

Satan's Excellent Adventure in the Antipodes (New Zealand)

Contributed by Michael Hill
 Friday, 01 January 1999
 Last Updated Sunday, 08 October 2006

This text was originally published online at: <http://www.globe.net.nz/~gweir/adventure.htm> by Michael Hill, Professor of Sociology, Victoria University of Wellington ©

I preface this paper with a quote from a seventeenth century sceptic who was responsible for bringing an end to a witch-hunt:

"I have observed that there were neither witches nor bewitched in a village until they were talked and written about."
 (Alonso de Salazar, quoted in Geis and Bunn, 1991:41-42)

In the latter part of the 1980s, first in Australia and subsequently in New Zealand, there was a mounting panic about alleged satanic activity. The activities that were claimed to be performed by satanic cults involved horrifying rituals in which children were said to be sexually abused, tortured, murdered, cannibalised, and even bred for use in these gothic practices. Belief in the existence of such cults spread not only among Christian fundamentalists but also among secular professionals, especially those involved in social work and counselling. To date there is no physical corroboration of the atrocities allegedly perpetrated by these satanists. What I hope to do in this paper is to show how these claims originated and how they were disseminated in this part of the world. To do this I need to examine the role played by a key network of American claims-makers who brought the Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) scenario to Australia, and later to New Zealand: I will examine the contorted logic that often accompanied the claims. Then I will show how local "experts" took the scenario further, sometimes with disturbing results.

I will preface this account with two important qualifiers. First, there is no intention in what follows to question the existence of child abuse, which has been increasingly recognised as a problem of considerable proportions since the recognition of a "battered child syndrome" in 1962 (Best, 1990). Quite the contrary, my concern over alleged SRA is partly motivated by concern that the pursuit of a mythical form of child abuse diverts resources from the genuine cases. Second, there is no disputing the existence of people who label themselves satanists: there were just over 900 of them in the 1996 New Zealand census. But as Jean La Fontaine points out in her study of the British allegations, published this year, "the existence of satanists does not prove that they abuse children in these rituals; it merely means that care must constantly be taken to emphasise that the actual practices of occultists, witches and satanists are different from what is being recounted as satanic abuse" (La Fontaine, 1998:41). Her own work (La Fontaine, 1994; 1998), the firm conclusions of an FBI specialist in sexual abuse (Lanning, 1992), and the results of a very large study in the United States (Goodman, 1994) all amount to the same result: "no bodies, no bones, no bloodstains, nothing" (Waterhouse 1990).

Satan's Arrival In North America

Though there are a variety of historical antecedents to the satanism scare, the year of its origin can be established fairly precisely as 1980. The publication of two very different books in that year laid the basis for an escalation of claims about satanic ritual abuse throughout the 1980s. The first was a book called *Michelle Remembers*, by a claimed "survivor" of SRA, Michelle Smith, and her therapist - later husband - Lawrence Pazder. In it Michelle recalls as a five-year-old

"... being tortured in houses, mausoleums, and cemeteries, being raped and sodomised with candles, being forced to defecate on a Bible and crucifix, witnessing babies and adults butchered, spending hours naked in a snake-filled cage, and having a devil's tail and horns surgically attached to her"
 (Nathan and Snedeker, 1995:45).

At one point in the account there is a personal appearance of the Devil, complete with tail, and when Jesus and Mary emerge to give support to the victim, there is an epic battle with sound effects between the forces of good and evil. Michelle's Christian faith finally defeats the satanists, who release her, whereupon she completely forgets her experiences until 20 years later when she is in therapy with Dr Pazder. However, there has been no verification of these events, and it has been discovered that the alleged victim was attending school regularly, and was even photographed for the school yearbook, at a time when she was supposedly locked in a basement for months. Pazder had an interest in exorcism and had studied West African witchcraft rituals, some of which involved being buried in a pit: it is worth noting that burial or entombment was to become one of the frequently reported components of the SRA scenario. The book was a best-seller and it was not long before other women began to recover "memories" of similar satanic events. Incidentally, it was Pazder in 1981 who coined the term "ritual abuse" (Nathan and Snedeker:50).

The other publication in 1980 that contributed to the satanism scare was the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical

Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSMIII) which for the first time included the categories of 'Multiple Personality Disorder' - later to be relabelled Dissociative Identity Disorder - and 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder'. These were to become the most common diagnoses applied to those thought to have been the victims of satanic abuse, and very soon a group of prominent American psychiatrists who specialised in hypnotism had established an organisation to advance the treatment of Multiple Personality and Dissociation. Its spread has been described to me as very like a process of pyramid selling (Sherrill Mulhern, personal communication). In this way a phenomenon which had initially been the preserve of fundamentalist Christians began to be validated by a group of secular professionals.

Pazder's influence was soon to be exercised in raising the satanism scenario in one of the most notorious investigations and trials in America, centring on the McMartin Preschool. This case has been much discussed and I only want to review the details briefly, but it laid the foundation for a network of claims-makers which was to have a major influence on the satanic panic in Australia and New Zealand. In 1983 the mother of a boy who was attending the preschool began to complain that he was being sexually abused and she accused the only male worker at the establishment. The school's property was searched for pornography and other relevant evidence, but without success. After the police alerted 200 parents of preschool children to the possibility that abuse may have occurred, more elaborate stories began to be told by the children - and despite many denials by the children themselves the investigation continued. It is at this point that the network of influential investigators began to form.

Two central figures in the group were social worker and interviewer Kee MacFarlane and psychiatrist Roland Summit. MacFarlane was working at the Children's Institute International, a non-profit child abuse facility. Aware of the problems of interviewing small children she introduced novel procedures, such as using hand puppets in the interviews, wearing colourful clothes, and making use of anatomically correct dolls. Given the growing interest in Multiple Personality and ritual abuse, children were told that if they did not remember incidents at the preschool this was because they were dissociating, and that the job of the interviewers was to help them remember. This led to a form of insistent interviewing, in which denials of abuse by children were discounted in the search for 'truths' which the interviewers believed were being suppressed. The original mother's complaints became increasingly bizarre and improbable but they were taken literally by police and therapists, who failed to notice their delusional nature: in fact, the mother was eventually diagnosed as paranoid-schizophrenic and died shortly afterwards from alcohol poisoning. The significance of this will be considered later.

Roland Summit's ideas provided a pseudo-scientific rationale which underpinned the approach taken by the investigators. He had written a 1978 paper outlining what he termed "The Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome". In that paper he argued that children never fabricated accounts of sexual abuse and thus were to be believed when they disclosed them, regardless of how incredible their accounts were. However, children who had been victims of incest would often recant in order, as he claimed, to maintain family equilibrium. Here were two components which were to be reiterated by many of those involved in subsequent investigations, and they became enshrined as dogma in the phrase 'Believe the Children' - and in the maxim that children never lie about sexual abuse unless they are recanting. Because of this it is extremely important to note that Summit's supposedly scientifically-phrased 'Syndrome' was based on no research, being in his own words "impressionistic". For the twelve years before he constructed the 'Syndrome' he had done no therapy with children under 7, and even then the children were not in treatment for sexual abuse (Nathan and Snedeker:145). This is very important, because Summit's 'Syndrome' was subsequently asserted in legal proceedings as a way of dismissing children's denials of abuse.

As a major protagonist in the satanism scare, it is also worth examining Summit's use of logic when faced with the possible unreliability of a claim. For instance, Summit has both denied that the complainant mother in the McMartin case was mentally unbalanced when she made her allegations, but simultaneously argued that mental instability is a pre-requisite for the recognition of child abuse:

Eccentric, alienated, unsocialized and paranoid personality types are needed to ferret out allegations of child sex abuse in the face of lack of evidence and conventional, well-socialised parents and professionals (who reinforce denial for their own mutual belief)...It takes somebody paranoid to continue to express suspicion and to take the child from doctor to doctor until somebody confirms that maybe there is abuse (Summit, quoted in Earl, 1995:90-91)

In a further piece of innuendo, Summit has alleged that the mother's paranoia may not have been delusional but the result of 'menacing strangers [presumably the perpetrators] who patrolled her yard' (Earl:90). Similarly, in the face of considerable investigation and evidence to the contrary, Summit has continued to insist - in line with his fervent belief in SRA - that there were tunnels underneath the McMartin playschool (Summit, 1994)

Two other figures who were involved in the McMartin case, one of whom has considerable importance in New Zealand, are David Finkelhor and Astrid Heger. Finkelhor gathered evidence of day-care cases throughout the country between 1983 and 1985, finding some three dozen ritual abuse scandals. No attempt was made to evaluate the reliability of the allegations involved and the study simply assumed that all were valid, even if no arrest or conviction arose from a case. And given the mounting hysteria about this newly discovered phenomenon, it is not surprising that this number of

allegations had arisen. It was Finkelhor, a sociologist with a conservative attitude to sexual relationships, who disseminated the notion of multiple victim, multiple perpetrator abuse: this was to figure prominently in other child-care investigations, and when his jointly written book *Nursery Crimes* eventually appeared in 1988 it became 'a Bible for ritual abuse believers' (Nathan and Snedeker: 132)

The book's introduction begins with a discussion of the McMartin case, and sceptical reviewers immediately sensed its potential to fuel the satanic panic. In the opinion of one of these:

This is a truly remarkable book, primarily because of the monumental irresponsibility of the authors, who have taken public monies...and used it [sic] to compile statistics based on nothing more than opinions of a few beleaguered investigators. The wasted money will be the least of it, however, for this book promises to do much harm. (Coleman, 1989:46)

Though his previous research into child abuse might have made him sceptical of the large percentage of women among those accused in this new form of child abuse, he disposed of this problem by arguing that a new type of woman had emerged from the sexual revolution of the 1960s - one that was so obsessed with power and control that dominating men was no longer adequate: the "mortification" of innocent children was now the goal (Nathan and Snedeker:133). It is more than a little curious that Finkelhor became a champion of the SRA scenario which was to be taken up so enthusiastically by some radical feminists.

Dr Astrid Heger was the fourth McMartin investigator to popularise a diagnostic technique which became influential in other parts of the world. In particular, under the tutelage of her colleague Bruce Woodling (Nathan and Snedeker:78), her investigation of children's genitals, and especially her belief that sexual abuse could be detected by the size and shape of young girls' hymens became an abuse indicator in the Christchurch child abuse investigation at the Glenelg Health Camp, while the related 'anal wink' or dilation test which was supposed to indicate molestation triggered a major sexual abuse investigation in Cleveland, Britain, in 1987 (Pendergrast, 1998:413-414). Evidence gradually accumulated to show that these alleged stigmata of child sexual abuse were meaningless, and although Heger was aware of these studies she still persisted in maintaining her original diagnoses when the McMartin case came to trial in 1987 (Nathan and Snedeker:197-8)

By the time the case came to trial charges had been dropped against five women defendants, and after a 28-month trial (the longest criminal proceeding in American history) there was an acquittal of the remaining woman defendant and not-guilty and hung verdicts for the remaining male defendant. There was also a hung jury at the second trial and the charges were finally dismissed, allowing the male defendant to be released from jail after a five-year imprisonment (Nathan and Snedeker: 92). Despite this outcome, the satanic claims-makers have continued to insist on the reality of the McMartin abuse, and subsequent allegations have closely paralleled the McMartin pattern.

Two other American figures, both social workers, were to have a significant impact on the dissemination of the satanism scenario. First, Pamela Klein, a rape crisis worker from Illinois, drew up a set of "satanic indicators" which included such symptoms as bed wetting, nightmares, fear of monsters and ghosts, and a preoccupation with faeces, urine and flatulence: these were to feature in a number of subsequent investigations of alleged satanism in several countries. Her credentials had been questioned by an Illinois judge, who stated that she was "not a legitimate therapist" and was not licensed to practise (Pope, 1991). In July 1985 she settled in Britain and was very influential in generating a network of satanic claims-makers through her contributions to conferences and seminars, including one involving senior police officers. Among her early associates was Ray Wyre, who introduced the satanic dimension to the Nottingham child abuse investigation: he was later to make four lecture tours of Australia, the most recent in July this year. As we will see, Klein was also influential in New Zealand.

Pamela Hudson is the other key figure. She too produced a list of satanic symptoms and forms of abuse which had wide distribution among abuse workers. Of particular importance was her list of 16 reported forms of physical and psychological abuse. These included being locked in a cage, being buried in the ground in a coffin or box, being tied upside down or hung from a pole or hook, participating in a mock marriage, seeing children or babies killed, having blood poured over them, and being taken to churches and graveyards for ritual abuse. Hudson had a particular interest in the robes and masks which perpetrators were alleged to wear, and the cover of her book, which received wide circulation, shows just such an image which a child had supposedly drawn (Hudson, 1991). As Jean La Fontaine has pointed out, 'it looks more like a cross between a ghost and a Ku Klux Klan figure' (La Fontaine, 1998:54)

Satan Migrates To The Antipodes

In August 1986 Australia was host to the largest child abuse conference in its history, the Sixth International Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. It was held in Sydney and was attended by Summit, MacFarlane, Heger and Finkelhor, all of whom gave addresses about their work: and MacFarlane was invited to conduct a further workshop after the conference for the benefit of local child abuse experts (Guilliatt: 29). Summit was to exercise 'great sway over the NSW Child Protection Council' (Guilliatt, personal communication) and revisited Australia in 1984. Prominent members of Australia's child abuse agencies participated in the week-long conference. There are fascinating links and parallels between the McMartin case and the first allegations of satanic involvement in Australia.

In October 1988 a woman reported to police her suspicion that her 3-year-old daughter was being abused at her day-care centre by a man named 'Mr Bubbles'. The mother had also contacted other parents and expressed her suspicions about the day-care centre, and in the ensuing interviews with police and social workers children attending the day-care centre 'claimed they had been abducted, given drugs, assaulted with knives, hammers and pins, sexually abused, filmed for pornographic movies and forced to watch animal sacrifices and satanic rituals' (Guilliatt:31). The link between this investigation and the earlier McMartin one is provided by a note in police files containing the McMartin address, and the parallels are striking. It later became apparent that the mother who initially complained to the police was psychotic; in both cases a children's game was investigated as a possible case of ritualised sex; and the medical examination of the children included a search for anal and genital stigmata of the type Heger had relied on. Another feature which would appear elsewhere was that some of the parents began to present those investigating the case with publications on ritual abuse. When a case did come to court in August 1989 it was dismissed by the magistrate on the grounds that the children's testimony 'had been contaminated by excessive and leading questioning by police and parents' (Guilliatt:35).

Also involved in interviewing some of the children in the 'Mr Bubbles' case was a Sydney psychiatrist, Dr Anne Schlebaum. She was called in after the children had made their allegations, and she fervently believed their occult stories and reports of animal killing. After the case was dismissed she continued to be a 'tireless proponent of the theory that satanic ritual abuse was tied up with a major international criminal conspiracy' (Guilliatt:89). Her beliefs were further developed in a speech she made to the November 1990 conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Psychology, Psychiatry and Law, when she proclaimed:

Satanists all around the world are reported to have declared the eighties "The Decade of the Destruction of Innocence" ... an horrendous reversal after the goodwill and progress of the International Year of the Child in 1979 (quoted in Guilliatt:90).

Her speech was titled 'Nursery Crimes - A Perfect Little Holocaust in the Suburbs', showing the affinity of her claims with the work of Finkelhor. Schlebaum has continued to investigate alleged cases and give seminars on SRA, and her most recent involvement will be discussed shortly.

The 'Mr Bubbles' case generated a great deal of media attention and within a short period of time police in Western Australia, Victoria, the ACT, Queensland and New South Wales were investigating allegations of bizarre satanic cult crimes involving sexual abuse of children, the sacrifice of humans and animals, rituals in which blood was consumed, and black mass rituals. Among specific allegations were those that could be found on the lists of satanic 'indicators' which had been devised by American 'experts' - children being locked in coffins became one of the common claims in a number of investigations.

One of the most substantial satanic cases to emerge in Australia was one which began with the arrest in October 1993 in Bunbury, Western Australia of a devout retired Baptist headmaster. His two daughters had begun recalling memories of ritual abuse involving their father and others during repeated therapy since the late 1980s. Allegations included a variety of sadistic tortures including being tied up and suspended in the air naked, and being assaulted with knives, scissors, screwdrivers, and an electric drill. Rituals also involved a circle of participants. One of the several therapists involved, John Manners, worked for a psychotherapy practice called Christian Psychological Services (Guilliatt:58) and held views on memory recovery which may help to explain his role in the Bunbury case. In one interview he is quoted as saying

"In reality the details of the trauma are more accurate if they've been repressed and brought back" (Who Weekly, 19/12/94:69).

Thus it is not difficult to understand why Manners should state that he had no intention of following the Australian Psychological Society's new guidelines on repressed memory, which stipulate the need for outside corroboration of such memories. The Bunbury case ended in December 1994 with a mixture of not guilty and undecided verdicts on the 42 charges faced by the accused (Guilliatt:216).

What is of considerable interest in the Australian dissemination of the satanic scenario, and something which will also be found in New Zealand, is the part played by publicly funded agencies. The network of agencies propagating SRA which are linked with Sydney's Dymnna House, which is 'one of NSW's best funded government sexual assault services' (Guilliatt:157), shows the extent of influence of this belief. There is not space to trace them fully in this paper, but they have been investigated in detail (Guilliatt). Similarly, in 1993 and 1994 two editions of a pamphlet on 'Ritual Abuse: Information for Health and Welfare Professionals' were published by the NSW Sexual Assault Committee, which is a subsidiary of the Ministry for the Status and Advancement of Women. Among other sources the booklet quotes the work of Summit, Finkelhor, Hudson, and a 1991 publication of the Los Angeles County Commission for Women on 'Ritual Abuse' (Los Angeles, 1991): the same sources were to become the basis for satanic claims across the Tasman.

Finally, in examining the penetration of the SRA scenario into the highest levels of decision-making in Australia, the role

of Dr Anne Schlebaum is once again apparent. Schlebaum has been a central figure in a very recent - and in many ways quite the most extraordinary - case involving an adult survivor. After the NSW Police Royal Commission (The Wood Commission) found evidence of paedophile networks producing child pornography, but not of the involvement of satanic cults, allegations began to be made by those closest to the satanic scenario of a cover-up, especially in relation to alleged paedophiles in high political and judicial office. Prominent among those alleging a cover-up was an MP in the Upper House of the NSW Parliament, Mrs Franca Arena, who is strongly supported and advised by Schlebaum and another satan-hunting psychiatrist Dr Jean Lennane. In late 1997 Arena alleged that there was a major suppression of evidence about paedophiles and that this had been orchestrated by the NSW Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and Justice Wood of the Royal Commission. In response, in October last year, an inquiry was set up (the Nader Inquiry) to investigate her claims. Despite the appearance before the inquiry of an alleged adult 'survivor' of satanic abuse, the inquiry concluded that Arena had no evidence of such a cover-up and had essentially used parliamentary privilege to launch a malicious campaign. Indeed, it was precisely the evidence of the satanic 'survivor' - claiming incidents which were alleged to have happened between the ages of 3 and 11 and recalled when she was aged 24 in 1992 - which had been given to Arena by the psychiatrist who was treating this person, which served to undermine the MP's credibility.

In a Privilege Committee hearing in March 1998 Arena was questioned at great length on the credibility of the satanic 'survivor' and on the reliability of the therapist. In her evidence to the Committee she asserted that she relied a great deal on the advice of the therapist to validate the so-called survivor's claims. In view of this, it is important to examine just what it was that was being alleged. Here are two extracts from the statement of the 'survivor':

"Judge B then dragged me downstairs to the basement. There were bodies strung up around the walls. He took me around to all the dead men and made me suck all the blood off their penises. I was later taken to the furnace room where they had a big incinerator and a stainless steel table where they were burning all the bodies. They quite often burned bodies there. There was a pipe which went to the outside of the building and up past the roof level. It made me sick whenever I saw smoke pouring out of it because I knew they were burning some bodies (NSW, 1998:88).

and again:

My mother grabbed me by the hair and shoved a penis in my mouth that she cut off one of the bodies. It had blood all over it. I gagged and nearly threw up. I shook my head to try to get it out. Judge B was holding down my arms and body. He yelled, "You little bitch," and took the penis off my mother and turned me on to my stomach and pushed the penis into my anus. He said, "See how you like that." He left it there and dragged me outside the room. He then took me into the bathroom and I just stared at the bath. Someone had filled it with blood and body parts. There were arms and legs and a head. I pulled the penis out of my bottom. He said, "What are you doing?" He picked me up and threw me in the bath. I was horrified. He then took off his clothes quickly and got into the bath with me (NSW:89).

When asked by a member of the Privileges Committee 'Do you believe that nonsense?', Arena's reply was 'I do not know', but she went on to quote the opinion of the psychiatrist, who wrote:

I have been seeing "A" (the 'survivor') once a week, at times more often, for 2 1/2 years. During that time I have become very familiar with her character and personality. During that time her behaviour has been consistently that of a highly ethical and scrupulously truthful person in all areas of her life. She has a very strong religious faith and tries to live by those principles. She has at times been severely depressed but never been delusional (NSW:90).

Eighteen years since the first publication of Michelle Remembers the same kinds of gothic atrocities are being elicited by therapists and presented as valid accounts. They form the basis for widespread folk myths about satanic activity which can be tapped by the media when they are in search of a grabbing headline. In the Australian press in June and July this year, for instance, there was an alleged 'satanic beheading' (Sydney Sun-Herald, 14/6/98) in which the investigating detective refused to comment on 'reliable reports that the word Satan was smeared on the wall in blood'. And the teenagers involved in the attack on a New Zealand tourist in Queensland in July were claimed to be 'lesbian lovers involved in a satanic cult' (Sydney Telegraph, 14/7/98).

Satan's New Zealand Stopover

The satanic cult scenario was introduced to New Zealand in May 1990, when Pamela Klein spoke to a Child Sexual Abuse conference. In a rambling speech on the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder and associated disorders in children, she referred to 'horrific satanic cult situations' and went on to claim that children in satanic cults were 'purposely programmed to develop multiple personalities' (Klein, transcript). She also spoke of using sand tray therapy to enable a child to bring a memory back of a satanic ceremony. Here we see once again the significance of the new diagnostic labels introduced to the 1980 psychiatric manual in providing apparent scientific legitimacy for a scenario which might otherwise be subject to critical scrutiny.

Early in the following year, 1991, the Ritual Action Network - later to be called Ritual Action Group - was established in Wellington. Its membership was composed mainly of counsellors and social workers, but also included a police officer. The key members of the group were Ann Marie Stapp and Jocelyn Frances (O'Kane), both social workers, the latter practising hypnosis and recovering memories of satanic cult abuse on the part of several 'survivors',

Laurie Gabites, a police officer who had visited the United States and brought back SRA material, and Nigel Marriott, a probation officer. Marriott was a graduate in Classics and had written a Masters thesis on Graeco-Roman love magic, in which - by his own admission - he was a dabbler (Marriott, 1989: Appendix B). They circulated material from the States on satanic cult allegations, including Pamela Hudson's list of satanic indicators and diagrams of supposed satanic symbols and alphabets.

The group received public funding from the Department of Social Welfare through the Family Violence Prevention Co-ordinating Committee. Indeed, it seems that the funding of the group was lavish because in 1994 an internal audit spoke of "grandiose" overspending, 'including "well-catered" breakfasts, lunches and dinners, uncontrolled use of taxi-cab books and wrong accounting practices' (Dominion, 7/4/94). And Jocelyn Frances was convicted in 1993 of benefit fraud, having defrauded the Social Welfare Department of \$30,000. In 1991, however, the group attracted considerable credibility and was able to propagate its views among Social Welfare staff, police, and staff from other government departments (Dominion, 28/11/93).

But the main focus of satanic allegations was to be Christchurch. In August 1991 Mitchell Whitman, a Christian sexual abuse therapist from the USA, was in Christchurch as a guest of the Open Home Foundation, a Christian Child and Family Support agency: he had previously spoken to Youth With a Mission in Auckland. He said it had been found in the United States that the usual damage caused to children by satanic ritual abuse was a multi-personality disorder. Research showed that about half the children suffering multi-personality disorders had been victims of satanic ritual abuse. (Christchurch Press, 27/8/91)

One of the claims reported by the speaker was that a child had been made to eat faeces during a particular ritual. The Commissioner for Children was quoted in the same news item as saying that the phenomenon of satanic worship was world-wide but 'whether it related to abuse of children or just mass hysteria, was another matter'. (Christchurch Press, 27/8/91).

The issue was made more concrete six days later at a Ritual Abuse Workshop presentation in Christchurch. This was a prominent feature at a Family Violence Prevention Conference and was presented by Stapp and O'Kane on behalf of RAG (FVPCC, vol 1:5; vol 2:5-24). The content of their paper is important because it shows the degree of cross-fertilization between American anti-cult and anti-satanic literature. It begins by defining ritual abuse as 'physical, sexual and psychological abuse that is systematic, ceremonial and public.' (FVPCC, vol 2:6)

The paper continues:

Not much is known at this time in Aotearoa/New Zealand, about ritual abuse that has occurred outside the family. In the United States, ritual abuse occurs without parents knowing, at pre-schools, day-care centres, churches, summer camps, and the hands of baby sitters and neighbours. It is likely to be so here in this country. Children are subjected to ritual and indoctrination to convert them to the belief or worship system of the group, and are abused with ritual and intimidation to terrorise them into silence. (FVPCC, vol 2:7)

The sources quoted in this section of the paper are the same Los Angeles Report as that cited in New South Wales and the claimed accounts of ritual abuse "survivors" in Wellington.

The paper then goes on to argue that the problem should be accepted rather than being discounted, and details the type of abuse associated with ritual contexts:

A child who has been ritually abused will have been subjected to a systematic process of de-humanisation -their bodies invaded through their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, vagina/penis and rectum. They will likely have been forced to have sex with animals, had their bodies smeared with excrement, drink blood and urine, forced to watch and participate in the sacrifice of animals, eaten the flesh and organs of animals, often their own pets, and seen photographs of themselves doing all of this. (FVPCC, vol 2:9)

The paper further comments on types of cults, including fundamentalist Christian churches, Freemasons and cults of a satanic kind. Ritual dabbling in particular is presented as a source of recruitment to satanic cults, and the following processual scheme is offered as a means of identifying individuals who are progressing to "higher rituals":

- bitter hatred towards family and religion
- drop in grades
- cuts to the body
- increased use of illegal drugs
- use of satanic nicknames
- use of various alphabets (ibid.:16)

Parents, it is suggested, should be looking for the following items:

- a black covered book or computer counterpart that has types and locations of rituals and contracts for suicide or

homicide

- ceremonial knives
- candles
- chalice
- robes
- photos and/or videos
- books about belief systems, eg satanic
- animal bones and human bones, especially skull, right upper leg, rib and upper portion of right arm. (ibid.:17)

The social workers' presentation had already been featured in Sunday newspapers before it was presented in Christchurch (see Dominion Sunday Times 1/9/91, and Star 1/9/91). In the same month a further workshop was given at the Women's Studies Association conference at the University of Auckland. Gabites, the police officer who belonged to RAG, had recently spent time in the USA studying child abuse investigation with various police departments there. Later, this same officer returned to the US to investigate links between satanism and child pornography, and the allegedly related issues of satanism, child pornography, and ritual abuse were featured in a whole-page treatment in a Sunday newspaper (Sunday News 3/11/91). It was just seventeen days after this story appeared that the first allegations in the Christchurch Civic Creche case were made by a mother who had earlier written a pamphlet on sexual abuse.

With the credentials the RAG network claimed for itself, their reports gained credibility with a wider audience. In turn, this wider audience may also have become predisposed to accept even more bizarre claims. Claims about child pornography, and about the existence of organised sex rings and cults which practised ritual abuse, had featured prominently in media reports prior to the September conference and were to reappear subsequently. The linkage between child pornography and ritual abuse had been an important feature of the satanism scare in the United States and Britain. According to RAG members, cults often recruited family members from generation to generation so that ritual abuse became a way of life. In one report (Dominion Sunday Times 1/9/91), reference was also made to the ritual abuse case in the Orkney Isles, a case widely reported in the New Zealand press during 1991 and 1992 because it involved a former New Zealand Presbyterian minister. In a later Christchurch Press report of the Orkneys case (7/9/91) mention was made of a circle incident, cloaks, hoods, masks, and dancing. While it was noted that this case had been dismissed by the court, it was also stated that the British Government had announced an inquiry into satanic or ritual abuse of children. In reality, the government inquiry and subsequent recommendations concerned child protection practices and in no way indicated government acceptance of the satanism scenario (The Independent, 28/10/92).

The extent to which a SRA scenario was involved in the Christchurch creche case has been somewhat masked by the Crown prosecutor's successful suppression of the more bizarre allegations which emerged in the children's later interviews, but it was undeniably part of the beliefs of some parents and formed a significant element in the police investigation. Indeed, according to David McLoughlin (1996), whose excellent article on the case makes it unnecessary to review it in detail, comments: "Anyone familiar with the American daycare cases would immediately recognise the Civic scenario as a carbon copy of numerous scandals in California and elsewhere" (McLoughlin:63). The mother of one child, whose reported abuse managed to list all 16 of Pamela Hudson's satanic indicators, demanded at the depositions hearing that Hudson be brought to New Zealand as an "expert" witness. Her son, for example, had told of how he had been "forced to kill a boy and animals" (Christchurch Press 13/11/92). Further elements of Hudson can be found in the mother's claim that her son had spoken of a visit to a church where children had been made to take part in a "mock" marriage ceremony and of a visit to a graveyard where he had been placed in a cage with a cat. Then there was the alleged "circle incident" which was widely reported:

On one occasion, children had been taken to an address in Hereford St and put in a tunnel or cavity area beneath a trapdoor. Afterward they were removed and made to stand naked inside a circle of adults, including all five accused. Indecencies were committed upon them and the children were made to kick each other in the genital area (Dominion 3/11/92)

The same mother later ran a newsletter called "End Ritual Abuse", with funding from the Lotteries Commission, and in it she reprinted claims which originated in an American publication "Believe the Children", a movement that arose out of the McMartin case. In her book on the creche affair the mother discourses on the nature of SRA, once again citing Hudson as an authority (Bander, 1997:84-5).

Hudson was indeed invited to Christchurch in 1993 by the Campbell Centre (Presbyterian Support Services), whose Director in 1992 - Rosemary Smart - had written a damning report on the Civic Creche which assumed that Ellis was guilty: this was a year before his trial (Smart, 1992). This report was very influential and led to police investigation of the women creche workers (McLoughlin:65). A further indication of the American influence on the case is the fact that the Commissioner for Children's office (Ian Hassall was then Commissioner) had sent Smart the Executive Summary of David Finkelhor's book Nursery Crimes (Office of the Commissioner for Children, letter 8/3/94) and in the report she cites him as an authority on child sexual abuse in childcare settings. Clearly Finkelhor is still regarded as a substantial expert in New Zealand child abuse circles, because only last month Hassall wrote to the Evening Post recommending Finkelhor to one of the newspaper's columnists.

The influence of Klein, Hudson, and Finkelhor has been noted, but it is interesting to note that other participants in the original McMartin debacle have had a continuing influence on the New Zealand child abuse industry. Roland Summit visited in 1994 at the invitation of Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care, and in his speech he spoke of the 'backlash' that claims-makers like himself were facing. Perhaps his influence is detectable in the Appeal Court's acceptance of the notion that retraction of allegations by a child - which happened while Ellis's case was being appealed - is merely "denial", for as Sir Maurice Casey wrote, "It is not uncommon for child complainants in sexual abuse cases to withdraw their allegations or claim they were lying...We are by no means satisfied [the girl] did lie at the interviews, although she may now genuinely believe she did" (Court of Appeal, 1994:33). One should remember the pseudo-scientific status of the so-called Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation syndrome when opinions such as that are stated as established principle. Another McMartin protagonist, Astrid Heger, was invited by DoSAC no fewer than 5 times between 1989 and 1996. DoSAC has also invited the SRA believers Arnon and Marianne Bentovim to New Zealand, as well as a number of the more extreme claims-makers in the recovered memory and multiple personality/dissociation debate.

As long as such lack of balance persists in the sexual abuse industry there remains a possibility that the SRA scenario will persist. Satan's excellent adventure is currently a lively feature in Australia, where it is fuelled principally by adult 'survivors' and their supportive therapists. Satan's New Zealand stopover may have been more low-key, but for some of those involved in the Christchurch creche case it has had devastating consequences. One of the more disturbing features of the last decade is the way in which the uncorroborated claims of satan-hunters have infiltrated the beliefs of secular professionals and semi-professionals such as psychiatrists, social workers, police, and government administrators. Despite the findings of a growing body of research which would urge scepticism over the SRA scenario and the related issue of therapy-induced pseudomemories, organizations like Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care continue to listen to a select group of true believers and to exclude critical views. In such an atmosphere of professionally-induced credulity, it is possible that Satan's excellent adventure may not be entirely ended.

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