

# RITUAL ABUSE-TORTURE: THE MOST UNSPOKEN FACE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Whenever we explain, to those who ask, that our activism work is focussed on exposing the reality of ritual abuse-torture the common response is, “But that doesn’t happen here ... not in this town ... does it?” It would be a relief if we could be reassuring by stating ... “No, ritual abuse-torture does not happen in your town”. But, we cannot.

A life-altering event happened to us in 1993 when Sara, not her known name, asked us for help. She stated she wanted to exit from the ritual abuse-torture (RAT) family/group into which she reported she had been born. As well, she gradually disclosed she wanted to get away from the re-victimization which she reported was being inflicted unto her by a group of health care professionals. This group was described by Sara as involving women perpetrators who used her ritual abuse-torture vulnerability to enslave and traffic her. This situation occurred when she was referred by her doctor to the institution for help.

Coming to know Sara gradually challenged our worldview. As we struggled to understand the chaotic and extensive horror embedded in the human perpetrator-victim relationships of ritual abuse-torture families and other like-minded groups. Not only did our worldview transform so to did our life goals. Just as we could not abandon Sara, we could not abandon or leave behind the infants, toddlers, children, youth, and other captive women who, though visible to us all, remain among the most invisible and the most unspoken of captive contemporary and trafficked slaves.

## What Acts do Perpetrators of Ritual Abuse-Torture Inflict?

Briefly, ritual abuse-torture victimization is intentionally inflicted by perpetrators living within intergenerational families and/or like-minded groups. Occurring “in-house” and “on-site” ritual abuse-torture involves organized acts of:

1. **Child abuse** which can be a daily in-house occurrence for children living within ritual abuse-torture families; or it can be a situational on-site occurrence for children who are “cared for” in institutions, orphanages, or other child care facilities.
2. **Terrorization** which keeps the victimized child silenced and enslaved by forcing a child to drown their pet cat then threatened that they will be drowned if they tell, for example.
3. **Cruelty to animals** including bestiality.
4. **Physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit tortures** such as electric shocking including penetration and electric shocking of the girl child’s vagina; such as

hanging by a limb, being burned, and having a gun inserted into the child victim's mouth to threaten them with death.

**5. Pedophilia**

**6. Necrophilism and pedophilic necrophilic acts** such as inducing “death-like” immobility in the infant to youth or woman victim by over-drugging, choking, or suffocating into unconsciousness.

**7. Violent ritualisms** that function as **group bonding** mechanisms which normalizes family/group raping of a toddler, for example.

**8. Horrification** of victims by forcing them to inflict dehumanizing acts unto another child victim; for instance, forcing one child victim to smear feces unto another child victim.

**9. Counselling and enforcing conditioned suicidal and other Self-harming acts** unto their victims to ensure the victimized person remains silent for if they try to tell they can become triggered into committing suicide and dead victims cannot tell; and,

**10. Exploitation and trafficking** of victims in the pedophilic and female adult pornographic and sexualized exploitation trade, both “off-street” and “on-street”, regionally, nationally, internationally, or transnationally, and the forced involvement of victimized persons in other criminal acts such as drug trafficking.

## **Ritual Abuse-Torture, Exploitation, and Trafficking**

As previously mentioned, the trafficking and exploitation that perpetrators of ritual abuse-torture commit can occur either off-street or on-street. On-street trafficking is the most familiar and more visible to mainstream society, discussed frequently in the media as street prostitution, a form of exploitation that is frequently controlled by “pimps”. Pimps, mainly identified as men, control women and girls using various means of physical violence, gang raping, or by inflicting drug addictions and dependency unto the women and girls they enslave. Families/groups which practice ritual abuse-torture may also push older youth and women into this on-street form of human trafficking.

Off-street trafficking, however, continues to remain invisible to mainstream society, although “outsider” pedophilic perpetrators do know how to gain access to the network of ritual abuse-torture families/groups who do supply them with “insider” infant, toddler, child, and youth victims. Ritual abuse-torture families/groups also



**THE WHOREHOUSE<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> “The Whorehouse” is part of a drawing by Abigail, a survivor of ritual abuse-torture, which was donated December 24, 2003 as testimony to her ordeals of in-house trafficking. Her work was part of the artifactual testimonials displayed during the side-panel presentation we participated in at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, March 1-12, 2004.

market captive enslaved women to outsiders. The marketability of the victims—from infants to women—is that the RAT torturers have conditioned their victims to withstand heinous atrocities, many since infancy, thus the outsider can rent “the perfect victim”.

The most unspoken face of human trafficking is the off-street in-house, on-site trafficking that occurs within the confines of the ritual abuse-torture family or like-minded groups. Within this context of family/group the victims—infants, toddlers, children, youth, or captive women—are trafficked whenever it suites the RAT perpetrators needs and desires.

### **What are the Off-Street In-House, On-Site Trafficking Sites?**

Off-street, in-house, on-site trafficking sites are, for example:

1. In the victim’s home and in the homes of like-minded others
2. Underground in house and church basements
3. In garages, warehouses, and churches
4. In community institutions such as foster care homes and orphanages
5. In recreation facilities such as cottages, cabins, campers, tents, on boats, in airplanes, and in the out-of-door
6. In private secretive clubs
7. In hotels and motels
8. In the private offices of professionals who utilize the last appointment of the day to organize acts of victimization
9. At the frequent violent family/group gatherings commonly referred to as “rituals and ceremonies”, and
10. In any place suitable to the perpetrators that increases their thrills, such as, raping a victimized person in a parking lot where the risks of being seen increases their excitement, or raping the victim while driving them to a violent family/group event, or even finger raping the victim under the table in a restaurant ... all such attacks increase the tension and thrill prior to the initiation of the violent family/group events.



**THE WHOREHOUSE<sup>2</sup>**

### **Who are the Ritual Abuse-Torture Traffickers?**

By now, it may be evident that the RAT traffickers are mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and like-minded family members, friends, or neighbours. They are groups of men and women from all walks of life; they are men and women who use positional power as a cover; they are professionals, clergy, or laypersons. They are, as defined in The Report of the High Commissioner on

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<sup>2</sup> This second drawing by Abigail depicts the physical trauma of sexualized exploitation as well as the state of captivity that can be inflicted when the victimized child is chained to the bed.

Human Rights, recruiters; transporters; those who exercise control over trafficked persons; those who transfer and/or maintain trafficked persons in exploitative situations; those involved in related crimes; and those who profit either directly or indirectly from trafficking ...<sup>3</sup>

### **Transporters: How do Ritual Abuse-Torturers Transport?**

Transportation is easy. The RAT families/groups have made it easy by instilling terror and by inflicting all forms of tortures and horror unto the victimized infant, toddler, child, youth, or captive enslaved woman who are conditioned not to utter a sound. Over-drugging is convenient as drugs are easily placed into an infants or toddlers nursing formula to guarantee their on-going drugged silence. Trafficking and transportation is by car or invisibly in the trunk of a car, or by truck, transport truck, plane, helicopter, boat, winter and summer recreational vehicles, campers, or by whatever means available to the perpetrators.

### **Why do Ritual Abuse-Torture Traffickers do what they do?**

Ritual abuse-torture families/groups engage in the organized crime of trafficking, whether on-street or off-street for various reasons, which are:

1. For greed and the financial profit obtained from involvement in meeting the demand for pedophilic and adult pornography and the “sex” trade;
2. To satisfy the family/group needs and desires to participate in violent organized cruel and inhumane pedophilic group pleasures and entertainment and to participate in the pleasures they derive from the infliction of creative brutality onto another human being ... with the thrill of wondering how far they can go.
3. To gain prestige and other benefits within their specific ritual abuse-torture family/group or within other inter-connected regional, national, international, or transnational ritual abuse-torture families/groups; or
4. To gain other benefits such as a job, positional power, or wealth within mainstream society by meeting the exploitative demands of outsider perpetrators; for example, by supplying a victim to their pedophilic boss a perpetrator of ritual abuse-torture may get a raise or a new job position.

### **Prevalence**

According to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) “ritual abuse and torture” was reported to occur in every region of Canada; however, no statistics are presently collected in Canada.<sup>4</sup> From our professional life-altering

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<sup>3</sup> The Report of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “*Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*”. [www.WomenWarPeace.org](http://www.WomenWarPeace.org)

<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. (1993). *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence ~ Achieving Equality* (pp. 45-47). Ottawa: The Minister of Supply and Service Canada.

journey into the reality that Sara reported, which included years of victimization—years of ritual abuse-torture—years of terror, torture, and horror—years of organized acts of human evil inflicted within the context of family and by like-minded groups—we accept the Canadian Panel’s findings.

As panellists, on a side-panel presentation, “*The Many Faces of Torture*”, at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, in March 2004, we carried with us the artifactual testimonials—poems, stories, drawings, and paintings—of 61 persons from 6 countries—Canada, Costa Rica, England, Germany, Scotland, and the United States—who reported surviving ritual abuse-torture. We have also received reports from professionals in Australia, England, Germany, Israel, South Africa, and the United States. Over and over again the horrific themes of terror, torture, and horror were repeated.

Persons who have survived ritual abuse-torture victimization have struggled for years, just as the holocaust survivors have struggled and just like the POW survivors had to struggle, to have their stories of life-threatening horrific ordeals respected. And, as society learns of the many human rights atrocities inflicted by traffickers of human beings, it is the survivors within ritual abuse-torture families/groups that have remained the most invisible faces of human trafficking. It has been our goal with this paper to make the faces of the survivors of ritual abuse-torture visible—to make them visible persons entitled to all their human rights and to have the crimes that have been committed against their humanity recognized by civil society.

### **In Conclusion**

The United Nations Committee Against Torture has considered specific forms of torture, including trafficking of women, as part of a gender-sensitive interpretation of torture as is defined in Article 1: “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental is intentionally inflicted on a person ... .”<sup>5</sup> If you, the reader, have been informed by the contents of this article then our goal has been achieved. It is also our hope that you will welcome all persons—infants to captive enslaved women—who struggle or who have struggled to overcome ritual abuse-torture victimization and traumatization—into all your communities so they will no longer be forced into the shadows of marginalization, isolation, and oppression!

We conclude with Sophie’s poem:

#### **I open my eyes**

I open my eyes. I see the room  
Instantly I am filled with doom.

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<sup>5</sup> The Convention Against Torture. (1987, June 26).

Will it be another night?  
Will you leave me filled with fright?  
Or will you stay and calm my fears?  
Make sure I do not cry my tears?  
Can't be, you would never dare,  
I know better, you don't care.  
I watch you come closer, I fill with dread  
I want to be any where but here in this bed.  
The pain washes over me, blood splatters the walls  
I try to block out your degrading calls.  
"Slut, Bitch, Whore," you scream  
I ignore you hoping it's only a dream.  
I open my eyes, and there you stand  
My blood falling from your hands.  
The night's still fresh, I know you're not done  
You haven't started to have all your fun.  
You tie me up, I cannot move  
What exactly are you trying to prove?  
I am yours, I can't resist  
I scream and still you will persist.  
You rent me out to all your friends  
I hope tonight all this will end.

Sophie ... a youth survivor of ritual abuse-torture, 2004©

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**PERSONS AGAINST NON-STATE TORTURE (NST)**

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