**Wikipedia – General Overview.**

Satanic ritual abuse (SRA, sometimes known as ritual abuse, ritualistic abuse, organized abuse, sadistic ritual abuse and other variants) was a moral panic that originated in the United States in the 1980s, spreading throughout the country and eventually many parts of the world, before subsiding in the late 1990s. Allegations of SRA involved reports of physical and sexual abuse of people in the context of occult or Satanic rituals. In its most extreme form, SRA involved a supposed worldwide conspiracy involving the wealthy and powerful of the world elite in which children were abducted or bred for sacrifices, pornography and prostitution.

The panic was influenced to a large extent by testimony of children and adults that were obtained using therapeutic and interrogation techniques now considered discredited. Initial publicity generated was by the now-discredited autobiography Michelle Remembers (1980), and sustained and popularized throughout the decade by the McMartin preschool trial. Testimonials, symptom lists, rumors and techniques to investigate or uncover memories of SRA were disseminated through professional, popular and religious conferences, as well as through the attention of talk shows, sustaining and spreading the moral panic further throughout the United States and beyond. In some cases allegations resulted in criminal trials with varying results; after seven years in court, the McMartin trial resulted in no convictions for any of the accused, while other cases resulted in lengthy sentences, some of which were later reversed. Scholarly interest in the topic slowly built, eventually resulting in the conclusion that the phenomenon was a moral panic, with little or no validity beyond paranoia.

Official investigations produced no evidence of widespread conspiracies or of the slaughter of thousands; only a small number of verified crimes have even remote similarities to tales of SRA. In the latter half of the 1990s interest in SRA declined and skepticism became the default position, with only a minority of researchers giving any credence to the existence of SRA.

**Slate Magazine – A specific case of a convicted family.**

Among the atrocities that Frances and Dan Keller were supposed to have committed while running a day care center out of their Texas home: drowning and dismembering babies in front of the children; killing dogs and cats in front of the children; transporting the children to Mexico to be sexually abused by soldiers in the Mexican army; dressing as pumpkins and shooting children in the arms and legs; putting the children into a pool with sharks that ate babies; putting blood in the children’s Kool-Aid; cutting the arm or a finger off a gorilla at a local park; and exhuming bodies at a cemetery, forcing children to carry the bones.

It was frankly unbelievable—except that people, most importantly, a Texas jury, didbelieve the Kellers had committed at least some of these acts. In 1992, the Kellers were convicted of aggravated sexual assault on a child and each sentenced to 48 years in prison. The investigation into their supposed crimes took slightly more than a year, the trial only six days.

And now, even the Travis County district attorney agrees that the trial was unfair.

After multiple appeal efforts and 21 years in prison, the Kellers are finally free. Fran Keller, 63, was released from prison on Nov. 26 on a personal bond, just in time for Thanksgiving. Her daughter was waiting for her with a bag full of the first clothes that weren’t prison-issued that Keller had seen in years. Dan, who turned 72 in prison and now walks with a cane, was released on Dec. 5; this time, Fran was there to greet him. (The Kellers divorced while in prison yet remain close, as close as two people locked up in separate prisons for crimes they say they didn’t commit can be.)

Why did psychotherapists and investigators conclude that these fantastic allegations were true?

The Kellers were released after the doctor who had testified at their trial and provided the only physical evidence that any sexual assault had taken place recanted his testimony. Travis County District Attorney Rosemary Lehmberg agreed with the findings of appeals filed on the Kellers’ behalf that they were denied their right to a fair trial and that their conviction should be overturned, allowing the Kellers to be released while their appeals move through the courts. In practical terms, this means the Kellers are on a path that may lead to their complete exoneration—and that they were able to celebrate their first Christmas with their families in more than 20 years.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*The seeds of the panic were planted with the 1980 publication of Michelle Remembers, the best-selling account of a Canadian psychotherapist’s work with a woman named Michelle Smith, who, under his care, began recalling forgotten memories of horrific childhood sexual abuse at the hands of her mother and others who were part of a devil-worshipping cult. The book, though riddled with fantastical claims (for example, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the Archangel Michael healed Smith’s physical scars), launched a cottage industry in recovering memories of satanic ritual abuse. (The psychotherapist and Smith later married.)

**People.vcu**

[**http://www.people.vcu.edu/~dbromley/undergraduate/spiritualCommunity/SatanicCults.html**](http://www.people.vcu.edu/~dbromley/undergraduate/spiritualCommunity/SatanicCults.html)

The satanic ritual abuse scare was a moral panic that began in the 1980’s in North America and lasted throughout much of the 1990’s. It was fueled by claims of Satan worship made up of several components: Child and sexual abuse, Human ritual sacrifice, Teenage abduction rumors, Animal Mutilation, Claims of actual Satanists (The Church of Satan and Temple of Set), Heavy metal rock and horror-core music, Violent and fantasy games.

During its time, the SRAS led to many criminal investigations based on little or no evidence of an actual occurrence of satanic activity or any criminal activity whatsoever. Although there are many components to the satanic ritual abuse scare, the incidents of sexual child abuse and abduction related to rumors of satanic cult activity will be the focus of this review.

\*\*Good Source for ideas\*\*