

END RITUAL ABUSE NEWSLETTER

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E.R.A. STATEMENT ON RITUAL ABUSE

Ritual Abuse is a very frightening terminology to many, but unfortunately this is the reality we are dealing with today. Denying ritual abuse exists is of no help to anyone, most of all victims/survivors. It is a brutal form of abuse to children, adolescents and adults, consisting of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and involving the use of rituals. It usually involves repeated abuse over an extended period of time. Physical abuse is severe, sometimes including torture and killing. Sexual abuse is usually painful, sadistic and humiliating, intended as a means of gaining dominance over the victim. Psychological abuse is devastating and involves the use of ritual indoctrination which includes mind control techniques. ERA's view is to keep the subject of ritual abuse on the public agenda, to educate and inform readers of its prevalence, and to discuss the diagnostic and treatment issues that arise from it.

Greetings from ERA

Hello readers.

After a lot of organising and waiting, E.R.A. has received \$1300.00 from Lottery Grant for the production of the newsletter. This means we will be able to produce the newsletter for 1995. It is of great relief to have this funding, as it has always been somewhat of a struggle to put out the newsletter.

Funding is an ongoing exercise, and in time we hope to have funding towards the resource library which is in the pipeline. In the last newsletter (on the back page) there was a cut out form for fees to be paid and sent to **E.R.A. Box 21231 Christchurch, New Zealand.**

We have received few fees. Could all readers please consider this matter, as we have a large amount of expenses to keep this newsletter produced. Please find subscription form on separate page at back of newsletter. Those who pay will be kept on the mailing list.

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CARLA: A MOTHER WHO SENT HER ONLY CHILD TO CRECHE

I am a mother of a boy who attended the civic creche. I find it almost impossible to bring myself to put pen to paper here, because of the weight of the blocked off pain I hold away from myself.

I will not give any content of my child's disclosure. That is his privacy which he guards with immense fear. But I will say that I believe completely the abuse on my child was ritual abuse, multi/perpetrator, multi/ victim.

My child had not had more than brief contact for one and a half years with the other children that had attended the creche with him, one of whom had parents that were my friends. The brief contact was because my sons relationships with those children had deteriorated so badly once they had started attending the creche.

What my son has told me with drawings, words and behaviour since that time, has been very clear. What happened to him and his friends was undoubtedly ritual abuse. At the time I had no concept of what this meant. I had no religious belief. I was a skeptic one might say. Through various means I had teaching on how not to use leading questions, so I don't doubt any of the detail my son gave. Much of what he told me corroborated the complainants children's evidence, (as I learnt by reading the papers, and what the media reported.)

My child would not attend evidential interviews partly because of the fear of cameras, and because of the intensity of fear in general. He very clearly suffered from post traumatic stress. Sitting here now, I find that words cannot communicate how the reality of life has changed for me.

I knew how savagely people had taken part in the holocaust persecution of the Jews. I know that the torture used on political prisoners is no worse than what these children suffered, except that they lived. These tortures were smarter and left few marks, but they did convince the children that they and their loved ones were at risk of death if they did not comply or told of the abuse.

They convinced my child that I knew of the abuse and that I did not care what they did to him. They tried to convince my son that I was there during a session of abusing him.

Political prisoners have their political will broken by a tortuous process resulting in depersonalisation. My child's abusers seemed to wish to destroy what Christians describe as his soul. By soul (I believe) Christians mean the part of him that is good, secure and happy. He is very slowly beginning to feel that the world is safe, predictably kind, orderly and understandable. The abusers tried so hard to smash his beautiful person. But they failed.

For all the depravity the abusers have modeled and taught with the aid of torture, for the perverted belief system they have attempted to indoctrinate, for the physical emotional and sexual trauma they have imposed on my sons psyche and body (from 18 months to 5 years of age) I can tell you one thing. IT DID NOT WORK. We will not keep quiet, we will not remain submissive. We shall fight the silence of this abuse even in the unsupportive, and emotionally secondarily wounding environment that has been premeditatedly created by groups formed by abusers and/or groups supporting abuses.

ERA would like to share with readers an article written in the Dominion newspaper (May 20 1994 Wellington) on a former hospital creche worker Geoffrey Scott who was found guilty of sexually abusing children in his care. It is interesting to note that the journalist who reported on this case over a number of weeks took a completely different stance in his reporting than the Christchurch Press did on the civic creche. Some of the media in Christchurch sensationalised the whole case of abuse, and did nothing other than re-abuse the children and their families.

BITTERNESS AFTER CRECHE CASE

by Pat Plunket.

A legacy of bitterness has been left to those involved in the trial of former Wellington Hospital creche worker Geoffrey Scott, found guilty last Friday of sexually abusing five children in his care.

The bitterness is felt by the parents and friends of the children he was found guilty of abusing because of what the jury decided he did to them.

But the parents and friends of the children he found not guilty of abusing are bitter, too, because the jury did not accept the children's evidence.

"All we wanted was the right verdict - guilty", the mother of one child whose evidence the jury rejected said after her three-day wait for a verdict. A mother source of bitterness which affects most parents whose children were at the creche while Scott was there is to be found in the fact, that, on the evidence, they were putting their children, for up to 16 months, in an environment where sexual molestation was going undetected. "We simply had no idea what was happening", one father said.

The key to this situation was twice highlighted by Justice Neazor during the trial when he commented on the apparent lack of appropriate management at the Wellington Hospital creche. Although the creche occupied premises the hospital provided and had other assistance from hospital authorities, it was supposed to be run as a co-operative. But from evidence at the trial, it seems that effective control of the creche lay with the supervisor and the parent who was management committee president, but neither can be named because of a suppression order prohibiting publication of the names of children at the creche and their parents.

Half the children at the creche had one parent who was a hospital employee but other parents had no link either with the hospital or each other and there was surprisingly little communication between them. There were also indications dur-

ing the trial of a lack of communication between creche-employed staff and those the hospital provided. At one point Justice Neazor said he had the impression that the creche management committee didn't do much managing, and a parent witness responded by saying that though she was a member of the management committee she felt she was just there to make up the numbers.

Part of the basis for the judge's observation could be found in the way in which Scott, who had no training in early childhood care and education, was hired.

Scott, the father of two small children, spent some time at the creche for reasons that cannot be published because of the suppression orders.

Creche staff decided he was good with children and the supervisor, who said during the trial that she had considerable difficulty getting relieving staff, hired him in that role. The creche was required to have a formal prescribed interviewing process which such institutions need before being granted in Education Department charter, but this was not followed when Scott was hired. Another factor that contributed to Scott, according to the evidence, being able to indulge his sexual proclivities with the children undetected was the layout of the creche with its small rooms and a toilet area with cubicles that could be closed.

The creche supervisor was aware that Scott, according to the evidence, was suffering from emotional difficulties arising out of problems in his relationships with two women, the mothers of his two children, and had recently spent time at Hamner Springs for an alcohol problem.

She told the court she thought this was some sort of "refresher course" and that Scott had been hired on the basis that he would leave when he found another job. Scott began relieving work at the creche early in 1991, moving shortly afterward to fulltime employment and, though other

staff at the creche felt he lacked imagination in planning creative play for his group and was over-keen on taking them for walks, there was no serious criticism of him before he left in July 1993 to resume his former occupation as a computer programmer.

But after Scott had gone, a boy told his mother that Scott had "done things to him". A sexual abuse team, comprising police and social workers, began, investigating and Scott was arrested on October 7. Were it not for convictions for sexually molesting children, most people would see 35 year old Scott as having an ordinary, if somewhat aimless life. The son of a carpenter, he was the third child in a family of five growing up in the outer Christchurch suburb of Halswell. His mother played the traditional family role of housewife till all the children were at school when she went back to her trade of seamstress. He went to Canterbury University for two years where he was successful in meeting Faye, whom he later married, but not at his studies and left to look for work in the computer industry.

He first came to Wellington in 1983, got a job as a trainee programmer and married soon after. Moving to Datapoint in 1984 he met a woman called Barbara with whom he formed a relationship, though he continued seeing his wife. Scott and Barbara had a daughter in 1989 and shortly afterward Faye went overseas leaving Scott in what he hoped was a stable relationship. Some months later Faye returned pregnant with Scott's second daughter and, he told the court, he became highly stressed after her return, withdrew from both women and began drinking. At one stage during the period he shared a flat with a woman whose daughter he was later charged with abusing at the creche.

After Scott's arrest rumours spread among creche parents that he was the staff member involved, though police attempted to keep his name secret for fear that parents would "contaminate" possible child witnesses by questioning them about the possibility that Scott had sexually abused them.

In an attempt to allay parent fears, police arranged a meeting at Wellington Hospital. They did not give Scott's name, though most parents had concluded by then that he was the arrested man. Police warned parents about questioning their children but made it clear that social welfare department counselling was available to children whose parents were worried about their behaviour and to

children who had "disclosed" in the jargon of sexual abuse therapists.

Note made by police working on the case showed that they had consulted with colleagues in Christchurch who had worked on the Civic Creche abuse case. One piece of advice recorded in an Officer's notebook was that they should "think big". Also available at the meeting was a pamphlet from the Wellington Sexual Abuse Help Foundation listing behaviour that could indicate a child had been sexually abused.

Lawyer Pat Grace, who conducted a vigorous defence of Scott, later made much of this pamphlet, saying that it led parents to ascribe their children's behaviour to sexual abuse when it had more likely causes.

Out of the work from the time of his arrest, but free on bail, Scott set about collecting material for his defence in which he attempted to show that each of the families whose children had "disclosed" were what behavioural psychologists describe as "dysfunction" and that this was the cause of the children's behaviour that prosecution psychologist Karen Zelas was attributing to sexual abuse. The information he collected included one-parent families, a mother who changed partners, parents who were away on trips overseas, a boy who lived in an all-woman household, and a mother of different ethnic origin.

Although Mr Grace used this information when cross-examining parents he advanced a three-pronged defence. In a four-hour address to the jury he said that some children had been brainwashed by parents and therapists into saying they had been abused; other incidents the children described as sexual assaults were things that happened during toileting which had been misinterpreted; and other allegations, such as a girl saying Scott had tongue-kissed her in front of a parent, were clearly wrong.

A feature of the trial was a replay of opposing expert child psychologists; Dr Karen Zelas for the prosecution and Australian Dr Keith Le Page for the defence. Both had played similar roles in the Christchurch creche case.

Dr Zelas said the videotaped evidence and other behaviour of most children was consistent with sexual abuse, but Dr Le Page said it could equally well have other causes. Videotaped evidence of interviews with the children was a feature of the trial, but the judge, and later the foreman of the jury, were both critical of the recordings. The judge said the sound recording was so poor, it (to p.5)

Since the civic creche enquiry many people have had a field day espousing forth about how the children have made up such bizarre abuse that they endured; or if the people don't feel comfortable in calling children liars, they blame all of the bizarre disclosures onto the police, counsellors and parents for putting the ideas into the children's head. ERA has been stressing in the newsletters so far, that ritual abuse, satanic ritual abuse is not a new phenomenon, and that it has existed for generations right throughout the world.

In 1987 *The Star* (Saturday, November 14) gave a full page article on what can clearly be described a ritual abuse case within Christchurch. This case occurred before evidential interviews were made on video, and before a child could give evidence in a room through close circuit T.V. At the top of the article it stated that "*the Minister of Justice proposed to promote an amendment to the Evidence Act 1908 to allow the evidence of victims of sexual violence cases to be presented to the court through means of video-monitors...*" The article is reprinted below.

CHILD ABUSE: GIVING EVIDENCE ANOTHER ORDEAL

by Keith Cronshaw

Two of the reasons for the proposed amendment live in a small, well-kept flat in the city. They are brother and sister... both of primary school age and they live in the flat with their mother. The girl is withdrawn. She lives in a dreamworld for much of the time. She sits for hours on a bed, stroking the hair of her doll.

The boy's face is set, his fists clench and unclench, he is full of tension. So far as possible the word "Daddy" is not mentioned in his presence. It is a trigger word with the boy. His face contorts, he screams, runs around, hides under the table, bounces off the walls or seizes a crayon and defaces whatever is handy with a savage scribble.

He is visibly and deeply disturbed. The conclusion of child experts is that both these children were sexually abused by their father.

Their father is free. On the morning of Monday, October 12, he left the dock of the Christchurch High Court and walked out. A judge had directed a jury to find him not guilty of charges of sexually violating his children.

Over many weeks, the prosecution, working with the Christchurch Hospital Board's Child and Family Guidance Council and the police, went to prolonged and elaborate lengths to bring the children "up to brief" - to give evidence before a judge and jury to support the charges. But in the end it was no use. Asked what had happened as the case approached trial, they wouldn't talk. What they had told a psychotherapist and what was recorded on videotape was useless - inadmissible under existing law.

from p.4

created doubt about what the children were actually saying, and the jury foreman said the placement of furniture in the room and the camera angles used prevented body language, which psychological witnesses set some store on, being properly observed.

The foreman also made the simple and obvious point that the eating of potato crisps during videotaped interview did little for sound quality. Scott in his sentencing received 7 years imprisonment. Drs Zelas and Le Page will replay their roles in another sexual molestation trial in Wellington later this year. But for the parents and children involved, the case will probably never be quite over.

This is the story of events as they touched some of the people involved - the prosecution, the psychotherapist, the counsellor, the police, the mother, the children, their teachers. It is clouded to some extent by the mother's bitterness, anger and suspicion over the fact that the father went free, her feeling that not everything was done by the various agencies involved. She is angry, disillusioned, left with the feeling that the rug has been pulled out from under her, that the justice system has let her down and that it will be a long time, if ever, before her faith in people and the system is restored.

The defense originally sought to have the charges dismissed under section 347 of the Crimes Act on the grounds that the children were unable to give evidence. The Crown did not seek to call them and there was no evidence on which a jury would be able to convict.

Formal

The judge could not see his way to do that - either in chambers or in open court. He ordered that the indictment be presented, that the charges be put and that a jury formally deliver a verdict of not guilty.

Dismissal under section 347 or a not guilty verdict by jury - either way the effect would have been the same: That would have been the end of it. The charges cannot be re-laid. So why the argument over procedure? What was the point of it? One effect was to focus attention on the existing legal situation and the fact that a case of this kind turns almost entirely on the evidence of the child. It spotlighted also the inordinate difficulties this may present and the anomaly that what the child has said on videotape, is inadmissible.

Under existing law a child must enter an adult world to support such charges which is forboding enough but what chance would the child have under cross-examination by skilled, experienced defence counsel?

The bottom line to the story, as police and prosecution would privately concede, is that the judicial system as it stands, is geared to the adult. Children are out in the cold. Or as a Wellington Barrister Warrick Gendall, told the recent New Zealand Law conference, "Dogs have more rights than children".

All of which is small consolation to the mother'. "I'd like to think this never happens to anyone else. But it won't help my children if (the father) cannot be re-charged. Now that bugger is free and the children are totally confused".

"My son said: 'Don't the policemen believe us anymore'".

She is 30. She left her husband on July 17, 1986, after eight years of marriage and what's she described as ongoing sexual and physical abuse to herself. She stayed in a motel for three weeks before the husband was ordered to leave the matrimonial home and she moved back in. The events that followed covered the period up to February 4.

Records

District court records show that the husband faced eight charges of breach of a non-molestation order - two this year, six last year. He was convicted and "discharged" on two charges. On the remainder he was ordered to come up for sentence if called upon within one year. Part of the psychological assessment pictured a rigid, obsessive personality that could not, or would not, accept the break-up.

"He followed me everywhere I went. He rang me

at all the hours God sent and I changed my phone number. If we got the bus he would follow the bus. If I went out in the car he followed the car. The children were a mess. Whenever they saw the same model car he drove, they screamed. I was driving them on October 12 and stopped at the lights. There was a white (make of car) alongside. They freaked out, crying and screaming and together they dropped to the floorboards. Eventually I managed to get (the boy) to look at the number plate of this car and kept saying to him: 'It's not Daddy, it's not Daddy'. And then he looked at the driver. He was an elderly man. They calmed down. He came around at night, at one, two, three, four o'clock in the morning, tapping at my bedroom window, at the children's bedroom window. Time and again the police were called and saw him off the premises. As soon as they'd gone he was back. It got to the point where I was a wreck, where the children were wrecks. We couldn't sleep. They were terrified at night and of going to sleep. They slept in the hall or the bathtub - anywhere away from the windows.

By February 4 we couldn't take any more and I entered the Women's Refuge with the children." Within this period - from the time of the separation and access visits to the father - there had been a transformation in the children. The girl was placid, loving; the boy cheerful, helpful, but the two years saw a traumatic change. They were variously shrill, fantasising, disruptive, clearly disturbed".

It worried the staff at the Refuge Centre - the constant fighting with each other and with other children. At their suggestion the mother took them to the Child and Family Guidance Centre.

Her suspicions that the behaviour might be related to the access visits remained just that. But at the centre, in front of a psychotherapist and a counsellor, the boy asked her "How do I spell naughty Daddy".

The answer triggered him into a frenzy. He jumped over the furniture, climbed on chairs and the table, bounced off the walls, hid under the table.

Suspected

The psychotherapist told her they suspected sexual abuse. Thereafter they interviewed the children separately - three hours with the girl, two hours with the boy. The interviews were videotaped. They used anatomical dolls - boy doll, girl doll, adult doll. The psychotherapist

picked up the cues and the children told of sexual abuse by the father. By May 7th the Child and Family Guidance Council called in the police. A week later the husband was charged with sexually violating the children.

The access visits ended and perceptibly there was a change in the children. The fighting, the screaming, the disruption receded. But it was not the end of the story. The children enrolled at primary school while they were with the mother in the women's shelter. At a reading of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" the little girl crumpled at the mention of the wicked queen disguised as an old woman who gave Snow White the deadly apple. She clung to the teacher: "I don't like that story - the one with the witch in it". And repeatedly she asked the teacher "Am I going to die".

Flew Apart

The boy went berserk when the class embarked on a family orientated programme - the role of the parents. At the mention of Daddy he "flew apart".

The story of the girl's reaction to Snow White and the witch was relayed to the Family Guidance Centre where the children were undergoing counselling. The child psychotherapist drew out another phase of events from the children. They told of the father taking them to the home of a woman friend, and there they dressed as witches, the father, the woman and her daughter, and together they subjected the children to succession of indignities, obscenities and physical abuse.

The children described the costumes in detail: The black hat with the purple pom-pom, the green and the pink hair. The woman friend, dressed as a witch had chased them, screaming and yelling. There was nowhere to hide and she came after them in her black hat and blue costume with the red spider on the chest and long, false fingernails outstretched.

At other times they were made to watch while the father and the woman friend had sex in front of them. The father had told him he was a pig, said the boy, and the father had told him that he hated his sister. The little girl was frightened her mother would die: Daddy and the woman had told her she would die and the woman would be her new mother. The boy said his brain was tired; he hated having bad dreams. Could he have a gun? Or could someone else kill Daddy, so he wouldn't hurt him or his sister anymore?

Conclusion

But the conclusion was that evidentially the witches story was not enough. The children referred to it sporadically. At times they closed up completely. It was felt also by that time they had gone through enough. They had clammed up on the

initial story and pressing ahead with the "witches" was likely to do more harm than good. There just wasn't enough to go on. No evidence to place the father with the children at the salient times, nor sufficient recall by the children.

In spite of the mother's doubt and reservations the prosecution and the police with the collaboration of the guidance centre had gone to prolonged and elaborate lengths to coax the children into telling the story which they had put on videotape in court. Certainly the police put a lot of time on it. It was one of the first cases to be handled by the newly formed Child Abuse Squad.

The big hope had been that the father, when confronted with the tapes, would be unable to handle it and there would be an admission, which is often the case. In the United States, the screening of tapes elicits an admission in 90 per cent of cases. But here, the husband dug in. He watched the boy and the girl and he was adamant. "That's not me - I didn't do that". He was never alone with them on access visits. The mother had put them up to it. The girl was trying to do him in.

So it was the children evidence or nothing. There were 3 Stages of preparation involving the children which were laid out by the psychotherapist.

Stage one.

At the guidance centre the adults laid pieces of wool on their heads to play the part of judge, prosecutor and defence lawyer. With the use of Leggo they made a mock-up of the High Court: "Here's where the judge sits ... here's the jury....there's the media" Over the next 40 minutes, in this play setting, the children were gently eased into the High Court atmosphere. There was no mention of the father or what they said he had done to them.

Stage two

At 9 a.m., an hour before the No 1 High Court became the preserve of adults, the children scampered around it. They sat in the judge's chair and the jury box and at the table where the microphone was hooked up where they would give evidence. The prosecutor asked them their names, the class they were in, how old they were, what they had done over the past few weeks. They were non-threatening questions, the idea being to get them used to his role as questioner.

It was difficult to hold the boy's attention. He raced around the courtroom in the same hyperactive, near manic way as he'd done at the guidance centre in the course of the videotaping. The mother came out of the jury box and suggested the children should be told there and then that their father would be there the next time they came to court.

Stage three

In the prosecutor's office the psychotherapist, the social worker and the prosecutor saw the children alone this time. Once again they engaged them in chit-chat. The children's recall was good. They could remember details of the court-room - the judges portraits on the walls, where the judge sat - and then.... "What did Daddy do"?

Their demeanour changed. They hung their heads. Nothing had happened they said.

Useless

The psychotherapist tried to retrieve the situation but it was useless. The psychotherapist felt that as far as the children were concerned it was over. They had been praised for making the initial revelation and now they had shut it out and were not prepared to talk about it.

The prosecution had intended bringing the trial on in August but then the mother had taken the children to Australia for six weeks. They would return at the end of September and the case was set down as the first trial the following month. The crown considered this may have been the problem. Too much time had elapsed between the time the children had told their story and the trial. This was not to blame the mother. By that stage she had had enough. She had to have a break.

In any event, the prosecution, the child experts and the police concluded it was no go. They didn't have enough, the chances of the children giving them what they wanted in court were nil.

The impact on the mother was almost as shattering as the initial revelation. Why hadn't she been with the children at the third session in the prosecutor's office, she wanted to know. What was going on?

In part this was orchestrated. The children had been told the mother would be excluded from the court for part of the time because she herself would be giving evidence. The third session was arranged so that the children would feel the effect of this exclusion. The mother bitterly disputes this. She feels she should have been there.

Distrust

Thereafter things were never the same. She distrusted them all - police, prosecution, psychotherapist, social worker. She felt she'd been hoodwinked, that something had gone on behind her back.

It will be a long time, if ever, before her faith is restored. For two years she and the children went through a nightmare and at a time when she felt the husband was responsible for the children's behaviour, no one listened. She felt in the end that she was the one with the problem - that she was cracking up.

"I hung in for the children. I was strong for them

because if I cracked up, who was going to look after them? "No one seemed to listen and when they did it was for nothing. I know I shouldn't feel this way but I find it very difficult to trust anyone".

The children's lawyer, through the Guidance Council, has suggested she should apply for full custody. She won't do that. "I want to see that bastard make application for access. And if he does I want those tapes shown. I want him to look at those tapes."

'Children Were Disturbed'

The school principal: "Certainly the children were disturbed. There's absolutely no doubt about that. At one stage they wanted to go home to make sure their mother was alive. Their constant fear was that she was going to die - and of their father. The boy was quite violent - we were very worried about him.

The little girl had gone into a fantasy world and told all kinds of stories and asked if they were true. She's a beautiful wee girl. But after six weeks in Australia with their mother we noticed a marked difference; they were much more stable. When they came back they seemed to have accepted the fact that they would be appearing in court. "They came to my office several times and told me they would be going to court in a few day's time and told me who was going to be there. They seemed quite relaxed about it.

The mother was devastated when the Crown announced it was with drawing the charges and it certainly concerned us greatly, the end result of it all. We were quite dumbfounded when we heard about it.

"I think having gone away, the children had got themselves through the worst part of it. It makes you wonder what's the point of it all when the cases aren't going to come to fruition. We're keeping in close contact with the mother. She's very angry and disillusioned."

The father of these children apparently has contact with Felicity Goodyear-Smith who is the founder of COSA and has written a book recently on how badly evidential interviews are dealt with and how the professional people and mothers put such bizarre ideas into children's head. Smith openly supports and has publicly spoken on supporting a pedophile Peter Ellis (civic creche worker convicted and jailed for 10 years for abusing 7 children in his care.) The father claims he is innocent, will forgive his children for saying dreadful things about him and is fighting for custody or at least access to the children. The children do not want to see their father at all, in fact they want to leave the country to prevent this from happening.

SURVIVORS COLUMN

Some adults who were ritually abused in their childhood have either contacted ERA through their therapist, or by writing to ERA to say thank you to ERA for writing a newsletter on the subject and for simply believing that ritual abuse exists. A support group is now running weekly for adult survivors. We now have a survivors column in this newsletter with poems and stories written by ritual abuse survivors.

MY VERY BEING

I'm a strong girl
I have suffered torture,
humiliation,
mutilation
and still I do not break.

I'm a strong girl
My mind can repress
for me to get by,
it has special compartments,
just for those heavy dark times.

I'm a strong girl
my body is sturdy,
my ligaments are taut,
my muscles firm,
but the body never forgets
when its time it will be let

I'm a strong girl
to have held on
for my spirit is the strongest
all the time knowing
this is against my will
holding on to my warm soul
my very being
for I'm a strong girl.

THE CHILD AND ME

"Take some time to...
watch the flowers grow...
see the leaves on the trees...
listen to the children sing.

These past three months
have been the hardest
like someone has ripped
at the bottom of my guts
and pulled out a baby,
that once was me"
How can this be?

She died, so I could live
and now she must live,
So I can be...

Together we can fight this,
separate we no longer have to be,
for we are one
the child and me"

ERA has been given some more writings from adult survivors to share with readers .

A Ritual Abuse Survivor

"I'm an adult survivor of ritual/satanic abuse and incest. I'm 37 years old and have been slowly releasing locked in emotions for the past 4 years. It's a very slow process because of the violence and terror associated with it. So, I only let out so much at a time, depending on how emotionally safe I feel and physically capable I am.

These emotions were triggered off, as I was coming to terms with the emotionally violent relationship I was in. It was inevitable that I looked at why I was so codependent and playing a victim role. It was wearing me down, so much so, that I couldn't avoid the admittance of it any longer. In expressing my fears of my life at that point, I was also acknowledging deep rooted fears that had been there as a child, particularly around the age of 3. This was the start of my healing. Each time these emotions were surfacing I regressed into feeling like a child - crying, talking and acting as a child. Feelings of terror, despair, emotional pain and grief that I can't describe in words. As these emotions subsided at these times, I'd be left feeling stunned, shocked, confused, disbelieving of myself and thinking where on earth had the out burst come from. But, yet still a knowing that what I'd expressed was real and part of me, and was distantly familiar to me. I was also so physically drained and needed to sleep it off. As I couldn't deny that these outbursts were real I was advised by a counsellor to see my G.P and then I was referred to a clinical Psychologists. I went to these appointments for about 9 months, talking about my family history and where I fitted in. I was aware at this stage, that I'd been sexually abused and I knew who had done it, but couldn't verbalise it at all and wouldn't. I wasn't prepared to admit that that's what had happened to me until the adult part of me got more concrete proof with more memories. This believing of myself was and at times still a struggle. The Doctor whom I was seeing decided that we'd talked enough about family history and relationships and that we really needed to establish or address the question of had or hadn't I been sexually abused.

I remember feeling like a cat on hot bricks. Of course I knew I had or part of me knew, but the little girl inside of me was terrified of dying from the disclosure of it, that she knew would take place at that next session. The adult part of me even wrote a letter to my partner saying that if anything happened to me, like dying or ending up in the loony bin, that none of my family would get anything of mine and that they had NO say in what happened to me. I was so nervous and really did not want to go to that session, but yet part of me wanted to. My partner was very supportive, but was stressed out like myself. This stage he was codependent as well.

Five minutes into that session, the Dr mentioned how devastated one adult he knew of, had been feeling about sitting in on the hearing of the Civic Creche case in Christchurch. He related that this man was apalled at what those little children had suffered. At that precise moment, I remember myself sucking in my breath and looking away terrified and stricken with grief KNOWING how much I never wanted any child to suffer. This triggered 2 hours of my little girl, backed into a corner, looking in terror (but covering my face through shame) verbalising bits and pieces and spitting from my mouth "stuff" that I knew had been forced into my mouth.

Everything was distorted that session, but one thing remained undeniably clear, that I was sexually abused and by the person that my little girl knew of and others. It took about a year after this for the adult in me to actually verbalise that it was my father. These sessions lasted for another 2 months and then we broke for xmas. After that, we were advised by the doctor to put a lid on it and get back to normal. But my emotions were on a roll and someone inside me did not want to put the lid on. Good grief, I'd

just got the lid sliding off a smither and my little girl which I've named Mary, wanted to get the whole lid off and step into the fresh air. She'd longed for that fresh air. She went back to the counsellor whom she'd originally seen with her relationship problems. She felt safe with this person and knew that she would allow Mary to disclose more, when she was ready. She was gentle and Mary sensed a calm and peacefulness that she'd never had before. Above all, the adult in me knew that this person wasn't influencing the truth what so ever, like she didn't put ideas into her head. This adult part of me, you see, was still somewhat disbelieving of Mary, but curious of her just the same and couldn't deny her existence.

Mary and that adult part of me began healing with this therapist and it's continued for about 2 years solid. We've slowing but surely covered a lot of ground. 18 months ago Mary disclosed a scene of ritual satanic abuse. She acknowledged chanting, robes, darkness, candles, evil people looking at her, altars and being sexually abused. This is the first time she's written this. Also, at that time, she remembered that she physically lost her breath during this event and she left her body and went towards a brilliant white light. She was terrified and knew what was happening to her down there, but this indescribable white light enveloped her and gave her hope and love like you wouldn't believe. The white light was telling her that she must go back, but she didn't want to. She so much wanted to stay with the safety of the white light and love. It said she'd be fine and it was said with so much calm and peace and knowing reassuredness, that she knew she had to go back and she did. With this memory that Mary had this day, she reclaimed herself by fully acknowledging this memory and she felt like she'd woken up from a long journey of oblivion and darkness. She went outside with her therapist and was in awe of seeing the trees, the sky and she could smell everything so much clearer. She wanted to run and experience this new visual world. Her legs felt so small, but in reality they were long. She had tears of joy and grief that she'd been locked away for so long, but more of joy at what she could see and feel this awareness or memory of the white light.

Later, the adult of Mary, recognised the feeling that this white light had given her hope and courage to survive and that she'd always had this feeling that she couldn't explain. Now she knew what it was all about.

Since then, we've recognised other parts of me because the ones we're aware of know how much we've dissociated at different times, with memories that we've had, so far. When I was being abused, I would block off what really happened by dissociating from myself or whoever I was at the time. By doing this, part of me would leave the abused body to bare the brunt and I would go off and be somebody else, and continued to be that somebody else after the event as well. The girl left behind would stay inside and grieve in silence waiting. I or we, couldn't attend to her needs, because it was far too risky. Our lives were in danger and we really didn't want to know what had happened to that girl anyway. So umpteen years later, the parts of me that were left, have to be nurtured, reassured, heard, validated, grieved for, understood etc etc. This takes time. A huge amount. There have been lots of struggles within me and outer influences, as these different girls have been trying to be heard. I have recognised Mary, Elizabeth, (whose nickname is goody little two shoes) Sam, Kelly and Penny. We all know that there are about 3 other characters lurking in the background waiting to be heard. We're all stalling at the moment because we know that one character knows a hell of a lot about the ritual abuse and the rest of us really don't want to know. We're all scared to death. But we all want to be free of fear, which is holding us up. Mary has had a very clear memory of being forced to kill a dog. She was beside herself with shame, guilt and above all grief and abhorrence that she actually had a part in it and she thought she was to blame. She or we have disjointed memories or flashbacks of blood dripping from our mouths, crosses being rammed up our anus, people looking at us in a humiliating way and knowing that we can't escape being told we're stupid and

it's our fault. Our mind going around and round with these people telling us things over and over again, being told we'll turn into the devil and we'll be killed if we tell, being forced to eat yukky things that make us want to throw up and being injected and told it's all a dream. Earlier this year, when I was having a therapeutic massage and the therapists was massaging my hands, it triggered off a memory and Mary remembered her hands and feet had had crosses cut into them and she remembered that it was part of a ceremony to indoctrinate her into what they were doing.

Sometimes, especially now that we're all slowly coming to terms with the ritual abuse, someone is so frightened to look at herself in the mirror in case she sees herself as the devil. We all go to bed at night feeling scared that someone is going to drag us out of our bed and take us away again and do those awful things and then kill us. Some nights, when "two shoes", Sam and the others are in control, we can all get a good nights sleep, but invariably we're always tired. We work 2 days a week and we were working full time, but 2 years ago we had to leave one of our part time jobs; because looking at myself and doing this work is so emotionally and therefore physically draining. By doing this work, we become a lot stronger and more in control of myself. I've changed old patterns as far as being a victim and can stand up to negative people and not flinch. I can keep my cool and stand my ground. I realise I'm intelligent to my amazement, as I always believed I was stupid and crazy. I have confidence now to make my own choices and decisions. Something I thought I never had a right too. I was so eager to please everyone else, as my life depended on it to survive. I was a puppet on a string. In short, I believe in the greater part of myself now, even though there is a lot more work to do in reclaiming the whole of me. I will know when I am free, as I believe this journey was meant to be and is special.

At times when I'm greiving, I find a great comfort in holding onto a small brown teddy bear, which I chose myself. I can look after myself now and I know what I need and whom. I can just reach out for help, but still in a self conscious way. Trust is an issue for me, although I'm aware that there are very few people out there that are whole and trustworthy. I trust my therapist explicitly. She has never pushed me, but just listened above all and asked me things that I could choose to answer if I feel safe at the time. For the first time the other day, a new part of me became slightly visible, and she was there to hold me. I was sobbing and I felt small and vulnerable and visible. I needed to be picked up and cuddled. I realised then that this part of me had never been cuddled. My mother was never there. She's got her head in the sand and her blinkers on. She was always too busy to notice what was really happening to me, and I know she knew. She chose to ignore it. Without asking, my therapist just picked me up and cuddled me and held me. It felt just amazing and very new, like it had never happened. I felt at last safe, as I now think I must've let the real me be visible - whoever she is. It feels like the first seeds of trust.

I'm attending a support group called End Ritual Abuse (E.R.A.) It's been going for a while now and I feel proud that I've helped start it. It's very necessary in my next steps of healing, as having other survivors, it validates me and through this helps me to continue to have the courage to face more terrifying memories in order to be free. The validation from this group helps me from feeling crazy and confused about my flashbacks and memories. There is power in numbers to bring this sort of abuse to a halt and any sort of abuse. Public awareness is needed now about this, as was needed for the Jews in the war and the many other victims at the prey of sick people who need to feel in control. I have a lot of inbuilt energy for this issue as I'm ANGRY.

I've waited a long time to be heard and to be free and I realise I have a lot of strength to combat the negative reations to survivors like myself. And I have my white light. My perpetrators obviously chose to have no insight into the strength of light. Even on the blackest of days there is light.

Surviving Ritual Abuse

“Being a survivor of ritual abuse I think it is good to write an article for your newsletter. For safety reasons I am unable to reveal my true identity.

Firstly I would like to mention to any skeptical readers out there, that I have carried some of my memories for sometime. It is not something of my imagination.

What I have found hard to come to grips with is that I thought what I had experienced was “normal abuse”; everyone who had been abused experienced this type of torture. Since being in therapy I discovered this was not so.

To survive each experience I put somebody else in my place. I call them my “Shadows” even though they all belong to me. Any survivors who have not told or are afraid too, may think they are going crazy by what they do remember. One of the things that has helped me is by writing things down or by drawing as the memories come to mind.

It gets it out of your head and eventually you see the jigsaw coming together and realise

you aren't going crazy or going insane.

My abuse, the earliest I remember, started at 4 years of age and ended at 16 when I walked out of home. That would have been back in the 1960's to the early 1970's. I was brought up in a very well educated family, both parents held professional positions. They were very religious and we had the bible drummed into us continuously. To the outside world we were a perfect family. I should mention there were five children; me the eldest girl but second in the family. We had all been adopted.

To this day I battle with a chanting in my head. Pictures of symbols and hearing voices if I ever told. So you don't only experience physical torture, you also battle with emotional pain. One that is harder to heal. In time the physical pain goes away, but the emotional and spiritual pain is an ongoing battle, a lot harder to heal and deal with.

Something everybody should be aware of working with ritual abuse survivors. The people

who abused them are very much professional. They know how to manipulate their victims, how to place guilt on them and create fear. With ritual they don't work alone. I remember a doctor, school teacher, social worker. Mum was a nurse. Most times it was done in a group situation.

To this day I frequently smell the stuff on a rag, but I don't know what it is. I know if I could smell it today I could identify it. I experienced eels on my body, animals being sacrificed, spiders crawling over me. Having to drink blood. Having things done to me and having to do things to other children (this is hard to live with). The list goes on.

Please don't say it is our imagination. This is 'REAL'. **DON'T ALLOW THIS TO BE IGNORED ANY LONGER.**

Incest has been brought out in the open. It is time this type of abuse was exposed as well.

Remember they work in groups, very professional. So one person can't work alone to expose it. We need to work in groups as well to conquer it.

DEFINING RITUAL ABUSE

Ritual abuse is not a new problem, but society is only just beginning to recognise the gravity and scope of this problem. We are all in need of education on this issue.

Parents need to be educated about the hallmarks of this abuse occurring in preschools and day care centres. Many professionals are seeing victims of ritual abuse and not yet recognising the patterns of this abuse. The concept of ritual abuse coming from child victims and their families, from adult victims and from the professionals working with them, and despite the remarkable consistency of these reports both nationally and internationally, society at large resists believing that ritual abuse really occurs. There remains the mistaken belief that satanic and other cult activity is isolated and rare.

In our first Newsletter (Newsletter One), we gave a definition of ritual abuse.

The *Los Angeles County Commission for Women* gave a descriptive definition, which we wish to share with readers, and is reproduced here as follows:

Ritual abuse is usually carried out by members of a cult. The purpose of the ritual elements of the abuse seems threefold:

- 1) rituals in some groups are part of a shared belief or worship system into which the victim is being indoctrinated;
- 2) rituals are used to intimidate victims into silence;
- 3) ritual elements (e.g., devil worship, animal or human sacrifice) seem so unbelievable to those unfamiliar with these crimes that these elements detract from the credibility of the victims and make prosecution of the crimes very difficult.

Many victims are children under the age of six who suffer the most severe and long-standing emotional damage from the abuse. These young victims are particularly susceptible to being terrorised and indoctrinated into the abusers' belief system. During, and even long after the abuse, victims live in a state of terror and dissociation and suffer from the impact of mind control.

Ritual abuse is known to occur as an integral part of the life of some families in which one or both parents participate in conjunction with the extended family or other group. These groups are typically satanic in their symbols and beliefs. Children in these settings are severely abused on an ongoing basis with little time during which they are safe from abuse. The results are devastating.

Ritual abuse also occurs (without parents knowing) at day care centres, churches and at the hands of baby sitters and neighbours. The ritual abuse in such an institutional setting is not incidental to its

operation, but in fact intrinsic to it, the very reason for the institutions existence. Children are subject to sexual abuse, ritual intimidation to terrorise them into silence, and ritual/indoctrination to convert them to the beliefs of worship system of the group.

Many adults who are victims and/or perpetrators of ritual abuse come under the influence of such beliefs and practices in their childhood or adolescence and may function with severe dissociative disorders, including multiple personality disorder. Such adults are often working members of society whose identity as members of satanic or other cults is not known outside the cult. Some perpetrate abuse, infiltrate, and/or recruit for the cult in the context of their jobs. Some adults join the cult later in life, enticed by sexual promiscuity and perversion, the availability of illicit drugs, the promise of money and the satanic spirituality oriented toward power and moral license.

Psychological abuse

The psychological abuse which is inflicted as part of ritual abuse causes severe mental and emotional suffering to the victims. Victims are subjected to profound terror as well as to mind control techniques so severe that most victims dissociate their memories of the experience and lose their sense of will.

Some reported examples are:

- 1) Threats of punishment, torture, mutilation, or death of the victim the victim's family or pets. Threats are heightened by carrying out killings of animals or human beings in the presence of the

victim, sometimes with the victim's forced participation, told that it would be futile to disclose because "no-one will believe you".

2) Threats against the victim's property including threats that his/her house will be broken into or burned down if he/she discloses the abuse.

3) Told that family or other loving and protective figures are secretly cult members who intend to harm the victim or made to believe that parents not only know, but have chosen that their child be ritually abused. Told that he/she is no longer loved by family or god.

4) Told that his/her family is not the "real" family, that the abusers are in fact the child's "real" family. Victim is told he/she will be kidnapped and forced to live with the abusers, apart from his/her family. Or told that parents no longer want the child and approve of the cult becoming the child's "new family".

5) Tied up or confined to a cage, closet, basement, isolation house, or other confined space. Told he/she being left there to die. Some are placed in coffins and told to "practice being dead". For some this includes mock burials in which victim is buried and told he/she is being left to die. Sometimes a cult member seems to rescue the child from these terrifying situations and thus the distraught child reaches out gratefully and bonds to the cult member.

6) Tied up or confined in a space with insects or animals that he/she is told will harm him/her, or tricked into believing that frightening insects or animals are present. Confined with, or hung upside down in a hole with a dead body or the mutilated body parts of an animal or a human being.

7) Humiliated or degraded through verbal abuse. Forced nudity in front of the group. Body of the victim smeared or covered with urine or feces. Forced ingestion of urine, feces, or semen.

8) Photographed in sexually provocative poses. Photographed while being sexually assaulted, or while physically or sexually assaulting someone else. Forced participation in the production of pornography used in the intimidation and humiliation of the victim as well as to financially profit the abusers.

9) Made to feel constantly watched and monitored by abusers on their spiritual counterparts (e.g. evil spirits.) Made to believe that disclosure or failure to perpetuate evil when expected by the group to do so, will result in punishment or even death.

10) Physically and sexually abused by perpetrators disguised as her/his authorities (e.g. like superman, father christmas, rabbi, clergy, judges, police. Undermines child's trust in authority and heroes. Inhibits disclosure.

11) Subjected to mind control and mind altering drugs which alter the victim's perception, interferes with the victim's resistance to the assault, and cloud the victim's recall of the details of the abuse. Sophisticated uses of hypnosis, indoctrination, programming, and the use of bioenerging.

12) Subject to ritual abuse, including birthing rituals, and marriage rituals which emphasise the victim's belonging to and subjugation to, the cult. Victims also are forced into the belief and worship system of the group. Often, though not always, the belief and worship of the group is satanic.

13) Sworn into secrecy regarding cult activities, including the abusive activities under penalty of death. Subjected to mind control regarding how to harm him/herself or even to commit suicide rather than remember or disclose cult activities. Vulnerable to extreme self-destructive impulses if he/she even considers leaving the cult.

14) Compelled to commit heinous acts, including the killing and mutilations of animals and human beings, sometimes including the victim's own children. Compelled to ingest blood or body parts of animals or human beings in cannibalistic rituals. Subsequently subjected by the group to profound condemnation and guilt for perpetrating and surviving these crimes. Victims tricked into believing their participation was voluntary. Threatened with exposure as a perpetrator.

15) Compelled to act on behalf of the group while outside the group by engaging in prostitution, drug dealing, and other illegal activities. Compelled to extend the group's sphere of influence and control in social institutions (e.g. by participating and working in schools, churches, law enforcement, courts, health and mental health professions, etc.)

Physical Abuse

Ritual abuse victims are physically abused often to the point of torture. Young victims who are being ritually abused without the knowledge of both parents are usually subjected only to physical abuse that is not easily detected.

Less Detectable examples.

- 1) Pins or "shots" inserted into sensitive areas of the body, especially between digits, under fingernails, or in genital areas. Electric shock to these body areas.
- 2) Being hung by hands or upside down by feet for extended periods of time. Sometimes hung from crosses in mock crucifixions. Sexual abuse while in such positions.
- 3) Submerging victim in water with perception of near drowning.
- 4) Withholding of food or water for several hours.
- 5) Sleep deprivation and activities aimed at inducing exhaustion.

More detectable Examples.

- 1) Physical beatings.
- 2) Use of cuts, tatoos, branding, burns, often to sensitive body areas.
- 3) Withholding food, water or sleep for days or weeks.
- 4) Removal of body parts, e.g. digits.

Sexual Abuse.

The sexual abuse of ritual victims is unusually brutal, sadistic and humiliating. It is far more severe than that which is usually inflicted by a pedophile or in the context of intrafamilial sexual abuse (incest). It seems intended as a means of gaining total dominance over the victim, as well as being an end in itself.

- 1) Repeated sexual assaults by men, women, and other children, often occurring in a group. May be associated with the marriage ritual, repeated fondling, oral copulation, rape and sodomy.
- 2) Assaults include the use of instruments for penetration of body orifices, including symbolic objects, (e.g. crucifix or wand.) or weapons (e.g., knife or gun.)
- 3) Sexual assault coupled with physical violence. Participation in rituals in which sexual assault is associated with death. Forced sexual contact with dead or dying people.
- 4) Forced to sexually perpetrate children and infants.
- 5) Forced sexual contact with animals.

What Is:

Birthing Ritual

A ritual described by victims of ritual abuse in which the victim is placed within the carcass of a dead animal, or in some cases a dead human body, and is, in the context of a ritual "born" into membership in the group. This ritual is intended to make the victim feel profoundly connected to the group.

What Is:

Cult - Destructive.

"A destructive cult may be defined as a closed system/group whose followers have been recruited deceptively and retained through the use of manipulative techniques of thought reform and mind control (undue influence). The system is imposed without the informed consent of the individual and is designed to alter one's personality and behaviour. The leadership is all-powerfull, the ideology is totalistic, and the will of the individual is subordinate to the will of the group. The destructive cult sets itself above society by creating its own values with little or no regard for society's ethics or morals."

"... (they) have engaged in some illegal and unethical practices - child abuse, neglect and death, illegal and fraudulent immigration, drug dealing, smuggling money, cars, guns, gems, fraud and deceit in recruiting, business, financial records, and fund-raising, theft, harassment of families and former members with threats, lawsuits and foul play, stockpiling and smuggling weapons and ammunition; beatings, sexual abuse and prostitution; kidnapping, murder, attempted murder, and psychological and emotional damage."

What Is:

Demons and Evil Spirits.

Spiritual beings who are evil and ruled by Satan. According to Christian tradition they are angels who shared satan's rebellion and were expelled with him. Ritually abused children and adults are victimised at rituals which invoke such beings. Victims report believing that perpetrators of ritual abuse possess control over these spiritual entities. Some victims are made to believe that these spirits have power to control the victim's life. For some, the fear of harm from such evil spirits or demons, or the fear of being controlled by them, is more oppressive and debilitating than fear of the perpetrators themselves.

What Is:

Magic Surgery.

Child victims of ritual abuse describe being drugged or hypnotised and, on awakening, being told they have had "magiz surgery". The blood that has been smeared on their bodies constitutes compelling evidence that such surgery has taken place. In some cases children are told that a

bomb has been placed inside them, a bomb that will explode if the child ever discloses the abuse, killing not only the child but the trusted person to whom he/she discloses to. Most typically, child victim's of magic surgery are told that they have had a monster, a demon, or "the devils heart" placed inside of them, and that it will attack them if they disclose. They are also told that the monster, demon, or devil is now in charge of their thought and behaviour and will cause the child to be "bad". Child victim's are made to believe that this entity will cause them pain, if they fail to comply with its wishes. Ritually abused children often report somatic complaints such as abdominal pains in connection with this phenomenon.

What Is:

Marriage Ritual

A ritual described by victims of ritual abuse in which a "mock marriage" takes place between a child and a member of the abusive group, between two children, or between the child and satan. Victims of this ritual are made to feel profoundly connected to the group itself or to the powers of evil.

What Is:

Occultism

Belief in the existence of mysterious, secret, or supernatural sources of power that can be known and/or communicated with by human beings.

"Occult" is a general designation for various systems of belief, practices, and rituals based on knowledge of the world of spirits and/or unknown forces of the universe.

What Is:

Perpetrator of Ritual Abuse.

Perpetrators of ritual abuse usually function in a group setting. Most victims report being abused by several perpetrators, often in conjunction with other victims. Women are reported to be perpetrators of ritual abuse as often as men. Little is known with certainty, about the perpetrators of ritual abuse, but it is important to note that they do not fit commonly held concepts of the motivation and psychological profile of the pedophile. Ritual abusers are generally far more sadistic and cruel in their sexual abuse than are pedophiles. Victims report painful and frightening sexual acts, and humiliating practices involving, for example, the use of urine and feces. The perpetrators seem motivated by a desire to see the victims lose a sense of their own will, identify with evil, and submit to the will of the group. Because of the apparent determination on the part of many ritual abusers to victimise and indoctrinate as many young children as possible, they frequently function together in groups in the operation of pre-schools, day-care services, and baby-sitting services, providing themselves access to children outside of their own families.

There is evidence that many of these perpetrators have been raised in groups with strong systems of belief or worship (usually satanic in content) and highly systematic practices of abuse that are passed on within families from one generation to the next. Thus, many of the perpetrators of this abuse are in fact both victims and perpetrators within a family system of abuse. Those who have been victimised by ritual abuse in a family setting experience varying degrees of dissociation, including in some cases, multiple personality disorder. This may explain how it is possible for some perpetrators to function undetected in child care settings, to seem quite believable when they deny children's complaints of abuse to experienced law enforcement investigators, and even to do quite well on polygraph examinations.

What Is:

Pornography.

Ritually abused children report being photographed nude in sexually provocative poses as well as during sexual and physical assault. Some of these photographs are circulated or sold for profit. The child victim also talk about the photographs being shown to them as part of an effort to make them feel humiliated, ashamed, and fearful of discovery by their parents. Children are often told that they will be arrested because of what the photographs show.

What Is:

Sacrifice.

A religious rite in which an object is offered to god in order to establish, restore, or maintain a right relationship of man to the sacred order. Blood sacrifices (killing with bloodshed) are based on the concept that the sacred life force of both man and animal resides in blood. Blood is particularly important in rituals involving fertility, purification and atonement. Sacrifices in different cults are often required according to certain calendars of special days as well as for unique purposes on a given occasion. Burning is believed to be another way that a sacrifice can be made directly to a god. A third way in which a

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sacrifice is conveyed to a god is burial in the earth. In some belief systems sacrifice is also a means of obtaining supernatural powers or favours from the god.

What Is:

Human Sacrifice.

The offering of the life of a human being to a god. The occurrence of human sacrifice usually can be related to the belief that blood is the sacred life force in man. The killing of a human, or of an animal in its place, represents an attempt to affect communication with a god and participate in its life force. Sacrifices have been made in connection with fertility rite, although specific other uses for obtaining powers and favours are also common.

Cannibalism is practiced as part of human sacrifice because of a belief that by ingesting human blood and flesh the individual is empowered and transformed by the life force contained therein.

Adults and children who have been ritually abused report being forced to participate in the killing of babies, children, and adults in ritual settings with the understanding that the purpose is to obtain certain magical powers.

Ritual abuse survivors explain that the drinking of blood and the practice of cannibalism are ways to invest the worshipper/perpetrator with the spiritual powers of the victim.

RELATIONSHIPS

In the newsletter, we would like to put some energy into the subject of "**Relationships**". Not only can relationships be difficult for people who were not ritually abused, but for ritually abused survivors relationships can be even more problematic.. The article below is taken from "Beyond Survival" (Issue No. 5, p. 33)

"Relationships: they have kept me alive, yet they can be the bane of my life; the source of light and hope on the one hand, and of maddening pain and nihilistic despair on the other."

"Light is the left hand of darkness and darkness the right hand of light. Two are one, life and death, lying together like lovers in kemmer, like hands joined together, like the end and the way."

There are so many kinds of relationships with other people: friend, lover/wife, sister, aunt, niece, cousin, daughter, granddaughter, colleague, student, teacher, patient; I am, or have been, involved in all of these relationships and more. Then there is my relationship to the sea, the mountains, the trees, the wind, flowers, birds, animals, my connection to the essence of the life force as it manifests itself to me: this keeps me alive; it is my umbilical cord.

My greatest challenge is relating to my selves. There are the many lost children, each holding their reservoir, of pain which would overwhelm me, were it all released at once. There are the parts I am afraid of; the raging, the bitter, the destructive, the sexually potent. The internalised negative parental and cult-programmed voices have less power now, but must still be dealt with, while the dualities within me demand a constant tightrope walk and centering discipline so that I can hold it all together. Reckless impatient wars with pedantic caution (why is it the impatience always seems to come out top?), the desire for external excitement and stimulation needs to be balanced with the cultivation of internal serenity and sufficient solitude.

What has helped me most in my struggle to relate to myself, the others and to the life force, has been participating in a 12 step program. It was such a relief to be in an environment where each person could be heard and heard in blessed silence, without interruption and interference. There was genuine commitment to recognise each person's value, regardless of where they were at in their process or how powerful or omnipotent they perceived themselves to be in the outside world. There was tremendous courage in people's efforts to be real, to speak and explore the truth, no matter how painful and embarrassing. And there was support, both at the meetings and on the telephone, freely given and received by people struggling with the same pain, the same fear, the same anger: a community of spirit.

I learnt there it was O.K. for there to be different voices; that they could all be heard: the domination of one view was not essential to keep the world safe. For me in my internal world, this meant it was O.K. if I didn't always know why I thought or felt or wanted to do. It was O.K.

to be confused. If I was patient and let each part have its say, a consensus would somehow emerge.

In my dealings with other people, I think this realisation has helped me become more accepting and understanding of other people's positions and dilemmas. I also think I am more respectful of others now, in that I am less inclined to be judgemental and more able to recognise their right to make their own choices. As well, I am less afraid of being hurt, partly because I am more able to believe that people aren't actually trying to hurt me all the time any more, and partly because I feel more able to defend myself. I don't mean physically; that hasn't been a problem for me since I did a self-defence course when I was 17. I mean morally; I don't recall ever feeling before that I was worth defending; I think I have begun to heal from this view by recognising that it was the result of severe childhood abuse.

With this new sense of self-worth has come an ability to maintain healthier boundaries and guard my sense of integrity within my closest and most intense relationships with other people. In the first years of high school, I chose to study geography instead of history simply because my best friend had chosen geography. I loved history and cordially disliked both geography and the geography teacher, but at that time, I felt my survival was dependent on every little bit of emotion warmth I could scavenge; my integrity was meaningless when weighed against the chance to spend more time with my friend. That sort of decision would not be possible for me now.

This means I have also been able to accept both my husband and my closest sister being unable to believe that I was ritually abused. My whole life, body, mind and spirit, has undergone a profound restructuring and realignment as a result of these memories. For the first time in my life, I am beginning to feel truly in touch with myself, and two of the people closest to me cannot believe my core truth. But in the disbelief they are being true to themselves and honest with me and that is what matters. We can hold different views of reality and still love and support each other. (Not that we always find this a piece of cake, I hasten to add).

Finally, the most terrifying of all areas of interpersonal relationship: sexuality. This one is going to take a bit more time, but at least I no longer see my sexuality as a black panther which each day gnaws away the bars of its cage; bars which I had to rebuild constantly at an enormous cost to my health and

vitality. The fear remains that my sexual desires would easily overwhelm me and that I could then act against my best interests and those of the people I care most about.

Nevertheless, I am beginning to believe that strong sexual desire will not actually kill me, and that I may even succeed in continuing to have strong desires without acting on them in a destructive way. What puzzles me here is that such a degree of doubt remains, when in some 20 years of voluntary sexual activity I have never, when in a committed relationship, allowed myself to become sexually involved with anyone other than my current partner. (And yes, I have been tempted).

The other aspect of my sexuality which I hope and believe will heal in time is the pain/pleasure bind that was created through the ritual abuse. Since the age of four and five, I have masturbated to masochistic fantasies. Even now I cannot reach orgasm when I masturbate unless I use them. I am trying not to use them; I hate this so much; it is one of the most disgusting and shameful aspects of the abuse for me.

I have been trying to use other images; perhaps I am making progress. But I have yet to reach orgasm using images that are not masochistic and I can reach orgasm in a couple of minutes every time I do use them. Sometimes I dream the images, or I dream of using them; then I wake aroused and frustrated, always facing the same choices: do I give in and get a quick fix that makes me feel rotten because I've betrayed myself again; do I resist and stay frustrated; do I try to wake my husband at some ungodly hour or do I try to find some effective alternative to a cold shower?

Building healthier relationships with others, with myself and with the life force is to draw closer to the light. It is also to face the darkness: to recognise and embrace the risk of terrible pain and loss; the risk of manipulation and oppression in the name of love; the risk that I or others might, in our own pain, lash out and deliberately hurt our loved ones; the risk that the truth about the motives or actions of myself or others might be less than palatable. What gives me courage to go on is that it really is becoming easier; the more I am in touch with myself, the easier it is to recognise my choices and to feel unashamed of what I have chosen: the more honest I am with myself and in my relationships, the more joy they bring me. The difficult times are less desperate; the good times more frequent and more enduring.

RESOURCES

E.R.A. has managed to build up a relatively good resource library. All material is available to be shared with readers, for a small donation - we suggest \$3 per item.

VIDEO TAPES

- 1) Children at Risk.
- 2) Identifying dissociation in children.
- 3) Treating dissociation in children.
- 4) Ritual Crime.

AUDIO TAPES

- 1) Ritualistic and Cultic Abuse (3), by Catherine Gould. Family psychotherapy practice, Seattle.
- 2) Satanism and Ritualistic Abuse. Wellness for ourselves and others, by Catherine Gould, Family psychotherapy practice, Seattle.

BOOKS

- 1) 'Disorder - Understanding and treating the survivor', by Holly Hector. Can be ordered through E.R.A. (We have a number of copies available). Price: \$24.95.
- 2) Eunice Fairchild's Book of Poems called 'Cry from the Heart'. Order through E.R.A., \$24.95.
- 3) 'Ritual Abuse: What it is - why it happens - how to help', by Margaret Smith. Published by Harper San Francisco. (A division of Harper Collins publishers). Available for loan from E.R.A. on a donation basis.
- 4) 'Satanic Ritual Abuse and Multiple Personality Disorder - Understanding and Treating the Survivor', by Holly Hector.

ALSO AVAILABLE: tapes from "Believe The Children" first annual conference 1993. (U.S.A.):

Recommended Reading

'The Flock, an autobiography of a multiple personality', by Joan Frances Casey with Lynn Wilson. Available from Kate Sheppard Bookshop (Chch).

"*The Flock* is the first autobiographical account of multiple personality disorder, a severe form of psychological trauma resulting from serious child abuse, a disease as old as the tale of the possession and witchcraft that were probably its symptoms.

It reads as a combination of detective story, therapy story, horror story and love story - peppered with such comments of comedy as the author finding herself at a lecture taking notes with one hand and simultaneously innotating a textbook with the other. We - and the narrator herself - become spectators of a dramatization of her own life as different characters emerge, some adults, some terrified children, some frozen in time, others suited for 'special purposes'.

Brilliant scholar Josie, worldly art lover Isis, flirtatious party girl Renee, tough boy Rusty and five year old Missey are just a few of the personalities coaxed into re-emergence during therapy to reveal their essential secrets to ultimately make possible the extraordinary integration of the 'flock'"

-New York Times

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