa's North Pole and a magic castle. The actual setting is more likely a house, deserted barn or building, church, apartment, cave or unused military building. Adults who survived ritual abuse have told this writer of being taken by every mode of transportation, except helicopter or submarine, to ritual sites. In this survey four reported transportation by airplane, three by boat, two by submarines, two by helicopter, one by a jet. Before we dismiss the less likely modes, e.g. jet, helicopter and submarine, consider the simplicity of placing toddlers inside a box or cage, draping it and placing them into a moving vehicle, then telling them it is a helicopter or submarine. Again.

the more outrageous their story, the less likely they will be believed. One Fort Bragg boy called it a space ship.

18. **Being taken to churches, other day care centers, graveyards and sexually assaulted or terrorized**

10/11

Four reported being taken to "other schools" i.e. day care centers, (McMartin, West Point, Gallup Day Care, Fort Bragg). One, McMartin, stated she went inside a crematorium. Five said they went to churches (Campbell, Alabama, Gallup, St. Cross, Fort Bragg). Two reported being taken to graveyards where "bodies were dug up." (Parent in coven and Fort Bragg). Events described by the children include having "white stuff squirted on her" (Campbell) to being sexually assaulted beneath a painting entitled "Jesus Knocking on the Door to Your Heart (Gallup)." One Fort Bragg boy was taken by his parent to a catholic church after he started disclosing his experiences. He screamed and bolted from the sanctuary when the priest lifted the holy wafer and blessed it in preparation for communion. Two Fort Bragg children described being taken to see dead bodies, one reports being placed into a coffin with the lid lowered.

While not necessarily true, ritual abuse seems to occur in day care centers which purport to be Christian. Apparently, these perpetrators will lease the day care buildings and use the nearby church which is generally empty during the weekday. The Gallup Christian Day Care, St. Cross Episcopal Day Care, Fort Bragg Day Care and YMCA in El Paso, Texas, presented themselves as Christian-oriented operations. Parents in Fort Bragg were reassured by the fact that the day care operators had Bible study meetings on Saturday nights. The unaware parent believes that if a day care is associated with a Christian church or calls itself Christian, it is actually Christian. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing beforehand whether the care providers are benevolent or malevolent. Some Satanists

deliberately use Christian settings.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Judging by the data there is a profile of both symptoms and allegations of those children who are ritual abuse survivors. While this sample is only eleven, all the children presented a post-traumatic stress syndrome as evidenced by severe separation anxiety, fear of starting school, avoidance of their own bed, refusal to sleep alone, and fear of the dark. The next largest category of symptoms are night terrors, night sweats, extreme fear of the bathroom, bathing, rain, hyperaggressiveness, and an eating disorder. Vomiting and somatic symptoms occurred in eight of the eleven cases. With regard to the allegations, all the cases spoke of being sexually molested by adult strangers or day care workers, being threatened with murder if they revealed the abuse, being photographed during the abuse, abusers wearing robes and sometimes masks, and all had medical findings commensurate with sexual assault. The cage torture, guns, knives, injections, being both defecated and urinated upon, observation of animals killed, other children tortured, being taken off day care grounds for abuse occurred in ten out of eleven cases. Group sex and small children killed was described in nine of the eleven cases. Over half of the eleven described being buried alive or confined in boxes, being held underwater, being hung on a cross or spread over a pentagram, participated in mock marriage, and given fake operations.

The consistency in these findings taken from cases across the nation suggest a predictable pattern in ritual abuse. We are compelled to wonder about a conspiracy among either the perpetrators or among the toddlers. The author believes that children who present these symptoms together with the allegations are likely to have been ritualistically abused. If the abusers wore black robes and chanted "Hail Satan!" the abuse is likely to

have been perpetrated by Satanists.

Rather than try to understand the way these effects are produced or where, when, and whether the multiple perpetrators managed to commit these crimes, the therapist should focus on the child/parent/family trauma. No other child abuse case will demand as much from a clinician than that of a ritual abuse case. The child will be unpredictable, possibly responding to programmed cues and behaviors which are unknown to the parent or therapist.¹ The father and mother will experience rage, grief, fear and mistrust of any person trying to treat their child. The family will be filled with schisms between parents, between siblings (the abused vs. the non-abused), between child and parent. Such schisms will often occur between the clinician and his/her employer or agency. Those therapists, officers and child protection workers who believe the children are isolated and sometimes ostracized by their administrators. Even newspaper reporters who present this topic to the reading public will notice themselves being shunned and their work "watered down" so the public can cope with it. This watering down effort is deliberate with certain district attorneys who would rather the victims minimized the rituals, tortures both physical and psychological, and the reports of animal and human sacrifice. In one case the parents have decided to not even give details of the rituals to their district attorney for fear he will not prosecute the case.

A word about two other types of ritual abuse clients, both interviewed by the writer. Teenagers involved with the occult and Satanism are distinguished by their dramatic methods of attempted suicide e.g. setting fire to themselves or slicing their own throat. And, their second more outstanding characteristic is their fantasies of killing their parents or another

¹Renner, Tanya, Brainwashing in Ritual Abuse, P.O. Box 3470, Berkeley, California 94703. Unpublished.