



### **Ted Gunderson: Death of a Public Paranoid**

Former Special Agent Ted Gunderson suspected he would be “taken out” eventually. As a whistleblower disclosing crimes of the highest order, Gunderson would attest to suffering endless harassment and attempts on his life: operatives entering his home to sneak poisonous liquids into the wall heaters<sup>1</sup>, phone tapping, personal computer hacking, years of surveillance by “groups and individuals” in ground vehicles, helicopters, and on foot.<sup>2</sup> Agents of his undoing were everywhere. And law enforcement were worse than helpless... they were complicit.

“I just don’t understand it”, Gunderson stated in an interview from “an undisclosed southwestern city” while on the run from his would-be assassins. “I thought they (the FBI) would help me. Instead... they’re trying to destroy me.”

<sup>1</sup> From the Current Affair television program, date unknown, quoted in John Earl’s *The Dark Truth About the “Dark Tunnels of McMartin”* IPT Journal vol. 7, 1995

<sup>2</sup> From but one of Gunderson’s countless affidavits. The content of this one is available at:  
<http://www.wcvvarones.com/2006/11/legal-news.html>

The FBI, Gunderson asserted, was assisting in having him silenced for exposing the collusion between a satanic cult and the United States Army in a high profile triple homicide -- ritual murder, by Gunderson's account -- involving a mother and her 2 daughters at Fort Bragg United States Army installation in North Carolina.

It all sounded unbelievable, but what separated him from countless other suspected delusives of the paranoid kind was that Gunderson, a private investigator, himself was a 27 year veteran of the Bureau who had headed three regional offices, serving three directors from J. Edgar Hoover to Judge William Webster. He was, in fact, an impressively credentialed G-man whose retirement party in 1979 had drawn an elite crowd of over 600. His book, *How to Locate Anyone Anywhere*, included endorsement blurbs from Johnny Carson and even President Gerald R. Ford, who took the opportunity to publicly congratulate Gunderson on "his fine career."

...Yet, there he was, implicating the Bureau in anti-American -- even anti-human -- crimes, informing the Associated Press that he had been brutally reduced to "living from a suitcase and associating with criminals in a lifestyle that [was] a stark contrast to his decorated career [...]"<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, suspicions were aroused (publicly expressed by associates of Ted's on various online sites) when it was learned that Gunderson had been declared dead on July 31st, 2011, allegedly from complications related to cancer... and only just under 30 years from the time he revealed that the FBI was trying to have him silenced. Prematurely robbed of his dissenting voice at the age of 83.

...Admittedly, 30 years is long time to wait to have a man silenced. Long enough, in fact, that he should have been able to disclose everything proprietary in that time. And, conceded, 83 is a bit of an old age to claim premature death, especially when the 83 year-old in question did in fact have cancer. But in order to understand the "suspicions" surrounding Gunderson's death, it is important to understand the whole of the Ted Gunderson story, to appreciate the shadow of fear, the miasma of paranoid discontent that he so actively engendered throughout his life. In the world of Ted Gunderson, every seemingly arbitrary idiosyncrasy, every obscure sign constructed from the random held signification aimed inexorably toward one unifying narrative.

Indisputable though his credentials were, the believability of Gunderson's accusations against the FBI were routinely diluted by the innumerable bombastic conspiracist claims he would make throughout the years. In his post-FBI career as a Private Investigator, Ted commented on numerous high-profile cases, often -- if not always -- taking a minority or deeply implausible view, always benefiting from his professional past, never disadvantaged by the sheer number of unlikely or outright impossible conspiracies he subscribed to, never left any the poorer for any instance in which he was grievously and demonstrably entirely wrong (such as in the case of his hysterical bandwagon apocalyptic "Y2K" fear-mongering)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Associate Press. "Agent linked to MacDonald now on the run." *Dallas Morning News* 3 Jan. 1983

<sup>4</sup> Serrano, Richard A. "Law enforcement officers prepare for the worst as 2000 dawns, authorities stand

Though his name is virtually unknown outside the hardcore conspiracy fringe, Ted Gunderson will live on in the enduring suspicions he sowed -- in each case he explored as a private investigator -- of deeper, more sinister plots at play behind-the-scenes. Where hysteria spread, Gunderson went to legitimize irrational fears in the FBI's name. Many of those infected with his paranoia remain, still today, invested in his dystopian vision. Trying to cope in the wake of unfathomable crimes committed in their midst, vulnerable minds gravitated to the delusional narratives Gunderson supported which, while claiming to confront the stark horror of "reality", offered a comfortably tidy narrative, linear and coherent, where demarcations between Good and Evil are unmistakably clear, and nothing occurs without purpose. In Gunderson's hands, an infamous murder became the work of Satanists sanctioned by demonic government forces -- the confusion created by his investigation still causing for controversy and suspicion. With Gunderson's late intervention, the debunked McMartin preschool Satanic Ritual Abuse panic is revived for true believers who hold firm to an appearance of tenability founded on Gunderson's claim that, with the aid of an archaeologist, he had unearthed secret tunnels underneath the site of the school where barbarous, sadistic rituals had been enacted. Gunderson's investigation of fraud at a credit union in Nebraska predictably revealed a Satanic plot extending to the highest reaches of the government, creating another panic that also retains unshakable believers today.

Gunderson claimed to have personally verified that the U.S. Government knew in advance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, yet allowed it to happen; Gunderson claimed insider knowledge of the truth behind the JFK assassination; 9/11, he was likewise certain, was an inside job... as was the 1993 World Trade Center bombing... as was the Oklahoma City Bombing; Children were being bused to the infamous extraterrestrial holding facility of Area 51 where they have been brain-washed and sold into sexual slavery; musician Sonny Bono was murdered by government hit-men for knowing too much; sitcom actor Gary Coleman, too, was murdered; actor David Carradine? Murdered by transsexual prostitutes... etc., and on and on. Every event, it seemed, was enacted at the behest of some sinister secret committee.

In theory, and at best (if one were to attempt to justify him), Gunderson practiced something of a criminological transcendental metaphysics, seeking the very source of crime itself in each individual crime he devoted his attention to, seeing them all tied to an all-pervasive network of evil. In practice, he was more of a ride-along observer to the shifting paranoid folklore panics of his times put forth by moral crusaders, modern witch-hunters, and outright con-men (and women) who benefited from attaching the prestige of a former G-man's endorsement to whatever implausible conspiracy narrative they happened to be selling. Everywhere he appeared, in every opinion he spoke, there was attached the "former FBI" stamp of credibility, the idea that Ted Gunderson was a highly trained and specialized crime fighter with an ability to connect seemingly disparate threads of evidence unseen by the common observer.

Sensationalist journalism quoting from Gunderson almost universally described him only as a former FBI man, even long after he had become an obvious caricature, a public paranoid for hire. Ted was still simply a respected former FBI man even after decades of attaching his expertise to the furthest-flung theories of world-wide Illuminati/Masonic/Satanic/Zionist

conspiracies. Throughout the moral panic of the 1980s - 1990s regarding Satanic cults thought to be subverting Christian-American lives, Gunderson would regularly appear on daytime talk shows warning of the insidious influence of Heavy Metal music and ubiquitous subliminal urgings being silently forced upon impressionable youthful minds. Even as late as 2007, long after any cursory research into Gunderson's background should have revealed him to be a delirious source of (at best) unreliable information, famed CNN correspondent Anderson Cooper invoked Gunderson's expertise in defense of alleged "psychic" Sylvia Browne in the face of criticisms presented by professional debunker and skeptical author, James Randi:

Cooper: [...] *James, you've actually called Sylvia Browne a villain.*

*We spoke to Ted Gunderson, who's a retired senior special agent in charge of the FBI in Los Angeles. He's worked with Sylvia Browne, and he says -- he says he's worked with her quite a bit. And he said this about her. He says, quote, "I've worked with numerous psychics in the past and very few are really on target, but Sylvia Browne is probably one of the most accurate psychics in the country."*

*Now, that's from a former senior FBI official. Are you saying he's wrong?*<sup>5</sup>

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Gunderson's entry into the Federal Bureau of Investigations was inauspicious, his probationary appointment as a special agent in 1951 -- at a per annum salary of \$5,500 -- the result of a seemingly whimsical letter dashed off to the Bureau at the age of 23. ("A friend of mine got a job with the FBI [...]," Ted would explain, "I decided if he could do it I could too. Six weeks later, I was in training school."<sup>6</sup>):

*Gentlemen:*

*I am under the basic requirement of being twenty-five years of age but most people consider me to be twenty-six or twenty-seven.*

*If a person has the outward appearance of being twenty-five and can fulfill the many other requirements, why shouldn't he be considered for a position?*

*If at all possible, I would like to be considered as an applicant.*

*Yours very truly,*

*Ted L. Gunderson*

Gunderson's personnel file reveals a pre-FBI academic record with no background in either Criminology or Law. A graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration<sup>7</sup> from the University of Nebraska, his advisor described Gunderson as "somewhat lazy" during the prerequisite Bureau background interviews, though an assistant professor assured the FBI that Ted was "by no means" lazy... He simply "did not excel". Ted was an "average" student -- "321st out of a class of 478" -- working as a ham salesman for Hormel in Dearborn, Michigan, at the time in which he submitted his application letter to the Bureau.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Islam Divided; Psychic Reality Check; Battle Under the Border. Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees.

Aired January 30, 2007 - 22:00 ET <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0701/30/acd.01.html>

<sup>6</sup> Lollar, Michael. "G-Man Parts From Stereotype and City." unknown newspaper clipping contained in FBI file 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 4 (pp. 155)

<sup>7</sup> Gunderson would typically claim that Economics was his graduating major, but this doesn't jibe with the official record: 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 1 (pp. 29)

<sup>8</sup> 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 1 (pp. 37)

“Selling hams was alright,” Ted reminisced in a 1975 interview while acting as Special Agent in Charge for the Memphis, Tennessee Bureau office, “but I love this job.”

Indeed, the job was good to him, and Gunderson had nothing critical to say about the Bureau while in its active employ. Gunderson’s file is full of commendations for his meticulously neat appearance, as well as letters that Gunderson himself would routinely send to whomever was acting Director at the time, gushingly complimenting them for their stoic leadership and unwavering fortitude.

Gunderson steadily eased his way up the promotional chain of Bureau command before ultimately acting as Special Agent in Charge for the offices in Memphis, Dallas, and Los Angeles until his retirement in 1979.

Throughout his career, Gunderson was a vociferous defender of the not-always-popular Bureau, acting as their spokesman to media during the Watergate scandal and amid criticisms of unconstitutional counterintelligence activities that took place throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

The slick, wavy-haired, broad-shouldered, cigar-chomping Gunderson struck journalists as affable, if abrupt. According to Ted, America had been endlessly besieged by subversive enemies from within. The FBI, it seemed, was the only thing between *Us* and *Them*.

Defending the FBI’s use of Civil Liberty violating investigation techniques, such as wiretapping, mail opening, and surreptitious entries, Gunderson would claim, “When we had the counterintelligence effort called Cointelpro going in the ‘50s and ‘60s, [these methods] helped break the backs of people dropping bombs everywhere and wrecking millions of dollars worth of property. Extreme tactics were needed if we were to stop them.”

“If [the FBI] had not taken an aggressive approach in the early ‘60s when [revolutionaries] took over the college campuses [...] the loss [of life and property] would have been greater than it was.”<sup>9</sup>

Amid the uproar following revelations of the FBI’s clandestine surveillance of Dr. Martin Luther King -- including placing a bug in the civil rights leader’s hotel room in hopes of catching him committing potentially stigmatizing deeds -- Gunderson explained that, here too, the FBI had acted appropriately: “One of [King’s] top advisors had been identified as a communist,” he stated.<sup>10</sup>

Responding to criticisms leveled against the Los Angeles FBI office while under his personal command for its alleged harassment and unconcealed surveillance of a visiting Chinese scholar at UCLA, Gunderson tersely informed reporters of their duty to assume any FBI activity to be sanctioned and just. “You just have to take our word for it,” he’s quoted, “If it’s our investigation, it’s a legitimate surveillance.”<sup>11</sup>

Hinting at a conspiracist mindset established prior to his ignoble post-FBI private investigations career, an interview from 1978 reports that *“Gunderson said that the element that has wanted to overthrow the government has always been present but that the Vietnam war*

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<sup>9</sup> Purtee, Alex. “Federal Bureau Of Investigation Defended.” *The Desert Sun* 14 March 1978

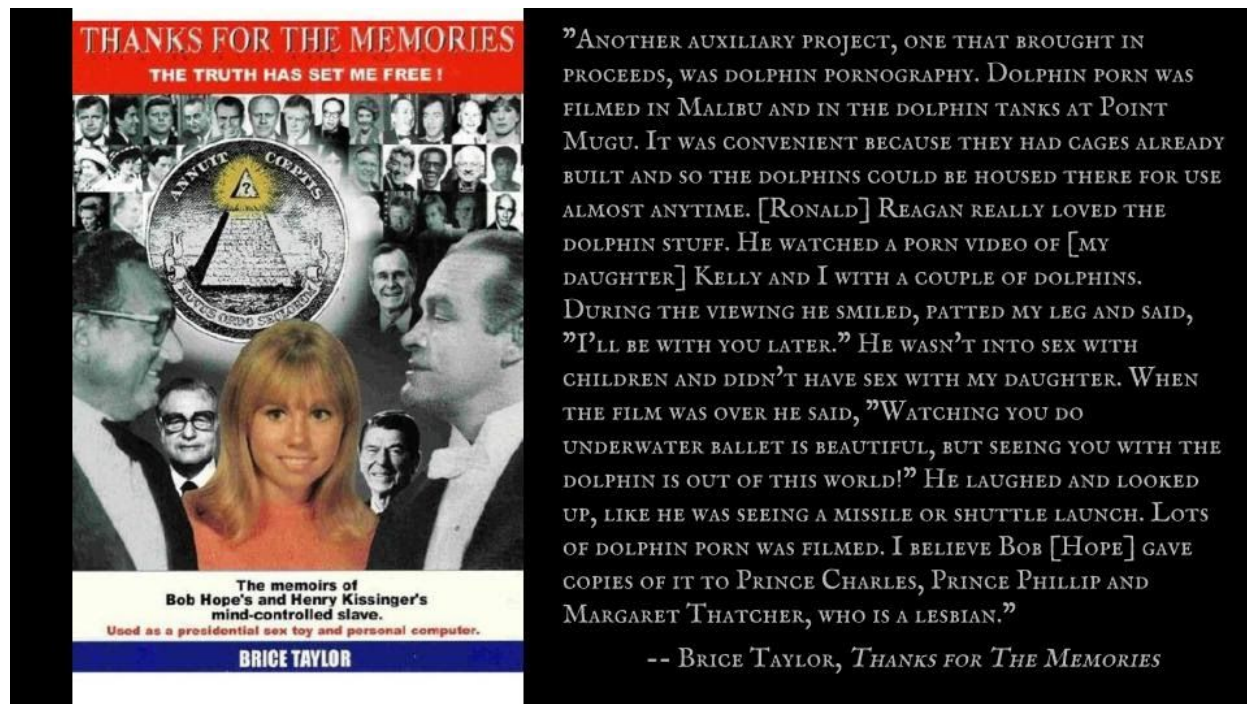
<sup>10</sup> 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 5 (pp. 99)

<sup>11</sup> McManus, Doyle. “FBI Chief in LA Attacks Times’ Story on Scholar.” *The Los Angeles Times* 18 July 1978



gave this element a cause. He added that the element still exists today.”<sup>12</sup> In 1977 (and in what would become a recurring theme), Gunderson alleged plots against his life, claiming to be the target of death threats from the Black Panthers, as well as a target of hit-men working on the behalf of Soviet spies in New York.<sup>13</sup>

In a letter to the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner published 17 January, 1979, Gunderson



seems to have finally over-stepped his professional boundaries in suggesting that the then-current Attorney General Guidelines were hampering investigations, thereby presenting a threat to National Security. This provoked a phone call on behalf of director Webster in which Gunderson was educated upon Webster’s own views on adhering to, and supporting, domestic security guidelines. This in turn provoked a letter to Webster from an impassioned Gunderson, dated 7 February, insisting upon an expansion of investigative latitude: “Individual rights are of the utmost importance,” he grudgingly conceded, “but some of our citizens are going to have their individual rights blasted off the face of the earth if our intelligence community does not gird its loins ‘with the laudable purpose of prevention’ rather than collecting evidence afterwards.” Now, Gunderson was saying, is the time to bring the fight to the Enemy. “I urgently request that you lend an unbiased ear to a field commander who daily witnesses Agent frustration and overcautiousness. These men and women fear they might overstep the guidelines or find themselves powerless to protect their sources from disclosure. Hesitancy is not a historic earmark of a Special Agent of the FBI.”

Clearly unmoved, Webster replied 26 February stating, “I believe at this time we are able to work within [the Attorney General guidelines] and, therefore, no modifications are necessary.”

<sup>12</sup> Purtee, *op cit*.

<sup>13</sup> Stump, Al. “FBI Man’s Job Tough, But Not Hopeless Cause.” *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* 11 December 1977

Just a week and a half later, 06 March 1979, Gunderson announced his retirement.<sup>14</sup>

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By Ted's own account, it wasn't until his first major case as a private investigator following his retirement in 1979 that he learned "what was going on".

"I had no idea about the Illuminati [before then]", he would explain.... "I [didn't] know anything about Satanism. I read about it in the Bible, of course, but that's about it..."<sup>15</sup>

The break-through investigation that Gunderson refers to was the highly publicized, still controversial Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald case. It was the same ground-breaking investigation that he would later claim had first put him on the FBI's hit-list.

The MacDonald case was already 10 years old by the time Gunderson became an investigator for the defense in 1980. And today, over 40 years after the crime, there is still bitter and divisive controversy over whether or not Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald himself is guilty of slaying his pregnant wife and 2 daughters in their bedrooms at their home on Fort Bragg, or if -- as MacDonald claims -- the savage slaughterings were committed by a Manson Family-like cult of narcotic crazed hippies. The facts of the case are generally available, having inspired a best-selling book and television movie, so the details will not be belabored here... Whatever the evidence may indicate of the actual sequence of events in the MacDonald household that fatal night in 1970, Gunderson certainly did little to clear the confusion with his own bizarre "investigation", instigated at the behest of friends of the convicted MacDonald.

Gunderson would claim that he was adamant that he would not have worked for MacDonald if he had found credible evidence of MacDonald's guilt. But at an hourly rate of \$100, Gunderson reportedly decided within 24 hours of accepting the job that MacDonald had been "railroaded".<sup>16</sup>

Gunderson's "investigation", such as it was, focused on a drug-addicted mentally disturbed daughter of a lieutenant colonel, Helena Stoeckley -- located in nearby Fayetteville at the time of the murders -- who had previously been pointed to as a possible suspect. Interviewed twice about the murders by the army's Criminal Investigation Division, Stoeckley's testimony had been deemed worthless prior to Gunderson's involvement.

Stoeckley had since married and relocated to South Carolina. According to *Vanity Fair* magazine<sup>17</sup>, Gunderson, "[a]cting on this intelligence [...] secured MacDonald's approval to dispatch a Canadian psychic, the notion being that her paranormal powers would put Stoeckley on an airliner. Stoeckley proved resistant, however, even after the psychic told her that she'd 'fallen in love' with MacDonald and that the psychic could 'foresee a beautiful life' for her—if she aided in clearing his name."

Upon securing Stoeckley for questioning, according to another former FBI agent

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<sup>14</sup> 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 5 (pp. 161 - 171)

<sup>15</sup> "Ted Gunderson -- The Great Conspiracy Exposed 1/7 PL." available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5r3HELQBXI>

<sup>16</sup> Anson, Robert Sam. "The Devil and Jeffrey Macdonald." *Vanity Fair* July 1998

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

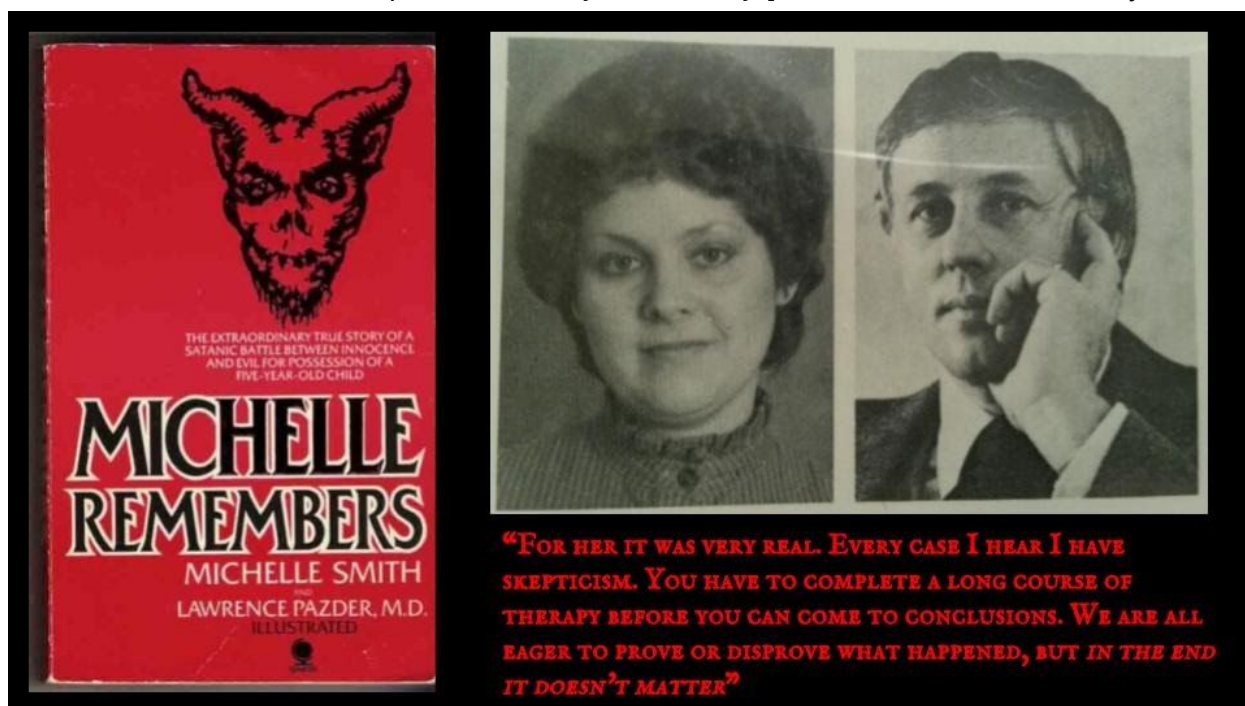
assisting Gunderson, there was an “element of duress” in the following interrogations wherein Gunderson resorted to “unethical means and tactics in a very important case”. In fact, Gunderson’s “interview” tactic oscillated between applied duress and promised rewards of lucrative book and movie deals for Stoeckley’s story.

*“Assured that she’d be resettled in California with a new house, job, and identity—even a part in the forthcoming movie—Stoeckley signed a statement not only implicating herself in the murders but naming five other killers (later referred to as “Black Cult” members) as well.”*<sup>18</sup> Predictably, under Gunderson’s influence, Stoeckley would go into hiding for fear of her life following the confession.<sup>19</sup>

Stoeckley’s story didn’t match with events as MacDonald described them, nor was it corroborated with the available evidence, despite Gunderson’s feeling that it must have been. According to CBS News: “When [Stoeckley] told her story, Gunderson says he believed her. ‘Because she said that she tried to ride the rocking horse in the small bedroom ... and she tried to get on it and she couldn’t because the spring was broken.’”:

*“Asked why that would be significant, Gunderson says, ‘Because the only people that knew that spring was broken on the rocking horse was the family, the MacDonald family.’*

*But 1970 crime scene photos, recently obtained by [CBS television documentary and*



news program] 48 Hours from the Department of Justice, seem to show that none of the springs on the toy horse were broken.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Associated Press. “Witness: Army Said To Keep Quiet.” *The Palm Beach Post* 28 Dec. 1980

<sup>20</sup> Josh Gelman. “Jeffrey MacDonald: A Time For Truth.” *CBS News* 17 March, 2007



Worse, Stoeckley's confession named five male co-perpetrators, all of whom denied involvement, none of whom could be connected to the scene of the crime, and one of whom had an unshakeable alibi: he had been in jail on the night in question.<sup>21</sup>

Stoeckley herself would alternate between embellishing upon, and outright recanting, the confession, but this hardly seemed to matter to Gunderson. For the rest of his life he would point to the MacDonald case and the disregarded confession of Helena Stoeckley as evidence of the United States Army's involvement in a world-wide Satanic cult crimes cover-up. Though Gunderson claimed it wasn't until the MacDonald case that he was awoken to the presence of Satanic conspiracy, it seems he immediately grasped the magnitude of the situation. The Satanic threat was imperiling the lives, freedom, and very humanity of good citizens worldwide.

Convinced that the FBI had undermined his investigation into the MacDonald murders and was actively working to destroy his reputation, Gunderson wrote a letter to President Reagan in 1985 pleading executive intervention. The President's counsel forwarded his letter to the Deputy Attorney General advising "no continuing interest in the matter."<sup>22</sup> In July 1987, Gunderson sent a rather disjointed letter to Arizona Senator John McCain warning of subversive Satanic cult activities with enclosures of documentary proof: a booklet entitled *Satanic Cults -- Missing Children*, and a New York Post article from earlier that same month about former CIA agent-turned-whistleblower, Philip Agee. The Satanists, Gunderson disclosed, were executing "kidnappings [...], human and animal sacrifices, illicit drug and other criminal activity [...]." The connection to Agee --who was "obviously a turncoat K.G.B agent who should [have been] in prison", by Gunderson's reckoning -- was clear: "[...] the Soviets are involved to a degree in the Satanic Cult movement in this country." McCain forwarded Gunderson's materials to the Department of Justice for investigation. The DOJ's letter of reply to Senator McCain assured him that, furnished with any evidence of "violations falling within [the DOJ's] jurisdiction", they would surely investigate all available leads. However, "the information Mr. Gunderson has provided [...] regarding 'Satanic Cults' has been in generalities and nothing relating to specific incidents other than the Jeffrey MacDonald case."<sup>23</sup>

Gunderson contributed heavily to a general moral panic regarding allegations of Satanic Ritual Abuse and he inspired localized uproars with allegations specific to certain communities. Such was the case when, in 1989, Gunderson boldly alleged on the *Geraldo* show that Mason County, Washington was the site of a mass burial ground for the bodies of victims of Satanic ritual murder. "They can't possibly go out there and dig them all out", Gunderson declared with grave certainty, "because there are too many of them."

Predictably, Gunderson's statements were met with particular shock in Mason County itself where a local paper reported that distressed county residents had been calling the sheriff's department and stopping deputies in the streets "[...] asking if Gunderson knew what he was talking about". As Gunderson hadn't bothered to inform local law enforcement of his specific

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[http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-18559\\_162-2580419-6.html?pageNum=6&tag=contentMain;contentBody](http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-18559_162-2580419-6.html?pageNum=6&tag=contentMain;contentBody)

<sup>21</sup> Associated Press. "Alleged Participant in Jail." *The Victoria Advocate* 24 Feb, 1983

<sup>22</sup> 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 6 (pp. 298)

<sup>23</sup> 1172959-000 --- 67E-HQ-493471 --- Section 6 (pp. 300 -- 305)

findings, they were keen to learn if in fact he *did* have any idea of what he was talking about. Asked by journalists, the FBI also stated that Gunderson hadn't reported the allegations of Satanic crimes to them.<sup>24</sup> Contrary to Gunderson's continuous assertions that Law Enforcement was ignoring the Satanic threat, the Mason County Sheriff's department did everything they could to either validate or disconfirm his claims. Eager to interview him regarding the specifics of these alleged crimes, the Sheriff's department asked the Seattle FBI office for help in locating the now unreachable Gunderson.

...But Gunderson was having none of it. "If I turn this over to the wrong law enforcement officials, I could blow the whole thing," he told one reporter. "This element has infiltrated every level of society [...] It's big, and involves heavy-duty, intelligent people . . . doctors, lawyers, prosecutors, police, airline pilots . . . every walk of life has been infiltrated."<sup>25</sup>

And there is little doubt that Gunderson must have been convinced that the Mason County Sheriff's department were "the wrong law enforcement officials" with whom to confide such sensitive details. Only two months prior to his mass-grave revelation, Gunderson had been confronted by a Mason County Sheriff, Bob Holter, who advised that because Gunderson had been "associating with known drug-dealers in the Mason County area, and because of the fact that Gunderson has been quite public about his former SAC [Special Agent in Charge] status within the Bureau, he (Holter) felt that the Bureau should be made aware of the situation."<sup>26</sup> Holter's subsequent report to the FBI noted that Gunderson "appear[ed] somewhat dishevelled in expensive clothing."

Perhaps insinuating that his appearance was merely a masterful disguise in service to a deep cover operation, Gunderson confided to Holter that he was "involved in some type of clandestine project."

The fear, according to Gunderson, was that if he revealed his sources they would surely be "silenced" shortly thereafter. As with most intelligence that he cited in his post-FBI career, Gunderson learned of the Mason County mass grave through what he described as "various reliable sources", confidential and unverifiable contacts who feared for their very lives.

Of course, Gunderson too was in mortal danger for his trifling into Satanic affairs. MacDonald murder confessor Helena Stoeckley had been found dead in her apartment in January of 1983 from pneumonia and cirrhosis of the liver -- a not-so-mysterious death according to the coroner's report -- though Gunderson would be "convinced that she was silenced using one of the many covert, untraceable assassination techniques known to government intel agencies."<sup>27</sup> One day, he would claim to find a death threat in the form of "13 red roses, 13 chrysanthemums and a three-line typed note on the lawn in front of his

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<sup>24</sup> Associated Press. "Officials doubt report of satanic burial sites". *Spokane Chronicle* 3 May, 1989

<sup>25</sup> Wallace, James. "Satanic Cults: Ex-FBI agent fears for sources." *Seattle PI* 4 May, 1989

<sup>26</sup> FBI File: 1172959-000---67E-HQ-493471---Section 6, p. 271

<sup>27</sup> Adachi, Ken. "Fatal Justice, The Continuing Persecution of Dr. Jeffrey R. MacDonald."

*Educate-Yourself.org* 5 Nov., 2005

(<http://educate-yourself.org/cn/fataljustice3chaphelenastoeckley05not05.shtml>) retrieved 2 Jan, 2012

apartment.” In a perplexing display of subtlety -- considering this “threat” presumably came from a global force of evil actively engaged in concealed mass murders -- the note simply read, “Poacher in the grass. Once a cub the lion sees. Shades of death and life.”<sup>28</sup>

Gunderson’s subsequent withdraw into a transient lifestyle in hiding may, in reality, have been motivated by more pragmatic concerns than a paranoia of Satan-worshipping FBI agents on assignment to have him silenced. At the time of his fugitive wanderings, the FBI was in fact investigating Gunderson regarding his role in an investment firm, Dekla International Inc., which “defrauded clients by taking advance fees or ‘front money’ to provide loans that never materialized.” Acting as president of the firm, Gunderson worked with two business partners, each of whom had criminal records.<sup>29</sup>

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I first called Ted Gunderson in 2004 to ask him about his role in researching a book about a cult claimed to have been responsible for motivating the famous Son of Sam murders of 1976 - 77.<sup>30</sup> I knew very little about Ted at that point and was still naively cowed by his credentials. The book in question was, at best, unconvincing as the author, on little to no evidence, attempted to fit what appeared sloppy and obviously rather unceremonious .44 calibre shootings -- motivated by homicidal delusions and personal fetish -- into a larger, well-schemed and highly secretive conspiracy. By the final page of this poorly-plotted crime fiction rubbish, I had an extreme deficit of respect for the “journalist” responsible, but I wondered how a former FBI man ended up in the book’s acknowledgments.

Ted recalled finding a vital piece of evidence that suggested cult involvement in the Son of Sam serial homicides. He and the author of the aforementioned tripe had traveled to a victim’s former dwelling, finding a bible had been opened to particular passage. What that passage was exactly, I cannot recall, but it contained a typical sanguinary quote, the likes of which are not too terribly uncommon in the “Good” Book.

Clearly, this was a message.

“But, Ted...” I protested, “this is the *Holy Bible* you’re talking about!”

“But that’s what they like to do, these Satanists,” Ted explained, “They like to leave little clues, hidden messages.”

It turned out that I had done something Ted’s “journalist” never attempted as far as I could tell; I had actually located and spoken to members of the defunct and maligned hippy-era cult that was said to have inspired these inelaborate alleged ritual killings. I asked Ted if he was aware that a number of the former inner-circle luminaries of this group were now running a rather successful, large no-kill animal shelter in keeping with the prior cult’s own impassioned anti-vivisection stance.

“Well,” Ted opined without missing a beat, “They manage an animal shelter so that they may have animals to use in their sacrifices.”

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<sup>28</sup> Associated Press. “Former Agent Claims Threats.” *The Press Courier* 3 Jan, 1983

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> The cult: The Process Church of the Final Judgment. The book: *The Ultimate Evil* by alleged journalist Maury Terry.

"How do you know this?" I asked.

"That's what they do, these Satanists," Ted again explained.

Gunderson's "knowledge" was not to be constrained by evidence.

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It was following one of his lectures regarding the MacDonald case, according to Gunderson, that somebody from the audience approached him with a book that he would come to credit with opening his eyes to the hidden truth about the "Illuminati". The book, *Pawns In The Game* by William Guy Carr (1958), became foundational to Gunderson's world-view, and he would often cite it as a primary source of documentary evidence for the insidious omnipresent conspiracy at play throughout history, now just at the precipice of realizing its infernal end.

Soon echoing Carr's own conspiracist world history, Gunderson would explain in his lectures how, in 1776, one Adam Weishaupt was commissioned by the House of Rothschild<sup>31</sup> to assemble the Illuminati, whose function was to corrupt society by way of "liberalism", cultural engineering, economic control, and drug trafficking (among other unholy schemes). The demonology of the Illuminati is fundamental to modern conspiracy lore and exists in a variety of similar narrative forms, Carr's interpretation being among some of the furthest right-wing and anti-semitic of the lot.

In fact, there was an 18th century society known as the Bavarian Illuminati founded by one Weishaupt, a Jesuit, but the Rothschilds in no way -- by any credible history -- played any part in it. Nonetheless, the idea of a Jewish connection to the Illuminati is central to the counterfactual *Pawns* which forwards the notion that the blueprints for the Illuminati's over 230 year-old plan-in-progress are explicated in the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a 24-point plan for world domination which includes recipes for planned disorder, absolute control of the press and, ultimately, total domination... all by the scheming, and for the benefit, of anti-Christ Jews... or "Illuminati".<sup>32</sup>

*Protocols*, as many know, is a vicious historical forgery, false evidence for a Jewish world conspiracy, the etiology of which can, in fact, be traced absolutely to anti-semitic and fictitious tales of non-Jewish origin. Historian Norman Cohn argues that *Protocols*, a compulsory text of study in schools of the Third Reich, was nothing short of Hitler's "warrant for genocide", his justification for attempted elimination of the "Jewish threat".<sup>33</sup>

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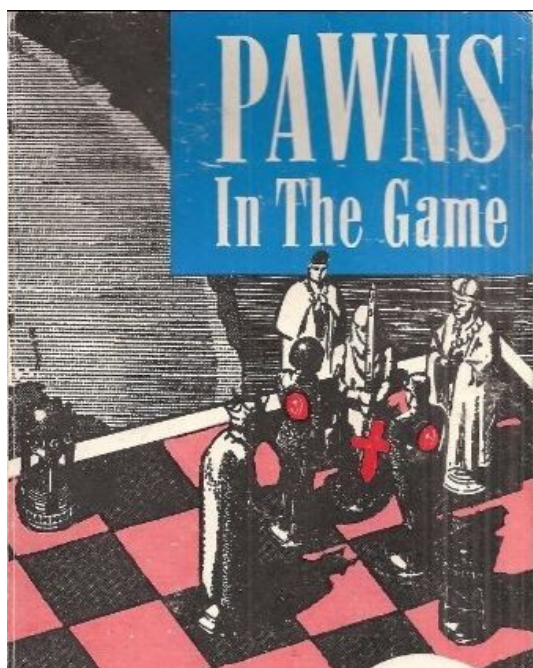
<sup>31</sup> The actual text from Carr's manuscript told it thus, "Adam Weishaupt, a jesuit trained professor of canon law, defected from christianity, and embraced the Luciferian ideology while teaching in Ingoldstadt University. In 1770 the money lenders (who had recently organized the House of Rothschild), retained him to revise and modernize the age-old 'protocols' designed to give the Synagogue of Satan ultimate world domination so they can impose the Luciferian ideology upon what remains of the Human Race, after the final social cataclysm, by use of satanic despotism. Weishaupt completed his task May 1st, 1776."

<sup>32</sup> Connecting the Illuminati and the "Jewish Threat" is by no means original to Carr. A good history of the evolution of this aspect of the Illuminati folklore is given in Michael Barkun's "A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America." University of California Press, 2006 (see chapter 3: "New World Order Conspiracies I: The New World Order and the Illuminati.")

<sup>33</sup> Cohn, Norman. "Warrant for Genocide: The myth of the Jewish world conspiracy and the Protocols of

According to *Pawns*, the “Synagogue of Satan” is steadily working ever nearer to a global Luciferian totalitarian nightmare, propelled forward by the propagation of Atheistic materialism into the mass (“Goyim”) consciousness.

Disturbing as the *Pawns* author’s interchangeable usage of words like “Illuminati” and “Luciferian” with various words for “Jew” (“international bankers”, “political Zionists”) is, certain passages of the book heavily suggest unbalance beyond the xenophobic variety, into the territory of paranoid schizophrenia. Indicating tin-foil hat notions of a mind oppressed by the



jumbled chaos of its own thoughts, author William Guy Carr describes his fear that the Devil himself may be broadcasting pure Evil into the “mysterious receiving set” of each human brain:

*“Undoubtedly many people will ask ‘But how could the Devil inoculate the minds of men with Atheistic and other evil ideas?’ That question can be answered in this way, If HUMAN Beings can establish radio, and television stations, from which one individual can influence millions of others by broadcasting his opinions on any given subject over the invisible air-waves then why shouldn’t it be possible for CELESTIAL Beings to broadcast their messages to us? No brain specialist has dared to deny that in the brain of each individual there is some kind of mysterious receiving set. Every hour of every day Human Beings are saying ‘I was inspired to do this’, or ‘I was tempted to do that’. Thoughts, be they good or evil, must originate somewhere, from*

*some ‘cause’, and be transmitted to the human brain. The body is only the instrument which puts the dominating thought for ‘Good’ or for ‘Evil’ into effect.”<sup>34</sup>*

Aside from using the discredited *Protocols*, Carr’s book -- Gunderson’s conspiracist bible -- contains very little in the way of any attempt to cite documentation that would support his so-called research, yet Gunderson would claim that its unconvincing premise is “very well documented”.

At best, Gunderson’s advocating for the veracity of Carr’s unhinged supernatural horror fantasy establishes him as having been a worthless judge upon the validity of historical documentary research, but does it establish an underlying anti-Semitism in Gunderson’s own conspiracist conception of the world? Is it possible that Ted, unlike Carr, saw the Illuminati as a distinct entity -- they being the *true* originators and executors of the plot outlined in *Protocols* -- separated from any notion of Jewish plots? After all, like many conspiracy theorists, Gunderson was quick to draw parallels to the events of his day and those of 1930s Germany, implying that

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the Elders of Zion.” Serif, 2005

<sup>34</sup> Carr, William Guy. “Pawns in the Game.” N.p. pp. 7



he was at least somewhat at odds with Hitler's National Socialist antics.

Rhetorical invocations of Nazi evil aside, Gunderson could be found at a 2006 historical revisionist/Holocaust denier conference for the American Free Press/Barnes Review. A post-conference report describes the wine & cheese social where their "old friend" Ted was in attendance, as well as a "Mr. Theo Junker [...] former member of the Wiking division of the S.S. who," the author of the report gushes, "courageously opened a Museum in Wisconsin dedicated to the memory of Adolf Hitler. It was indeed one of the highlights of the conference meeting this courageous patriot who continues to fight the good fight well into his 80's. God bless you, Herr Junker!"<sup>35</sup>

Ted was deeply respected by the survivalist extreme right -- a "true patriot" and one-time presidential candidate for the Independent American Party of Nevada (a Constitution Party<sup>36</sup> affiliate) -- appearing in their newsletters and on their radio shows with inflated reports regarding important world events, claiming a unique knowledge of each. Government plots against the good people of the nation abound. Enslavement ever imminent... The U.S. Government intentionally poisoning the air with toxic chemical contrails emitted from airliners; the Obama government has "prepared 1,000 camps for its own citizens", and, "has stored 30,000 guillotines to murder its critics, and has stashed 500,000 caskets in Georgia and Montana for the remains."

*Guillotines, you say?*

"Beheading", Ted explained, "is the most efficient means of harvesting body parts."<sup>37</sup>

Gunderson would continue his conspiracist evangelizing after the MacDonald case (and for the rest of his life) explaining as late as mid-2011 in an interview that the Satanists are "active -- extremely active. They sacrifice like 50 to 60 thousand people a year in this country<sup>38</sup>, the cult does. They have secret auctions for the children. The list goes on and on..." Explaining this harrowing state of affairs with proper gravity, Ted then rather tactlessly directed his attention to the interviewer, "This is all on my CD that's available for 35 dollars... want me to give you the

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<sup>35</sup> AFP/Barnes Review 06 (<http://enationalist.com/portal/index/index.php?/Latest/newsflash-2.html>) retrieved 31 Dec. 2011

<sup>36</sup> From The Constitution Party's website: "The Constitution Party gratefully acknowledges the blessing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the Universe and of these United States. We hereby appeal to Him for mercy, aid, comfort, guidance and the protection of His Providence as we work to restore and preserve these United States." ... "The U.S. Constitution established a Republic rooted in Biblical law"...

Gunderson ran for office against Republican John Ensign in Nevada's 1st Congressional District in 1996. Terrifyingly, Gunderson received a full 3% of the votes.

<sup>37</sup> Thomma, Steven. "Secret camps and guillotines? Groups make birthers look sane." *McClatchy Newspapers* 28 Aug., 2009

<sup>38</sup> To help give perspective on how remarkable this statement is, consider the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's preliminary data for 2009 which has the estimated total number of homicides in the United States at 16,591. The low end of Gunderson's estimate puts us at 137 American satanic human sacrifices per day. (National Vital Statistics Reports Volume 59, No. 4 16 March, 2011) [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59\\_04.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_04.pdf)

address where they can send the 35 dollars...?”<sup>39</sup>

### The Tunnels of McMartin

“The activities of these groups (it is in reality one group which operates on many levels),” Gunderson explained of the Satanic conspiracy<sup>40</sup>, “include the kidnapping and molestation of children, as well as the torture and murder of human beings. Their favorite victims are children and newborn babies— the younger the better. . . . My investigation has revealed that the satanic cult network has set up preschools across the country which they use as the source of kiddie pornography and child prostitution. They have successfully penetrated the public school system as well.”

Publicly, Gunderson projected absolute certainty in this: Satanists were perpetrating ceremonial crimes of abuse and murder on a global scale in every community, and they were funding their operations through organized criminal activities involving trade in illicit drugs, pornography, and human trafficking. Under questioning, however, Gunderson failed to produce convincing evidence to support his claims. Cross-examined under oath, Gunderson was interrogated regarding his role in investigating the notorious McMartin Preschool allegations involving claims of Satanic Ritual Abuse:

Q: [...Children] were going to school with their parents during the morning, but during the day they were transported through the tunnel system to the building next door. Correct?

A: In through a trapdoor next door.

Q: And they were taken through that trapdoor and whisked away in cars to people who were pedophiles?

A: Right. For prostitution.

Q: And including people who were involved in Satanic cults?

A: As far as I know. I can't say because I don't know who the cult members were. Who may have had sex with them, I don't know, but I'm sure there were Satanists in there someplace.

The chimerical specter of a satanic kiddie porn-producing cult network infiltrating preschools was by no means a personal delusion, nor was Gunderson the only credentialed expert to perpetuate this hallucinatory intrigue. The 1980s saw an alarming rise in public paranoids peddling bizarre fables of satanic conspiracies bent upon defiling children and corrupting established norms. Several social factors converged during the 80s that piqued deep-rooted atavistic fears of an anti-human *other*. A fear of cults, symptomatic of the public horror experienced in reaction to the Manson murders and the Jonestown cult's mass suicide, drove a conservative call for a return to traditional religious values with an upsurge in evangelical activism. Feminists, or a faction thereof, sensing a patriarchal conspiracy of rape denialism, found unlikely allies among the evangelical activist front in their shared interest for

<sup>39</sup> “Ted Gunderson Interview 5-14-2011” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSAdHZfmQY>

<sup>40</sup> The Nebraska Leadership Conference, “*The Mystery of the Carefully Crafted Hoax*.” Forward. Independently published, date unspecified.

eradicating pornography and combating child abuse, which many were hypothesizing to be far more prevalent than previously assumed. A rise in divorce rates, as well as an abrupt increase in women with children entering the labor market, led to a rise in reliance upon soon overcrowded daycare centers. Popular exposes of the time revealed less-than-optimal daycare conditions where children experienced neglect, and even physical abuse, in understaffed centers or with overwrought and unfit nannies.

It was in this social setting in 1980 that the book *Michelle Remembers*, purporting to be a true account chronicling the horrors of Satanic Ritual Abuse as belatedly recalled during hypnosis sessions by one Michelle Smith, was released to a remarkably credulous general response relative to the implausibility of its claims. Co-authored by Smith and her psychiatrist, Lawrence Pazder, under whose treatment she came to “remember” her supernatural tale of horror, the book claimed to confirm the existence of a worldwide network of Satanists practicing grotesque rituals of torture and murder that Smith personally endured. Satan himself was summoned, according to Smith’s account, during an 81-day ritual she had attended as a child, and Jesus Christ at one point intervened against the hideous blasphemies being wrought. The Virgin Mary made a guest appearance, as did the Archangel Michael, who conveniently removed all the physical scars from Smith’s body -- and thus any potential corroborating evidence of her story -- temporarily erasing her memory of the horrific occurrences she had witnessed until such as time in which it was appropriate for her to warn the world.

Journalists eventually debunked even the mundane claims made by Smith and Pazder (who eventually were married), discrediting a story that never held the appearance of credibility to begin with. However, even nearly 10 years after its publication, Oprah Winfrey would host Smith and Pazder on her show, treating their account of a Satanic conspiracy as an established, unquestionable fact. In 1983, Pazder would be called to consult on claims of child abuse allegedly taking place at a Manhattan Beach preschool in California. His predictable and confident speculation that the nefarious hand of covert Satanic activities could be discerned from the available evidence leaking from the McMartin preschool would kick off a full-blown panic.

To be sure, Gunderson didn’t create the frenzied atmosphere of unreason that allowed the ugly witch-hunt of McMartin to unfold -- rather, Gunderson benefited from a corrupt and anxiety-ridden social environment ripe for acceptance of the Gundersonian Nightmare.

Among reasonable people there may still be disagreement as to who committed the Fort Bragg murders, but there is no such reasonable doubt that the McMartin trial was anything but a total fraud. Today, the case is analysed by academics in various fields as a tool of illustration. Sociologists consider its relevance in the study of moral panics. Historians consider it in the context of the continued tradition of Western witch-hunts. Psychologists review its transcripts for their extreme real-world examples of coerced testimony and abusive child interviewing. Legal scholars look to it as a blatant and undeniable case of prosecutorial misconduct.

Among the *unreasoned*, however, there is still a hardcore of McMartin believers who are insistent that the charges of satanic abuse that emerged were factual allegations, the discrediting of which was merely a well-orchestrated cover-up. Gunderson is largely to blame for this continued delirium, for it was Gunderson who purported to find the evidence which validated the claims of abuse and proved everything

The McMartin fiasco began with allegations made by a parent of one of the children attending the preschool. Judy Johnson, in what appears to have been a regularly scheduled activity, was inspecting her son's anus when she decided something was amiss. And something may well have been amiss in this odd display of focused attention, especially given the indications of Johnson's general neglect of the rest of the boy, who -- according to his own father's later testimony -- was generally in a state of poor hygiene. Nonetheless, detecting irritation, Judy Johnson decided the boy had been molested. She reported that the misconduct against her child had been committed at the McMartin preschool. She also reported that her estranged husband had sodomized the boy. Further, she would claim that an "AWOL marine had broken into her home and sexually molested her son and her dog."<sup>41</sup> She would also charge that she had seen Ray Buckey, a young employee of the preschool and the unfortunate focus of suspicion in subsequent McMartin molestation investigations, fly in the air "like a bird".

The totality of evidence against Buckey amounted to his proclivity for dressing sans underwear, and a cache of "pornography" -- issues of Playboy magazine secreted in some shameful dark corner -- revealed in a search of his bedroom. Buckey's free-spirited, freestyling buffoonery didn't play well with the locals who found their sensibilities outraged by such apparent scofflaw disdain for decency.

Gunderson would claim that "in the McMartin case [...] before any criminal charges were filed against anyone, 460 complaints were filed with the Manhattan Beach Police."

This simply isn't true.

In reality, the preschool had an excellent record and, before the accusations, there was a waiting list of children whose parents wished to have them enrolled. Children not yet born were being wait-listed for enrollment. Not one for waiting around, Johnson had "enrolled" her boy by simply dumping him in front of the school one day. Taking pity, the school took him in. It was a singular act of kindness they'd have surely never indulged given any forewarning of how it would come to ruin their lives.

It was one of the longest, most expensive trials in U.S. history, eventually resulting in no convictions, with all charges dropped in 1990. The prosecution's case relied most heavily on child testimony, often fantastical in nature.

Gunderson would guffaw at the McMartin skeptics who, he claimed, asserted that the children had collectively "hallucinated" all this alleged Satanic Ritual Abuse. In fact, hallucinations were never offered as an explanation for the children's narratives, nor does it take an expert to clearly see how the narratives did surface. Every foul, coercive, leading and tainting interview technique known was used to extract confessions from the hapless toddlers who found themselves suffering a very real abuse from their maliciously irresponsible interrogators.

Several hundred children were intensively interviewed at the Children's Institute International (CII) in Los Angeles overseen by Kee MacFarlane. MacFarlane, referencing the theories of a Dr. Roland Summit, who posited that abused children are likely to maintain secrecy on behalf of their abusers, delay reporting, and retract ultimate disclosures of abuse, approached the child interviews as interrogations in which the existence of abuse was a foregone conclusion and all claims to the contrary were merely evidence of the abuses'

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/21/us/abuse-hearing-is-told-of-withheld-evidence.html>

traumatic effects. There was no accounting for any child interviewee behavior which might indicate abuse that had not taken place. The eventual release of transcripts from the McMartin child interviews revealed the obvious mishandling of those interrogated.

In one interview, a child denied any wrong-doing by teachers. The interviewer responded, "Are you going to be stupid, or are you going to be smart and help us here?"

An interrogator asked a child, "Do you remember the naked pictures?" When the child replied to the negative, the interrogator suggested, "Why don't you think about that for a while, okay? Your memory might come back to you."

"Do you think some of that yucky touching happened [...] when she was tied up and she couldn't get away? Do you think some of that touching that -- Mr. Ray might have done some of that touching? Do you think that's possible? Where do you think he would have touched her? Can you use your pointer and show us where he would have touched her?"

In 2005, one of the McMartin children came forward with an apology for the accused, detailing his forced confession at CII. Kyle Sapp, who was 8 years old when first questioned in 1984, felt significant guilt thereafter for having contributed to claims against the McMartin Preschool staff that he knew to be untrue. For the Los Angeles Times<sup>42</sup>, he wrote:

The first time I went to CII [Children's Institute International, now known as Children's Institute, Inc., a respected century-old L.A. County child welfare organization where approximately 400 former McMartin children were interviewed and given genital exams, and where many were diagnosed as abuse victims], we drove there, our whole family. I remember waiting ... for hours while my brothers and sisters were being interviewed. I don't remember how many days or if it was just one day, but my memory tells me it was weeks, it seemed so long. It was an ordeal. I remember thinking to myself, "I'm not going to get out of here unless I tell them what they want to hear."

I remember them asking extremely uncomfortable questions about whether Ray touched me and about all the teachers and what they did--and I remember telling them nothing happened to me. I remember them almost giggling and laughing, saying, "Oh, we know these things happened to you. Why don't you just go ahead and tell us? Use these dolls if you're scared."

Anytime I would give them an answer that they didn't like, they would ask again and encourage me to give them the answer they were looking for. It was really obvious what they wanted. I know the types of language they used on me: things like I was smart, or I could help the other kids who were scared.

[...] there were so many kids saying all these things happened that you didn't want to be the one who said nothing did. You wouldn't be believed if you said that.

I remember feeling like they didn't pick just anybody--they picked me because I had a good memory of what they wanted, and they could rely on me to do a good job. I don't think they thought I was telling the truth, just that I was telling the same stories consistently, doing what needed to be done to get these teachers judged guilty. I felt special. Important.

Most of the children have remained silent, and most were younger than Sapp, probably still deeply confused as to the reality of their own pasts, raised to believe horrific "recollections"

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-oct-30-tm-mcmartin44-story.html>



of deranged events manufactured for their autobiographical “memories” by irresponsible conspiracist authorities.

I strongly suspect that those who so heartily endorsed the CII tactic of interviewing as the cutting-edge in Child Psychology would have very swiftly come to their reasonable senses if placed on the receiving end of an accusation supported by their methods. Further, I think it surmise that a fair number of those who furiously rail against fantasized Satanic cult abuse of children -- and obsess over the salacious details of these demented folk-tales -- do so because they are secretly (perhaps even unconsciously) titillated by them. Like the Evangelical pulpit-pounding Prophet of Calamity who makes a mission of ridding the world of the Homosexual Threat only to be found on a meth-fueled debauch with a male prostitute in a public stall, the Satanic Ritual Abuse infatuated “expert” ranks high on the list of suspected latent pedophiles. This is certainly not to say anything of the type regarding people who work with *real* abuse, which doesn’t require the sadistic fantasies of adults in lieu of any actual evidence. In any case, I should certainly have liked to have known if, say, Roland Summit would have indulged my concerns by allowing interviews of children he had personal contact with, done in exactly the same fashion as the “interviews” he found to be of sound form conducted by the CII. I imagine him in a room looking through a one way mirror, shitting himself for fear as the interviewer begins with one of dozens of children...

*All of your friends have told us about the naked pictures with Dr. Summit. We want to know if you're smart enough to tell us about them too. Don't worry, we have all the time we need...*

For that matter, the CII standard didn’t seem to hold for Gunderson, either. When Ted’s friend and webmaster, Christopher Link Jones, was convicted of “lewd or lascivious acts with a child under 14 years of age”, including initiating a game of strip poker with two boys, 9 and 11 years of age, Gunderson adjudged the whole thing a preposterous frame-up. Never, to Ted’s mind, had a more ludicrous tale been told.

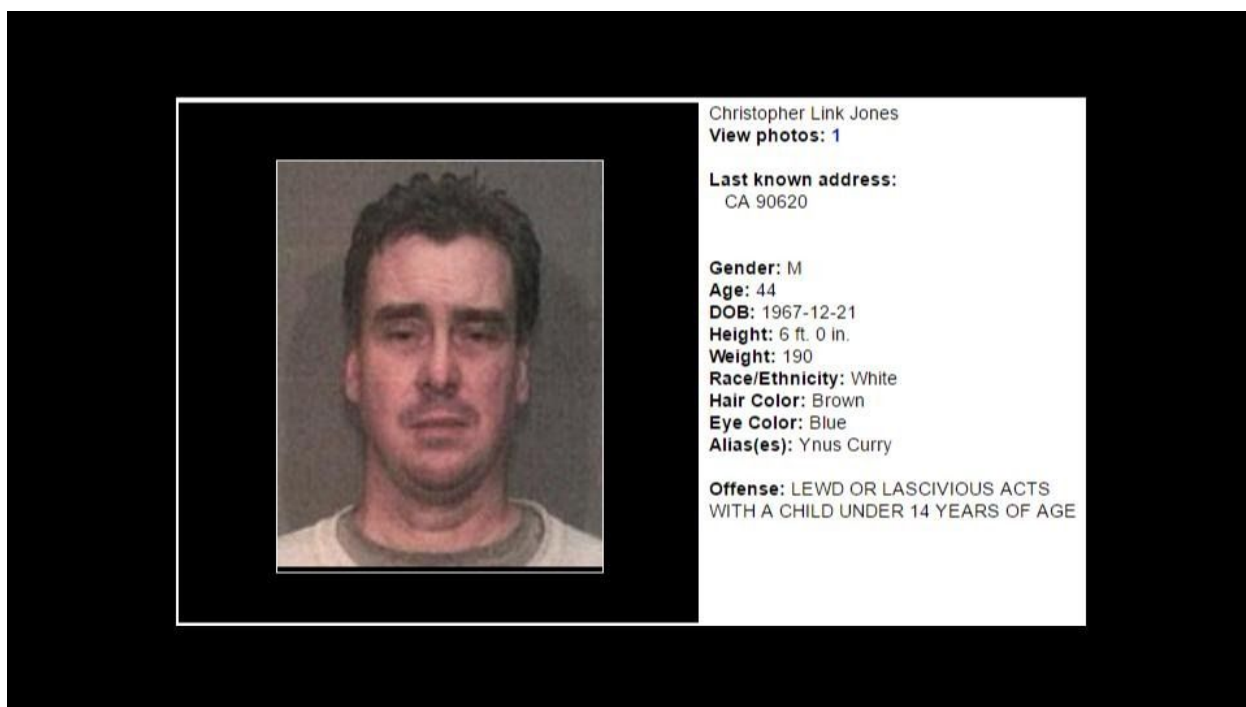
Testifying on Jones’s behalf in 2008, Gunderson was asked, “[...] the children reported acts in a sexual nature against Mr. Jones here before they were interviewed by the detective. You still are sitting here and saying that’s -- that you’re up here testifying because you don’t believe in this case?

“I don’t think that sex entered into this case from what I reviewed.”

“Okay. Adult male taking naked pictures with their cell phone. Is that sexual in nature?”

“Depends on the purpose of taking the pictures.”

One does not need the full sordid story, or a solid opinion regarding the accusations against Gunderson’s associate to discern the clear dissonance exhibited by Gunderson which calls into question his image as a zero-tolerance defender of a “believe the children” approach that will humor even deeply implausible claims to serve the greater purpose of rooting out any and all exploitation.



Chuck Norris was not arrested as a McMartin co-conspirator, though he was pointed out by a child at the school as having been involved, as were various other famed actors, athletes, and public figures. Gunderson would often cite these allegations against elite personalities as evidence of the conspiracy's influence and power, failing to note that these particular allegations were the result of the defense attempting to demonstrate that the children were willing to find guilty parties in any random collection of photos, which they populated with celebrity headshots for that purpose. The fact that these individuals hadn't been to the school should have made little difference to the prosecution who used the testimony of many children claiming Ray had molested them at a time when he was in san diego taking college courses.

The trial was yet to get underway when one of the prosecutors, Glenn Stevens, admitted that the children were “embellishing and embellishing” their stories at the direction of CII, stating, “we had no business being in court.”<sup>43</sup> Even as the case fell completely apart, the moral panic surrounding secretive Satanic cults was in full swing, the sprawling conspiracy theory now having grown to the point that any disconfirming evidence was merely seen as evidence of the Satanists' power, efficiency, and ubiquity. Failure to secure a conviction in McMartin was seen as evidence of law enforcement's complicity.

In the early 1990s, Gunderson caught wind that the McMartin property had been sold and contractors were soon to begin work developing it. Gunderson asked for access in a final attempt to find evidence of the Satanic activities he felt must have taken place there. According to Gunderson, he was given two weeks.

According to Gunderson's own telling of the events that followed, he, “along with some of the parents [...] hired an archaeologist from UCLA, Dr. Gary Stickel -- knowing full well that I'm not qualified to say there were tunnels under there even if I found them. We began our dig. At

<sup>43</sup> <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mcmartin/mcmartinaccount.html>

the end of two weeks I had to stall, stall, stall, because Dr. Stickel was not quite ready to admit there were tunnels” at noon the 34th day, Stickel finally ‘admitted’ that tunnels had been filled in.

<sup>44</sup> Gunderson went on to describe the tunnels: “The tunnels were 30 inches wide, 44 to 46 inches deep, with the top of the tunnel at 30 inches under the classroom floor.”

Those familiar with the conspiracist claims surrounding subterranean McMartin ritual activities, said to include full ceremonies, and alleged to involve an abusive elephant, lions, and a giraffe -- to say nothing of adult efforts to navigate through such narrow passageways -- would recognize those measurements as impossibly small.

Even by Gunderson’s own account, it is easy to discern an atmosphere of coercion imposed upon the spineless Stickel, who remains silent on the topic today, as Gunderson stalled for time attempting to persuade the archaeologist to “admit” that tunnels had been filled in. As evidence that tunnels had existed on the property, Stickel’s ultimate report pointed to various debris that had been revealed in the excavation. Further independent analysis would point out that the property on which the preschool resided was previously a residential lot that pre-dated weekly trash pickups, where it was common for households to bury trash in a pit till filled before digging a new pit, and then filling that... and so on.

Reviewing the evidence, W. Joseph Wyatt of Marshall University wrote in 2002<sup>45</sup> “Why would the defendants have brought in fill dirt from a dump that included dozens of tin cans, bottles, trash-filled crockery, an inner tube, TV antenna wire, steak bones, animal bones and other such debris? Would Ray Buckey and the other defendants have brought in fill dirt from a dump? If they had gotten their fill dirt from a dump, what are the odds that its contents would exactly date from the 1920s to the 1950s when the earlier homeowners would have been dumping their household trash? [...] The odds are powerfully against all of that. Rather, odds are that there were no tunnels beneath the McMartin preschool and that what was found was an old trash pit, nothing more.”

Weak as Gunderson’s “evidence” was, however, it has taken on a life of its own among Satanic Panic conspiracists who, to this day, insist that the tunnels under McMartin were ignored by an infiltrated legal system that is either indifferent to victims of Satanic Ritual Abuse, or actively attempting to cover for the crimes of a Satanic conspiracy. The legacy of Gunderson’s tunnels can be seen in identical “PizzaGate” accusations claiming the existence of human trafficking tunnels underneath a Washington DC pizzeria where, again, no tunnels exist at all. To the conspiracist, even fully debunked claims can age into credibility when repeated often enough and introduced into multiple settings.

Belief in the McMartin tunnels has, in fact, become a type of shibboleth among conspiracists in the mental health profession who still cling to debunked narratives of Satanic Ritual Abuse in defense of discredited therapeutic techniques employed to draw forth “recovered memories” of repressed extreme trauma. Despite holding annual conferences wherein lecturers tell of Illuminati mind-control and Satanic world domination plots, many mental health professionals within the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) are cautious to not speak too openly about their wildly irrational claims in the view of

<sup>44</sup> [https://youtu.be/89ZxExw\\_ynM](https://youtu.be/89ZxExw_ynM)

<sup>45</sup> <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.5210/bsi.v12i1.77.pdf>

wider public scrutiny. Like ISSTD special interest group chair Michael Salter, they tend to write in very broad terms about memory and abuse, posturing themselves as defenders of the innocent, and everybody skeptical of recovered memory veracity as a defender of sexual exploitation.

As Salter cautiously stated in *Organized Abuse and the Politics of Disbelief*, regarding the blow to credibility that Satanic Ritual Abuse conspiracy theories suffered after the dismantling of the McMartin prosecution: “The findings of an archaeological dig at the McMartin preschool site, which uncovered recently backfilled tunnels and ritual articles in accordance with the children’s disclosures, came too late to counter the momentum of the backlash.”

Gunderson would, no doubt, feel at home with the prevalent conspiracy theories of today, replete with his influence as they are. He would also almost certainly, in the bizarre dysfunctional self-validating spiral of the conspiracist, find vindication for his own fantasies in the identical fantasies of Pizzagate paranoiacs. When I spoke to Gunderson on the phone all those years ago, he evaded any pointed questions and assured me that the evidence would eventually justify him, though he had forgotten more than he could remember. For a man who claimed to see the influence of Satanists everywhere, he seemed to immediately embrace me as an ally, and he congratulated me on being such an inquisitive young man pursuing the less traveled path of inquiry. Knowing next to nothing about me, and relying on his intuition, he stated confidently that he felt that I would, in time, make a lasting impact on the world.

