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An Occult Primer: Investigating Goth, Satanic, & Other Alternative Belief System Related Crimes

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Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. discuss the impact of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution upon the investigation of possible Occult related crime
2. define the terms “Cult Cops” and “Ghostbusters” and their evolutionary impact upon the investigation of possible Occult related crime
3. explain the impact that “Satanic Panic” and the “CSI Effect” upon these types of investigations
4. describe the characteristics of individuals involved in negative or dangerous types of Occult behaviors
5. discuss the factors involved in the identification and investigation of a possible Cult, Occult, Alternative Belief Crime Scene
6. discuss the possible barriers to effective law enforcement involvement in Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief System Crime

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Introduction

Over the past forty years considerable attention has been given by the public, news, and media to the perceived exponential increase in the amount of “Occult and Satanic” related crime in the United States. While historically there has been very little evidence of this actually occurring, rumors, legends, misrepresentations, and unsupported reports of it have substantially impacted America and the rest of the world. A growing number of countries are experiencing a new phenomenon of their youth becoming interested and involved in various Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief Systems and practices. Unfortunately, some of this behavior involves criminal, anti-social, and very unsafe/risky behaviors. Depending upon the political and social culture, it can actually place these young people’s lives at risk by their government and family. It appears that Western influence and attempts to democratize various parts of the world have brought about negative influences as well as positive ones.

Many international youth and young adults (Crews & Montgomery, 2001) are mimicking activities, practices, and belief systems they are reading about on the Internet and seeing through media outlets. The problem is that many of the incidents and activities they are learning about either *never occurred* or where *grossly misrepresented* on the web. Moreover, many social media sites universally accessible allow individuals to create, exaggerate, manipulate, and even fake events and actions which may or may not have even happened.

A major contributing factor (Crews & Montgomery, 1996) to these issues is that there is very little serious examination of the problem of actual Occult, Ritualistic, or Satanic related violence and crime. Most social scientists consider the topic unworthy of any serious academic consideration. Therefore, sound, evidence based, unbiased information for those in the criminal justice system to use in addressing what crime does occur is scarce. Unfortunately (Religious Tolerance, n.d.), others, like Fundamental Christians, overly zealous television and media

producers, and others with personal agendas, have given enormous time and energy to spreading misinformation, panic, and hysteria. Ironically, this information seems to be that which finds its way into the hands of those responsible in dealing with it such as parents, teachers, and law enforcement. Even those with good intentions (Crews and Montgomery, 2001) and motivation can become harmful and actual contributors to problems they are trying to prevent when they have incorrect or biased information at their disposal.

As with the investigation of any type of criminal behavior (Osterburg & Ward, 2013), law enforcement must use the soundest practices and sound evidence possible in order to be effective. Panic and misinformation can no longer be the foundation for law enforcement efforts to deal with suspected Occult or Satanic criminal behavior or crime scenes. Given the importance of the police function in any society, there is far too much potential for harmful impacts on the lives of witnesses, victims, and suspects with anything less.

A major problem (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1991) immediately apparent in an historical examination of the investigation of any Occult related crime is simply lack of education and understanding. Most law enforcement personnel, albeit the general public too, are unfamiliar with the world of the "Occult" in general much less the ways in which it can be used and/or abused by criminal offenders. This lack of knowledge in the general public has led to panic, hysteria, stereotyping of others, and unnecessary problems between parents/teachers and young people. This lack of knowledge in law enforcement has led to wrongful prosecutions, accusations against innocent individuals, and lack of identification of actual culpable individuals. At a minimum, it can cause communities undue fear, parents to over react, educators to miss proper warning signs, and the separation of people based on imaginary lines where none need to exist.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer, at a minimum, information for the criminal investigator to consider when he or she is faced with a potentially Occult related crime or behavior. Very often simple “food for thought” can help one realize their own lack of knowledge, personal biases, prejudice, and limitations. The vast majority of law enforcement officers desire to be as effective as possible in carrying out their sworn duty to “serve and protect”. This sometimes requires and officer to step out of their “comfort zone” and face the reality of that in which they may become involved. This is no truer than found in the duties of the criminal investigator.

Terminology, Titles, and Labels Used

Throughout this chapter, labels such as “Occult”, “Satanic”, or “Alternative Belief System” are used interchangeably for the sake of discussion. This is in no way meant to imply they are the same thing or universally defined in the same manner. The definitions of these terms is, as with many things in culture, in the “eyes of the beholder”. The one involved in a particular belief system or behavior will ultimately be the sole individual to truly know what they are doing and why. They will be the one who has defined and qualified all systems, terms, practices, and terms they use. As will be discussed extensively, the police investigator must keep this fact at the forefront of their mind in examining these types of suspected crimes or criminal involvement.

The information discussed in this chapter is not offered to contribute to the misconception that all “Occult” activities or interests are “evil” or “Satanic”. Nor does it wish to contribute to the false belief that all of the belief systems or practices discussed have a natural inclination toward criminal behavior. Investigators are encouraged to review the vast information available on these interests and belief systems. Caution should be advised though to determine the source and potential personal agenda which may exist for the writer or group producing the material.

Some who practice these activities do sometimes break the law, some do use them as an excuse to commit their crimes, and others use them to “cover-up” the true motivation of their crime. Each individual event, incident, crime, and/or individual must be evaluated upon their own merits with no assumptions or stereotypes in mind. This is a very basic idea in criminal investigation, but one which must not be forgotten.

First Amendment Protections

As with all areas of the police function (Osterburg & Ward, 2013; Brandl, 2014), law enforcement officials must be vigilant in their efforts to serve and protect serve their respective publics. This vigilance is no more important than when it comes to ensuring the due process protections enjoyed by Americans and those on its soil. It has to be remembered that most (Legal Information Institute, n.d.), if not all, Occult and Paganistic belief systems and practices are protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. While many may view these practices as “different or strange” they are still protected by the freedom of religion aspect of this amendment.

The first pronouncement of the First Amendment (Legal Information Institute, n.d.), stating that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," is generally interpreted as meaning that the Federal and State government cannot establish a national church/religion or excessively becoming involved in religion in the United States, particularly to the benefit of one religion over another. While the "Free Exercise Clause" states that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”, the Supreme Court of the United States has consistently held, however, that the right to free exercise of religion is not absolute.

Historically (Anti-Defamation League, 2012), the Court has held that convictions for criminal acts committed in the name of religion do not violate the First Amendment. The Court has generally reasoned that to do otherwise would potentially set precedents for a wide range of religious beliefs including those as potentially extreme as human sacrifice. The Court has stated (*Reynolds V. United States*, 1878), "Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions, they may with practices." Therefore, when it comes to Occult, Pagan, and Satanic practices, the First Amendment protects one's alternative belief, but not all aspects of the practice.

“Cult Cops” and “Ghost Busters”

Since the early days of policing (Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996) many officers have become, either by choice or need, experts in specialized fields such as gang violence, organized crime, terrorism, or arson. The last forty years have forced many police officers to become acquainted with the Occult, cults, and various forms of ritualistic violence. Some experience one unusual event which may have peaked their interest where others may have been assigned to become “overnight experts” in order to deal with a rash of crimes or activities in their jurisdiction.

Genesis of Labels

This labeling occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s when police officers were becoming overwhelmed with so-called “cult and ritualistic violence” calls and complaints. These situations involved everything from older women suddenly realizing (or after seeing a paraprofessional counselor) that they were either ritualistically sexually abused by their “Satanic parents” to having been sold by their parents to some new “devil worshipping cult” to become a “breeder” for the group. They ranged from accusations that the teenager next door “Satanically

sacrificed” one’s pet black cat to unsubstantiated rumors of the local day care center being a cult headquarters where children were ritualistic sexually abused each day.

Police officers (Crews & Montgomery, 1996) who were interested in investigating (or assigned to) these types of crimes were considered by some to be “odd” or “strange”. Jokes started in many departments that these officers were “Cult Cops” or “Ghostbusters”. Over the following decades these nicknames would change from humorous tags and labels to actual titles that were revealed by many officers trying to make a name for themselves in lectures, interviews, and training programs. Currently these titles are used as negative labels placed upon anyone who is overzealous, misinformed, or benefiting from spreading fear and panic. While the term used to be just used for actual police officers, it has become one used for anyone who is “uncovering the hidden through of the Satanic Conspiracy in the United States”, obviously supporting the idea that one *does* exist.

Impact on Police Training and Education

Unfortunately (Victor, 1991b), "Cult Cops" and "Ghostbusters" had a major impact on establishing and supporting the earliest rumors of a vast "Satanic Conspiracy". They helped "validate" to the public that this *conspiracy* was responsible for up to 50,000 human sacrifices a year in the United States, involved people in the highest levels of government and civilian life, and recruited new members through heavy metal music and roleplaying games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Numerous police "Satanic Cult seminars" and police academy classes arose across the country (California Office of Criminal Planning, 1993). Traditional police jargon was used to describe people who were evil, dangerous, and very eager to recruit young adults into their groups. This jargon was combined with a plethora of terms such as "Cult and Ritual" by these so called

“cult crime experts”, but they were never truly or fully defined nor clarified. By not doing this, speakers implanted in their audiences superstitious connotations of evil, the demonic, and the supernaturally criminal as plausible causes.

Still in the 21st Century (Toth, Crews, & Burton, 2008), law enforcement officials flock to training seminars about Satanic cults and crime, albeit new groups like “Goth”, “Juggalos”, and the “trench coat mafia” are the new culprits. Many of these seminars offer a world view that interprets any unusual occurrence, interest, or behavior as a sign of increasing participation by Americans in anti-social belief systems. The seminars further claim that Satanism has spawned gruesome crimes and aberrant behavior that might presage massive increases in violent crime.

An examination of most of the “training materials” and “sources” (Hicks, 1990) used in police training in this subject area is very often no more than newspaper stories and anecdotal information. Much of this current training teaches officers to quickly infer false *cause-effect relationships*. Conclusions (Lanning, 1989) are to be drawn from very weak and circumstantial evidence. This has caused a great deal of the law enforcement model of cult crime to be ill-considered, based on non-documented secondary sources or other unsubstantiated information, and is rife with errors of logic. Such errors include false analogies, faulty cause-effect relationships, and broad, unsupported generalizations. The new “Cult Crime Model” (Richardson, 1991) betrays an ignorance of a larger academic context of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and history which is vital to a proper perspective on these types of behaviors and interests.

This rapidly developed (Crews, 1996) as the basis of many law enforcement publications and reports. People were warned that almost any unusual event or crime scene could be an Occult related crime. People should be warned to vigilantly watch for any items which could be in any remote way connected to any “Occult” practice or belief. If any are found then, in fact, an Occult

related crime had occurred or was about to occur. This implied to many parents, social workers, and teachers that there was some inherent connection between reading books on the Occult and crimes like murder or suicide. This steered them away often from looking at other causes that may have led to the violence (*i.e.*, being jilted by a girlfriend, a history of psychiatric treatment for depression, etc.).

This was compiled by the fact (Coleman, 1986) that most newspaper accounts never mentioned other attributes of a crime scene since only those touched by a nameless, faceless evil will suit the reader's interest for an explanation of why seemingly “normal” children commit such horrific acts. And, the same newspaper article would ultimately be reproduced and circulated at “Cult seminars” to substantiate the so-called “Satanic connection”.

The negative and counterproductive results of this is obvious. As noted before (California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993), “Cult Cops” do not readily define their terms. The words "Cult," "Occult," "Satanic," and "Ritual" find casual usage, the words imply with demonic and evil associations. “Evil” is, indeed, the operative word. Law enforcers who have mixed *Cult Crime theories* with their professional world views have transformed their legal duties into a confrontation between good and evil. While police officers are viewed as “crime fighters”, they are to do this by being civil servants and honoring the moto painted on the sides of many police patrol units, “to serve and protect”. Obviously, this must mean to do so for all.

Satanic Panic and the CSI Effect

Two of the criminal investigator’s worst enemies are concepts that entered the American culture and nomenclature in the 1970s and 2000s respectively; *Satanic Panic* and *the CSI Effect*. Both are responsible for a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation which has led to enormous confusion, panic, fear, and hysteria in communities across the United States. Obviously,

all of which make the criminal investigator's job much more difficult. The best defense for the police officer is to be as familiar with these phenomenon as possible and aware of the impact they may have upon any criminal investigation. They can also further help the citizens they serve by taking every opportunity to educate the public and fellow criminal justice colleagues of the existence and impact these concepts can have on the proper response to criminal behavior and public safety.

Satanic Panic

The phenomenon of *Satanic Panic* (Victor, 1993) originated during the 1970s and gained widespread acceptance during the 1980s and 1990s. This period in American history was rampant with outlandish claims that a vast underground network of Satanists were in control of secular society. These reports were fueled by many fundamentalist Christians in the United States. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the proliferation of so-called "authoritative" works being published and disseminated to the American public. Works such as *The Satan Seller* by Mike Warnke (1972) and *Michelle Remembers* by Michelle Smith (1980) became actual training materials for educators, parents, and law enforcement. Self-proclaimed "Satanic Experts" such as these joined a large number of individuals spreading panic and fear into local communities across the United States.

Satanic Panic (Victor, 1993) spread to society at large when law enforcement agencies began accepting the incredible claims of evangelical Christians at face value. Police agencies used these false allegations as the basis for investigations of any and all perceived Occult activity often committed by harmless Neopaganism groups or bored teenagers. The assumption became that these activities were part of the broader *Satanic Conspiracy* (Frankfurter, 2008) which they were lead to believe existed. As more crimes were being "linked" to Satanic Rituals by American law

enforcement, the popular media began to “validate” this false information to the public in news reports. They naively believed that if law enforcement reported it, it must be true and factual.

By the early 1990s (Sills, 1990), *all* of these “authoritative pieces and speakers/trainers” were proven to be fraudulent and their “information” self-created. A pivotal work during this time was the book *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* by Dr. Jeffrey S. Victor in 1993. He examined the phenomenon of *Satanic Panic* and offered that there is no evidence for the actual existence of organized Satanic cults.

Unfortunately, these revelations have had little effect on those who wanted to believe such an extremely organized evil underground did exist to promote “Satan on earth”. More importantly, many of the materials developed, published, and printed during this period are still being used by police academies across America in the 21st Century. Over time, past use by law enforcement officials of these materials have somehow validated their use for current police officers. This obviously is very disturbing in that false and inaccurate information is being given as fact to an entirely new generation of police officers almost daily.

The impact that this was having, and continues to, was that some criminal investigators (Victor, 1989) fell into the same traps which made so many ineffective in the 1970s and 1980s (*i.e.*, identification of *backward masking* on albums, the *Dungeons and Dragons* board game, and *heavy metal music* in general as the cause of all social ills). As America attempted to deal with juveniles who were “dabbling with various types of dangerous Occult and Satanic practices” those in pivotal roles to have positive impacts did not. In turn, many young people were damaged and families destroyed for no reason.

The CSI Effect

Most police officers (Roane, 2005) are well aware of the issue *The CSI Effect* or, as known by some, the *CSI Syndrome*. *The CSI Effect* is named after a television program which first aired in 2000. *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* involved a fictional team of crime scene investigators who solved murders in Las Vegas, Nevada. The show greatly exaggerated criminal investigation techniques and procedures and the capabilities of police crime labs. These exaggerations (Heinrick, 2006) have greatly impacted public perception and the U.S. Criminal Justice System over the last decade. Such shows are responsible for raising crime victims' and jury members', even criminals', real-world expectations of forensic science. This is especially true in crime scene investigation and DNA testing.

It has become very apparent (Roane, 2005) that many juries have come to demand more forensic evidence in criminal trials. This has greatly raised the stakes for standard of proof required for criminal prosecutions. Such increased public awareness of forensic science has also increased the demand for forensic evidence in police investigations. These demands have greatly increased the workloads for crime laboratories across the country. Another result of the *CSI Effect* is the drastic increase in forensic science programs at the university level, though many new programs have been criticized for inadequately preparing (in understanding of role and skill set) their students for real forensic work. Finally (Heinrick, 2006), many argue that shows such as this actually teach criminals how to conceal evidence of their crimes, thereby making it more difficult for investigators to solve cases.

The potential impact that either of these phenomena can have on the criminal investigator is obvious. For those who are investigating potentially Occult or Satanic crime they will probably experience both of them at the same time. An effective investigator will be able to recognize when

faced with these and know how to manage them. Their own personal biases/beliefs, fears, and lack of knowledge first, then those of others second.

Defining and Identifying Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief Related Crime

One of the most difficult areas of this type of investigation is defining and identifying Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief Related Crimes. Some law enforcers (Mueller, 1992) have recommended the creation of a new criminal category specifically called "Occult Crime," arguing that such a category is necessary to measure the actual extent of crime related to the Occult. Other law enforcers have adamantly argued against this creation, claiming that such a category would not only be superfluous, but that no crime category should exist for a specific belief system. Other law enforcers simply offer that anyone of any belief who commits a crime, whether or not to further their beliefs, has committed a crime, not just an Occult crime, Satanic crime, or for that matter, a "Christian" crime.

Still, many (Clark, 1988; Lyons, 1988; Larson, 1989; Johnson, 1989; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; and, Crews, 1996) have attempted to develop the proper definition of these types of crimes. The following is a list of many proposed definitions for "Occult Related Crime":

- it involves a crime that is Occult-motivated, involved with secret knowledge of an Occult group and uses certain rituals to change physical science
- it is in some way motivated by a person's belief either in religion or in theory
- it is motivated by nontraditional or Occult beliefs and committed to further an Occult belief system
- it is any illegal activity in which the "trappings" of the Occult are present

- it is committed by two or more individuals who rationally plan the crime and whose primary motivation is to fulfill a prescribed Occult ritual calling
- it encompasses ceremonial actions and/or ritualistic acts, involves Occult-related behavior patterns, and is motivated by a belief in some Occult ideology.

No matter what definition is used, law enforcers must be careful not to interchangeably and synonymously use the terms Occult crime, Satanic crime, and/or ritualistic violence.

Crimes Most Often Linked to Occult Involvement

In general, law enforcers assume (Richardson, 1991; Mueller, 1992; Perlmutter, 2003) that several specific crimes can have Occult linkages: trespassing, vandalism, theft, graffiti, arson, and animal sacrifice. There is a second category of crimes whose assumed links to crime are either supported or denied by law enforcers: suicide, kidnapping, murder/human sacrifice, and ritualistic abuse.

Inherent in Some Activities

Many law enforcement investigators (Richardson, Best, & Bromley, 1991a) share a common belief that physical evidence found in the following crimes sometimes indicates an Occult motivation: trespassing, vandalism, theft, graffiti, arson, and animal mutilation and sacrifice.

Trespassing (Barry, 1987) related to Occult activity usually involves individuals entering private areas such as wooded and forested lands, barns and other old or abandoned buildings. The purpose for such trespassing is to worship either in the area as it is naturally arranged, or to make it into an Occult worship site with the appropriate altars and symbols. Occult related trespassing of this nature is committed both by *true believers* and *true criminals* who seek a private and isolated place to worship.

Vandalism (Crews & Montgomery, 1996) most often associated with Occult crime includes cemetery and church desecration. The most common types of cemetery desecration attributed to

Occult groups are overturning, breaking and/or stealing headstones; digging up graves; grave robbing; and tampering with human corpses or skeletons. The prevalence of cemetery desecration is unknown on either a national or statewide basis; more specifically, the prevalence of Occult-related cemetery desecration is unknown. Most often committed by true criminals who use dabbling in the Occult as an excuse to commit a crime, church desecration includes the following actions: destroying Bibles; urinating and defecating on Holy objects and furniture; tearing crucifixes off walls; and destroying rosaries and crucifixes.

Thefts (Mueller, 1992) from Christian churches, Jewish synagogues, hospitals, morgues, medical schools and funeral homes are often linked with Occult crime. Items that are most often taken include cadavers, skeletal remains and religious artifacts from churches and synagogues which are considered sacred: crucifixes, communion waters, wine, chalices, etc.

Graffiti (Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996) is one of the most common crimes related to the Occult. While a small amount of graffiti is probably related to other Occult groups, many argue that the vast majority is directly related to involvement in Satanic groups.

Arson (Johnston, 1989) is another crime which is almost always attributed to Satanists, especially Youth Subculture Satanists. Among the most common places for Occultists to commit arson are churches and synagogues in which particularly holy sections or artifacts are burned, and houses or buildings where damaging evidence could be uncovered by investigators.

Although *sacrificing animals* for religious rites (Petropoulou, 2008), has a long and significant history in many nations, it is not common practice in the United States. As the number of Latin American arrivals to the United States increased, so do the number of believers in Afro-Caribbean religions that practice animal mutilation and sacrifice. These are primarily the actions

of true believers, primarily Santerians, who sacrifice animals as part of rituals designed to please their gods and to invoke some kind of magic.

This list is in no way attempting to indicate that all of these types of crimes are connected to Occult practitioners or that all Occult practitioners involve themselves in such crimes. Investigators simply need to realize that there is often a connection.

Questionable Crimes

Currently, at least four other crimes (Bromley & Shupe, 1981; Bromley, 1991) have been linked to the Occult by some criminal justice professionals: suicide; kidnapping; murder and human sacrifice; and ritualistic abuse. But others disagree with such alleged linkages. *Alleged* is a key word because although many law enforcement officials believe these crimes are occurring and some people who have left Occult groups claim they are common, very little physical evidence exists to substantiate such claims.

Occult-related suicide (Richardson, Best, & Bromley, 1991b) appears to be the primary domain of Youth Subculture Satanists who are often true believers, but sometimes dabblers. Indeed, Satanic-related teenage suicide is a major concern among many criminal justice practitioners and therapists.

Kidnapping (Sharp, 1987) people of all ages, but especially children, is thought by some to be a prevalent crime among some Occult practitioners. Especially accused are Traditional/Cult Satanists who are said to kidnap victims needed for ritual sacrifice, self-styled juvenile Satanists whose dabbling has taken them "to the point of no return," and Mayomberos, whose rituals require a human skull, often with the brains still attached, to add to their Nganga (term for herbalist or spiritual healer).

Probably the most controversial crime allegedly committed for Occult purposes is *murder* (Wedge, 1988) perpetrated for spiritual reasons and sometimes to provide a human sacrifice. Sacrificing a human being and cannibalizing human remains have occurred throughout history. Some early Pagan rites included both animal and human sacrifice. Unsubstantiated rumors of murder and cannibalism have fueled many panic and hysterical outbreaks in many communities.

The “Types” of Individuals Involved

Although the vast majority of Occultists are law-abiding practitioners, some do commit criminal acts. Since this topic is so controversial and no universal definition or agreement exists, they are usually described in one of two ways (Mueller, 1992): either by *their method of operation* or by *their motive*. The typology that utilizes methods to describe Occult crime perpetrators generally identifies two distinct categories: *dabbling* and *ritualism*.

Dabbling (Crews, 1996) involves people who are intermittently and experimentally involved in Occult activities. While dabbling in supernatural belief systems involves non-criminal activity which generally stems from a vague, curious interest. Some dabbling does involve intense preoccupation that culminates in criminal behavior. Such perpetrators most often act alone or in small loosely organized groups. Dabblers usually make up their own belief system based upon some Occult ideology and perpetrate criminal activity that conforms to that ideology.

Ritualism (Lanning, 1988) involves people who commit criminal activities characterized by a series of repeated physical, sexual, and/or psychological assaults combined with a systematic use of symbols, ceremonies and/or machinations. The need to repeat such acts can be cultural, sexual, economic, psychological, and/or spiritual. Membership in either group is not mutually exclusive. Indeed, dabblers may commit ritualistic crimes and ritualists may also dabble in the Occult.

The typology that utilizes *motives* (Perlmutter, 2003) to describe Occult crime perpetrators also identifies two distinct categories: *true believers* and *true criminals*. *True believers* are Occult practitioners who commit crimes because such acts fit into and/or are required by their particular belief systems. These persons are involved in crime primarily because the ideology, rituals and behavior patterns related to their Occult beliefs motivate and require them to do so. Because their criminal actions are dependent upon an Occult belief system and include some form of spiritual ritual, true believers are often called spiritual ritualists. True believers either commit crimes for theologically evil purposes or for theologically good purposes.

True criminals (Crews 1996), on the other hand, are persons who use the Occult as an excuse to justify or rationalize their criminal behavior. They act individually or within Occult groups which can and do "act as a social binding mechanism for some people to do what they want to do." True criminals both dabble with the Occult and are involved in rituals that fit their particular physical, sexual, psychological, social, economic, and/ or spiritual needs; they are committed not to the belief system, but to the criminal action.

Levels of Involvement

Since the 1980s, police officers have been taught that there are three levels of involvement for those involved in Occult, Satanic, or Alternative Belief systems (Toth, Crews, & Burton, 2008). Academics (Crews & Montgomery, 1996), studying the topic have added a fourth level starting in the 1990s. The initial three were *Dabblers*, *Traditional or Religious Practitioners*, and *Self-styled Practitioners*. The most recent fourth is the *Youth Subculture* in general.

The *Dabbler* (Bromley, 1991; Crews, 1996) is almost always a juvenile who is beginning to explore one or more belief systems. They will generally experiment with the belief along with studying the belief. They will often learn of the belief from friends, Internet, library books, and

movies/videos. They may actually go to one or more meetings associated with the group. All of these actions can be dangerous to him/herself or others because she/he is trying to appease the group and prove him/herself worthy.

Another type is the *Traditional or Religious Practitioner* (Crews & Montgomery, 2001) who is very deep into their belief and makes their belief become their way of life. They tend to look, act, and go about their daily business like regular folks. These individuals often slip into their "life style" during their meetings and happenings.

The type which is most identified with criminal and anti-social behavior (Crews, 1996) is the *Self-styled Practitioner*. This is an individual and/or group that actually creates their belief system. They begin to make the belief become a part of their life and will generally experiment with the belief along with studying the belief. They often flaunt their affiliation by dressing a certain way, wearing associated jewelry, listening to music associated with the group, etc.

The final and most recent type of involvement (Crews and Montgomery, 1996) is named by many as simply the *Youth Subculture*. Some juveniles simply become involved with an alternative belief system out of excitement or boredom. This can often take the form of a Cult or an Occult-based belief system. It is often a combination of belief systems (*e.g.* Vampire, Satanic, and Black Magic). The combination of beliefs and leadership makes these groups sometimes very dangerous, as well as inviting. Many aspects of the Occult and Satanic beliefs are mocked or "played with" by many youth. Many new fads involve Occult and Satanic "themes". Many bands use Occult and Satanic themes in their lyrics. Many movies, TV shows, and video games use same themes.

The reason (Osterburg & Ward, 2013; Brandl, 2014) for the criminal investigator to be familiar with these levels of involvement is evaluate motive and mode of operation as with most

investigations. Crime scenes, victims, suspects, and evidence must be examined carefully. Knowledge of the possible level of involvement of an individual and what it could mean can sometimes be vital.

Satanic Tourism and Legend Tripping

There are two relatively recent types of behavior which the criminal investigator needs to consider when examining juvenile involvement in potential Occult related crime. These concepts are *Satanic Tourism* and *Legend Tripping* (Fine and Victor, 1994). Some believe that these are two types of “crimes” and/or activities which lead to criminal behavior. Most researchers and juvenile delinquency experts argue that the vast majority of these types of juvenile behavior are simply fads and activities exhibited for excitement and dabbling at best.

Gary Fine and Jeffrey Victor (1994) defined “Satanic Tourism” an inherently delinquent juvenile activities at geographic sites associated with some tragic event, rumored to be supernatural or related to the Occult. They offered that a type of “legend trip” characterized by juvenile involvement in pseudo-Satanic/Occult behavior such as drawing pentagrams, writing epithets, and burning candles. During this a juvenile may visit a geographic location such as an abandoned church, historic graveyard, or reputedly “haunted” site, and engage in mischievous, destructive, or “ritualistic” behaviors as “rites of passage”. They argue that these activities, which often are relatively harmless and conducted primarily for juvenile thrills, may be perceived by law enforcement and the larger community as threatening and dangerous.

The concept of “legend tripping” is at least this old as Mark Twain's “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” (1876). In this book there are several accounts of adolescents visiting allegedly haunted houses and caves said to be the “lair of criminals”. *Legend Tripping*, a name recently bestowed by folklorists and anthropologists, is considered an adolescent rite of passage in which

a usually secret nocturnal pilgrimage is made to a site which is alleged to have been the scene of something tragic, horrific, and possibly supernatural or haunting.

These activities have been known to cause a great deal of panic and hysteria in communities across the United States. One of the biggest reasons for this is where the activities take place. Juveniles often meet and congregate in areas which are not normal gathering locations. Juveniles often meet and visit in the following areas (Fine and Victor, 1994):

Abandoned buildings/factories	Graveyards	Playgrounds	State Parks
Bridges	Historical Landmarks	Ranger Outlook Stations	Train Tunnels
Caves	Nightclubs	Roads/underpasses	Warehouses
Churches	Open Fields	Rock Quarries	Woods

Investigators should consider these concepts when examining potential Occult related criminal behavior. It can never be overstated the extremely harmful impact misinformation, unsubstantiated assumptions, and hysteria can cause to a community. Many investigations have damaged communities and individuals around the world. Most if not all of these could have been corrected if only an investigator had taken a step back to fully examine each piece of evidence in a clear and consistent manner.

Factors Involved in the Identification and Investigation of a Possible Cult, Occult, Alternative Belief Crime Scene

The following is an overview of traditional materials that are taught to police officers to help them identify and investigate possible cult, Occult, or various other types of alternative belief crime scenes. These materials have been used since the late 1960s, albeit generally false and misinformed. When information is presented to a “learner” in a “list format” it becomes very tempting to use them as a “check list” of sorts. A major problem that developed over the decades is that educators, parents, and law enforcement have been given lists which they were to keep in

mind as *indicators* of a certain things, not *predictors*. These things were most often misused to seek individuals being involved in a behavior or a crime scene. Unfortunately, they often ultimately led to individuals being automatically linked to a certain type of behavior. Care must be taken by the investigator to use this information as additional tools to help them in doing their jobs, not a guaranteed list of indicators.

Investigating Occult Related Crime

As with any type of crime scene investigation (Mueller, 1992; Osterburg & Ward, 2013; Brandl, 2014), great care must be taken in order to protect evidence, victims, witnesses, the public, and oneself. While greatly exaggerated for many years, there have been some Occult related crime scenes that were actually “booby-trapped” with explosives and other items. Some of these actions were taken to protect a location from any intruder or even a first-responder if officials notified of its location. Investigators should not enter the perimeter of Occult crime scene until advised to do so by those in charge of securing a scene. Also, no substance at a ritual site should be touched without wearing gloves, eye protection, and masks in that poison can sometimes be used during ritual ceremonies.

Many in law enforcement are unclear about how to actually handle an alleged Occult crime case (Barry, 1987; Clark, 1988; Hicks, 1990). They will have questions about whether investigators should handle the crime differently than other crimes and what resources should be devoted to training officers and providing specialized knowledge about this type of crime. Ultimately, whether comfortable or not they will have to deal with an issue that is highly emotional and spiritual in nature, but they cannot afford to let their emotions or spiritual convictions enter into the lawful response required by their profession. Law enforcers must focus their attention on

the criminal act, not on the perpetrators belief system. In short, he or she must listen to complainants, not automatically believe them.

Any crime requires an objective assessment, and Occult crime is no exception. Nonetheless, few contemporary issues have so confounded and divided the law enforcement community than that of Occult crime. Thus, they should "stick to the Constitutional basics" by "investigating irregular behavior based on a well-founded and legally-defined reasonable suspicion and arresting based on probable cause."

Since Occult crime (Crews & Montgomery 1996) has only relatively recently become a specialized area of criminal activity, law enforcers are gradually learning how to approach an investigation. Thus, there are some important points to keep in mind prior to conducting any investigation. First, investigators are obligated to address the issue of the perpetrators Occult affiliation only if it is clear that the crime was committed in direct relation to his or her belief system. Second, as some have stated (Wedge, 1988; Perlmutter, 2003), traditional investigative responses do not always provide clear cut answers in true Occult crime cases.

Recognizing Occult Symbols and Rituals at the Crime Scene

If an investigator is called to an alleged Occult crime, there are several important points he or she must keep in mind in order to be effective. First, at least one crime scene investigator should be familiar with the outward, physical symbols used in various Occult rituals. If no one in the department has investigated an alleged Occult crime, the participation of an outside law enforcement consultant should be obtained. It should be remembered that the investigator is not initially responsible for interpreting the meaning of any symbols; he or she only records their existence at the crime scene.

Occult Crime Scene Clues

Law enforcers (Wedge, 1988; Rimer, 2009) who have investigated Occult crimes have developed many lists of general clues that could indicate the possibility that some kind of Occult ritual may have been involved in a crime. While an alleged Occult crime scene should not be handled any differently than other crime scene, special evidence may be found and must be processed.

At the scene of any crime (Wedge, 1988; Blood, 1994; Rimer, 2009), the following items and symbols may provide clues to possible Occult involvement. The criminal investigator must remember that some criminals have actually used this same list and others like it to mislead an investigation. Much of this misleading is to derail an investigator into believing that an Occult motivation existed when it did not.

animal bodies that have been mutilated	bottles of small vials of what may appear to be blood, found in refrigerator
human bodies that have been decapitated, mutilated, or branded with symbols	hypodermic needles used to remove blood from animals and humans
human and animal organs that have been removed, such as the head, heart, tongue, eyes and digits	animal or human body parts, found in freezers Occult books
human and animal bodies that have been drained of blood or cannibalized	handwritten Occult essays or poetry/ Messages written in blood
waxes, powders, oils on or around a body or crime scene area	writings in a non-discernable alphabet
religious artifacts such as altars, candles, chalices	handmade drawings of Occult symbols
symbols such as inverted crosses, pentagrams, inverted pentagrams	drawings or photographs of victims
a circle, eight feet in diameter which may or may not contain a pentagram	calendars with peculiar days marked
graffiti and the use of specific colors included in any symbols	Computer bulletin boards tied to the Occult

Other Potential Questions that should be considered

The following questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) should be addressed in an alleged Occult-related homicide.

As with any investigation, pictures and notations should be taken of anything that is considered significant.

What is the location of the cadaver? / Missing body parts?	Has the cadaver been branded or burned and is there a particular pattern?	Are there any candle wax drippings on or near the cadaver? In any particular location, color and number?	Is there any sign of semen on or near the cadaver?
What is the physical position of the cadaver?	Are there any jewelry, charms, stones, talisman or amulets on or near the cadaver? / Are there any Occult ritual items or artifacts on or near the cadaver?	Are there any animal or human feces on the upper part of the cadaver, and is there any evidence such substances have been consumed?	Are there any oils, incense, perfumes, or potions poured or rubbed on the body? Wax dripping on the body?
Is the cadaver dressed or undressed?	Is there any evidence that jewelry is missing from the cadaver?	Is there evidence that hands or feet have been tied or shackled?	Is blood absent from the cadaver?
Does the cadaver have any cuts, slashes, teeth marks, or stab wounds? How many? Is there a particular pattern?	Oils or incense on the body?	Is there any sign of semen in the cadaver?	Symbols carved into the flesh? / Past scarring?
Is there evidence that smoke, water or blood has been collected in the lungs?	Has the cadaver been painted with any substance or spray paint and is the paint a particular color?	Are there any tattoos or ink marks on the cadaver and are they any particular pattern or color?	Is there evidence of urine, feces, drugs, wine or other substances having been ingested?

Traditional Materials used by Criminal Investigators

The following are lists of traditional information questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) taught to and used by law enforcement since the 1980s. Great care must be used when examining this material in that much of it has been the catalyst for misdirection of many police investigations. The reason to review

this material is that it has been disseminated by so many to so many for so many years that it has become part of American culture. Many young people wishing to become involved in any type of anti-social behavior often mimic it, while many wishing to derail law enforcement investigations use it to cover up the true motive of their crimes. Either way, it is definitely materials that the investigator should be familiar with and have access to as they conduct their investigations.

Occult Crime Scene Identifiers

There are myriad lists questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) of “indicators of an Occult crime scene” developed since the early 1980s. The following is a compiled list of the information provided in this lists. As stated prior, care must be taken in how this list is used by the investigator. While these have been found at many crime scenes and the in possession of criminal offenders, they are also used by many in their personal law abiding lives. Just because one or more of these items are present that does not necessarily mean criminal involvement and could very well mislead an investigation. The wrong suspects or motives or evidence could be pursued and valuable time wasted. Moreover, more damage that good could be done to a community by a criminal investigation.

The identifiers are:

Absence of blood on ground/floor	Bones; human or animal	Fire pit	Non-sensible (non-discernible) alphabet or writings	Skulls with or without candles
Altar & items for worship	Books, games, movies, or music with Occultic themes	Items from a grave robbery; coffin, tombstone, or dirt	Occult symbols	Small bowls of powder, salt, drugs, and herbs
Animal mutilations, including the removal of specific body	Candles (e.g. black, white, and red) and candle drippings	Jewelry with Occult symbols	Robes; black, white, or red	Unusual drawings or symbols (.e.g. inverted pentagram,

parts (e.g. eye, anus, heart, tongue, kidney, and left leg)				pentagram, inverted cross) on walls, floors, etc.
Ashes	Evidence of sexual activities	Literature and books related to subjects such as Satanism, magic, role playing games, card games, witchcraft, and photographs pertaining to areas such as the preceding	Rooms painted red or black	Voodoo dolls
Blood; human or animal	Face/body paint	Mockery of Christian symbols	Silver implements	Whips, chains, handcuffs, or ropes

Occult Holidays

Various lists of “Occult and Satanic Holidays” questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) have been disseminated for many years. Beginning in the late 1970s, police training and seminars began distributing lists such as the one below as another tool for investigators to use in determining whether a crime was “Occult Related” or not. Any unusual crime scene which was discovered within a day or two of one of these dates was to be examined further for potential Occult connection. While many of these dates have their genesis from ancient pagan calendars, many have simply been made up by overzealous supposed Occult experts over the years.

Sabbat: Holidays of the Occult Calendar (Items marked with an asterisk (*) are the 8 major holidays)	
January 1	Druid Feast Day
January 17	Satanic Revels
February 1	Imbolic (1st Full Moon)
February 2 *	Candlemas (Sabot)
March 20-21 *	Spring Equinox (Feast)
April 19-26	Preparation for Sacrifice

April 30 *	Walpurgis Night (Great Sabot)
May 1 *	Beltane
June 21-22	Summer Solstice (Feast)
July 1	Demon Revels
August 2 *	Lammas (Great Sabot)
August 3	Satanic Revels
September 7	Marriage to the Beast Satan
September 20-21 *	Fall Equinox (Feast)
October 29	All Hallows Eve
October 31 *	Samhain (Great Sabot-Holy Day)
December 22 *	Winter Solstice (Feast)
December 24	Satanic Revels
Person's Birthday	Highest of All Holidays

The potential importance of this list to investigators in the 21st century is that many young “dabblers” use this list for dates to plan their activities. Some youth will try to shock their parents, teachers, and friends with activities or behaviors around these “holidays”.

Potential Indicators of Dangerous Occult Related Behavior

There have been myriad lists questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) made for parents to use to “identify” if their child is involved in the Occult or for teachers to identify if their student is a Satanist, and for law enforcement to use to identify a potential suspect. The following is a compiled list of the most common characteristics found in an examination of the material.

A mutilation theme dominates play-time	Aggressive play that has a marked sadistic quality	Alienation from family	An obsession with Occult books, games, music, and movies
Behavior is disruptive, disrespectful, and disobedient	Bizarre cruelty Displays/cruelty to animals	Characteristically resorts to name calling, cursing, or abusive language	Confidential phone calls
Consistently prefers TV shows, movies, or music expressing violent themes and acts	Discussion of participation in a “religious ceremony”	Drug and alcohol abuse	Family pets or other animals are harmed

Fascination with death/Preoccupation with death	Fascination with weapons	Frequent runaway	Habitually makes violent threats when angry
Has a background of drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse or dependency	Has a background of serious disciplinary problems at school and in the community	Has a history of tantrums and uncontrollable, angry outbursts	Has been bullied and/or bullies or intimidates peers or younger children
Has little or no supervision and support from parents or a caring adult	Has previously been truant, suspended, or expelled from school	Has previously brought a weapon to school	Has threatened or attempted suicide
Has witnessed or been a victim of abuse or neglect in the home	High truancy rate	Is involved with a gang or an antisocial group on the fringe of peer acceptance	Is often depressed and/or has significant mood swings
Is on the fringe of his or her peer group with few or no close friends	Is preoccupied with weapons, explosives or other incendiary devices	Jewelry, make-up, and clothing reflect an Occultic theme	Mysterious new friends
Numbers or letters written backwards, characteristic of the "Devil's Alphabet"	Obnoxious & anti-social	Occult symbols drawn on walls, books, and clothing	Prefers reading materials dealing with violent themes, rituals, and abuse
Preoccupation with the devil, magic, potions, and spells	Reference to people dressed in costumes, robes, and masks	Reflects anger, frustration, and the dark side of life in school essays or writing projects	Refusal to participate in the family religious affiliation
Secret messages/diary	Self-mutilation	Songs and chanting that are sexual or bizarre	Suicide/Attempted suicide
Symbols carved, burnt, or tattooed on the child's body	Tends to blame others for difficulties and problems that she/he causes her/himself	Violent & aggressive behavior	

The caution that needs to be taken here is obvious. Many of these are also characteristics exhibited by children who have suffered bullying, neglect, or mistreatment. These children are in no way connected with the Occult and to deal with them from that perspective will do more damage than good. Moreover, the investigator must remember that many of these "characteristics" are part of adolescent interests and exhibited by most young people at one time or another across the world.

Plus, Occult themes (Toth, Crews, & Burton 2008) have become part of the contemporary culture and permeate art, tattoos, music, dress, and appearance. They are seen by most as fashion, not a sign of personal belief or practice.

Symbols of the Occult and Alternate Religions

A comprehensive list of all potential symbols of the Occult and alternative belief systems is beyond the scope of this chapter. Many sources questions (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009) dealing with symbols and their use exist for the investigator to use in order to define/identify an object, marking, or writing found at a crime scene. The following is a brief list of some of these symbols commonly used (whether appropriately or not) by some Occult groups and individuals.

666/FFF	Anarchy symbol	Ankh	Anti-Christ	Anti-Justice	Baphomet
Black Mass Indicator	Circle	Cross of Confusion	Cross of Nero	Diana and Lucifer	Double Lightning Bolts
Eye in Pyramid	Eye of Horus	Hexagram	Horned Hand	Pentagram	Satanic Moon
Seal of Solomon /Star of David	Spiral	Swastikas	Talisman or Amulet	The Blood Ritual Symbol	The Inverted Cross of Satanic Justice
The Sexual Ritual Symbol	Trail Markers	Triangle	Unicursive Hexagram	Yin/Yang	

The major thing which must be remembered by the criminal investigator is that the meaning of any symbol is in the “eye of the beholder”. That is to state that the true meaning of a symbol is in the mind of the person using it in any manner. While many of these symbols have universal and/or historic meaning, they are still used by many for completely opposite reasons.

The investigator should be aware of the general meaning of a symbol, but should be vigilant in determining how its author views it and intended its use.

Developing Probable Cause for a Search Warrant

Putting together a comprehensive search warrant (Osterburg & Ward, 2013; Brandl, 2014) that may provide desperately needed physical evidence is key to a true Occult crime investigation. Investigators must be sure to validate the need for every item prior to the search. While the following items should be included on a search warrant, it is again important to emphasize that when interpreting the actual Occult connection between the evidence that is seized and an Occult crime, other professional expertise should be obtained (Wedge, 1988; Barry, 1987; California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993; Rimer, 2009).

Clothing and Jewelry

- black satin or velvet right-handed glove
- robes, detachable hoods
- costumes and masks
- martial arts clothing
- medallions with Satanic symbols
- Large ruby or red-stoned ring

Games, Books, Wall-hangings

- Occult games
- Occult books
- handwritten diaries
- writings in non-discernable alphabet
- Posters of heavy metal rock stars, mythological beings, nightmarish pictures, sadomasochistic sex

Weapons

- heavy wooden staff
- sword
- knives or athame, a handmade knife with a black handle and etchings
- bull whip, cat o' nine tails, ligatures
- Martial arts weapons

Ritual items

- altar, wooden stand, marble slab
- crosses
- candles and candle holders
- chalice, goblet, cruet
- gongs, drums, bells
- hair and skeletal remains
- coffin, coffin nails
- ashes from fire pits, fireplaces, wood stoves
- phallus, serpent symbols
- incense and incense burner
- body paint, face paint
- feathers
- mirror
- twine string
- herbs, especially salt, bay leaves and garlic
- caldron or iron pot
- Coins, statues, stones, jewels

Barriers to Effective Law Enforcement Involvement in Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief System Crime

There are myriad barriers and obstacles (California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993) to the effective investigation of suspected Occult related crime. Most if not all of these can be overcome with logic, open-mindedness, and common sense. Before any law enforcement officer comes face-to-face with allegations or actual instances of Occult-related crime, he or she should be aware of the wide array of barriers discussed below which can and often will confuse and even overwhelm law enforcement functions.

Barriers

First, many familiar with this type of crime (Richardson, Best, & Bromley, 1991b) will have major disagreements about many issues. Among the most debated points are the actual extent of Occult crime, the motives of Occultists involved in criminal activity, and the veracity of self-

professed "survivors". Not surprisingly, such disagreement will affect any law enforcement approach to an alleged Occult-related criminal incident.

Second, traditional intelligence operations (Rimer, 2009) do not work very well with Occultists. Because Occult groups have been historically persecuted for their beliefs, most ceremonies and rituals are highly secretive and, therefore, difficult to penetrate. However, the biggest barrier to traditional intelligence is that most Occultists require all group members to participate in their rituals. In most cases, law enforcers would be morally and legally prohibited from such participation.

Third, many people (Crews, 1996) both within and without law enforcement circles are either skeptical about the existence of Occult activities or absolutely deny the existence of any criminal links. While a certain amount of skepticism may actually be beneficial to an investigation, such skepticism can also prohibit an investigation from getting "off the ground." Fourth, the law enforcer's own personal and spiritual belief system may inhibit an objective handling of the case. Investigating crimes that are both morally and spiritually repugnant.

Fifth, law enforcers (Fine and Victor, 1994) who receive specialized training in Occult crime may become what some people have called "over-sensitized" to this type of criminal activity. The possibility increases that he or she will expect an Occult encounter, and when confronted with unexpected or inexplicable information, may interpret it along the new lines of expectations. Sixth, law enforcement investigators may spend a great deal of time linking the commission of a crime to an Occult belief system, only to find the prosecutor and/or an expert witness recommending the link be ignored or discredited in a jury trial. In many cases where Occult links have been alleged, prosecutors are not presenting such ties to the juries, arguing such evidence is circumstantial at best and that juries simply will not accept the existence of such evil-minded crimes.

Overcoming Barriers

As with any type of investigation (Osterburg & Ward, 2013), officers must be prepared to follow any lead no matter where it goes. Any investigator faced with an alleged Occult crime must be prepared to face these barriers and to devise some sort of strategy to overcome each hurdle as it arises. To help counter the effects of these investigatory problems, the following procedural guidelines are offered.

First, as with all investigation (Brandl, 2014), document all evidence as soon as it is received. This should occur (California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1993) through the working as a team in which the roles of each team member are clearly defined. Recognize that the perspectives of each team member will differ, but this is a positive rather than negative factor which encourages a broader base for sharing and analyzing information. The team should be open to new theories, should review the case often and should not eliminate any factors unless they are conclusive. Teams should be comprised of individuals with needed specialized knowledge. At least one investigator should be assigned as a liaison with non-law enforcement groups which may be involved in a particular case (*i.e.*, parents, educators, community members, and the media).

Given the controversy with many of these types of crimes (Mueller, 1992), investigators should involve the District Attorney/Prosecutor in the early stages of any investigation. It goes without stating (Osterburg & Ward, 2013; Brandl, 2014) that they must keep all investigative information confidential for as long as possible. As with any investigation, the investigator should execute search warrants as soon as needed, but not short of probable cause. They should follow careful, well-documented interview procedures with any involved.

Most importantly, the investigator must keep in mind when examining the evidence and interview results whether they can determine if the crime was Occult related or not. And, was it

part of a belief system identified with a particular group or was it an individualistic belief system. Cases must be built on physical evidence, not circumstantial conjecture.

Conclusion

Few types of behavior bring about more controversy, panic, and hysteria than that which is potentially Occult related. Because this new "field" of crime has been pioneered by people with wide-ranging spiritual convictions, professional objectives, political agendas, and emotional commitments, it is a difficult situation. The real problem is that everyone has a valid perspective; but the valid perspectives are all-too often based upon fears, emotion, spiritual beliefs and hearsay.

Law enforcers face many legal, spiritual and emotional hurdles when confronted with an alleged Occult crime. While there are no simple solutions for overcoming these hurdles, most criminal justice professionals recognize the answer lies somewhere within the educational realm. Indeed, law enforcers must clearly understand the belief systems of Occultists and know when practicing such beliefs are within legally protected Constitutional boundaries and when such practices step over the line into clearly criminal conduct.

Additionally, law enforcers must have a clear comprehension of the barriers they will face when investigating an alleged Occult crime and must be able to formulate a plan for overcoming such obstacles. They must understand and be prepared to act upon orders to perform in any of the three capacities required of Occult-related law enforcement (*i.e.*, maintaining order through a protection role; providing services through a public relations role; and enforcing the law through an investigative role).

And perhaps most importantly, those assigned the task of investigating an alleged Occult-related crime must be prepared to recognize Occult symbols and rituals at the crime scene or call for a professional opinion from another source. This requires that police officers must be the

recipients of objective information about the Occult presented by objective and experienced instructors. Second, they must conduct Occult-related investigations by objective law enforcers who base their actions upon firm educational knowledge and sound intelligence about Occult groups and activities within their jurisdictions. Third, they must stop dwelling on the controversy surrounding the extent of Occult crime and deal with the problems presented by law enforcement and community perceptions of Occult activity and Occult crime.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the impact of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution upon the investigation of possible Occult related crimes
2. Define the terms “Cult Cops” and “Ghostbusters” and their impact upon the investigation of possible Occult related crime
3. Explain the impact that “Satanic Panic” and the “CSI Effect” upon these types of investigations
4. Describe the types of individuals involved in these types of behaviors and their characteristics
5. Discuss the Factors Involved in the Identification and Investigation of a Possible Cult, Occult, Alternative Belief Crime Scene
6. Discuss the possible Barriers to Effective Law Enforcement Involvement in Occult, Satanic, and Alternative Belief System Crime

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