

**PENSEZ A VOS ENFANTS!**

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH

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## AIDS AND AGGRESSION:

Polish Legends about HIV-Infected People\*

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## I

In the fall of 1989, Polish people had an opportunity to watch the struggle of young people infected with HIV for their own place to live. First, they were evicted by outraged inhabitants from Kaweczyn, then from a new site in Konstancin. With full determination, the young people occupied health service buildings in Warsaw, and as a result of this action they won themselves a roof to live under. The place they are staying, however, is kept secret for fear of further reprisals.

Since mid-1989, the press and radio and TV stations have reported on this and other demonstrations directed against AIDS victims and HIV carriers. Society has turned aggressive even against groups of drug addicts who can only be suspected of carrying HIV. In mid-March 1990, for instance, the Głoskowo MONAR [Youth Movement Center for Combatting Drug Addiction], housing 19 patients, was surrounded by farm tractors and trailers and cut off from the world. Gazeta Wyborcza reported:

On Thursday, March 15, at 6:00 AM, all the roads to the Center were blocked. Three days later, on Saturday, the Protest Committee blocked the international route E-18 with a farm tractor. The third step was to take over the Center's buildings and to begin their occupation [No. 68 (21 March 1990)].

The protest action proceeded under the slogans, "Głoskowo is becoming the center for HIV carriers!" "Turn the buildings of MONAR into senior citizen housing!" "Parents of drug addicts! Take better care of your children!" "We can't afford free treatment of drug addiction--a disease you choose to get!" "Watch out, AIDS!" "Druggies out of Głoskowo!"

The active protest continued for several days. On 23 March, Gazeta Wyborcza reported that the MONAR center was still being picketed. Mediation was begun by the governor of Siedlce Province and by Bishop Orszulik, with a senator from the Senate's Intervention Bureau as well as the Ministry of Health representative. During a meeting with inhabitants of Głoskowo, who had been blocking the roads to the MONAR center, Bishop Orszulik delivered a statement made by the Chief of Ministers Council Office jointly with the Minister of Health. The local community demanding liquidation of the center was assured that there were no plans to make it a specialized care unit for drug addicts who were HIV carriers or showing symptoms of AIDS. The existing center would come

under the direct supervision of the Chief Siedlce Province Doctor, and regulations for the center's operations would be tightened up.

Anticipation of danger made people deaf to all arguments about how to avoid the disease and about the need for the infected to have a chance to life in a normal and healthy environment. To try to counteract this psychosis, the Praesidium of the AIDS Council for the Minister of Health published an open letter to the Prime Minister (Gazeta Wyborcza [28 March 1990]), expressing concern about symptoms of extreme intolerance shown towards infected people. The authors blame the crisis evolving around HIV carriers on the Administration, who failed to react properly when protest groups denied the sick the right to a normal life. In a similar spirit, Bishop Orszulik stated:

The Roman Catholic Church has taken a clear position with regard to AIDS victims and HIV carriers. Those people have full right to free medical care, they must be able to find a place in society, and they must be protected against all attacks of aggression and intolerance [Gazeta Wyborcza (2 April 1990)].

The bishop also quoted an appeal by the Polish bishops at the recent Episcopal Conference and offered his own reflections about how animosity towards the infected began.

## II

The fears of society that cannot be soothed by even the highest authorities become reflected in folklore, in the form of abundant legends, sensations, and rumors about AIDS victims and HIV carriers that are being circulated all over Poland. As the number of those infected and infecting increases, so are the situations, places and institutions in which people believe the disease can be spread: a handshake, human sweat, a kiss, public restrooms, utensils in restaurants and cafes visited by foreigners and prostitutes, people sneezing on the bus, mosquito bites, pharaoh ants passing through apartments--all are perceived as dangerous situations. Even neighborhood beauticians and barbers fall under suspicion.

From ephemeral pieces of information gathered in the coal-mining region of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, it appears that men have quit going to the barber's for a shave; they do not even let the barber shave them after a haircut for fear of cuts and infections. One of my informants from Sosnowiec told me the following:

The hotel barber, he used to be somebody. And now? No one goes there for a shave any more. I'm telling you, they're scared of AIDS! You used to make real money in that business. When you got a foreigner in the chair--well, he paid. It was worth it, standing

there in the apron just for the tips they gave you. Today nobody goes, nobody will even let the razor touch their skin. It might all be contaminated. And, you know, it's even worse when you're a skinny barber--forget it! At Novotel [a luxurious motel chain -- Trans.], the barber went bankrupt. He was so skinny everybody suspected he had it. Who knows, maybe the hotel workers ruined his reputation, why not? I wouldn't go there myself. I tell you, there's no way you can pull the razor over the skin without scratching, and you got all kinds of races and types sitting in that chair.

[Jan K., retired craftsman. Recorded 19 April 1990.]

Dentists' offices are suspicious places, too. Many dentists themselves are believed to be HIV carriers:

Near Krakow, there is a place, I forget the name. There were two dentists there. They were doing well, had a lot of clients, and suddenly people found out one of them had AIDS. No one ever went to him again, so he had to leave that place. Now there is a court trial because he wants to defend himself.

[Krzysztof Swiatlochowski, student in political sciences, University of Silesia, Katowice. Recorded 4 November 1990.]

In large cities, dentists suspected of being HIV-positive are singled out by districts:

In Giszowiec [a district of Katowice --DC], there is a very well-known dentist, Dr. M \_\_\_\_\_. There was a rumor around in Giszowiec that he had AIDS, so nobody ever goes to him any more to have their teeth worked on. I used to go to him, but I stopped, what with people saying those things. I got scared--it is possible, after all. And who spilled the beans? See, among his patients were wulce [workers living in a company hostel --DC]. Three of these wulce that used to be his patients were taken to the hospital in a ambulance because all three of them tested HIV-positive.

See, Dr. M \_\_\_\_\_ had spent three months in West Germany. Maybe he cleaned floors there or something because he came back looking pale and skinny, which convinced his patients that he was ill. So then he lost his patients. Now he wanders around the city looking for patients, but nobody goes for that. They say around here that he's going to change neighborhoods.

[Ryszard Poplawski, student in political sciences, University of Silesia, Katowice. Recorded 4 December 1990.]

Some hospitals are under a similar suspicion:

M.H.: In Silesia, it is commonly believed that entire hospitals are contaminated. Every town has got one such bad hospital, sort of an extermination camp. You get in, but you don't get out. Here in Bytom, we have a hospital like that. People say it is horrible. Everything there is contaminated with HIV. One guy down the street was booked in there once and then had to run for his life out of there. He'll never admit having been there or people would not even dare shake his hand.

A.K.: In Sosnowiec we have a hospital like that. They say it is Hospital [district number] Two. Recently the director of the hospital got sick, so naturally that's where they admitted him. They say he kept begging his family to get him out of there.

[Marcin Halas and Adam Kuta, students of culture, University of Silesia. Recorded 8 November 1990.]

During the same month, a group of students from Katowice told me about another hospital:

K.M.: A druggie in Myslowice got a girl pregnant. When the baby was born, it turned out that they all had AIDS, that is, the druggie, the baby, and the mother. As soon as the news spread around, his parents were fired from work, and the mother's grandmother who worked at the meat shop was fired, too. A committee was formed in Myslowice, and they wrote a petition demanding to have all three of them put to death by lethal injection. It happened only two weeks ago.

A female companion: I heard about that, too. The girl ran away from the hospital so that nobody would find out. But when her time came, she returned to the delivery ward. After the child was born, the news came out. And, of course, she had contaminated the entire hospital with her blood, so the hospital was shut down.

A second female companion: I heard about that at home. They closed the hospital. And the delivery ward could not be decontaminated, so now it will serve the AIDS women from Katowice Province.

[Krzysztof Marek, student of political sciences, and two anonymous companions, students of the University of Silesia. Recorded 4 November 1990.]

In popular lore, an HIV carrier turns aggressive and terrorizes his environment, making even medics and police helpless.

M.H.: I think I read it in Polityka weekly. It said there that the police arrested a criminal, took him into their patrol car, and drove him to the police station. There, he told them he had AIDS and went after them as if to bite them. The police ran away in a panic, and he walked off free. They'd rather let him go than keep him and infect the jail and themselves. It must have been in Otwock.

A.K.: In Oswiecim, there was another incident. They had this guy in the ambulance. He had a bad wound and messed up the ambulance with the oozing. When they found he had AIDS, they had to burn the ambulance up. People go there to see the charred skeleton of the car.

[Marcin Halas and Adam Kuta. Recorded 9 November 1990.]

It is rumored that HIV carriers are a threat to society because they intentionally spread the disease. Among teenagers, stories circulate about carriers who hang out in discos to assault unsuspecting victims in secluded spots. Two of them hold a girl's hands, while the third kisses her on the mouth and passes on the virus with his saliva. Rumor has it that hundreds of 14-year-olds have been infected in this way.

Another method of intentionally infecting other is to add blood to a drink. A high school student from Bedzin told me this story:

There was a drug addict who learned he had AIDS, so he threw a party for his friends and treated them to some soup in which he had mixed some of his blood. In this way he infected thirty people out of sheer revenge for being ill himself.

[Viola Kulik, high school student from Bedzin. Recorded 27 October 1989.]

I have recorded many legends about a prostitute from Katowice who was a virus carrier.

I heard of a prostitute living in Katowice who intentionally passes the disease to men, who in turn pass it on to their wives and children. She took some medical tests, and when she found she was an HIV carrier, she kept it secret. It would not pay for her to admit it or undergo treatment, because she would lose her customers. And so she stays in business and destroys society. What a terrible thing to hear! I also read about this, and the journalist counted how many men and eventually women she could infect in one day.

[Malgorzata Hunkiewicz, student of Polish philology, University of Silesia. Recorded 29 March 1990.]

Another narrator gave a more colorful rendition of this sensation:

In Katowice, there lives a very rich lady. She graduated from the University and can speak several languages. She is very respectable, so she invites very few gentlemen. She belongs to the aristocracy of prostitutes and deals only with millionaires. For one night she charges more than another prostitute barely makes in a month. In every restaurant she has a table reserved for a different hour. Say, she comes to Hotel Warszawa at 2:00 PM and nobody dares sit next to her. She makes her own choice, that is, if she needs a customer. She won't even look at an average guy. She is so professional that she can figure out what you have in your wallet at one glance. Then she goes to Café Katowice, spends half an hour or one hour there, and if she does not find anything good enough for her, she goes to Hotel Silesia. The regulars at the Café know her, and the service personnel bow down before her. She used to be a beautiful woman, but they say now that she's got HIV she's turned skinnier and uglier. Those who know about it warn others away from her, but she still manages to infect foreigners. She must have a lot of serious people on her conscience.

[J.K., 48, clerk living in Sosnowiec. Recorded 18 February 1990.]

Another version of this "infected by a girl" motif appears in two other stories.

M.M.: I have a couple of friends in those circles, so I heard that a lot of them are sick. They all got the virus from a girl that had come from Warsaw. She slept around with a few guys from Katowice. And she got paid with dope. When she was leaving, she told them jokingly about her disease. Quite possible she did this on purpose.

A.K.: I heard a similar story. A girl slept with a guy and did not ask for money: instead she left a farewell message on the mirror. When they boy woke up, he read, "Welcome to the AIDS club."

[Maciej Mazyczuk and Agata Krok, students of the Cultural Studies Department, University of Silesia. Recorded 7 May 1990.]

In the opinion of many narrators, the disease is spreading especially in places like jails and prisons. Stories about this appeared in Silesia in spring 1990:

A drug addict—they told me in Bedzin—was in prison. He got so hungry for drugs that he had to be taken to hospital for fear he'd die. Tests showed that he was infected. He stayed in the hospital for a while, and when he got better they sent him back to prison. Then a rebellion broke out. Nobody wanted to be in the same prison with him. The wardens did not want him either, so they set him free.

[Marek Borzecki, 36, electrician living in Bedzin. Recorded 31 March 1990.]

I recorded three other variants in a group interview following a public lecture on contemporary folklore in Bedzin:

They locked a druggie in jail. He demanded drugs, and when someone failed to meet his demand, he kissed him. They thought he was crazy and sent him to the hospital. There it was found he was infected with HIV. Panic broke out, as he had kissed several people. [A man aged 50]

I heard on the train that an infected criminal got jailed and the chief warden was a real mean guy, like he really persecuted the inmates. So one day the criminal asked to see the chief warden and kissed him, and that's how he infected him out of revenge. [A man aged 30]

Someone was telling me about prison. A convict was doing life for murder. He told his wife to get him a syringe with a drug addict's blood, and he infected himself with it. When that was discovered, he threatened that he would get the whole prison infected, and so he was let out and now walks free. No one will dare touch him any more. That's the way things are these days. [A man aged 40]

[Recorded 24 February 1990.]

There are also numerous stories about infected people, who, armed with a syringe, desperately attack people of various levels of society and in various places.

D.M.: I don't remember where it happened, but I heard that a boy infected with AIDS jumped on the bus, a syringe in his hand, and started pricking the other passengers. He got dozens of them infected. When he was disarmed at the police station, he said it was his revenge for the cruelty with which society treats people with AIDS.

Another student: They wrote about this incident in Detektyw [a sensational magazine —DC].

Another: And I read it happened in some city in the USA.

[Dorota Mirska, student of culture studies, with fellow students from the University of Silesia. Recorded 8 November 1989.]

In the spring of 1990, I interviewed a journalism student at the University of Silesia, living in Warsaw. An excuse for the interview was an article by Kinga Rolna in Gazeta Wyborcza (No. 69, 22 March 1990) in which the author reported that HIV carriers in Warsaw intentionally infect other people, like "the rat who infects on purpose, out of desperation and protest against his accelerated rate of dying."

The interviewed student confirmed that rumors circulated in Warsaw to the effect that HIV-infected people "are out to get even for their persecution":

These are street rumors popular among people meeting in shop lines or on the bus. The Old City is where things are happening. True, the Old City and Nowy Swiat are the places where drug addicts hang out and buy their supplies. You can see them from the bus, standing in doorways. That's a fact.

That's where junkies with syringes filled with blood appear and attack people, sticking a needle in their flesh. It happens during the afternoon hours when the traffic is highest. This is supposed to be their revenge for persecution against not only the HIV-infected but all the drug addicts. Supposedly this has been going on for half a year now.

Personally, I am not sure whether this is true, but if the

oppression of these people continues, that's what might start happening.

[Mira Debowska, student of journalism, University of Silesia.  
Recorded 23 March 1990.]

The same theme appeared in the Katowice daily, Trybuna Robotnicza (23 March 1990).

In Bielsko-Biala's Klimczok, the largest department store in the country, it was just a normal day like any other. Throngs of people were milling about with what was left of their extra inflationary money in their pockets; street-wise money changers wandered about the stairways, occasionally transacting a deal in foreign currency.

Suddenly, a young man approached a woman standing in line and grabbed her purse. A commotion ensued, and several energetic men managed to surround the thief. Coolly, the thief took out of his pocket a syringe filled with some red liquid and announced that he was an HIV-carrier. If anyone so much as touched him, the thief warned, he would be treated to some of the thief's own blood, infected of course.

The frightened crowd jumped back, and the thief walked away untouched.

Reading this story, folklorists will have no doubt that it is another variant of the traditional sensation. However, we cannot be sure whether the journalist who wrote it is also aware of that or if he too has been overwhelmed by the panic spreading in this country. It would not be surprising: journalists often give way to such social mythology.

One of my students told me more stories about Bielsko-Biala and about how the HIV-infected take revenge in that city:

Our colleague from Bielsko, Janusz, told us that there is a huge concentration of infected people there. They are terribly aggressive. It's not just the locals—it is like a vacationland that attracts infected visitors, and then the city becomes really dangerous. Last year they supposedly got so aggressive that they were going after other people with their needles, especially children.

There was a mother of two children, who were playing in a sandbox. The kids came home and showed their mother needle marks from injections given them by a stranger. The mother could not figure it out, and she got scared. Then it turned out that there were some suspicious youths walking on the streets, looking for kids to give them the needle. That's when the panic broke out. The mother of these kids and others had the children examined by a doctor, and it turned out that they were all infected. A lot of kids have been infected in the same way.

[H.M., student of cultural studies, University of Silesia.  
Recorded 7 May 1990.]

I was also told that in Sosnowiec, there is a madman infected with HIV. Everybody is afraid of him because he gets on the tramway and gives the needle to girls, especially the very young ones. Supposedly he's infected dozens of them so far. Mothers are afraid to let their children play in the streets because the madman could come by.

[Beata Bedkowska, student of Polish philology, University of Silesia. Recorded 7 May 1990.]

### III

The fear of the disease, which has been growing and spreading swiftly since the middle of 1989 in Poland, has interfered with one of the strongest human needs—the need for security. Lack of this sense has triggered a defense mechanism, and anger and aggression are the simplest effects.

Before the fear of the disease broke out, the youths of MONAR Center in Gloskowo used to live in peaceful symbiosis with the local population. Says one of the Center's inhabitants: "We used to play soccer with the locals; in the evenings some of the youths would stop by to listen to the music and talk. We lent them our farming equipment, the school drew water from our deep well for free, we helped put up their fire station. For three days all the people from the Center, with our equipment, worked on constructing their chapel. We have never denied help to anybody. We just can't understand what happened ... what's got into them?"

And the residents of Gloskowo? Are they hicks ignorant of medical facts, or just bigots? The only thing that is clear from what they say is that they are scared and therefore need to defend themselves: "We fear for ourselves, our families, our children. True, we have been assured that for two years they won't send any AIDS victims here—but then for so many years we have been assured so many things that were not true. If everybody is saying that you can't get AIDS through casual contact, why did Primate Glemp put on a mask and rubber gloves when he visited AIDS patients?" [Gazeta Wyborcza (10 April 1990)].

It was explained that the Primate was wearing only a white apron, at the request of the Minister of Health, and most of Poland has seen other prominent officials visiting AIDS patients without any special protective measures. But neither of these facts will disperse a conviction that has already taken form. It is impossible to fight a panic based on fear and threat with even the most rational arguments.

The power of social myth-making also affects some journalists, who present the legends and sensations passing through Poland as facts and build on them an apocalyptic vision of the future ahead. Slawomir Szota's statement in Katowice's daily Trybuna Robotnicza is an extreme example of this process:

It seems that we are irreversibly losing the chance to control the destructive calamity of AIDS, spread by an unprosecuted drug trade and resulting criminal acts. The mass media have recently publicized astonishing and frightening information about how some drug addicts act. We have heard about a group in Warsaw that threatened to plunge a needle with allegedly infected blood into the bodies of those unwilling to part with their wallets. In another city, a young thief nearly escaped custody because the police were afraid of his syringe, which was filled, as it turned out, with red paint. This matter has been located at Café Krysztalowa in Katowice: there are reasons to believe that this is where HIV is spreading [23 March 1990].

The same author links that café with the girl who intentionally infects her customers. I have recorded sensations on this theme given me by many interviewees. The echo of other legends reverberates throughout the Katowice journalist's story.

In my study of the legends of the 1970s, I wrote that they were stories that "lived a short or very short life" and that it is important "to record them while variants were flourishing and diversifying." Texts recorded too late lack "the power of emotional effect that is at its peak when the stories are passed at the right

time and place" (Czubala 1985:84 ff.).

With this awareness, I began recording sensations about AIDS as soon as symptoms appeared of the social psychosis caused by the threat of "the black plague of the twentieth century." Carefully collected records of the mythologized communications created about that disease, as well as those that will be created in the future, will give us a solid foundation for verifying our judgments and describing the phenomenon more comprehensively.

Exciting proposals to research contemporary legends as a global phenomenon would be practical--if research results on the global scale were available. From reading FOAFtale News, I understand that this goal is central to the scholars linked by the newsletter. Unfortunately, legend scholars from many other parts of the world are not so strongly receptive to this material yet, as they lack effective information links.

A more realistic approach seems to be--at least for the time being--a second type of research on contemporary legends: the search for their relation to local traditions and the construction of thematic monographs within the available range.

Neither of these approaches means a return to the geographic-historical method. Today we are not interested so much in the archetype of a theme as in the universal mechanism that directs the same processes of mythologizing life in all human societies and produces similar if not identical legendary figures in all cultures.

\* Translated by Janusz Petrykowski, Penn State University, University Park.

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#### THE KIDNAPPERS AND THE BLACK AMBULANCE: Child Abduction Legends from Sicily\*

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"There's a black ambulance driving around the city trying to kidnap our children!"

Beginning early in the summer of 1990, a new series of rumors dealing with the "black ----" topic broke out [cf. the report on the "Black Volga," FN 21:1-3 --BE], made up of two apparently simultaneous undercurrents and slowly moving from the provinces toward large cities such as Rome and Bologna. The theme of these rumors is one of the most characteristic anxiety-producing motifs of contemporary urban societies: the security of one's own children and a "dark" and scarcely comprehensible threat carried out against them.

According to newspaper coverage summarized in Il Resto del Carlino (16 November 1990), many attempted child abductions were reported in communities of the Romagna coast and before that in the Marches. These were alleged to be the work of Gypsy women. All the attempts "failed in an instant": the kidnappers tried to snatch children away from their mothers, who had been "distracted for a moment" by hiding the little ones under their full skirts.

By November, following a familiar itinerary, the rumor reached a

large supermarket at the outskirts of Bologna, the Hypercoop in the suburb Borgo Panigale. The event always centered on a Gypsy woman; everyone knew about it by hearsay, but no child turned up missing from the area.

Disturbingly, these rumors followed soon after a bloody series of raids against transients staying in the vicinity of Bologna, despite the protests of the National Institute for Transients. This confirms the saying that "hearsay neither creates nor precedes belief, but it is its most visible manifestation."

Moreover, one must not forget that rumors about child abductions (all of which proved unfounded) had recently circulated in Piedmont as well, especially in Canavese. In mid-October people in Cuornè were talking about a little boy kidnapped in the street and about a shooting, and a week later, in Filetto, two little girls were allegedly forced to get into a car and later abandoned along the Orco River.

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of Italy, a similar rumor was beginning in 1990: a band of kidnappers were abducting children to supply a horrible trade in human organs. La Stampa (29 November 1990) was the first daily newspaper to feature the abductions on the front page. (Newspapers get around to passing on the rumor only as or after the phenomenon begins to spread.) The story probably arose when the actual case of Santina Renda, a little girl who disappeared from Palermo in March 1990, was embroidered with details of child abductions in South America.

In Catanzaro it is said that the kidnappers have already struck near the coast. In Foggia they are sure that they are the next target. In Campobasso mothers say that a little boy has been found dead in a nearby town. In Pescara they attach the story to a case of sexual molestation and are now certain that the gang is wandering their countryside.

In the past few days, the rumor has arrived in Rome. Receptionists at the newspapers have received dozens of alarmed phone calls. And in Pomezia people were so sure that bogus medical officials had been identified that groups of parents showed up to defend schools.

A circular from the Office of the Superintendent of Education in Rome allegedly alerted schoolteachers that imposters were going around schools in uniforms. However, no such circular exists.

"Realistic" details have been added to improve the story: "Two men disguised as medical workers and accompanied by two would-be state policemen got out of the ambulance. The fake policemen ask that a child be called, explaining that its parents have been admitted to the hospital, and they ask the child to come with them." But no report of a missing child has ever been filed.

From first-hand sources, moreover, we have learned that a rumor had circulated in Calabria in June or July 1990 about an inter-national organization that probably had bases throughout Italy and might have an underground base right in Marina di Catanzaro.

In the meantime, the day after the original report, La Stampa's article appeared in London's daily newspaper, The Times. Distorting the information slightly, it stressed the widespread fear that hovered over Italian schools and families.

Significantly, the case of little Santina Renda combined all the fantasies documented above. In fact, suppositions about her disappearance were many. These were also exaggerated during the course of Channel Three's program Chi l'ha visto [Have you seen this person?], which became interested in this case in spring 1990. Among other things, it was suggested that she could have been kidnapped by Gypsies

or by an organization trafficking in human organs. In conclusion, they mentioned a clinic on the outskirts of Rome, where every month a team of foreign surgeons was supposed to lend itself to this bloodcurdling trade.

The connection between presumed kidnappings and the cruel traffic in organs surely reached us from Latin America, where, since 1988, we hear of an organization that has recruited unscrupulous surgeons to remove human organs for sale on a transplant black market. The events were said to have happened in Mexico, as well as in Brazil and Guatemala. At once, in this country, newspapers were reporting the discovery of an insane plan to "breed and raise children for transplants!"

Yet an article in Corriere della Sera (13 July 1987) headlined "They kidnap children to steal their organs" seems to describe less a verifiable fact than a legend in formation—the same one we find in Italy today:

A group of children was playing soccer in a poor neighborhood of Medellin, a Colombian city at the base of the Andes. All of a sudden a shiny Cadillac broke into the open space. The children's curiosity was excited by the unusual sight and stopped their game. Some people got out of the car; they didn't say a word. They immobilized one of the children and fled with squealing tires. Several days later the child returned with a medicated bandage over one eye: a doctor determined that a skilful surgeon had removed his cornea.

Where does reality end and legend begin? Meanwhile, the legend has become a TV feature. In March 1991 Channel Five will show a production directed by Vittorio De Sisti, Il Ricatto 2 [The Ransom, Part Two], and Massimo Ranieri will repeat his role of Commissioner Fedeli. The plot, set primarily in Naples, will show the Fedeli tracing abducted children to break up a clandestine international racket in organ transplants.

But "medical horror" rumors, as Brunvand terms them, are not new to our time. In La Logique de la Foule, Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel, two researchers for the CNRS clearly illustrate a wave of rumors that permeated the French capital in May 1750. Police using covered wagons were kidnapping children off the streets; they were never seen again. Some said they were sent to the Americas; according to others, the unfortunate children were drained of their blood, which was being used to cure a sick prince at the Royal Palace. [Farge and Revel's book has now been translated into English as The Vanishing Children of Paris: Rumor and Politics before the French Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); British ed. titled The Rules of Rebellion (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).—BE.]

Confusion breaks out; some deaths occur; the "evidence" of the events is debated. All of these, once again, are symptoms of some deep, pathological conviction that will soon lead to events with quite a different meaning.

\* Translated by Francis Pierucci, Penn State, Hazleton Campus

## ORGAN KIDNAP STORIES

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As new medical techniques and technologies are developed, one may expect that peoples' fear of what is done, or what can be done to their bodies may be increasingly reflected in contemporary folklore. Certainly fear about what uninvited forces may invade one's body has

been around since the first days of "demonic possession."

Currently, I am compiling material on "organ kidnap stories." What set me off was recently hearing a story with all the hallmarks of a contemporary legend. The story (in summary) goes:

Two Australian men went on holiday to Los Angeles, USA. They went out one evening drinking in the bars and met up with some local people. One of the men decided to go off with one of the women whilst his companion returned to their hotel room. His friend didn't return for a few days. When he finally showed up, he complained of not feeling well and of being unable to remember what had happened. They thought that maybe he'd been drugged and robbed, but he still had his wallet. As they also discovered a cut on his back, they decided to go to a doctor. After various tests, it was discovered that one of his kidneys had been removed!

The story has many of the trademarks of a contemporary legend: having been told as a true story but passed on by a friend-of-a-friend; having allegedly happened to a local person; and having the obvious "moral theme" of innocents abroad placing themselves in a dangerous situation.

The initial speculation in the story about the man having been surreptitiously drugged for the purpose of robbery is based on a number of press reports on police investigations into such incidents over recent years. One particularly notorious example involved former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who was reportedly (and embarrassingly) found without his trousers (and wallet) in an American city hotel room following a previous evening's drink in a local bar (a story celebrated by at least one cartoonist ever since!)

The theme of being kidnapped for organ transplants has its precedents. A similar story circulates in northeast Brazil, with stray children being allegedly kidnapped for the same purpose. The theme has also appeared in popular culture: for example, in the film and novel Coma, patients sent to a mysterious hospital are deliberately placed into an irreversible coma to enable removal of their organs as "spare parts" for others. Even the stories of UFO abductions, where people claim to have been kidnapped by alien entities for purposes of medical examination and/or genetic experimentation, may be a parallel folklore reflecting contemporary concerns about organ transplants, fetal experiments, and medical advances generally.

I would be interested in hearing from any readers who have heard of similar "organ kidnap stories," be they in the form of contemporary legends or as reflected in popular culture.

## MORE STOLEN BODY ORGANS

[The following round-ups of additional reports of this legend complex were contributed by FN's News Editor, Alan Mays.]

**KIDNEY ROBBERIES.** On 16 August, 1991, Martha Sachs, a library worker from Hershey, Pennsylvania, recalled a story she had heard two months earlier from her orthodontist: "A friend of his [the orthodontist's] went to New York City and met a woman. They went to a hotel room. The next thing he remembered was waking up on a bench in a park. He was in physical pain and fuzzy-headed, and was taken to a hospital where an examination discovered he had had a kidney surgically removed.

"Further investigation disclosed that he had been a victim of forced organ donation. The woman who took him to the hotel room was actually a nurse. He was rendered unconscious, at which point a surgeon came in and the operation was performed. Afterwards, he was dressed and removed to a park, placed on the bench, and abandoned.

"The reason this man was chosen was because he was involved in a paternity suit, and had had various tests done to discover whether he was or was not the father. These tests were somehow put in the hands of the surgeon who needed a kidney from someone with these tissue/blood numbers.

"The surgeon profited handsomely from these procedures, since he was paid by the recipients or by their families, who were desperate for a kidney and were also extremely wealthy."

Sachs recognized this story as implausible since her husband had received a kidney transplant, and she was familiar with the complicated procedures involved in transplanting a kidney. Similar accounts of seduction and kidney removal have surfaced recently in the United States. Frequently, the incident is set in New York City, although the detail of the genetic testing for paternity is unique in this case. [Lloyd Grove, "The Kidney That Got Away: Stolen Organs among Stuff of Urban Legends," *Washington Post* (2 April 1991):E1, E4. C: Henry Koretzky.]

The stolen kidney legend is similar to the "baby-parts story," which has circulated in Third World countries during the last few years. According to this legend, wealthy United States citizens are buying or kidnapping babies from the slums of Latin and Central America for use in organ transplants. Beginning in 1987 in Honduras, newspaper reports told of kidnapped babies being cut apart for use as transplants. By 1988, with international attention focused on the story, the United States Information Agency acted to counter the rumor. USIA officials accused the Soviets of spreading the story as part of their anti-American propaganda. By the end of 1989, the rumor had largely died out, except for occasional reports in the media. [Véronique Campion-Vincent, "The Baby-Parts Story," *Western Folklore* 49 (1990):9-25; John M. Goshko, "Nailing Disinformation: The Slum-Child Tale," *Washington Post* (26 August 1988):A19.]

**STOLEN KIDNEY IN "LAW AND ORDER" EPISODE.** The stolen kidney legend formed the basis of the 2 April 1991 episode of "Law and Order," an American television drama involving policemen and district attorneys in New York City who solve and prosecute a different crime during the course of the show each week. "Law and Order" co-producer Robert Palm suggested the basic plot of the show to scriptwriter Joe Morgenstern: "A guy gets mugged in Central Park, wakes up in terrible pain, and discovers that someone has cut him open, ripped off one of his kidneys and sewed him up." A newspaper clipping was supposedly the origin of this story, although Morgenstern never saw the clipping himself. Given the general plot, Morgenstern "concocted a story of a wealthy philanthropist whose daughter is dying of kidney disease, but her tissue type is so rare that she can't have a transplant unless someone finds a perfect match." Once the scheme was uncovered, prosecutors brought charges against the father and the surgeon who performed the operation. [Joe Morgenstern, "A Script Recipe: One Kidney, Lots of Writers, Beat Well," *New York Times* (31 March 1991) sec. 2:25, 26.] After the show was already filmed, Morgenstern heard the story again from a friend, who told him about a "stockbroker from Shearson Lehman who had been mugged in Central Park." [Lloyd Grove, "The Kidney That Got Away: Stolen Organs among Stuff of Urban Legends," *Washington Post* (2 April 1991):E1, E4.]

**STOLEN HEART IN "DICK TRACY" COMIC STRIP.** "Dick Tracy," the American daily comic strip written and drawn by Dick Locher and Max Collins and distributed by Tribune Media Services, currently features a plot focusing on stolen body parts. The story so far: Detective Dick Tracy, sporting a beard he grew while on vacation, goes undercover to Skid Row to investigate the mysterious disappearance of ten homeless persons. Posing as one of the homeless, Tracy is mugged by two men who

try to steal his two-way wrist computer, which he uses to communicate with police headquarters.

Meanwhile, rich industrialist Diet Smith learns he will need a transplant soon for his failing heart, but his rare blood type and a waiting list jeopardize his chances for receiving a transplant in time. Smith turns to attorney Tekram K. Calb (read it backwards) after he learns that Calb was able to arrange a kidney transplant for a friend. Smith agrees to pay the one million dollar fee for a heart transplant.

After taking off his wrist computer to avoid further harassment, Dick Tracy seeks treatment at the Free Clinic, a local medical center that treats the homeless, for the injuries he received during the mugging. When the unscrupulous doctors at the Free Clinic discover Tracy's unusual blood type, they drug him and prepare him as a donor, presumably for the ailing Diet Smith. When last seen, a drugged Tracy lies strapped to a hospital gurney awaiting removal to the transplant site.

As it now stands (on 1 September), Dick Tracy's son, also a police officer, and a homeless friend have noticed that Tracy is missing and are searching for him. It remains to be seen, however, whether Tracy will be rescued in time to save him from certain death when the evil doctors remove his heart. [C: Dan Hartung, alt.folklore.urban.]

**KIDNEY-NAPPERS IN GERMANY.** According to an American tabloid of dubious reliability, three gunmen stole eighty-nine human kidneys from the Federal Institute of Organ Shares, an organ bank in Hamburg, Germany. Using beer coolers to transport the body organs, the robbers sold twenty-three of the kidneys to local hospitals before being apprehended. "We found \$575,000 [£330,000] in cash when they were captured," Police Lt. Deter Kalb reported. The men contacted the hospitals before the robbery and made arrangements to deliver the kidneys. "Some hospitals apparently managed to have lots of cash on hand when the day of delivery arrived," Kalb said. Acting on a tip, police tracked down the men five hours after the robbery. When cornered, the men initially threatened to shoot the coolers containing the kidneys unless they were allowed to leave. The gunmen eventually surrendered to police, and the kidneys were recovered intact. ["Kidney-nappers Rob Organ Bank!," *Weekly World News* (23 July 1991):9.]

#### SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM:

##### A Checklist of Newspaper Reports, Part Two:

##### The Rochdale and Nottingham Affairs

Gillian Bennett  
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Following up on the report of alleged "Satanic abuse" in Rochdale (near Manchester, England; see *FN* 20:6-7), I thought readers might be interested in the following checklist of newspaper reports. These cover the period 26 February 1989 to 24 April 1991, a twenty-six month period when interest in the subject was at its height. It takes in the Rochdale cases and the less well publicised case at Nottingham that preceded it. This was actually a 1988 case in which 9 adults were sentenced to prison for sexually abusing children in their families. No claims of Satanism were presented at their trials, but at a September 1989 seminar in Reading, it was revealed that children had told stories of ritual abuse. Among other things, they claimed to have been taken to "parties" where adults dressed as witches and monsters carried out sexual attacks on them and murdered babies (see *FN* 16:8). A BBC programme aired in October 1990 also claimed that "tunnels" with "altars" had been found under a cemetery in Nottingham.

This checklist cites articles appearing in the quality press rather than the tabloids because this allows readers to see what opinion-leaders were making of the reports. It also shows how claims of ritual abuse were politicised by involving the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), a high-profile, quasi-official charity, and how, after an initial period of universal credulity, "informed opinion" gradually began to reject the claims. The police, in particular, refused to prosecute on the basis of the accusations, a particularly interesting detail as James Anderton, the Chief Constable of Manchester (the district with overall responsibility for Rochdale) is a fundamentalist Christian not otherwise known for enlightened attitudes.

Though the list is offered mainly as a research aid, it makes interesting reading in its own right, charting the course of the scandal from the start to its virtual close through its headlines.

I have computer print-outs of articles appearing in The Independent and The Independent on Sunday; if anyone is interested, I can provide copies for the cost of copying and postage.

[Thanks to additional clipping files sent me by Sherrill Mulhern, Bill Thompson, Jeff Mazo, and Sandy Hobbs, I have added a few items to this checklist. -BE.]

DTL <u>Daily Telegraph</u>	OBS <u>The Observer</u>
FT <u>Financial Times</u>	STL <u>Sunday Telegraph</u>
GDN <u>The Guardian</u>	STM <u>Sunday Times</u>
IND <u>The Independent</u>	TMS <u>The Times</u>
INS <u>The Independent on Sunday</u>	TDY <u>Today</u>

- 26 Feb 89 STL Devil worship linked to child sex abuse, claims social worker
- 17 Jul 89 DTL Helpline for child victims of the occult
- 20 Sep 89 IND Children who fall victim to Satanic rituals
- 23 Sep 89 DTL 'Rising tide' of ritual sex abuse of children
- 23 Dec 89 IND Four questioned after police raids in child sex inquiry
- 13 Mar 90 GDN NSPCC uncovers 'Satanic' abuse
  - TDY Sex abuse gangs lure children to Satanism
  - TMS NSPCC says ritual child abuse is rife: Health Department investigating 'bizarre and often violent ceremonies'
  - Harrowing cases detailed in report by society
- 14 Mar 90 TMS Child report angers MPs: Parliament
- 16 Mar 90 GDN Futile foray into the world of darkness
- 17 Mar 90 IND Ritual killing fears in child sex rings
  - Memories from childhood of ritualistic rape
  - Children lured to Satanic 'parties'
- 18 Mar 90 INS A Satanic litany of children's suffering: Sexual perversion, animal sacrifice and the drinking of blood are among the bizarre rituals adding a shocking new dimension to abuse of the young. Rosie Waterhouse, Sharon Kingman and Jennie Cuffe on the evidence behind this week's NSPCC report

- 20 Mar 90 IND Children's evidence of Satanic rites [letter]
- 6 Apr 90 TMS Check on ritual sex abuse: Parliament
- 7 Jun 90 TMS Moves promised on child abuse: Parliament
- [Note: the Rochdale raids occurred on 14 June, but newspapers were prevented from publicising the event until September 4.]
- 24 Jun 90 STL Facing up to ritual child abuse
- 2 Jul 90 GDN Child abuse allegations that are threatening to ruin a community: A judge dismisses charges against a nursery school but their poisonous effects linger on
- 4 Jul 90 GDN Law: Beyond belief for children's benefit. Clare Dyer surveys changing attitudes to child abuse evidence  
Is belief unquestioning?
- 8 Aug 90 IND Doctors disclose Satanic child-killing
- 9 Aug 90 IND Paedophiles 'use single mothers as route to children' Officer criticises lack of evidence  
Sisters were subjected to black magic
- 12 Aug 90 INS The making of a Satanic myth: Adult 'survivors' tell horrific tales of ritual child abuse but the evidence is missing.
- 19 Aug 90 INS Victims of Satanic cult myth need care, say psychiatrists  
Ignoring Satanic child abuse is a dangerous and Freudian slip [letter]
- 2 Sep 90 INS Freud, the psychiatrist and the facts about child abuse [letter]
- 8 Sep 90 DTL Satanic claims split children from families  
TMS Parents fight for return of children after Satanic tales: Rochdale
- 10 Sep 90 GDN Parents and council battle over children: Judge removes gag on 17 taken into care in abuse case  
Propaganda, fantasy and lies blur reports of ritual abuse  
Reports of ritual child abuse are not backed by facts: Chris Mihill examines the recurring concerns about sexual exploitation involving black magic and finds little firm evidence
- 11 Sep 90 GDN Satanic abuse total grows: Three more made wards of court as lawyers seek parents' access and social services talk of 'multiple abuse' risk
- 12 Sep 90 TMS Decision to put children in court care is defended: ritualistic abuse allegations
- 13 Sep 90 IND Abuse case parents 'left in the dark': Jack O'Sullivan talks to parents in Rochdale whose lives have been



- blighted by allegations of ritual child abuse  
 GDN Inquiry urged into ritual abuse allegations  
 Langley sceptics take devil worship with pinch of salt:  
 Erlend Clouston reports on a struggling Rochdale  
 estate's unwanted celebrity status  
 DTL A town's talk of the Devil: After grim tales of ritual  
 child abuse, Rochdale waits to hear the evidence  
 Satanic abuse investigation disclosed in Manchester  
 TMS 13 children put in council care after sex abuse  
 enquiry: Satanic practices  
 'Satanic' practices difficult to prove
- 14 Sep 90 IND Anderton rules out Satan abuse charges  
 TMS No evidence for charges in ritual abuse
- 15 Sep 90 IND National inquiry urged into 'ritual child abuse':  
 Families have been broken up after claims of  
 'Satanic' sex cases: Jack O'Sullivan reports  
 DTL Council staff in child abuse case backed  
 GDN Councillors back social workers' handling of ritual  
 abuse cases
- 16 Sep 90 INS Satanic cults; how the hysteria swept Britain:  
 Child abuse or occult rituals? Rosie Waterhouse  
 traces the events leading to the trauma for Rochdale  
 families  
 OBS A child in the coven: Last week, 33 children in  
 Rochdale and Manchester were made wards of court  
 during investigations into allegations of satanic  
 ritual abuse. Proof of ritual abuse is scant. Fear  
 silences victims. Children may be too loyal to name  
 names. They may be disbelieved.  
 Call for war on hidden menace of ritual abuse  
 Tale of confusion in the town hall [chronology of  
 Rochdale arrests]  
 Hard man's rage turns to despair: 'I would shoot myself  
 if I thought any of this was true'  
 STL Deliver us from demons and scandal  
 Focus on Rochdale: dark shadows that hang over  
 Rochdale's children--children taken from their  
 parents and into care amid rumours of Satanism.  
 Anthea Hall visits a town where life has been disrupted  
 by the unknown
- 17 Sep 90 IND Council seeks ritual abuse inquiry  
 TMS Inspectors to test 'abuse' procedures: Rochdale council
- 18 Sep 90 GDN Merseyside police drop Satanic abuse cases
- 19 Sep 90 TMS Mother describes trauma of losing children in abuse  
 case
- 20 Sep 90 IND Rochdale abuse case transferred  
 FT World News in Brief: Rochdale criticized  
 GDN Top judge to preside in child abuse case: Rochdale  
 social services accused of poor practice  
 TMS Rochdale ritual child abuse allegations: Public inquiry  
 demanded  
 Merseyside Satanic child abuse allegations
- 21 Sep 90 GDN Commentary: Satanic cloak hides the real horror  
 TMS Where the law fails the satanist: child abuse cases
- 22 Sep 90 GDN Guidelines to be revised to deal with ritual abuse  
 TMS Revised code will cover ritual abuse: child abuse
- 23 Sep 90 INS NSPCC faces sack over 'Satanic' abuse role  
 Children's games that bred alarm over 'Satanism':  
 Rosie Waterhouse examines how cases in Notting-  
 hamshire led to hysteria about ritual abuse  
 STM Twisting the truth to fit a ghoulish fantasy
- 24 Sep 90 IND The Bar Conference: Lawyer says child abuse  
 investigators ignore rules  
 Abuse case group denies being fired  
 TMS NSPCC denies move to end its role on child abuse lists  
 Roles in child welfare [leading article]
- 25 Sep 90 GDN Rochdale access ruling  
 TDY 2 Satan probe children reunited with parents
- 26 Sep 90 FT World News in Brief: NSPCC returns registers  
 GDN NSPCC defends record on child abuse  
 DTL NSPCC claims sacking slur as it resigns council roles  
 TMS NSPCC agrees to return of child abuse registers
- 30 Sep 90 INS NSPCC questions led to Satan cases  
 A tug of love over charity's policy  
 Why the NSPCC has decided it should speak out on  
 Satanic child abuse [letter]  
 STL Children's charity victim of own publicity success  
 STM Children speared on the horns of demonic dilemma: Forum
- 1 Oct 90 GDN Giving voice to children
- 3 Oct 90 IND Tunnel find 'is evidence of ritual child abuse'  
 GDN Satanic child abuse claims 'suppressed': TV programme  
 says evidence of rites was not pursued  
 TMS Allegations of child abuse in graveyard: Nottingham
- 4 Oct 90 IND Dispute over ritual child abuse divides city:  
 'Tunnel of the condemned' under a sunken graveyard  
 Police chief warns of ducking stool justice  
 GDN Police and council deny claim of child Satanic rituals  
 at cemetery
- 5 Oct 90 IND Social workers and the police [leading article]  
 DTL Avoid justice of ducking stool plea
- 7 Oct 90 INS Satanic inquisitors from the town hall  
 NSPCC threatened by its own shock tactics: Charles  
 Oulton investigates how one of our oldest charities  
 became the focal point of a national controversy  
 Police chief to 'kill off' abuse stories
- 9 Oct 90 IND Children in the shadow of doubt: Uncovering the truth  
 about ritual abuse requires cooperation rather than  
 confrontation, and inquiry instead of incredulity,  
 says Jack O'Sullivan
- 14 Oct 90 INS New evidence of ritual abuse was ignored [letter]

- 21 Oct 90 INS Documentary on 'Satanic abuse' failed to be fair with the evidence [letter]
- 3 Nov 90 DTL Child abuse claims divide police and social workers  
GDN Talk of the devil: Secret Lives. Revelations of ritual child abuse have been greeted with disbelief by many. Valerie Sinason compares the outcry over the Nottingham allegations to the reaction in America when a social worker first realised that the children parents were referring to her were victims of a Satanic cult working in a day-care centre. Since then six more circles have been uncovered.  
Rift in child care after abuse case  
TMS Social workers are vindicated by ritual abuse report
- 7 Nov 90 TMS Rift grows as police rebuff theory of Satanic abuse; Broxtowe case  
Churches draft guideline on occult links  
Everything points to Satanism
- 8 Nov 90 TMS Research call; Satanic child abuse
- 11 Nov 90 OBS Minister to act on rise in ritual child abuse
- 13 Nov 90 FT World News in Brief: Child abuse changes  
DTL Council in ritual child abuse row failed to involve parents  
GDN Leading Article: Rochdale in context  
Checks sought on child abuse procedures  
TMS Rochdale failed to adopt abuse rules because of expense; child abuse
- 19 Nov 90 TMS Rochdale workers 'ignored rules' on child abuse cases
- 22 Nov 90 GDN Social workers boost for Rochdale
- 9 Dec 90 TMS Claim dropped; Satanic abuse
- 10 Dec 90 FT World News in Brief: Ritual abuse hearings  
GDN Police aiding social checks on sex abuse  
TMS Abuse hearing; Rochdale council
- 11 Dec 90 DTL Orders lifted in 'abuse' case  
GDN Rochdale scraps case for wardship of three sisters  
TDY Satanic abuse is ruled out  
TMS Judge sends sisters home in ritual abuse hearing; Rochdale
- 18 Dec 90 TMS Social workers obsessed by Satanic abuse, judge says  
FT World News in Brief: Child abuse decision  
GDN Return of eight children in abuse inquiry  
TDY Judge attacks Satan fixation in abuse case
- 19 Dec 90 TMS Guidance on abuse 'heeded'; Manchester Nottingham ritual child abuse  
GDN Child abuse staff 'right' to take action
- 22 Dec 90 GDN Families' routine of child abuse: The web of maltreatment uncovered in a joint investigation by Kent police and social workers
- 30 Dec 90 INS A ritual fabrication: Caroline Marchant claimed to have been a victim of satanic abuse, but there is strong evidence that she was making the story up. In the end, it may have been the pressure to sustain the fiction that drove her to suicide.
- 17 Feb 91 STL Focus on evil: Look who's back—dark forces are abroad.  
The West says Saddam is evil. He calls America the Great Satan  
At home, stories of sadistic killings and 'Satanic' child abuse shake the imagination  
The meaning of evil in the modern world
- 20 Feb 91 GDN Satanic abuse and the law: devil of a mess  
As another sex abuse case nears its end, Malcolm Dean finds a tangle in the courts and Beatrix Campbell reports on young victims' own horror stories
- [Note: the Rochdale case virtually ended on 7 March when a Manchester justice dismissed claims of ritual abuse and released ten children to their parents' custody.]
- 8 Mar 91 TMS 'Ritual abuse' children free to return home; Rochdale Horror film fantasy led to a year of anguish for parents; Rochdale child sexual abuse case  
Judge pours scorn on Rochdale abuse claim  
DTL Leading article: Abuse in Rochdale  
Satanic abuse case children freed by judge  
'Obsession of social workers made them ignore advice'  
GDN Leading article: Rochdale - simply a terrible botch  
Rochdale children returned to parents  
Social services department breached guidelines  
Bitterness mixes with relief on tainted estate: Erlend Clouston on the video ghosts that started reign of fear in a community  
'Rich and deplorable' diet of video horror: Judge rules on Satanic abuse claims - Tom Sharratt reports on the judge's reaction to the situation in Rochdale and the manner in which the social services responded  
TDY Satanic obsession: 'There is no evidence that children were part of any ritual abuse'
- 9 Mar 91 DTL Director in child abuse row resigns  
Allowing a child to watch video nasties: is that child abuse? After Rochdale, the NSPPC's chief talks  
GDN Abuse case head quits: Rochdale social services director defends 'skilled' staff despite court rejection  
Saturday People: 'Decent bloke' caught in Satanic tangle - Gordon Littlemore  
TDY Rochdale abuse row leader quits  
Satan Scandal Chief resigns
- 10 Mar 91 INS Parents may sue after ritual abuse cases are dropped  
STM Inquiry ordered into 'satanic abuse': Rochdale and Orkney claims trigger detailed study

STL The abuse of social work: Dawn raids to seize children continue. Lynette Burrows asks who is doing the real damage

Focus on families in fear: is the evil in the eye of the beholder?

As Rochdale children are returned to their families after claims of ritual abuse, Orkney's island community has been shattered by similar allegations. Fad or fact?

Twilight of the social worker: Once they were amateurs with common sense who wanted to help people. Professional airs and graces made it all go wrong.

OBS Treading the fine line between care and a conviction

11 Mar 91 DTL Police deny any proof of Satanic child sex abuse  
Armchair voyeurism [TV panel discussion of ritual abuse]

TMS Leading article: The Salem Syndrome

GDN Satanic abuse 'exaggerated'

19 Mar 91 TMS NSPCC says ritual abuse claims still being made  
DTL Satanic abuse claims justified, says NSPCC

24 Mar 91 INS Judge dismisses status of Satanic abuse 'therapist'

29 Mar 91 DTL Wednesday Matters: Casting out the Devil -Yesterday the NSPCC said it was still convinced that there was such a thing as Satanic abuse

But not a shred of evidence has so far been presented  
The origin of the claims lies with born-again Christian groups and their obsession with 'end-time'

TMS Study of abuse ordered; Parliament

5 Apr 91 DTL Search for evidence of Satanism

6 Apr 91 TDY The root of all this evil: Pamela Klein is the fake therapist who started Satanic abuse witch hunt

7 Apr 91 DTL Cleveland. Rochdale. Orkney: what's wrong? The trail of misery that follows when social workers abandon 'do-gooding' to take up campaigning against evil  
Holy crusader on the trail of Satanism: The anti-occult campaigner who has been blamed for whipping up the fears and suspicions of social workers that led to the pain of the Rochdale and Orkney cases

18 Apr 91 DTL Child charity forced to cut budget by pounds 2m

24 Apr 91 GDN Appointments: A profession in need of its own counselling. The furore over alleged child abuse means social work must rely on inner strengths as well as external resources

[This series will continue next issue with a supplement to FN 22's checklist of British and Scottish articles on the Orkney Islands case, where the Sheriff's decision to release the children has been overturned on appeal. A full-scale official inquiry is underway. —BE.]

## BULLETIN BOARD

CONTEMPORARY LEGEND NEARS PRINT. ISCLR has contracted with Hisarlik Press in London to publish its annual journal. This press is a new operation founded by Jeffrey Mazo, who has just received his Ph.D. in folklore and mythology from UCLA and was previously journals manager for Chapman and Hall, with responsibility for a list of 45 scientific, technical and medical journals. Hisarlik Press is developing lists in folklore, medieval studies, and local history, and will distribute promotional flyers to around 2500 libraries throughout the world. The first issue is nearing completion and will include selected papers from the 1989 Texas A&M meeting, along with freshly submitted and solicited essays. A tentative table of contents should be ready in time for next month's AFS meeting.

NEWS EDITOR ADDED TO FOAFTALE NEWS STAFF. With our scope expanding and news items proliferating, editor Bill Ellis has begun splitting his work with Alan E. Mays, the newsletter's new News Editor. Alan received a degree in anthropology with a minor in folklore studies from the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus, in 1981. He currently works in the periodicals section of the Heindel Library at Penn State Harrisburg. As part of his research into an historical legend in western Pennsylvania, he compiled "The Lost Children of the Alleghenies: A Bibliography of Publications Currently in Print" for the Journal of the Alleghenies (1984). In 1988, he presented "The Welded Chain Mailbox Support: Material Culture at Work and in the Landscape," at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Folklore Society. He worked for Simon Bronner as a research assistant for the book Piled Higher and Deeper: The Folklore of Campus Life (1990) and is now collaborating with him on a research guide to the field of American folklore. Besides legends, Alan's research interests include foodways, xeroxlore, and occupational folklore.

Alan will contribute many of the summaries of news items in the "Just In" section. Beginning with this issue, his entries will be signed [AM], and Bill Ellis's [BE]. Alan will also compile the bibliography for "Recent Publications of Interest." Please send contributions for these sections to Alan E. Mays, Heindel Library, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 W. Harrisburg Avenue, Middletown, PA 17057-4898, USA.

## JUST IN!

### MIRACULOUS BILLBOARDS

CHULA VISTA BILLBOARD GHOST. In Chula Vista, California, an Hispanic Catholic community near San Diego, the image of a murdered girl has appeared on a blank billboard since July. Crowds estimated at up to 25,000 have visited the billboard beginning at dusk looking for the face of nine-year-old Laura Arroyo, who was abducted on 19 June from her home in San Diego. Her body was discovered the next day at an industrial park, and her murderer has not been apprehended. Shadows cast on the vacant billboard by spotlights resemble Laura Arroyo's features, according to some, but others have spotted crosses, a dove, and other faces. Candles, Bibles, holy water, and other offerings left by visitors form a shrine at the base of the billboard. Some believe that the face of the murderer will appear on the sign. Kelly Harmon, a twenty-six-year-old resident of Chula Vista, explained, "Off to the right you can see his face, too. Eventually, her face will fade away, and all we'll see is his face. That's when he'll be caught." And fifteen-year-old Yvette Villalvazo observed, "She's there in the middle. You see her little nose? There are two other people on the side. They say those are the two who killed her."

To discourage crowds at the site and avoid liability for any accidents that might occur, the owners of the billboard plan to put up a picture of Laura Arroyo and the number of a telephone hotline that police have established. [Brigitte Greenberg, "Crowds Look for Slain Girl's Image," Harrisburg [PA] Patriot (20 July 1991):A1, A2; John Woestendiek, "Some See a Miracle on Blank Billboard," Philadelphia Inquirer (27 July 27, 1991):1-A, 9-A; "Miraculous Perception," Time (5 August 1991):27.]

The billboard apparition corresponds to the rumor concerning the ghost in the 1987 film Three Men and a Baby. A human figure visible in one scene is supposedly the ghost of a young boy who was murdered or had committed suicide in the apartment in which the movie was filmed (FN 20:8-9). [AM]

[This image is also linked to adolescents' legends about murdered women's gravestones, which are said to bear supernatural signs of the victim's fate. Some stones bear the face of the dead woman, others, the instrument of her death. See F. A. de Caro and Richard Lunt, "The Face on the Tombstone," Indiana Folklore 1:1 (1968):34-41 and William Clements, "The Chain," Indiana Folklore 2:1 (1969):90-96. —BE.]

SPAGHETTI JESUS BILLBOARD. Joyce Simpson, a fashion designer in Atlanta, Georgia, sought divine guidance as she considered whether to continue singing in her church choir or quit to sing professionally. She prayed to God to send a sign. Then, as she was leaving a gas station in Stone Mountain, Georgia, one day, she glanced at a roadside billboard and found the message she was seeking. "I looked up and saw the Michelangelo version of Christ's face on a Pizza Hut sign," Simpson said. "It's incredible." The billboard, one of thirty-five erected in April 1991 to promote a local Pizza Hut luncheon special, shows a forkful of spaghetti and advertises a "New \$1.29 [75p] Lunch Menu." Simpson spotted Jesus in the strands of spaghetti hanging from the fork and took it as a sign she should stay in the church choir.

While some recognized the "Michelangelo version" of the face of Jesus that Joyce Simpson saw ("deep-set eyes, a beard, and a crown of thorns"), others claimed to see the late rock musician Jim Morrison or country music star Willie Nelson. Phil Bunton, editorial director of the weekly tabloids the Globe, National Examiner, and Sun, compared the image on the billboard to similar phenomena reported in the tabloids, including the face of Jesus on a wedding dress in Chicago, an image of the Virgin Mary on a tree in New York, and Christ's face on a tortilla in Lake Arthur, New Mexico. ["Pizza Hut Ad Called Revelation," Pittsburgh Press (22 May 1991):A18; David Jacobson, "Holy Appearances Frequent: Jesus' Face in Spaghetti Ad Just One of Many," Harrisburg [PA] Evening News (7 June 1991), religion section:8. C: Henry Koretzky.] [AM]

### EYE ON SATANISM

WICCAN CEREMONY INTERRUPTED BY POLICE. On 2 August a police officer in St. Paul, Minnesota, responded to complaints that a group was ritually chanting at a public fire ring in Hidden Falls Park. On arrival, they found 12 members of the Minnesota Church of Wicca conducting a Lammas ritual celebrating the summer's first harvest. Surveying the scene, the officer called for help and confronted the group. When Bertrand, the group's high priest, made a pass with his athalme, or ritual knife (in this case a letter opener), the police drew their service revolvers and entered the circle. Bertrand asked the officers to leave, saying that the circle was "sacred space," and one of the officers responded that he had a "sacred gun." And when Bertrand identified himself as high priest of the group, an officer allegedly said that he was the "high priest of the police department." No arrests

were made, but a police spokesman defended the confrontation, saying that the group had brought an illegal alcoholic beverage (consecrated wine) into a public park and that Bertrand's athalme might be misconstrued as a dangerous weapon.

The Wiccans, who are officially registered as a church in Minnesota, later lodged a complaint with the police watch commander, which led to a meeting with Sgt. Vern Lee, the St. Paul occult crimes expert. Bertrand was pleasantly surprised with Lee's tolerance and promised to notify park officials ahead of time before future rituals; he also agreed to put Lee on the mailing list of his newsletter. Lee, in turn, said that he understood the Wiccans' feelings: "I belong to a Masonic lodge and the Shrine. . . . You don't walk into those meetings." [Clark Morpew, "Witches' ceremony in park brews trouble with police," St. Paul Pioneer Press (7 August 1991):1A.6A; Conrad deFiebre, "Police and top witch are charmed," Minneapolis Star Tribune (8 August 1991):2B.]

Emotions were heightened by the arrest of Eugene Banks on 3 August for abducting a 5-year-old from her home in Champlin, a suburb north of St. Paul. Banks, who lived in an apartment complex above the girl, was not linked to satanism before police found in his pocket a photocopied list of dates with appropriate crimes. The date of the crime was starred as an important holiday and specified "sex with a female 7 to 17 years old." The next date listed, 7 September, called for the sacrifice and dismemberment of a female. Police called the photocopy a "satanic ritual calendar," but found no other occult items in his possession. They did find satanic graffiti at the apartment complex, but noted that it was a notorious drinking spot for youths.

Champlin Police Chief Gene Kulander told press that the abduction "has had a tremendous effect on a community like this. A number of parents have called me concerned about the welfare of their children, and to determine if in fact there is a cult operating that we are aware of." [Wayne Wangstad, "Kidnap arrest raises fears of satanic cult," St. Paul Pioneer Press (8 August 1991):B1. C: Loren Coleman and Robert Hicks.] [BE]

EDENTON, N.C., CHILD ABUSE CASE. The first trial in the Little Rascals Day Care Center case got underway in August, more than two years after Robert F. Kelly, Jr., former co-owner of the center, was arrested on charges that he sexually abused twenty-two children in his care. Kelly has been held since April 1989 on bail of \$1.5 million [\$850,000] and faces 187 criminal counts, which include sexual inter-course with children and intercourse with other adults in the presence of children. His wife, Betsy, and five other adults have also been charged and will face trial at a later date.

Although prosecutors have not brought criminal charges alleging ritual abuse against Kelly, rumors about such abuse have apparently circulated in the town. Michael Spivey, a lawyer for Robert Kelly, told the jury in an opening statement about children's "stories of being put in bags and being hung from trees, being locked in refrigerators, babies being killed, burned, and buried." "Innocence Lost," a two-hour television special about the case broadcast in May as part of the PBS series "Frontline," mentioned children's accounts of being cooked in a microwave oven and being asked to swallow snakes. [Debbie Nathan, "Salem's Hot: PBS on Ritual Sex Abuse," Village Voice (7 May 1991):47; Walter Goodman, "Sex Abuse Charges Disrupt a Small Town," New York Times (7 May 1991):C13.]

Attorneys prosecuting Kelly have consulted with prosecutors in other child-abuse trials to avoid an outcome like that in the McMartin case, which involved operators of a day-care center in Los Angeles charged with ritual child abuse. The defendants were acquitted after two trials that lasted more than two years and cost taxpayers more than \$15 million (FN 19:8). Kelly's trial, which was moved sixty miles from

Edenton to Farmville, N.C., to avoid pretrial publicity, is expected to take three or four months. [Miriam Durkin, "Sex-Abuse Trial Starts Today for Day-Care Owner," Philadelphia Inquirer (22 July 1991):7-A; Charles Hoskinson, "1st Child Testifies against Ex-N.C. Day-Care Operator," Philadelphia Inquirer (23 August 1991):22-A; Ronald Smothers, "Child-Abuse Case is Ordeal for a Town," New York Times (19 August 1991):A13; Ronald Smothers, "Lawyers Trade Allegations at Child-Abuse Trial," New York Times (20 August 1991):A18.] [AM]

**MORE SATANIC CATTLE MUTILATIONS.** Nine new cases of livestock killings in southern Arizona led to a meeting in Nogales called by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. At the meeting, which attracted 200 participants, authorities said they had received confidential tips linking the killings to satanic cults. The animals were found sexually mutilated and drained of blood, "exactly the way they are described in law enforcement training," said Detective Mike Raffety of the Cochise County Sheriff's Department. Ranchers were told to note down the license numbers of any unfamiliar vehicles. The latest killings, Raffety claimed, were linked to "blood baptisms" in which cult initiates bathe in a small pool filled with cattle blood. Raffety had been told that satanists were drawn to Arizona because they "associate the sun with power," but he felt that a stronger reason was the remoteness of most ranches, which makes it easier for them to commit mutilations undetected. Arizona does not have an unusually large number of satanists, he said, "although we have our fair share." "It's not new. . . . It's not a rash that people should get panicked over." [Peter Pegnam, "Satanic cow deaths spur alert on ranches," Tucson [AZ] Citizen (15 August 1991):1C, 4C. C: Robert Hicks.] [BE]

**SIGNS OF THE BEAST.** The British Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency has eliminated the number 666 on license plates, since drivers complained that it led to unexplained mishaps. "People complained of funny things whenever they came up against a vehicle with the number," a source said. "There was so much hassle about bumps, collisions and accidents with this number that we decided to scrap it." The Right Reverend William Westwood, Bishop of Peterborough, praised the decision, saying "anything that stops people running into each other is good." [Robert Bedlow, "Devil of a problem for cars with 666," Daily Telegraph (2 May 1991):1.] Meantime, the Manitoba Telephone System has abandoned plans to assign numbers beginning 666- because customers refused to accept them. [CP, 10 November 1990. C: Paul Smith.] [BE]

**PROCTER AND GAMBLE TRADEMARK REDESIGNED.** Procter & Gamble officials announced in July that the company's moon-and-stars trademark will undergo a facelift. The trademark, featuring a crescent moon with a man's face and background of 13 stars, has been the object of rumors linking the firm with satanism since about 1980. According to a widely distributed photocopied flier, a ram's horn and three sixes allegedly visible in the man in the moon's beard hairs are symbols of Satan. The redesign of the trademark streamlines the drawing of the man in the moon to eliminate the sixes and the ram's horn in his beard. Procter & Gamble has gradually removed the moon-and-stars trademark from its product packaging since 1985, and the redesigned logo will be limited to some printed materials and company awards and buildings. In the past, the company has countered the rumor by suing individuals who distribute the flier containing the allegations of Satanism (FN 19:7). A resurgence of the devil rumor in 1990 caused Procter & Gamble to bring back its telephone hot line (800-331-3774) to handle inquiries from customers. ["Undying rumor's still wrong; company has no ties to Satan, Richmond [VA] Times-Dispatch (29 June 1991):B8, C: Robert Hicks; "Procter & Gamble Exorcizes the 'Devil' from Company Logo," Philadelphia Inquirer (11 July 1991):6-B; Laura Blumenfeld, "Procter & Gamble's Devil of a Problem," Washington Post (15 July 1991):B1, B6, C: Henry

Koretzky; James Lileks, "The Devil You Say! (But Procter & Gamble Says It Isn't)," Harrisburg [PA] Evening News (19 July 1991):A11; M. Jill Austin and Lynn Brumfield, "P&G's Run-In with the Devil," Business and Society Review 78 (Summer 1991):16-19.] [AM]

**VOODOO BEER BAN.** For a brief time in June, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission refused to allow Dixie Brewing, a New Orleans beer company, to sell its Dixie Blackened Voodoo Lager in the state. "Have you seen the label?" a commission supervisor told press, "It appears to be a cult entity. It's a swamp scene with a skeleton in the background and a sort of dark blue color to it." The ban, he added, "has to do with your cults and public safety areas. We have to keep an eye on a lot of things like that." The brewery's owner countered that the label had no skeletons or occult signs, only a bayou at dusk with the glowing eyes of swamp animals. A New Orleans bartender noted, "I see people drinking it, not reading it. So far none of them have grown horns or anything from it." Faced with Louisiana's threat to ban a Texas beer in retaliation, the commission removed the edict in early July. [AP, 27 June and 6 July 1991. C: Robert Hicks.] [BE]

**LAUREN STRATFORD COMEBACK.** Satan's Underground, an influential account of how satanic cults entrap women and use them as "breeders" for babies to be ritually sacrificed, has been slated for reissue by Pelican Publishing Company of Gretna, Louisiana. The book, originally published by Harvest House, was withdrawn when investigative reporters for the Christian magazine Cornerstone found evidence that Stratford's story was fabricated. [Cf. FN 19:6-7.] A Pelican press release called the Cornerstone expose "a compilation of circumstantial evidence and petty character attacks" and promised to reissue Satan's Underground "with only few minor text revisions and the addition of an afterword by three notable psychologists." [C: Robert Hicks.] [BE]

**HELP (?) FROM THE US GOVERNMENT.** In June, the National Institute of Justice held a grant competition for a research project on "Occult Crime: A National Assessment," to determine the extent of the problem in the US and suggest "innovative approaches" to solve it. The guide-lines define "occult crime" as "any criminal activity which include [sic] secret knowledge, rituals, or both connected to supernatural beliefs or supernatural powers . . . [including] neopaganism, witchcraft, cultural spiritualists [sic], and satanism. [But not Freemasonry? —BE.] The "generally agreed upon occult crimes" are vandalism, theft from religious or medical buildings, satanic graffiti, arson, animal sacrifice, extortion, and, less frequently, kidnapping, murder, human sacrifice, and ritual child abuse. Funding for the project was tentatively set at \$50,000 [£28,000].

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense has sponsored a series of courses for experienced polygraph (lie detector) examiners to train them to recognize traits "indicative of involvement in Satanic or deviant cults." The course, open to DOD examiners and other in mental health, child welfare, criminal justice, and other human services, covers "interrogation approaches to be used with cult members" and "Use of the information for the successful conclusion of the polygraph examination." The three-day course costs \$150 [£83] for nonfederal employees and is held in Fort McClellan, Alabama, about every two months. [C: Robert Hicks.] [BE]

#### WARS AND RUMORS OF WAR

**GI "TALL TALES" FROM PORT.** Sgt. Steven W. Durell of Tiffin, Ohio, recently served in the Persian Gulf in the 192 Quartermaster Company, US Army Reserve. Called to active duty in Nov.90, Durell's company left for the Port of Dammam, Saudi Arabia, on 9 Jan.91 and then was repositioned to help pump fuel at the front.

While there, he had the opportunity to observe several contemporary legends (which he and his friends preferred to call "tall tales"). Returning to the States, Durell, an anthropology major at the University of Toledo, described these legends in a collection project submitted to Tom Barden.

Before the ground combat began, many stories circulated, he noted, "most probably because of the intense boredom and tension." Most of these dealt with experiences from past military camps, but several were unique to the unit's experience in the Middle East. The two most elaborate are the following:

The first tall tale was related to me by Staff Sergeant Tom T-----. SSG T----- returned to our area of operations near the Iraqi border after a trip to the Port of Dammam to retrieve equipment. A soldier at the port told him that the day before he got there, a soldier from the First Infantry Division received a videotape from home, ostensibly of his daughter's birthday party. The soldier gathered some of his friends around the VCR that the unit had acquired to watch his daughter's party. As the tale goes, about ten minutes into the tape of his daughter's party, the screen went blank, and after a few moments the soldier's wife appeared on the screen, naked, and in bed having sex with two of his friends. After a few moments of the raunchy sex scene, his wife turned to face the camera and said, "Honey, I want a divorce." At this remark the soldier went berserk; he destroyed the TV, the VCR, and it took twelve men to subdue his rampage.

This tall tale spread like wildfire through our unit, but every time it was told, elements were altered, such as: what unit the soldier was with, what the tape was supposed to be of, exactly what sex act his wife was engaged in, who she was with (including the gender), and how many people it took to control the man. Not only did this story spread through our unit, but for about three weeks after we heard the story, people in other units would ask us and others if we had "heard about the guy in Port."

The second tall tale was related to me by a helicopter pilot that I met in the chow hall at Port. He was an active Army captain who flew Cobras. He was telling his friend how he had helped to train some of the Saudis on Cobras back in the States before the war had started. Someone asked him what he thought of the Saudis as officers and pilots. The American pilot replied that the Saudis were obnoxious, arrogant, self centered, technically incompetent, and dangerous, as they did not take training seriously.

The pilot then went on to tell us how one time he was checking out a Saudi on a Cobra: the American put the helicopter into a maneuver that simulated a failed engine and would result in the destruction of the aircraft as it slammed into the ground if the Saudi did not take the proper measures to bring the aircraft back to a safe flight path. According to the American, the Saudi was expected to take the proper measures within seconds of discovering that the aircraft was in an unsafe maneuver. The American waited for the Saudi to do what he was supposed to do. However, a full 45 seconds elapsed and the Saudi still had not taken any action to correct the maneuver. Finally the American asked the Saudi what he was going to do, and the Saudi replied, "I do not know, but Allah will fix." Upon hearing this, the American resumed control of the aircraft and brought it back to a safe and level flight path. The Saudi then replied through the intercom, "See, I told you that Allah would fix."

This tall tale is interesting as it was related to others by myself, and it became widely known. In addition, while driving my tractor-trailer, I would see many accidents resulting from the unsafe and inept driving habits of the Saudis. Upon seeing these type of accidents, I

would tell my passenger, "Allah didn't fix that one, did he?" This eventually became a standard joke of many of my friends to whom I had related the original story. [Sgt. Steven W. Durell]

PETER ARNETT AND THE DEVIL. Cable News Network reporter Peter Arnett, who broadcast civilian casualties in Baghdad and interviewed Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf War, was given a Freedom of Speech Award on 8 June by the National Association of Radio Talk Show Hosts in Seattle. In presenting the award, Mike Siegel noted the intense criticism that Arnett's broadcasts had produced, which included death threats from viewers who called him "the incarnation of all evil." Several viewers claimed to have proof of Arnett's diabolical nature, Siegel noted: an Illinois man tried to take an instant photograph of the reporter off the TV screen, only to find that Arnett's image faded from the print. Another viewer, in Kentucky, found after one of Arnett's newscasts that all her house plants had died. [AP, 10 June 1991.] [BE]

### CONTAMINATION AND LIFE

BLACK WIDOW SPIDERS IN GRAPES. On June 24, Carol Woodman of Sebago, Maine, bought a bunch of green seedless grapes at a local Shop 'n Save grocery store. On unpacking them at home, she noticed a small, shiny black spider, and when it jumped onto her kitchen table, she placed a mason jar over it. When Woodman complained, store officials told her to bring the spider back to the store; meantime it "spun a web [in the jar] and laid several eggs." She was disappointed by the store's apparent lack of concern: when she handed the spider over to a clerk at the courtesy desk, "She doubled my money back for the grapes and handed me a coupon for ice cream. I was insulted." Officials positively identified the spider as a deadly black widow and called in "a local pesticide company."

After two more black widows were found in grapes at the company's distribution center, all grapes were removed from store shelves in five New England states. Officials from Shaw's Supermarkets, Inc., had also found a black widow in a recent grape shipment and likewise halted sales of all varieties. A week later another spider was found in grapes shipped to the New England Produce Center in Chelsea, Massachusetts; eight in all turned up. The grapes, officials said, originated in California's Coachella Valley, "which is north of the Mexican border." They blamed the finds on consumer pressure to cut down on pesticide use on fresh fruits, which in turn attracts insects that black widows eat. [Linda Fullerton, "Shop 'n Save pulls grapes from shelves," Portland [ME] Press Herald (9 July 1991):1A, 8A; AP, 10 July, 11 July, and 19 July 1991; "You Are What You Eat," Time (22 July 1991):29. C: Loren Coleman and Alan Mays.] [BE]

SNAKES IN MATTRESSES. According to a lawsuit filed in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Gladys Diehl and her husband John Brehm bought a mattress from Hess's department store in May 1988 and soon after noticed unusual movements in their bed, which they "suspected could be a living creature." They exchanged the mattress for another, but found odd movements in that one as well. After four months, they took the second mattress to a laboratory, where workers found the remains of a dead 26-inch ribbon snake. Diehl and Brehm asked more than \$20,000 [\$11,000] in damages from the store and the mattress manufacturer. [John P. Martin, "A mattress with the wrong coils," Philadelphia Inquirer (4 April 1991):3B; "Yikes! That lump in their mattress was ... a snake," National Enquirer (30 July 1991):32. C: Alan Mays.] [BE]

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

We are interested in publications on any topic relevant to contemporary legends, especially those in journals or from publishing houses not usually read by academics in the US and Great Britain. Forward references or offprints (if convenient) to Alan E. Mays, Heindel Library, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 W. Harrisburg Avenue, Middletown, PA 17057-4898, USA. For publications in foreign languages, English abstracts would be appreciated.

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