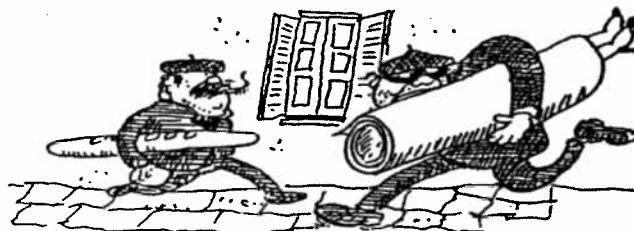


FOAFTALE NEWS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH

CHELSEA SMILERS: Interim Report on a Gang-Violence Rumor

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I first heard the rumor on 28th February when my daughter Kate reported that it had been rife in her Croydon Secondary School (1st-3rd years) on that and the previous day. Phone-calls and letters to pupils and headteachers elsewhere in the borough showed that it had visited every secondary school in Croydon at the same time as Kate's or the end of the week before (23rd-24th February).

In each case the basic pattern of response had been the same. Pupils' reaction had been near-panic--children refusing to leave the school premises without adult escort, worried phone-calls from parents, some children kept away from school, and children talking of little else for two or three days.

Teachers reacted by checking with other schools and police, by one-to-one reassurance, and by holding special assemblies and/or circulating notes to form-teachers discrediting the story.

BASIC STORY. Details vary, of course, but the following motifs are extremely constant:

1. A gang of youths called the Chelsea Smilers are going round schools attacking pupils on their way home.
2. They question children about the Chelsea Football Club.
3. They cut pupils' mouths at the sides in a grotesque smile (using knives/razors/credit cards).
4. They do something else (e.g., punch them in the stomach) to make the victim scream, which splits their face even wider.
5. They were at so-and-so local school on day X, and will be here on day Y.

DISTRIBUTION. Detailed research has so far concentrated on South London and has shown that the rumor and panic were found right across the region. The following London Boroughs were definitely affected:

Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth, Croydon, Wandsworth, Merton and Sutton. In addition, areas in Kent, such as Dartford and Gravesend were also hit. I have not, however, had replies from every school in the region, and the distribution may be more patchy than it appears at this stage. A brief report on the rumour in the Sunday Express ('Riddle of Knife Rumour' (12th March 1989):2) gives the distribution as "South London and as far as Gravesend and Sevenoaks in Kent".

I have not yet attempted a systematic search elsewhere, but have received reports from isolated places in North London: Archway, Marylebone, Tufnell Park, and Parliament Hill: all for March 1989. My 14-year old nephew from Leytonstone (East London) reports no school-panic, but he has heard one friend refer to the story (he had renamed it the 'Liverpool Smilers'). I have received no other report from East London.

Friends elsewhere in the country have not heard of it, but one important reference from outside London has come to light: "A boy was giving a talk about football violence. He mentioned the practice of a particular 'firm' of making two slits, one at each corner of the victim's mouth and then 'kneeing him in the balls' so that the resulting grimace caused his cheeks to tear. The scars left him with a permanent 'smile'. I'm

fairly sure he was talking about Chelsea supporters, though I can't be absolutely certain. As far as I know, the story was news to his friends (who were in his discussion group) and so it was certainly not a rumour of the type you describe" (Milton Keynes, March 1988).

CHRONOLOGY. Schools in a particular borough appear to have been first affected on different days, and we do not always have exact dates, but by charting the earliest known occurrence in each borough a reasonably clear broad pattern emerges of a spread from Bexley/Bromley westwards across South London and eastwards across Kent.

Apart from the Milton Keynes example, the first known dated reference we have so far is in Bexley on 31st January, but the first reported school-panic is in Bromley on 2nd February, while the first panic in Bexley is 6th February. It is worth noting that several Bexley schools reported that they were not visited by the rumor at all.

REPORTED ORIGINS. A regular feature of the rumour as reported by pupils is that the gang come from a particular named school in the area. This 'localising' trait is common in rumours/legends. A theory of origin which was regularly reported by teachers maintained that the rumour had stemmed from a fight between two pupils at a school in North Bexley, in which one pupil had his nose broken. This appears to have been started unwittingly by the Bexley police.

The first thing that local police do when confronted with such a story as the Chelsea Smilers is to check their 'incident book' to see if anything relevant has been reported. It appears that the Bexley police did just this and told enquiring local teachers that the only incident remotely connected with the story was this fight, and as this information was passed from school to school--at teacher level--the qualification was dropped and this 'rumour' became accepted as fact, or at least as probably correct.

OTHER 'ORIGIN' THEORIES. In areas affected after the 26th February, many teachers (and pupils) connected the story with the TV film The Firm (BBC2 26th February). This film was about football violence, and apparently included some gratuitous face-cutting (I have not seen it), but not of the 'smile' type. Given the chronology involved, this film may have added credence or vitality to the rumour, but it cannot have caused it.

One person (not in the London area) on hearing the story connected it immediately with a half-remembered incident in the Kings Road, Chelsea which was widely reported in the national press and TV. This was the so-called 'fat man' case of December 1984, where a Chelsea supporter had savagely attacked a publican's face with a broken glass. Again, however, there was no 'smile' motif.

Several people have pointed out the possible connection with the Acid House 'smiley' badges which received a great deal of media attention in 1988. A fairly regular motif of the rumour has the gang travelling in a van with the 'smiley' badge painted on the side.

PRECURSORS. Information gleaned from other folklorists and responses to an appeal in the Guardian (30th May) show that neither the Chelsea Smilers story, nor the ensuing panic, is unique. Selected items in chronological order:

1950's Newcastle: A very similar story (including 'smile' motif) was told about the Glasgow razor gangs.

Early 1970's Liverpool: Gang: "Can your mother sew? - Well, sew this"

1971 Skelmersdale: 'Green (or red) Jackets' gang - caught someone who pleaded it was their birthday, so the gang scored 'happy birthday' on their back with a knife.

1971/2 Liverpool: The 'Green Jackets' gang playing noughts and crosses on faces with razors or Stanley knives (plus other things). Some degree of school panic.

NOTES. It must be stressed that my research so far is at best patchy, and any conclusions must be very tentative. It is clear that we must distinguish between the story of the Chelsea Smilers and its associated panic. The story can exist without the panic, although not vice versa.

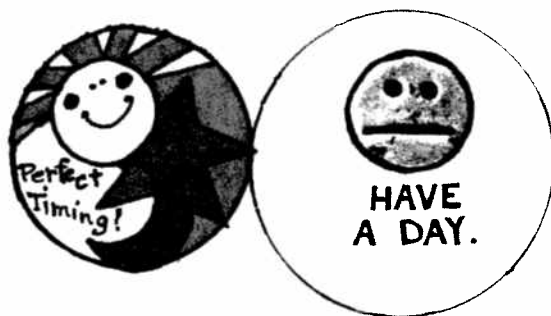
Teachers, when faced with such a phenomenon, are in a very difficult position. They must act to discredit the story and to calm things down, but they run the risk of their actions being taken as legitimizing the rumour (examples of this have been reported to me). When the panic hits, teachers have to rely on other teachers and the police for information--which is often as much 'hearsay' as the pupils' rumour. Local police are in a similar position. Hence the spread of 'official' rumours such as the origin in the fight at the Bexley School.

The element which appears to have caused the children to panic, and which sets the story off from other legends, is the reported premeditated timetable of the gang. They are not located in 'vague time' but are coming here next Tuesday, etc. To adult eyes, however, this is the one motif which seems to be immediately suspect: if the timetable is known then the police must be prepared for it!

Even this motif, however, is not unique. The 'Green Jackets' gang rumour in the 1970's is described thus by a correspondent: "They were reported to be approaching Formby along the beach from the direction of Liverpool and were said to have terrorised other schools. . . . Though I found it hard to believe that the police could not prevent such an invasion I was genuinely alarmed and kept my daughters at home the afternoon. It was only after contacting the police ourselves later in the day that we were reassured that the scare had no foundation".

[Editor's Note: The "smile" motif may have deeper folk roots. Among "The Witty and Entertaining Exploits of George Buchanan" (a chapbook printed in 1703), we find an incident in which the famous jester finds himself derided by courtiers for his shabby dress. At dinner, he "went into the stables, and with a knife cut all their horses' chafes, not sore, but so as they might bleed." Later, as the courtiers begin to jibe again, he turns to them and laughs heartily, saying to the king, "how can I but laugh, when horses cannot hold their peace. . . . don't you see how your horses have rent their chafes, laughing at my old boots?" (Reprinted in Katherine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), A.2.328). I believe that this cruel prank shows up in other Anglo-American trickster tales as well.

"The Joker," a regular nemesis of the American comic book superhero Batman, also boasts a similar deformed, perpetual smile and may reflect a similar motif in popular culture. Jack Nicholson's memorable embodiment of this character in this summer's movie may give the motif added vitality in America. And the Japanese "split-mouth woman" (described by James Kirkup later in this issue) may be yet another wry "Smiler." Readers?]



"CONTEMPORARY LEGENDS," 1924

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Contemporary legend scholarship dates from the 1940s but awareness of the phenomenon can be found in the 1930s. Alexander Woolcott's While Rome Burns (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1937) is probably the most frequently cited example. But no legend scholar seems to have noticed a somewhat earlier case.

Near the beginning of Chapter 6 of The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald appears the following:

Gatsby's notoriety, spread about by the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality and so become authorities upon his past, had increased all summer until he fell just short of being news. Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipe-line to Canada" attached themselves to him and there was one persistent story that he didn't live in a house at all, but in a boat that looked like a house and was moved secretly up and down the Long Island shore.

The interest of this passage is two-fold. First, it seems to show that Fitzgerald was aware of some features of what we now call contemporary legends, in particular that the same basic story may be "attached" to different people. Secondly, and perhaps more strikingly, there is the fact that he calls such stories "contemporary legends," a term which is now favored by many scholars but which has had to compete with the many rivals used by both scholars and the lay public.

The Great Gatsby was published in 1925, but largely written in 1924, and the manuscript contains a passage virtually identical to that quoted (Brucoli 1973:159). Thus we have Fitzgerald using the phrase "contemporary legend" with apparent casualness in 1924. Is there any other evidence of awareness at this time or earlier?

Source

Brucoli, Matthew J., ed. 1973. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby: A Facsimile of the Manuscript. Washington DC: Microcard Editions.

TRUTH STRANGER THAN LEGEND: Contemporary Legends in Europe and the Orient

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I first became aware of the emotional power of urban legend in the early 1950's. The beautiful city of Bath was then starting to receive increasingly large numbers of foreign residents, in particular blacks and Indians, many of them part of a continuing overflow from Bristol. The contrast between their colorful, exuberant and often happy-go-lucky way of life and the staid gentility of conservative Bath was to me very exciting. But to most of the inhabitants this injection of vitality appeared like an invasion and an affront to values that were sometimes still set in the 18th century.

This gave rise to the first urban legend I remember. I heard it from my mother, a working class Tyneside woman who might have been expected to accept "coloured people," for there had been quite a large population of Arabs, Indians, and West Indians in our home town, South Shields. But a few years' residence in Bath had perhaps infected her with middle-class "Bath-itis": or perhaps Bath encouraged the underlying conservatism often found in the working class in Britain. She was a woman whom I had thought to be totally without either racial or sexual prejudice, so I was shocked when one day she informed me that the blacks in Bath lived on cans of cat and dog food.

I knew that many of them were unemployed, and that they lived in run-down accommodation in the poorer parts of the city. But I knew my mother's story was absurd. I found out that she had heard it from our cleaning woman, a Bath widow who had "come down in the world" as she put it. But what shocked me even more than the legend was the fury with which they both turned upon me when I ventured to doubt its truth. Their anger was as irrational as their tale, and soon died down. But it showed me how ferociously some people will cling to rumour and legend, and how they will indignantly try to

prove the truth by citing the experiences of a friend or of someone with whom they had chatted on the bus.

In this case, a friend of our cleaning lady's sister had found the modest "buildings" where she lived taken over by immigrants, and her next-door neighbours were the ones she claimed devoured mountains of pet food, for she had seen their empty tins in their dustbins. When I suggested that the pet food was for their pets, and not for human consumption, there were cries of indignation from our cleaning lady, who seemed to think I was "letting down the side" by taking the defense of the blacks. Shortly after that, she gave in her notice. I have never forgotten her shrill indignation, and how for a while it infected my mother.

Fortunately, urban legends usually evoke laughter. But something of that class prejudice was neatly skewered by the American satirist, Art Buchwald, in "The Welfare Chiselers" (1987). It appeared at the time that President Reagan was firmly convinced that there were too many families in the US having an easy time living on welfare, and Buchwald entertainingly sketched a portrait of a Ronald Reagan hunting for concrete examples of out-of-work families living in luxury at the country's expense in the Pierre or the Plaza. This has the real makings of a real urban legend with its roots in class prejudice.

Racial prejudice often seems to rear its ugly head most viciously in the heat of summer. The best French daily, *Libération*, often gives examples of this. In September 1985, it covered the case of a Greek cargo vessel captain who had been accused of dumping eleven African stowaways overboard in the Indian Ocean. At his trial in Athens, he claimed that this was common practice, and that he was in no way guilty. A dozen or so captains spoke up in support of Captain Plytzanopoulos. A certain Captain Garufalias stated that "the Japanese put their stowaways in the freezer room, and when they have turned to blocks of ice throw them into the sea." The Norwegians, for their part, are said to stoke the furnaces with their clandestine passengers, and the Greeks claim that sharks never eat blacks. Captain Protidis defended his countryman's action, saying: "If a hundred unemployed blacks occupied the offices of our newspapers [addressing journalists who had severely criticized the murders] would you not throw them into the street...?" ("Le capitaine" 1985). I seem to remember a similar form of chop-logic used by Mrs Thatcher against the striking miners.

1986 saw an interesting crop of urban legends from France. There was the case of housewives finding snakes among the Asian-made textiles in the department stores of Lyons. Then there was the rumour of poisonous spiders found in potted yucca plants--"from abroad," of course. And snakes had even been found in mechanical toys from Hong Kong. Such rumours are the source of urban legends, and are obviously based on fears of economic competition from foreign sources, mainly from the Far East.

One interesting development in France in this respect is the creation of La Fondation pour l'étude et l'information sur les Rumeurs, started by the sociologist Jean-Noël Kapferer, the subject of a report in *Libération* of October 4th, 1984. People can telephone the Foundation with the latest rumour. One of these, reported in *Libération*, was that it had become fashionable in Paris to raise rats as pets. Kapferer rejects this rumour as "physically incoherent," and suggests that the rat, which has the appearance of a small dog such as a chihuahua, could possibly be a small rodent called an agouti found in Guyana and Brazil, and which is not carnivorous. Therefore, he says, the rumour would find difficulty in being accepted ("Elle court" 1986). But is this not the same urban legend as that which provides the title to Jan Harold Brunvand's *The Mexican Pet?* (1986)

Through the summer of 1986, there were sightings, reports, and rumours of a big black panther prowling in the dunes at Le Touquet, said to be feeding on wild rabbits and small children. The police took imprints of its paws and sent them for analysis to a zoologist. It turned out to be simply a large black cat.

There was another tale of a woman who usually when returning from vacation in the South of France slept all the way in the back seat of her husband's car. But when he stopped to get petrol, unknown to him she woke up and went to the Ladies'. Without bothering to check if she was still asleep on the back seat, the husband set off without her. Brigades of gendarmes were mobilized to find him, but as long as four hours after forgetting his wife on the Autoroute du Soleil he had still not been traced.

This true *fait divers* resembles those found in the collections of Paul Smith (1983: 36) and Jan Brunvand (1981: 132-136) about caravanners on vacation. In this

case, the real name of the victim is given: "Mme Jeannine Elbaz, 58 years old, who never makes any noise when she is riding in her husband's car..." The name of the place where hubby stopped for petrol is also given: Sezerin-du-Rhone. These are the sort of factual details often invented by authors of urban legends to make them more convincing.

In August, 1986, after a long drought in the Midi-Pyrenees since early spring, *Libération* reported that farmers were desperate. Only the fruit-growers were happy, because there was no hail to spoil their crops. The *paysans* became jealous of the fruit farmers, whose orchards are irrigated by carefully-controlled water channels. The *paysans* began claiming that whenever a rare cloud appears in the burning blue sky, it is prevented from disgorging rain through the activities of a small white aeroplane that flies round the cloud, sometimes enters it, and sometimes appears to drag it away before it can release a single drop of rain for the drought-stricken farmers.

They say it is the fruit-growers who send up this phantom airplane, just like the Russians who after Chernobyl sent up planes to prevent clouds sending down radioactive rain that might contaminate the ground (Lavac 1986). These statements by the *paysans* are in the purest line of urban legend: someone who admits not having actually seen the mysterious plane believes in it because his grandfather had seen it. Now 500 *paysans* have signed a petition demanding the cessation of these strange *pratiques clandestines* by the little white aeroplane.

In the Zurich *Tages Anzeiger* I found a story telling how a hearse carrying a dead body for burial could not find a parking space because of the deep snow surrounding the village church in Hartmannsdorf. So the driver had to leave his hearse in the middle of the road while he went to get help and to inform the relatives of the dead person who were waiting in the church. But while he was absent the traffic police came along and towed the hearse and the dead body away because they were obstructing the highway, even though the driver had stuck a notice on his windscreen saying "On Urgent Business." The traffic police hauled the hearse away to an "automobile graveyard". Meanwhile the priest and the sorrowing relatives were waiting in the freezing church for the body to arrive and the ceremony to begin (Meyer 1987).

Recently, I worked in Japan, but frequently traveled back and forth to Europe. The envious West, jealous of the continuing economic successes of Japan, would naturally be a breeding-ground for anti-Japanese urban legends. So we have had reports that the raw fish used in sushi and sashimi contains minute grubs that can enter the blood stream and contaminate the brain. Certain chopsticks exported from Japan are said to have poisoned tips.

In Japan, the first urban legend I heard was about a taxi driver and appears to be a version of the well-known Vanishing Hitchhiker. Late one night in Kyoto, a young and inexperienced taxi-driver picked up a beautiful young woman dressed in exquisite kimono and obi at a lonely spot beside the Kamogawa River. The lady gave him the address she wanted to go to, which she said was a house right next to a famous temple. Like all Kyoto taxi-drivers, the young man knew quite well where the temple was, so he was confident he could find the house without difficulty.

During the drive, the woman kept silent. The driver tried to start a conversation, but she would not reply. She kept brushing the folds of her kimono with her hands, as if trying to brush something away. The driver fell silent, deciding she must be a little crazy.

As he approached the temple, he saw that the house next to it was burning. It was completely devoured by flames. The firemen were helpless against such a great conflagration. The driver turned to the woman to warn her that her house was on fire, but found she had vanished. But as Japanese taxi doors are automatic, and controlled by the driver, who alone can open them to let a passenger out, the driver was baffled. At that very moment, a dead body was being carried out of the house by the firemen, and to the taxi-driver's horror, he saw that it was the woman he had driven in his taxi from the Kamogawa. Her body was burned, and dripping with water from the firemen's hoses, but her face was still plainly recognizable.

Terrified, the driver sped away, back to his taxi company headquarters. When he got back there, shaking with fright as he told his story, one of his fellow drivers cried: "Hey! Look here! The back seat of your taxi is all soaking wet!" As the taxi-driver gazed in stupefaction at the pools of water on the back seat and the floor, he saw that they were swimming with

charred cloth exactly like that of the woman's kimono. Then he just fainted clean away. . . .

There is at present a great conflict going on between the well-known "nuclear allergy" of the Japanese and the increasingly powerful pro-nuclear energy (and arms) lobby in the Diet. Various protest movements are going on against the construction of nuclear fuel processing plants, like the one at Mihama in Fukui on the Japan Sea Coast.

It is from this region that the latest urban legend springs. As most Japanese are rightly afraid of nuclear energy in any form--there have already been several accidents--it is difficult to recruit Japanese workmen, so most of those working on the sites are Koreans, Okinawans, or day laborers who cannot find any other kind of work. Frequently these are the underprivileged and the outcasts of society--mostly recruits from the social dropout areas of Sanya in Tokyo and Imaike and Amagasaki in Osaka. Every night, helicopters transport highly radioactive nuclear reactor sludge, which the cheaply-hired day laborers have been shovelling out of the plant all day long.

"It is said"--the Japanese non-committal phrase that often begins a story--that the helicopters also ferry out from the plant the corpses of laborers who have died of radioactive contamination, for clandestine burial far out at sea. This legend forms part of the theme of a new movie, Ikiteru Uchi ga Hana na no yo Shindara sore made yo To Sengen, or "The 'While You're Alive Life Is Like a Flower but When You're Dead You've Had It' Party Manifesto" (directed by Azuma Morisaki). "It is said" also that parts of the dead laborer's bodies are sometimes found in catches of fish brought to the Japan Sea ports. Consignments of nuclear waste sent to Cumbria for disposal also contain these workers' corpses, other reports say.

One of the most interesting Japanese urban legends concerns the Ainu, a racially discriminated minority that was recently the subject of ignorantly racist remarks. The Ainu have risen up in arms because the Japanese government has stated officially that there are no racial minorities in Japan--which drew protests also from Koreans and the burakumin or "untouchable" minorities. Former Prime Minister Nakasone further offended the Ainu, who regard being called "hairy" an insult, by referring to his own very bushy eyebrows in a clumsy attempt to prove that the Ainu weren't the only hairy people in Japan.

In the legend, two housewives went on a trip to Hokkaido, where they visited the Ainu village of Shiroishi. They bought an Ainu doll as a souvenir, and when they got home they were horrified to find that the doll's hair had started to grow out of its wooden skull. They measured the hair every day and found it was growing longer and longer. The phenomenon was widely reported in the Japanese press and gave me the subject for a short story, "Living Doll" (1986).

Finally, a few years ago young people and small children were both fascinated and appalled by the story of the kuchi-sake onna, literally "split-mouth woman." There are several variants, but the best one is this:

Some children were out playing at dusk in a deserted lane, when they saw the elegant figure of a kimono-clad young lady walking towards them. But, like most Japanese when they have a bad cold, she was wearing a white gauze mask covering her nose and mouth, and hooked round her ears with elastic. The children gazed in admiration at her beautiful and expensive clothes, and one of them commented: "What a shame! Such lovely clothes, and wearing a mask! I'm sure she must be a very beautiful lady. What a pity we can't see her face. . . ."

On hearing these words, the lady stopped in front of the children, and, swiftly removing her mask, revealed a gaping mouth hideously slit from ear to ear! "Now do you think I'm beautiful?" she screamed after the children as they ran away.

In another version of the story, her nose is also missing. This tale was highly popular for a year or two among school children, so much so that women were afraid to go out wearing a gauze mask when they had a cold, because children would run after them shouting: "Kuchi-sake onna!" One school teacher who came to school wearing such a mask tried to commit suicide because of the taunts of her pupils.

Of such is the very stuff of urban legend!

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JUST IN!

MORE SECRET AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE. "The spooks at the CIA have pumped millions of dollars into a frenzied race to catch up with Soviet advances in psychic spying. America lags so far behind in the 'race for inner space' that the CIA is especially sensitive about public exposure when it uses mind readers, spoon benders and voodoo pin stickers.

"Mark Woods, a former Customs investigator. . . found out the hard way just how sensitive the CIA can be. In 1982, Woods got a tip that the infamous terrorist called 'Carlos' or 'The Jackal' was plotting to kill President Reagan. . . . His source was a 9-year-old girl who he says was a CIA psychic.

"In 1982, while he was with Customs in Virginia Beach, Va., Woods got to know a family whose psychic daughter worked with the CIA, according to papers that Woods filed in federal court. Those papers say the girl helped in the 1982 search for American Gen. James Dozier, who was kidnapped by the Italian Red Brigade; gave advance information about the rise to power of Yuri Andropov in the Soviet Union; and predicted that a man with a gun would be lurking outside the White House, prompting Reagan to light the national Christmas tree from inside the White House. . . .

"The information was passed on to Secret Service agents and Woods does not know what they did with it. But later the Secret Service demanded to know his source. The CIA handler, speaking through the girl's mother, warned Woods against divulging information to Customs. . . . The message was clear to Woods: He was not to say anything about the girl or the CIA. . . . [The handler] assured him through the girl's mother that the CIA would fix things privately so he could keep his job. The CIA did not hold up its end of the bargain and has since disavowed any connection with . . . the girl. . . .

"That leaves Woods as the only person telling what sounds like a preposterous story. Is he a hare-brained nut or a victim of CIA skullduggery? Four federal law enforcement officials who have known Woods for 20 years told us he is one of the best investigators they know." [Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta, "Investigator tips CIA and loses his job," February 15, 1989.]

US MILITARY AND WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC. "Korean hookers are playing their trade around the United States in houses of prostitution thinly disguised as massage parlors and modeling studios. The hookers are not smuggled secretly into the country--the U.S. Military brings them in.

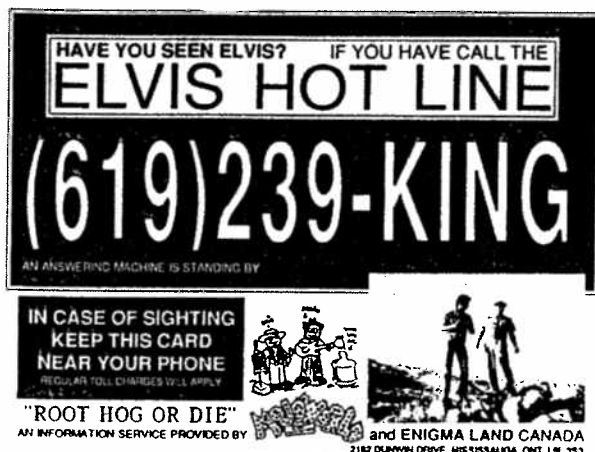
"According to top federal and state investigators, 99 percent of the Korean prostitutes working in the United States got here by marrying American GIs stationed in Korea. The marriages often are brief. Many appear to be arranged by American-Korean crime syndicates. Sometimes the soldier is duped into marriage with a woman who leaves him when they are transferred to the United States. Sometimes the GI is part of the scam, collecting as much as \$10,000 to marry a Korean hooker and bring her home. . . .

"As the wife of a soldier, even a prostitute is almost guaranteed admittance to the United States. Korean police rarely enforce prostitution laws, so many of the women have no arrest record to tip off the U.S. military authorities who OK the marriages. Korean officials working for the Army certify the marriages, and the paperwork is rubber-stamped by American officers. Former U.S. Embassy officials in Korea told us that some Koreans on the Army payroll moonlight for black market visa brokers.

"Koreans have become the most common purveyors of organized prostitution in the United States. . . . Vice cops in Texas, with contacts nationwide, maintain that at least 80 percent of the houses of prostitution in the country use Korean women. . . . A former undercover agent for the U.S. Embassy in Seoul told us that some soldiers marry three or four Korean women on their tour of duty there" [Jack Anderson & Dale Van Atta, "Korean Prostitutes Enter U.S. as Brides," 22 June 1989].

[Ed's note: See also FN 12:3 for another Anderson/Van Atta secret intelligence report. The rattlesnake in the pot field rumor, Dick Sweterlitsch assures me, is current also among forestry officials in Vermont.]

ELVIS WATCH CONTINUED. Interest in the idea that Elvis may not have died but faked his own death seems to have declined into skeptical backlash. The cartoon feature "Phenomenomix" in *Fortean Times* 51 (Winter 1988/89), depicts the phenomenon as "a modern religion" with a "shrine . . . miraculous manifestations of the cult figure's image . . . claims for reincarnation . . . but mainly . . . gullible acolytes!" (58). The graphics that follow (with one exception located by Paul Smith in Newfoundland) suggest that the mass audience agrees.



Flyer distributed at the Avalon shopping mall, St. John's, Newfoundland, 9 May 1989.



Automobile bumper sticker bought in St. John's, May 1989.

Michael Goss writes to confirm that the legend's most popular subject in England earlier was Jim Morrison, eccentric lead singer for the Doors, who died under odd circumstances in Paris on 3 July 1971 and who was buried there without public viewing. (My Hazelton colleague Alan Price confirms that his gravesite remains a popular pilgrimage site for all kinds of strange types.)

GUESTS

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Nikhil K. Attwater	University Park, Pa
Edythe Ruth Phillips	Harpersfield, N.Y.
Robert Tada	Slater, University Park, Pa. - Univ. Supt.
Suzanne Newman	University Park
Karen Bennett	Bound Brook, N.J.
Komaz, Tracy Bishop	632 Longfellow Rd 1935
Imagery Publishing	Ugale, Mass
Robert Johnson	
David H. Harvath	Scranton, PA
Shirley McLean	Scranton, Pa
William A. Roberts	University Park, Pa
Elvis Presley	Mem, Tenn, everywhere!
Jan Thomson	

Official guest book, Penn State--Hazelton Campus, September 1989.

Regarding the "ghost" publication by Bill Smith mentioned in FN14, Goss passes on a reference to the work in *Elvis: The Legend Lives On*, a British special popstar magazine mostly written by Derek Johnson. According to this, the full title of Smith's book is *Memphis Mystery: Requiem for Elvis*. Like G. B. Giorgio's *Orion* (1979; rpt. Atlanta: Legend Books, 1988), it too is in novel format, "based on fact." Both show how Elvis desperately rejects the pressures of fame by faking his own death. The magazine reference comments that Smith is said to be preparing a film based on the book--but we still have no evidence that the book was ever published. Might the Giorgio book have stolen its audience?

MORE REDEMPTION RUMORS. John Rimmer of *Magonia* writes that in June he "had to convince a work colleague that our local [London] hospital probably does not actually want a million bar-codes off supermarket packages and old library books in order to buy some expensive piece of equipment."

Meantime, on June 12, the Louisville (KY) *Courier-Journal* reported finding six projects (one at the paper itself) to collect Coca-Cola tab tops in the belief that every three tabs would pay for one minute of kidney dialysis treatment needed by a boy in a local hospital. In one case, second-graders in a Clarksville, IN, school collected thousands of tabs before a Coca-Cola spokesperson debunked the rumor, noting that it had been circulating for at least ten years.

The project began when a parent received a computer message from a co-worker in another city who was involved in a similar collection. The parent mentioned it to her son, who was looking for a Cub Scout project, and he suggested it to his teacher. In two months, the children collected enough tabs to fill several grocery bags, but when the teacher tried to elicit a thank-you note from the sick boy, the co-worker could not locate the family and assumed that they had moved away from the area. After further calls determined that the story was not true, the tabs were sold to an aluminum recycling center for \$27, which the teacher donated to the National Kidney Foundation.

The Foundation commented, "Hardly a day goes by that we don't get calls about the pull tabs. . . . It's something that has just mushroomed. All these people are well-intentioned, and it's hard to tell them that there's nothing to it. I wish I could tell them it's true." ["Good Intentions Pave Way for Old Can-tab Rumor to Mushroom Anew," *Al*, 6. Courtesy Danielle Roemer.]

TANNING BOOTH DEATH. On May 24, 1989, Patsy Campbell of Portage, IN, died at the University of Chicago Medical Center of burns suffered in a 25-minute tanning booth session eleven days earlier. Campbell had been taking psoralen, a drug used to increase the skin's sensitivity to light as part of a program to treat psoriasis. Soon after visiting the parlor, she began to itch all over, and blisters soon developed. A burn expert from the University of Alabama thought it was the first verifiable case of fatal burns suffered in a tanning booth [AP release, 28 May 1989. Courtesy Linda Milligan].

LADY DRIVERS. Erma Bombeck's syndicated column, "No Music to the Ears of Women" (5 June 1989) reflects several contemporary legends describing women as hopelessly ignorant about cars and driving. She begins by alluding to "the old stereotype of a woman putting her hand out of the car window to dry her nails instead of making a signal to turn." Next, she describes a husband telling other men "the story about his wife, Anna, who duly reported to him that her brakes were 'mushy.' He drove her car around the block and pronounced the brakes to be perfectly normal. Anna still was not convinced. She told her friend Ethel that her brakes were 'mushy,' and Ethel said she had the same experience with mushy brakes until she put high-test ethyl in the gas tank. The men got hernias from laughing."

Bombeck, in her self-deprecating style, then tells how she had a car serviced for a "boompt" noise in the trunk and paid "\$102 to find out that a can of creamed corn was banging against [her] spare tire." But she adds that a husband, too, has been known to "turn on the windshield wipers when he has to turn left and release the hood when he thinks he's turning on the lights." She ends triumphantly by claiming that she eliminated a "ping" by having the car washed and waxed.

Such stories seem to play on automobile stories widespread in American folk and popular culture. Brunvand notes cognate stories about a Cadillac that have rattle-making cans planted in them by disgruntled factory workers and about women who try to "push-start" a stalled car by backing up and driving up behind the car at 40 mph (Choking Doberman [New York: Norton, 1984]: 62-65). I recall twice encountering a similar "true" story about a woman who had a car serviced for running roughly. The car tested normal, and the mechanics were puzzled until the woman climbed in to drive the car home and immediately pulled the choke all the way out. When the mechanic called her attention to this, she commented, "Oh, I thought that was to hang my purse on!" (I vaguely remember seeing this as part of a high school drivers' training film, which would date this in the 1960s. Besides, the last car I owned with a manual choke was my 1969 Volvo.)

To give credit to the other side, when collecting data in the Hazleton area on automobile superstitions, one male informant admitted that when his car began giving him trouble on a long trip, he would keep it going by promising it a tankful of high-test gasoline at the next gas station.

MICKEY MOUSE LSD RUMOR UPDATE. Jan Brunvand sends his United Feature syndicated column for 2 January 1989, in which he notes that the flyer warning against LSD-laced "tattoos" and stickers given to children circulated as far afield as Fairbanks, Alaska, and among U.S. embassy officials in Lima, Peru. The memo, in fact, was translated into Spanish and published in the Lima newspaper La Republica. States covered by the latest version of the memo (originally discussed in Choking Doberman, 163-169) were Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

William Hopkins, director of the Bureau of Research for New York's Division of Substance Abuse Services, ordered a survey of LSD-related cases in February 1988 after encountering the letter. They did find a small number of cases involving blotter paper decorated with a blue star or cartoon character but concluded that LSD use was not increasing but holding steady or decreasing. No case involving a child mistaking blotter acid for stickers could be verified, and Hopkins concluded that "the anonymous letters warning about Blue Star LSD was [sic] a hoax and should be treated as such" [courtesy J. H. Brunvand].

Cornelius J. Dougherty, spokesperson at Washington's Federal Drug Enforcement Administration concurred, calling the memo a "poor practical joke." The version called to his attention was signed by an untraced "Sheriff Edward J. Weister, Union City Police Department" and began circulating in October among Ciba-Geigy employees in Summit, NJ. By late November it was "causing a minor panic" in much of the state, accompanied by persistent rumors that two little children had indeed been given LSD-laced stickers at a rock concert.

The principal of a private school in Tinton Falls, NJ, hesitated before distributing copies to parents, but went ahead when she learned that the principal and nurse of the local public elementary school had circulated it under their names. She commented, "you don't want even one child to fall victim to this." Parents agreed, one saying "Drugs are everywhere today. You

can't assume that your child is safe" [Gina Kolata, "Rumor of LSD-Tainted Tattoos Called Hoax," New York Times (9 December 1988): B1,5,1].

Los Angeles officials had been more cautious the year before. In December 1987, Riverside County Sheriff's Detective Carla Gordon admitted, "I haven't seen LSD in the streets in years," yet she was unwilling to call the notice a hoax. "With drugs, if you're going to err, it's better to do so on the side of extreme caution." The flyer that circulated there gave "the Valley Children's Hospital and the Police Department" as authorities and circulated in day-care centers, hospitals, and parochial schools.

One form arrived in August 1986 when a parent passed a copy of the notice to teachers at the Kindercare Day Care Center in Simi Valley. The center mailed a copy to the Hospital Council of Southern California, representing about 220 hospitals in the Los Angeles area. David Langness, Vice President of Communications, then mailed the warning to all member hospitals. When contacted, he commented, "When we hear about these things, we don't attempt to confirm or deny them. We simply send it [sic] out to emergency rooms across the region in case they see a medical problem associated with this kind of drug." On August 20, the Long Beach Community Hospital transmitted the memo as a "drug alert" to all hospital personnel. A spouse of a hospital worker copied it and took it to work, where a part-time security guard at Culver City High School found it and brought it to school officials' attention.

Many school administrators decided against sending copies home with students because they remembered distributing the same letter in 1982. But the principal of the Normandie Christian School in Los Angeles felt "that if it was something that concerned the safety and well-being of our students, then the parents ought to know about it." One parent of a seven-year-old child said she was frightened: "He's always going to the store to get candy and a sticker" [Mark Arax and Bill Billiter, "Flyers Stir Fears About LSD-Laced Rub-on Tattoos," Los Angeles Times (9 December 1987): 11:1, 4; courtesy Shirley Arora].

LOTTERY LOSERS AND CEMENT MIXERS. Columnist Jack Kissing, in "Urban Legends Never Die" in the 31 May 1988 Denver Post, relates the following story:

"So this guy is a Colorado lottery winner--several thousand dollars--and he's bragging about it to a bunch of people crowded around a table in a bar and grill. Someone doubts his windfall and says 'let's see the ticket.' He pulls it out, and it is passed from hand to hand, finally returning to him. Except that the ticket he gets back has a different number than the one he handed out."

Kissing comments that "Whether an urban legend is literally true isn't as important as whether it is true to life," and adds that "The Solid Cement Car," which he recalls hearing in Denver in the late 1940s or early '50s from the cement-mixer's brother-in-law, was "one of the most satisfying tales I ever heard. . . . It's a good story, turning on the sweetness of revenge and the spirit of American enterprise. Who knows? Maybe it really happened somewhere, sometime, and if it hasn't, no doubt it will one day. Until then, it deserves to live" [Courtesy Michael J. Preston].

EYE ON SATANIC CULTS. Although I have not heard of any major rumor-panics since the Matamoros "cult" arrests, allusions to this complex of legends continue to surface. Before taping an interview on the subject for a Penn State radio station, the studio manager told me that she had been warned by the state police to keep her blonde-haired, blue-eyed child under strict watch, "because we know cults are operating near your house." And just last week a PSU official told me, quite seriously, that a certain coven in the New York City area sacrificed nothing but white German shepherds (dogs, not people). She had heard that police in Brooklyn had identified one of their meeting places and had dug up "hundreds" of dog skeletons in the yard. (Didn't mass murderer "Son of Sam" have a thing about German shepherds?) Here are some of the more revealing news items relating to satanism.

Pasadena, TX. School officials in at least six local schools prohibited clothing that included the "peace symbol" made famous in the 1960s. After attending a seminar on cults held at the University of Houston during the spring, officials became concerned that the symbol had been adopted by satanists as "Nero's Cross," an inverted cross with broken arms. One spokesperson said that the cult slayings in Matamoros reinforced their doubts about the symbol,

"but the awareness was already there. . . . We'd pick up little signs, like students doodling things on desk tops. . . or rumors of some students involved in cult practices." Classes affected by the bans included mainly 11- and 12-year-old students [AP release, 20 June 1989; "Antiwar or Antichrist," Time (3 July 1989): 23; courtesy Linda Milligan].

New Orleans, LA. "Demonologists" Lorraine and Ed Warren, noted for their investigations of demon-possessed houses in Amityville NY and West Pittston PA, gave a lecture in April to a standing-room-only crowd at Tulane University. Lorraine, herself a clairvoyant, described an exorcism she and their team conducted in Massachusetts. At its climax, the victim's head split open, crosses appeared on his body, and he spoke in Latin backwards to the attending priest. (A film of the exorcism was prepared for the Warrens' appearance on the Morton Downey talk-show, scheduled to air at midnight on 5 May.)

Ed Warren warned that "amateur" Satanists can be found at every high school, college, and university in this land. However, the more dangerous "cult Satanists" are responsible for kidnappings and murders all over the world. They torture their victims before they kill, Warren said in an interview, since "they believe that their victims, knowing they are going to die, throw off energy that they can use." He warned that people showing an "overt interest in the occult" can open doors to demons. Lorraine countered that not all spirits are evil: "When that little girl went down the well [18-month-old Jessica McClure, rescued on 16 October 1987 after being trapped for 2 1/2 days --Ed.] --remember how she talked about Winnie the Pooh? . . . Winnie the Pooh saved her . . . [and] sang to her. That was a good guiding spirit" [Mary Lou Atkinson, "Demon Hunters," New Orleans Times-Picayune (26 April 1989): E1, 3; courtesy Leonard Rubinstein].

Baton Rouge, LA. Among bills filed by Louisiana state legislators was one to increase maximum jail terms for grave desecration from six months to five years. The sponsor, Rep. Cain from Dry Creek, introduced the bill after reports of devil-worship and grave disturbing increased in the New Orleans area and southwest LA. Later he added a bill to outlaw blood-drinking, cannibalism, and animal mutilation. "You stick one of those devil-worshippers pretty good with the bill, and word will get out we're not just slapping 'em on the wrist," Cain commented ["Bill would make things hot for devil-may-care Satanists," New Orleans Times-Picayune (28 April 1989): B1; "Bill would outlaw blasphemy," New Orleans Times-Picayune (2 May 1989): A9. Courtesy Leonard Rubinstein].

Tupelo, MS. Two brothers were tried in June for conspiring to commit murder after one of them paid \$100 for a photograph and a lock of hair from a circuit judge who had sentenced the other brother to 40 years in jail for armed robbery. Investigators said the brothers planned to send the photo and hair to a Jamaican voodoo priest, who would cast a death curse on the judge. Prosecutors said that it made no difference whether the plot involved a literal death threat or not, since the brothers believed they could actually kill the judge by supernatural means [AP releases, 16 February and 28 May 1989; courtesy Leonard Rubinstein and Linda Milligan].

Wilkes-Barre, PA. On 8 September a jury found Larry and Leona Cottam guilty of third-degree murder for starving their 14-year-old son to death last January. Larry Cottam had set aside \$3774.95 as a "tithe to God" after being dismissed as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, and refused to use it to buy his family food, believing that God would rescue them.

The Cottams had left the area abruptly in 1983 after they learned that an Adventist school in Slocum, PA, had forced their two children to participate in satanic rituals, watch animal killings, eat raw meat, and perform sexual activities with each other and with animals. When they moved to the Pittsburgh area, the children were subjected to similar abuses in a second church school. Moving back to the Wilkes-Barre area again, the Cottams cut themselves off from most church and community contacts, for fear of inciting more attacks on their children. Down to the "tithe" money, the parents chose to do without food until Eric died of starvation on 4 January 1989, when Larry called police.

A pediatric intern at the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital recorded the children's stories of satanic and sexual abuse at the Slocum school and commented, "The fact that Laura and Eric were so graphic about their experiences lends some credibility to their story. On the other hand, the history of abuse by so many authority figures in different locales is unlikely." Dr. Patricia McGuire, a psychiatrist at the Children's

Hospital, testified, "The children gave the reports of sexual abuse and the stories were consistent with each other's and [with the intern's] report. Those facts make it reasonably realistic that those acts did occur." Luzerne County Detective Gary Sworn, the area's specialist in investigating satanic cases, said he took information but could not officially investigate because the Cottams refused to press charges. (He did, however, repeat their stories last October in a public church meeting on the dangers of Satanism.)

The Cottams' lawyers plan to appeal the murder verdict, since the evidence did not show that the couple starved their son out of malice, defined legally as a hardness of heart or wickedness of disposition. They also argued that the Cottams were legally exercising their freedom of religion and right to privacy [Hazleton Standard-Speaker, 6 September, 7 September, 8 September, 9 September, and 14 September 1989].

Stroudsburg, PA. Five teenagers were arrested on charges ranging from kidnapping to making terroristic threats after they took a 15-year-old to an abandoned barn near Gilbert, PA, and held a "Black Mass" over him. Forced to wear a spiked collar, the youngster was tied by his hands and feet in the middle of a pentagram, at the points of which candles were placed. During the "Black Mass," blood was drawn from the victim's neck and tasted by the group's leader, who told him, "If you tell anyone what we did to you, we'll come back and kill you."

Police removed "three or four bags of satanic material from the barn and confiscated about a dozen occult books from the ringleader's house, including The Satanic Bible, The Devil's Dictionary [by Ambrose Bierce? --Ed.], The Manson File, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Seth Speaks, and Ritual Magic. Also found was a black, hooded robe, several candles, and a plastic skull with a snake. A guidance counselor at nearby Pleasant Valley High School commented, "I would have said a year ago I heard things but I didn't have any proof of it. You see the people and you know they're messing with it. . . . I hope the community will become aware and be watchful of these things. . . This should not get a witch hunt going, but also people should not take a deaf ear" [Robert H. Orenstein and Sean Connolly, "5 Arrested in Satanist kidnapping," Allentown Morning Call (27 July 1989); "Two charged in ritual to remain in custody," Hazleton Standard-Speaker (2 August 1989); Courtesy Jeffrey Victor].

Los Angeles, CA. On 20 September, Richard Ramirez was convicted of the thirteen "Night Stalker" murders with satanic overtones that terrorized California in 1985. During the bizarre year-long trial, one of the jurors had been murdered. After the verdict, Ramirez "flashed a two-finger 'devil sign'" to press photographers. When asked his reaction to the convictions, he said only "Evil" (AP release, 21 September 1989).

Meanwhile, 153 years ago. In August and September 1836, two separate inspections of the Hôtel Dieu in Montreal by Protestant clergy and news reporters found no evidence that the convent contained secret passageways in which the bodies of strangled babies were concealed. Earlier in the year, Maria Monk, who claimed to be an escaped nun from the convent, had published a sensational memoir of her experiences. Among other allegations, she claimed that nuns were forced to live in criminal intercourse with priests, and the children borne from such unions were regularly baptized at birth, then immediately strangled to secure their entry into heaven.

Monk's supporters immediately responded that the convent had obviously been redesigned by a team of masons and carpenters to disguise the secret rooms before the inspection parties were admitted. Two years previously, on 11 August 1834, the Mt. Benedict convent near Charlestown, MA, was burned to the ground by Protestant mobs after rumors circulated that Catholics had kidnapped a recently-escaped nun and put her into a hidden dungeon to keep her from revealing secrets about their life [R. A. Billington, The Protestant Crusade: 1800-1860 (New York: Macmillan, 1938): 71-76, 99-108].

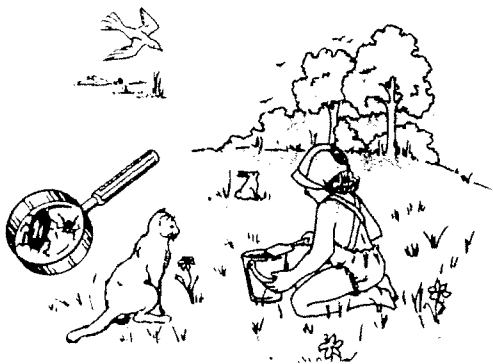


HAVE YOU HEARD...?

CATS IN SANDBOXES. Linda Milligan (2350 Bristol Rd., Columbus, OH 43221) has observed that several communities in Ohio have suddenly felt the need to pass laws requiring cats to stay on their owners' property. Simultaneously, animal control officers have stepped up efforts to pick up and destroy "stray" cats. The rationale given is that cats seek out children's sandboxes and defecate in them, thereby spreading diseases. There is a bill in the Ohio Legislature that would enact such ordinances statewide, and Linda has heard that a similar anti-cat campaign (based on the same fear of sandbox-dirtying) led to similar laws around Calgary, Saskatchewan. A student of mine recalls a similar move around Westchester, NY.

But aren't most sandboxes made with lids these days? And what dangerous disease is spread this way? I vaguely recalled a flyer on toxoplasmosis, a parasitic disease that can be spread by accidental ingestion of cat feces, that included an image of a cat dirtying a sandbox. But the only version I could locate does show a child with a pail and shovel like those used in sandboxes, but playing in grass. Close to the child is a defecating cat, but the scene shows many other animals also fertilizing the landscape, including birds, rabbits, mice, hogs, and cattle. And, as the text makes clear, most children who are infected with toxoplasmosis show no symptoms, though if a pregnant woman contracts it, the fetus may be damaged.

Still, the timing and the similarity of these campaigns suggests that there is some rumor element to their spread, and perhaps even a xeroxlore component based on the image reprinted here. If you have encountered this rumor, or have knowledge of such an anti-cat flyer, please contact Linda or Editor, FN.



CATTLE MUTILATION RUMORS. Bill Ellis is looking for source material on the complex of stories and explanations of the 1973-79 "cattle mutilation" rumor-panic, during which ranchers in much of the American Midwest and Great Plains believed that their livestock was being killed, drained of blood, and stripped of certain organs (typically sex organs) by sinister agents. Satanic cults were one culprit; the U.S. government another; extraterrestrials yet another. I have located a few serious studies by social scientists and a substantial body of popular sources, but I am certain there are many newspaper and obscure magazine publications that I have overlooked. I am willing to trade references and material.

Particularly needed are these works: Michael D. Albers, The Terror (New York: Manor, 1979); Dave DeWitt, The Mute Strategy (Albuquerque, NM: Sunbelt Press, 1979); and Roberta Donovan and Keith Wolverton, Mystery Stalks the Prairie (Raynesford, MT: T.B.A.R. Institute, 1976).

POLISH-AMERICAN URBAN LEGEND EXCHANGE. Dr. Dionizjusz Czubała, a folklorist at the University of Silesia in Katowice, wishes to exchange articles and information about modern urban legends. He is author of a 1985 book on modern fabulates, memorates, and urban legends and is willing to contact any folklorist in the West who would be willing to trade notes on research and variants. His address is ul. Ostrogórska 33/285, 41-200 Sosnowiec POLAND.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES. A few hardy souls and a few cowards are being dragged into the electronic age for the simple reason that some kind of swift networking seems to be the easiest way to keep track of legends that

move so quickly and so far. We would like to hear from those of you who already have electronic mail addresses and access to BITNET, the most extensive computer network. Send your UserID's and Nodes to Editor, FN by regular mail, or try WCE2 at PSUVM. (Don't ask me; that's what someone told me to say.)

BULLETIN BOARD

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY MEETING, PHILADELPHIA, PA. OCTOBER 18-22, 1989.

The upcoming AFS meeting will feature several events of interest to legend scholars. Among these will be the first General Meeting of ISCLR in the US, to be held at 12:15 PM on Friday, October 20 at the Sheraton Society Hill (room to be announced). The agenda will include a number of issues ranging from the need for a bank account in the society's name to negotiations for a new regular publisher for our proposed yearbook, Contemporary Legend. Time will also be given to take suggestions from members for new activities that ISCLR may want to investigate or sponsor.

The AFS's Folk Narrative Section will sponsor a panel of papers, "Emergent Legends: How Do We Handle Them?" scheduled for 8:15 to 10:00 AM on Saturday, October 21. The panel, chaired by Bill Ellis, will include these presentations:

Jeffrey S. Victor (Jamestown Community College) "A Rumor-Panic About a Dangerous Satanic Cult in Western New York."

Bill Ellis (PSU-Hazleton) "The Devil-Worshippers at the Prom."

Véronique Campion-Vincent (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris) "Situations of Uncertainty and Emergent Legends."

Linda J. Milligan (Ohio State) "The 'Truth' About the Bigfoot Legend."

Jan Harold Brunvand (Utah) "Some News from the Miscellaneous File."

Phillips Stevens, Jr. from SUNY-Buffalo will serve as discussant for the panel. Dr. Stevens is past editor of New York Folklore and recently published a strongly-written editorial titled "Satanism: Where are the Folklorists?"

Following this panel at 10:15 will be a forum on Folk Narrative and Social Problems, chaired by Gary Alan Fine. Mark Glazer, Janet Langlois, Sabina Magliocco, and Patrick Mullen will participate.

The Folk Narrative Section will have its annual business and planning meeting at 7:15 PM on Thursday, October 19, and on the following day will sponsor a story-swapping session at 6:15 PM.

Other sessions and panels of interest:

October 18, 10:15. Panel: Tales of Hope and Caution: Computer Applications in Folklore (Mark Glazer, Chair)

October 18, 3:15. Paper Session: Life Stories and Personal Narratives (with Anna Davis on serial murder rumors; Robert Atkinson, Chair).

October 18, 3:15. Paper Session: Fairies, Tales, and Legend (Ellen J. Stekert, Chair)

October 19, 8:15. Paper Session: "Creatures of Myth and Legend" (Umay Gunay, Chair)

October 19, 1:15. Paper Session: Legendary Figures I: Legends and Ballads (John S. Patterson, Chair)

October 19, 3:15. Paper Session: Legendary Figures II: The New World (Jim Griffith, Chair)

October 20, 8:15. Paper Session: Contemporary Legend (Elliott Oring, Chair)

October 22, 9:00. Paper Session: Folklore and Popular Culture (with Elizabeth Lewis on Elvis; Elizabeth Walker Mechling, Chair).

EIGHTH SEMINAR ON PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY LEGEND AND EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL HUMOR CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED. Plans are now underway to hold the 1990 Contemporary Legend Seminar at Sheffield University on July 23-27. As in 1988, it will be followed by a conference sponsored by the International Society for Humor Studies on July 29-August 4. The estimated cost of each conference is \$440 USD, which includes registration and full room and board exclusive of transportation to Sheffield.

For additional information on the Contemporary Legend Seminar, contact Paul Smith, Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1C 5S7. Abstracts for the Humor Conference are due 15 February 1990; for format and more information on this conference, write Mark Glazer, President, International Society for Humor Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Texas at Pan American, Edinburg, TX 78539 USA (Phone: 512-381-3551; E-Mail MG6BE8@PANAM (BITNET))

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FOLK-NARRATIVE RESEARCH CONGRESS, BUDAPEST. The recent ISPNR Congress showed that considerable interest was being paid contemporary legends, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where scholars are beginning to collect and publish variants of legends previously documented only by English and American folklorists. In fact, the special issue of *Fabula* devoted to the Budapest papers (Vol. 30, 1990) will include a special section on "Modern Legends." Even though language barriers often hampered discussion, I found that common interests and problems in collecting transcended these walls.

It was, however, not always clear when and if papers were being given, where, or in what language. I found myself delivering an updated version of my Texas A&M paper in an out-of-the-way corner of Budapest to twelve sympathetic German-speakers (the rest of the panel papers were, of course, auf Deutsch). Enough of my undergraduate memories of the language came back so that I could translate a few of my points, and one of the speakers reassured me that my German was just as clear as my English. Accommodation and new modes of communication were the keynotes of the congress.

Following are selected papers listed on the program. I cannot be sure that all of these were, in fact, delivered, but in the interest of making international contacts easier I include addresses so that interested parties can contact these scholars and exchange ideas.

Iván Balassa, "Einige Züge der ungarischen Glaubenssagen"
Batthyány u. 3, 1015 Budapest HUNGARY

Rolf W. Brednich, "Moderne Sagen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bericht über ein Projekt"
Seminar für Volkskunde, Friedländer Weg 2, 3400 Göttingen, BRD

Véronique Campion-Vincent, "Contemporary Legends about Animal-Release in France"
27 rue de Liege, 75008 Paris FRANCE

Pao-lin Duan, "On Contemporary Legend"
Beijing University Dept. of Chinese Literature and Language, 100871 Beijing CHINA

Karoly Gaál, "Wirtschaftsformen und Glaubenssagen"
LWengasse 44/15, 1030 Wien AUSTRIA

Sylvia Grider, "The Function of Texas Historical Legends"
Texas A&M University, Department of Anthropology, College Station, TX 77843-4352 U.S.A

Andreas Hartmann and Sabine Kunstig, "Geschichten von der deutsch-deutschen Grenzen"
Seminar für Volkskunde, Friedländer Weg 2, 3400 Göttingen BRD

Zoja Karanović, "Factography and Fiction in Today's Stories of Buried Treasure"
Filozofski Fakultet, Stevana Musica BB, 21000 Novi Sad YUGOSLAVIA

Bengt af Klintberg, "Do the legends of Today and Yesterday Belong to the Same Genre?"
Vendevägen 13, 181 31 Lidingö SWEDEN

John Lindow, "Thematic Continuity in Contemporary Legends"
University of California, Department of Scandinavian Studies, Berkeley, CA 94720 U.S.A.

Leander Petzoldt, "Zur Vorgeschichte der Sagenforschung," and "Phantom Lore"
Institut für Volkskunde, Innrain 52 (Penthouse), 6020 Innsbruck AUSTRIA

Miklos Réthey Prikkel, "Die Wahrgeschichte"
Vöröshadsereg ut 3, 6221 Akasztó HUNGARY

Françoise Reumaux, "La Bête de Noth" [A mystery animal kills livestock; related to American cattle mutilation rumors]
84, avenue de Wagram, 75017 Paris FRANCE

Alfons Roeck, "Freemasons in Modern Folk Stories in Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands" [Analogues to American satanic cult legends]
Roeselbergdal 51, 3010 Wilsele-Leuven BELGIUM

Dorota Simonides, "Contemporary Urban Legends in Poland" and "Zur Methodologie der zeitgenössischer Sagen"
ul. Strzelców Bytomskich 14/1, 45084 Opole POLAND

Marta Srámková, "Zur gegenwärtigen Erzählen im grosstädtischen Milieu"
ul. M. Steyskalové 70, 61600 Brno CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Stefan Top, "Modern Storytelling: 'Urban' Legends in the Belgian Oral-Tradition"
Belsenakestraat 102, 3020 Herent BELGIUM

Eha Viluoka, "Beliefs and Legends about the Dead in Estonian Folk Tradition"
Institute of Language and Literature, Lauristini 6, 200106 Tallinn USSR

Leena Virtanen, "The Contemporary Legends in Finland"
University of Helsinki, Department of Folklore, Fabianinkatu 33, 00171 Helsinki FINLAND

Rainer Wehse, "'Neue' Sagen in Deutschland"
Kapitän-Lehmann-Str. 6, 3400 Göttingen BRD

CONTRIBUTORS NEEDED. The first volume of the exhaustive *Encyclopaedia of American Folk Beliefs and Superstitions* (covering A-B) is now undergoing final editing and preparation for the printer, The University of California Press. Its Executive Editor, Frances Cattermole-Tally, is seeking a few conscientious researchers to write entries for the next volumes. If you accept, you will receive a file of references gathered and catalogued under the direction of the late Wayland Hand, but you will be encouraged to update and extend this file in your own way. Material from contemporary legends that illustrate folk beliefs is especially desirable.

Some subjects have already been assigned, but following is a partial list of headings not yet spoken for. Dr. Cattermole-Tally is also willing to create headings for overlooked subjects. If you are interested, contact her at Folklore and Mythology, 1037 GSM, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

Unspoken topics: Cabala Cake Calamus Calcium Calendar Calomel Camphor Canary Cancer (disease) Cancer (Zodiac) Candy Cane Cannon Canoe Cantaloupe Cap Cape Capricorn Captain Caraway Card/Cards Cardinal (bird) Carp (fish) Carriage Carrot Castor Bean Castor Oil Castration Cat Catfish Cedar Ceiling Celery Centipede Chair Chalk Changeling Channeling Character Charcoal Cheek Chest Chestnut Chewing Gum Chicken Child/Children Chin China/Crockery Chipmunk Chocolate Choking Cholera Christ Church Churchyard

Cider Cigar Cigarette Cinnamon Circle Circus City Clairvoyance Clam Claws Clay Clean Clergy Climate Closet Cloth Clothes/Clothing Clothes-line/pin Clouds Coach/Coachmen Coal Oil Cobra Cobweb Cognitive Dissonance Coins Comb Comet Comfrey Communion Company Compass Compliment Conceal Concrete (Cement) Confinement Congregation Consecration Container Cook/Cooking Coprotherapy Cord/String Cork Corner Cornmeal Cotton/Cottonseed Cougar Count/Counting Counteractant Couple Courage/Courageous Cousin Coward Crack Cradle/Crib Cramps Cranberry Crane Craving Crawling Cream Cricket Cripple Crops Cross/Crucifix Crossing Over Croup Crow Crown/Crown of Glory Crutches Crying Crystal/Crystal Ball Cuckoo Bird Cunning Cup Cupping Curandero(a) Curl(s) Currant Curse Curtain Customary Cut/Cutting Cyst/Wen

Daddy Longlegs Daffodil Dagger Daisy Dam Damage Damn/Damned Dance Dandelion Danger Dark/Darkness Date (social) Date (year) Daughter Dawn Day Daybreak Dead Man's Hand Deaf/Deafness Deal/Dealer (cards) Death Dance Deathwatch Beetle Debt/Debtor Decapitate Decay Deceit December Decision Decoction Decoration Dedicate Deed (good and bad) Deer Defeat Defecate Defense Deformity Deja Vu Delirium Democrat Demons Dentist Departure

Depression/Economic Descendant Desert Destination
 Destiny Destruction Detlaus Day Devotion Dew
 Diagnosis Diamond Diaper Diarrhea Dice Different
 Dig Digestion Digitalis Dill Dime Dimple Dine/
 Dining Room Dinner Dip Diphtheria Dipper Direction
 Dirt Dirty Disappear Disappointment Disaster
 Discard Disciple Discord Discover Disease Dis-
 figure Disgrace Disguise Dish Dish Towel Dish-
 cloth/Rag Dishonest Dishonor Dishwater Disinfectant
 Dislike Disobedient Disposal Disposition Dissolve
 Distance Distemper Disturbance Ditch Diver Divest-
 ment Divine/Divination Divinity Divorce Dizzy
 Dock (plant) Dog (animal) Dog Days Dog Fennel
 Dog Fish Dogwood Doll Dollar Dolphin Donkey
 Doodlebug Doom/Doomsday Door Knob Door/Back Door/
 Doorway Door/Front Doorstep Double Dove Down
 Downfall Dowry Draft (Breeze) Dragon Dragonfly
 Drawer (cabinet) Dress Dressing Dressing Room Drink
 Dripping Drive Dropping Dropsy Drought Drowning
 Drugs Drum Dry Duck Duende Dumb Supper Dusk Dust
 Dutchman Dying/The Dysentery

NOW AVAILABLE!

THE QUESTING BEAST: PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY
 LEGEND, VOLUME IV. Edited by Gillian Bennett and Paul
 Smith. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.
 ISBN 1 85075 120. Price: £9.95 or \$16.50. 250pp.

According to T.H. White's classic Arthurian story
 THE SWORD IN THE STONE, it was the curse of the
 Pellinore to be always 'mollocking about after the
 beastly Beast'. Glatisant or the Questing Beast was a
 curious creature made up of titbits from other animals:
 it had the head of a serpent, the body of a leopard,
 the haunches of a lion and the feet of a hart. But
 when King Pellinore tires of the chase and quits the
 hunt, the Beast pines away because there is no one to
 take an interest in it.

In this volume King Pellinore from two continents
 go in quest of an equally strange beast, the
 contemporary legend. Gillian Bennett, Georgina Boyes,
 Keith Cunningham, Bill Ellis, James Evans, Sheila
 Douglas, Mark Glazer, Sandy Hobbs, Brian McConnell,
 W.F.H. Nicolaisen, John Niles, Sigrid Schmidt and Paul
 Smith are the hunters; and the quest takes two main
 forms: (i) case studies of individual legends from
 Britain, Germany and the USA; (ii) theoretical analyses
 of the legend genre and the narrative process.

As all the participants are expert, energetic and
 enthusiastic in the chase, there is never any danger
 that the Beast will die for lack of interest. And if,
 as White observed, 'Sometimes King Pellinore could be
 described galloping over the purlieus after the Beast,
 or with the Beast after him if they happened to have
 got muddled up', that is the nature of this fascinating
 and challenging genre.

The volume is the fourth in the 'Perspectives'
 series and brings together papers presented at the
 International Conference on Contemporary Legend held in
 Sheffield, 14th-18th July, 1986.

PART 1: LEGEND: DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

Bill Ellis	When is a Legend? An Essay in Legend Morphology
Sandy Hobbs	Enough to Constitute a Legend?
W.F.H. Nicolaisen	Definitional Problems in Oral Narrative
Paul Smith	Contemporary Legend: A Legendary Genre?
John Niles	The Berkeley Contemporary Legend Files

PART 2: FIVE LOCAL LEGENDS

Georgina Boyes	Women's Icon, Occupational Folklore and the Media
Sheila Douglas	The Hoodoo of the Hanging Tree
James L. Evans	The Legend of Joaquin: 'The Celebrated California Bandit'
Mark Glazer	Gravity Hill: Belief and Belief Legend
Sigrid Schmidt	The Stories about the Painted Ceiling of St. Michael's Hildesheim: The Problems of Contemporary Legend

PART 3: LEGENDS AND SOCIETY

Gillian Bennett	Playful Chaos: Anatomy of a Storytelling Session
Keith and Kathryn Cunningham	The Appearing Hitchhiker: Narrative Acculturation among the Ramah Navajo
Brian McConnell	The Corporate Folk-Legend: Marketing Invention or Consumer Response?

Copies of this volume are available directly from
 Sheffield Academic Press, 343 Fulwood Road, Sheffield
 S10 3BP, England, or through Cornell University Press
 Services, 740 Cascadilla St., P.O. Box 250, Ithaca, NY
 14851. (But has anyone successfully ordered S.A.P.
 volumes from Cornell? Please advise Ed., PN.)

FORTEAN TIMES 51. The current issue of this detailed
 and well-edited journal contains many items of interest
 to legend and rumor scholars. These include:
 Dmitri Bayanov, "Black Sea Serpents" (59). [Russian
 accounts of a lake monster.]

Mark Chorvinsky, "Strange Tangents" (38-39). [1909
 clipping reprints from MD; includes "bosom serpent,"
 "abduction by eagle," "Jersey devil," and others.]

Mike Dash, "Marine Mysteries" (26-30). [Rumors and
 panics surrounding sightings of mystery submarines
 in Swedish coastal waters and apparent collisions
 between subs and fishing boats in the Irish Sea.]

-----, "Miracles: Apparitions & the Marian Year"
 (19-23).

Michel Meurger, "In Jormungandra's Coils" (63-68).
 [Mythological background of Scandinavian lake
 monsters.]

Nigel Mortimer, "Yorkshire's Water Wolf" (48-49).
 ["Bosom serpent."]

Paul Sieveking, "Lizard Man" (34-37). Sightings of a
 huge, scaly humanoid near Bishopville, SC.]

FT 51 also contains a variety of weird and wonderful
 news clippings, ranging from a bigfoot abduction story
 (15) to a young English couple who found "what appeared
 to be a human eye" in a packet of potato crisps
 (illustrated by a photo, 11).

SPECIAL ISSUE ON UFO ABDUCTIONS. The Journal of UFO
 Studies has published the first volume of a new series,
 including a lengthy discussion of the alien abduction
 phenomenon from several angles. The journal, which is
 available from The J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO
 Studies, Chicago, Illinois, includes the following:

Thomas E. Bullard	Hypnosis and UFO Abductions: A Troubled Relationship
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ISSUES FORUM: UFO ABDUCTION

Michael D. Swords	Introduction
Robert A. Baker	Q: Are UFO Abduction Experiences for Real? A: No, No, a Thousand Times No!
Peter M. Rojcewicz	Signals of Transcendence: The Human-UFO Equation
Stuart Appelle	Reflections on the Reports of Being Abducted by UFOS
D. C. Donderi	Comments on the Evidence Concerning Abductions
Hilary Evans	Abductions: A Policy Statement
Jean Mundy	A Psychological Study of Subjects Who Report Contact with Intelligent Alien Beings
Michael D. Swords	Abductions: Questions in the Data

The issue also includes a "second round" of reactions
 to the Forum by each of the contributors, along with an
 article by Richard F. Haines on "A 'Three Stage
 Technique' (TST) to Help Reduce Biasing Effects during
 Hypnotic Regression."

THE JOURNAL OF BIZARRE OCCURRENCES AND RIDICULOUS
 DEATHS. Subscribers may well want to investigate this
 publication, which reprints "stranger-than-fiction"
 news items contributed by readers across the country.
 Issues run about 20 pp. and include the name and date
 of the papers in which the items appeared. Volume 5
 (1989-90) is now available for \$4.50. Contact Harry
 Parkas, 421 E. 15th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43201.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

We are always on the lookout for publications on any topic relevant to contemporary legends, particularly those in journals not usually read by professional folklorists. Please forward offprints (if convenient) or abstracts/tables of content to Bill Ellis, Editor, FOAFTale News. For publications in foreign languages, English abstracts would be quite welcome.

Items starred (*) have been placed in a file in the Editor's office and are available to qualified legend scholars for reference. Books and articles in major folklore journals are not normally starred.

Atwater, P. M. H. Coming Back to Life: The After-Effects of the Near Death Experience. New York: Ballantine, 1989.

Beidler, Peter G. Ghosts, Demons, and Henry James: The Turn of the Screw at the Turn of the Century. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989. [Discusses James's novella against the background of contemporary "reports of supernatural incidents known to James."]

* Bennett, Gillian. "Are Legends Narratives?" Talking Folklore 6 (April 1989): 1-12.

* Borje, Anna. "Lasarettet i skräck för mytisk 'liftare': Ruggig historia på Lunds lasarett" ["Hospital Terrified by Mythical 'Hitchhiker': Gruesome Story at the Lund Hospital"]. Arbetet [Malmö, Sweden] 14 January 1989: 10. [Reports epidemic spread of "The Hairy-Handed Hitchhiker" in Southern Sweden.]

Bullard, Thomas E. "UFO Abduction Reports: The Supernatural Kidnap Narrative Returns in Technological Guise." Journal of American Folklore 102 (1989): 147-170.

* Campion-Vincent, Véronique. "Les légendes urbaines, rumeur du quotidien, objet d'étude pluridisciplinaire." Cahiers de littérature orale 24 (1988): 75-92.

* Canaan, Don. Horror in Hocking County. Cincinnati: Land of Canaan Communications, 1989. [Account of 1982 Ohio murders allegedly committed by satanists; accompanied by VHS video.]

* Clarke, David. "From My Pennine Valley Notebook." Magonia 33 (July 1989): 3-7. [Investigation of ghostly appearances and "children" playing around a high-tension pylon at a construction site northwest of Sheffield, England.]

* Clements, William M. "Mythography and the Modern Legend: Interpreting 'The Hook.'" Journal of Popular Culture 19:4 (Spring 1986): 39-46.

Dawkins, Vickie L., and Nina Downey Higgins. Devil Child. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. [Account of 1985 Oklahoma murders committed by a 16-year-old involved in satanism. "As seen on Geraldo!"]

* Fine, Gary Alan. "The Social Organization of Adolescent Gossip: The Rhetoric of Moral Evaluation." In Children's Worlds and Children's Language, ed. Jenny Cook-Gumperz, William A. Corsaro, and Jürgen Streeck. New Babylon Studies in the Social Sciences No. 47. Berlin/New York/Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986. Pp. 405-423.

Havary, Keith, and Pamela Weintraub. Have an Out-of-Body Experience in 30 Days: The Free-Flight Program. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

* Hobbs, Sandy. "Why Are They Called Urban Legends?" Talking Folklore 6 (April 1989): 14-25. [With a bibliography of early discussions of u. l.'s.]

Jacobs, Claude F. "Spirit Guides and Possession in the New Orleans Black Spiritual Churches." Journal of American Folklore 102 (1989): 45-67. [Includes a portfolio of photographs by Michael P. Smith.]

Jenkins, Philip. "Myth and Murder: The Serial Killer Panic of 1983-5." Criminal Justice Research Bulletin 3 (November): 1-7.

Neeley, Robert G., Jr. The Airship Chronicle and UFOs of 1896-1897: The Airship Wave. Mount Rainier: Fund for UFO Research, 1988. [Chronological catalog of "phantom airship" reports in newspapers; discussion.]

Provost, Gary. Across the Border: The True Story of the Satanic Cult Killings in Matamoros, Mexico. New York: Pocket Books, 1989.

Randles, Jenny, and Peter Hough. Death by Supernatural Causes? London: Grafton, 1988. [Spontaneous combustion; cattle mutilation; unexplained disappearances.]

* Reumaux, Françoise. "Un rite oral urbain: la rumeur." Cahiers de littérature orale 24 (1988): 55-73.

Sassoon, David. "Silence and Taboo Spur Growth of Sexual Trafficking of Children." Childworld 14:1 (Spring 1989): 3-4. [Thousands, perhaps millions of children are involved in sex rings and interstate trade; reprinted from Action for Children 3:1 (1988).]

Schutze, Jim. Cauldron of Blood: The Matamoros Cult Killings. New York: Avon, 1989.

Stevens, Phillips, Jr. "Satanism: Where Are the Folklorists?" New York Folklore 15 (1989): 1-22.

Vallee, Jacques. Dimensions: A Casebook of Alien Contact. New York: Ballantine, 1989.

Victor, Jeffrey S. "A Rumor-Panic about a Dangerous Satanic Cult in Western New York." New York Folklore 15 (1989): 23-49.

Wachs, Eleanor. "The Crime-Victim Narrative as a Folkloric Genre." Cahiers de Littérature Orale 24 (1988): 37-54.

Webster, Ken. The Vertical Plane. London: Grafton, 1989. [A home computer prints out messages from spirits in another world.]

* Wörner, Gosta. "Saga, sägen, film" ["Tale, Legend, Film"]. Chaplin 3 (1989): 136-137. [A well-known Swedish film historian comments on the use of contemporary legends in movie scripts.]

FOAFTALE NEWS: THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH

ISCLR was formed to build worldwide links among legend scholars. It encourages study, not only of so-called "modern" or "urban" legends, but also of any legend now in active circulation in a given community. We invite all who have an interest in this research area to join. As a member of ISCLR, you will receive this newsletter and advance notice of Society events and publications.

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Send queries and material for publication to the editor, Bill Ellis, Penn State--Hazleton Campus, Hazleton, PA 18201, USA. (Telephone: 717-450-3026 or 717-788-2021; E-mail WCE2@PSUVM BITNET)