



The Utah County Sheriff's Office in Spanish Fork, Utah is investigating reports of "ritualistic child sexual abuse" in three counties spanning the years 1990 to 2010. More than 120 victims and witnesses who know of victims have come forward since the investigation began in April 2021. (Allan Stein/The Epoch Times)

Utah Ritual Abuse Case: Victims' Claims Deserve Our Attention

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https://www.theepochtimes.com/utah-ritual-abuse-case-victims-claims-deserve-our-attention_4860729.html?utm_campaign=roundup

November 13, 2022 Updated: November 14, 2022

Earlier this year, a decades-old controversy over satanic ritual abuse re-emerged as [Utah](#) authorities sought tips in a [case](#) that implicated a county attorney, his family, and other prominent families in the area.

Shortly after the sheriff's request for tips, Utah County Attorney David Leavitt held a press conference in which he denied wrongdoing. Victim statements, however, accuse him and his family—"the Leavitts"—of indulging in horrific acts such as child abuse.

The media responded to the controversy with language about Q-Anon and the “satanic panic,” effectively discrediting the alleged victims without evidence.

It turns out that, in the wake of those stories, one of the alleged perpetrators, a former Utah psychologist David Hamblin, was [arrested](#) again for charges related to child sexual abuse.

Hamblin’s 2012 case—which included several felony counts of child sex abuse—was dismissed without prejudice, meaning that it could be revived at a later date. The prosecuting attorney, David Sturgill, had reportedly cited an “extremely delayed disclosure” that made it difficult to gather necessary evidence. Both sides, [according](#) to the Daily Herald, experienced difficulty obtaining records from the Division of Child and Family Services.

The brutality and grotesque nature of the alleged incidents in Utah include severe child abuse at the hands of satanists. It’s not as if these are the ramblings of a conspiracy theorist either. In requesting tips, the sheriff previously said that “portions” of the broader investigation into ritualist child sexual abuse and trafficking were “confirmed.” Moreover, the victim statements appear to show multiple accounts corroborating the overall story, specific events, and names of alleged perpetrators.

We now know, after derisive media coverage, that two alleged victims have corroborated the account of a woman who claims to have been abused by Hamblin in the 1980s. The alleged victim claims to have lived in Hamblin’s neighborhood and, along with two other children, was told to perform oral sex on him at his house.

It’s unclear who exactly those children were. The victim statements, although partially redacted, appear to show Hamblin partaking in a pedophilic satanic cult that involved prominent families and Mormon clergy. Hamblin himself has [reportedly told](#) a member of his own family “I am sorry for raping you.”

If this were a case of Hollywood sexual assault, outlets would probably face massive backlash in line with the furor exhibited during the “MeToo” movement. But instead,

they've been allowed to issue sweeping narratives that effectively step on victims and sympathize with their alleged abusers.

It's disgusting and the media should apologize for their articles. There are legitimate concerns about false allegations of satanic ritual abuse during the 1980s and 1990s. My basic position is that these allegations should all be investigated while alleged perpetrators should receive due process and a presumption of innocence.

That does not mean, however, that outlets can simply dismiss victims' claims or paint them as part of a purported social panic. Doing so egregiously impugns the psyche and character of people who have potentially undergone some of the most horrific abuse imaginable.

Ritual abuse is and has been an incredibly controversial topic—and for good reason. The sheer number of allegations has raised suspicions—in the Utah case alone, police [received](#) over 150 tips since requesting them in May.

A 1995 study by UC-Davis ([pdf](#)) also concluded there was insufficient evidence for proving thousands of ritual abuse cases. Nevertheless, they identified 412 ritual abuse cases reported from municipal law enforcement agencies, departments of social services, and district attorneys. It also surveyed clinicians and social workers, finding 387 child ritual cases and 674 for adult survivors. That was in the 1990s and presumably represents a severe underestimate of the problem's scope. Victims allege to have received severe threats (e.g., being shown graphic photos of mutilated humans) for disclosing their abuse while some claim not to even remember it until their 30s.

The idea behind SRA is that perpetrators inflict so much physical and psychological pain that children dissociate in order to cope with the trauma. According to therapists, this can create an amnesic barrier that may block memories of the abuse but doesn't preclude certain symptoms of it.

Moreover, the study's authors said that reporting agencies “[o]verwhelmingly believed” the ritual abuse allegations. And while the authors concluded there was insufficient

evidence of organized satanic networks abusing children, they noted physical evidence such as “tattoos, drawings, scars on a child’s or adult’s body, film, photos, ritual dolls, masks, costumes, etc.”

Part of the UC-Davis study also interviewed children about their knowledge of satanism, and concluded that it was unlikely they would fabricate allegations. That study was reproduced by the Justice Department, which apparently thought ritual abuse was important enough to produce a report on it. In 1992, the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime within the FBI ([pdf](#)) published an “Investigator’s Guide to Allegations of ‘Ritual’ Child Abuse.”

From the Franklin scandal to the McMartin Preschool trial, alleged victims have claimed to be raped or witness rape by politicians, military personnel, and other prominent figures in communities.

Worse, the Utah statements and numerous other testimonies allege law enforcement involvement in cults as well as attempts to thwart legitimate investigations.

The allegations go on and on, often alongside mysterious occurrences—such as Franklin investigator Gary Caradori’s death or the “Conspiracy of Silence” documentary being pulled from broadcast—that would benefit alleged perpetrators.

The Franklin scandal, which led to a grand jury, involved children claiming they were flown to Washington for sex trafficking to high-ranking politicians. The grand jury ultimately said the allegations were unfounded and indicted one of the purported victims on eight counts of perjury. But the investigation itself was tainted by severe mishandling, according to critics. Among other things, Troy Boner claims to have recanted his account of the trafficking ring under pressure from the FBI. In the “Conspiracy of Silence” documentary, he recants his recantation.

The now-infamous McMartin Preschool Case, which ended in acquittal, has questions surrounding its resolution as well. Former FBI official Ted Gunderson [claims](#) to have

conducted his own investigation in which he appeared to find filled-in tunnels similar to the ones described by children.

This issue is not something responsible journalists should merely dismiss, especially since it potentially involves government cover-ups and horrific child abuse. A portion of the public also has [suspicions](#) about satanic-worshipping elite pedophiles.

The controversy surrounding ritual abuse has no doubt been influenced by the “pizzagate” scandal. Many people have claimed that the John Podesta emails disclosed by WikiLeaks appeared to use pedophilic code words, such as “pizza,” “map,” and “handkerchief.”

For example, [one email](#) showed someone telling Podesta: “The realtor found a handkerchief (I think it has a map that seems pizza-related. Is it yours [sic]? They can send it if you want. I know you’re busy, so feel free not to respond if it’s not yours or you don’t want it.” Podesta responds that it’s his “but not worth worrying about.”

Why exactly are the media so willing to publish a narrative that implies victim accounts are the result of a social panic? Media outlets have wrongly painted SRA as a narrative created by adults coaxing children into recalling non-existent memories.

Instead, it might just be the story of our lifetimes.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



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