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**Probing the Underworld
of Occult Crime**

LARRY KAHANER

CULTS THAT KILL

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of Occult Crime**
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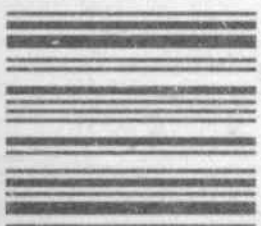
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INTRODUCTION

This book began as an investigation into the growing phenomenon of Satanism in America. It was to be a study of Satanists, their beliefs and practices. As I interviewed more and more people living in this bizarre and mysterious world, however, what I found led me in a different direction. I found a hidden society, much larger and more disquieting than the world of Satanism alone, a place few people know exists.

It is the underworld of "occult crime," and it's the most-discussed issue in law enforcement circles today. The crimes are frightening: a homicide where the decapitated victim is surrounded by colored beads, seven coins and chicken feathers; ritual sacrifices at wooded sites where black-robed cultists mutilate animals on altars; other homicides where the corpses are found drained of blood with symbols such as a pentagram or inverted cross carved into their chests; drug and pornography rings with nationwide connections to occult groups; carefully executed grave robbing; Satanic rituals and human sacrifices involving children—fantastic stories told by hundreds of children in scores of preschools throughout the United States, all of them relating similar horrors.

I discovered a small clique of police officers—"cult cops" or "ghostbusters" as they're affectionately known by their peers—who have specialized in this field. To their surprise, they find themselves overwhelmed with requests to analyze outside cases and lecture before other law enforcement agencies. The need for this information is growing so quickly that

the investigation of occult crime is now being taught in police academies by the same officers who have written the procedural manuals.

This book details the new wave in crime through the eyes of those who are involved in it. But beware: readers who like their crime stories wrapped up with neat conclusions will be disappointed. Occult crimes are rarely solved.

This is new territory, just as drug crimes were in the 1960s, computer crimes in the '70s, and terrorism in the '80s. Most agencies are not yet versed in occult crime investigation, and few cases are examined by experts. I have presented several cases in depth, but the purpose of this book is to show the far-reaching breadth of this type of crime. By my having strung together many incidents, the reader will get a better understanding of occult crime than if he or she read just one or two particular cases. I also have omitted well-known, occult-related crimes like those of Charles Manson and others; enough has been written about these familiar villains. This book will show you crimes in your own neighborhood that you didn't know existed.

Because of the controversy surrounding these crimes, I have chosen to let police officers describe their own experiences. All conversations took place over a two-year period—in some cases I spent several weeks with one particular person—and the interviews were recorded. What you will read are their exact words. All testimony, whenever possible, was corroborated by another investigator, those involved in the crime, police records or court documents. Sometimes several sources were used. Because no one's memory is precise, especially about incidents that occurred many years before, I have occasionally corrected simple errors in dates, times, spelling of names and similar details. Whenever explanations, amplifications, or definitions were necessary, I have set them within brackets. I also have included selected newspaper articles,

police reports and official memoranda about incidents to contrast public knowledge with behind-the-scenes knowledge.

You will also read verbatim testimony from those outside the law enforcement community: practitioners of white and black arts, private investigators, doctors, therapists, clergy, victims, and others.

Each investigator has his or her own approach to occult crime, and interpretations may vary from expert to expert. Don't be disturbed if one point of view is followed by a different one. I did not dismiss reliable testimony just because it didn't "fit in." Remember, law enforcement is often more art than science, and this is particularly true of occult crime. Because the field is so new, a consensus on many issues has not been reached by the law enforcement community.

Keep in mind that few who engage in occult activities are criminals. The majority are law-abiding citizens; their activities are considered religions—and are thereby protected under the Constitution. In fact, police find that some of their best sources about occult crimes are those involved in the occult who are eager to rid their own closed communities of the criminal elements.

One final note: it is easy to sensationalize occult crimes by dwelling on gruesome evidence. While I have not omitted anything solely because it is frightening, neither have I included shocking evidence simply to titillate my audience—you won't find any unsupported claims, even from credible sources. But I warn you in advance that there is horrifying material in this book, especially in Chapter 12: *The Occult Survivors*. Excuse the cliché, but it's not for the squeamish.

There are many people and organizations I would like to thank for their help. Some spent only a short time with me while others spent days and weeks telling me about incidents, introducing me to informants, sharing their notes and showing me evidence from their cases. Some of these people are

quoted extensively, while others are not. Even those whose words are not printed here have helped greatly by heading me in the right direction, confirming my sources or by helping me understand the scope of this crime.

Among them are Sgt. Ed Anderson of the San Jose State University Police Department, who shared his research on occult symbols with me; Blanche Barton, administrator of the Church of Satan; Linda Blood, former member of the Temple of Set, who helped me understand more about this particular Satanic cult; Dee Brown, researcher and TV producer, for her insights into preschool cases in Southern California; Sgt. Rod Carpenter of the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office in Martinez, California; Private Investigator Ted Gunderson of Los Angeles, for his contacts in the occult world; Gwyn Gwynallen, Feather, and Margot Adler, practitioners of the occult arts, who taught me the strange beauty of their world; Investigator Judy Hanson; Special Agent Ken Lanning of the FBI Academy Behavioral Sciences Unit in Quantico, Virginia; Father James Le Bar of the New York Archdiocese; Det. P. J. Lawton of the Pima County Sheriff's Department; Police Consultant Jim McCarthy; Tim Maas, Pastoral Counselor, who helped me understand the psychological problems of victims of the occult; Prof. Jeffrey Russell, of the department of history of the University of California at Santa Barbara; Det. Gary Traina of the Newport Beach California Police Department and Dr. Lawrence Pazder, whose compassion for victims of occult crime is enormous.

I would also like to thank Officer Tim Boyle of the Maryland National Capital Park Police, who showed me the action in my own backyard; Det. Jim Bradley of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Intelligence Division, who introduced me to the Hispanic occult underworld in the Washington area; Chief Investigator Mike Davison of the Monroe County, Michigan, Sheriff's Office, who shared his most exciting case with me; Capt. Dale Griffis, now retired, of the Tiffin, Ohio,

Police Department, who was more than generous with his time, information and homespun wisdom; Det. Pat Metoyer of the Los Angeles Police Department Criminal Conspiracy Division, whose insights into handling occult crime are unique and painfully practical; Deputy Probation Officer Darlyne Pettinicchio of Orange County, who doesn't give up on teenagers that society has thrown away; Det. Bill Wickersham and his partner Det. Cleo Wilson of the Denver Police Department, whose passion for the subject of occult crime is catching.

More than any other area of criminal activity, occult crime is kept close by police officers, and it took many months for me to gain the trust of investigators.

For help in opening usually closed doors, I especially thank Det. Sandi Gallant of the San Francisco Police Department's Intelligence Division. Because of her excellent reputation in the law enforcement community, mentioning her name got me entrée that I might not have gotten otherwise.

There are also many people whom I cannot name, because they are afraid of retribution from occult groups, humiliated by what happened to them, or because they are police officers whose undercover assignments won't permit their identities to be made public. Additionally, there are police officers who have been told by their departments not to talk about occult crime outside the law enforcement community. Many of them talked with me despite the prohibition, and I thank them for taking the risk. Some of them will recognize their words under the guise of pseudonyms, as we agreed.

Last, I would like to thank my editor Jim Frost for understanding the different turn that this project took and his willingness to embrace it.

Larry Kahaner
Washington, DC
January, 1988

Occult crime may be the most difficult area of police work today. You won't find simple cases with obvious suspects. You find bits and pieces, evidence that goes nowhere, testimony that is always suspect and crimes so bizarre and disgusting that even most police officers don't want to believe it exists.

**—DET. SANDI GALLANT,
SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT**

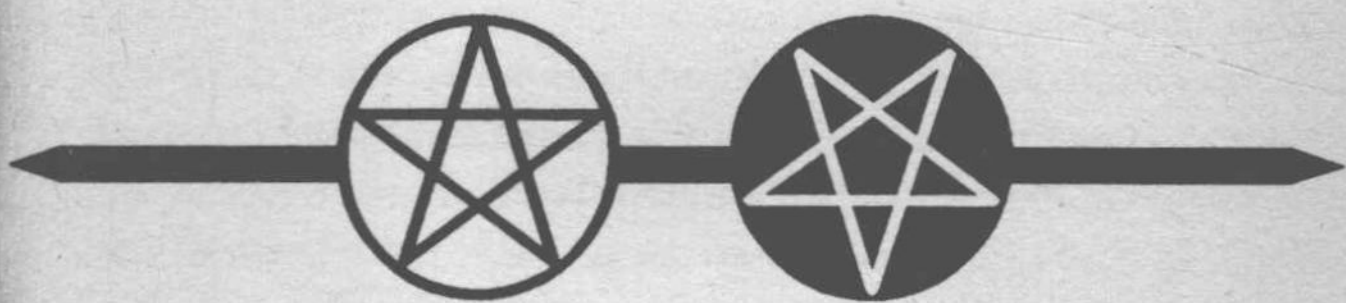
Where all these occult religions go bad is when people aren't satisfied to live within the environment they have created. It's not enough to have power over themselves. They want to control the heavens and each other. As the need for more power grows, occult crime increases. It attracts people who aren't satisfied; they want more power. The more powerful you are, the more people you have power over, and the more powerful you become in turn.

**—DET. CLEO WILSON,
DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT**

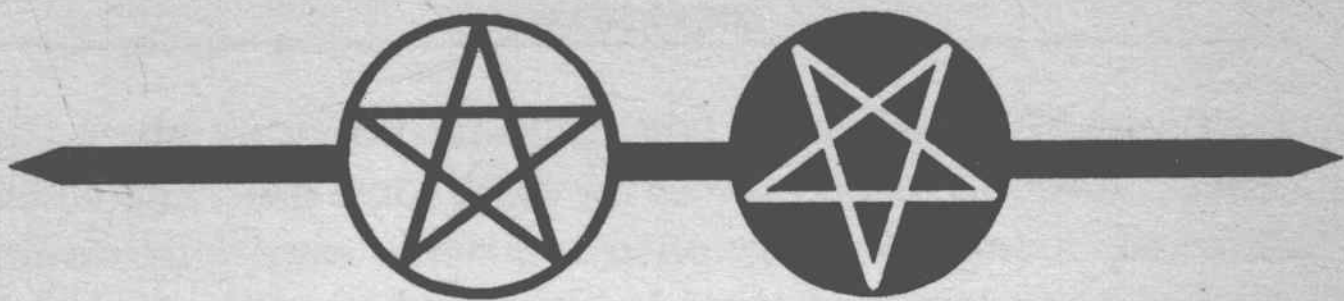
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CHAPTER ONE:



THE CULT COPS



Some police officers are experts in terrorism, gangs, organized crime, or explosives. A handful have focused on occult crime. Some detectives were thrust into the field by a single case, while others have found themselves bewildered by an explosion of apparently bizarre and unrelated cases and have strived to make sense of them. Although each officer approaches the subject in his* own way, each shares an irresistible passion and curiosity about human beings who operate just beyond what most of us would consider the real world.

[Sandi Gallant, forty-four, is a detective with the Intelligence Division of the San Francisco Police Department. In 1972, she made national news by being the first female police officer assigned to street duty in San Francisco. She also worked as the first decoy prostitute, the model for similar police actions now commonplace. Her interest in cults and the occult was triggered by the Jonestown, Guyana, mass suicide of Jim Jones and members of the People's Temple, which was established in San Francisco.]

DET. SANDI GALLANT: I got a call at home on November 23, 1978, from my boss saying, "Do you know anything about People's Temple?"

*The masculine pronoun appears here and elsewhere for simplicity, but should be understood to include both male and female.

I said, "I know they've been right next door to where the Zebra [murders] suspects were for quite some time, and when I worked in Juvenile every once in a while somebody would call and complain that their kid was with this group, but I really know nothing about them." He said, "We're getting reports that two hundred in the group committed suicide."

We both kind of cackled on the phone and said it was ridiculous. Then he said, "But the reports are coming from the State Department." I got serious real fast. "Oh, my. . . ." And he said, "Well, I just wanted to know if you knew anything about it."

By the next day, the count was four hundred people. The Department had somebody who was working with the FBI, but the information wasn't being gathered fast enough. I was working prison gangs at the time, eating my lunch one day in the office, and the boss said "Daly, get in here! [Daly was Gallant's maiden name.] I got an assignment for you. The FBI needs someone to work liaison, to gather information, put files together." I've always been fairly good at putting systems together, so I said, "Okay." [Before entering the police academy, Gallant worked as a civilian employee in the Police Department. She compiled the Department's first comprehensive tattoo and scar file as well as a left- and right-handed file of criminals.]

What I did mostly was a lot of paper shuffling, a lot of paper handling. I wasn't directly involved in the interviews until later on. One of the fellows in our office, however, Don Daniels, did some interviews of the survivors when they came back. One of the janitors in our building lost his wife and five children. Don and I did that interview, which was tough. A little bit after that, less than a year later, the man who was to become my partner, Jerry Belfield, and I got involved with some of the survivors who were living over in the East Bay.

Jeannie Mills, who was an ex-member of People's Temple, was murdered along with her husband in their home in Berke-

ley. Their daughter was critically wounded. [Mills and her husband Al ran a halfway house for former cult members called the Human Freedom Center.] The original call came from one of the Jonestown survivors who was living over in Berkeley, and our immediate thought was, Oh my God, someone from the Temple killed them. It's starting again, but that turned out not to be the case.

We began doing some surveillance on some of Jones's adopted children, just to get a feel for whether they were a little agitated or too excited, while Berkeley [Police Department] was trying to put the case together. That was really the beginning of how we got involved in cults. As it turned out, the D.A. didn't have enough to go to prosecution, but the investigation suggested that the son had shot the parents and critically wounded his sister.

Out of that, over a period of months working that case, we developed a general interest in the area of cults. I eventually went back in to the boss and said, "There are other groups out there, certainly not to the point where the Jones group was, but there are some concerns around." I told him that I didn't necessarily look at law enforcement as something that always reacts after something happens but before it happens. I reminded him that our Department was starting to receive a series of complaints regarding specific organizations, and perhaps it might be wise to give it some serious thought.

Murphy, the boss, said, "Go for it," which was highly unusual, because you have a problem. You have the First Amendment, freedom of religion, so I made it very clear to him that I wasn't going in looking at the ideology of groups but their actions. I think the reason why they let us go ahead with this was People's Temple. We got caught with our pants down.

[Dale Griffis, fifty, was captain of the Tiffin, Ohio, Police Department. Before his retirement in 1986, he served the