EVIDENCING SATANIST RITUAL ABUSE (SRA) IN THE UK - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Summary
The poster provides a historical perspective on evidencing Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA), a lens on current efforts and proposals for raising public and institutional awareness. It outlines sparse yet rich accounts of SRA and other types of serious offending, recent exposures and avenues for tackling the issues. Books and news items were reviewed by two advocates who between them have 30 years of experience in evidencing SRA.

Background
The ‘Memory Wars’ erupted around 1990 when several cases of Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) made headline news. This paper outlines past sources of evidence, recent SRA cases and possible steps forward to educate victims, professionals and society.

Three early UK publications (1991) were 'Blasphemous Rumours' (Andrew Boyd), 'Children for the Devil, Ritual abuse and satanic crime' (Tim Tate) and 'Chasing Satan' (Dianne Core). Since 1994 Dr Valerie Sinason has published courageously on the topic. A pilot study report co-authored by Robert Hale is now available due to a Freedom of Information request.

Historical Perspective
Tate (1991) describes 'Hell Fire' clubs attended by the privileged in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century including high ranking politicians (e.g. Chancellor of the Exchequer). He remarks 'Unsurprisingly, the sex was not limited either to heterosexual intercourse or to adult participants' and 'The history of satanic worship from medieval times to the dawn of the twentieth century is inextricably linked with the abuse and sacrifice of children.'

Boyd (1991) provides details of Ritual Murder, reports striking parallels of current SRA cases with an account of a 400 year old English SRA case and interviewed many professional carers, who: 'Between them they claim to be counselling some 900 victims of ritual abuse.'

Contemporary Survivor Accounts
Epstein et al (2011) provided chilling case studies that resonate with advocacy cases:

'These were special shows and I remember one of many shows that I was involved with…I had been primed – I was probably eight at the time – to have sex with a boy who was around the same age as me, who was absolutely petrified.' (Female Survivor, p. 145)

'Sobbing, Bruce told me about his hellish Christmas, memories around the sacrifice of his little baby brother and how they threatened that they would kill his younger sibling if he would not slash the baby's throat.' (Male Survivor, p. 161).

Trauma & Advocacy
Professionals need to properly research and recognise the links between SRA trauma and mental health issues such as dissociative disorders. A rare mainstream media program addressing SRA was an episode of Channel 4 Despatches in 1991, produced by Olave Snelling, that triggered thousands of calls to a dedicated helpline. Individuals confronted by disclosures of SRA should listen empathetically, make notes and act wisely.

Over the years the authors presented at numerous conferences and media programs. Contributions were made to the Midland and Conifer police operations. A current focus is a Letter Writing campaign aimed at the UK Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.

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