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Vampire Crime

Katherine Ramsland

[Dr. Katherine Ramsland has published fifteen books, including a biography of Anne Rice, *The Vampire Companion*, and *Piercing the Darkness* (a journalistic expose of the vampire subculture).]

While most of the vampire subculture these days is a benign form of role-playing, there have been cases of people who were inspired by the predatory image to kill. To their minds, the vampire mythos provides a framework that inspires and even licenses certain types of violent behaviors. Although this bloodthirsty impulse reaches back centuries and crosses cultures, I want to examine the mythology's influence on three cases in recent American culture: Roderick Ferrell, James Riva, and Richard Trenton Chase. I will take one case at a time and then discuss how they attach to the vampire frame.

A Brief History of the Vampire and Crime

Since primitive time, humans have been known to drink blood, often in religious rituals. However, some sanguinary acts had nothing to do with ceremony. In 300 B. C. a Buddhist monk drank the blood of swine to cure an illness said to be incurable -- and it worked. Warriors of many cultures drank the blood of their enemies to affirm their conquest and enhance their power. Some even did it as a communion of friendship with their victim. In contrast, the compulsion to drink blood is generally part of a sexual perversion called hematomania. For example, Peter Kurten, "the Vampire of Dusseldorf," felt the buildup of erotic tension before he attacked a victim and achieved release only after violence. It seems that blood is a complex symbol that inspires both healing and destruction.

A quick list of some who drank blood in a pathological manner includes Gilles de Rais, Sergeant François Bertrand, Fritz Haarmann, and the aforementioned Peter Kurten. There are many lesser known "vampires" as well, both male and female.¹ Some merely kidnap or drug someone to get a taste of blood, others murder.

John George Haigh is frequently found on the lists of modern vampires. However, while inspiring the media to go into a frenzy over his confession about drinking blood, he probably had no such fetish. When he was arrested in England in 1949 for the possible murder of a missing woman, he immediately asked about the chances of getting out of the local mental institution. Then he launched into a confession that involved killing six people in order to drink their blood. (Later he added three more to his tally, none of whom could be traced to real people.) Haigh insisted his acts had been motivated not by personal gain, but by a gruesome dream cycle that involved gory images. "It was not their money but their blood that I was after," he stated. Nevertheless, each time he killed someone and then dissolved that person's body in sulfuric acid, he was in debt and he took over their properties to enrich himself. He claimed he had a series of dreams about bloody crucifixes that always triggered his compulsion, but it seems more likely that he was malingering insanity. Twelve physicians examined him and only one thought he had an aberrant mental condition. He claimed to drink his own urine, too, although the only person to see him do it was a doctor for whom Haigh demonstrated this dubious talent. It turns out that Haigh had studied various forms of psychoses in detail, so his claim to be a vampire in need of human blood is highly suspect.²

¹For details, see Basil Copper, *The Vampire* (New York: Citadel, 1973); Norine Dresser, *American Vampires* (New York: Norton, 1989); and J. Gordon Melton, *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1994).

²For further details on Haigh, see David Briffett, *The Acid Bath Murders* (West Sussex, England: Field Place Press, 1988); Lord Dunboyne, ed. *The Trial of John George Haigh* (London: William Hodge, 1953); and Molly Lefebure, *Murder with a Difference: The Cases of Haigh and Christie* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

The cases below demonstrate that those who identify with the vampire as a framework for their crimes generally came to the image with pathology intact, rather than being inspired by the image to become killers. This is an important detail, because the media likes to play up the vampire's inspiration in mental illness and violence. At best, it creates a frame and perhaps fuels an impulse that is already in place.

Case One: Roderick Ferrell³

On Thanksgiving Day in 1996, Roderick Ferrell, 16, from Murray, Kentucky, led a pack of teens to Eustis, Florida, where he killed the elderly parents of a former girlfriend. Ferrell had lived in Eustis for a year and had then returned to Kentucky. He'd gotten involved with a fantasy role-playing game called *Vampire: The Masquerade*. However, he wanted something more edgy, so he formed The Vampire Clan. According to one member, Ferrell became obsessed with "opening the Gates of Hell," which meant to him that he had to kill a large number of people in order to consume their souls. He certainly felt angry and that anger often took the form of violence.

At one point, Ferrell was arrested for breaking into a local animal shelter to mutilate two puppies. He pulled the legs off one. However, this was considered a misdemeanor, so he was let off. Yet his motives seem to have been less about mischief than about his occult practices. Someone in his clan saw him kill a cat in a rather brutal manner, too.

But he didn't stop with that. Richard Wendorf and his wife were found beaten to death in their Eustis home. Cigarette burns in the shape of a V, with two dots on either side, were present on the body of Richard Wendorf, and Ferrell had told friends that his sign was a V, with dots on each side to signify clan members. Early news reports suggested that their 15-year-old daughter, Heather, had plotted with this gang to murder her parents. Wendorf and the others were subsequently arrested in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Roderick Ferrell, Howard Scott Anderson, 17, Charity Lynn Keesee, 16, and Dana Cooper, 19, were caught in the Wendorf's stolen Ford Explorer when one of the girls inadvertently revealed their whereabouts to her mother.

In a Grand Jury hearing, Heather was cleared of all charges, although the other four were held for separate murder trials. Heather claimed that she and Keesee were riding in Anderson's car when the murders took place. She had no idea what Ferrell was planning, and was not even sure that he had actually done it until she saw him playing with her mother's pearl necklace.

However, the same day her parents were murdered, she had received Ferrell's blood in a cemetery ritual in order to "cross over" and "become a vampire." She had also told friends that she had been a demon in a past life and that she talked with spirits during blood-drinking rituals. When dating Ferrell, she viewed him as a kindred spirit and awaited the day when he would return to Florida so they could live together. She named her cat Vassago, a name that Ferrell had adopted after a Prince of Hell. She had told a friend she sometimes wished her parents were dead, especially after they stopped Ferrell's collect calls to her, and had once asked her older sister, Jennifer, if she ever thought about killing them. She mentioned that Rod could kill people, if Jennifer ever needed that done.

Apparently Ferrell had decided to kill Wendorf's parents before arriving. He and the others had visited another girl in Eustis to reveal the plan. That made it first degree murder, two counts. Prosecutors said they would seek the death penalty for Anderson and Ferrell initially. Ferrell told reporters from the *Orlando Sentinel* that a rival vampire clan had done the killings. Then he claimed to have been treated by psychiatrists for multiple personality disorder and that he'd been part of a Satanic cult run by

³Details of the Ferrell case are taken from articles in the *Orlando Sentinel*, Lake County Edition, Florida.

his grandfather. While his many stories were probably lies, it soon became clear that he had some serious attachment problems and had grown up in an unstable household.

First, his mother's arrest following his own indicated that he'd been raised by someone with a mental illness. Sondra Gibson, 35, was indicted in November 1997 for allegedly writing sexually explicit letters to a fourteen-year-old boy to entice him into a sexual initiation ritual. In the letters she stressed how she longed to be near him and to become a vampire. She asked him to "cross me over and I will be your bride for eternity and you my sire." Gibson pleaded guilty to a felony charge of unlawful transaction with a minor.

On top of that, Ferrell's father – himself the child of a man who had been treated for psychiatric problems – had abandoned him as a child. There were no siblings – just an unbalanced mother with whom to share a house. The vampire image may have appeared to him to be a source of power and freedom, as well as a way to find some excitement in a small Kentucky town.

As preparations began for Ferrell's trial, details emerged of what exactly had happened that day. Anderson was in the house, but it was Ferrell who swung a crowbar at a sleeping Richard Wendorf. He then stabbed Ruth Wendorf in the head when she walked into the room. The girls returned and they piled into the car to run away to New Orleans. When they were caught, there were fresh scars on the arms of these clan members, as if they'd been drinking blood that day.

The Eustis murders appear to have been senseless, unrelated to any kind of threat, abuse, surprise attack, rage, or confrontation. They had a plan and they carried it out. On videotape, Ferrell describes without emotion how he bludgeoned the sleeping man and then struck the woman. The other boy had merely stood by.

Since there is no "diminished capacity" law in Florida and the plea of not guilty by reason of insanity has become less popular with juries, the defense offered in pretrial motions the arguments for mitigating the penalty phase:

- The killings were committed while Ferrell was mentally disturbed;
- Ferrell was too disturbed to realize the seriousness of the crimes;
- Ferrell was under the influence of drugs;
- Ferrell suffers from schizotypal personality disorder;
- Ferrell was raised by a divorced mother who failed to discipline him properly, and was neglected by his father;
- Ferrell was sexually abused as a youth;
- Ferrell was allowed to participate in violent and self-destructive role-playing fantasy games, which impaired his judgment about what was real or normal;
- Ferrell is developmentally disabled;
- Ferrell suffers from his beliefs in vampirism

Of his vampirism, Ferrell had said that he had no soul and was possessed. He had devised vampire rituals that gave him an adrenaline rush. He liked to threaten others and make them believe that his vampire nature made him all-powerful. He believed there was a group of vampires that really existed and he was one of the rare ones. He saw himself at war with other vampire clans and believed that he had the power to do anything he pleased. When he was arrested for murder, he told the arresting officers that he was a powerful immortal and they would be unable to hold him.⁴

⁴See also Clifford Linedecker, *The Vampire Killers* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998); and Aphrodite Jones, *The Embrace* (New York: Pocket Books, 1999).

Case Two: Richard Trenton Chase

Richard Trenton Chase had a thing for blood, in part because he was afraid of disintegrating. Although deemed sane at his trial, he was clearly psychotic.

In the late seventies, Chase was known as “The Vampire of Sacramento.” He began by killing a woman, cutting out her entrails, stuffing her mouth with dog feces, and drinking her blood from a yogurt cup. He also smeared his face with it. Next, he killed a family, including an infant, and was quickly identified through a police search. In his apartment, police discovered evidence that he seemed to be planning to kill again over forty more times that same year. He killed near his own home, and his criterion for entering a house was merely to find a door that was not locked. Into those homes that were locked he was not invited. The very definition of a vampire!

During one of Chase’s incarcerations in psychiatric facilities for mental instability, he purchased rabbits and drank their blood. At times, he tried to inject rabbit blood into his own veins. He also bit the heads off birds and was known to the hospital staff as “Dracula.” Once he was free and without supervision, he also purchased or stole dogs and cats to torture them and drink their blood. He did these things because he believed that he was being poisoned by soap dishes. That is, if the bottom of a piece of soap in his dish was wet, it meant his blood was turning to powder and he would need to replenish it. Otherwise, all of his energies would be depleted and he would disintegrate. Chase was sentenced to die, but was found dead in his cell in 1980 after swallowing an overdose of antidepressants.

Born May 23, 1950, he liked to set fires as a child and to torment animals. He had a sister, four years younger, and his father was a strict disciplinarian who bickered constantly with his wife. By the time Richard was ten, he was killing cats. As a teenager, he drank and smoked dope, getting into trouble several times but showing no shame over it. He dated several girls, one of whom reported that “Rick” was unable to perform sexually because he could not keep an erection. This problem bothered him and when he was eighteen, he went to see a psychiatrist. He learned that a root cause of impotence was repressed anger. The psychiatrist also thought he might be suffering from a major mental illness, but did not suggest he be committed.

After he moved out of his parents’ home, he went through a series of roommates, many of whom reported his bizarre behavior and heavy drug use. Once he nailed shut his bedroom closet door because “people” were invading his space from in there. He was preoccupied with any sign that something was wrong with him, and he once entered an emergency room looking for the person who had stolen his pulmonary artery. He also complained that the bones were coming out through the back of his head, his stomach was backwards, and his heart often stopped beating. Another psychiatrist diagnosed him as a paranoid schizophrenic, but thought he might actually be suffering from a drug-induced toxic psychosis. He was put under observation for 72 hours, and it was recommended that he stay. Eventually he was released.

His life grew increasingly slovenly, and he submersed into hypochondria and drug abuse. He lived with his mother for awhile, now divorced, but believed he was being poisoned. His father got him an apartment. Chase soon began to kill and disembowel rabbits that he either caught or bought, and to eat their entrails raw. Sometimes he would put the intestines with the animal’s blood into a blender, liquefy them, and drink this concoction in an effort to keep his heart from shrinking. He once injected rabbit blood into his veins and got very ill. He believed this rabbit had ingested battery acid that had seeped into his stomach, but in fact he had a bad case of blood poisoning.

Finally he was committed as a schizophrenic suffering from somatic delusions. The doctors tried anti-psychotic medications, which failed to work, indicating that Chase’s psychosis may have been precipitated by his drug abuse. In 1976, he escaped and showed up at his mother’s house. He was returned to the hospital, ending up at a facility for mental patients, where he earned the nickname, “Dracula.” One day he was found with blood around his mouth. Two dead birds, their necks broken, lay outside his window.

Eventually he was released and deemed no longer a danger. His parents were granted a conservatorship, renewed annually, and his mother paid his rent and shopped for his groceries. Chase moved into another apartment and began to catch and torture cats, dogs, and rabbits. He killed them to drink their blood. Sometimes he stole neighborhood pets. He bought guns and started to practice with them. Although he was on psychiatric medication, he remained unsupervised. His mother weaned him from the medications herself. In 1977, the conservatorship expired and his parents failed to renew it, leaving Chase on his own.

One day he paid his mother a visit. She heard a loud noise and opened the door to see her son holding a dead cat. He threw the animal to the ground and tore it open, smearing the blood all over his face and neck. His mother failed to act and never reported the incident.

On August 3 that same year, police officers found Chase's Ford Ranchero stuck in sand near Pyramid Lake in Nevada. Two rifles lay on the seat, along with a pile of men's clothing. Blood smears on the inside and a blood-filled white plastic bucket containing a liver made them suspicious. When they spotted Chase through binoculars, he was nude and covered in blood. He saw them and ran, but they caught up with him and took him back to his pick-up. He claimed that the blood was his. It had "seeped out" of him. The liver, it turned out, was from a cow.

Soon he grew bolder. Apparently he found the door at the Wallin home unlocked. He encountered Teresa (Terry) Wallin, 22, and three months pregnant. He opened the door and ran into Terry as she was taking out the garbage. He raised his pistol and shot her twice. She fell; Chase then knelt over her prostrate body, firing another bullet into her temple. His next move was to drag her into the bedroom, leaving a trail of blood behind. He then retrieved a knife from the kitchen and an empty yogurt container from the trash bag that Terry had been carrying. When he was done, he left.

Terry's husband, David, found her lying just inside the door, on her back, her clothing in disarray that suggested assault. Her left nipple was carved off, her torso cut open below the sternum, and her spleen and intestines pulled out. Chase had stabbed her repeatedly in the lung, liver, diaphragm, and left breast and had cut out her kidneys and severed her pancreas in two. He placed the kidneys together back inside her. There was blood in the bathroom and it was later learned that he had smeared Terry's blood all over his face and hands, licking it off his fingers. There were odd rings of blood around the body, as if someone had placed a bucket there.

On January 27, Evelyn Miroth, 38, received the same treatment. Chase also shot a male friend who was visiting her, and her six-year-old son, Jason. Her infant nephew was missing from his crib. It later turned out that Chase had drunk Evelyn's blood and had mutilated the baby's body in the bathroom, opening the head and spilling pieces of the brain into the tub. A knock on the door must have interrupted him and he had fled with the body. As police looked for him, he took the baby to his home and severed the head. He removed several organs and consumed them.

The police closed in and grabbed him as he was leaving his apartment with a box full of bloody newspapers and rags. He was arrested. In prison, he told another inmate that he needed the blood of his victims because of blood poisoning, and he'd grown tired of hunting for animals. He also admitted to one of the dozen psychiatrists who examined him that he was disturbed about killing his victims and was afraid they would come for him. He had never felt compelled to kill. He simply thought the blood would help him. It was clear that he had intended to murder his victims and knew it was wrong, so he was convicted of six counts of first degree murder.

FBI profiler Robert Ressler interviewed Chase and felt strongly that he ought to be transferred to a psychiatric hospital. He learned that other inmates tried to get Chase to kill himself. The day after Christmas, 1980, that is just what he did. Despite his lifelong concerns, his heart was found to be normal.⁵

⁵See Ray Biondi & Walt Hecox, *The Dracula Killer* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992); and Robert Ressler & Tom Shachtman, *Whoever Fights Monsters* (New York: St. Martin's, 1992).

Case Three: James Riva

James Riva claimed to hear the voice of a vampire before he shot his grandmother four times with bullets that he had painted gold. He then tried to drink her blood from the wound in order to get eternal life. Finally, he set her corpse on fire. To some degree, he claimed, it was self defense, because he was convinced she was drinking his blood while he was asleep, as were other vampires. He believed that everyone was a vampire and that he needed to do something to become like everyone else. The secret, he was told, was to kill someone and drink the blood. Afterward, the vampires would throw a party for him.

At the age of five, Riva had become enraged by something his father had done and had rigged a mechanism intended to hit his father in the head with a hammer. He drew pictures of bare bottoms with holes oozing blood and other pictures of violence. His depictions of death were so graphic that a teacher notified his parents.

Fascinated with vampires since the age of thirteen, he drew pictures of violent acts and began to eat things with a blood-like consistency. He killed animals, including a horse, to drink their blood. He also punched a friend in the nose and tried to spear another in order to get blood from them, and claimed that he had attacked strangers to get it, but didn't want to kill anyone. He kept an axe by his bedroom door and once told a psychiatrist he was going to kill his father.

He appeared to his mother to be in the grip of a serious mental illness. She would not allow him to live in their home. He told a psychiatrist that he was hearing male voices warning him to watch out for vampires. The voices also said that if he wanted to be like everyone else, he had to drink blood. He decided that his grandmother was using an ice pick at night to get blood from him -- although she was an invalid in a wheelchair. He also believed that she was poisoning his food. On the day that he killed her, he felt he was going to die.

A jury returned a verdict of second degree murder, with a life term. From prison, Riva sent several threatening letters to his mother. He showed every indication of extreme paranoia. He stopped drinking blood in prison, he said, because he couldn't get enough and he thought his body, used to human tissue consumption, was metabolizing his. He claimed he had taken blood from people for ten years. He had never wanted to kill anyone; he had just wanted their blood. Apparently, he was never a fan of vampire films or books.

Clinical Vampirism

Is vampirism that targets others a psychiatric affliction? That is, is the vampire activity a manifestation of a larger mental illness or is this a category unto itself?

Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a German neurologist and psychiatrist, wrote several case histories in 1886 that involved lust murders and blood drinking.⁶ He noted that some individuals can only get excited at the sight of fresh blood, such as the 19-year-old vine-dresser who murders a girl, drinks her blood, tears out her heart, and buries her remains. There was also the man who cut his arm for his wife to suck on before sex because it aroused her so strongly.

Dr. Richard Noll, who believes that clinical vampirism is rare, renames it Renfield's Syndrome. He describes the typical progression into this mental condition as: 1) a pivotal event, usually in childhood, triggers the feeling that blood is exciting and might involve autovampirism; 2) in puberty, this association becomes part of sexual arousal and may involve taking blood from

⁶*Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study*. Trans F.S. Klaf (New York: Stein & Day, 1965).

others. Persons with this syndrome are primarily male and the blood tends to take on a mystical quality, as if it can enhance their lives or empower them.⁷

Riva and Chase seem to fit this syndrome, although both clearly have comorbid disorders. It is not known whether they participated in autovampirism, but their blood thirst did progress through stages of increased violence. Ferrell seems to have developed his vampirism as a fetish and a means to control those around him. Since Ferrell neither attempted the practice in prison nor claimed to suffer from blood deprivation, it can be fairly assumed that his vampirism was an outgrowth of an imagination caught up in vampire role-playing games, and not clinical vampirism. Engaging in the forbidden excited him to the point of murder, but the vampirism element seemed incidental.

Some people seek out intense experience just to stimulate themselves and psychopaths appear to be born with a need for greater stimulation than the average person. Psychotic or otherwise, some people need something to inspire them past an emotional deadness. That antisocial activities escalate indicates, according to psychiatrist Robert Simon, that they fulfill a need for stimulation.⁸ In fact, some killers report that they feel normal only after killing. Thus, they become addicted to their compulsive patterns. It was clearly the case with Chase that he was planning to increase his brutal behavior quite dramatically and there is every indication that Riva would have killed again. Ferrell, too, seems to have acquired a feeling of grandiosity from his murders that may have inspired him to continue. As their dark sides take over, Simon points out, their personal lives spiral downward and self-care diminishes. They have to feed a need. This is the pattern of a drug addict. Simon also states that intermittent stimulation of the brain has the effect of altering brain excitability; it can even produce seizures. The brain becomes increasingly more sensitive to the stimulation and more prone to post-stimulation depression. It could be, he suggests, that some killers have this type of mood disorder. Where it takes them will be channeled through their fantasies. Some will only fantasize about their victims, while others will clothe themselves in a fantasy role that makes their killing both satisfying and permissible.

Enter the vampire – the charismatic, dangerous, sexual predator who possesses secret powers.

Psychologist Michael Apter's theory of arousal may help to explain.⁹ Once something is labeled dangerous, he says, it exerts a magical attraction. It produces arousal, which is mostly pleasant. It makes us feel more alive. However, it can also make us feel anxious, so we develop what he calls "protective frames." This is a way to mentally create a buffer around our experience that helps us feel safe; it allows us to feel excited without being overwhelmed by anxiety. For example, a protective frame is a story arch that has an aesthetic sense of closure. The monster rises up and scares us. We have the weapons to fend him off and bring him down. Thus, we can enjoy the excitement he engenders in us. Within the frame, we welcome risk; we're eager to go to the edge to experience the sense of exhilaration. We can actually enjoy danger.

Apter describes three types of frames: the confidence frame, the safety frame, and the detachment frame. 1) The confidence frame is one in which you feel confident of your abilities or weapons or defenses. You can bring on the monster. 2) The safety zone is the place where you feel no danger. 3) The detachment frame is a fantasy that involves no significant interaction with the environment. Each provides a degree of removal from the threats of the real world. With the safety and confidence frames, the individual is in the real world. In detachment, one is merely

⁷For details of Noll's studies, see *Bizarre Diseases of the Mind* (New York: Berkley, 1990) and *Vampires, Werewolves and Demons* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1992).

⁸See Robert Simon, *Bad Men Do What Good Men Dream* (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1996).

⁹Details can be found in Apter's *The Dangerous Edge: The Psychology of Excitement* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

observing. Either someone else is perceived to be in danger or the danger is perceived to be past or imaginary.

For some people the frame they use can become pathological. They might add sources of arousal to increase the excitement that actually endanger others and then use the frame to protect themselves from the consequences. Rod Ferrell, for example, viewed himself as a powerful vampire that the law officers could not arrest or prosecute. Even if he did end up in prison, he couldn't die because he was immortal. For him, the vampire was a protective frame that gave him license to do what he did and made him feel that he was too powerful to be saddled with consequences.

People who involve others in their frame in order to get aroused may put them at risk. The frame is a fantasy that allows this to occur without seeming harmful to the perpetrator. He still feels safe, despite potential repercussions in the real world. Generally the frame forms from a fantasy that has an erotic buzz, like the vampire for the killers described above. Then it involves preparation, which digs the person more deeply into the role. The next step includes a victim – perhaps initially in fantasy, but eventually in reality. Each of the killers thought about their vampiric acts before they did them; each knew he was going to eventually kill. Each killed as a “creature” more powerful than those victims. Generally the victim's distress continues the stimulation and enhances the image of power – these people are just disposable objects. Then the danger of discovery for those who are not completely psychotic provides an extra sheen of arousal. Both Chase and Ferrell avidly followed news reports of what they had done. That they viewed themselves in vampiric frames made them feel not only justified in what they had done – Riva as well – but invulnerable. Life is recreated through the frame so that their otherwise chaotic impulses are given organization and coherence. As a vampire, it makes sense to kill as they did, to take a life to enhance their powers. They create safety in this frame for themselves and use detachment to make it work.

Ferrell, while mentally disturbed, was not psychotic. He found within the vampire frame an exciting game that increasingly became more real to him because he finally had a sense of power and could not relinquish it. Being a vampire dampened the anxiety and heightened the excitement of the aroused state. It made perfect sense, given his frame and how strongly he seemed to believe in it, that he would feel as he did and do what he did.

These three cases illustrate how a mental illness that evolves into aggression and violence may find a form for these acts within a predatory mythology like the vampire. It is not the case that the vampire image has made them violent, but rather that it has provided a way to organize their self-impressions and to justify their acts. They are “safe” from the consequences. While everyone uses frames in some manner, in this case, the frame becomes pathological because it licenses killers to pull others into their frame and do them harm.

The vampire is a dangerous creature. Using this mythos for a protective frame heightens excitement but may also inspire aggression, depending on the state of mind of the person involved.