

**REPORT OF THE  
VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION**

**Task Force  
Study of  
Ritual Crime**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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RICHMOND  
1992**

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Delegate Robert Tata, Virginia Beach

### **Appointed by Senate P & E Committee**

Senator Elliot S. Schewel, Lynchburg

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# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION

General Assembly Building

IN RESPONSE TO  
THIS LETTER TELEPHONE  
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F. L. RUSSELL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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ROBERT C. BOBB  
ROBERT F. HORAN, JR.  
GEORGE F. RICKETTS, SR.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE  
H. LANE KNEEDLER

December 10, 1991

TO: The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder, Governor of Virginia,  
and Members of the General Assembly:

House Joint Resolution 147, adopted by the 1990 General Assembly, directed the Virginia State Crime Commission to "study certain cult practices" in Virginia, determine the prevalence of these practices and "recommend appropriate ways in which the Commonwealth might respond to such activity to protect public property and safety while protecting the Constitutional rights of its citizenry."

In fulfilling the directive of HJR 147, I have the honor of submitting herewith the final report of the Ritual Crime Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elmon T. Gray".

Elmon T. Gray  
Chairman

ETG:sc

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## I. AUTHORITY FOR STUDY

During the 1990 session of the Virginia legislature, Delegate Robert Tata sponsored House Joint Resolution No. 147 (HJR 147) directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to "study certain cult practices" and to "(i) focus its study on those cults in Virginia that emphasize or promote their members' participation in dangerous, antisocial or criminal activities as a part of their practices; (ii) determine, to the extent possible, the prevalence of such cults and their recruitment and ritualistic practices; (iii) identify risk factors associated with youth involvement in such groups; (iv) confer with law-enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth regarding the reports and documentation of occult activity, ritualistic crimes, and whether such acts involved youth; (v) inventory school divisions to determine the nature and magnitude of the problem and the perspectives of school administrators concerning how such problems should be managed; (vi) assess the fiscal impact of vandalism and destruction of public property due to such acts; (vii) review the efforts of other states to prevent and control such cults and resulting criminal activity; (viii) recommend appropriate ways in which the Commonwealth might respond to such activity to protect public property and safety while protecting the Constitutional rights of its citizenry; and (iv) limit its study to such related matters as the Commission may deem appropriate." (See Appendix A.)

The resolution called for creation of a task force consisting of thirteen members, reporting directly to the Crime Commission, in order to fulfill the requirements of HJR 147. In addition to members drawn from the ranks of the Commission, the task force was to be comprised of one member each from the House of Delegates and from the Senate, and four citizen members.

Established by Section 9-125 of the Code of Virginia, the Crime Commission's legislative mandate is "to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection." Section 9-127 of the Code of Virginia provides that "the Commission shall have the duty and power to make such studies and gather information in order to accomplish its purpose, as set forth in Section 9-125, and to formulate its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly." Section 9-134 of the Code of Virginia authorizes the Commission to "conduct private and public hearings, and to designate a member of the Commission to preside over such hearings."

Pursuant to HJR 147, the Crime Commission established a task force and proceeded with this study per the authorization and direction of such resolution.

## **II. MEMBERS APPOINTED TO SERVE ON THE TASK FORCE**

Subsequent to the April 17, 1990, meeting of the Crime Commission, Commission Chairman Senator Elmon T. Gray, of Sussex, selected Mr. Robert C. Bobb to serve as Chairman of the Ritual Crime Study Task Force. The following persons were appointed as members of the task force:

### **Crime Commission Members**

Robert C. Bobb, Richmond City Manager, Chairman  
Senator Elmon T. Gray, Sussex  
Delegate Raymond R. Guest, Jr., Front Royal  
Mr. H. Lane Kneedler, Attorney General's Office  
Speaker A. L. Philpott, Bassett  
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### III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

House Joint Resolution 147 (HJR 147) directed the Crime Commission to establish a task force in order to study certain cult practices which represent a danger to citizens of the Commonwealth and determine the prevalence of such practices, risk factors which induce youths' participation in this activity, fiscal cost resulting from property damage and means of addressing these concerns.

Following expert testimony regarding the scope of issues relating to the occult and cult practices the task force determined that parameters to this study must be carefully drawn and objectives narrowly focused. Particularly prominent was concern about potential conflicts with constitutional rights to free association and exercise of religion.

To eradicate confusion and properly identify the subject matter of this study the task force defined the focus to be that criminal behavior which is derived from or motivated by a specific spiritual belief system and the practices or ceremonies with which it is associated. Such behavior is regarded as "ritual crime" or "ritualistic crime" for the purposes of this study.

Controversy about ritual crime, both in terms of its prevalence and its nature, is rampant. Much of the debate can be traced to the careless or inaccurate use of terminology. Inappropriate identification of and reference to groups and belief systems, as well as inexact descriptions of what constitutes ritual crime, inevitably cloud this debate and make more difficult an objective investigation into the actual incidence of occult related crime.

A state-wide survey of all law enforcement agencies and school divisions, and geographically representative samples of social service departments and licensed mental health practitioners in Virginia produced comprehensive data about the incidence of ritual crime in the Commonwealth. Follow-up interviews confirmed that most incidents which could be linked to belief systems involved minor property crimes. The results make clear the difficulty in establishing causal connections between the reported cases and spiritual belief systems.

Claims regarding incidents of ritual crime suffer in many cases from a lack of adequate evidence. While this is attributed by some to the effective disposal of evidence by cult members it is clear also that indicia of unconventional belief systems are often speciously linked to ritual crime.

The research evidenced a distinct schism between the types of reports from mental health therapists and other interviewees. While schools, law enforcement agencies and social service workers pointed to specific cases of crime, therapists tended to provide more general accounts of ritual crime which they derived from their clients and which were frequently years or decades old.



This contrast between law enforcement and mental health extends also to the goals of the respective groups. Therapists' focus is on treatment issues, rather than the prevention and enforcement of crime. Response to ritual crime therefore differs by necessity for these two segments of the population and recognition of this fact is important both in interpreting data and in making recommendations for action.

Based upon survey results, testimony and intensive research the task force made the following findings:

- Misconceptions about ritual crime are pervasive.
- Evidence is insufficient to establish the existence of any major conspiracy or organized criminal network based upon an occult or spiritual belief system.
- Unpopular belief systems are erroneously associated with criminal behavior.
- Criminal activity which might reasonably be associated with belief systems consists primarily of minor property crimes and is committed largely by "dabblers."
- Existing criminal statutes in Virginia are adequate to address dangerous conduct which may result from participation in unconventional belief systems.
- The ritual crime phenomenon has its greatest overt impact in the field of mental health.

As a result of and in accordance with these findings the task force made the following recommendations:

- That the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services develop a model curriculum addressing ritual crime for Virginia's law enforcement officers.
- That the Crime Commission's continued research on youth gangs be tracked and reviewed for findings and ultimate recommendations.
- That the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services coordinate continued research efforts relating to the ramifications of ritual abuse in the mental health field.
- That law enforcement personnel act in cooperation with appropriate agencies in the investigation and prosecution of claims involving ritual abuse of persons.

- That school personnel and social service workers be provided objective and accurate information on ritual crime.
- That the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services establish a definitional standard and review development of a separate reporting category for ritual crime.

#### **IV. STUDY DESIGN**

The subject matter of HJR 147 being of a broad and amorphous nature, the methodology necessary for fulfillment of the resolution's mandate was by necessity incremental. Prior to specific investigation into particular activity the task force required establishment of definitional terms and an understanding of the allegations surrounding cults and the occult in order to determine the study's parameters and have a context for relating certain activity to study objectives. Consequently, an initial research project into the issues surrounding occult and cult related crime was instigated.

This research was initiated by reference to a vast array of literature addressing the occult generally, numerous specific groups, allegations of ritual crime and discussion and analysis of these issues. The project was both guided and augmented by interviews and correspondence with individuals who are schooled in and have gained substantial exposure to this area of study and concern. As the work of the task force progressed, further literature was amassed while the focus of research was properly narrowed and honed.

Upon establishment of study parameters, three state-wide surveys of law enforcement agencies, school divisions and licensed mental health practitioners, respectively, were distributed. These surveys requested information relating to the respondent's awareness of ritual crime activity, its prevalence, the nature of such activity, responses to such activity and opinions as to legislative or other action which should be taken to address the activity, based on the respondent's respective area of expertise. A subsequent state-wide survey of juvenile detention facilities and regional and local social service agencies was also made, seeking similar information and emphasizing treatment concerns.

Selected respondents from these surveys were interviewed personally and by telephone. Additionally, the field for interviews was expanded to include counselors in public school systems. The purpose of such interviews was to confirm information obtained through surveys, provide greater detail and analysis of such information and permit an update of the information.

The task force requested and received the public testimony of experts who had engaged in extensive research directly related to this area of study, and heard testimony from other interested parties who chose to appear before the task force. The task force further received confidential information relating to investiga-

tions or alleged criminal conduct from numerous persons in private hearing pursuant to Section 9-134 of the Code of Virginia.

Throughout the course of the study, consultation with interested parties and with academicians and professionals was maintained. Reliance was made upon organizations at the local, state and national level which research and respond to ritualistic crime. Additionally, training seminars, workshops and similar meetings dealing with ritualistic crime and related issues were reviewed. While such programs provided an expanded base of information about alleged ritualistic activities and options for responding to such activity, they also offered an opportunity to gauge the perceptions and knowledge of those who lecture, teach and attend these meetings.

### Literature Review

Because the Crime Commission's investigation into ritualistic crime necessitated a broad familiarity with the subject as a whole, initial stages focused heavily on the review of literature dealing with the occult, cults and ritualistic practices arising from spiritual belief systems (particularly unconventional beliefs). The research dealt with four broad categories of interest:

1. Various spiritual belief systems and their historical bases.
2. Sources purporting to substantiate specific cases of dangerous ritualistic activities, or otherwise reporting allegations of such activity.
3. Scholarly works describing unconventional belief systems, analyzing ritualistic practices or consequences of such practices, or posturing solutions to adverse consequences arising from these belief systems.
4. Formal studies seeking to quantify the existence of a problem with ritualistic behavior, identify the nature or causes of such problem, or propose alternatives for responding to the adverse affects of ritualistic crime.

The initial research objective involved definitional concerns. In order to properly differentiate between various belief systems it was necessary to gain some understanding of their goals and philosophies. To ascertain the scope of ritual crime an examination of the numerous allegations was required.

This understanding also provided the basis for evaluation of claims regarding specific groups engaged in ritualistic practices. Ultimately, these sources helped to identify both the causes of ritual crime and approaches for response to it. As the study progressed, subject matter was narrowed considerably to focus on current research efforts, recent accounts of ritualistic abuses and other newly published materials.

A list of references is appended to this report. Such reference list includes those sources cited most often as well as those the task force found to be most credible and relevant to this study. Inclusion of a particular source does not represent an endorsement by this task force of the work or its author.

## V. DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

Too often literature, or speakers, dealing with the subject of ritual abuse, "deviant" religious practices and criminal acts motivated by non-traditional belief systems utilize language which is insufficiently defined, and perhaps in some cases deliberately vague, to refer to their subject matter. Such terms as "occult," "cult," "cultism," "satanic" and "ritualistic" are regularly used by therapists, law enforcement officers and others who speak or write about the aforementioned activities.

Two distinct problems arise from this usage. Identification of certain activities by reference to one or another of these terms is often made without defining the term in question. The connotation is left to the subjective perception or imagination of the listener. Further, many different and diverse beliefs and practices are grouped into a single category, and referenced with one or more of these titles. Both tendencies exacerbate and perpetuate the confusion and debate which necessarily pervades subject matter as controversial as this. The terms which are used to describe these various activities possess distinct meanings and should not be used interchangeably. Additionally, the activities themselves are not inherently related and reference to them as such makes quantification and analysis impossible.

This ubiquitous ambiguity necessitated of the task force that it define both the subject matter to which it would devote itself and the terminology to be used in this study. While the term "ritual crime" is used by many in conflicting fashion, it was adopted for the purposes of this study with a specific and limited definition. Thus, throughout the course of the study and within this report "ritual crime," and "ritualistic crime," have been used to connote the criminal behavior which is derived from or motivated by a specific spiritual belief system and the practices or ceremonies with which it is associated. Dangerous activities associated with these practices which are not presently prohibited by criminal law have been referred to as "ritualistic" behavior.

In this context, the fact that commission of a crime involves some ritual or rituals does not in itself make it a "ritual crime." The use by some individual of a modus operandi in commission of a criminal act would not cause such act to fall under the purview of this study. Only if these acts are driven by, or are the result of, a spiritual belief system does "ritual crime" apply as such term is employed by this task force. In no way is this definition meant to represent universal application of the phrase. Rather, it provides the reader with a clear notion of the task force's reference point in the study of this subject.

Other terms are applied in their more traditional fashion, unless accompanied by specific explanation. Where "cult" is used in this report the term assumes the common definition of a group engaged in an unorthodox system or community of religious worship. The occult may refer to anything of a supernatural nature.

While satanism is of the occult, it is merely one of many such supernatural belief systems. The use of this various terminology is not directed at a specific group or belief system, nor does it necessarily carry with it connotations of criminal conduct. To avoid undue inferences, occult or cult activity of a criminal nature is explicitly referenced as such.

## **VI. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ADDRESSED**

The task force assumed a sweeping responsibility in attempting to address this relatively unexplored area of criminal justice. Concerns relating to ritual crime manifest themselves not only in law enforcement and in the courts, but in schools and the mental health community as well. In seeking to examine and respond to these concerns the task force endeavored to determine:

1. The prevalence of ritual crime in the Commonwealth.
2. The prevalence of other dangerous ritualistic activity which may not presently constitute a crime.
3. The geographic concentration of such activity.
4. The nature of such activity; whether it is associated with violent crime, crimes against property, or other crimes, and to what degree.
5. The nature of other states' experiences with ritual crime, both in terms of the extent of such activity and the means by which such states address it.
6. Whether existing criminal statutes adequately address adverse ritual activity in the Commonwealth.
7. Whether measures beyond the criminal code need be employed to address adverse affects of ritual activity in the Commonwealth.

## **VII. BACKGROUND DISCUSSION**

The topic of ritualistic crime ignites strong sentiment on all sides of the issue. The controversy is only heightened by the fact that many allegations of pernicious activity involve ideas and concepts which, for some people, constitute deeply held religious beliefs. As a result, both the investigation by the task force and the production of this report required carefully crafted guidelines and objectives. In order to pursue an effective investigation into conduct which may represent a real danger to the citizens of this Commonwealth, seek out remedies for individuals who suffer from participation in or consequences of dangerous ritualistic practices, and preserve the rights of all persons, the task force defined

and limited its investigation to practices which legitimately fall within the purview of the state.

In researching this topic the task force was not interested in representing a particular viewpoint. Rather, the goal was to make a comprehensive but objective determination as to the prevalence of ritualistic crime in Virginia and assess alternative means for addressing whatever problem was ultimately found to exist.

While written works dealing with mystical practices, ritualistic abuse, unpopular religions and allegations of various related criminal endeavors abound, relatively few credible studies have been conducted on the nature and prevalence of these phenomena. Statistics regarding the frequency of ritualistic activities proliferate, yet sound bases for these numbers are rarely offered. A fundamental, yet common, problem is the failure to sufficiently identify the topic of discussion.

The occult is an umbrella term for supernatural or mystical beliefs and practices. To the degree that conventional religions rely upon non-physical entities and conviction by faith over reason they share this umbrella. This does not mean that all supernatural belief systems are equal, or that they represent comparable value systems. In fact "occultism" is generally referred to in the context of unconventional systems of belief. It is important, however, not to confuse unconventional beliefs with illegal practices. The latter is the primary focus of this report.

Those who write or lecture about ritual crime frequently do not make the distinction between criminal acts and non-criminal practices involving occultic or ritualistic elements. Rather, the discussion focuses on participation in belief systems which are deemed aberrant and viewed as potentially leading to dangerous or illegal conduct. Consequently, many spiritual belief systems are grouped together and subsequently treated with a single point of reference. Though these belief systems often have very disparate goals, values, and practices they are treated in comparable fashion.

Some of the belief systems most often cited as falling into this group include witchcraft or wicca, satanism, santeria, voodoo, palo mayombe as well as other neo-pagan and syncretic religions. The treatment of believers or practitioners of these faiths as somehow comparable immediately confuses the discussion of ritual crime. Most do not belong to a major unified organization and are not represented by a single entity.

Thus belief systems will differ dramatically even among individuals who claim to adhere to a specific religion. This is particularly true of the more generic titles. The satanism cloak, for example, is cast over practices and beliefs which are utterly unrelated. Depending upon one's point of reference, origins, values and goals of two so-called satanic religions may contrast completely. "Satanism" has

now been adopted by many as a term of reference for various individuals or groups espousing beliefs in magick, witchcraft or any of the other belief systems mentioned above. Such application is inaccurate and unproductive. Further, the identification of these groups (or the members thereof) as inherently criminal is a fallacy which will not be perpetuated here. A sweeping generalization regarding unpopular or unconventional belief systems is neither an accurate portrayal nor an effective method for assessing perpetration of ritual crime. Consequently, this report will not examine these many individual belief systems in-depth (please note, however, that the reference list appended hereto will direct interested parties to other sources which do so). Rather, focus will be directed towards criminal activity which may be traceable to particular ritual practices.

A broadly used classification scheme has evolved which places adherents of these belief systems into one of four distinct categories. The categories are:

1. **Dabblers** - Those who exhibit superficial, and usually transitory, interest in a belief system but have neither developed a significant understanding of it nor become substantially committed to it. Alternatively, the dabbler may exhibit superficial interest in the occult generally (as opposed to a single belief system).
2. **Self-stylists** - Those who exhibit a greater degree of interest in one or more belief systems but have generally not developed a significant knowledge and understanding of the respective systems. Individuals who fall into this category develop personal belief systems encompassing elements of multiple religions and embellished by their own ideas and concepts.
3. **Religious Traditionalists** - Members of an established church or religion which is legally recognized and does not formally advocate criminal activities.
4. **"Cult" Members** - Those who adhere to an established belief system and belong to an organization which advocates and encourages certain criminal activities. By necessity their practices are typically covert.

Depending upon the particular advocate the category title may differ, though these are the most popular. The accompanying characteristics also may deviate somewhat from one speaker to the next. Again, the definitions provided here approximate those most frequently offered. Persons being characterized in this manner may not fit exclusively into a single category or may cross lines from one to another. For example dabblers, due to their relative ignorance and lack of commitment, often assume the characteristics of a self-stylist. Nevertheless, a self-stylist is generally regarded as more involved and more dangerous than a dabbler. In fact, some authorities contend that the self-stylist is the most dangerous of the four types because he is wholly unpredictable and may exploit selective elements of various belief systems as justification for violent or criminal conduct. An extreme example of this archetype is viewed by some as possessing severe personality problems and mental instability.

The religious traditionalists are labeled as such by virtue of their reliance upon an established religion. Members of this group may or may not belong to a recognized church. They will, however, possess a reasonable level of knowledge about, and commitment to, a given belief system. In either case, their practices are legitimate insofar as they decline to advocate illegal activities. Some authorities on ritual crime contend that members of apparently legitimate religious organizations actually engage in covert criminal conduct contrary to the stated position, but with the sanction, of their church.

This scheme of categorizing individuals has a number of drawbacks, not least of which is the implicit delegitimization of any organization placed in the third category (the mere mention of a given belief system in this context tends to lend to it a negative connotation). The focus is not on ritual crime per se, but on the belief system. Still, it is used so pervasively in discussions of ritual crime that it demands mention and may actually provide a useful means of differentiating levels of involvement in ritual crime.

Important to note, however, is the tendency by some to brand particular religious beliefs as inherently unhealthy. Participation, to whatever degree, in unconventional or minority belief systems is viewed by many as an undesirable event in itself. The mere interest in spiritual beliefs which are not associated with accepted religious norms, particularly in youth, is presumed to lead to dangerous or criminal behavior. Frequently evidence of interest in an unconventional belief system provokes parents or other concerned parties to assert the existence of a causal relationship between delinquent acts and the belief system itself where none has been established.

Various activities which may not even indicate an interest in the occult are also sometimes cited as engendering unhealthy beliefs or thought patterns. Among these are certain musical groups and fantasy or role playing games. Popular music may contain lyrics which mention occult subjects but which young people enjoy simply for its entertainment value. Likewise, participation in fantasy games (as with any game) most often represents a form of entertainment and nothing more. The few credible studies addressed to research of this topic have failed to point up a causal link between music or games and illegal practices.

### **Allegations Regarding Ritual Crime**

As already noted, substantial controversy surrounds claims of ritual crime. Contentions concern not only the prevalence of ritual crime but conceptual frameworks for viewing the topic. The very nature of ritual crime is at issue, spawning disparate and divergent viewpoints as to the existence and intentions of movements and organizations implicated in such activity. It is necessary therefore to identify some of the perspectives which predominate this debate.



At one end of the spectrum are those who conclude that ritual crime, in essence, does not exist. Subscribers to this view hold that spiritual motivations generally do not drive criminal conduct and that only isolated incidents of such crime actually occur. They suggest that alleged incidents either did not transpire at all or are susceptible of alternative (more viable) explanations, and that victims of ritual crime are mistaken in their beliefs, misled into false beliefs or deliberately fabricate stories for their own purposes.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who recognize the existence of a broad-based organization, or multiple organizations, engaged in habitual acts of crime (violent and otherwise) premised on tenants of a given belief system. Adherents of this position point to statements of numerous persons across the North American continent claiming personal knowledge of ritual crime. Most often these individuals claim to be victims of powerful cult groups. The lack of physical evidence of ritual crimes is explained by the effectiveness of these groups in destroying or concealing such evidence. Cited crimes include fraud, kidnapping, torture and murder (often in the form of sacrifice) as well as habitual acts of physical abuse. The perpetration of such acts would constitute a massive criminal conspiracy which is pursued not for the sake of money but in the interest of spiritual fulfillment.

Nevertheless, there are some who maintain that the existence of this criminal network is actually motivated by a quest for power and that the spiritual belief system is a subterfuge employed to assure the continued allegiance of participants and the silence of victims. Often the allegations indicate multigenerational participation in these cults by family members.

The third group might be identified as objective observers; persons who initiate their research without a personal position or interest. These are frequently academics whose goal is to determine the verifiability of claims and the veracity of witnesses, as well as the causes, effects and relationships associated with the phenomenon of ritual crime. Sociologists and mental health researchers populate this group. Also falling into the group, however, are criminal justice and other governmental or public interest entities. Members of this group recognize reason for concern regarding ritual crime simply because allegations are so wide-spread and therefore demand examination.

Unlike the first two groups, members of this one do not possess a uniform position as to the prevalence of ritual crime. Depending upon the focus of study such a determination may not even be an issue. The orientation is on the belief in existence of ritual crime as much as validation of that belief. It is fair to say, however, that both of the extreme positions are frequently rejected as unsubstantiated.

Finally there are those who perceive a threat from unconventional belief systems based upon the clash that those beliefs and values represent to their own religious views. Insofar as purely spiritual bases for these objections are prof-

ferred this group resides outside the focus of this study. The task force takes no position on the preference of one religion over another, or upon the legitimacy of religious beliefs or practices except where they encourage behavior which represents a threat to the rights or safety of society or the safety of the practitioner himself.

Numerous advocates across the United States and Canada have offered various perspectives on ritual crime, based upon their particular objectives in examining this subject. Most can be placed in one of the general groups described above. This task force initiated its investigation with the posture of an objective observer. The study focused upon the specific issues outlined in this report and the methodology adopted by the task force, described under section four of this report, was developed in response to these issues.

## VIII. SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS AND TESTIMONY

### Surveys

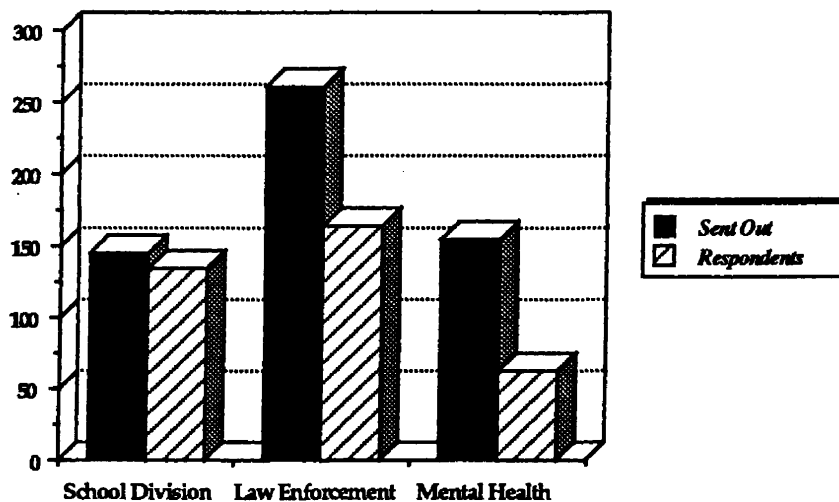
In an attempt to quantify and document actual cases of ritual crime in Virginia a broad-based survey of the Commonwealth was conducted. This consisted initially of state-wide surveys to three separate segments of the population: law enforcement agencies, public school systems and licensed practitioners within the various disciplines of the mental health field. (See Appendix B for survey instruments).

All 174 chiefs of police, 87 law enforcement sheriffs, and 145 school districts in Virginia received a copy of the survey. Additionally a random sample of 155 licensed mental health practitioners in Virginia, representing all geographical areas of the Commonwealth, were polled. The questionnaires were designed to elicit information relating to the number of reports of ritual activity, the type of activity, the number of participants or perpetrators, the manner in which reports were addressed and other information concerning the respondent's knowledge of, experience with and concern about ritual crime. Jurisdictions were broken down into regions, utilizing the classification maintained by Virginia State Police (See Appendix C ).

Through the compilation of responses to these surveys the task force hoped to provide reliable data for determining the prevalence of ritual crime, in contrast to the widely varying, and typically anecdotal, reports which are so pervasive. That said, a caveat must be interjected. Schools and law enforcement agencies do not generally maintain discrete records of ritualistic crime. Therapists represent only their clientele, rather than a specific geographical portion of the general population. Nevertheless, respondents generally exhibited excellent understanding of the information sought by the survey and provided effective responses. Subsequent follow-up interviews further clarified and confirmed the data.

Of the 561 surveys distributed 361 were returned (See Appendix D for compilation of survey data), representing a response rate of sixty-five percent. School divisions returned 135 surveys meaning that over 90% of the state's schools are represented. The sheriffs and police departments returned over 60% of the law enforcement surveys.

**Survey Response Rate**

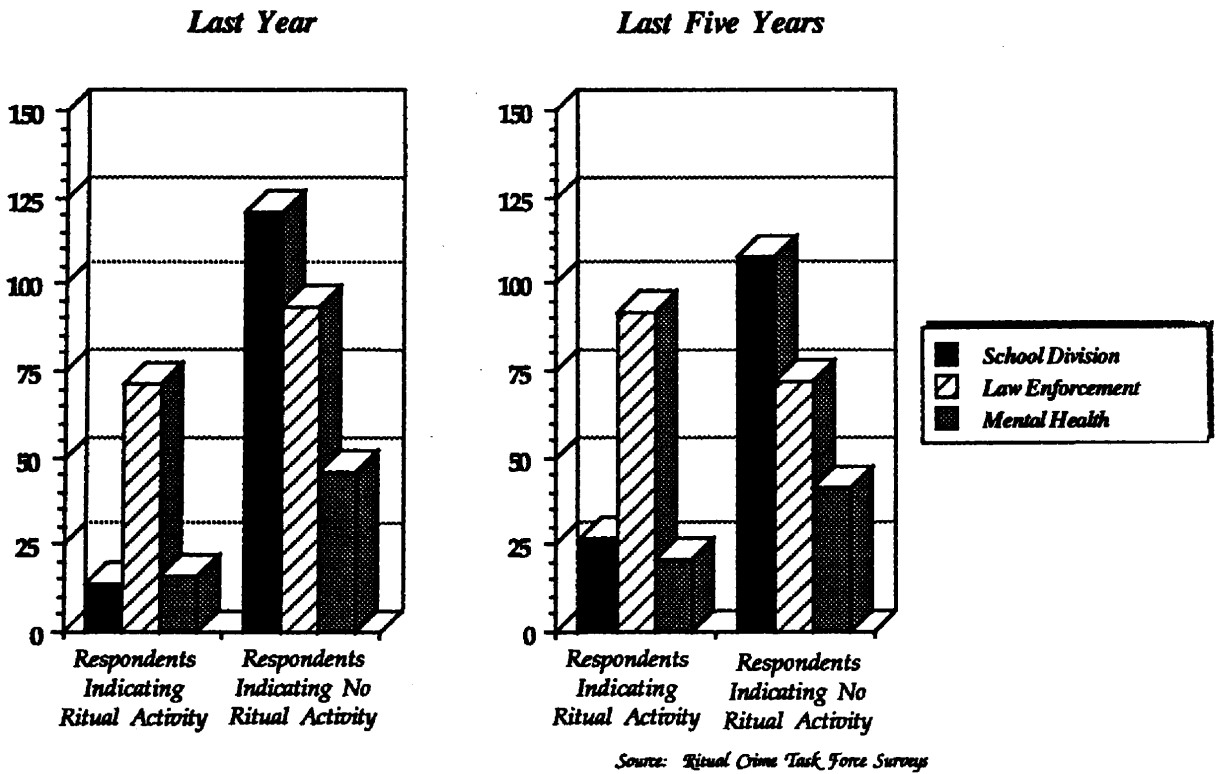


*Source: Ritual Crime Task Force Survey*

Of all law enforcement agencies responding to the survey, 57% reported no incidents of ritual crime over the past year. However, approximately the same number reported some incidence of ritual crime over the most recent five year period. 43% of the respondents answered that no reports of ritual crime had come to their attention over the entire reporting period. A mere 10% of school divisions reported any incidence of activity which might be associated with ritualistic involvement over the last year, while fewer than 20% indicated such activity over the preceding five years. 25% of the mental health practitioners indicated that clients in the past year had been involved in ritual activity and just over 33% of the respondents indicated clients in the past five years had been so involved.

While approximately 40% of law enforcement agencies reported some incidence of ritual crime in their jurisdiction over the past year, the vast majority of these indicated that the number of incidents was fewer than five (53 reported in this category, compared to 18 for all other categories combined). Additionally, over 65% of these reports of ritual crime were said to have an unclear association with occult or ritual practices or, alternatively, could have another explanation.

## Incidence of Ritual Activity

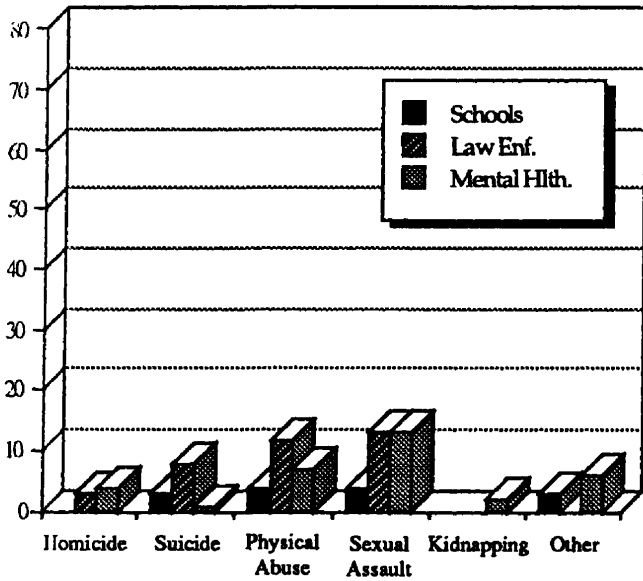


The types of ritual crimes most often reported involved graffiti, vandalism and trespassing. Crimes against persons were far less frequently reported. Such crimes typically involved sexual and physical abuse. Reports of homicide were extremely rare.

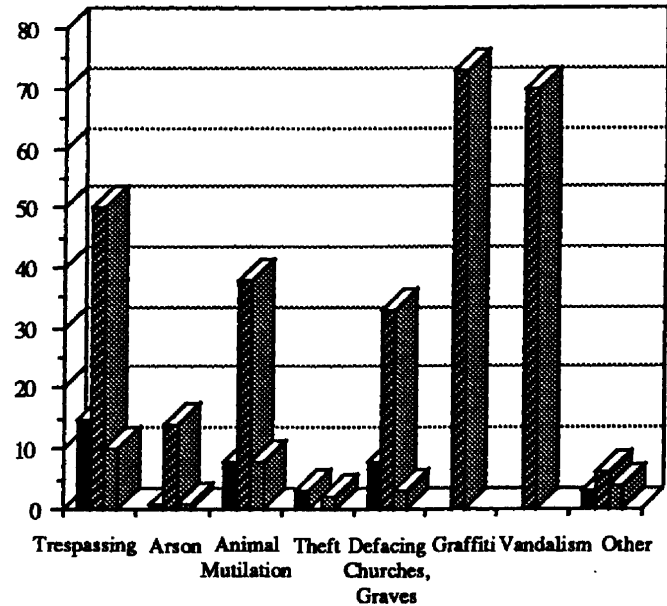
Though relatively few school jurisdictions reported any behavioral problems by students which they associated with occult involvement, data by those that did report such activity closely paralleled responses by law enforcement agencies. However, fully 84% of the perpetrators fell into a category of "alleged perpetrators" while only 6% were adjudicated as such (the others were categorized as victims).

Among mental health professionals who reported clients as being involved in ritual activity, a greater percentage of incidents were said to involve violent crime. As with the other surveys, physical assault and sexual assault were by far the most frequent violent crimes. Also consistent with the other surveys' findings were the percentage of property crimes related to offenses of vandalism, graffiti and trespassing (Such crimes, again, represented a disproportionate share of the offenses).

### Ritual Crimes Against Persons



### Other Ritual Crimes



Source: Ritual Crime Task Force Surveys

Questionnaires to juvenile detention facilities and to local and regional social service departments were also distributed. Responses from juvenile detention centers invariably indicated the lack of any significant activity. The survey of social service departments, while requesting information about the level of activity, was focused primarily upon the response taken and suggestions about means of addressing ritual crime, eliciting written responses not susceptible of quantification. Consequently responses from these surveys were not compiled for numerical analysis.

Many of the respondents to the social services questionnaire indicated that they had encountered youth expressing some interest in the occult. However, most of these respondents stated that only one or two such cases had come to their attention. Furthermore they suggested that this interest frequently was not associated with ritual crime. When such an association was alleged, animal mutilation was oft cited and physical assault of persons was occasionally reported.

Despite the limited ritual crime involvement evidenced by these responses, a number of those answering the questionnaire suggested that the most effective aid for social service workers would be information on evaluating and treating youth who were involved in dangerous occult practices.

## **Interviews**

The high response rate, as well as the detailed nature of the information provided, was indicative of significant and useful data. To further clarify and verify this data, a number of selected respondents were interviewed via telephone and in person. Geographic locations with high population density and areas which reported significant activity were the primary targets of such interviews. Typically they were one and the same. Though respondents who indicated little or no ritual crime in their jurisdictions were also interviewed, relatively fewer of them were chosen.

As might be expected, interviewees reiterated responses they had provided on surveys, but the bases for these positions were not always comparable. The follow-up investigations elicited information falling into two basic groups: well defined current or recent cases and testimonials of historic or on-going abuse.

Generally, law enforcement officers and school officials were able to offer accounts of specific misconduct which they associated with ritualistic practices. Because of the nature of mental health practitioners' work, their information on ritual crime was invariably second-hand and did not involve investigation into specific allegations. Rather, accounts by clients constituted the sole basis for their responses.

School officials typically referred serious offenses to law enforcement authorities. For less serious offenses parents or other custodial parties were notified. Verification of occult influence was not generally made by school officials.

Law enforcement officers who actually completed the surveys and who were chosen for interviews were those reputed as being experienced in the investigation of ritual crime. In many cases these officers were in possession of indicia of belief systems which they felt linked the crime to the belief system itself. They conceded that in few cases could they conclusively prove such a connection. Though this evidence sometimes indicated a suspect's interest in an unconventional belief system, more often than not it failed to substantiate a causal link between those beliefs and commission of the offense in question. Further, because perpetrators were not apprehended in most cases, investigators were unable to definitively assign a motive to the crime. Often they relied upon factors merely suggesting existence of a belief system.

The presence of certain graffiti at the crime scene, or of particular clothes, tatoos or scars on the suspect led law officers to label the offense as a ritual crime. The occurrence of the event on a specific date (one of many listed on a "satanic calendar") was also a popular basis for assigning ritual crime status, even where no suspect was apprehended and other corroborating evidence was unavailable.

Definitive documentation of ritual crime was rare. In no case was there conclusive evidence of homicide in Virginia which could be causally linked to the influence of a spiritual belief system or interest in the occult.

Crimes of vandalism, trespassing, and graffiti (those most frequently cited as possessing occult overtones) had the clearest link to occult influence. Even where these crimes were reported, follow-up investigations revealed that an occult influence was often suspected rather than proved.

Results of the follow-up interviews indicated that ritual crime in Virginia, to the degree that it is found to exist, is limited primarily to individuals or very small groups (who might be characterized as dabblers) and consists of trespassing, graffiti and other vandalism.

Follow-up interviews exposed no evidence of any broad conspiracy of ritual crime. Local law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth and experts within the Virginia State Police insisted that their investigations failed to uncover any organized network of crime which could be attributed to the influences of a spiritual belief system.

Greater in-depth review of survey responses by members of the mental health field revealed ritual crime claims falling into the second group. Follow-up interviews of these respondents evidenced a substantively different body of information. Generally these claims involved information derived from clients, were anecdotal in nature and lacked detail concerning dates and locations of alleged offenses. Additionally, they involved incidents that were years or decades old. The nature of such claims makes verification exceedingly difficult if not impossible. It also suggests an aspect of this phenomenon which is fundamentally different from the more specific allegations provided by law enforcement, schools and social services agencies.

### **Testimony**

On a number of occasions the task force received testimony involving allegations of ritual crime. Academics, law enforcement officers and alleged victims came before the task force in public and private hearings (authorized by § 9-134 of the Code of Virginia), the latter being necessitated both by concern associated with the safety of certain witnesses and the potentially sensitive nature of material relating to on-going criminal enterprises and investigations.

Evidence received in such meetings mirrored the conflicting opinions and accounts encountered throughout the study. Disclosures by therapists and self-described victims of ritual crime included allegations of nationwide conspiracies (as described under section seven of this report). Alleged offenses included kidnapping, murder, and physical and emotional abuse, though witnesses were typically unable to provide specific details as to locations of events, dates on which they occurred or names of victims other than themselves.

Law enforcement officers (from the national, state and local level) appearing before the task force challenged these claims. While some of these witnesses suggested the possibility of criminal activity between state lines, all rejected as

untenable the existence of an organized crime network as pervasive as that being asserted. Citing the lack of physical evidence, missing persons or other indications of the alleged crimes, these officers disputed the claims of criminal activity and therefore failed to reach the more specific issue of whether such alleged crime had as its origin occult influence.

Therapists who claimed experience in treating victims of ritual crime offered contrasting positions on the veracity of victim's testimony. While some expressed the conviction that much of this testimony was accurate, others noted that victims of abuse, as well as those suffering various emotional and psychological conditions, may assert such claims for numerous reasons.

In its totality the testimony reaffirmed the need for separate discussion of concerns experienced by law enforcement and those encountered by professionals in the field of mental health.

## **IX. THE MENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVE**

Based upon the number of claims of ritual abuse emanating from therapists and their clients it is evident that significant concerns exist in this arena. The cumulative research (including interviews with and testimony of numerous licensed mental health practitioners) indicates that issues relating to ritual crime in the mental health field possess their own unique series of problems.

Because therapists are necessarily concerned with treatment issues their initial response to clients who report ritual abuse is to seek a determination as to what effect this has had on the client. Ascertaining the validity of the reports may be important in treatment planning, but it is not the objective of the therapist to attain or compile evidence in support of a criminal investigation or prosecution. Indeed, attempts in that regard may tend to impede effective treatment.

Where patients allege being subjected to abuse, claims of ritual crime take on a new focus, directed at the victim solely. This impacts directly in two ways. While the nature of inquiry differs, the ultimate objectives are also distinct. The mission of law enforcement is at odds with that of the therapist since, for the therapist, challenging a client's story may be inappropriate. It is imperative, however, for law enforcement to establish factual accuracy with regard to alleged criminal offenses. Additionally, the goal for addressing complaints directed to therapists varies from that sought by the criminal justice system. Law enforcement agencies exist to prevent, investigate and prosecute crime. In the majority of cases the therapist is likely never to seek nor encounter his client's victimizer. Typically only if the patient himself is the perpetrator of crime will the therapist address this side of the equation.



This dichotomy is of particular significance for those attempting to establish the true extent of ritual crime because claims involving the most serious and widespread offenses derive predominantly from the realm of mental health. Often these claims are never reported to law enforcement at all, or only after a therapist has elicited the information.

But if the nature of therapists' work makes more difficult the verification of claims involving ritual crime the concerns reflected by such claims remain just as real. Unfortunately, controversy respecting treatment of clients reporting ritual abuse is as intense among therapists as is the subject of ritual crime among the broader general population. Actually, mental health professionals who espouse any opinion about the ritual crime phenomenon tend to fall into one of the three earlier referenced categories (described under section seven).

However, while these professionals point to many of the same factors as others in debate over the true extent of ritual crime, the discussion assumes a higher level of complexity. The causes and affects of victims' mental conditions, and their impact on claims of ritual crime, adds fuel to the fire. The inquiry shifts readily from questions about the victim's veracity to issues concerning their beliefs.

Just as the therapist's role contrasts with that of the law enforcer so to is the patient's role incomparable to that of the average citizen in report of a crime. The patient is there for the specific purpose of seeking treatment, and therefore properly views communications within the doctor-patient relationship as unique. These communications are neither directed to, nor intended for, an officer's ears. Further, the conditions for which the patient seeks help often affect his ability to perceive and process information, which in turn relates to the reliability of information relayed by such patient.

The credibility to which a therapist attributes a patient's claims of abuse will depend substantially on the pathology for which such patient is diagnosed. Manifestation of psychosis may evidence distortions of reality apparent on their face, either because they involve inaccuracies with which the therapist is personally familiar or because the reports follow an inherently illogical path. Many claims of ritual abuse appear to be so bizarre that psychosis is assumed. If objective testing does not indicate the presence of such psychosis, however, the therapist might well attribute greater potential credibility to a patient's claims of abuse.

Other bases for questioning credibility of patient's accounts might include malingering patients or a factitious disorder. In these cases the patient will deliberately fabricate stories to serve an ulterior motive. Lack of sincerity on the patient's part makes uncovering discrepancies in his stories less difficult than is the case with other psychological conditions which involve more deeply imbedded memories or beliefs.

Victims of abuse are increasingly being diagnosed with dissociative disorders. Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) in particular has come to be viewed as a common manifestation of severe abuse. Substantial debate remains, however, as to the prevalence of MPD. In cases of abuse MPD would typically manifest itself as an adaptive ego defense mechanism. Alter-egos are created to assume various roles in the individual's life. Borderline Personality Disorder, which has traditionally been heavily associated with victims of severe habitual abuse, has taken a backseat as a diagnosis in the offices of many therapists who are gaining increased knowledge and understanding of MPD.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, (DSM III-R), revised in 1987, now recognizes MPD as the essential feature of certain dissociative disorders and one response to severe abuse. Among mental health professionals, however, there are many who feel that some patients reporting abuse are being misdiagnosed as sufferers of MPD. That some therapists have a high concentration of clients diagnosed as MPD in their caseloads is beyond dispute. There are those who point to this fact as support for their hypothesis. On the other hand, therapists known as experts in dealing with MPD patients tend to receive referrals for these clients so that they may be expected to have a disproportionate number of such patients.

Continued publicity stressing the link between ritual abuse and MPD has popularized the notion that MPD is the result of ritual abuse. In fact, this has not been firmly established. A broadly accepted model, Kluft's Four-Factor Theory, suggests the interrelation of various factors as resulting in the disorder. Unfortunately the converse to the position has also been implied; that all MPD sufferers are in fact victims of ritual abuse. Yet this is only one of many traumas which may precipitate the disorder. Since introduction of his theory Kluft has published findings of a decade and a half of MPD case studies which indicate that approximately one third of these patients reported ritual abuse (Kluft, 1988). He goes on to say that this third included many of the more complex cases. These findings suggest, however, that the majority of those suffering from MPD did not become so encumbered as the result of ritual abuse.

Whether patients are properly diagnosed or not, a problem which may arise from the perception of these individuals as victims of ritual abuse is the tendency to conclude that each such patient necessarily represents one more in a growing throng of ritual crime victims. This potential is enhanced as these diagnosis increase. But because not all MPD patients are victims of ritual abuse, and because there is good reason to question the veracity of the accounts of MPD patients, such a conclusion would be premature (pending other corroborating evidence).

An essential component of MPD is the susceptibility to autohypnotic trance experiences. This susceptibility to trance aids therapists in the hypnosis which is often used in abreaction (a method used by therapists to elicit repressed emotions). A number of ramifications ensue from this proclivity towards trance

states. Persons under hypnosis are more highly suggestible. Studies affirm that they are also more inclined to accept the accuracy of information which is obtained while in the hypnotic state. Because elements of fantasy are likely to exist to one degree or another in the evolution of the disorder, persons suffering from MPD may report with complete conviction events which either did not occur or were distorted by their perceptions.

Also significant is the fact that most MPD patients who report ritual abuse state that they were the object of such abuse at a young age. The limited cognitive functions of young children permit manipulation by adults which may convince the child that a certain series of events occurred when in fact they were contrived (that is, the event in question appeared to be real when it was mere theatrics). Even innocent acts of adults may be distorted in the minds of children. Because adults who recount these childhood experiences view them through children's eyes their stories retain such distortions. This factor may help to explain certain accounts of ritual crime which, if accepted at face value, would be physically impossible.

While the evidence in support of organized ritual crime is found almost exclusively within the mental health community (in the form of testimony from patients and their therapists), there are many practitioners who reject the existence of such a broad-based criminal conspiracy but do assert experience suggestive of more limited ritual crime. Much of the information in support of their opinions comes not from victims but from perpetrators of what is described as ritual crime. These crimes are most often property crimes of a relatively minor nature, consistent with the information obtained through surveying schools, law enforcement and social services.

Patients who report participation in illegal endeavors, and who also demonstrate interest in the occult, may cause therapists to jump to the conclusion that the delinquent acts involve ritual crime when in actuality the belief system plays no part in the criminal acts. There is some evidence, however, that troubled youth experience a disproportionate interest in so-called aberrant belief systems.

Clinical studies indicate that youth who turn to occult beliefs reflective of socially ostracized value systems tend to exhibit antisocial behavior generally, and may be self-destructive. Self-esteem is likely to be abnormally low, suggesting the youth's attempt to gain greater power, acceptance and confidence through his participation in the occult and groups who engage in associated practices. Also demonstrated was a high incidence of substance abuse among these individuals. Clinical evidence does not support the conclusion that either drug abuse or a general interest in the occult leads to ritual crime. The research does suggest the possibility that drug abuse and participation in aberrant belief systems can be symptomatic of psychological problems.

There is no question that psychotic and sociopathic persons who engage in various atrocities involving loss of human life may be associated with belief

systems which rationalize or explain their behavior. Such persons may fit the model of a "self-stylist" who integrates the concepts of other religions into a personal (and self-serving) belief system. In this case it is not a particular belief system which influences their behavior. Rather, the behavior is a result of the interaction between their illness and personal belief system, and may itself affect that illness and belief system.

Clearly there remains substantial debate within the field as to the extent to which ritual crimes occur. Some of this debate is attributable to the same definitional problems which generally plague this area of study. The ritual abuse often cited by therapists, for example, encompasses interfamilial generational abuse. The reason for its characterization as ritual abuse is sometimes due to the bizarre or habitual nature of it, despite the absence of a belief system and associated rituals. Characterization of such abuse as ritual is not incorrect, per se. It may, however, convey false images to other professionals and to the public. And it could certainly ignite challenges to proffered statistics of ritual abuse.

As greater understanding of physical and sexual abuse of children is gained, it is becoming ever more evident that the proclivity for such abuse is passed from parents to children, one generation to the next. Thus, that generational abuse within families occurs seems unquestionable. This fact does not establish, nor necessarily make more likely, the existence of organized ritual abuse. The increasing publicity accorded ritual abuse claims, however, heightens the likelihood that child abuse will be seen in this light. The added dimension of mental illness, which may lead to distortion of actual events, only aggravates the problem. Recognition of this reality does not require one to reject all claims of ritual abuse but should caution the need for objective evaluation of such claims based upon available facts.

## **X. FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPERTY DAMAGE**

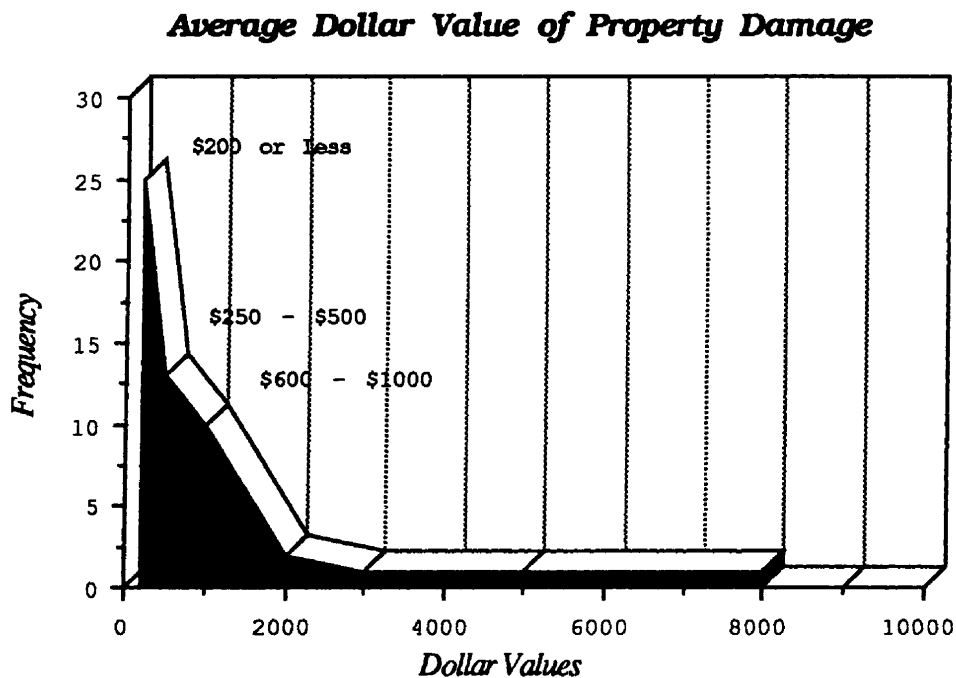
In attempting to assess the fiscal impact to the Commonwealth of property damage resulting from ritual crime, law enforcement agencies were requested to report the average dollar value of property damage for all ritual crimes investigated by their agency. (See Appendix D for survey results).

The subsequent review of data provided by law enforcement on ritual crimes indicated that many of the incidents reported as ritual crime were not conclusively determined to be so. Consequently the level of property damage reflected by survey responses is somewhat inflated.

To accurately reflect damage costs of established ritual crime incidents, more serious crimes which are not demonstrated to be occult related should be discounted. Estimates could then properly be limited primarily to cases involving acts of vandalism and graffiti. As such acts are conducted for the most part in or upon abandoned property, fiscal damage would be negligible. Because

available data does not permit precise evaluation of property damage within such constraints, survey results are being relied upon to provide a general average figure for damage costs per incident.

In a very few cases disproportionately high damage costs were reported, raising the overall average. In most cases the value of damage to property was relatively small. The single figure reported most often was fifty dollars per an incident. By far, the greatest number of respondents reported damages as being \$200 or less per alleged incident of ritually related crimes against property.



## XI. EXPERIENCES OF OTHER STATES

Though allegations of ritual crime have been pursued vigorously on the national level and within many states, few states have attempted to systematically assess the actual level of such activity within their jurisdictions. Anecdotal reports of ritual crime appear widely and with some regularity but are accompanied by very little quantitative analysis.

California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning produced a research effort which is largely descriptive of ritual crime and which presents the various perspectives on it. Their conclusions are that while each of the perspectives may share some truth, they are frequently dominated by "fears, emotion, spiritual beliefs and hearsay." (Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1989-90).

The Michigan State Police conducted a comprehensive survey of all law enforcement agencies in the state. The survey "broadly defined occult" and requested information relating to any of a number of crimes against property and persons. The report concluded that no causal link could be established between occult practices and offenses of homicide or suicide. Consistent with results of the surveys by this task force, the crimes most frequently reported were graffiti and vandalism, while animal mutilations were also frequently reported. Because follow-up interviews were conducted only in cases involving deaths the authors declined to offer a position as to the validity of other reports in terms of occult influence.

The largest survey to date was recently conducted by the Child Abuse Research Project at the University of Buffalo with the aid of a federal grant. This survey was comprehensive in its geographical scope, covering numerous agencies throughout the nation. It also generated a substantial quantity of information, though its subject matter was limited to crimes against children. The Research Project is in the process of compiling its data and will publish findings within the year.

The limited reliable information presently available fails to substantiate any significant incidence of ritual crime in the United States. However, because the available figures are so limited, nor can this information be said to disprove the existence of ritual crime.

Some few states have sought to control certain ritualistic practices through statutory enactments. Criminal laws passed by Idaho, Louisiana, Texas and Illinois enhance penalties for engaging in specified forms of abuse, mutilation and cannibalism during ceremonies or in a ritualistic manner as defined by statute, but have had little success in convictions heretofore. The acts proscribed in these statutes are criminal in nature, independent of the ritual element. No state presently possesses a statute which criminalizes conduct premised solely on its ceremonial nature. Legislative memoranda and reports from a number of states detail research which emphasizes the constitutional prohibition against doing so.

## XII. ANALYSIS

Interest in the occult in certain segments of the population, particularly among youth, has become apparent in recent years with the increasing cries of concern about such involvement. Whether this interest is on the rise, or whether the prominent attention focused upon it has created greater awareness of such interest is not clear. It is likely the case that media stories focusing on occult involvement have actually spurred curiosity about occult topics, though this media attention may simply reflect the increased interest.

Among young people who do develop some interest in unconventional belief systems the vast majority are "dabblers" who will abandon this fascination in

relatively short order. For some it is an innocent diversion; for others it may represent adolescent rebellion. Some few, however, immerse themselves in concepts and value systems which appear to parents to be unhealthy or even dangerous.

Insofar as belief systems represent values which run contrary to social norms they will be looked upon by many with substantial disapproval. Likewise, minority religions by their nature clash with established notions of acceptable worship. When activity which threatens the physical welfare and safety of society is tied to one or more particular belief systems apprehension is inevitable.

Much of the examination of ritual crime among writers and lecturers today has as its basis an evaluation of belief systems in terms of their "deviance." Unfortunately, the standard which is applied for such evaluation is often a subjective one. Challenges to foreign or distasteful ideas are premised on vague assertions of threats which may be unproved or altogether groundless.

Because the judgement of another's spiritual beliefs is generally anathema to a fundamental proposition on which our society rests, and which has long been established as a pillar of both federal and state constitutions, charges of this nature must be carefully scrutinized for substance. Criminal law proscribes conduct; a careful line must be drawn between regulation of behavior and the restriction of beliefs.

Certain well publicized cases of violent crimes, such as those committed by Sean Sellers (who attributed his actions to a belief in satan) and the Matamoros murders (described by many as satanic sacrifices but in fact related to an Afro-Caribbean syncretic belief system), are oft cited examples of the dangers which specific belief systems represent to society. Such belief systems, however, are those of the perpetrators of these heinous offenses, personal to them. These are self-stylists who often suffer severe mental illness and invariably rely upon values which are unrepresentative of established belief systems. Thus, the individual, who happens to claim some allegiance to one or another religion, is actually acting upon personal desires and goals.

Regardless of the motive, available evidence suggests that these cases are aberrations. Crimes of this nature are relatively rare and appear to be perpetrated by individuals or small groups acting on their own initiative.

Media reports of these crimes often relate incomplete or inaccurate information and cause some people to look for ritual crime where it doesn't exist. Even trained professionals may categorize a crime as ritually related without sufficient evidence to support this interpretation. The types of symbols and paraphernalia which are customarily relied upon as evidence of ritual crime represent different things to different people and certainly are not always indicative of unique belief systems.

It is as a result of the hyperbole and hysteria, as well as an undue emphasis on belief systems as agents of crime, that investigation into ritual crime is often sidetracked, and objective and effective analysis is defeated. Rather than attacking ritual crime based upon presumptions about certain belief systems, effective crime prevention necessitates aggressive action against practices (be them ritual or otherwise) which have conclusively proved to be criminal in nature or effect. Because mental health professionals are so frequently confronted with claims of ritual crime the potential for being affected by preconceived notions is especially acute. As with other professionals, therapists may accept claims of ritual crime where unwarranted because other elements of the claims are more easily validated. The fact that abuse has occurred does not necessarily confirm allegations of ritual abuse. For treatment purposes this distinction may not be relevant. Indeed it may be important to minimize the distinction in treatment sessions between patient and therapist. But allegations of ritual crime (particularly when evidence fails to support the allegations) can diminish a victim's credibility and may discourage a criminal investigation or prosecution where one is appropriate.

The differing roles of law enforcement and therapy take on special significance in this regard. Ultimately, continued research in the mental health field may permit a better understanding of how ritual abuse affects victims psychologically and what treatment means are most effective. The apparent link between drug abuse, mental illness and ritual crime demonstrates the importance of treatment issues. The debate within the mental health community regarding the viability of ritual abuse claims, however, need not influence law enforcement in the effective performance of their duties. Investigators should not permit wild accusations to distract them from this objective. At the same time, counselors claiming knowledge of ritual crime, whether they be in social services, schools or the private sector, as well as alleged victims of ritual abuse, should not be ignored. On the contrary, ritual crime investigations heretofore evidence the need for cooperation among these populations.

The role of the state should be to encourage a cooperative effort, and continue to educate people on ritual crime. Successful eradication of ritual crime rests with effective enforcement of existing criminal statutes. To the degree that organized crime exists, concentration on spiritual belief systems as a motivation only diverts resources which could more properly be used for deterring such crime. This is particularly true with regard to young people who ban together for commission of crimes. Groups of this nature should elicit a response based upon recent efforts and experience in dealing with youth gangs.

Debate about the extent and nature of ritual crime is bound to persist. It is hoped that the work of this task force will provide an enhanced basis for evaluating these questions while offering constructive suggestions for resolving problems which they represent.



### **XIII. FINDINGS**

**Misconceptions about ritual crime are pervasive.**

Among the general population, and professionals who are in a position to come into contact with perpetrators or victims of ritual crime, there are many inconsistent beliefs and impressions. Misinformation about the values, goals and activities of various minority belief systems is common, and has significant impact on popular perceptions regarding ritual crime.

**Evidence is insufficient to establish the existence of any major conspiracy or organized criminal network based upon an occult or spiritual belief system.**

The cumulative evidence, derived from a comprehensive investigation of ritual crime in the Commonwealth of Virginia, has not uncovered or indicated any network of ritual crime.

**Unpopular belief systems are erroneously associated with criminal behavior.**

Where indicia of unconventional, and particularly less popular, belief systems are uncovered in the possession of one who is accused of a criminal act this is frequently cited as evidence of ritual crime. More often than not, no direct link is shown to exist between the beliefs and the crime. This reaction results in characterization of certain criminal acts as occult based when in fact they are not.

**Criminal activity which might reasonably be associated with belief systems consists primarily of minor property crimes and is committed largely by "dabblers."**

In the vast majority of cases where the available evidence is sufficient to establish some link between criminal behavior and a spiritual belief system the crimes consist of trespassing, graffiti and vandalism. Generally these crimes are relatively minor and are perpetrated on or against abandoned property, thus resulting in low damage costs. Such evidence does not conclusively disprove the existence of more serious crime.

**Existing criminal statutes in Virginia are adequate to address dangerous conduct which may result from participation in unconventional belief systems.**

Dangerous activities which are alleged to be associated with or motivated by spiritual belief systems are prohibited by existing criminal statutes in the Commonwealth. Amendment to the criminal code in response to ritual crime is therefore unnecessary.

**The ritual crime phenomenon has its greatest overt impact in the field of mental health.**

Whether true or not, there are numerous allegations of ritual crime which evidence real suffering. Many claims of ritual crime apparently have as their basis real, and often severe, abuse (whether ritually related or otherwise). Regardless of the veracity of patients claiming ritual abuse, therapists should be sensitive to such claims while approaching treatment with an objective stance.

#### **XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the interest of addressing wide-spread concerns regarding the possible dangers of ritualistic crime the task force offers the following recommendations. These recommendations are intended to reflect a rational approach to a real concern. Where hysteria or fanaticism is interjected, however, the recommended actions tend to defeat the interests of law enforcement agencies, schools, therapists and society generally.

**Recommendation: That the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services develop a model curriculum addressing ritual crime for Virginia's law enforcement officers.**

DCJS should develop a standard curriculum in aid of law enforcement officers which could be utilized on a state-wide basis to enhance awareness of ritualistic crime and suggest appropriate responses to it. This would provide a uniform source of information in lieu of the multitude of diverse, often conflicting and sometimes irrelevant information disseminated by training courses and seminars given throughout the state by numerous organizations and interest groups. Assistance of Crime Commission staff in development of this curriculum should be sought where practical and necessary. Appropriate subjects to be addressed include:

- Constitutional prerogatives relating to the right to assemble and to engage in the peaceful practice of religious beliefs where such beliefs do not abridge neutral criminal statutes.
- Sections within Title 18.2 of the Code of Virginia which address commonly alleged ritual crimes but with which many law enforcement officers may be unfamiliar (Examples include Sections 18.2-403.1(1), 18.2-403.2(3), 3.1-796.113, 3.1-796.122, 18.2-97, 18.2-125, 18.2-126, 18.2-127, 18.2-138, 18.2-144, 18.2-323).
- The need to maintain normal techniques and standards in the investigation and prosecution of allegations involving ritual crime.
- The type of specific evidence at crime scenes which may suggest ritual activity.

**Recommendation: That the Crime Commission's continued research on youth gangs be tracked and reviewed for findings and ultimate recommendations.**

The forming of gangs by young people for purposes of pursuing criminal objectives needs to be addressed in unique fashion. The on-going study on youth gang activity by the Crime Commission should yield recommendations which are equally applicable to criminal behavior by all youth gangs regardless of the motivating philosophy or belief system.

**Recommendation: That the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services coordinate continued research efforts relating to the ramifications of ritual abuse in the mental health field.**

Continued research into the relationships between psychological illness and participation in dangerous ritualistic practices should be encouraged. The limited clinical research findings presently available, while not substantiating causal links, have established factors which appear to be associated with dangerous practices and which may aid in the treatment of individuals who fall prey to these activities. Such research should focus on development of a clearer understanding of perpetrators of ritualistic practices, evidence of treatable psychological illness (including Multiple Personality Disorder and related conditions), and the roles which various agencies may assume in practical intervention. The Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services should assume a leading role in coordinating this continued study of the causes, effects and treatment of ritual abuse.

**Recommendation: That law enforcement personnel act in cooperation with appropriate agencies in the investigation and prosecution of claims involving ritual abuse of persons.**

As in any case involving allegations of abuse against children, law enforcement interaction with state and local agencies is necessary. In cases of systematic or on-going abuse effective prosecution demands a cooperative relationship between investigators on the one hand and school officials and social services agencies on the other. Jurisdictions having success with prosecutions emphasize this as among the most significant factors in such success.

**Recommendation: That school personnel and social service workers be provided objective and accurate information on ritual crime.**

The greatest problem reported by employees in social services and schools who work with young people on a regular basis is the lack of accurate information on ritual crime. Objective information, consistent with the findings of this report, should be made available to persons who deal with youth and are concerned about potential involvement in dangerous cults. The Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services is the appropriate agency for dissemination of such information.

**Recommendation: That the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services establish a definitional standard and review development of a separate reporting category for ritual crime.**

While law enforcement in Virginia (including those officers who are responsible for investigating these types of crimes) oppose implementation of a separate reporting category for ritual crime at present, DCJS should define a standard for crimes which might fall into this category and review the potential usefulness of separate reporting in the future.

## XV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Detective Don Rimer

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Detective Carl Deavers  
Detective John Polak

Virginia State Sheriffs' Association  
John W. Jones, Executive Director

Brenda J. Wagner

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APPENDIX A

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 147

# 1990 SESSION

LD4283578

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 147**  
**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
**(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules**  
**on March 5, 1990)**

**(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Tata)**

*Directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to study certain cult practices.*

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is committed to the safety of youth, and effective control of crime is of paramount importance in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, there has been a reported increase in the number of teenagers who have become engaged in certain cult activities fraught with danger, antisocial behavior, and criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, although some experts indicate that for some youth, cult involvement is just a game, albeit a potentially dangerous game, it can become life-threatening where adults are the leaders of such groups; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported that some cults in which some teenagers are involved include drug use, desecration of graves and churches, sacrifices, and other criminal acts; and

WHEREAS, although participation in cults is not a crime, reports indicate that the criminal acts which may be a part of such groups' practice in which such youth participate are an increasing problem for law-enforcement agencies as well as game wardens in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, it has also been reported that schools in some areas of the Commonwealth are experiencing problems with such cults, and the activities of some such groups reportedly have been linked to the suicide of some members; and

WHEREAS, although law-enforcement agencies state that hard physical evidence of rumored gruesome acts is difficult to obtain because ritual sites are cleaned, the agencies believe that the detail and consistency of the growing number of such accounts will eventually enhance their credibility; and

WHEREAS, because ritualistic abuse may be related to tragic and fatal incidents among such youth, many parents, having experienced the painful results of their teenager's obsession with the occult and cults, are concerned about the harmful effects of such activities; and

WHEREAS, due to the growth in certain cults, the increase in the number of youth involved in such groups, and the rising incidence of ritualistic crimes, an intensive review of these problems is necessary to protect the welfare of youth, ensure compliance with the laws of this Commonwealth, and protect the safety of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 9-125 of the Code of Virginia, it is the responsibility of the Virginia State Crime Commission "to endeavor to ascertain the causes of crime and recommend ways to reduce and prevent it, to coordinate the proposals and recommendations of all commissions and agencies concerning legislation affecting crimes, crime control and criminal procedure, and to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection" to the Governor and the General Assembly; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission is directed to study certain cult practices.

The Commission shall (i) focus its study on those cults in Virginia that emphasize or promote their members' participation in dangerous, antisocial, or criminal activities as a part of their practices; (ii) determine, to the extent possible, the prevalence of such cults and their recruitment and ritualistic practices; (iii) identify risk factors associated with youth involvement in such groups; (iv) confer with law-enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth regarding the reports and documentation of occult activity, ritualistic crimes, and whether such acts involved youth; (v) inventory school divisions to determine the nature and magnitude of the problem and the perspectives of school administrators concerning how such problems should be managed; (vi) assess the fiscal impact of

1 vandalism and destruction of public property due to such acts; (vii) review the efforts of  
2 other states to prevent and control such cults and resulting criminal activity; (viii)  
3 recommend appropriate ways in which the Commonwealth might respond to such activity  
4 to protect public property and safety while protecting the Constitutional rights of its  
5 citizenry; and (iv) limit its study to such related matters as the Commission may deem  
6 appropriate.

7 The Commission may employ such means, including public hearings and the hiring of  
8 additional, temporary staff as it deems necessary to complete its study; and, be it

9 **RESOLVED FURTHER,** That the Commission shall designate a select task force to assist  
10 with the study, and such Task Force shall report directly to the Commission. The task  
11 force shall consist of members of the Virginia State Crime Commission; one member from  
12 the House of Delegates at large appointed by the Speaker of the House; one member of  
13 the Senate at large appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and  
14 four citizens: one representative of law enforcement, two licensed mental health  
15 professionals, one of whom shall be a licensed clinical psychologist and both of whom treat  
16 individuals who are or have been involved in such cults, and a citizen of the  
17 Commonwealth at large to be appointed by the Virginia State Crime Commission.

18 In its deliberations, the Commission's task force shall seek the participation and  
19 expertise of educators, professional counselors, persons in the fields of criminal justice,  
20 adolescent medicine, and psychiatry, persons who are experts in constitutional law, parents  
21 and youth affected by cultism.

22 All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance upon request in the manner  
23 deemed appropriate by the Commission.

24 The Commission shall submit an interim report on its progress to the Governor and the  
25 1991 session of the General Assembly and complete its work in time to submit its  
26 recommendations and final report to the Governor and the 1992 Session of the General  
27 Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems  
28 for the processing of legislative documents.

29 The costs of this study are estimated to be \$21,020 and such amount shall be allocated  
30 to the Virginia State Crime Commission from the general appropriation to the General  
31 Assembly for the conduct of this study.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENTS**

**RITUAL CRIME  
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SURVEY**

**Instructions:** Please include in this survey any incident which was reported (either by the officer, victim or witness) as being related to ritual activity. For the purposes of this survey, ritual activity is defined as conduct by two or more persons engaged in on a habitual basis or involving a ceremony(ies) and resulting in socially unacceptable or dangerous consequences.

1. Name of Locality: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Population Served: \_\_\_\_\_  
Average Number of Annual Investigations Conducted: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many incidents of alleged ritual activity have been reported to your agency?

Over past one year	Over past five years
None _____	None _____
1-5 _____	1-5 _____
6-10 _____	6-10 _____
11-15 _____	11-15 _____
16-25 _____	16-25 _____
Over 25 _____	Over 25 _____

3. In how many of the total incidents did the investigators conclude:
- (a) the crime was associated with ritualistic practices \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) there was another explanation for the crime \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) it was unclear whether or not there was any association with ritualistic activity \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many of these incidents involved

Crimes against Persons	Property Crimes
None _____	None _____
1-5 _____	1-5 _____
6-10 _____	6-10 _____
11-15 _____	11-15 _____
16-25 _____	16-25 _____
Over 25 _____	Over 25 _____

5. Which of the following categories of personal and property crime were involved in these incidents: Check as many as appropriate.

Sexual abuse _____	Graffiti _____
Other physical abuse _____	Vandalism _____
Homicide _____	Arson _____
Suicide _____	Grave desecration _____
Kidnapping _____	Animal mutilation _____
Other (specify) _____	Trespassing _____

Average dollar value of property damage: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Has any member of your agency attended a professional workshop or conference on ritual crimes? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

7. a. Have you established any specific policies or procedures to address crimes of this nature? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

b. Please explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide name, address, and phone number of appropriate contact person, if we may contact you for additional information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

(Please indicate if the contact person is an investigator who specializes in investigations relating to ritualistic activity: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_)

If NO, does your organization have a special investigator who specializes in this type of investigation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, please provide name and telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

**RITUAL CRIME  
SCHOOL DIVISION SURVEY**

**Instructions:** Please include in this survey any incident which was reported as or appears to reflect ritualistic activity. For the purposes of this survey, ritual activity is defined as conduct by two or more persons engaged in on a habitual basis or involving a ceremony(ies) and resulting in socially unacceptable or dangerous consequences.

Name of School Division: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Enrollment (#): \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of students alleged to be involved in such activity: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have there been any reported incidents of ritualistic activity, as defined above, involving students within your school division:

<u>Over past one year</u>		<u>Over past five years</u>	
None	_____	None	_____
1 - 5	_____	1 - 5	_____
6 - 10	_____	6 - 10	_____
11 - 15	_____	11 - 15	_____
16 - 25	_____	16 - 25	_____
Over 25	_____	Over 25	_____

2. Were the youth involved considered: (Please provide numbers).

Alleged Perpetrators \_\_\_\_\_  
Adjudicated Perpetrators \_\_\_\_\_  
Victims \_\_\_\_\_  
Both \_\_\_\_\_

3. What numbers of reports involved injury to persons:

(a) Less than 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 15 \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) What types of crimes were they:

Homicide \_\_\_\_\_ Assault & Battery \_\_\_\_\_  
Suicide \_\_\_\_\_ Kidnapping \_\_\_\_\_  
Sexual Assault \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What number of reports involved damage to property:

(a) Less than 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 15 \_\_\_\_\_



(b) If these reported incidents involved destruction/damage to property, what types of crimes were they:

- Trespassing, vandalism, grafitti \_\_\_\_\_
- Arson \_\_\_\_\_
- Animal Mutilation \_\_\_\_\_
- Theft \_\_\_\_\_
- Defacing churches, church property, grave sites \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. How did school officials handle these reports?

- Contact Parents \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Juvenile Court or Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Law Enforcement Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Counseling \_\_\_\_\_
- School Suspension \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you aware of or concerned about an increase in ritualistic activity involving youth?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify possible risk factors of youth associated with groups engaged in ritualistic activities. \_\_\_\_\_

7. How do you suggest these problems be managed?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

May we contact you for additional input or clarification of your responses?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**RITUAL CRIME  
MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER SURVEY**

**Instructions:** Please include in this survey any incident which was reported as or appears to reflect ritualistic activity. For the purposes of this survey, ritual activity is defined as conduct by two or more persons engaged in on a habitual basis or involving a ceremony(ies) and resulting in socially unacceptable or dangerous consequences.

At your option, please provide us the following indentifying information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Avg. Number of Clients Treated Annually: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have any of your clients reported to you their current or previous involvement in ritualistic activity -- and, specifically, criminal acts which occurred as a result of ritualistic practices?

Over past one year

None \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
 16 - 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Over 25 \_\_\_\_\_

Over past five years

None \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
 16 - 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Over 25 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Were the individuals involved considered: (Please provide numbers).

Adult Perpetrators	_____	Adult Victims	_____	Both	_____
Juvenile Perpetrators	_____	Juvenile Victims	_____	Both	_____

4. What numbers of reports involved injury to persons:

(a) Less than 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 15 \_\_\_\_\_

(b) What types of crimes were they:

Homicide	_____	Assault & Battery	_____
Suicide	_____	Kidnapping	_____
Sexual Assault	_____	Other	_____

5. What number of reports involved damage to property:

(a) Less than 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 15 \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) What types of crimes were they:
- Trespassing, vandalism, grafitti \_\_\_\_\_
  - Arson \_\_\_\_\_
  - Animal Mutilation \_\_\_\_\_
  - Theft \_\_\_\_\_
  - Defacing churches, church property, grave sites \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. How did you handle these reports?

- Contact Parents \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Law Enforcement Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Counseling \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you aware of or concerned about an increase in ritualistic activity, as defined above.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify possible risk factors of youth associated with this type of activity. \_\_\_\_\_

8. How do you suggest these problems be managed?

\_\_\_\_\_

May we contact you for additional input or clarification of your responses?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**  
**SURVEY REGIONS**



**APPENDIX D**  
**SURVEY RESULTS**

*Law Enforcement Survey Responses*

Of 261 surveys disseminated by the Virginia State Crime Commission to law enforcement agencies in Virginia, 164 were completed and returned. The information provided below represents a compilation of these responses. Because not all responses were quantifiable, some survey questions may not be reflected here.

**TABLE 1**

Number of law enforcement agencies  
receiving reports of ritual activity

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Over the Past Year</u>	<u>Over Past Five Years</u>
None	93	72
1-5	53	51
6-10	11	17
11-15	1	10
16-25	3	7
Over 25	3	7

---

No Involvement	93	72
Some Involvement	71	92

**TABLE 2**

Law enforcement determination  
of report's actual link to ritual activity

<u>Status of Report</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Reports</u>
Report was linked to ritual activity	34.92%
Activity had alternative motive	16.53%
Motive of alleged activity unclear	48.55%

**TABLE 3**

Number of reports, distributed between property crimes  
and crimes against persons

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Agencies Reporting Crimes Against Persons</u>	<u>Agencies Reporting Crimes Against Property</u>
None	130	79
1-5	31	53
6-10	2	14
11-15	1	7
16-25	0	6
Over 25	0	5

**TABLE 4**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of crimes against persons

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Agencies Reporting</u>
Sexual abuse	13
Other physical abuse	12
Homicide	3
Suicide	8
Kidnapping	4
Other	6

**TABLE 5**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of other crimes

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Agencies Reporting</u>
Graffiti	73
Vandalism	70
Arson	14
Grave desecration	33
Animal mutilation	38
Trespassing	50



**TABLE 6**

Agencies reporting officers' attendance at professional workshops/seminars on ritual crime

<u>Workshop Participation</u>	<u>Number of Agencies Reporting</u>
None	52
Some	96

**TABLE 7**

Agencies reporting special policies addressing complaints associated with ritual crimes

<u>Special Policies</u>	<u>Number of Agencies Reporting</u>
None	127
Some	22

**TABLE 8**

Survey respondents' reports of ritual crime broken down by region over one year period\*

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of agencies reporting ritual crime</u>	<u>Number of agencies reporting no ritual crime</u>
Henrico	11	18
Culpeper	7	10
Appomattox	6	12
Wythe	14	21
Chesapeake	12	13
Roanoke	12	12
Fairfax	8	3

\*Regions are based on the Virginia State Police regional system.

**TABLE 9**

Survey respondents' reports of ritual crime  
broken down by region over five year period\*

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of agencies reporting ritual crime</u>	<u>Number of agencies reporting no ritual crime</u>
Henrico	15	14
Culpeper	11	6
Appomattox	10	8
Wythe	18	17
Chesapeake	13	12
Roanoke	15	9
Fairfax	9	2

\*Regions are based on the Virginia State Police regional system.

*School Division Survey Responses*

Of 145 surveys disseminated by the Virginia State Crime Commission to public school divisions in Virginia, 135 were completed and returned. The information provided below represents a compilation of these responses. Because not all responses were quantifiable, some survey questions may not be reflected here.

**TABLE 1**

Number of school divisions reporting incidents of ritual activity

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Over the Past Year</u>	<u>Over Past Five Years</u>
None	121	108
1-5	14	23
6-10	0	4
11-15	0	0
16-25	0	0
Over 25	0	0
No Involvement	121	108
Some Involvement	14	27

**TABLE 2**

School officials' determination of incident's actual link to ritual activity

<u>Status of Individual</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Reports</u>
Alleged perpetrators	84%
Adjudicated perpetrators	5%
Victims	17%
Both*	4%

\*"Both" denotes individuals who were subjected to but also perpetrated ritual crime. Percentages exceed one hundred since some respondents reported in more than one category.

**TABLE 3**

Number of reports, distributed between property crimes  
and crimes against persons

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Divisions Reporting Crimes Against Persons</u>	<u>Divisions Reporting Crimes Against Property</u>
None	30	29
1-5	0	1
6-10	0	0
11-15	0	0
16-25	0	0
Over 25	0	0

**TABLE 4**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of crimes against persons

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Divisions Reporting</u>
Sexual abuse	4
Other physical abuse	4
Homicide	0
Suicide	3
Kidnapping	0
Other	3

**TABLE 5**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of other crimes

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Divisions Reporting</u>
Trespassing, graffiti, vandalism	15
Arson	1
Defacing church sites/graves	8
Animal mutilation	8
Theft	3
Other	3

**TABLE 6**

School response to incidents  
of ritual activity\*

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number of Divisions Reporting</u>
Contacted parents	19
Contacted juvenile court/agency	13
Contacted law enforcement	18
Provided counseling	14
Suspended student(s)	10
Other	3

\*Note that respondents frequently reported in two or more response categories.

**TABLE 7**

Survey respondents' reports of ritual crime  
broken down by region over one year period\*

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Divisions reporting ritual crime</u>	<u>Number of Divisions reporting no ritual crime</u>
Henrico	2	20
Culpeper	0	13
Appomattox	2	18
Wythe	3	10
Chesapeake	3	18
Roanoke	3	17
Fairfax	1	7

**TABLE 8**

Survey respondents' reports of ritual crime  
broken down by region over five year period\*

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Divisions reporting ritual crime</u>	<u>Number of Divisions reporting no ritual crime</u>
Henrico	4	18
Culpeper	2	11
Appomattox	7	13
Wythe	3	10
Chesapeake	4	17
Roanoke	5	15
Fairfax	2	6

\*Regions are based on the Virginia State Police regional system.

### *Mental Health Survey Responses*

Of 155 surveys disseminated by the Virginia State Crime Commission to licensed mental health professionals in Virginia, 62 were completed and returned. The information provided below represents a compilation of these responses. Because not all responses were quantifiable, some survey questions may not be reflected here.

**TABLE 1**

Number of mental health professionals  
receiving reports of ritual activity

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Over the Past Year</u>	<u>Over Past Five Years</u>
None	46	41
1-5	13	18
6-10	3	1
11-15	0	2
16-25	0	0
Over 25	0	0

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No Involvement	46	41
Some Involvement	16	21

**TABLE 2**

Status of individuals involved  
in the ritual activity

<u>Status</u>	<u>Number of professionals reporting</u>
Adult perpetrators	6
Adult victims	7
Both (adult) perpetrators & victims	2
Juvenile perpetrators	7
Juvenile Victims	11
Both (juvenile) perpetrators & victims	6

**TABLE 3**

Number of reports, distributed between property crimes  
and crimes against persons

<u>Frequency of Reports</u>	<u>Professionals Reporting Crimes Against Persons</u>	<u>Professionals Reporting Crimes Against Property</u>
Less than 5	21	22
6-10	0	0
11-15	0	0
Over 15	0	0

**TABLE 4**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of crimes against persons

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Professionals Reporting</u>
Sexual abuse	13
Other physical abuse	7
Homicide	4
Suicide	1
Kidnapping	2
Other	6

**TABLE 5**

Distribution of reports (over types of crime)  
of other crimes

<u>Crime Category</u>	<u>Number of Professionals Reporting</u>
Trespassing, graffiti, vandalism	10
Arson	1
Defacement of churches/grave sites	3
Animal mutilation	8
Theft	2
Other	4

**TABLE 6**

**Professional's response to incidents  
of ritual activity\***

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number of Professionals Reporting</u>
Contacted parents	7
Contacted law enforcement	4
Provided counseling	16
Other	5

\*Note that respondents frequently reported in two or more response categories.