

Satanic Seductions

A front page story in a Minnesota newspaper revealed what has become a growing occurrence around the country: episodes of frenzied devil worshipers involved in ritual mutilation, blood-letting, sacrificing animals and sometimes human beings, before candle lit altars to Satan.

An increasing number of police investigators throughout the nation find such satanic events happening with greater frequency, and law enforcement officials now hold seminars to train their staff to see the signs of satanic motives behind otherwise bizarre and inexplicable crimes.

Robert J. Simandl, a 20-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department, has been studying cult crimes around the country for over five years. He can rattle off stories that rock the most seasoned police investigators, telling tales of child molestation, grave robberies, and teen-age suicide pacts.

Simandl points out that much satanic crime goes unrecognized for what it is because police do not know the clues, such as mutilated goats, pentagrams, burning candles, satanic graffiti and occult holy days.

While there are no statistics, enough documented criminal cases involving Satan worshipers have cropped up around the country in the past five years leading many police detectives to begin looking for patterns and links. They say they have uncovered only hints of organized activity, apart from the established 2,500 member church of Satan based in San Francisco, yet remain convinced

that covens of child molesters around the country practice satanic rites and are in contact with one another.

All this is apart from the countless teens who have committed crimes, often suicide or homicide, after dabbling in Satanism through demonic lyrics of heavy-metal rock bands and by following books like Anton Szander LaVey's *The Satanic Bible* (which claims sales of a half million copies in print since 1969).

On October 16, 1987, an 18-year-old man was charged with raping a 15-year-old girl in Minneapolis. He confessed to arresting officers that he is a member of a satanic coven that directed him to drive a knife through the girl's heart and to bury her, but he "couldn't bring himself to do it" even though other coven members had promised him a "death star" (granting him "supernatural powers"), once the deed was accomplished. He admitted that he and coven members are followers of Satan worshiper, Anton LaVey.

Devil worship has emerged as a motive for a number of high profile serial killings, most notably that of Los Angeles "Night Stalker," Richard Ramirez, who painted pentagrams - five pointed stars associated with satanism - in the homes of several of his victims, and later emerged from a court hearing during his trial yelling "Hail Satan!" Ramirez reportedly had grown obsessed with, among other things, the satanic themes in the rock album "Highway to Hell" by heavy metal band AC/DC. The cover depicts a band member dressed as the devil.

Simandl said such obsession is "typical among youths who get caught up in worship of the diabolical."

Satanism is a term used to signify honoring Satan with quasi-religious ceremonies in mockery of Christian rites, and with the performance of other works which promote the cause of Satan's dominion in the world.

In Bloomington, Minnesota, 16-year-old, William Gary Chelseth, is awaiting trial for the brutal stabbing of Teresa Knudsen. In June, 1989, Chelseth rode to the victim's house on his bicycle. After entering the home through the garage door while Knudsen was outside mowing the lawn, he took a dollar from her purse and some coins off a nearby desk. When Knudsen walked into the living room and confronted Chelseth, he repeatedly stabbed her. The boy later told authorities he did it for "Satan and the cult."

In another area of the country, police found graves containing fifteen human male bodies just south of the Mexican border on April 11, 1989. They said the victims were sacrificed by a satanic cult of drug-smugglers. The suspects were U.S. and Mexican citizens, some of whom admitted to Sheriff Lt. George Gavito that the cult had been involved in human sacrifices and prayed to the devil "so the police would not arrest them, so bullets would not kill them, and so they could make more money."

Among the fifteen victims was the body of Mark Kilroy (21) a pre-med student from the University of Texas who disappeared from a crowded street after 2:00 A.M. on March 14, 1989, after straying from a drinking part with friends in Matamoros, which is a border city across from Brownsville, Texas.

Authorities said there were

overtures of "Santaria," a type of voodoo practice in South Florida and the Carribean and recently featured in the movie "The Believers." They found candles, kettles full of body parts and animal bones, human brains and blood. In some forms of witch craft, removal of the brains signifies a sacrifice of the victim's soul.

Kilroy was reportedly selected "at random" when cult leader, Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo (26) ordered his followers to bring him an Anglo male. According to Alvaro de Leon (22), one of the cult members, males were sacrificed to seek the devil's protection from police for their marijuana-drug smuggling activities.

Constanzo, leader of the cult, ordered his own killing when police closed in on him, some of those arrested said. His bullet-riddled body was found in a closet in the apartment police raided on May 6, 1989. Also confiscated in the raid were black candles, a goats head, a blind-folded statue of St. Anthony, jagged swords, a wax skull draped with beads and black clothing worn by women.

Most of those arrested in the Texas/Mexico drug-cult were in their early or mid twenties. For varied reasons the occult is purposely appealing to the young.

Sean Sellers was only 17 when he was put on death row in Oklahoma for the 1985 murder of a convenience store clerk and the murders of his mother and stepfather. He told authorities later that he did it to "pay homage to Satan." "I am free," he said. "Satanism has made me a better person. I can kill without remorse..."

Investigators in the Sellers case said that he and several other youths had turned to Satanism after becoming enthralled by the images of fire, death and sacrifice in heavy metal music. The youths sometimes conducted candle lit

satanic baptisms that included cutting one another with knives, drinking blood and using it to write incantations to Satan.

In St. Cloud, Minnesota four teenage boys were charged with murder in a vampire-cult slaying in which the victim's throat and wrists were slashed and his body dumped into the Mississippi River. Newspaper accounts verified the slayers, inspired and influenced by the horror movie "The Lost Boys," drank some of the victim's blood.

A growing fascination with the occult, demonism, violence and death has obviously taken hold in America. It can be found in the music teens listen to, the latest movies, as well as the best selling novels.

In our home we try to censor the reading, listening and television material our children are exposed to. I knew to watch out for the more outrageous "baddies" like Ozzie Osbourne (who allegedly bit off the head of a live bat while

performing on stage), and KISS (the rock groups whose initials stand for "Knights in Satan's Service"). Yet, after learning that popular musical (called "heavy metal") groups like Mettalica, Megadeth Anthrax, Slayer, Venom and King Diamond were also known for their lyrics on violence (sex, rape, torture, human sacrifice) and death; I was shocked to discover some of the very "artists" in one on my own sixteen-year-old's shoe box of tapes collection.

My husband and I sat down and talked to our son about his choice of music. Quite frankly, what parent enjoys being a naysayer to a child, especially one like Tony who is a typical good, fun-loving teen. Nevertheless, music that is indecent, offensive, or demonic is designed to have a deliberate, though perhaps subtle, impact on listeners and is underserving of a place in a Christian home.

We believe a home and what is

Cat and Reconsider

All her insides were outside. Someone, trying to get somewhere in a hurry, left Fluffy with no place to go. The blind black rubber, buying time for the driver, cashed in at very slow profits, the pelt of Jennifer's prize-winning pet. No more leisurely stretching from a prone position, or quick as a jay-call to leap in a lap; now silent as concrete, unmoving, non-mewing; a groan from a passerby, the only eulogy, sounds the great gap between highway and farmhouse. The kittens will never know

what hit them or their mother. The pregnant wife and her other children will most certainly not waver now in a final decision to keep the life, the human passenger, far from the highway and clinic, safe for eternity, baptized not bloodied by cynic.

Charles M. Campell

spoken, listened to, read and seen in it, is a reflection of the people who live there. For that reason, we tell our youngsters - including those college-age and young adult - that we cannot permit albums, taped, television shows or reading material that contradicts our faith and values.

The other day our eight-year-old daughter, Angela, came home from school with a toy that was given to her by a classmate at the parochial school our children attend. The "toy" was an Eight (8) ball - a childish and bewitching game wherein the child asks the ball a question and it's answer, after being rubbed and turned, surfaces on a window-like area on the ball. I took the object away and Angela returned it the next day. When I told a friend of the incident, she remarked, "You'd be surprised at the number of Christian children whose parents naively give them Ouiji Boards, Eight Balls, "Dungeons and Dragons" and other such games.

A pastor was recently called for advice and counsel by a mother whose fifth-grade son persistently drew pentagrams on the backs of his hands and was seen at school giving the "Satan sign" (waving the index and small fingers) to another student. When questioned, the boys said it was "just in fun." The parents, with the priest's assistance, moved quickly to inform the boys of the seriousness of their innocent, yet naive, acts.

We fail to realize that youngsters who become "hooked" on devil worship, the occult, and fortune telling, usually start with little more than an over-active curiosity and a fascination for the far-out. Christian parents must warn children of the very danger and sinfulness involved. Yes, sinfulness. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are to place our futures, our lives, and our very souls with no one other than Him. To submit

to fortune telling (even "just for fun") gives believability to the power of such occult, and leaves our souls open and vulnerable.

Donna Steichen, a freelance writer from the mid-west, has been investigating and exposing the growing phenomenon of witchcraft "seminars" held on American campuses. Sad to say, these conferences - at which the earth, goddesses (in the name of feminism), and "self" are adored and deified - have not only been invited on secular institutions but, she reports, have been welcomed on some religious college grounds as well.

Unfortunately some young people in a state of spiritual poverty and confusion, will turn to the most enticing, alluring, and false gods, including sex, money, power, and the occult, if the message of Christ has not been adequately presented to them.

Parents today are at a tremendous disadvantage when film and song idols use their influence to "influence" young people into lifestyles that involve drugs, drink, sex, violence and satanism.

As a busy mom, it can be frightening and discouraging to realize that unless we put a bag over our young, follow them around 24 hours a day, or forbid their entrance into today's "values-free" atmosphere, they will be exposed in one way or another to the books, movies, music, and evil environment attempting to attract them.

We must, however, never despair (the devil's tool)! Christian parents have two weapons far more powerful than even the most satanic attack on our young: 1). We have the power of Prayer. And, 2). We can call upon our youngsters Guardian Angels, to watch over and protect them.

Thirdly, to the extent we are able, we have a responsibility and

an obligation to censor *out* material we know to be harmful or contradictory to our faith and values.

Likewise, we can censor *in* the "Good News" making our homes a haven of well written, interesting, positive, pro-family, and pro-life Christian material which offers stories and examples with role models young people can look up to.

Most young people who admit to dabbling in the occult, do so because of a tremendous void in their lives. Fortune telling, mysticism, and satanism offer a power, excitement, and perhaps quick answers to those struggling or in search. Most have been taught little in the way of faith, values, and absolutes.

Young people especially are *hungry* for the truth; they need to know about Jesus Christ, about right and wrong (good and evil); and the kind of life Christ calls us to.

Let us as a Catholic community of believers, by our standards and Christ-like example, become a source of strength and light to our children as well as the non-churched and unbeliever. Christ Himself in John 17:15-21 prayed to God the Father "to guard them from the evil one" and to "consecrate them by means of truth" because God's Word is truth. St. John urges us to "love in deed and in truth and not merely talk about it" (I John 3:18) and to become as Christ - a guiding light for others to follow.

Satanism and mysticism whether in high schools, colleges, or seminars, film, book, or music, will have no foothold, if we, as Christ's ambassadors, aggressively live the Gospel message.

Mary Ann Kuharski