

Vampires Are



STEPHEN KAPLAN

as told to

CAROLE KANE

An ETC Publication

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Kaplan, Stephen, 1940-
Vampires are.

Bibliography: p.

1. Vampires. I. Kane, Carole, 1939-

II. Title.

GR830.V3K36 1984 398'.45 83-6515

ISBN 0-88280-102-3

ISBN 0-88280-103-1 (pbk.)

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Published by ETC Publications
Palm Springs
California 92263-1608

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Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION

To Edmund Cohen; Roxanne, my leading lady; Brian and Stacy; Shirley and Sol Kaplan; Rochelle Lowenthal; Sam Kaufman; and ESPECIALLY TO THE VAMPIRES WHO ARE!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank each and every individual in the small army of people who have contributed in some way to this book.

My special thanks to Joel and Chris Martin, the late Ivan Sanderson, the late Long John Nebel, Fate Magazine, Regina and Barbara, and to the people around the world who shared their experiences with us.

Finally, particular thanks and appreciation for his patience and humor to Dr. Steven Kaplan, Endodontist.

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FOREWORD

By Joel Martin, Host, “Joel Martin Show”
WBAB Radio, Babylon, New York

How does one introduce and describe a vampirologist? Then again, how does one even meet a vampirologist in the first place? My introduction to Dr. Stephen Kaplan was in 1974 when I happened upon a newspaper article about him and his Vampire Research Center on Long Island. How could I resist?

As a radio/TV talk program host, I have had many strange encounters with many guests. There have been murderers, politicians, and people abducted by UFO's, psychics who bent spoons and repaired broken watches; a medium who on the air located missing persons; those who claimed to have traveled out of body; those who have come back as spirit voices. I have interviewed demonologists, pyramidologists, parapsychologists, clairvoyants, witches, cultists, exorcists — to say nothing of a long list of distinguished authors, celebrities, and other internationally known figures.

Now here was an article about a vampirologist! How could I resist digging further (if you'll pardon the play on words)? I bit! I called Dr. Kaplan and introduced myself, and the rest, as they say, is history. I became the first human on radio and TV to interview this strange but articulate character!

Was he part showman? Was he part social scientist, as he claimed? And was he, in fact, a distinguished and award winning instructor who really taught courses at a major university about “Vampires, Werewolves, and Creatures of the Night”? The answer to all of this is yes! And is he sincere in his research of contemporary vampirism? Again, the answer I have found is yes — sincere and dedicated to an admittedly bizarre subject.

It is now many years later. Dr. Steven Kaplan has been internationally acclaimed; he has been interviewed on hundreds of radio and TV programs around the world, to say nothing of numerous articles in national magazines, newspapers and journals. He became the first “vampire consultant” to the successful off-Broadway show “The Passion of Dracula” as well as to various television network programs and major motion pictures about vampires and the occult.

He has seen the subject become one of the most popular themes in the media in recent years — on TV, stage, and film — just as he predicted would happen.

I believe you will find this book fascinating — and some parts are frightfully funny — as funny as Dr. Kaplan is in real life.

What would you like to know about vampires? Perhaps you think it all died with the legendary Count Dracula. Not so! Dr. Kaplan has resurrected and pumped new blood into the legend. He is firmly convinced that it did not end 500 years ago in Transylvania, but that Dracula's descendants and their kind are living amongst us — now! The lid on Dracula's coffin has been left somewhat ajar for modern investigation. Dr. Kaplan says there are vampires actually roaming our streets, avenues and highways. This is what he and his group study; and their laboratories are often those very streets, avenues, and highways. They do not confine themselves to an office. They are unlike any other group of researchers you'll ever meet.

On one occasion I had the opportunity to visit the Vampire Research Center. They receive a steady barrage of mail and phone calls, and no call to the Center is ordinary. (I am told by one research assistant that a salesman once tried to sell them life insurance — to no avail.) Would-be vampires often call. But it is not Dial-A-Joke; a good many are dead serious, some very urgent. They come from loved ones of victims — and the culprits; from law enforcement specialists; from serious students of vampires and Dracula in history; from people in the media; and from those wanting information about the vampires of today.

I know you will want to read ahead — that you will be compelled to read this book. It is the first of its kind ever; the first contemporary, yet entertaining, book on every facet imaginable about today's vampires.

Now, I don't want to take all this too seriously — but as I'm writing this at night I'm wearing my cross; my clove of garlic hangs over the doorway, and my stake is at hand. Listen — better safe than sorry, especially when the world's greatest authority on vampires tells us they are there...waiting!

By the way, do you suppose you — or I — are vampires? Dr. Kaplan has a test for that too.

Am I safe? Are you? Don't get nervous. As he says, "If you've been bitten by curiosity, read the book." It's informative and entertaining...and it's safe.

So dig in!

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ask the average man or woman what a vampire is, and when they stop laughing they'll usually tell you it's a living-dead creature, preferably with fangs, pale green skin, hypnotic eyes, and a black opera cape with a red lining. It rises from its coffin at night to stalk innocent victims; and of course it has a heavy Transylvanian accent — "I vant to drrink yourr blahd."

Let's face it, we're all greatly influenced by the media. Bela Lugosi has immortalized Count Dracula by his brilliant film portrayal of the hairy, 500-year- young nobleman sporting bad breath and sharp teeth. He sucks out his victims' blood and drinks it so he can live forever, then returns to his coffin before daybreak. An entertaining story; kind of scary — but still only fiction. Our same average man or woman is sure that there's no such thing as a real vampire. Once, I myself felt the same way. But not now!

During my years of vampire research I have had some very frightening experiences. Many times, in sheer terror, I was ready to give up the study and let a less cowardly soul dig up the facts. But my vampire interest wouldn't die; it rose up again and again, and I would return to my work, painstakingly documenting case after case in this strange, unprecedented field of research.

It all began in 1971 while I was taking a graduate

course in Legal and Political Anthropology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Long Island. As the semester progressed. I made a very interesting observation: many of the customs and rituals of the primitive cultures we were studying showed striking similarities to vampire myths and legends.

Having been bitten at an early age with a consuming interest in strange phenomena, I had already read much about vampirism, and knew that this practice is mentioned throughout history, even in the Bible. As a professional sociologist I am also very interested in habits and rituals of particular groups or cultures, as well as the effect these have on society in general.

When I observed these two areas overlapping, I began to suspect that there might indeed be a basis of truth to the existence of vampires. And if this were so, it was possible that vampires still exist today! My mouth watered at the very thought! They might be walking among us; sitting next to us on the bus; waiting ... On the other hand, this might be just another theory that would prove groundless. But either way, this was an area I wanted to sink my teeth into. I decided that if vampires exist, I was going to prove it; and if they don't exist, I wanted to prove that to my own satisfaction, too. I must admit that deep down, I truly didn't expect to find any real, contemporary vampires.

At that time there was virtually nothing available for the study of recent vampires. All the books, myths, legends, were about vampires way in the past. There were no organizations doing current research, very few

scholarly books or papers, and even fewer newspaper articles. I decided that the best way to obtain the information I needed — if indeed any existed was to form a research group myself, and collect data from around the world. In late 1971 I founded the Vampire Research Center (although we did not officially become recognized until nearly a year later) and persuaded a few of my colleagues to join me. Between us we had backgrounds in the fields of paleontology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and hematology. Later, some of these were to leave and other expert consultants would take their places. It took all our combined skills to analyze and categorize the information we would receive from recordings, field investigations, and interviews with vampires. Closet scholars would give us advice in our quest, and friendly media people would also act as our eyes and ears in reporting strange happenings from around the world.

Right off the bat we learned that vampire researchers “don’t get no respect.” We were laughed at; picked apart by critics both in and out of the so-called scholarly world; even accused of being vampires ourselves! But as I often point out, being a criminologist does not make a person a criminal; being a bacteriologist does not make you a bacterium; so why would being a vampirologist make you a vampire?

Today, a decade after we began our research, society is beginning to accept as possible many phenomena once deemed only myth or purely incredible fantasy. We are living in an age where scientists avidly hunt for

Big Foot, Yeti, and the Loch Ness Monster; where landing on the moon is nonchalantly talked about as “old hat”: and where life after death is close to being proven as a scientific truth. The acceptance of life after death may be one of the reasons behind the tremendous interest in vampires that has recently arisen: for couldn't the vampire be an example of life after death? But ten years ago, vampire research was considered just a bizarre oddity. We were pioneers, on our own in a dangerous, previously unexplored field.

Yes, this research is a very dangerous undertaking. At any time, tracking down vampires can find the hunter suddenly becoming the hunted! After several unfortunate instances we had to develop elaborate security measures, even disguising identities to protect our families. But despite all the obstacles, we carried on our research, finding it more and more fascinating as we unearthed each new bit of precious information.

Some of our experiences have been downright funny. More of them have been spine-chillingly dangerous. In fact, am delighted to still be here to share our findings with you.

So get out the garlic, some holy water, a Bible or a cross; check your door and window locks, take a deep breath, and brace yourself. You are about to read a hair-raising, true account of actual vampires in today's world.

CHAPTER II

UNDERTAKING OUR VAMPIRE RESEARCH

In the early months of the Vampire Research Center, my colleagues and I had an enormous task ahead of us. We had to make the Center known, so that the public would be aware of a place to report suspected vampires or their rituals; and so that any vampires who so desired could call us. More importantly, we had to educate ourselves so that we could intelligently evaluate their reports.

We solved the first problem by convincing the telephone company that we were legitimate researchers, and finally getting them to list the Center in several local telephone books. We began our background research by examining in minute detail every bit of data we could find out about vampires — legends, myths, Bible references, theories, fiction, news articles, comic books, movies, television shows. What does a vampire look like? How much blood does one need? Do their victims always die? There were endless questions to answer before we would be fully prepared — if we could *ever* be fully prepared. But ready or not, it wasn't long before I received a call that led to my first face-to-face encounter with a man who claimed to be a vampire.

It was a quiet September evening in 1971. I was alone, answering the phone at the Center, beginning to feel like the host of a bad amateur show. I'd had three

crank calls in a row, each one an imitation of Dracula. (We receive more calls like that than we care to count.) When the phone rang again, I had no idea of the adventure I was about to embark upon.

A man I'll call William was on the phone. He'd found our listing in his telephone book, and at first I thought this was another crank call.

"I'm a vampire," he said, "and I'd like to know if you can introduce me to some other vampires."

As he talked, I realized he was serious. He thought we were a dating service for vampires! Despite the absurdity of the situation, I was very aware that this was a fantastic opportunity for the Center. Our first "real" vampire! I wanted to meet him — to interview him — and so I guess I led him on a bit... forgive me. I told him that it could be possible to arrange such an introduction, but I'd have to know more about him, his lifestyle, his needs.

"It would be a good idea if we could meet each other and talk," I said. And he agreed!

He invited me to his rented house, which was about a fifteen-minute drive from the Center, that very evening. Although no one was available to accompany me, I was so anxious to meet a "real" vampire that I decided to go alone. First I phoned him back, on the pretext of checking his address; I didn't want to go off on a wild-goose chase. He answered, and I knew it had not been just a prank call. I left his address and telephone number where one of my colleagues would find them later that evening, along with instructions to telephone me there in about two hours, and drove off.

About halfway there it suddenly dawned on me — I was going to meet a VAMPIRE! At least *he* thought he was a vampire. My excitement over meeting him suddenly disappeared. What was I getting myself into? He could have big sharp fangs, and try to attack me! Or he might be a full-blown psychiatric case. Either way, I would come out the loser. I considered turning back, but forced myself to keep going, scared or not. Wasn't this what the Vampire Research Center was all about? I couldn't run away.

A few minutes later I pulled up in front of William's house, and I quickly scanned the street, hoping to see some other cars or people around. There weren't any. I turned towards the house with a sinking feeling of foreboding.

It wasn't a medieval castle after all! Just a weathered old colonial style home with peeling white paint and a low porch. William was standing in the doorway under a yellow porch light, and he looked like an ordinary regular person — about six feet tall, thin, maybe 35 years old, brown hair and eyes. He was wearing comfortable slacks, a knit shirt and a light sweater; and his teeth were beautiful — white and even, no sign of fangs!

"Stephen Kaplan?"

I nodded and we shook hands. His were warm. Mine were cold and damp.

"Come in. We can talk in the living room," he said.

Wary and cautious, I followed him slowly through a dimly-lit hallway where several old-fashioned oil paintings hung. There was no sign of anything occult as

far as I could see; but there were no mirrors in view, either, and no religious objects.

The living room was dominated by an unusually large coffee table, about six feet long, and around it was a comfortable arrangement of chairs and a couch. A soft, brown rug covered the floor, and the only light came from a small lamp on the coffee table.

I was surprised to see someone else in the room. Somehow I had thought that a vampire wouldn't have too many friends; but a strikingly sensuous young woman was sitting on the couch. She was wearing a sheer flowing dress, and smiled pleasantly at me. Her teeth were even nicer than William's.

"This is Lorina." William said. Then he settled on the couch and motioned me to a chair. He told me that by day he was an engineer in a famous university, but by night he and Lorina were involved in vampirism. My stomach did a flip as I reminded myself that it was no-w night-time!

Lorina seemed happy to discuss their habits, relishing her words as she told me that they practiced blood-letting and drinking human blood. And she added that William enjoyed sleeping in a coffin.

"It brings me tranquility... peace of mind. And I feel it is extending my life. Would you like to see it?" William seemed anxious to show his "bed" to me.

I swallowed hard, forced a smile, and agreed. God, let one of the guys at the Center telephone me now! Let these people see that my colleagues know where I am!

They led me down another short hallway. The first thing I didn't like was the manacles hung over the top

of the bedroom doorway. The sight of them made me extremely uncomfortable, and I followed my host very reluctantly into the bedroom. By now I expected to be pounced upon by a whole group of vampires and become their next dinner — or liquid refreshment. But much to my relief, all we did was inspect the room.

It wasn't your usual bedroom. In the middle, on a platform about three feet high, was the coffin. It was made of wood, and looked like an expensive one. Over in a corner was a small cot with straps attached to the sides, and hung about on the walls were various whips, chains, and handcuffs. Lorina gestured towards the paraphernalia and told me that they were also involved heavily with sado-masochism. One of her very favorite things was to don leather gloves and beat William until he was bloody, then lick the blood. This she found very arousing sexually. Then she smiled provocatively at me. I shook my head politely — no. She was awfully beautiful standing there under the whips and handcuffs, but no. NO!

After we returned to the living room I decided to ask a few more questions. I had not realized how upsetting this kind of situation could be, and it seemed difficult to remember all the things I'd like to know from them. But so far they had been very cordial to me, and my terror had returned to simple fear again.

“Where do you find the people you get blood from?” I asked, being careful not to say “victims” lest I insult someone and put myself in more danger. Also, I didn't want to put them on the defensive.

“We have two types of donors,” William said.

“There are willing ones and —” he paused kind of dramatically — “and unwilling ones. The willing donors exchange sexual favors with us, and in return we get their blood.” He didn’t say any more about the unwilling donors. As for me, I figured it would be prudent not to bring the subject up right then.

They had been able to form a group of four or five people who visited regularly to donate their blood for sexual favors. Lorina said that two of them were lady wrestlers who would happily punch each other until they were covered with blood, to the sensual delight of the others.

William said that ads in a local Greenwich Village publication had brought the group together. He added that his phone call to the Vampire Research Center had been “sort of like going to the Source” in his constant search for willing participants.

“How much blood do you drink at one time?” I asked.

“It depends on the situation,” said William. Maybe six or eight ounces. I guess about a juice-glass full.”

“Or as much as we can get,” Lorina added.

Then they brought out an album of photographs which showed the two of them drinking blood, licking the wounds of the donors, many of whom were chained to a wall or lying on the floor. One was lying on the coffee table. Now I knew why the table was big!

“Are these the unwilling donors?” I asked uneasily. “Oh, no. Most of these people go along with what we want to do. We occasionally even pay them to act out our fantasies with us,” William replied. He also said

that he experienced his greatest sexual pleasure by watching blood ooze out and licking it from a wound, and added that this was the only way he could reach orgasm.

Lorina came in from the kitchen with a tray of some liquid in a pitcher and some glasses. “Would you like a drink?”

I declined as politely as I could. Even if I were able to keep anything in my stomach at that point, I didn’t know what the stuff was, and I didn’t want to risk being drugged.

I glanced at my watch and announced that I had to get back to the Center. I felt we had spent a reasonable amount of time so that they wouldn’t think I wanted to get out of there because I was afraid of them. Also, no one from the Center had telephoned, so my associates had probably been delayed in getting to the Center; and I didn’t want to stay where no one knew where I was, any longer than absolutely necessary. I had been lucky so far, but you never know what can happen.

I told William and Lorina that they had a very interesting, exciting life, and thanked them for inviting me for the interview. And I promised to phone them as soon as I could make contact with some other “vampires” for them. Then I headed for my car, trying mightily not to run — and hoping desperately that the car would!



Back at my office I wrote up a complete report of my encounter with William and Lorina, and as I read it over I began to wonder — had I really met two actual vampires? I had no criteria to measure them by. It was obvious that I was painfully lacking in both knowledge and evaluation methods.

The following afternoon my colleagues and I held a meeting to decide on the characteristics we would consider to be strong indications of an actual vampire. Each of us brought our notes from the intensive research we had been conducting. We wanted to try to answer two major questions: a) what does a vampire look like? and b) What do vampires do?

From our combined notes we found that vampires of legends and fiction are thin: have either very pale skin or green skin: sharp, elongated teeth; swollen, red tongues; burning eyes; and avoid the sunlight. They wear anything from a black opera cape to ordinary street clothing.

We approached the physical characteristics scientifically, agreeing that if these same features occur in people other than vampires, then they are not definite signs of vampirism. We concluded that every feature mentioned could occur, for example, in various forms of anemia, and agreed that some “vampires” could indeed have been victims of disease whose stories were embellished into vampire tales as they were told and re-told over the years. We reached this conclusion after discussing — for hours — what we had dug up in our research.

Anemia is a condition in which there is a less than

normal concentration of hemoglobin in the blood. Hemoglobin is the iron-containing protein which accounts for the blood's red color. Anemia is usually a symptom of some other disease within the body, and an extremely anemic person suffers loss of appetite, fatigue, and irritability.

In iron-deficiency anemia, the sufferer often has a *greenish cast to the skin*. Another form, pernicious anemia, is caused by a lack of vitamin B12. . The victim has a *pale complexion* — often from poor circulation and is *sensitive to bright light*. The *tongue* is *sore* and *reel*, and sometimes a *liquid diet* is necessary because it is difficult to swallow. There will often be dark circles under the eyes from general poor health. Before the advent of synthesized vitamins, doctors prescribed eating raw liver, an excellent source of vitamin B12, as a treatment for pernicious anemia. When our bodies lack certain nutrients, we often crave the foods which will supply them, and a sufferer of pernicious anemia could easily find himself craving raw liver.

Back when there was no medical knowledge of anemia — for instance at the time many vampire legends and myths take place — can you imagine what people would think of a person who slept all day (because he was tired all the time), had pale white skin and burning, dark-circled eyes, only came out when it was dark (light hurt his eyes), was rather unfriendly most of the time (sick and irritable), and loved to eat bloody, raw liver — or maybe only suck out the blood (because his tongue hurt too much to chew and

swallow)? and if he had greenish skin!? What great ingredients for gossip! It might even be suggested that he could use “a drink of blood” to give him some “life” or some color. Before long, you can see how an interesting vampire tale could evolve.

Another form of anemia brings out some even more interesting correlations to vampire tales. Hemolytic anemia accompanies a rare genetic disease, erythropoietic porphyria, associated with close in- breeding. Victims of this disease are *extremely sensitive to light*. Lesions caused by sunlight appear on the skin, and when complicated by infection result in permanent scarring and mutilation of the area, even involving loss of fingers. Hemolytic anemia reduces the sufferer to a *cadaverous shadow*, and the gums begin to recede, causing the *teeth* to *appear elongated*. Red staining of the teeth sometimes occurs, and under ultraviolet light they have a red fluorescence.

Remember the horror on Dracula’s face as the morning sun streamed through the dining hall windows, and his anguished screams as the golden light bathed him like acid? It mutilated his body, and he crumbled into dust. We could make an interesting hypothesis:

A nobleman of the 16th century, with deep religious roots, finds out he is dying from the “curse of royalty.” All he knows is that this means something terrible is wrong with his blood. Panic-stricken, he decides to try drinking human blood, thinking it might replace his own diseased blood and save his life. The only way he can get all the blood he believes he will need is to kill.

and drink the blood of his victims.

Following his horrendous acts of murder, the man is confronted with the most tangible symbol of his early religious training — the crucifix. He shrinks from it in terror, reminded of his own mortality and his eternal damnation. Another great basis for a vampire tale.

So, having ruled out the physical features we had investigated as peculiar to vampires, my staff and I considered the age of a vampire; but we found that they are mentioned at all ages. Vampires look only as old as they were when they “died” and were buried, or about to be buried. (In my own research I had found that most vampires allegedly rose up within the first 24 hours after “death” and therefore many were not yet buried.)

With al' this in mind, to answer our first question as to what a vampire looks like, we concluded that —as far as we could determine — a vampire can look just like anybody else. So far we had nothing that would help us to identify one.

We then approached the second question — What do vampires do? We analyzed each action before accepting it as indicative of true vampirism. Here are some of the things we discussed . . .

One of the most popular notions is that a vampire must return to his grave after sating his blood lust, and sleep in his coffin until he rises again the next night. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* even brings along his coffin and some earth from his grave wherever he travels. This could lead us to believe that sleeping in a coffin is a sure sign that a person is a vampire. However,

vampires are mentioned in historical writings long before coffins came into use for burial; so the coffin becomes only an embellishment to the vampire stories. We concluded that sleeping in a coffin is not proof that an individual is a vampire.

We were to find later on that some people actually do sleep in coffins, and claim to be vampires. Apparently they are emulating what they think vampires do, trying to attain the powers attributed to vampires, such as domination, immortality, sensuality, charisma, and so forth.

In further comparing our notes, we found that all the legends and vampire stories agree on this point: A vampire's every activity is single-mindedly devoted to satisfying the hunger for human blood, traditionally thought of as the life-giving fluid, from which it gains its vitality and power. Some tales depict the vampire having a secondary goal, too — sexual satisfaction. The first time it rises from the dead the vampire will visit its loved ones, especially a spouse or betrothed.

Actually, there is quite a lot of sadistic eroticism underlying vampire stories: the bedroom, the biting of the neck, the enslavement of the victim, the sucking of the life fluid into the mouth and swallowing it, the satisfaction and contentment experienced by the vampire.

After an exciting debate, we finally came up with three clues which we agreed could indicate that a person is a vampire. These were:

- a) The person must have a need to drink human blood, and actually drink it.

b) He/she must believe this ritual will prolong his/her life, perhaps eternally.

c) The person may find sexual satisfaction from this ritual.

In the future we would find other characteristics to add to our list; but these would come from our actual observation of the vampires and other blood-drinkers we were yet to meet.

With these criteria established, we were now ready to do a preliminary evaluation of my report on William and Lorina, the couple who professed to be vampires, to see if we could conclude that they were actual vampires. There were many questions unanswered. I had not actually observed them drinking blood, so I couldn't be sure they really did. We also needed to know if they had a physical need for human blood, and whether they believed they were gaining immortality — or at least longer life — from their blood-drinking. We would have to talk to them again. We also agreed that several of us should try to visit William and Lorina and actually observe them “in action” if we could arrange it.

I dialed William's number, but got no answer. We all took turns calling him throughout that day and every day and evening for a full week, and found that at the end of the week the number was disconnected. Then three of us visited William's house. No one was there. The university where William had said he was employed had no record of him, although he may have given me a fictitious name.

We were to find in our future studies that vampires.

or those who believe they are vampires, do not like publicity. They do not like to have their whereabouts known, and usually are very transient people. They seem to want to talk to someone about their behavior without being judged or reported to psychiatric centers; but after they tell of their habits they seem to have second thoughts and vanish into obscurity for protection. Or, like William and Lorina, I suspect, they are looking for fellow blood-drinkers and when they tell of their bizarre habits to an “outsider” such as myself, they are afraid of being exposed and disguise their identities, addresses, and any other information that could embarrass or incriminate them.

One group’s desire to keep vampire-like activity buried was brought very unpleasantly to my attention one afternoon in February, 1972. The telephone rang, and when I answered it I could hear strange music in the background. A man with a deep voice chanted some kind of mumbo-jumbo with a rhythmic beat. Then he said, “Stephen Kaplan, you will be dead before 12:00 midnight tonight. We have put a curse upon you. We are coming to get you. Be prepared. Expect to die.” Then he hung up.

This made me rather upset. I spent the rest of the day with all the windows and doors locked. I asked several of the staff to stay with me that night. And we did not sleep. Why didn’t I leave and go somewhere safer? Well, underneath it all I still wasn’t convinced that the call was genuine. And I guess I had a sort of morbid curiosity as to what would happen, too. Fortunately, nothing did happen, and I didn’t die. But I became

much more aware that there were people out there who did not like what the Vampire Research Center was doing. In ensuing months we received many death threats. (We still do.) Some were from members of blood cults, some from certain religious groups who were convinced that we were working for Satan and it was their duty to kill us in the name of God. Eventually several members of my staff left out of fear, and those who remained refused to let their names be known to the public.

We began to take many precautions, using collective security as one form of protection. No one would ever investigate a case alone. We did intensive telephone interviews before personally meeting our callers, and when our people were out in the field others of us would always telephone them on some pretext or other, to show that their whereabouts were known. We did this because some of the vampire attack reports we were receiving showed a pattern of victims who were “loners” hitchhikers, derelicts, and the like, who would not be missed for several weeks. We also have several other security measures which cannot be revealed, for obvious reasons.

But in spite of all the precautions we took, I was unable to prevent a terrible event which occurred within my own family circle. One day in late October, my family and I were enjoying a lazy Sunday afternoon at home. Our dog, Nova, a beautiful young sable-and- white collie, was romping in the back yard while the children — who usually played in the yard, too — were occupied with some indoor games. Nova found some

cookies on the ground and, being a normal dog, ate one. He died almost immediately. We found him lying in the yard, several cookies scattered around near him. It was later found that the cookies were permeated with the lethal poison strychnine. If the children had been out there, I shudder to think what could have happened!

Later that night I received a call from a man who said he was a Satanist. “Next time we’ll get you and your whole family!” he warned, and hung up. After that incident, I moved my family to another location; and to this day I will not reveal their whereabouts.

With the constant death threats, the difficulty in following up cases, and the gradual shrinking of the size of my staff as they found the pressures too demanding, I was about ready to give up the whole idea of vampire research; but in the back of my mind was the nagging thought that with all this opposition to my work, and from the reports we had so far received, there really *was* something to be discovered about contemporary vampires. We had all worked very hard, and had lived through some harrowing experiences, it was true. But if we were very cautious, very careful, we could possibly make some amazing discoveries. I was right.

Reports began to trickle in from around the country, and then from other parts of the world. Between the Dracula imitations and death threats and the out-and-out hoaxes, some actual vampire cases were emerging, and we tried to develop some kind of pattern from them.

A case which I found to be most interesting started with a phone call at 2:00 a.m. - they call at all hours, day and night — in early 1973. It was from a woman I'll call Ramona.

"I found your number in my phone book," she began. "I need someone to talk to. People would think I'm crazy, but I know I'm not. I just have this need to drink human blood. Could I possibly come over and talk to you?"

I interviewed her for about a half hour on the phone, until I was fairly certain that she was sincere, and then we made an appointment for her to come to my office the next day.

The first thing I noticed about her was how young she looked. On the phone she had told me she was thirty years old, but she looked no more than eighteen. Maybe drinking blood really did make a person look younger.

Ramona was fascinating one of the most feminine, sensual women I had ever seen; an exotic looking blonde, very heavily made up, with a voice that exuded as much sexuality as her body did. She talked about her vampire lust, which she had had for at least ten years. She had been drinking blood for all that time, and said she obtained the blood by trading her sexual favors for it.

"How do you extract the blood?" I asked. "Do you bite your donors?"

"Oh, no. That's much too painful!" she said. She took a little case out of her purse and opened it. Inside there were two implements — a 5cc hypodermic

syringe and a fresh razor blade. "I'm very good at extracting blood painlessly." she said proudly. "And I always take it from a part of the body that won't show."

"But doesn't that make your donor lose his, uh, concentration?"

Ramona smiled. "Not at all. We both enjoy it. At the right time I just place the needle into a vein in his arm, or sometimes another area, and extract a full syringe of blood. No, I mean, an artery. Then, I squirt the blood into my mouth and lick any blood that's left on his wound. It's a wonderful feeling! It really turns me on!" "What do you do with the razor blade?" I asked.

"Well, sometimes, if I want to prolong the pleasure. I'll use that to make little slashes on his body. The best place is the chest. Buttocks are too fleshy, and they don't bleed as freely."

I told her that I found her story a little incredible.

She shook her head impatiently. "I'm not making this up. I'll show you." She inched closer to me and leaned into my face. "Let's do it together. You know, that's really why I came here. Actually I live in Oregon and I heard of your reputation and came all the way to New York to meet you. I admire your power. Come, let me show you *real* pleasure."

Power? Me? I eyed this tempting, beautiful blonde seductress and simultaneously thought of the little case in her purse with the razor blade and the dreadful hypodermic needle, and my hair began to stand up. I was very glad that several of my staff were close by in the next room; and I declined her offer. I also recognized the way she was trying to cover her real

identity and where she really came from. Yes, much better to decline.

Ramona was very insulted. "Don't you want to experience the feeling of blood oozing from your body?" she asked.

That was about the last thing I wanted to feel. "No, I don't." I answered. But to calm her down, I told her that I might believe her, but she would have to prove her story to me. Perhaps I could witness one of her liaisons? Incredibly, she offered to let me watch her perform her ritual with one of her lovers, a former willing donor, whom she was going to spend that evening with.

"I'd very much enjoy having you there," she said, "and you'll see what pleasure blood-drinking gives me." She paused a moment, thinking it over. "Mm yes. And you'll have some evidence to add to your research. Please do come. All I ask is that you don't bring anyone else with you. I'm very sensitive about my need for blood. I believe you understand me, but I wouldn't trust anyone else."

Oh-oh. Another potentially dangerous situation. I thought it over and decided I could have an associate wait for me in my car, and if I didn't come back within a specified time, he could bring help. If Ramona's story were true, I wanted to document it.

I arrived at her hotel on the Upper West Side of Manhattan at about eight o'clock that evening. The three-room suite was decorated simply but comfortably. A few books on occult subjects were scattered around, along with several concerning

anatomy; and there were mirrors everywhere. Apparently Ramona was as vain as she was beautiful. But was she really a vampire?

She sat in the living room, sharing some wine with an average-looking man of about forty, and after she introduced us they both acted as if I weren't there. A few minutes later they went into the bedroom, and I sat in the doorway observing.

At first nothing seemed unusual. They caressed, they kissed; they appeared to be a normal couple enjoying sex. They became more and more ardent, and suddenly I noticed something shiny in Ramona's hand the razor blade! She was really going to use it!

She made several quick slashes on the man's chest — he didn't flinch — and hungrily began sucking and licking at his blood, thoroughly enjoying herself. She did this for about five minutes, and suddenly they were through.

They remained in bed, resting and totally ignoring me. Ramona lay there, eyes open, staring dreamily, looking totally satisfied and contented. Her partner looked exhausted and tired.

Feeling a bit awkward, I stood up to leave. "Thank you for allowing me to watch," I said stiffly. "It was very enlightening."

"Call me," Ramona purred as I headed for the door. "Don't forget."

"I won't forget," I said, and I closed the door behind me. Ah, the things I have to go through in the name of research!

I made my report for the Center and filed it away. A

few days later I made a follow-up call to the hotel, but Ramona had already checked out. Then I called her “home in Oregon” and found it was a non-working number. As I had suspected — it had happened again.

“RAMONA” — An “Unknown” 1973



Photos Courtesy of Vampire Research Center

When several cases led to the same dead end, we realized that we were going to have to change our method of investigation. The people who agreed to meet with us were carefully protecting themselves and their lifestyle — which they keep well hidden from the general public. Although admitting a desire or need to drink human blood, they were giving us fictitious names and addresses, or would move on and leave no forwarding information, no way of tracing them. Obviously, we were going to have to get as much information as we could during the initial interview. So far, we had listened to their stories, asking little, letting them tell us whatever they wished. We'd hoped to make them more confident in this way, and in further interviews we would do more intense questioning. It wasn't working.

To help develop a more productive initial interview, we decided that we could use another professional on our staff — ideally a person with a good background in the fields of psychology and/or anatomy and physiology: and an open mind. Because aside from cataloging the activities of blood-drinking people, we wanted to determine if they were physically or mentally different from other people, which might prove that they were actual vampires. We needed an expert's advice on how to interview them.

One of the people I approached was Max Toth, who is among the world's most respected researchers in the field of parapsychology. I asked (rather slyly, I thought) if he might be able to recommend someone who would be interested in working with us.

“Yes, I think I know someone,” he said, smiling. “Me.”

Just what I wanted to hear! We couldn't have had a better man! Max was not only a professor of physiology, but a professor of parapsychology as well. He had a degree in psychology and a Master's in psychological counseling. He specialized in experimental psychology. What more could we want?

“I have a degree in electrical engineering, too,” Max added modestly. “But I guess you wouldn't need that — although . . .” he mused for a moment, “. . . as an electroneurophysiologist, I can see great research possibilities in examining alleged vampires.”

“Uh - right,” I said. “In English, please, what does an electro-whatever-you-said actually do?”

“Record electrical and mechanical impulses of the body brain waves, heart rate, body temperature, respiration, perspiration. Galvanic skin response, stuff like that. I'd love to see what kind of results we'd get from your ‘vampires.’ ”

“Do I detect a bit of skepticism?” I asked him.

He nodded slightly. “Let's put it this way. My mind is open. But I'm going to have to prove to myself that vampires really do exist. I'll work on a questionnaire for your interviews tonight. Now, tell me what you've done so far.”

And so Max joined our staff. He examined the files, listened to tapes, and discussed our methods of investigation with the whole crew. We traded ideas and theories, and talked about the difficulties we had encountered, and when all was said and done. Max

gave us some suggestions.

“You need to organize yourselves better,” he said. “You could be getting much more information from these people. You need to follow a standard procedure in each case, cover every point possible each time. Then you’ll have a better basis of comparison between cases, and your records will be much easier to analyze.

“And it’s true, you *should be* paying more attention to the physiology of these people. If we do find something different about them, something that keeps them youthful or healthier, maybe it can be applied to other people as well. For one thing, with all this blood drinking and blood-letting, are any of these people contracting hepatitis? If not, why?”

Max had been bitten! His scientific curiosity was piqued, and as he left he was already working out a plan in his head.

“I’m going to write down everything I’d like to know about a vampire. Then I’m going to think up a fantastic hoax. Then I’m going to blast it apart with the right questions. Then I’m going to organize the whole thing. Then I’m going to ...” He was still muttering to himself as he drove off.

Within a week Max had drawn up an outline of investigation procedures, screening of phone calls, and his comments about what he had learned from the reports on file. We immediately adopted his plan. I have put a modified version of his plan and the methods we use, along with some of Max’s comments, in the appendix at the back of this book. Of course, because of the nature of these investigations, I can’t

reveal everything, but at least you will be able to get an idea of what we look for. As you can see, there is a great amount of time and effort put into these investigations. But to complete every part, the alleged vampire's total cooperation is necessary. As we began to use the plan we could only hope for such an ideal situation. Ultimately, total documentation might be impossible (which has caused Max and myself to have many a lively debate). Because of the individual nature of each case, we might have to accept a fragment of documentation and a lot of descriptive, narrative, and clinical observation rather than physical documentation.

But in the long run, a good diagnostician is quite accurate clinically, and uses laboratory tests simply for confirmation of the diagnosis; and after hundreds of interviews, we were to become crackerjack diagnosticians!

We began to receive more and more phone calls, and always tried to cover the points developed in Max's plan — separating the pranksters from the possibilities; arranging interviews; cross-referencing cases; writing, taping, analyzing, theorizing. The plan was working, and believe me, so were we!

As the calls multiplied, the reasons behind the calls also increased, and the drudgery of cataloguing, questioning, and interpreting was often offset by a kind of strange entertainment for our staff.



Steve Kaplan and Max Toth after a “friendly debate.”

Photo by Arthur Sirdofsky

CHAPTER III

BITING HUMOR —GRAVE PROBLEMS CALLS TO THE VAMPIRE HOTLINE

When we answer the telephone at the Vampire Research Center, we never know what's going to happen. For pure variety, adventure, horror and maybe a good laugh or two, you can't beat it.

We get about fifty calls a week, except in Halloween season when we average about 200 a week. (I won't even mention April Fool's Day!) Tucked in between calls from unsuspecting creditors who were given our phone number in a kind of humorous "revenge" for squeezing blood money out of their clients, and the bad renditions of "Peg O' My Heart" and "Heart Of My Heart" we hear some mighty interesting things.

Come along with me, and eavesdrop on some of the calls we've received over the years . . .

This one was from a man in the Bronx, N.Y., who said he had a friend, sitting next to him as we spoke, who was a vampire. The vampire was too shy to talk to us, so "Fred" did the talking.

Kaplan: How long has your friend been a vampire?

Fred: Let's see — he's been a vampire for about two years. He got turned on one day — something about a cross or garlic.

K: How old is he?

F: Thirty-two.

K: What does he do for a living?

F: He's a brain surgeon.

K: What made him become a brain surgeon, rather than getting into, say, hematology?

F: He's got a good head for it.

K: How long has he been a brain surgeon?

F: Since he was twenty-eight.

K: Where did he get his training?

F: In Italy.

K: Where did he hear about us?

F: In Playboy Magazine.

K: Well, at least he's sexually oriented in the right direction.

F: Sexually oriented all right — on the blood kick. He bites girls.

K: He bites his victims? And by the way, are they victims, or are the girls willing?

F: No, the girls are not willing. But he sinks the teeth in, and then they're turned on by his teeth.

K: How much blood does he take from them?

F: He says about two shot glasses full. He's got very long teeth.

K: What time of day or night does he usually bite the women?

F: He says in the evening, when it gets dark.

K: Where does he usually do it - his place? Her place?

F: Anyplace. In a car, in a motel.

K: What's the general age of his victims?

F: He doesn't care about the age.

K: Non-discriminatory. I like a man who's

liberal. Now, does he leave any mark on the girls?

F: Two puncture marks.

K: Isn't he afraid of infection?

F: No. He uses Listerine, and Colgate with the invisible shield.

K: What kind of line does he use with the women to get them to take part in this ritual?

F: He doesn't use any line — he just does his thing, in intimate times.

K: Is that the only thing he does to them — drink their blood?

F: No. He does his thing.

K: What thing? Is he a flasher?

F: He consummates the act.

K: You mean the act as THE Act?

F: I mean the act of sexual perversion. He's a little bit on the perverted side. He's also a masochist. He loves to be whipped.

K: As a brain surgeon, doesn't he have a lot of women around the hospital — nurses, patients — that he could seduce without any sweat?

F: Yes, but he doesn't want it known around the hospital. He used to work at another hospital, but all his patients were wearing band-aids on their necks, and he had to leave that hospital.

K: Does he feel that he is immortal?

F: Yes, he always talks to me about that. He says nothing can kill him. Blood makes him younger and younger. He thrives on the stuff.

K: What type of bed does he sleep in?

F: He used to sleep in a coffin. but he had to

give it up. It got too musty. He had a problem — he used to urinate in the coffin.

K: Why couldn't he use the bathroom?

F: He couldn't get out of the coffin fast enough in the dark.

K: What kind of clothing does he wear when he does his thing?

F: Believe it or not, he wears normal clothes. At night he puts on dark suits for some reason. He is also very pale.

K: Was his father or mother involved in vampirism?

F: No. He was an orphan. Raised in an orphanage.

K: Does he want to stop what he's doing?

F: He'd like to stop it, but he just seems to have the urge for more and more blood.

K: Why doesn't he go to a blood bank?

F: He says it's not the real thing.

K: Is he married?

F: No. He's never been married. How can you get married with a hang-up like that? Can you imagine what your wife's neck would look like?

K: Does his behavior worry him?

F: Well, he is worried about this vampire thing he has. But he really doesn't consider himself a vampire. Just a misunderstood person who can't find his place in society.

K: How tall is he? How much does he weigh?

F: He's about five feet ten, 220 pounds

K: He'd better cut down on the blood. Maybe

he isn't being rejected because he's a vampire — it might be his size. By the way, does he bite other areas besides the neck?

F: Yes, meaty parts of the body, around the thigh. Another good part is the inside of the leg. There's a lot of meat there. Say, Dr. Kaplan, we're wondering — can you turn into a vampire from a vampire bite? Is vampirism transmittable?

K: In a way. Once another person enjoys it, he or she is liable to repeat that process.

F: Look at that — my friend just left. I don't know if he was turned on by our conversation and went to go bite, or if he was shy. Well, it was nice speaking to you, Dr. Kaplan. Bye.

At first glance this might seem like a prank call. But read it again. I joked along with this man, but I could sense that he was actually talking about himself. Some people who practice blood-drinking, or imitate vampires and find it pleasurable, have an underlying fear that something is terribly wrong with them. This might be true, or not — I am not the one to decide; but many have a need to talk about their “perversions” to a person who will not judge them. Some, embarrassed about their behavior, will say they're calling for a friend, or make a joke of the whole thing. I think this was the case with “Fred.”

Caller: Is this the Vampire Research Center?

Kaplan: Yes, This is Stephen Kaplan speaking.

C: WELL, GREAT! #e%\$\$#!!!!!#

K: I understand. Thank you for calling. We appreciate your sincerity.

A nurse from Queens, New York, called to give us her opinion of our work . . .

Nurse: You don't really believe in vampires, do you?

Kaplan: Yes, I do. There are several types of vampires, and . . .

N: But it's disgusting! It's just not natural!

K: I respect your feelings, but I don't agree with you as far as it's not being natural. Actually, it could very possibly be. Vampirism — which we might also call blood-drinking — definitely does occur in nature. Didn't you ever hear of vampire bats?

N: Well, they're not human beings.

K: But they do exist, and they are a part of nature. So are leeches. As a nurse, you know about leeches?

N: They used to use them to take blood out of people, doctors in the old days.

K: Right. Blood-sucking worms. Would you call that "accepted vampirism?"

N: What?

K: The doctors who used them to bleed their patients — they thought it was helping to get rid of poisoned blood. Wasn't that a form of vampirism? And what about mosquitoes? They drink our blood.

N: What has all this got to do with human vampires? It's humans, people drinking human blood — that's what I don't believe.

K: Look at it this way — a lot of things that occur in the natural world of animals also occur with human beings. Like sexual reproduction, social

groups, hunting for food. Right?

N: Yes, but . . .

K: Well, then, isn't it possible —just possible — that vampirism, which definitely exists in the animal kingdom, could also occur among human beings?

N: No! It's just not natural! (hung up)

Vampirism is a very strange subject to discuss. People who think they know a vampire, or a blooddrinking person — particularly if the person is a member of their family — find the subject horrifying and embarrassing. Still, if the blood-drinker is a loved member of their circle, they want to help in some way. Many of these would-be helpers lose their nerve when it actually comes down to admitting their relative is practicing blood-drinking.

On May 10, 1979, a very troubled man called us ...

Man: I I don't know if I should tell you this,
but — but —

Kaplan: Please go on. I'll help you if I can.

M: Well, I — uh — I saw you on TV last night,
and I understand you study vampires.

K: That's correct.

M: Do you help them, too?

K: What kind of help?

M: I wanted to speak to you about (long
pause) — it's my wife. She — she — drinks blood.

K: Where are you calling from?

M: Well — oh, I'm sorry. Just forget it. (hung
up)

Not all the people who lose their nerve are calling

about vampires. Some of them are the actual vampires. In October, 1976, a man who claimed he was a vampire called .

..

K: How long have you been a vampire?

M: Many years.

K: How old are you?

M: Old enough.

K: Well, I would like to know something about you, sir. Can you tell me your name, or where you live? Perhaps you can tell me what you do for a living?

M: I — I'm sorry, I don't want to tell you. Please just forget I called.

Here's one of my all-time favorite calls. It came from a man in Dallas, Texas — or so he claimed in August, 1976. He had a heavy accent, and said he was originally from Saudi Arabia. He claimed to be reporting a vampire attack which allegedly occurred the previous evening, to his brother-in-law and a companion. They had been parked in a wooded area on the outskirts of a small town near Dallas, and the brother-in-law had actually fought the vampire off ...

K: In this attack, how long did the fight go on between your brother-in-law and the vampire?

SA: Well, he said it seemed like an hour, but actually it was only three or four minutes.

K: How was the vampire dressed?

SA: He was fairly well-dressed, and he was wearing stilts. My brother-in-law was able to fight him off, and the fellow disappeared into the bushes.

K: Now why did the vampire run into the

bushes? If it was so powerful, wouldn't he have overcome your brother-in-law? Or is your brother-in-law that strong?

SA: The person with my brother-in-law went to the car and got a piece of pipe they were carrying there. I suppose the vampire was scared of the two of them.

K: You say the vampire was fairly well-dressed, and was wearing stilts. Well, how fast could the vampire have run with stilts? Wouldn't they be rather cumbersome?

SA: My brother-in-law said the vampire was the best stilt-walker he had ever seen, that is true.

K: How was he able to determine that this vampire was on stilts?

SA: Well, he said they protruded from beneath his cape. They were rather obvious, with rubber tips on the bottom for traction.

K: How tall was the vampire?

SA: My brother-in-law said the vampire was about five feet, six inches.

K: Is that with or without the stilts?

SA: With them. He said he added about one foot for the stilts.

K: So then, the vampire was about four and a half feet tall without stilts?

SA: Yes.

K: What kind of shoes was the vampire wearing?

SA: He could not see them. They were up under the cape, concealed.

K: Did your brother-in-law report this case to the police?

SA: Yes.

K: And are they investigating it?

SA: They are investigating my brother-in-law.

Man: Somebody just bit me on the neck. Is this a real number?

K: This is the Vampire Research Center, yes.
What area are you from?

M: Area?

K: State — what state are you in?

M: What state am I in? The State of Shock,
(hung up)

In the October 1977 issue of *Playboy Magazine*, the Vampire Research Center was mentioned in a small article in the back of the magazine, asking anyone with knowledge of vampires or their activities to contact us. The response was amazing. They called from all over the country, just dying to report vampires. I felt that anyone who could read past the centerfold and get to our article must be a really dedicated individual, and found their “reports” quite absorbing. They turned in their landlords, their neighbors, co-workers, teachers, ex-spouses, and a lot of them were serious about it.

A student from Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, called to tell us about his music teacher, who he suspected was a vampire . . .

K: What makes you think this man is a vampire?

Student: Well, I have no proof, just that he speaks

in a funny accent, and he wears this strange outfit, and has a cane with a wolf's head on it. His house is all covered with ivy, and the only time he comes out is around 1 1:00 p.m. The only lessons he gives are at that time. Otherwise we have to go to his assistant.

K: All this could just be unusual behavior. Perhaps he's involved in the occult in some way, but there are many people who work nights and have accents.

S: Well, I just thought he seemed like ... I guess you mean I should get more conclusive proof, huh?*

K: Well, if you do try, be very careful. There could possibly be some danger involved.

S: I know. But I can take care of myself. By the way, do you believe in this staking business?

K: Staking somebody would definitely put them out of commission as far as life as we know it is concerned. But actually doing it in our society today might present a ticklish legal problem.

S: But who cares about the legal problem if it's a vampire?

K: If you stake a vampire, the courts might judge you as a murderer rather than a hero. It's not illegal to be a vampire in this country — not yet, anyway.

S: But as far as I've read — doesn't the vampire disappear when you stake it?

K: In legends — and I stress, legends — some vampires did, but there were others that just became older. They didn't necessarily disappear. It's not clear

where legend ends and reality begins. A lot of people drink blood because they think it will make them look younger and live longer. Now, if you kill one and it doesn't disappear, what are you going to say to the police about this body with the stake through it? My point is, never try to kill a vampire. First of all, you can't be sure it's a vampire. Suppose somebody thought row were a vampire? You know. I myself have to be very careful. There are people who believe that because I study vampires it means I am one. I receive death threats all the time from these folks. Believe me, I don't enjoy it one bit.

S: I guess you're right. I'm going to see if I can get some more proof about this man. I'll call you back and tell you what I find out.

We never heard from this student again. Perhaps he really found his proof.

A seventeen-year-old girl in Wisconsin called to report a vampire. The woman she suspected wore strange clothing and "stared funny" at the girl.

A woman from Bruceville, Florida, called about a man she met at a party. He had strange, hypnotic eyes, lots of charisma, and seemed to dominate everyone in the room. When she danced with him he kept nibbling on her neck until it hurt, and he left marks on her neck. When he nibbled accidentally on the chain from a cross she was wearing, he acted "strange" and ordered her out of the room.

A thirty-year-old construction worker reported his attorney's secretary because she "is ugly, has fang teeth

and pop-eyes.”

A heart-rending call came from a sixteen-year-old boy who was worried that he might be a vampire, because when he was kissing his girlfriend he had the urge to bite her on the neck. She got mad, and he got in trouble. We reassured him, telling him that he had had a perfectly natural feeling in an intimate situation.

Many of our calls are from people seeking information. The interest in vampires and vampirism is astounding. We receive an average forty letters a month requesting information, as well as hundreds of calls . . .

Man: Do you believe in vampires? Really?

K: Yes. there are more than one type of vampire, and we certainly do believe in them.

M: Is it a mental illness? Or demonic possession or something?

K: I would say in some cases mental illness is involved; some cases could possibly be demonic possession, and some cases involve a cultural way of life. In other cases, possibly some of the real, Bela Lugosi-Dracula-type vampire.

M: I always thought they were real. Thank you.

A very practical man seeking a certain kind of information called us a few years back. He sounded about seventy years old . . .

Man: Well?

K: Well, what?

M: What time is it?

K: Time to hang up.
M: But I just started to talk.
K: Whom are you calling?
M: 936-1616, the Time. I'm calling.
K: I'm sorry. You've reached the Vampire Research Center. We study vampires.
M: Oh, no, I didn't. I'm calling the Time. I want to know what time it is.
K: That seems logical.
M: Well, what time is it?
K: Would you like Eastern Standard, Central, or Pacific time?
M: Eastern Standard, please.
K: It's close to one o'clock, sir.
M: Thank you.

Many students call us for help with term papers and reports. Here are some typical ones . . .

Coed: Do you believe vampires exist today?
K: There are people today who drink human blood — blood cults, people who emulate vampires.
C: What about things like Dracula and Transylvania, and things like that?

K: There is usually some basis of truth to every legend and myth, and Dracula is no exception. There was an historical Count Dracula — Vlad Tepesh — who lived in Romania, just a small distance away from Transylvania, in the 15th Century. He used to impale many of his subjects on stakes and drink their blood as it dripped. Ate them, too. He died — allegedly died — in 1476. There are several books you can read about this. So we have a basis of truth for the Dracula

legend.

C: Can you send me any more information?

K: Yes. Send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and we'll be happy to send you current, up- to-date information concerning vampires.

A twenty-year-old man from New Jersey asked . . .

M: Have you ever met a vampire?

K: Yes, I have.

M: Do they turn into vampire bats?

K: To the best of my knowledge — and please remember that we are still researching the subject with open minds — I don't think so.

M: But there are so many stories where that happens. Why do they mention it so often?

K: It's possible that observing the vampire bats gave a basis for a good story. The bats have long, sharp teeth, and only eat blood from living animals, no other food.

M: Could you tell me more? I'm writing a term paper and . . .

One of the questions we hear most often is, "How can I protect myself from a vampire?" The best answer is to stay away from it. Don't hitchhike, don't leave your doors or windows unlocked. Don't neck with strangers.

There are some legendary protections that are interesting, and I'll tell you about a few. If it makes you feel safer, go right ahead and use them. It can't hurt.

Two of the most popularly-known defenses are garlic and a crucifix. Garlic is a natural remedy for

many diseases — abnormal blood pressure, coughs, gas, arthritis, to name a few. Its healing influence is in an oil, dialyl sulfide, which is so strong that shortly after rubbing it on the soles of the feet it can be detected in the breath. Now, if vampirism might be a transmittable disease (discussed in a later chapter), maybe using garlic as a protection was founded on medical grounds. Many folk remedies have been proven to work by modern scientists. The passing down of this knowledge from generation to generation could have altered the use of garlic from eating it to wearing it or hanging it in the house for protection.

The crucifix was introduced by the church as a defense against vampires in the Middle Ages, possibly to keep religion uppermost in the people's minds, or possibly to make the superstitious, faithful people feel more secure. We have to remember that vampires appear in historical writings long before the time of Christ.

An anti-vampire remedy I find particularly amusing is to strew poppy seeds or thorns between the vampire and its intended victim. The vampire, according to legend, will have to pick up each and every one of them, and this takes so long that he has to return to his grave because the sun is about to come up.

In December, 1977, a woman called us from Toronto, Canada . . .

Woman: How can I protect myself from a vampire?
Does garlic really work?

K: Do you know a vampire?

W: Well, I'm not sure, but there's a man who

lives all alone up in a big house in the woods, and you never see him except at night, and I'm just afraid of him. I think he might be a vampire. He wears a black suit and a cape, and he never talks to anybody. Does garlic work?

K: If you think it will, it will. Actually, if you eat garlic it changes the blood chemistry a bit. Also, the odor might affect whoever is near you. But the main thing is to believe it will work. The same thing goes for a crucifix, or anything else. When you believe something is true, you set up a psychic protection around yourself.

W: I don't believe that.

K: Yet you believe in vampires?

W: Well. I . . .

K: Listen, maybe this will help you. There are some people who act like vampires because they want to be all the things they feel vampires are. They may want to dominate others, or be considered very sensual the way movies and plays are making vampires appear, and so they act and dress like vampires. Some even sleep in coffins, and some actually drink blood. Now, if one of these "imitators" believes that a vampire is afraid of, say, a crucifix, and you are holding one, then the "vampire" will run away, as he believes a real vampire would do. So that is another kind of protection for you.

W: Thank you. But now I really don't know what to do. You mean I should use garlic? Or should I use a crucifix?

K: Why take a chance? Use both.

Many people call us to report being bitten by bats, and they ask us what to do about it. Where there is a definite puncture wound involved, we always advise that they see a doctor for treatment.

Being bitten by a bat is a terrifying experience. Bats are mysterious, evil-looking creatures, nocturnal animals with leathery flaps of skin attached to their front legs. These form wings when stretched out. The bats can attack their prey in total darkness, and they strike with unerring accuracy. Most people seem to have a built-in aversion to these animals, as well as a deep-rooted fear of what the bat represents. This is probably due to the superstitions handed down from generation to generation. For instance, if a bat suddenly enters a house, many people believe this foreshadows the death of someone in that house. Irish superstition considers the bat a death symbol; and Negroes along the Ivory Coast in Africa consider the bat the embodiment of the dead. In medieval times it was believed that the Devil also assumed the shape of a bat.

Interestingly, in China the bat symbolizes a long and successful life (like a vampire's "immortality"?).

So you can see how bats and vampires seem closely related. Both are associated with death, evil, blooddrinking, night-stalking, even immortality; and the legendary Dracula's opera cape unfurls like the wings of a bat. It's not very surprising that people call the Vampire Research Center to report these cases. Consciously or subconsciously, they are really hoping we'll tell them that they have nothing to fear — that

vampires really don't turn into bats . . .

In June, 1976, a pharmacology student from Kentucky called.

Student: I can't eat any more. I feel sick to my stomach. I think I got bitten by a vampire.

K: Tell me about what happened.

S: It was about midnight last night. I was outdoors in Webber's Field, walking my dog. The vampire bit me on my right side, underneath the earlobe.

K: Was it a male or a female vampire?

S: It was so fast ... I was so surprised ... I didn't have time to tell.

K: Are there any wounds on you?

S: There are about three holes, and they're about 1 /8 inch apart.

K: What was the dog's reaction to this event?

S: He was barking like crazy.

K: Did you call the police?

S: What could they do to chase after a bat? I think the vampire turned into a bat.'

K: You saw a bat?

S: I don't know what it was. It could have been a bat. Have you ever been bitten by a vampire?

K: Not to my knowledge.

S: Is there really such a thing as vampires?

K: Let's say there are many blood-drinking creatures that exist in the world.

S: Do you think I should see a doctor?

K: If you have a definite puncture wound, or if the area is swollen or red, or painful, I definitely

think you should.

S: Why am I sick to my stomach?

K: Ask the doctor. You will feel relieved just knowing what is or isn't wrong with you. And let me know what he tells you.

S: Sure thing. By the way, I'm a tool salesman. Need any at a real good price?

We have received reports of bat bites from Washington, D.C., Florida, Texas, Kentucky, just about every area of the country, and several from Canada. This one came from Babylon, Long Island. The man who called said he was a construction worker.

CW: I don't know if this is exactly a vampire bite, but — I have these puncture marks on my neck.

K: When did you get these puncture marks?

CW: Last night, I guess. I woke up this morning and I felt drained and weak. I went in to shave and I looked — I had these two funny marks on my neck.

K: How far apart are these marks?

CW: About a half inch. And it's puffy and swollen around the marks.

K: Did you sleep near an open window?

CW: Yes. I live alone on the second floor. I'm just wondering — does this happen often? Is there some kind of resurgence of vampires?

K: This is what the Vampire Research Center is trying to find out. It may not be a resurgence so much as that we are keeping more accurate statistics.

CW: But is this really going on in this day?

K: Well, you reported it, so something has

happened.

CW: But I'm not sure what it is, you know I can't believe it.

K: How wide open was your window?

CW: It seemed when I went to bed it was just slightly open, but it was more open when I got up this morning.

K: Open enough for a person or an animal to get through?

CW: An animal, maybe, but not a large person. How do I protect myself now? If I close my window, will I be safe?

K: Try it. Do you have a dog? That would help to scare away anything trying to get in, or at least it would wake you up.

CW: I don't have one, no. But I'm going to get one, you can count on that. This really has me scared.

K: Well, try not to worry. There could be several explanations for those marks. If you like, we could have a research team come over to investigate the area.

CW: I think I might like that. I'll tell you how to get here . . .

Because of the number of reports we get about suspected bat bites, we tried to find out as much as we could about these animals. How much blood does a vampire bat drink? Do they kill their prey? Do they really attack humans? We read all the available information, but wanted some first-hand data; so one drizzly Sunday afternoon, in the spring of 1979, several of us made a trip to the most prestigious — and

definitely the most beautiful — zoological parks in the country, the Bronx Zoo. We held a damp, impromptu picnic under a magnificent pink dogwood, then followed the path to the World of Darkness, where the vampire bats are housed. As our eyes got accustomed to the dimness, we saw several kinds of bats protected by a huge glass barrier. Indian fruit bats, with a wing span of about five feet. Some as big as an old tomcat. Next to their enclosure was a smaller one for the vampire bats — which are no bigger than mice, with a wing span of about eight inches! Some were flying, some hanging upside down; others were lapping beef blood from a little dish at the bottom of their cave-like setting.

The comments of visitors were almost unanimous — “They’re so small!” “There’s Dracula!” “Oh, God, blood!” “This is the one that gets stuck in your hair and bites your neck.” Parents were passing on myths to their children without even knowing it. One little girl rapped on the window and said, “Stupid bat! You’re upside down!”

And then we met Cosmo. He’s a bright, outgoing, thoroughly delightful caretaker who has been with the Bronx Zoo for over twenty years, and looks forward to twenty more. He consented to an interview, and as we talked, his knowledge and love for the animals in his care shone through the entire conversation . . .

Kaplan: what do you hear most often around the vampire bat cage?

Cosmo: Well, a lot of people think there really aren’t vampire bats. They’re surprised, first, to see

them at all; and then at how small they are. Actually, the Indian fruit bat is the largest bat. Its wings span about five feet. That's the one they use in movies instead of real vampire bats, because they're easier to film, and look more frightening.

K: Are vampire bats dangerous?

C: Not at all. In their habitat they usually drink from much larger animals. They never hurt anything.

K: Cosmo, do you believe in vampires?

C: No. All the vampire myths are native to Europe. And vampire bats are native to Texas and Central and South America, not Europe. I think Bram Stoker took a thing native to this area and transferred it to Europe, that's all.

K: Now, you say vampire bats never hurt anything. But what about rabies?

C: Well, bats can carry rabies, but most of them don't have it. The bats will die from rabies. But where most animals die after 21 days, the bat can live up to 18 months with this disease.

K: So that's where the problem comes in. If they've got rabies, they can be around a pretty long time to transmit it.

C: That's right.

K: How much blood does a vampire bat need?

C: Only an ounce and a half a day.

K: Only an ounce and a half? Then they mustn't really hurt the animals they take blood from.

C: Like I said, they never hurt anything, except in the case where they have rabies. Then there is

a problem. What a vampire bat does — it makes a small incision with its teeth, and licks the blood. It doesn't suck it. There is an anticoagulant in the saliva, and when the bat is through, the wound heals again.

K: So they really don't want to kill their victims?

C: No. They just take enough blood to feed themselves.

Cosmo also told us that bats socialize. Vampire bats will live with insectivorous bats, and they won't bother each other. They hunt for their prey individually, not in groups. He told us of a case in Texas where a cave of bats was discovered after two cattle were lost, probably because of the bats. The bats were going to be destroyed; but scientists calculated that the number of bats in that cave ate six TONS of insects EVERY NIGHT, so they left them alone rather than interfere with the cycle of nature.

He also told us that there are about 16 million insectivorous bats in New York City. They can be seen at dusk over the water, picking up insects. He added that if a bat flies into a house, it is because it is following an insect, and no other reason. The Bronx Zoo gets many calls from frightened people who have bats in their houses and want them removed.

Over and over again, Cosmo stressed that vampire bats do not live anywhere except Texas, Central and South America; and he insisted that anyone who thought they had been bitten by a vampire bat elsewhere was mistaken. Which leaves us with one haunting question: What about the reports we've

received from people who woke up with bite marks on their necks, who live in New Jersey, or Long Eland California, or Washington, D.C.? What could have left those marks?

December, 1978 was the beginning of a strange series of phone calls, al first just curious, then downright mysterious . .

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John: Steve?

K: Yes.

J: This isJohn.

K: Hi, John. What can I do for you?

J: I called to give you my report. I followed your man to the X Hotel in the city. Now it's up to you. I'm flying to Dallas tonight for a board meeting. Can you handle it?

K: Handle what?

J: The case. All you have to do is watch the hotel until he comes out, then follow him.

K: Who? Until who comes out? Is he a vampire?

J: VAMPIRE?? Who is this? You don't sound like Steve!

K: This is Stephen Kaplan.

J: Who the hell are you?

K: I'm the Director.

J: Director? When did they get a Director?

K: I've always been the Director.

J: Director of what?

K: The Vampire Research Center — I'm the Founder and Director.

J: Vampire Re . . . Oh, my God! You're sick!
(hung up)

One day as I was reading an article in the *Journal of Vampirism*, for which I was a consultant, the phone rang . . .

Caller: Is this Mr. Leech?

K: Well, I guess you can call me that if you want to.

C: You're the editor, right?

K: We don't have an editor. I'm a consultant.

C: Come on, I know you're the editor. I've been reading the *Journal* for over ten years.

K: Ten years? It's only been out two or three years.

C: What kind of editor are you? You don't even know how often your paper comes out! (hung up)

The following call scared me a little. When people say they're going to send me something, I never know if it's going to be a death charm, a real gift, or even a bomb. Over the years I've received all kinds of things in the mail . . .

Man: Did you get it yet?

K: No.

M: Well, it'll be there soon.

K: What is "it?"

M: You'll know when you get it. It's a surprise I've been wanting to deliver to you for a long time. I can't discuss it on the phone, though. You'll have it for sure by tomorrow.

I kept getting mysterious calls like the last few for several months, and I finally found out why. The

Journal of Commerce, a highly respected New York publication, has a phone number only one digit different from the one we had at the Center at the time, I had been receiving wrong-number calls intended for them! I decided to contact their editor to let him know, and I got a few laughs and some surprises from that call

Operator: Who's calling, please?

K: This is Stephen Kaplan. And could you please tell me your editor's name.

O: Mr. Leech.

K: Leech! Are you sure? You're not kidding me?

O: That's his name. I can connect you now.

L: Leech here.

K: Hello, Mr. Leech. My name is Stephen Kaplan.

L: Stephen Kaplan? There really *is* a Stephen Kaplan?

K: As far as I know, there is. Anyway, I called to tell you that I've been getting a lot of your phone calls. We have very similar phone numbers and I thought you should know.

L: Why thank you. You know, I've been getting quite a few calls meant for you, too — but you wouldn't believe what they were saying! You must have some very odd friends.

K: That's true, I do. But the calls you've heard were probably not kidding. I'm the Director of the Vampire Research Center.

L: Are you serious?

K: Dead serious. We study vampires. Imagine what my callers think when they get a guy called Mr. Leech on the phone?

L: (laughing) Well, I can imagine what *my* callers think when they reach the Vampire Research Center!

K: Maybe you should tell your people to dial *very* carefully. Or boy, will they get a wrong number!

Shortly after our conversation, the *Journal of Commerce* ran a humorous, well-written article about this mix-up; and for a few weeks after, the Center was inundated with even more calls.

By now you have a pretty good idea of the amazing gamut our telephone calls cover — from funny to fearsome; from questioning to questionable. And there was much more to come. As our research progressed, we entered the area of the near-incredible!

CHAPTER IV

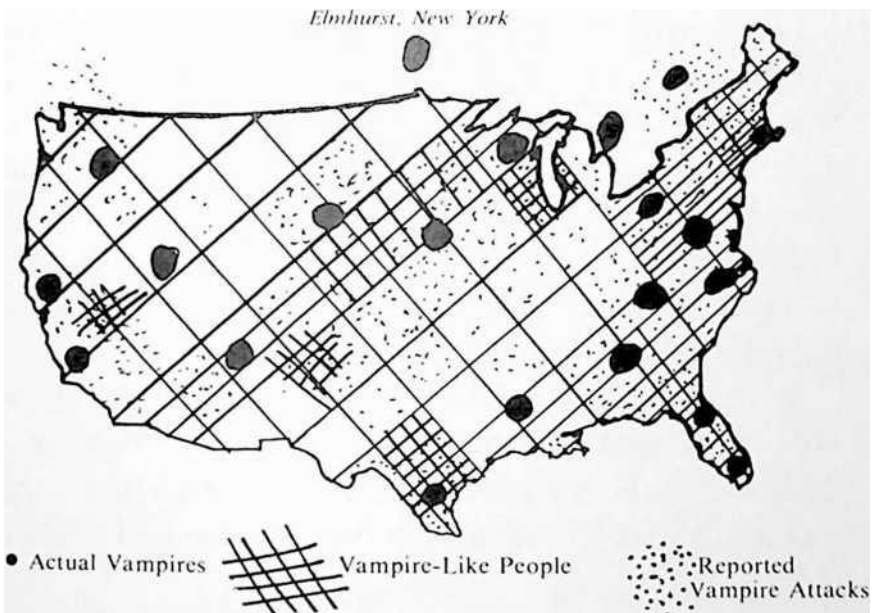
A HOST OF VAMPIRES WE'VE DUG UP

I'm sure you're wondering if we've ever found any "real" vampires who sleep in coffins, turn into bats, and live hundreds of years. We haven't. What we have encountered are a few individuals we believe are true vampires, but none whose only food was human blood. One case which took close to a year to investigate came close, but is not yet resolved. We've also come across a lot of "vampire-like" people.

I've been fascinated, wooed, mystified, entranced, and entertained by them. I've also been threatened, horrified, lured, and once almost killed by them.

VAMPIRE DISTRIBUTION AS OF JUNE 1982

The Vampire Research Center



Of the hundreds of blood-drinking people we've investigated, we have found a small number who have a true need for human blood and actually drink a few ounces of it every day — in addition to their regular diet. They range in age from 19 to 62 and all believe that the blood-drinking is keeping them youthful and will extend their lives.

None of these people will allow us to reveal their identities. We are respecting their wishes for two reasons: in order to gather information about this type of individual we must have their confidence and trust; and there is danger of reprisal to our staff if we break this confidence. However, there will be some description and case histories in this book, minus any details that could identify the individuals involved.

These vampires, as mentioned, drink only a few ounces of human blood each day but their need to drink it must be satisfied at any cost. They report that if they do not have this daily portion of blood they become irritable, depressed, feel weak, and become very aggressive. They wear inconspicuous clothing, not wishing to bring attention to themselves. They look no different from the average person. I've never seen one who had fangs. They sleep in ordinary beds. All are light-sensitive and prefer to sleep during the day and work at night, although they can function during the daylight hours if they have to.

With their constant daily need for human blood, this type of vampire will do almost anything to obtain it. They will take part in sado-masochistic rituals that include blood-letting and blood-drinking. They will

exchange their sexual favors in return for blood. Many have joined blood cults in order to satisfy their needs.

I have never met a vampire of this type who said he or she would kill for blood. The amount of blood they need does not warrant killing the donor. But if there is no alternative, they will take blood from an unwilling donor, and we have had some reports from victims of such people. Here are two cases that are typical of the bulk of these reports.

In February, 1978, we received a call from an actor in New York City. He had attended a party where he met an attractive, vivacious woman and spent most of the evening with her. Eventually they went to his home together. There, the woman suddenly took out a razor blade and demanded that “X” cut his own arm so that she could drink his blood. When he refused, she tried to cut him herself, rather frantic at that point. He ordered her out of his apartment, but she told him, “There are a lot of members in my cult, and we all drink human blood. If you aren’t nice to me I’ll have them visit you.”

“X” finally got her out the door, but he was very worried about what she or her group might do. That’s when he called the Vampire Research Center for advice.

We told him that if anyone did “visit” him, simply say that the Vampire Research Center — with contacts in all the media — was aware of their group and would publicize their activities if they did not stop harassing him. He took our advice when the woman showed up a few days later as he was leaving the theater where he was appearing. He has had no further trouble.

Only about a month later, in March 1978, a 23-year-old secretary called our office and asked for help. She was terrified. After telling part of her story on the phone, she asked if we could meet and talk in person, but not at her apartment or my office. She wanted to meet in a place where there would be a lot of people. She said she was being followed. From what she had already told us, we understood her reasons and arranged to meet her in a small restaurant in midtown Manhattan.

It was easy to recognize her. “Mary” was sitting in a booth towards the back — pretty, blonde, neatly dressed, terror etched deeply into her face. Even after we joined her — three of us had gone to meet her — she kept glancing nervously around the restaurant, expecting to see someone watching her. She told us her story over coffee .

..

A few days earlier she had been walking on Seventh Avenue near 39th Street in Manhattan, near dusk, when she was grabbed and dragged into a car. She was taken to an old apartment house in what she believed was Brooklyn. There, four men cut her on the arms and legs with razor blades, then took turns licking the blood as it flowed from the wounds. They finally let her go, driving her back to where they had found her, but told her they would be following her because they wanted more of her blood.

She had asked the police for protection, but they did not believe her story. She wasn’t sure where the apartment house was, and there had been no witnesses. Her wounds were not large or serious, and could have

been caused by shaving her legs, for instance. They said nothing about the arm wounds, which also were not serious, except that they could have been caused any number of ways. In spite of this, I believed the girl. The fear in her eyes was real.

She said that she was sure she was being followed everywhere she went, and now she was afraid to go to work or even to go shopping. We suggested a few changes for her appearance so that if she were really being followed, they might not recognize her. We also suggested that she leave town if possible. And we told her to let her assailants know, in the event they did try to attack her again, that we would publicize them if anything at all should happen to her.

About two weeks later, “Mary” called the Center again to tell us she had found a new apartment in a small Long Island town not far from her parents’ home, and was beginning a new job there.

These reports are typical of the ones we receive from victims of blood-drinking people. Incredible as it may seem to you, there are people in the most unlikely places just waiting for a chance to drink your blood. So be extra alert when you’re walking alone in an unfamiliar area. And next time you’re at a party and you meet a tempting admirer, ask him or her to name their favorite drink before you bite. You may be more appetizing than you know!

In spite of these cases, as I mentioned previously, these vampires will usually try to find a willing donor rather than an unwilling one. The most frequently mentioned way is by trading their sexual favors or

participating in sado-masochistic rituals in exchange for blood. Those we met were exceptionally attractive people. There are as many men as there are women in this category, and most of them looked much younger than the ages they gave us.

The reasons most often given for their contacting the Vampire Research Center are:

- a) to talk about their need for blood to someone who won't judge them;

- b) to be assured that there are others in the world who need to drink human blood, and that they are not alone with the “problem”;

- c) to meet other vampires;

- d) they believe the Center is a likely place to get some blood.

Many of these individuals thought that because I am in this field I would furnish blood for them - mine! They've told me that I should experience the feeling, that it would be good for my research. I have been asked by many a blood-thirsty female to have a consultation in the bedroom, where we can check each other's pulsating veins and arteries. And do they use their charms! For this reason I always have at least two staff members in the office with me — and we all try to ignore the low-cut dresses and tight jeans. We never say “I gave at the office!”

A large number of people who claim to be vampires have passed through our offices. Only a very small percentage of them are candidates for the “true vampire” category. Some 55% of them are hoaxes, and the remaining are “vampire-like” people. This large

group of blood-drinking people fall into two categories: those who imitate the lifestyle (their conception) of a vampire, believing they will gain the charisma and powers attributed to vampires; and those who find a sexual attraction in blood. Although these are not true vampires, there are enough of them to warrant our study.

The first part of this “vampire-like” category are individuals who emulate vampires to gain the qualities such as domination over others, immortality, sexual charisma, and so forth, which they believe true vampires possess. They often say they sleep in coffins, and usually dress in black. I have met a few who have actually had their teeth filed to sharp points. Most of them drink their blood mixed with wine or tomato juice, and only drink it when it’s easily available.

The second part of the “vampire-like” category are individuals who have a sexual attraction to vampirism. Many of them are misled by sexual overtones regarding vampirism today which do not refer to actual blood drinking. An erotic atmosphere is created by beautiful people, sensuous nightgowns, and so forth. Some movies portray Dracula as so busy proving how powerful and dominant he is that we almost forget about his blood lust.

Other individuals in this group are sexually attracted to blood itself. Some regard fangs as phallic symbols; others associate the mystery and darkness that surrounds vampires with the mystery and darkness of erotic encounters.

Since so many of the individuals we interviewed fell

into the “vampire-like” category, we felt there was good reason to dig even further into why they are drawn to vampirism. My staff and I decided to try to experience some of the things these people do, so that we could see these experiences from their point of view.

The first experiment we performed was a very painful one, both for me and for “Helga” — a long- suffering and very loyal research assistant who has been on the staff since the Center began operations.

In the summer of 1977 we decided to try to find out if a bite on the neck, strong enough to draw blood, would be at all pleasurable. It wasn’t. In fact, it was a royal pain in the neck.

First, “Helga” tried biting me. It hurt so much that I begged off before she actually drew blood. Then I tried it. Maybe I was stronger, maybe my teeth were sharper, but I punctured her skin and suddenly tasted hot, salty, sticky blood. I was definitely not thrilled by it. Nor did I enjoy “Helga’s” less-than-endearing words as she ran for the Band-Aids and Bactine.

We were both surprised at how tough skin is, and we also found that rather than two puncture marks, a whole mouthful of teeth-marks were left behind. We walked around wearing scarves or turtlenecks for about two weeks, until the marks faded. Try that on a hot summer’s day!

By the way, we were lucky not to get any infection in the bite area. In November of 1978 a man, who was bitten on the hand by a five-year-old boy in Massachusetts, died from the resulting infection. Still, there must be something attractive about people biting

people. A report in May 1979 stated that hundreds of human bites are treated by doctors in the New York City area. There are more people biting people than dogs biting people. It has been suggested that sometimes, when a person gets very angry or upset, he will momentarily revert to his pre-civilized state — and bite. But whatever the reasons for biting, neither “Helga” nor I have any desire to try it again!

Our next stab at understanding the vampire-like person was to try to find out how it feels to sleep in a coffin. For some reason, no one on the staff wanted to take part in the test. They collectively told me they wouldn't be caught dead in a coffin. However, they would do everything in their power to get me into one!

Getting a coffin in the first place was not easy — even if we had had enough money to buy one. We began by visiting a local funeral director, telling him we were doing research for a book about death and dying, and would like to take a look at some coffins. It seemed like a better idea than telling him I wanted to try one out.

We arrived at our appointed time and were ushered into the lobby of the funeral home. It looked like a southern mansion out of *GONE WITH THE WIND*, richly carpeted, with a grand winding staircase leading to six “lovely slumber rooms.” The corpse-like mortician whispered that we should follow him, and led us to the coffin showroom behind the staircase. There, like in a car showroom were about twelve different models on pedestals, their lids open to reveal downy velvet and satin linings. Most were fiberglass, with iridescent finishes that reminded me of the body

of a shiny new sports car. There was one made of polished oak, but we were told that wood rots much faster. The fiberglass models were guaranteed leakproof and airtight for at least 60 years after burial in the ground. Silently, I wondered if anybody ever tries to enforce this guarantee.

“How much is this one?” I asked, pointing to an immaculate, white-lined model with intricate brass handles. Even the lid was quilted.

“Two thousand,” the mortician whispered reverently.

Two thousand dollars!

This made me wonder where our vampire-like people were getting their coffins from. We later learned that many of them build their own.

(In British Columbia, Canada, there is a man who sells cardboard coffins lined with a fabric that looks like satin. The total cost is \$6.00. For people who are reluctant about the appearance of a cardboard casket, he will rent out an ornate, majestic casket that he calls a “catafalque,” in which the cardboard “slumber bed” can be placed until burial.)

The mortician left us alone in the showroom for a few minutes, allowing Roxanne to sketch some of the

coffins. While he was gone, I considered climbing into one of them, but they were all on pedestals, and might have toppled over if I jarred them. So we left the funeral home, wiser about coffins, but still wondering how it would feel to lie in one.

Not too long after this, I did get to lie in a coffin. In fact, I got carried through the streets of a conservative little town on Long Island in one. Some of my colleagues wanted to give an unusual birthday present (in revenge) to another of our friends — a real practical joker — and they decided to kill two birds with one stone.

“Steve, you want to try out a coffin, right?” My associate, whom I’ll call Dr. Smith, was grinning devilishly at me.

“Sure, if I can ever find one,” I answered.

“Well, we have a plan,” Smith said.

I must state here that my colleagues and I all have a great sense of humor. It’s one of the prerequisites of working at the Vampire Research Center. With the type of work we’re involved in, the death threats, reports of horrible goings-on, and the frustrations we encounter daily, we need to laugh at ourselves and relieve the tension just to remain (reasonably) sane.

Smith’s plan was to deliver a coffin to the home of “Jones” during Jones’s birthday party — complete with Jones’s name on it, and with a real body inside — me. I would sit up at an appropriate moment and wish him a happy birthday from the Vampire Research Center. I loved the idea!

“But where can we get a coffin?” I asked again.

They had it all figured out. One of our group knew someone who worked in a funeral parlor in Suffolk County — who also had a great sense of humor. He had agreed to lend us a plain pine box — not the actual coffin, which was much too expensive and heavy to lend out, but the outer wooden shell in which coffins are shipped. It was nearly the right size and shape, and he said we could keep it for a week.

The next afternoon four of us drove up to the back door of the funeral parlor to pick up the coffin-box. Was it big! It took all of us to hoist it into the station wagon, and the end stuck out a few feet beyond the tail of the car. We got some puzzled stares from the other drivers as we drove back to Smith's house; and you should have seen the neighbors in his little suburban community as they stopped watering their lawns to watch us unload the coffin and try to get it through his front door without ripping the door off its hinges!

For two days we worked on the box. Some of us made a black velvet lining, while others made the name plate and practiced being pallbearers. When it was all ready, I got in and tried it out. I had to see if I could breathe with the lid closed, and if I would panic in such close quarters. It worked out fine.

As I lay there in the dark, I closed my eyes and tried to imagine why a person would like to sleep in such a thing. There was a feeling of security . . . isolation — even peace. But with a real coffin — one of those airtight, padded kinds — you'd have to be very careful that someone wouldn't close the lid while you were asleep. Buying sheets might be another problem; and I

wouldn't recommend it for a person with claustrophobia.

So much for lying in the coffin. Being carried in one by amateur pallbearers is quite another experience!

Smith lived about a block away from Jones. On the night of the party we lugged the prepared coffin-box into the middle of the street and I got in. With the lid closed, I felt myself sliding down as two pallbearers hoisted me to their shoulders a little sooner than the other two did. I could hear grunts and groans; and comments like, "Boy, is this guy heavy!" did nothing for my ego. I could hear others chuckling about how we were finally going to top one of Jones's practical jokes. Every ten or fifteen steps I felt myself going up and down, up and down, thud, slide, thud, slide, as the pallbearers put down the coffin to catch their breath.

Some of the women in our group had dressed in long black robes, and walked in a procession in front of the coffin singing a Gregorian death chant. It was just wonderful!

Someone rang Jones's doorbell and a party guest opened the door, did a double-take, and called into the house, "Hey, Jones, it's for you!"

"Tell 'em to come in," Jones called back.

"You sure?"

"C'mon, it's a party! Everybody's invited!" he answered.

They hoisted me into the crowded living room and laid the coffin on the floor. The ladies went through their death chant again, and everyone gaped in silence. For a moment, Jones was mystified and stunned as he

stared at his shiny nameplate on the lid. Then he said, very calmly, no hint to let us know he acknowledged our triumph of surprising him, “Thanks, fellas, it’s just what I always wanted.”

“There’s a special gift inside,” Smith told him.

He picked up the lid and I sat up. “We’re dying to wish you happy birthday, old boy,” I chirped. “Here’s your very own coffin. Use it in good health.”

Jones gasped, finally unable to cover his surprise. “You #!!\$%€&#!” Then he shut the lid on me.

It was worth every splinter!

With our practical joke behind me, I sat down the next day and gave some serious thought to the impressions I got while lying in a coffin. It was a unique experience for me, and I thought briefly about how almost everybody gets to lie in a coffin eventually — but will never be aware of the feeling.

I can understand how a person might find it pleasant. It’s peaceful, you’re away from everything, isolated with your own thoughts. I did experience slight claustrophobia, though. You can’t thrash around, or turn over, or stretch too easily. And I had the underlying worry about being locked in if people I couldn’t trust were nearby.

Many blood-drinking people try to satisfy their need for blood by joining blood cults. A blood cult is a group which believes that blood has a spiritual or magical significance, and some of them incorporate this belief into a religious ritual, offering blood sacrifices to a god or gods they worship. Blood drinking is sometimes practiced by the participants.

Here is where things can get dangerous. Blood is constantly needed for the ceremonies, and the cult 72

members are always seeking blood donors—willing or unwilling! There are cults which mutilate or torture, and kill, in their unsavory rituals. Human victims of the more dangerous cults are usually young, healthy, physically beautiful people — the idea being that if the life energy is being offered, it should be perfect life energy. The victims are often chosen from among people who will not be missed for some time; for instance runaways and hitchhikers, or tourists. Like the intersecting threads of a spider web, the further these cults stray from the center, the more bizarre their rituals, until you have something like the Charles Manson group, or the Jonestown cult that involved the mass murder-suicide of several hundred members. On the outer fringes of the web are groups who worship or emulate “anti-heroes” such as Hitler (or Satan, or Dracula). These anti-heroes hold a strange fascination for some people. Hitler, like the mythical vampire, had charisma of a sort, a kind of hypnotic influence over his subordinates. They followed his bidding without question; and by “sacrificing” the blood of millions. Hitler has gained a sort of “immortality.” Interestingly, Hitler was a very superstitious man, and many of the atrocities carried out on his instructions during World War II show strong indications of Black Magic ritual.

There are all kinds of blood cults. Each group varies from the others in some ways, but there is a sociometric chart common to all of them. The group will consist of a leader, several members lower in the hierarchy, and neophytes who are subservient to the other members. All constantly “recruit” for other members.

One particularly dangerous cult are the followers of

the mythical Kali, the goddess of death and destruction; the epitome of a female vampire. To satisfy her blood lust, she slit her own throat and let the blood spurt into her mouth. This cult's ritual includes killing and ceremonial drinking of the victim's blood. They believe that drinking the blood gives the participants occult powers.

We have come across many blood-drinking groups in the United States, quite a few of them on Long Island. Most prefer human blood, but due to possible legal problems they will substitute animal blood in their rituals if they have to. Some ceremonies require specific parts of the animal (or human!), often the genitalia, heart, or brain. Some place their victim on a ceremonial table and use sacred knives to cut the body, allowing the blood to drip, and then ritualistically suck it up.

Over the years cattle mutilations have been steadily reported throughout the entire central portion of the country. Farmers find their animals dead, with parts of the anatomy missing, usually cut off with surgical precision — which would discount the idea that another animal had perhaps eaten these parts. Most often the sexual organs, the tails, ears, and sometimes the rectum are gone. Very mysteriously, there is no sign of blood anywhere — not in the animal, nor on the ground. And even more mysteriously, no footprints are found in the area, not even when there is snow on the ground.

This is so puzzling that some investigators have suggested that unearthly visitors in a UFO may be

responsible. However, I believe that these mutilations have been the work of blood cults. Since these groups try to avoid detection at all costs, they could have devised some ingenious way to erase or cover their footprints. This seems a lot more logical than blaming the mutilations on aliens from outer space.

In 1975 the Vampire Research Center had our first experience with a blood cult — a Satanist group — and we came close to being liquidated on the spot. But before I tell you about our encounter, let me give you a little background about some of the Satanist rituals.

As their name implies, this cult worships Satan. One of their rituals is the Black Mass, which is an obscene corruption of Christian rites, exalting Satan and the negative things he represents, blaspheming Christ. It is a total reverse of the Christian Mass. Participants believe that Satan is present at all these gatherings, as well as in the symbolism of the rituals and in the significance of the invocations. The Mass is often held in a dark, damp cellar or an abandoned building where it will be unobserved.

In one form of Black Mass, at the height of the ceremony, the officiant leads a sex orgy. Children are sacrificed and later disposed of. In another form, participants wearing black robes perform a ritual over a girl lying nude on the altar, with her arms and legs stretched out in the shape of a cross. The blood of a sacrificed child (an unblemished soul) is offered to Astarte, goddess of lust and sexuality.

Other rituals include invocations calling down demons to the ceremony, and sometimes offering them

bodies to inhabit on earth.

Incredible as all this sounds, there really are people engaging in these rituals. My staff and I had a hair-raising encounter with a group of them a few years ago.

On January 12, 1975 we received a call from a woman I'll call Sarah. She said that two of her friends believed there was a "blood-sucking demon" in the loft of an old abandoned barn in Mastic Beach, Long Island. Sarah said they believed this to be true after practicing an occult ritual. Her friends were very interested in occult phenomena and now were insisting on investigating the loft again. They wanted Sarah to go along with them, and although she wanted to go, she was worried and afraid. She asked if the Vampire Research Center would send a team to accompany them for protection.

Of course we were interested! Here was the first report we'd had involving a "demon" — and we were dying to learn more about the case. Although the idea of a vampire demon was a little hard for us to swallow, we were open for any new data we could gather. We wanted to see the area first-hand, question the people involved in the "occult ritual" and see what type of individuals would get involved with a "vampire demon" in the first place.

"Can you meet us at the Mastic Firehouse next Sunday morning?" Sarah asked.

It was agreed. At 10:00 that Sunday, January 19, five of us parked our van in front of the firehouse, where three women stood waiting. One of them — short and very fat, in a dowdy-looking jacket and dirty gray

pants — detached herself from the group and came towards us.

“Hello, I’m Sarah. I’m so glad you came,” she said.

“Let me introduce you to my friends.”

They made quite a group. The tall bleached blonde with the heavy Brooklyn accent and stage makeup was called Terry. Even though it was January, she wore only a light sweater over a low-cut blouse and tight white jeans, all revealing her ample endowments.

Bobby, rail-thin and plain, had stringy, dirty-blond hair hanging to her waist. She wore a flowing gray cape that was way too big for her; and her face was strangely devoid of any emotion.

All of them seemed to be in mid-to-late thirties, and they didn't appear to come from any particular ethnic background.

They led us through a nearby field to a small wood-and-brick barn with a large loft. The building looked about a hundred years old, and some of the wood in the back had rotted away.

“So you think there’s a vampire-demon here?” I asked.

The women exchanged nervous glances. “Oh, yes. I can feel it,” Bobby said.

Terry nodded. “She’s very psychic, you know.”

“And you feel it here now?” I asked.

“Definitely. It’s in the loft,” said Bobby.

Sarah put a heavy hand on my sleeve and asked worriedly, “Would you go up first and take a look?”

I went into the barn. There as a rickety old ladder in the corner, and Smith brought it over and leaned it

against the loft floor. Jones held it steady as Smith tested the worn rungs for safety. Just then I heard some commotion outside, and Sarah — who had remained outside the barn — waddled in, breathless. “Hurry up!” she whispered. “Get up into the loft, all of you! The owner’s coming, and he doesn’t like trespassers!”

“You mean we’re trespassing? Why didn’t you say so? We could have gotten permission to investigate!” I said.

“He’d never give it — he hates people snooping around his property.” Sarah looked outside, then continued, “Oh, oh! He’s got a shotgun! Quick, get up into the loft!”

“What about you and Terry and Bobby?” I asked.

“He knows us. We’ll tell him we were just taking a walk. Hurry.”

She seemed to be awfully anxious for us to go up into that loft. It occurred to me that if our group went up there, and if someone were to take the ladder away, there’d be no way we could get out of there; not to mention the alleged vampire demon who was supposed to be up there, too.

Through a side window I caught a glimpse of three people coming towards the barn, dressed in long black, hooded robes. It suddenly hit me — we were in some kind of danger. What? Who cared! (Sometimes I’m a little psychic, too.)

“Run!” I yelled, and grabbed Roxanne by the arm. “Get out of here!”

We raced back through the field and piled into the van, and took off for home without a backward glance.

When we got back to the Center office, the five of us talked over what had happened.

“What do you think they were going to do?”

“Whatever it was, I’m glad we got out of there. Those people in the black robes looked like they came out of a horror movie.”

“Those women were no pin-up girls, either,” someone said. “The stone-faced one really gave me the creeps.”

We talked for a while, but we had no idea what had really been planned for us. We found out a week later — and nothing we might have imagined could compare to what those ladies and gentlemen had had in store for us! I still get chills when I think about it.

Sarah called us again a week later. She was very upset, almost incoherent at first.

“I need your help!” she wailed, over and over again.

“We’ve already heard that story,” I told her. “Why don’t you tell the truth about what was going on last Sunday?”

“I’ll tell you everything, Dr. Kaplan. But not on the phone.”

“Why not?”

“I just can’t. I’m in a lot of danger. I’m even afraid to go out of my house. Please — would you come here? Just you and maybe two others, so if anybody’s watching they won’t know I’ve called for help?”

“What are you afraid of?”

“The others.” She was whispering now. “I failed them, and now they are threatening me. Please help me.”

“Who are the ‘others’?” I persisted.

‘The cult. We — they are Satanists, and — oh, please, I can’t talk on the phone. I must see you before the next full moon! They said — they’d get my children!’ She was sobbing.

I finally agreed to see her at 8:00 that night; but this time my staff and I were more security-conscious. We formed three teams. One would wait at the office for a phone call from us. If they didn’t receive it by 10:00 they would call more help and come to Sarah’s house. The second team followed me and two of our more adventurous members (the first team) in another car, and would wait outside Sarah’s house, observing.

Sarah lived in Mastic Beach, not far from the old barn we’d visited the previous week. We arrived two hours earlier than arranged, and drove all around the neighborhood. Then we watched Sarah’s house for more than an hour for signs of any unusual activity. We did several other things which cannot be told, as they are now standard security measures on all our investigations.

At 8:00 we rang the bell. Sarah opened the door and led us into the kitchen, then pulled down the shades on the two windows there. We sat around a big table with Sarah and her visiting parents, and while her young children played in the adjoining room, we taped Sarah’s story.

“I’ve always been interested in the occult,” she began. “I get my cards read often, go to psychics whenever I can — you know, things like that. I’m also into astrology. Some of my friends are into Witchcraft, and

they got to know some other people interested in this sort of thing. Then one night, one of them went to a Cub Scout meeting and the Cubmaster and Pack Leader started talking to her. It turned out they were Satanists — but she didn't find this out until much later.

“One thing led to another, and before you know it I got involved with them, too, then I joined the cult. As a neophyte I've been assigned to tell them of anybody in town I know of who is pregnant. They want to use a baby for one of their rituals. They said it has to be an unblemished soul, and a newborn baby is the best for that.

“Another thing — they had a ceremony where they summoned up ten vampire-demons. They say the demons are in the loft of that barn now, waiting for human bodies to inhabit. I was assigned to find bodies for them.”

“Just how do you go about finding bodies,?” I asked.

“They told me I should get people to come to the barn, and they would do the rest. That's where you and your team came in.”

“So it was a set-up, your calling us to investigate?”

“Yes. I couldn't think of how to get anybody there — and then I came across the Vampire Research Center listing in the phone book, and I thought, who would be more interested in investigating a vampire demon? You have to admit it was pretty easy to get you out there.”

“I admire your ingenuity,” I said. “And what did they plan to do with us if we had gone up into the loft?”

“You were going to be —” she hesitated, then forced herself on. “You would have been used in the blood

ceremony-and after the ritual, the demons would have taken over your bodies. But even then I would have needed to find more bodies. There were only five of you. and they need ten bodies.”

“In other words, we would have been killed? Our blood taken?”

“Yes.”

After a shocked silence while my friends and I digested this tidbit of news. I said. “And now you want our help?”

Sarah leaned forward. “I have no one else to turn to. Let me explain. They need those bodies before the next full moon, when they are holding the next ceremony. And they want the unblemished soul, too. They’ll settle for an older child. I’ve failed them once already, and they’ve told me that if I don’t come up with something, they’ll use my children and me for their blood sacrifices! I’m so scared! I don’t want to be in the cult anymore, and I don’t know how to get out of it. I’m sorry I ever got involved with them. What should I do? You have to help me!”

“Can’t you go to the police?” I asked.

“I’m afraid. I don’t know who else might be in the cult. Besides, I have no proof that the cult does anything illegal.”

My colleagues and I excused ourselves for a few moments and went into the living room for a conference. It was obvious that Sarah was what we term a “psychiholic”- a person who wanders from one psychic area to another, like an addict, hoping to find who knows what. She had books on the occult all over the house, even in the bathroom. Astrology charts

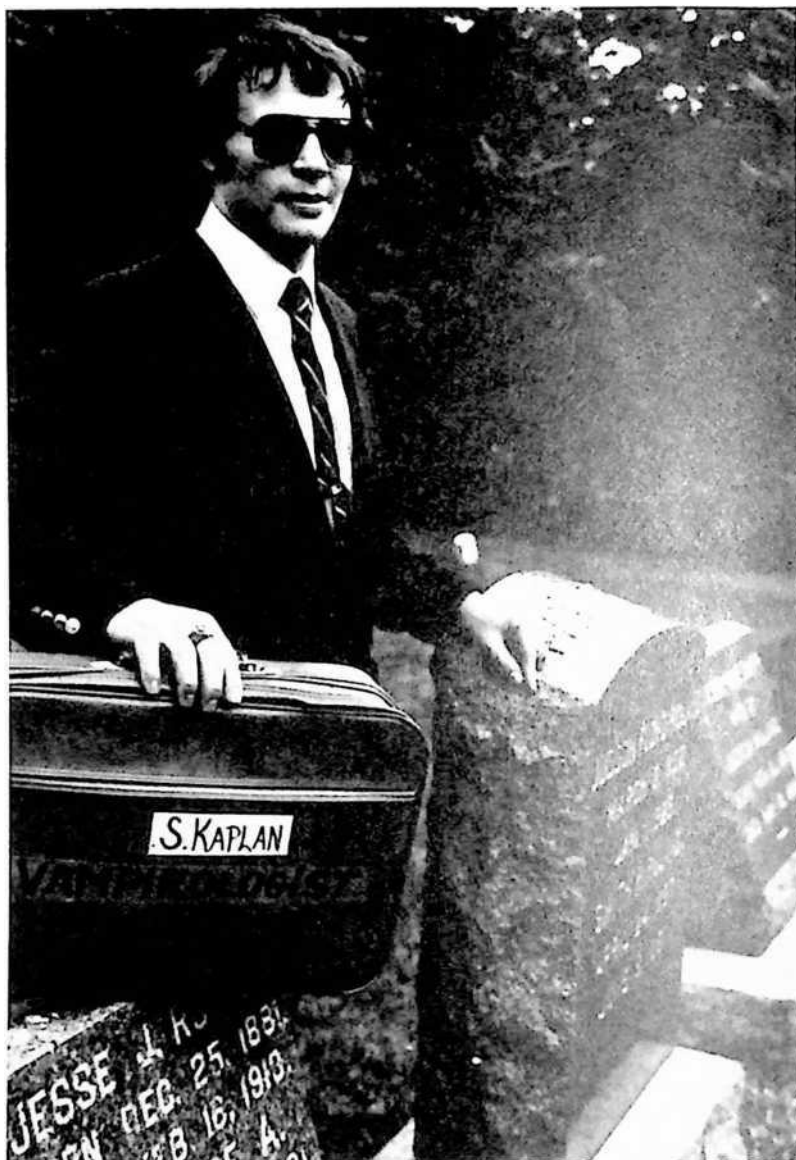
hung everywhere. But this time she had gotten in too deep for her own safety.

We suggested that she and her children go home with her parents until the next full moon passed. Her parents lived in another town, which would be safer for the family. Next, we suggested that she go back to her church and seek the advice of her minister. (She told us that she was once quite religious.) This could both comfort her and give her a better direction for her interests.

The help the Vampire Research Center could offer would be to threaten to publicize the Satanist group if anything should happen to Sarah, her children, or any other member of her family. We advised her to inform the cult that there were over twenty members of the VRC on Long Island, and we knew everything. If anything should happen to the people involved, there was a letter already typed and ready to mail to the District Attorney's office. We felt that the threat of publicity should help keep Sarah safe.

We never heard from Sarah again. But a few months later we learned from a friend who came across her that Sarah still the psychiholic — was busy reading Tarot cards in another Long Island town.

Our encounter with Sarah and the Mastic Beach Satanist group taught us a well-needed lesson. When she invited us to investigate a vampire demon that was conjured up in an occult ritual, we had allowed our curiosity (and skepticism. I might add) to cloud our better judgment; and we landed in a very dangerous situation. We have never gone unprotected on a field



Steve Kaplan — Vampirologist

investigation since then.

Speaking of field investigations, we have made quite a few of them over the years. As we gained experience in this phase of our work, we developed a vampire investigation kit which we always bring with us. It contains all the tools we might need for any circumstance which could develop. A partial list of these tools, and purpose, is in the Appendix of this book.

What type of field investigation do we do? We have been asked to stake out areas where suspected vampire attacks occurred. Several times we've been summoned to actually meet "vampires" themselves on their own territory. We must be particularly careful in these cases. We've also spent many hours in various cemeteries — observing, waiting, wondering if a vampire might appear. We have yet to meet a vampire in action.

All the "vampires" who agreed to meet us in the field have been either vampire-like people; out-and-out hoaxes, or didn't show up at all.

One of the times I remember fondly was the night four of us went to a cemetery in Queens to meet "LouAnne" — a self-proclaimed vampire. Smith fell into an open, freshly-dug grave, and his shrieks of surprise and terror coming out of the total darkness scared the rest of us into near-panic for a moment. LouAnne never showed up.

Another group which practice blood-drinking and blood sacrifices are Voodooists. Voodoo was introduced into the New World in the 1880's by

African slaves, and it is most popularly practiced in Haiti, although there are groups engaging in Voodooism in many other parts of the world today.

In some Voodoo rituals animal blood is used. Chickens, goats, pigeons, or a black cat are torn apart with the teeth. The blood is tasted by all the participants, and the ritual will end in a wild orgy of sex.

Human sacrifices of young children — called “hornless goats” — have been reported, as well as blood baths. Fresh drops of human blood placed in a pan of sugar or syrup is believed to break a hex spell. The menstrual blood of an intended victim is often put into the stuffing of the voodoo doll. Menstrual blood is believed to be the most potent of all kinds of blood.

There is some evidence that Francois Duvalier (“Papa Doc”), dictator of Haiti until his death in 1971, used his people's strong belief in Voodoo to maintain a stranglehold over his subjects. One investigation has found that Papa Doc practiced drinking human blood, believing that he was appeasing the Spirit of Death, thus keeping his family in power. The report states that palace guards would toss babies to him, and he would catch them on the end of a dagger and drink the blood as it flowed.

There are many reports of vampirism and vampirelike activities around the world. In our own country they span the map, from coast to coast. In 1975 a man was found dead in a doorway in the Bronx, New York. His body had been drained of all blood through a cut on his wrist - but there was no sign of blood anywhere, not on his clothing, not on the ground. He was dressed

in a business suit, and there was no sign of a struggle having occurred. Another case occurred in New Jersey in 1980, when a man and a woman were discovered along a highway, also both totally drained of blood. In fact, there was so little blood in the bodies that doctors were unable to determine their blood types for lack of a specimen. The Vampire Research Center has been consulted by law enforcement officials in several such cases because of our research on blood-drinking individuals and their habits. These cases sound strangely similar to the bloodless cattle found throughout central part of our country, which were mentioned earlier in this chapter.

There have been several cases involving people allegedly possessed by vampire demons. In 1973 an exorcist for the Church of England was called upon to exorcise a vampire demon from a 25-year-old man in a mental hospital. As he began the exorcism rite, the patient attacked the exorcist and tried to bite his neck. It took three attendants to subdue the patient while the rite continued. After it was completed the patient, who had a long history of attacking people and drinking their blood, was cured. He had no further aggressive attacks. This was one of three cases the exorcist has encountered. He believes that legendary vampires were probably people suffering the same way as the victims he helped.

In 1976 David Berkowitz, "Son of Sam," began a series of shootings that lasted over a year, killing five young people and injuring five more. He claimed that he was possessed by "bloodsucking vampire demons"

which compelled him to kill.

In 1979 Richard Trenton Chase, dubbed the “Vampire Killer,” was convicted of murdering six people and drinking the blood of at least one of them. He said he drank the blood of his victims thinking it would “cleanse” him.

This chapter has covered just a small number of the cases we’ve catalogued. There is ever-growing evidence of the existence of vampires in today’s world. I’ve told you about the vampires who drink only a few ounces of blood every day. Finding them and proving to our satisfaction that they could be considered true vampires was a long, tedious, difficult procedure. Now I will tell you about our most puzzling encounter — one that left us stunned and perplexed for months. If you have a very open mind and a very strong stomach read on...



“Misty” — A vampire-like person

CHAPTER V

439-YEAR-OLD ELIZABETH OUR BIGGEST PUZZLE

In the Spring of 1979, at 11:30 p.m. on May 13, the phone rang at the Center. I was tired, and promised myself that this would be the last call I would take for that night. Sure enough — I was sorry I had picked up the phone. Another prank call. It was a woman who said she was a vampire. She said she had seen me on television and decided to call me; and guess how old she said she was? Over 400! I mentally gave her a rating of 3 on a scale of 10 for a rotten story, and was about to hang up; but as long as I'd gone that far, I figured I might as well ask her the standard questions, just for the record.

In the next five minutes I was suddenly wide awake! And I was sure that whoever was on the phone was worth an interview! We parried questions and answers in a rapid, staccato-like exchange, and her responses came easily, with no hesitation. She was articulate and rational — and dead serious!

She said her name was Elizabeth, that she had been a vampire since she was “about 17 or 18 years old,” and had been born in England somewhere around 1540. She said she was currently living in Florida, and had

lived there for 17 years. Before that she had lived in Indiana “for quite awhile.”

K: Elizabeth, why did you call me?

E: Well, I haven’t talked about myself to anyone for a long, long time, and I’ve been sort of depressed lately, and then I saw you on that TV show — I have a videotape set-up so I can see the earlier shows when I wake up. And I thought . . . well, there’s something about you . . . Anyway, I just thought I might like to talk to you.

K: All right. Tell me about yourself. Where did you go to school?

E: I’ve never had a formal education. But I do a lot of reading. I’m finally figuring out my physiological make-up.

K: What do you mean?

E: Well, I must have a liquid diet. A special one. Human blood is the only food my system can tolerate.

K: What does your doctor say about this?

E: I don’t go to a doctor.

K: How often do you drink human blood?

E: Every day.

K: And how much do you drink each day?

E: I’ve never measured it, but I guess about eight or nine pints.

K: Where do you do get this blood?

E: I drain a human body.

K: You drain a body? Every day?

E: Yes.

K: How do you extract the blood?

E: I choose one of the six major arteries, and cut

it. Usually with a straight razor.

K: How do you ... I mean ... do you tranquilize your victims first, give them something to subdue them?

E: Definitely not! I don't want to pollute the blood with drugs. I'm also very careful to check for needle marks. I don't want to get a drug addict.

K: But, then, how do you subdue your victims?

E: I can't tell you that.

K: All right. You say you drain a body a day. Doesn't that mean you have to dispose of a body every day? Isn't that a bit difficult? How do you manage that?

E: There are several methods.

K: Can you tell me some?

E: I'll tell you of one. There was a man I drained, then I left him in his car, took off the brake, and pushed the car into a body of water. It's been two months now, and the body has not been discovered yet.

K: Will you give me another example?

E: No.

K: Do you choose victims of one particular sex or age?

E: No. It doesn't matter.

K: How do you feel while you are drinking blood?

E: That's hard to describe. Let me see ... my feet get cold. And I can't hear anything. It's like ... like a dreamless sleep. Or like ... I guess yawning might describe it. At one point the feeling gets very intense.

K: How long does this go on?

E: Until there is no more need for blood. It takes

about 25 or 30 minutes.

K: What type of bed do you sleep in?

E: I've had a special sleeper made, with a cover over it.

K: You mean a coffin?

E: No, it's not a coffin. I do need some air, and the sleeper is designed to let some air get in when it's closed. I have corduroy pillows in it. It's very comfortable.

K: When do you sleep?

E: During the daylight hours. And this is upsetting sometimes. I hardly have time to take a shower and get to the stores before they close.

K: What do you buy in the stores, Elizabeth?

E: I've answered a lot of your questions up to now. But I'd like to ask you some things.

K: Go right ahead.

E: Did you ever meet a male vampire who said he had impregnated a human female.

K: Let's say I've met some who claim they are vampires, and also claim to be fathers.

E: Well, here's some information for your files: nine out of ten male vampires are impotent. It's a matter of hormones, plus their body temperature is too cool to support healthy sperm cells. Another thing I'd like to ask you now . . . can you give me the names of any other vampires?

K: (I gave a name I made up off the top of my head.)

E: I've never heard of that one. Name some more.

K: They really don't want me to give out their names. Do you know any other vampires yourself?

E: Yes, but they're all neurotic. I guess I am, too, but I don't like to be with them.

K: Do you like to be with, uh, normal men? Have you ever been married?

E: No, I've never been married. I have no interest in men, except for intellectual company.

K: But don't you have any—forgive me, but this is for research purposes — what about your sex life?

E: (sharply) I am not all interested in sex. And I will not discuss that subject with you!

K: Excuse me — I wasn't trying to be rude. Can you tell me how you look? Do you look your age?

E: I'm five feet, two inches tall, and I have a very nice shape. I've been told that I look anywhere from 19 to 26 years old.

Later on, Elizabeth furnished a much more detailed description of herself, which I will repeat at this point:

K: Do you look like a normal person?

E: (laughing) I don't know how to answer that!

K: Well, do you look like something out of a Martian comic strip, or Vampirella? Is there anything unusual about your appearance?

E: Under some conditions I can get away with just a few stares. But my skin, my movements, my hair are different.

K: What color is your skin?

E: I tell people I'm an albino. And my eyes, if you look at them long enough, would be curious. They resemble glass: lead crystal. The texture is different.

K: Could you describe them a little more for me?

E: How to phrase this . . . imagine if you will a piece of cloth and a piece of metal. When you shine a light on the cloth and it goes through it's dull and diffused. But when you shine it on the metal it bounces back. Well, it's the same basic idea with eyes.

K: I don't quite know what you mean.

E: The iris of human eyes is tissue, but from studying my own, I suspect my own eyes are crystalline. I would look in the mirror and study them. This would account for the sharpness of vision that I have, even of objects at great distances. I can define even the smallest line on a dollar bill at 50 yards.

K: What do you do for income, Elizabeth?

E: I own a lot of real estate, and have a substantial income from that.

Our conversation went on for another half hour. She told me she liked art, music, dancing, painting, reading, and sewing. She made all her own clothes, "mostly black things," and used mirrors to fit the clothes to her body. She "rather liked the smell of garlic" although she could not eat it. I was about to ask another question, when . . .

E: (worriedly) I have to hang up now.

K: Yes, I guess we have been talking for quite some time. But you are a very fascinating person, Elizabeth. Will you call me again?

E: No. I'll probably hate myself for three weeks for making this call. You'll never hear from me again. But I needed to talk, and you have cheered me up considerably. Thank you, Dr. Kaplan.

After she hung up, Roxanne and I talked over what we had just heard. We were inclined to believe that Elizabeth was a hoax; her story was simply incredible. And yet, her vivid account of how it feels when she drinks blood lent a feeling of truth to her words. Her answers were so smooth and nonchalant, no matter what I had asked her. But to kill a person a day for so long, and get away with it? It was an intriguing call, but it had to be a hoax.

We began to think back. We had received several reports of vampire activity in Florida, but this was the first time a person claiming to be a vampire had contacted us from that area; and she had mentioned that there were other vampires there, too. Based on reports we've had, there were strong indications that this woman might not be joking. Either she was a vampire, or truly believed she was one, which was just as dangerous for the victims. On the other hand, one of the things that made us doubt Elizabeth's story was that she would not tell how she subdued her victims. If she were as petite as she described herself, it would be pretty difficult to handle even an average-sized man. But, if she did tell us her method (s), as Roxanne pointed out to me, Elizabeth could betray herself.

We were very interested in her reference to the reproductive ability of male vampires, as it was something we had not thought of before. Hopefully, some day we'll be able to convince a male vampire to undergo laboratory tests. The problem here is that none of them so far has consented to even talk to anyone other than myself and one or two researchers.

They insist on anonymity and will not risk the exposure.

Elizabeth's allusion to a "human" female was intriguing. Did she mean that vampires are not human? Why hadn't I asked her that! I had been so amazed with what she had been saying that I didn't pick it up at the time.

Overall, Roxanne and I agreed that Elizabeth sounded like an old-fashioned type of woman. She sewed, painted, read, cleaned house, kept herself well groomed, and had a rather Victorian attitude towards sex — no interest. Might we say she'd fit comfortably into the English society of the 1500's?

Summing Elizabeth's call up, we were left with several possibilities. Was this woman — who called long distance from Florida to New York (she said) and spoke for over an hour to me — simply a very bright practical joker with a good imagination, who didn't care how she spent her money? Was she a person looking for some kind of notoriety by contacting me? Was she mentally disturbed, truly believing she was a vampire? Or could she possibly have been telling the truth?

We closed the office for the night after making a detailed report of the conversation. It had been an interesting call.

Six weeks later Elizabeth called again. This time it was 3:15 a.m., July 8. Half asleep, I groped for a pencil and scribbled some notes as we talked. Unfortunately I didn't tape that conversation, but I can tell you the gist of it.

She said she had enjoyed talking to me very much, and wanted to call me just once more. Although she was worried about her security, the mental lift she'd gotten from our last conversation was so great that it was worth the risk to her. I assured her that she had nothing to fear from the Vampire Research Center — that we have always respected the confidence of our clients; and I told her I was really glad to hear from her. This seemed to make her feel good.

I asked her if she was still drinking blood, and she said, “Of course. That’s all I can eat. I told you that.”

I asked her again how much blood she drank each 24 hours and she again said she never measured it. We talked a bit more, and then she said she had to hang up, as she was on her way “out to dinner.”

After that call, I decided to keep a tape recorder next to all my telephones, as I believed Elizabeth would call again. It’s much easier to analyse a voice, a conversation, and reactions when you can replay the whole thing and listen objectively; and I wanted several consultants to hear her, too, so they could offer their comments about the case.

My hunch was right. We had received only the first two of a long series of telephone calls from Elizabeth, a series which continued for six months. It was fascinating . . . incredible . . . even awesome to speak to this woman; but going through the conversations became tedious sometimes. Elizabeth loved to talk! I mean for three hours at a time! She always called near midnight, which meant that my staff and I had to work into the wee hours of the morning. But tedium aside,

what emerged from these talks was a story so puzzling, so mysterious, and so chillingly possible, that it had our staff in an uproar for months.

We checked history, hematology, criminology, and physiology sources. We called in expert consultants in the fields of acting, voice analysis, psychology. We even had several psychics give us their impressions of Elizabeth.

Following each phone conversation, our entire staff would listen to the tapes, make analyses, and draw up a list of questions for me to ask her the next time she called. We purposely repeated questions, asked things out of context, and tried to trap Elizabeth in a lie. We devised a way to get her to mail us some material, in an effort to trace her. We notified the police in Florida that there was a possible mass murderer on the loose somewhere in their state — of course knowing they couldn't do much with so little information, but we felt we should tell them anyway.

I joked with Elizabeth and cajoled and humored her, and actually grew to like her quite a bit over those months. And fear her, as well; for I never could be sure just what I was dealing with.

What follows is taken from the hours and hours of actual taped conversations I had with Elizabeth. Much of it is condensed, and some of it is out of context in order to keep the same subject matter together. All of it is fascinating . . . JULY 19, 1979: Elizabeth began by telling me she had taken a trip to Bermuda, then returned to a new residence in Florida. She said that her van had been stolen during that time; and she was

particularly upset because she had lost a custom-made “sleeper” she had put in the van about a year earlier.

“It was solid oak with mahogany inlays, and the inside was lined with cedar, and around the top, to conceal the fact that there was a lid, was a brass band about two inches wide, with hieroglyphics from the Book of the Dead, the Papyrus of Ani.”

I asked her if she had reported her stolen van to the police and she said she had not, as it was not registered in her own name. She had paid someone to get her a false registration and driver's license, as a personal security measure.

A little further into the conversation, Elizabeth told a chilling story . . .

E: Oh, I had something very interesting happen. I was stopped at a light and I didn't have my car doors locked, and this guy runs up to the car and jumps in. He takes out a knife and says, “Drive!” I was in a hurry to get someplace and I really didn't have time to deal with this man. “Get out of my car!” I told him. He didn't seem to be amused by that, and he said, “Drive, lady, or else!” (laughing) I said, “Okay, if you say so.” So I drove. That's never happened to me before.

K: So what happened at the end?

E: Well, I drove.

K: And you left him somewhere?

E: I did what I had to do.

K: Might we say he's no longer going to be a threat to the world?

E: You could put it that way.

This really upset me. If there were even a bit of truth

to Elizabeth's claims, I felt she had to be stopped. I had already inquired about putting a tracing device on my phone, but was told that since I never knew when she would be calling, it wouldn't be feasible. I had the feeling that tracing alleged vampires was not top priority with the phone company. So I decided to try to get Elizabeth to mail me something — anything — and perhaps we could trace her that way.

K: So how much blood are you drinking these days? I know you told me you don't measure it, but I just thought I'd ask again.

E: That's right. I don't measure it — but since we last talked, I looked it up and it was something like 12 or 10 litres. I have a book here — anatomy and physiology.

K: (intentionally giving her wrong information)
No, they're wrong. You're wrong. I've done quite a bit of research on that. You don't have 6 quarts in you. No way.

E: Well, good grief, this is a text book that people are studying in college to become doctors and nurses!

K: It can't say 6 quarts in the human body.

E: Oh, yes it does. I'll Xerox it and send it to you.

K: Can you do that? (Success!)

E: Yes, I'll definitely send it to you.

During this long conversation, Elizabeth gave us much information about herself:

- Her sleep is more a form of hibernation than “human” sleep.
- She cannot turn into a bat; thinks that's utter

nonsense.

- Her teeth look normal, except for two that are a little longer than the rest, which you “could call fangs, I suppose, but I don’t like the word.”
- She had recently met a male vampire in Florida whom she had known and last seen in 1863 or thereabouts. “I looked and he looked at me at the same time, like a dual double-take, and I thought, ‘You!’ and he was aghast. We didn’t say a word to each other that time; just kept going. Right now he stays in his half of the state and I stay in mine and we just leave each other alone.”
- She gave us some of her past history. She was born in either Folkstone or Canterbury, England, and was in the Tower of London in approximately 1556 or 1557, awaiting beheading for having become a Protestant. She had been carrying incriminating letters for her boyfriend of the time, Thomas Willfield, and had been caught . . .

E: I had a choice when the priest came to take my confession. I was raised a Catholic, so if you don’t confess you go to hell and all, and I had the choice of either confessing that I had become Protestant and had been attending Mass in falseness, and risking being burned at the stake, or keeping my mouth shut. As it was, I was going to lose my head. I didn’t confess.

K: What happened?

E: (a bit tongue-in-cheek) Well, in through the window, like Peter Pan, comes this person. I was not asked do you want to do this, or what do you think of this. I was told, “Here, put these on.” He cut my hair;

he took me out of there. That's when I went through the vicissitudes.

I then asked her some more about her blood drinking . . .

K: Do you drink the same amount of blood every night?

E: No.

K: How much variation is there?

E: Well, I haven't paid that much attention to it. Let's see. Oh, one night I might mark, say, one. The next night I mark two, the next night mark one.

K: What's "mark" mean?

K: Mark. A mark.

K: You mean a victim?

E: Yes.

K: How do you avoid coagulation of blood in the body. It does tend to gel, doesn't it?

E: Not the way I do it.

K: What specific techniques do you use to avoid that?

E: Go for one of the six main arteries.

K: And how do you open it?

E: The usual way.

K: Which is?

E: Oh, I use a knife.

K: Last night, did you use a knife?

E: No, last night I was traditional about it.

K: Which means?

E: I used my teeth.

K: How many bodies would you say you've consumed over the years?

E: Oh, gosh — figure it out. I don't have a calculator with me.

K: Would you say roughly, ten per week?

E: Roughly. It varies with my cycle.

K: Elizabeth, is it all right if one of my researchers asks you a question?

E: It depends on the question.

Carole: Elizabeth why exactly are you calling?

E: Because there's something about Stephen that interests me.

K: Anything specific?

E: Well, you seem to be very intelligent. You seem to have your head on straight. And there must be some psychology to it, inasmuch as *to be recognized as a person —for that is what I am before I am anything else, means a lot. And to be recognized as a person by someone who knows what I have done and am doing is somehow good, although I may be risking my security.*

K: Another question from Carole, Elizabeth. Were your parents vampires?

E: (laughing) I don't think so. No.

K: So when did you first start drinking human blood?

E: 1558 or 1559, around then. I was chronologically around 18.

K: Elizabeth, this may sound a little pushy, but

is it possible to get a sample of blood? Could you mail it to us? Just put a drop on a glass slide, place another slide on top of it, wrap it and mail it to us. Can you do that?

E: This sounds kind of peculiar. I'll think about it.

K: Good. Then we can have it professionally analysed for you. We might come up with something that could help humankind as well as yourself. You know, if we can find what makes you live longer, we might be able to apply this to everyone, and help save a lot of people, and live longer lives.

E: Well, one thing that occurs to me is this — to have been exposed to all the viruses, bacteria, diseases, everything from typhoid to polio, I must have very powerful antibodies in my blood.

K: Well, I would certainly suspect that to be the case, and that certainly would be a help to other people. Do you mind being a vampire, Elizabeth?

E: As that is academic — it's difficult to say.

K: Vampires are usually seen as evil. Wouldn't you like to change that image?

E: I really don't know what it would be changed to. I hate to think this could develop into a three-ring circus.

K: I don't mean putting you on exhibit. I mean, if what you have could help people — instead of taking their lives, you could serve people—wouldn't that be a great gift to mankind?

E: People in general are stupid. What's the point of saving them?

From this point, we went on to discussing a few of Elizabeth's hobbies, one of which was painting and sketching. She also liked to watch sports, gymnastics, figure skating, ballet, and sketch scenes from them.

K: Is it possible to draw me something? I'd like to see your own art style. All you'll have to do is sign it "Elizabeth." We'll know who you are.

E: Okay — I'll sign my name as I used to. My handwriting has changed quite a bit over the years. It's still unreadable. It was easier to read when I printed. There was no such thing back in those days as so — called cursive writing. Pens have certainly improved. I like the fine point ones.

Roxanne asked Elizabeth if she remembered the Civil War. Elizabeth said yes, she had been "in the middle of Sherman's march." She had been trying to stay out of the direct line of battle but was going in the wrong direction, "headed for the sea." She was between Atlanta and Charleston.

Then Roxanne asked her when she first came to this country. She answered "Just before the Revolutionary War" about 1775, on a boat whose name she thought was Farragut. It was very crowded. "Those things! I don't know where in the world people got the idea they were seaworthy!"

Eventually I got Elizabeth talking about her "hunting" and blood-drinking habits again. I asked her what she usually does to find a victim.

K: I mean, you're going to leave there tonight, then what?

E: Well, after I get off the phone with you I'll put

on my “out” clothes.

K: What’s “out” clothes? It’s not a cape and hat, is it?

E: No. (laughs) . . . Pair of pants, my \$21.00 tennis shoes, a pair of socks, brassiere, that sort of thing. Right now I’m wearing a satin robe-type housecoat. It’s what I slept in.

K: Now, when you go out tonight, where will you go then?

E: Uh . . . I’ll probably go south this time, because I went north last night.

K: You do the opposite of what you did the day before?

E: No — just different. I’ll drive for a ways, and walk for a ways. How long I travel depends. I just go until my sixth sense or whatever tells me, okay, stop here. Then i walk and go in this direction, then I go in that direction, whatever my mind directs me.

K: Where do you find people at that hour?

E: You’d be surprised. People walk around the streets at all hours. There’s no problem about it.

K: How do you select your victims?

E: I prefer tourists, (condescendingly) For one thing, most people are not very bright. Half of them don’t bother with traveler’s checks, the other half never informs anybody where they’re going or how long they’re going to be gone. They wouldn’t be missed for a month, most of them.

K: And what do you do with the body?

E: It depends on the situation. I usually try to dispose of the remains as close as possible to the

situation. Quickly, if possible. You know, when people die it's rather messy.

K: How do you feel after you finish drinking your meal?

E: Strong.

K: And how do you clean up? Blood stains must be really rough to get out of clothing.

E: I'm very careful about that. I've gotten to be very good at it over the years.

K: What about finding a willing victim? Why don't you buy blood from somebody who's willing to sell their blood?

E: Oh, for God's sake! That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of, really!

K: All right. Now, let me ask you a kind of strange question. I've been approached by about 400 people. There are a lot of radio and TV people who want to interview you. Now, I know you don't like "public relations" . . .

E: That's for sure.

K: But is it possible, for instance, to do a radio hook-up? In other words, you would call my number, and we would do a radio show from here?

E: That's something I would have to think on for a long time.

K: Not longer than my lifetime, please. It runs out a lot faster than yours — unless I find the "elixir" too.

E: You're too old.

K: I'm not too old! I just look old.

E: You're over 30, aren't you?

K: Over 30? All right. I'm over 30, but that isn't over the hill. I've got another 4 years, at least.

E: Usually, by age 24 the body is dying at such a fast rate that you would never survive.

K: My associate is going to kill herself. She's over 24. In fact, even Carole is over 24. She admits to 26.

E: I have never turned someone through the vicissitudes. I would not, if I were going to do it, do it with anyone over the age of 25.

K: Don't you want to have a couple of more people "in the field" — or do you feel it's like competition?

E: Well, the word that comes to mind is responsibility. I don't want the responsibility of another vampire. I have a responsibility to maintain myself, not to make a public spectacle of myself. I just don't want to have anybody with me that closely.

K: Elizabeth, what happens if you don't drink blood? What happens to you?

E: Well, I'll tell you — I'm beginning to feel the effects right now. Certain agitation. My heart beat in the advanced stage of it will start to fluctuate. And I become very security-conscious.

K: In what way?

E: I start to pay strict attention to sounds. I seem to hear more, see more. The slightest little thing attracts my attention. And I will be getting off the phone with you soon ... I have to.

K: Okay. But before we hang up, remember, we

want a slide of your blood, a sample of your writing, and maybe a picture that you draw for us.

E: Well, I'll think about it. It might compromise my security, and I need time to see if I want to do this.

K: All right, Elizabeth. You think it over. I hope to hear from you again. Thank you very much for calling.

JULY 31, 1979: Elizabeth called at 1 1:45 p.m. My first question was, had she mailed anything to me yet. She said she had some things ready, but had not yet decided to mail them.

The next half hour or so concerned Elizabeth's business dealings and how she coped with daytime activities when she could only function at night. And as we talked, some supremely interesting things came out. She told us:

- She has a phone answering machine.
- She has a secretary who runs daytime errands for her, and who is aware that Elizabeth is a vampire. "Otherwise she would be a threat." Her secretary is the "intended" of the other vampire in the state of Florida.

K: Is she one of his girlfriends, or a victim, or what?

E: What is known as an "Intended." When her training is over, when she's old enough . . .

K: How old is she now?

E: About 20. I'm not really sure.

K: Does she help you secure victims?

E: Of course not! You ask some of the stupidest questions!

K: Well, you caught me half asleep. I have to warm up. So anyway, what have you been doing lately? Anything new?

E: Well, for the past week, every night when I get up I write down what my state is and have been keeping a little note for you.

K: And what is your state now?

E: Medium. I was taught the finger method. What you do is hold your hands up, fingers and thumb outstretched. The tallest finger of the left hand is zero and the tallest finger of the right hand is one hundred, and then I don't know — I do it by feeling now. But what you do is, if it's been say, 16 hours, you count back, 2-4-6-8-10-12-14-16 and then you know if you need blood or not. It was part of my training.

K: Where did you get your training from?

E: Well—from my teacher, of course. My lord.

K: So what happened to him? To your lord?

E: I don't know. I haven't seen or heard anything from him in, let's see — I didn't see him in the 1970's, the 60's . . . or the 50's... It might have been, uh, 1927 or so.

K: And who is your lord?

E: I forget what I called him then. He's Michael to me now. He was Michael after about 1860 or so.

K: What position did he hold, to train you for this?

E: I guess a way of putting it would be to say he was my parent, (very British accent beginning to come out)

K: If I wanted to become a vampire could I?

E: You're too old. Way too old.

K: What do you mean, too old! I'm 38. I can still sing and dance, you know.

E: That's much too old. It could be done, but you probably wouldn't live more than about five years, then you'd die.

K: That doesn't sound like a fair trade-off to me. I mean, I wouldn't mind living two or three hundred years, but to die so quickly — in five years — I'd rather die the old way.

E: I seriously doubt if any vampire would do it with you.

K: And why not? I take a shower!

E: (laughing) Well, I fell into that one, didn't I?

K: But say I was young enough — say 24 or so years old — what kind of ceremony would I have to go through to become a vampire?

E: No particular ceremony. Although it was done with ceremony with me.

K: What actually happened?

E: It was practically a cult back then. I had to wear a white gown. I was locked in a room for three days, and then the door was unlocked and I was told to find Michael and Dino. It took me three hours. It never occurred to me that they were sitting around waiting for me. They lit seventeen candles. I think it was because I was seventeen years old — but no, maybe I was eighteen or sixteen. It was in the Fall. My birthday is in January. Well, anyway, Michael just looked into my eyes, held up my wrist, and said I should just sit down and calm down. Dino thought that was amusing. He

was just sitting in the background, pretending. He wasn't really doing anything. Apparently I had sufficiently calmed down after a little while and the process was done.

K: What process was done? Did they give you chemicals?

E: No. It's a transfusion process of blood. Michael cut his arm. My blood was transferred to him.

K: How?

E: The usual way. He bit me on the neck, and went on from there.

K: Which side did he bite you on, right or left?

E: I'm not sure. I think it was the right side. It hurt! I froze with pain. He drank the blood; it was flowing pretty freely.

K: And how did he give you blood?

E: I don't know. I was not conscious then. I don't want to think about that.

K: So what actually made you become a vampire?

E: I think I have it figured out — it's a theory, mind you. But I think there is something in the blood of the vampire, or maybe transmitted by the bite, that is capable of making another vampire under the right conditions. Just as the sexual act is capable of producing a baby, so the vampire bite may be capable of producing another vampire because of whatever is released into the blood.

K: Elizabeth, that vampire you know in Florida — does he look like you?

E: He's the same basic race. There are different

racess, but the race that I belong to is the only one having any great intelligence.

K: What race is that?

E: There's no specific name for it. We're simply The People. He's from the same group as I. In fact, I think he's distantly related.

K: But you're not the human race?

E: We started out as human, but after the vicissitudes, no. Definitely not.

K: I could use your opinion, Elizabeth. I'm writing a book on vampires that exist today. How many vampires do you estimate there are in the United States?

E: That's a very difficult question. It could be 10, it could be 50.

K: How many to your knowledge?

E: Well, let's see. If they're all still living today . . . four, five, six, seven ... I know of ten that are probably still living including myself.

E: Where are they located? Do you know that?

E: Well, there are three that I know of in Louisiana. One in Indiana. Myself and Joachim here (Florida). I have no idea where Michael is. He may not even be in the country. Dino is a relative of his, and I don't know where he is. Nobody has seen or heard anything from him in a long time ... since around 1950 I suppose.

K: Are there any vampires up in Canada?

E: I really don't know.

K: What about in Wisconsin?

E: There might be one in Wyoming, but I don't

know of any in Wisconsin.

K: I've got a lot of vampire reports from up that way, that's why I asked you.

E: Well, somebody could be running across borders there, too.

K: What about Canada, again? Nova Scotia? Toronto?

E: Really, I don't know. But I was up in Nova Scotia once on a vacation.

K: What year?

E: Let's see, when was that? It wasn't this last winter; it wasn't the one before that. So it must have been the winter before that. I went up there for a couple of weeks.

(This really amazed me! We had received vampire reports from Nova Scotia during the winter of 1977!)

K: Are you the oldest living vampire?

E: Not so long as Michael is around. He would be approximately 100 years older than I am. And Dino's older than he is, if he's still around. Then I'd be the oldest one after them. Everybody else I know is younger, by a good margin.

K: What do you think of the chance that you and I may meet, Elizabeth?

E: I can't get away right now.

K: But I have a chance to get down to Florida in the next few weeks. I have a choice of either Miami Beach or northern Florida. Speaking engagements. Do you think we'll have a chance to meet in Florida?

E: I don't know, really.

K: What area are you from?

Heaven.

Monday

Anything marked w/ yr initials is
yrs to keep.

If y^r is indeed coming to Fla - give me
advanced notice if you want to meet w/ us.
I never do anything on the spur of the moment.
I have not lived thus long by being careless or
impulsive. It will take a few notes for me to
arrange such a meeting. I must feel sure
I will not meet w/ anyone than her
yours at a time.

But - I give you my word that
so long as I do not believe you to have
sacrificed my own security in any way, I
will never so much as raise my voice
against you.

This promise I make & I may be
as comfortable as possible.

Take me seriously, & then, as I have
little left in my life which is of true value
to me... My integrity is one of the
valuable things.

Hoping this note finds you in good health

I have the honor to remain

Your most humble servant,

Lizbeth

E: No particular area. I don't frequent the south.

K So you're in the north area?

E: More often than not. I have three places - I'm at one, then I'm at the other, then the other. It's a triangle which enables me to cover a large area.

K: Elizabeth, remember the last time, I asked you to get a sample of your blood to be mailed to us? Are you doing that for us ?

E: No. God knows what you'd do with it. It's beneath my dignity and I won't be subjected to it! I have to hang up now.

K. Okay, Elizabeth. But don't forget to mail me at least that information you promised.

E: I shall mail it. Good night.

A week later - August 8 - I received a package from Elizabeth! The return address on the package was "Barbara Fields" in Seattle, Washington and so was the postmark. Inside were several photographs of people she had known over the "past 100 years or so"; samples of her handwriting, both cursive and calligraphy; a poem she had written; a photocopy of a page from a medical journal detailing facts about blood; some samples of textiles she claimed were from clothing she had sewn for herself; a few items she considered humorous; and three even more interesting things. The first was a blueprint and specifications she claimed had been given to a carpenter to construct her "sleeper"; the second was notes detailing how much blood she'd needed during the past week; and the third was a letter, written in calligraphy, addressed to me personally. She agreed to meet with me in Florida upon "three nights' notice" but, to protect herself she

would meet with no more than two people. Part of this letter follows:

'I never do anything on the spur of the moment. I have not lived this long by being careless or impulsive.

I must feel secure . . . And— I give you my word that so long as I do not believe you to have sacrificed my own security in any way, I will never so much as raise my voice to you. This promise I make that you may be as comfortable as possible. ”

Two nights after the package arrived, Elizabeth telephoned. It was then August 10, 1979.

K: Who's this “Barbara Fields” in Seattle, Washington — the one you have in your return address?

E: That's just an alias. An identity I use occasionally.

K: In Washington?

E: No. In business.

K: But the address is in Washington.

E: Yes. From there it goes someplace else, and from there it goes to my secretary, and from her it gets to me finally.

K: Who's the pretty blonde in the picture?

E: Charlotte? That is a business secretary. She's not my secretary anymore.

K: Okay, Elizabeth. Now, I have some questions that Carole wants to ask you. She wrote them down for me. How did you meet Michael?

E: I was in the Tower of London awaiting execution and he came through the window.

K: Next question: Did you ever go back to your

family after your “initiation”?

E: Of course not.

K: Did your family ever know?

E: No. I was miles and miles away from them.

They thought I was dead, I suppose.

K: Did you eat food any more?

E: No.

K: I'm trying to read Carole's handwriting. It's terrible! Your handwriting, by the way, is intriguing. Where'd you learn to write that way?

E: It's just the way I learned.

K: Have you taken any courses in calligraphy?

E: No.

K: Next question: Were you human before your initiation? I didn't write these questions, so I'm not going to apologize. I feel like Mike Wallace.

E: (laughing) Yes, I was human.

K: Question 4/2: Why are you so willing to tell us about yourself if you don't want to be found?

E: My own curiosity. More to learn. I need new ideas. You get stagnant after awhile. Can you imagine how isolated I am?

K: I can see that. Let me get another question for you. Can you tell us something about your childhood?

E: Well, when I was five years old I was sent off to avoid the Reformation, and I was raised in a convent where, more often than not I was beaten and starved for the good of my soul. I went to live with my aunt about a year later, and she was called to court when Mary came to power, and I went with her. (accent

becoming very British) They hoped that because we had been staunch Catholics and had stayed Catholic all through the Reformation period there, even though they took away property and really gave us a hard time, it was hoped that I would be able to find a husband.

K: Elizabeth, let's get back to the present time. You and I are supposed to meet each other in the near future. How long can we talk when we meet you?

E: (accent fading, resumes her usual mid western-slight ly-southern sound)

E: Let's see — umm — 10:00 — 2 hours. I have this penchant for safety. I would want a good safety factor and plenty of time to do what I have to do.

K: And that is?

E: (hesitates) Hunt.

K: When you say hunt — I must ask — isn't there a tremendous risk of getting of caught?

E: There is quite a bit of risk of being seen or having a pattern noted.

K: Now, let me ask you this — you say there are about ten vampires you've met or heard about in the United States alone. Have you heard of or from any in the last couple of weeks or so?

E: I've heard from Joachim, but he's included in that number.

K: Do you have any friends, Elizabeth?

E: I have Charlotte. She's the closest thing to a friend that I have.

K: I've mentioned to you before, I'm writing a book and one of the chapters might be about you — about your life, your thoughts. What philosophy would

you like to be remembered for, as a vampire?

E: My philosophy of life? Well, be the best of what you are.

K: Are you the best of vampires?

E: I hope so.

K: What makes you so good?

E: Well, I'm careful — damn careful.

K: Wasn't your teacher 100 years older than you, and doing a lot better? And wasn't he wiser?

E: At that time, yes. I believe I have now surpassed him.

K: Elizabeth, we have an associate who is a radio commentator. Would it be possible for us to do a radio show, with three phones — yours, mine and his?

E: I have thought about it, but I've decided against it. Some of my business people who think I'm dead could recognize my voice.

K: By the way, do you ever come into New York City? Is there a chance you can visit me here?

E: It would take some doing. I'd have to case the place for at least a month.

K: A month? Come on, why a month?

E: I would want to know everything I could about the comings and goings, personal habits, the works.

K: I don't smoke, I don't drink, and I don't run around. What else is there to know? But all fooling aside, I really can see why — your safety. Now, I see here you've sent us a chart of your state, or condition when you wake up, and how you feel right before you drink your — what do you call it? Your lunch? Dinner?

E: Mark.

K: Your mark. So, right before you eat your mark . . .

E: (English accent suddenly very pronounced) I don't say "eat" either. I just say I'm going to mark. But marking is something which is very, very seldom discussed among The People.

K: By the way, one of my associates is asking why your English accent has suddenly become much more prominent. Is there any particular reason?

E: Must be because Pm in a good mood. When I'm by myself it's very thick. When I'm speaking to someone it depends on who they are what my accent will be. By the way, Stephen, I have a question for you. I Would like to know some of the details of your first meeting with a real, live vampire. What was your reaction, and what were the emotional consequences?

K: I would rather talk about you, Elizabeth. Do you feel you are killing when you are taking food, or do you feel it's not killing, but just finding food?

E: It certainly is damaging to the physical body of that person; however, that person's spirit, I do not believe it dies. I am no more drastic than an automobile accident to that person. I treat people in general well enough. I think of them as little children in a way; or to use my secretary's favorite description, uneducated bumbling nitwits.

K: Have you changed physically or mentally over the years?

E: For one thing, the older you get, the faster you get, the better you get, the stronger, the more secure. Either that, or the weaker, and you die.

K: Carole has another question, Elizabeth. How many teeth do you have?

E: (sounds almost shy) I'd have to count, (pause) Ten on the top . . . and twelve on the bottom.

K: Do you have molars, incisors? How many of each?

E: Oh, for God's sake! I'm not sure which really is a molar.

K: Did you ever have a cavity? And what color are your teeth?

E: No, I never had a cavity. My teeth are perfectly white.

K: Another question from Carole — If you are asexual, as you claim to be, then why are there male and female vampires?

E: Because they were male and female humans. So the outside structural appearance remains basically the same.

K: Another one from Carole. Do you have mental telepathy abilities?

E: Yes, as a matter of fact, I do.

K: Elizabeth, as you know, Carole is listening on the other phone. She wants to know why you are talking so freely to us, especially when you know we are writing a book and want to use what you are telling us. What are we doing for you?

E: For one thing, you are providing me with entertainment. And you are giving me ideas about how humans think and react. I like to learn. And now I must hang up. I am going to Georgia for a few days, and will

call you when I get back.

K: What part of Georgia?

E: You aren't very subtle.

K: That's me. Always trying.

E: Good night.

K: Good night.

AUGUST 14, 1979: This last conversation brought up many questions. Max had noticed a slightly nasal quality to Elizabeth's voice, and thought he noted some kind of breathing disorder, too. He suggested that she may have broken her nose sometime in the past. Carole found Elizabeth's teeth interesting. Roxanne wanted to know more about when Elizabeth first became a vampire . . .

K: Well, Elizabeth, we have a few more questions for you, if it's okay.

E: I hope they're more intelligent than the last ones.

K: I'll let you decide on that. First question ... it seems we have a hundred. Where had you met Joachim before you met him on the street in Florida?

E: You mean originally? That was in 1861 or 1862, in France.

K: I thought you were in the United States since 1775.

E: Michael and I had traveled all over the world for quite some time.

K: Next question: If you have no real need to drink blood, would you go after an easy victim anyway?

E: No. I would get uncomfortably full. If I get to

a point where I cannot consume any more I will feel, umm. a sort of aching feeling on my right side. That will hold me for eighteen hours, when I get that high a load.

K: All right. Next question. Have any of your victims ever escaped?

E: In my early years they did, and then there have been occasions where I have goofed. But that is a very rare occasion. When I go after somebody I don't let them go on.

K: We have had many vampire attack reports. Why do you think other vampires lose their victims? This question is from our physiologist.

E: The only thing I can guess, really, would be lack of education, perhaps.

K: Okay. Question 7^{1/2}: When was the last time you had medical treatment?

E: Never.

K: Are you immune to human diseases? Or do you ever get any illnesses that we don't?

E: I don't know, really. I do have certain problems with aerosol sprays. They cause me to sneeze violently.

K: Do you have any other problems?

E: Well, my nose was broken. Michael did it with the back of his hand when I was living with him during the training, for about a year. It swelled up terribly, and a piece of cartilage came out when I blew my nose. There is a slightly indentation on the left side of the bridge of my nose.

K: Okay, how did you treat it?

E: Left it alone.

K: Have you ever studied acting? Ever a professional or an amateur performer?

E: No.

K: Do you have a passport, Elizabeth?

E: I have quite a few passports, (laughing) I can't use a lot of them anymore because the people that they were supposed to be died.

K: Which countries do you have passports for?

E: Next question, please.

K: Ail right. Your teeth. Carole finds them very fascinating.

E: What about "my" teeth?

K: What happened to your original human teeth?

E: Nothing special.

K: Well, the average human has around 32 teeth, and you have far less than that. Don't you find that unusual?

E: Really? I didn't know that. My goodness.

K: What do your teeth look like now? Are they flat? Blunt? Sharp?

E: They're very white, solid. That's about it, really. They're teeth. There are two that could be described as fangs, but I just call them teeth.

K: Do you use those teeth on your mark?

E: Of course.

K: When Michael drained your blood and you were becoming a vampire, how did he get the blood back into your body?

E: It was through the wrist. Through the radial

artery. He used a knife.

K: So what part of his body did the blood drain from?

E: (annoyed) You don't know what the radial artery is?

K: You mean it came from his wrist to your wrist?

E: No. I drank it.

K: What happened to him when he gave all that blood from his body to yours?

E: I wasn't paying much attention.

K: How long did it take for your teeth to change to "fangs"?

E: More than a fortnight, less than a month.

K: You mean between 2 and 4 weeks?

E: You knew! Good for you!

We went on to discuss her blood-drinking again. She said she does not drink from a dead human, that when her victim dies, that's enough. She does not drink animal blood, although for the first two weeks of her "training" she began with animal blood, going from smaller to larger animals as she progressed.

She said she can run at least 30 miles per hour, keeping up with a car going that fast, and can maintain that pace depending on why she is running.

She mentioned that she had practiced Witchcraft in the middle 1500's; but after careful questioning it was apparent to me that she did not know what she was talking about. I have studied the subject extensively and lecture on it, and she was really ignorant about some of the simplest details. When I confronted her with this, she said . . .

E: I only know what I experienced about four hundred years ago, and you're asking me things now that make no sense to me because they don't apply to me.

K: Elizabeth, if you were in my place, talking to someone as I am talking to you, there are several categories we could put you into. One, a real vampire; two, a vampire-like person; three, a hoax; four, unknown. Which one, based on the information you have given us, and based on the rather sketchy evidence you've mailed us, would you put yourself into?

E: To be honest, I would say "unknown."

K: A good way for us to get you from "unknown" to "real vampire" would be to have a blood sample. It doesn't have to be beneath your dignity to do this. We have a hematologist who will analyze it for us. Is it possible?

E: I'm not sure I want to do that. Because this way, I've always got an "out" . . .

K: But it's important that we prove your credibility, and we need your help, don't you agree?

E: It's important to you, yes. But why should that be important to me?

K: For the same reason that you are talking to us. Obviously, in some way you are trying to help us, am I correct?

E: Yes, but it's for my own benefit. For instance, tonight you've irritated me. Now I am speaking to you, I am interacting with you in a way that I have not done with any other human being since I was a human. I'm not speaking to you as I would to a vampire, because

you don't know certain things, and you wouldn't know what I was talking about. So I am experiencing something which I have not experienced before. And, well, it is enjoyable. You are providing me with information on humans and an insight that is invaluable to me.

And there is no one with whom I can get this raw, at times even callous and very candid approach. You don't quite know — I'm still the unknown, so you're going to push it, you're going to really put me on the spot, and this is very energizing.

K: How long did you stay with Michael, Elizabeth?

E: From 1557 until 1862, or about those dates.

K: Did you each have your own territory? Why did you split up?

E: We shared wherever we were, and we split up because we were tired of each other, I suppose. It was mutual consent.

K: Elizabeth, a lot of people I've mentioned you to are skeptical of your existence. How could I prove it to them?

E: If I wanted to prove to you beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am what I am, I might have to break my promise not to raise my voice against you.

K: You mean that's the only way? By knocking me off? Can't we use one of my associates? Wait a minute, hold on — I think Carole just quit!

E: I could scare the living daylights out of you. Don't you realize what I could do to you? If I were to just strike you with the back of my hand, it would

probably break your neck right where you stood and kill you instantly.

K: Thank God I'm covered with Blue Cross and Blue Shield. I wouldn't worry. Besides, if you're dead, you're dead.

E: That's what they say. Your attitude is refreshing.

K: If I were afraid of you I wouldn't be talking to you. Besides, one of my associates has volunteered to be your victim, (laughs) Really, Elizabeth, don't worry. We're only joking. Now, how else could we prove you are what you say you are?

E: Well, you are going to meet me.

K: Yes. Now, we will coming down with four people. Two of us will meet you, but we would like to have three. Actually, all four of us would like to interview you.

E: You've got to understand something. Living as long as I have, I haven't gotten away by not allowing myself huge margins. I have a certain amount of caution where you're concerned. I've never done anything like this before. I've come to believe that the best way to stay alive is to always assume that the other person knows your every thought and can outdo you in everything, and that way you will never run the risk of underestimating them, fatally perhaps. I don't know you well enough to really trust you.

K: Elizabeth, you're either a hoax, an unknown, a real vampire, or a great actress. You've done a lot of research, a lot of hard work. You're very clever, and you've got a good command of the English language.

You're pretty hip on the subject.

And whether I want to believe you or not — one of the problems with researchers is, when they find something they feel fits in with the subject, they want to believe it. I always tell myself never be too “hungry” to want to believe something simply because I’m pursuing it. You understand what I’m saying?

E: I believe so.

K: In other words, I don’t find a ghost unless there’s a ghost there, no matter how badly I want to find it. And when I finally reach a conclusion, I still realize that something else might come along tomorrow to change the whole picture again.

E: I would have to talk to you more before I would really feel comfortable.

K: Well, we’ve run out of questions for you for tonight. We’ve certainly asked you a lot. And we will meet soon. I’m looking forward to seeing you. And next time we talk, I’ll have some new questions for you.

E: I don’t know what you are going to do with this. I’d hate to think ... (pause)... I am worried about the emotional reaction you may have when you meet me. I don’t know that you’ve ever seen a real one before, and knowing in advance what I am, but not really what to expect ...

K: Well, don’t worry. I’ve met some of the most unusual people on earth. I work with unusual people all the time. So, we’ll speak again in a few days. Thank you for calling.

AUGUST 15,1979: This night, the NBC-TV show “Real People” on which I appeared was repeated.

Since I expected the usual flurry of crank calls after my my appearance, I had the phone at the Center connected to my answering machine. In this way I could hear who was calling and avoid the unimportant ones. The phone rang constantly, and I hardly paid any attention to it until I heard one particular message coming through. It was Elizabeth, and she was talking rather sadly. It sounded like she was reading rather than simply speaking.

E: Stephen, this is Elizabeth. I'm calling tonight — I saw your show and saw, not just heard, your sincerity, and know you to be an intellectual, honorable person, and good in your way. I am sorry and dishonored. I am a fraud. I deceived you, Steve. I thank you for your honor, and wish you godspeed and safety in your work. You've done me a great deal of good.

I quickly picked up the phone, not wanting to lose contact. Elizabeth had deceived me!? I had to hear the whole story . . .

K: This is Stephen Kaplan, Elizabeth. How have you deceived me?

E: Well, I've been using you rather selfishly.

K: In what way?

E: I've wanted to know certain things — things that were necessary to me, and I've used you to find them out.

K: And what have you found out, Elizabeth?
And in what way did you deceive me?

E: (long pause) Umm — I told you ... umm ... I can't tell somebody a lie right to them. I just can't do it.

K: Well, then, can you tell me the truth, please?

E: I was going to tell you that I was not a vampire.

K: Really? And what are you?

E: Well ... I am.

K: You are what?

E: A vampire.

K: Can you remember if you're a vampire or not? Elizabeth, come on, will you tell me the truth please?

E: I have, (flat, unemotional voice unlike previous times)

K: You have what?

E: Told you the truth.

K: And which truth is that? Are you an actress, or someone who believes you are a vampire?

E: Whatever suits you is fine with me. (annoyed)

K: No, no, no! That's not what I want you to say. I want you to tell me the truth, please.

E: I know what I am. That is enough for me.

K: Yes, but you see, you've told me a lot of things after all these hours, and I'm waiting for the true true story. Do you think you might tell me?

E: Why is it necessary?

K: Why? Because you've taken a lot of my time, and I feel that somehow you owe me.

E: I think I have given as much as I have gotten.

K: No, it doesn't work that way. Can you tell me the truth, please?

E: What specifically do you want to know?

K: In what area have you not been telling the

truth?

E: I haven't lied to you at any time until tonight.

K: And how did you lie to me this evening?

E: When I got your recording, I assumed you had probably gone to bed.

K: I was going to retire, but when I heard you saying you were going to tell the truth, it perked up my curiosity. And I want to know that truth. If it's an elaborate hoax then it's very sad, because we've worked a tremendous amount of hours, and you've wasted a lot of our time and effort. But I'd rather be embarrassed now than later.

E: (long pause) It's not a hoax. But you would be more comfortable with it if it were a hoax.

K: All right. Could you then do me one favor? Could you send me a photograph, not of your face, but of your teeth?

E: I will not do that.

K: Why not? That would be some proof. I don't want to look at your eyes, I don't want to look at your body, I don't want to look at your skin, I just want to look at your teeth.

E: (long pause) No matter what you believe, I have gotten what I needed. So it is not to my benefit to send you this, and I won't. You asked how to classify me. Call me a hoax.

K: All right. I'm not satisfied with the information that I've gotten so far. You do not know much about witchcraft. I feel you were making that up.

E: That's fine. Why should I be an expert?

K: If you were a practicing witch you should

have known some basic facts.

E: Well, evidently I was wrong. I thought that that was what I had been doing. I was told I was a practicing witch.

K: So why don't you send me a photograph of your teeth?

E: Because I want an "out." I still have it.

K: How do you mean, an "out"? I don't understand. In what way?

E: I want to be able to bow out as a hoax, which is what I was going to do tonight.

K: Yes. I know that. Well, that's all right. We're going to let you bow out anyway. Were you auditioning for a part before you called us?

E: You really do think I'm a hoax? Well. good.
Goodnight, (hung up)

She was gone. And she never called us again. We were left with her fascinating story and a mysterious puzzle to piece together. Was she a hoax? Was she . . . an unknown?

I'm going to end this chapter here and let you decide for yourself what Elizabeth was. Obviously, a lot of her story was questionable — but a lot more, if you keep an open mind, was at least possible. Our staff wrestled with this case for weeks after her final call, and we still don't have a satisfactory answer.

There's just one more bit of information I will give you:

On October 27, 1981, the Boston Globe quoted 24- year-old James P. Riva II, on trial for murder, as saying, "I've been a vampire for four years."

Later in the article, his mother is quoted: “He told me he had met vampires in Florida, and that he knew some were 200 years old.”

What do you think of that!?

CHAPTER VI

ARE YOU A VAMPIRE?

Among the thousands of requests for information that cross our desks at the Center are quite a large number from people who suspect — or fear — that they themselves are possibly vampires. Usually they have read a book or two on the subject, and suddenly they notice things about themselves that seem to fit the descriptions of the vampires they've studied.

This always reminds me of my friend Lenny The Doctor. All through medical school, whatever disease he studied, the next week he had it! Poor Lenny spent years having cancer, tuberculosis, vitamin deficiencies, malformed organs, heart disease — everything. He made it through school finally, and realized that all he really had was blocked sinuses — what a relief!

Well, for all those who suspect they might be vampires, we've designed a series of tests. After you take them, you may find relief, like Lenny The Doctor, by discovering you're not a vampire at all, and you can lay your fears to rest. On the other hand . . .

TEST I

1. Do you turn into a bat? (cat? dog? horse? other?)
2. Are you the seventh son of a seventh son?
3. Are you a wicked person?
4. Do mirrors show no reflection of you?
5. Does a crucifix or holy water frighten you?
6. Does life seem to crumble during the daylight?

A “yes” to any of these questions, with the possible exception of #3, would be surprising. Not one of these questions has any connection to true vampirism; however, all these “symptoms” do appear in legends and myths about vampires.

Let’s take a quick look at some of things found in these tales.

How does a person become a vampire? The most frequently mentioned way is dying in the state of sin. Slavonic legends say that a wicked person would become a vampire as punishment; in the Balkans, people who died under the curse of their parents, or those who committed suicide, would become vampires. Legends of Sicily and Greece state that a murdered person whose death went unavenged would rise up as a vampire.

European folk tales show that vampires rise from their graves each night and go in search of a meal of human blood. How they get into a locked house to reach a victim is rather vague. Some stories solve this problem by having the vampire turn into a vampire bat and fly through his victim's open bedroom window; others become cats, dogs, horses, or other animals which will be able to get near the victim unnoticed. Another way of entry into a victim's house has also been suggested — projected hypnosis. The vampire may cause his victim to open the door and let him in, through hypnotic suggestion which he is able to project from a distance.

The corpse gets out of the grave in one of several ways. In some cases, the vampire may have a living human associate who digs him out before the first 24 hours after burial. In other cases, legends say that the vampire has super-human strength for moving aside the earth and tombstone that cover him. And in still other cases the vampire's grave shows several small holes through which the vampire can filter. In many tales, the townsfolk, suspecting that a vampire was afoot, would search through the local graveyard, looking for a grave with a few holes of this nature. This, they believed, was a sure sign that a vampire was resting there, and they would then destroy it by either staking the body through the heart, decapitating it, or burning the body after stuffing the mouth with garlic or soaking the body in wine.

The filtering of the vampire through the small holes in its grave shows a confusion between corpse and soul.

often found in old supernatural beliefs. The vampire is a material being, yet has non-material attributes such as the power to pass through small spaces. Another example of this is the belief that a vampire casts no reflection in a mirror.

A few other people who were believed to turn into vampires: the seventh son of a seventh son; unchristened babies; excommunicated church members.

On close examination, these “criteria” indicate several things: an ingenious way of keeping law and order; a way of keeping the church’s power strong; and some superstitious beliefs.

Look again at who will become a vampire: a murder victim whose death goes unavenged; a wicked person; a person dying in the state of sin; people who commit suicide. The threat of becoming a vampire if one falls into these categories is akin to the eternal damnation promised to sinners by many contemporary religions!

The murderer would surely think twice if he believed his victim would come back as a vampire to get him; and the only way that could be avoided was if the murderer was caught and punished. Quite a deterrent to the crime in the first place, isn’t it? The same could apply to people contemplating suicide; to be cursed with the life after death of a vampire would almost surely be worse than the problems they wished to end in this life.

Knowing the fate of vampirism promised to sinners, excommunicants, unchristened babies, and “wicked people” would certainly keep the average townsfolk

from straying from their church's laws; and the use of the crucifix as a protection against a vampire is another ploy introduced by the church, either to comfort the believers or to keep the church in their thoughts. As we've discussed earlier, vampires are mentioned historically long before the time of Christ, Whom the crucifix represents.

A superstition is an irrational belief in the significance for good or evil concerning certain events or things. Primitive people developed superstitions in trying to understand the world around them, and to protect themselves and their loved ones from evil influences. They also developed superstitions to insure good fortune.

The "seventh son of a seventh son" shows a superstitious belief in the significance of the number seven. This is interesting. The number seven is usually associated with good fortune. In some places, the seventh son of a seventh son is believed to possess magical healing powers. However, in its relation to vampires this number seven seems to have a negative meaning; unless we look at it this way: perhaps the "life after death" of vampires was considered by some primitive societies as a good thing.

The belief that vampires shun daylight and practice their rituals in darkness stems back to the ancient belief of light representing Good, darkness, representing Evil. Jesus said, "I am the Light." Satan is called the Prince of Darkness. Ancient peoples worshipped the sun as a benevolent god.

It is comforting that Good always triumphs over

Evil; so you can see the correlation with the vampire (Evil) being destroyed by daylight (Good). Also in this connection, most people are afraid of the unknown. Darkness hides things, and we can't be sure what we are up against. In the daylight, we can identify whatever sounds or movements occur, and usually find nothing to fear.

The way the legendary vampires are destroyed also correlates to some basic ideas. Many people believe that the heart is the place where the spirit dwells; and the brain is the place from which a person's thoughts and deeds originate. To this day, some primitive cultures exist around the world where a warrior will eat the heart and brain of a slain enemy, but only if he believes his enemy had been equal or greater in strength or wisdom than himself. This ritual is like a showing of respect for the dead man; don't confuse it with cannibalism. The victorious man truly believes he is adding to his own strength and intelligence by taking those assets from the dead man.

Conversely, to destroy the heart and brain shows a contempt for the dead person; a way to insure that his or her spirit and deeds will not live on.

The total destruction of the body by fire further insures this. There is a belief that a person's spirit remains near its earthly body. In fact, several contemporary religions frown on cremation for this reason, believing that in some future time the body and spirit will be reunited, and the dead will rise again. The ancient Egyptians carefully preserved their bodies by mummification with this in mind. So, acting on this

belief, the townsfolk burning a vampire's body would destroy forever any chance of its returning to life.

The staking of vampires, aside from destroying the heart, corresponds to an old practice in Europe where executed criminals were buried with stakes in their hearts, at crossroads, where passers-by would see the punishment meted out to law-breakers.

From this quick analysis of the myths and legends, we can see how vampire tales, intertwined with primitive beliefs and superstitions, were mixed together into new and more horrible stories with each telling. But one mystery remains: no matter how distorted the tales have become, they all tell of creatures which must drink human blood to survive; creatures which can live indefinitely as long as they get this "elixir of life." What is a vampire? And could you or I be one? For those who are still wondering about themselves, this next test may help make the decision.

TEST II

1. Do you sleep in a coffin?
2. Are most of your clothes black?
3. Do you wear an opera cape with a red lining?
Carry a wolf's-head cane?
4. Do you avoid mirrors? garlic? sunlight?
church?
5. Do you have fangs?
6. Do you enjoy biting people on the neck?
7. Do you crave power over others?

8. Do you drink human blood occasionally?
9. Do you believe that drinking human blood will make you look younger?
10. Does the sight or taste of human blood arouse you sexually?

Surprise! None of the above questions have anything to do with true vampirism. If you have answered “yes” to many or all of the first nine questions, you fall into the category of “vampire-like” people. Some of these individuals hope that by emulating a vampire’s life style, they will actually become vampires themselves. They are familiar with the Dracula story and believe, erroneously, that a true vampire sleeps in a coffin, has fangs, is deathly afraid of sunlight, garlic, etc. They even go as far as drinking human blood — always from willing donors, and only when it is easily available — in their attempts at gaining the assets attributed to vampires. But no matter how hard they try to be vampires, it just doesn’t happen. If you wanted to be a dog, and walked on all fours, ate dog food from a dish on the floor, and barked instead of talking, you’d still be just imitating a dog.

The typical vampire-like person is often fighting an inferiority complex. He or she believes that if they can improve their appearance — perhaps remain youthful by drinking blood — they will gain admiration from others; and if they can’t get admiration, they will settle for fear or submission. They dress in bizarre costumes, and some even file their teeth to the sharp fangs they believe a vampire has. They often try to bite their

willing donors on the neck to draw blood. If that doesn't work, they will use other means to withdraw the blood, and usually will drink it mixed in fruit juice or wine to kill the taste.

They often let it be known that they are involved in vampirism, and enjoy the shocked reactions they receive.

A “yes” to question #10, concerning the erotic attraction of blood, may put you in another category — that of a blood fetishist. Some people are sexually aroused by the sight or taste of human blood. They often join groups with similar interests and participate in blood-letting rituals, sometimes including sadomasochistic activities, to satisfy their needs. One of the individuals I interviewed exchanged menstrual blood through the mail with another woman, and they wrote each other erotic letters along with it.

Unlike the vampire-like person, the blood fetishist does not draw attention to his or her desire for blood. They dress in normal clothing, and prefer to keep their activities private and known only to members of their group.

People who find that they have a desire for blood (not a need) often worry about it. Are they moral degenerates? Will they someday evolve into murderers? Are they really vampires?

The moral issue is a very personal one. As to the possibility of becoming a murderer, I will repeat here that the desire for blood is definitely not the same as the desire to kill. They are two separate issues. Is a blood fetishist really a vampire? I would say not. They simply

have an unusual reaction to the sight or taste of blood.

But what, then, is a vampire? If fangs and opera capes, bats and coffins, fascination with blood, and even occasional drinking of human blood have nothing to do with true vampirism, how can you determine whether or not you're a vampire? Take the next test — we could call this the “acid test” — and maybe then you'll know for sure.

TEST III

1. Do you need to drink human blood every day?

2. Do you become irritable, aggressive, or frantic if you can't drink human blood every day?

3. Do you believe that drinking human blood every day has kept you youthful and will extend your life indefinitely?

If you've answered “yes” to even one of these questions, you are what we call a true vampire.

Of the hundreds of people we have interviewed at the Vampire Research Center both in person and by telephone, we feel that seven of them fall into this category. Two others, probably. Here are some of the characteristics common to the seven we have personally met:

- They need to drink human blood every day.

Whether this is a physical or psychological need is still unknown, but all of them said they would do almost anything in order to secure blood. They've paid money to their donors; traded sex for blood; participated in sado-masochistic rituals; joined blood cults; some even admitted attacking an unwilling victim when they were desperate. However, none that we met was willing to kill for blood. A few ounces would be sufficient and they did not wish to harm their donors. (Doesn't this sound like vampire bats?)

- They are very body-conscious, usually pleasant-looking, well-groomed, and appear younger than their chronological age.
- They are convinced that if they stop drinking human blood they will age, and possibly die. They believe that human blood is going to extend their lives while keeping them young-looking.
- They have overpowering personalities. They take charge in a conversation; are able to get people to willingly do things their way. They are generally likeable, intelligent, and good conversationalists.
- They are “night people”—preferring to work at night and sleep during the day. They can function during the day if necessary, but do not enjoy it.
- None had ever been married, but two had companions of the opposite sex. None said they had ever had any children.
- Every one of them insisted on total security

concerning their identity.

The overall picture of the true vampires we've met is rather surprising, isn't it? Contrary to what the average person would imagine, they were not hideous, contemptible, murderous individuals; only people with an overwhelming need for an unusual substance in their diet. Still, it's easy to understand why vampires are feared. Their need for blood — our very life-essence — is threatening to us. We need our blood every bit as much as they do! Also, there is the old fear of the unknown. Vampires are all the more frightening because they are a virtually unstudied phenomenon. It's only in the very recent past that they've even been considered as possibly real and worthy of study, rather than fictitious creatures. If we compare vampires to another group of individuals that we're more familiar with, we can gain a better perspective.

Let's compare vampires to drug addicts. Both have an overwhelming need for an unusual substance. Both will do anything necessary to get the needed substance. We are more familiar with drug addicts because there is constant newspaper coverage of their activities. Those who can't obtain the drugs they need in any other way will resort to robbery, beatings, even murder, in their frantic quest for relief.

Another form of addiction, alcoholism, can also be compared to vampirism. Here, too, the alcoholic experiences withdrawal symptoms, like the hard-drug addict, and like the vampire, if the needed substance is unavailable.

There is one outstanding difference, though, between drug addiction, alcoholism, and vampirism. Where the alcoholic and the drug addict are harming their bodies, the vampire — apparently — is improving his or her health. All three groups could be considered potentially dangerous to society for various reasons.

The point I want to bring out by these comparisons is that vampires, although frightening in their own way, are no more dangerous than other, more familiar groups of individuals; and perhaps with some aid from certain authorities, their needs can be channeled more positively.

There are centers that offer counseling and treatment for various addictions and problems. Perhaps a similar service will some day be available for vampires; but first a suitable replacement for fresh blood must be found. I've been asked over and over why vampires don't just use blood from a blood bank if they're really not interested in harming their donors. Wouldn't this solve their problem? This sounds logical, and I've asked every true vampire I've encountered this question. All said they must have blood from a living person. Why? They can't explain. We could speculate on this. Maybe the nutrients in the blood of a living person, produced from their diet, undergo a slight change when the blood is removed from the body. Maybe the vampire's metabolism is a little different from the average person's and he or she cannot produce whatever the needed blood substance is. Maybe the anticoagulant which is added to the blood when a technician draws it from a donor affects this

needed substance.

One true vampire I spoke with, “Felix,” gave some additional reasons why blood from a blood bank is not the answer:

“I must protect my identity, as you know. How would I find a doctor to cooperate with me and order the blood without risking disclosure? And how could I get it as often as I need it? A person can’t just go buy a pint of blood.” He paused a moment, then continued. “Look, even if I could get that far, you know how much a pint of blood costs?”

I nodded yes. Felix’s point was valid. He needs to drink six to eight ounces of blood every day. With the price of blood nearing \$100 a pint, he could never afford it.

With all the problems involved in obtaining blood and covering up the constant quest for it, a logical question arises: Can a true vampire ever overcome the need for human blood? As far as we have been able to determine, the answer is no. Two of those we interviewed had tried to go without it, but could not get beyond one bloodless day. The other five had no desire to find out; they were convinced that the problems they face are as nothing compared to the blood-withdrawal symptoms, coupled with their fear of aging and possible death.

If you have decided from this that you’re not a vampire, and will never be one, don’t be too hasty in your conclusion. We asked each of the nine true vampires when their blood-drinking began, and it may surprise you to know that not all of them were “born-

into” vampirism. Four of them did say they just “always” needed human blood. We asked each of them if their parents or other relatives also drank human blood, but none of them would discuss their families. As researchers we found this very frustrating; however, any data that could possibly give their identity away was strictly avoided. Fm sure I have never been given a true, correct name by any of these nine individuals.

The remaining five true vampires we interviewed did not begin to drink human blood until they were well into their teens. Each one said they realized their need for human blood as soon as they first tasted a few drops of it.

One man told us he hit his thumb with a hammer and automatically put the profusely bleeding thumb into his mouth to ease the pain and lick the blood away. He suddenly felt a compelling need for more blood, and kept making the wound bleed until he felt “reasonably satisfied.” Two women also mentioned licking blood from a badly bleeding wound as their introduction to vampirism. Two others mentioned that friends who were blood fetishists first introduced them to vampirism. In every case, as soon as they tasted an ounce or more of blood (not the small amount you would have from a small flesh wound, but enough to cover the tongue), they felt an overwhelming need to have it again. Some tried cutting themselves with razor blades and tasted their own blood every day, but found they needed larger amounts of blood. They “graduated” to other means — finding blood fetishists to trade blood with, exchanging sex for blood, and

participating in other blood rituals mentioned earlier.

Extracting blood from donors is somewhat of an art among vampires and other blood-drinking people. Some are taught by more talented blood-drinkers and there is actually a correspondence course offered, along with a pamphlet, which teaches “how to become a vampire” — including lessons on how to find willing blood suppliers and how to extract blood by methods which are “painless” and even “pleasurable” to the donor.

If you’ve ever had occasion to taste an appreciable amount of blood, found it unpleasant, and never desired it again, you can be reasonably sure you’re not a potential vampire.

Another determining factor may be your age. According to what we’ve been told by several true vampires, if you’re over 30 years old and not a vampire, chances are you’ll never be one.

“Jeanette,” a true vampire we interviewed in 1978, had this to say about age:

“By the time a person is 30 years old, the deterioration of the body is too far along, and the aging process cannot be reversed, even by drinking human blood.”

Well, so far we’ve covered mythical vampires, vampire-like people, and true vampires, and you should have a pretty good idea where you fit or don’t fit in the world of vampirism. Blood-drinking people are what the average person usually think of in relation to vampirism; but there is another type of vampire, much more common, which we must still discuss. I would say

that nearly every one of us has either met or been one of them, at some time.

Let's begin by re-defining the word. Vampirism is actually the draining of physical energy from one individual to another, often via the blood. However, there are some people who can drain energy from others without ever touching them! We call these people “Psychic vampires.”

Psychic vampires have an ability which can be compared to the ability of psychic healers, only in reverse. Psychic healers are able to transfer their own physical energy to a patient, helping to cure an illness or problem. The healer is often left tired and weak after treating a patient, because of the tremendous amount of energy given to the other. On the other hand, psychic vampires are able to sap energy from their victims, leaving them drained and sometimes actually ill, while the vampire comes away energized.

There is another theory regarding the transferral of energy from a psychic healer to a patient. It suggests that the energy received is not the energy of the healer, but that the healer is a sort of transformer through whom cosmic energy passes and goes on to the receiver. Obviously, the phenomenon is not fully understood, but the results are still evident. What is known is that when either the psychic healer or the psychic vampire “plugs in” to the patient or victim, all involved undergo certain changes in their energy levels.

Some people seem to be born with a pronounced energy-transferral ability, which can be developed through awareness and repetition. This seems to be linked with heightened psychic sensitivities; and since everyone has psychic abilities to a greater or lesser degree, it is possible for any one of us to develop into, among other things, psychic healers — or psychic vampires. Psychic phenomena often occur during times of emotional upheaval — for instance great happiness or deep depression — when psychic sensitivities seem to increase. The average person may have an isolated psychic experience because of this.

Now, let's get back to psychic vampires. What's this "plugging in"? Simply stated, the victim must acknowledge the presence of the vampire and "open the circuit" through which energy will flow. As an example, in a social situation the psychic vampire may greet a potential victim by saying "Hello." If the "victim" responds with a positive reply, nothing more need be said. The "circuit" has been completed and in a few minutes the victim will feel quite uncomfortable, for no obvious reason. If a conversation develops between them, the victim will find himself wishing to get away; or feel an aversion to the psychic vampire. If there is no acceptable way of escape, the victim may actually develop a roaring headache, due to the loss of energy, and will eventually be left feeling totally "drained" and possibly really ill.

On the other hand, the potential victim may sense something negative about the psychic vampire when they first meet, and simply avoid him, or reply to the

greeting but not invite any further contact. This will prevent the psychic vampire from plugging in to his energy, and the vampire will go on to an easier target. This doesn't mean that every time you meet a person you don't particularly care for, he or she is a psychic vampire. There are hundreds of reasons why people attract or repel each other. But your psychic abilities do come into play at the strangest times, and I would suggest you follow your "instincts" in these encounters.

What can you do if you find yourself a victim of a psychic vampire? You may have unknowingly allowed one to plug into your energy — now what? You have to break the circuit.

Here is where garlic, a crucifix, a Star of David, a good-luck charm, or other amulet can come into play in warding off a vampire — a psychic vampire, that is. By putting all your awareness on something you believe is good for you, by concentrating on a person who loves you, or in other words, by positive thinking, you are creating a protective shield of energy between you and the psychic vampire and will be able to stop the flow of energy from your body. This is because when you clear the brain of all thoughts but one, the mental powers grow.

Chances are you have met a psychic vampire. Did you ever describe someone as a "pain in the neck" or avoid certain people because they "give you a headache" or "turn you off"? Did anyone ever nearly bore you "to death"? Have you ever found a person annoying but couldn't put your finger on why?

Apparently, psychic vampires have a lower energy

level than the average person, and must raise it by taking energy from others. Anyone whose energy is depleted at one time or another may become a psychic vampire until their energy returns naturally. I don't mean cases where energy is depleted because of strong exercise or hard physical labor. Indeed, after a rest period, energy is actually increased after this type of activity. I'm talking about emotional energy. As I mentioned before, the psychic sensitivities seem to increase during times of emotional turbulence, so the ability to transfer energy could increase at these times. A state of depression, for instance, makes us feel drained and weak, and it "takes all our energy just to get out of bed in the morning." But talking to someone often makes us feel better; however, our confidants may feel worse than they did before they talked to us!

The true psychic vampire is aware of his lack of energy, and of his ability to sap energy from others, which he has developed with practice. But there are individuals who are unknowingly sapping energy from others, and who only do this in times of emotional stress. Some examples of psychic vampires: the chronic complainer; the pessimist; the person who never seems happy; the domineering teacher who takes pleasure in browbeating students for no reason; the spouse who makes life miserable for a mate.

Energies constantly flow between people, and usually there is a balance between what goes out and what comes in. In some cases, though, the balance is temporarily upset. When a person has a high level of energy, we often describe him or her as "glowing" with

health, happiness, life — and people around them come away “feeling good” and more energetic themselves. Conversely, people with low energy levels are often described as “dull and lifeless,” and people around them feel “worse” after encountering them. These are examples of imbalanced energy transferral.

In a group situation, it’s possible for the entire group to act as a psychic vampire, sapping energy; or as a psychic “healer” giving off extra energy. A good example of this type of group is an audience. Every actor or actress has had the experience of a “good” audience, where the performance just seemed to flow easily, and the applause left the cast “glowing.” The same cast performing to another audience can feel like they had to plod through the show, and afterwards come away drained and tired. This is also a reaction to the audience’s “vibes” or energy.

Have you ever stayed up until the wee hours of the morning in lively conversation with a group of interesting, dynamic people; and then wondered why you weren’t tired after only two hours of sleep? Or had the opposite happen, where after a short meeting with some dull, boring group, you just had no energy left for anything but sleeping?

Have you recognized any of these psychic vampires? Remember, by positive thinking and concentration, you can ward off the effects of these people.

Maybe you’ve found yourself among this type of vampire, and never knew the effect you had on others until now. If so, and you would like to change, it is possible. Next time you find that you’re out of sorts,

depressed, fatigued for no reason, first become even more aware of your feelings. Then concentrate intensely on something positive. Clear your mind of everything else and concentrate. You can build up your energy this way, and will not need to sap it from the people around you. The more you practice this, the easier it will be for you, and you will soon be “glowing” with your own energy. You will be happier, others around you will be happier, and you will also be able to ward off any energy-draining people you may meet. That old “power of positive thinking” we’ve all heard so much about really is a power.

Before we leave the subject of whether or not you’re a potential vampire, here’s something else to think about: There is something fascinating about blood. Deep down, a lot of people have a blood lust which draws them to situations where blood is involved. They are able to channel this lust into socially acceptable activities, but it still exists.

Sports involving violence and possible blood draw huge crowds. Boxing fans scream, “We want blood! Kill ’em! Let’s see some blood!” Hockey fans seem to enjoy watching bloody fistfights between opposing players almost more than the game itself. Cock fights where the prime objective is to have two birds lacerate each other until one of them dies, bring rounds of cheers and applause from the spectators. And what’s the object of fencing? or bullfights?

Another example of possible latent blood lust is the way most people prefer to eat meat. What is it about a “juicy” steak (which is really a “bloody” steak) that

makes one salivate and want to bite it?

And what about a “love-bite” — better known as a “hickey”? To suck one’s partner’s blood nearly through the skin ... is this a latent form of vampirism? Why is the color red so popular?

The fact is, there is a whole lot of interest in blood, both on a conscious and on a subconscious level, among human beings; and we spend a fortune to feed this blood lust.

A look at the media, entertainment, business and advertising worlds will show just how profitable our latent blood lust has been, and will also assure you that you’re not alone with your attraction to blood.

There’s a sort of “vampire fever” raging all around us, and people everywhere just love it.

I was walking up 43rd Street near Fifth Avenue in Manhattan not too long ago, when I saw something that made me think I might be working too hard. Not ten steps ahead of me, two green men were strolling along, one in a black opera cape with a red lining, and one wearing a white cape lined in black.

“Come on, Kaplan,” I told myself, “you’re letting this research get to you . . . imagining vampires all over the place!”

Other people were walking right past them without so much as a curious glance; but in New York, where the unusual is commonplace, nobody seems surprised to see anything. The Statue of Liberty was on the corner giving out abortion pamphlets, her spiked crown and torch set off nicely by tennis sneakers and dirty socks. There was a man dressed in a green plastic

garbage bag, with bouncing springs stuck in his afro, singing to himself as he skipped along Fifth Avenue. And there I was, my attaché case emblazoned with “Stephen Kaplan — Vampirolgist” — and nobody was paying much attention to any of us either.

I blinked a couple of times and looked again, and the green men were still there, so I walked a little faster and caught up with them.

“Good morning, gentlemen. Aren’t you out a little early today?” I asked, keeping step with them.

They both turned and smiled, and the one in black removed his false fangs. “Hard to talk right with these,” he said. Then he pointed to his companion. “We’re on our way to see ‘Passion of Dracula’ downtown, so we decided to dress for the occasion. We just love vampires!”

I watched them until they disappeared down a subway entrance, two more people caught up in the vampire fever of the time; and I started thinking about how things have changed in the world of vampires-for-entertainment during the past few years.

When I was a child, Dracula was a horrible, terrifying creature that I’d never want to meet up with! I covered my eyes with my jacket and peeked ever so carefully so Dracula wouldn’t see me in my seat, when Bela Lugosi bared his fangs; and I cheered when he was killed at the end, relieved that now I wouldn’t have to worry about him. I don’t think I reacted that way only because I was very young; indeed, the grown-ups seemed just as scared as I was.

But nowadays, nobody’s scared anymore. The

terrifying, blood-sucking creature of the past has evolved into a loveable, desirable sex-symbol. His need for blood is treated somewhat like a social problem akin to bad breath: and women the world over are just dying to have the macho Dracula bite them, please. In fact, Dracula has become the most popular entertainment fiend in history — a multi-billion-dollar phenomenon.

Vampire movies, plays, TV shows, magazine and newspaper articles have multiplied to the point where it is hard to keep track of them all.

We've had movies of Nosferatu and Dracula and Count Dracula and Blackula and a remake of Dracula, and a remake of Nosferatu, and Love at First Bite, and Love at Second Bite, and Martin, and Nightwing, and The Hunger; and there's no end in sight to the new ones out every month.

In 1979 there were three Dracula plays showing simultaneously on the New York City stages, as well as road companies playing around the country — and around the world.

England, France. Germany, Canada and others have added contributions to the vampire stockpile. And all these movies and plays, no matter how good or bad, draw record crowds.

Television has offered up a screamingly successful vampire soap opera called Dark Shadows; plus a series called The Night Stalker in a more serious vein. There were television versions of Dracula, a lot of other vampire tales, and documentaries exploring vampire myths and legends. One children's show has a loveable

vampire who teaches you how to count — “Van, two three, four, five.” His name is The Count (what else?). Vampires appear in commercials to sell us everything from yogurt to children’s games to New York at night.

There’s vampire wallpaper, tee shirts, breakfast cereals, comic books, kiddie records; and my favorite — a vampire kit shaped like a coffin, containing a miniature stake, “holy water,” a crucifix or other religious symbols of choice, and a clove of garlic.

Magazines and newspapers need only mention vampires in one way or another and their sales go up considerably.

Why all this interest in vampires? Because the interest in blood, latent or overt, is nearly universal; and people tend to channel this interest or attraction into socially acceptable forms.

There’s also another reason. The search for immortality, or the “fountain of youth” is one of the most intriguing quests of mankind. Isn’t this really what science and medicine are seeking by developing ways to ward off disease and slow up the aging process? And isn’t the research into “life after death” really an attempt to show that life won’t end — or in other words, a search for immortality?

The cosmetic industry is making a fortune selling creams that control wrinkles and makeup to create a youthful appearance. Jogging, health spas, health foods, massages, calisthenics, meditation, yoga, and cosmetic surgery are all the more proof of our desire for eternal youth.

The vampire is the embodiment of both the blood

lust and the desire for immortality; and although we're not usually aware of it, this is why we are ever-eager to read about them, watch them in the movies and on television, and buy products associated with them. The media have successfully taken a subject with universal appeal and adapted it to our present environment; and to increase sales, they've removed the 'Tear factor' to a great extent. Could you be afraid of a friendly vampire smiling through his fangs on the cereal box at breakfast? Would the loveable vampire who teaches little children how to count hurt anyone? Of course not!

For good measure, the media have recently taken another universally appealing subject — sex - and incorporated it into the vampire's mystique. Dracula as a sex symbol, totally overpowering, young and handsome despite his years, is knocking 'em dead at the box office.

The result of all this was summed up in the words of those two false-fanged fellows I met on Fifth Avenue: "We just love vampires."

So you see, we all have a little bit of vampire in us; and unless you've found yourself in the true vampire category, you probably are no different from the guy or gal next door. Stop worrying about it.

Well, now that we've settled that, would you like to take a look at some of the data we've received from people like yourself? People with open, inquisitive minds and a distinct interest in vampires? Just turn the page . . .

CHAPTER VII

ENTRANCING THEORIES & THOUGHTS

Vampires have been around for ages, in legend and myth and - we believe — in the flesh. These beings... are they human? Are they super-human? Are they mutants? Could they be from another world? Does blood have strange powers?

All these questions and more have been mulled over and worried about by a lot of people, and a great number of them shared their thoughts and research with us, from the first week the Center opened.

We've burrowed through the mounds of information and literature that constantly cross our desks and have unearthed some juicy food for thought. There are theories about the origin of vampires and ideas on how vampire tales could have evolved; some tidbits of information that, when absorbed from the viewpoint of a vampirologist, will quicken your heartbeat. I'm not saying that I agree with all these concepts, nor that I disagree. What follows is simply a potpourri of some of the more interesting data which we take into consideration in our research.

BLOOD — THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

Blood . . . the life force . . . the essence of life. This idea of the power of blood could have evolved from the time of primitive man. If an animal or another man were speared and the blood oozed out, the hunter or warrior assumed that death was taking place. Now, if the loss of blood meant death, perhaps he believed that the absorption of blood would give life.

BLOOD AND RELIGION

Throughout the civilized world, blood is used as an important part of religious ceremonies. Probably the most familiar of these is the Christian ritual of Communion, where bread and wine are used symbolically to represent the flesh and blood of Christ. Catholics believe that when a priest blesses the bread and wine, it actually becomes the body and blood of Christ; and when the congregation partakes of these foods they are physically and spiritually “communing” with Christ, taking His life or spirit into themselves.

Paradoxically, an interesting mention of blood is found in the Bible: “. . . the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life . . .” (Deut. 12: 23, 24, 25, 27.)

Ancient cultures frequently offered the blood of a perfect, unblemished lamb or other animal to their gods, making an elaborate ritual of the sacrifice. Some would offer the blood of a perfect human, usually a young virgin or a child.

BLOOD ON OUR DINNER TABLE

The very thought of tasting human blood is totally repulsive to most of us. But when you stop to think a moment, you'll realize that we have all tasted human blood at some time or other. Haven't you ever cut a finger and licked the blood away? Or been to the dentist's and swallowed some blood from a cut in your gums?

Although you may not have thought about it, you probably enjoy the taste of blood —animal blood. The “juicy” cut of meat is really the “bloody” cut; several delicacies from around the world are made with animal blood. Yorkshire pudding is made from beef blood; a delicious chocolate-flavored Italian dessert, called sanguinocci, is made from pig's blood (in the United States, beef blood is substituted because of possible trichinosis); pig's blood is also the prime ingredient in the sausage we call blood pudding; and what do you think makes your beef gravy so tasty?

Getting hungry? How about a nice, rare steak, au jus? Hearty appetite!

BLOOD AND SEX

An interesting morsel of mythology tells of Lilith, one of four demons belonging to the incubi-succubae class, appearing in Sumerian scripture around 2400 B.C. She was the first wife of Adam, subsequently replaced by the serene, benign Eve, which made her very angry. She had a definite blood lust. In LEGEND OF THE JEWS, Lilith “drains the very essence of men.”

The Hebrew Succubus, or night demon, visited men who slept alone and raped them, causing nocturnal emissions. This is the first analogy between semen and blood — both are life-forces; both are warm and sticky when freshly drawn: and the “loss” of either leaves one in a temporary lethargy.

In early myths, women in general are considered vampiristic and parasitic. (Forgive me, Gloria Steinem.) The Chinese “Yin” or masculine energy force, is increased during intercourse if the man can withhold ejaculation. If he cannot, the energy is then spilled over into the woman, and the man becomes weakened, while the woman becomes strengthened.

Another link between blood and sex is seen in the many taboos concerning menstruation among primitive and not so primitive cultures.

And consider the blood-letting fetish practiced on wedding nights when virgin brides must prove their chastity with a show of blood.

PRIMITIVE IDEAS

Primitive people, living at a low technological level, reason in a child-like way. They have a poetic and imaginative way of looking at death and life beyond — which could explain the evolving of certain vampire tales.

Blood was the essential factor in the human sacrifices of ancient Mexico and Peru, where thousands were killed to insure a bountiful harvest. Primitive man always enriched the soil with human blood.

Conversely, some cultures believe that the soulpower of a person is in his blood, and if it is spilled on the earth it will threaten anyone who walks on it. Some primitive societies believed contact with menstrual blood was particularly dangerous. They isolated and even caged their women. In some cultures, menstruating women were prevented from touching the earth with their feet so they wouldn't pollute it.

15.000 GALLONS OF MISSING BLOOD

Blood donated to blood banks must be used within the first 21 days after it has been drawn, otherwise it is destroyed.

An article in New York Magazine, November 6, 1978 page 67, states that statistics on blood collection and use in New York City show 26,000 units of blood had to be discarded in one year. However, 125,000 units — over 15,000 GALLONS — are unaccounted for.

Now, we can think of a lot of rational reasons for this. Poor bookkeeping, breakage which went unrecorded. But between you and me, do you think there's another possibility?

BEAUTY TIP

Some people believe that drinking or bathing in blood maintains energy and youth. They find various ways to obtain their blood — for instance, belonging to one of the many blood cults in the country today.

In the 15th Century, Elizabeth Bathory, the Hungarian Countess who bathed in human blood, accidentally discovered that blood spilled on her skin

made it appeal fresher and whiter. But her beauty ritual was rather anti-social.

MIRRORS

Many legends state that a vampire has no soul. It is also said that vampires cast no reflection in a mirror. (We have never found this to be true in our research.) This idea could have evolved from the beliefs of certain primitive peoples who, even today, will not look in a mirror nor allow photographs to be taken of themselves. They think that the reflected image or the photograph is their soul or spirit taken from them.

Following this up with the belief that a vampire has no soul, then the vampire would have no mirror image, nor would it show up in a photograph.

PREMATURE BURIAL THEORY

One suggestion for the origin of vampire tales is that in the past, before embalming of corpses became popular, an occasional person who seemed to be dead, but really was in a cataleptic trance or other state of suspended animation, would be buried alive. Upon awakening, if the poor victim was fortunate enough to manage to dig out of the grave, he would certainly give the impression of rising from the dead. And after the trauma of being buried alive, with little oxygen and no food for several hours or even days, his mental state could make him act in an aggressive or “scary” manner.

CRYOGENIC MAN — THE VAMPIRE OF THE FUTURE

Cryogenics involves preservation of tissue by chemically freezing it. In recent years, some people with presently untreatable medical problems have arranged to have their bodies preserved cryogenically when they die.

Immediately upon death, the blood is removed from the body and replaced with a chemical preservative. The body is then frozen in stages, wrapped in foil, and suspended in liquid hydrogen in a specially-prepared capsule (coffin?). The hope is that when medical science is ready, these individuals can be given fresh blood, revived, and given the needed medical treatment, enabling them to live healthy lives again.

Two interesting theories about cryogenics and its relationship to vampires have evolved.

The first concerns the possibility that a vampire tale could have developed from a misunderstanding of information which was beyond the comprehension of the people of two thousand years ago. In the Bible, Jesus says that in the future the dead will rise and walk with the living. Could this possibly be a reference to cryogenics, told as a parable as Jesus often taught his lessons?

As an analogy, how would you explain an airplane to a primitive aborigine? Trying to simplify it, you might just call the plane a big bird which men could ride in. This would be in the frame of reference of the primitive person, and he could relate to it.

Now imagine trying to explain cryogenic preservation of a human body for future revivifying — to people whose technology consisted of horse-drawn chariots, who never heard or even dreamed of chemically induced freezing of tissue, or advanced medical procedures. A Master such as Jesus Christ, who had precognition of such future accomplishments, could very likely have attempted to explain this complicated subject in a simple way by saying that “the dead will rise and walk among the living.” This would have been in the frame of reference of the people of His time. However, if this information were misinterpreted by some, a vampire story could evolve. The rising of the dead, the blood giving life again — these are two major ingredients in every vampire tale.

The second theory regarding cryogenic man revived asks some haunting questions: What will these reanimated people be like? Could their souls remain trapped in suspended animation indefinitely? If not, what kind of creature would awaken ... a scientific oddity? — or, tomorrow’s soulless vampire?

RABID BAT THEORY

It's been said that the bite of a vampire will, in turn, make the victim into a vampire. Doesn't this sound like a disease is being transmitted? Could vampirism be caused by a virus? With this in mind, we came across an interesting theory in *Omni Magazine*, June, 1979. It suggests that rabid bats, probably vampire bats in the warmer climates, may have been the original cause of human vampires. The theory ties bats and vampires together very nicely. Here’s how:

Bats normally live in caves. So did many primitive people. Bats often carry and transmit the rabies virus, and unlike most rabid animals, who die within about three weeks of contracting the disease, a rabid bat can live up to 18 months.

Rabies causes aggressive behavior and an urge to bite. The rabies virus is concentrated in the saliva. Another symptom of a recently-infected animal (and man is an animal) is a preference for solitude and discomfort in bright light. The victim of a bite from a rabid animal also develops the disease, and has the same symptoms.

If a rabid bat were to bite a cave man, the victim, now ill with rabies himself, could have retreated to the cool, dark solitude in the back of the cave, along with the bats. Family or friends who might have tried to bring him food or comfort could easily have been attacked and bitten by the sick man, thus also contracting rabies. The bat's victim and the other victims, now showing the symptoms of rabies, could have appeared to be acting just like the bats.

This theory ended here. I'd like to continue it one step further . . .

Suppose the cave man-victim were to develop an immunity to the rabies virus so that he did not die, but only suffered the symptoms of the disease. Or suppose the virus mutated somewhere along the line of transmittal, so that the victim didn't die, but still had the symptoms? You'd then have a person who preferred being in solitude in a dark, cool place, who had learned to emulate the creatures he was

surrounded by (vampire bats) as they dined on blood, and who had an overwhelming urge to bite. Hmm . . .

BABY VAMPIRES

We could say that every single human being has spent several months as a vampire. During pregnancy, the fetus gets all of its food - its very life itself - from the blood of the mother-host in whose body the fetus is carried.

TWO QUICKIES

Vampires might be a separate species which developed concurrently with man. And give them credit — they’ve managed to stay as hidden, almost, as the Loch Ness Monster all these years.

Vampires might be extraterrestrial beings.

QUESTION

Could some of the vandalism in cemeteries, where graves are dug up and tombstones overturned, have actually been done by self-styled “vampire hunters?”

BLOOD BATHS

Blood will clot within a few minutes after drawing it, unless an anticoagulant is added. This makes one wonder how Elizabeth Bathory, for instance, could have bathed in blood. She’d have ended up sitting in something like a tub full of bloody Jell-O.

A cadaver’s blood will coagulate, then liquefy again.

BLOOD DRINKING

Drinking blood is very dangerous. There’s a good possibility of contracting hepatitis. Blood bank

personnel are particularly aware and cautious about handling blood. If it should contact an open wound, even a small cut on one's finger, there's a danger of hepatitis. This has actually caused death for many a technician and doctor.

REPLACING BLOOD

A healthy blood donor replaces the donated pint of blood within a few days.

A normal person can lose one-third of his usual 10 to 12 pints of blood and still survive.

THE AGING PROCESS

For years, biologists have been looking for the reason for aging. One experiment done by gerontologists at the W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center in Lake Placid, New York, seemed to show that vitamin E doubled the life span of a cell culture. However, no one, including the original gerontologists, could reproduce the results of that cell culture, and it is now believed that the extension of the life of the cell culture was not due to vitamin E at all, but to some as yet unidentified ingredient in the *calf serum* in which the cells were grown.

KAPLAN'S "VAMPIRE SYNDROME" THEORY

On July 10, 1979, the New York Daily News ran a story of a little girl with a very rare disease. Penny V. was chronologically five years old, but her body had aged to the equivalent of an 80-year-old woman. She suffered from arthritis, cataracts, and deafness.

It seems that Penny had aged 16 years for every

actual year of her life. Since such a disease has been proven to exist, couldn't it be possible that a reverse type affliction could exist? And because it is so rare, it may simply be as unnoticed as Penny's disease was until very recently.

Let's assume this hypothetical disease could exist, and let's call it Vampire Syndrome. If the biblical three score plus ten is man's normal life span, then a person with Vampire Syndrome could live to 70 x 16 years, or an actual chronological age of 1,120 years! A vampire who looks 35 years old could actually be 560 years old!

A milder form of Vampire Syndrome might slow the aging process, say, eight years for every chronological year. There could be various degrees of Vampire Syndrome. Here's a table of some actual life spans, and the correlation to Vampire Syndrome:

APPROX. PHYSICAL			
<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>BODY AGE</u>	<u>AGING</u>
PENNY	5	80	16 yrs/yr
DELINOR FILKINS	113	70	3/8 yr/yr
METHUSELAH	969	70?	1 yr/ 13.8 yrs (Gen. V, 27)

And hypothetically speaking, if Dracula really had existed and was born in 1431, with the full Vampire Syndrome, in 1980 he would look 34 years old, be actually 549 years old, and could expect to live until the year 2551!

THE BACTERIA THEORY

From one of our correspondents in San Francisco, the following thoughts and ideas on vampirism and its myths:

“*Bacillus areogenes* is responsible for vampirism. It grows in the absence of oxygen, and causes gas gangrene — rare among the living, but common among the dead. With gas gangrene, the face and neck become bloated; the tongue becomes swollen and protrudes beyond the teeth, the hair and nails become loosened and easily detached. Bloodstained froth may appear at the mouth and nostrils.

“The swollen appearance of the corpse with gas gangrene is also characteristic of the traditional vampire, particularly in Greek mythology. So is the bloodstained froth.

“Gangrene in a living person can be prevented by applying garlic. It is amazingly antiseptic, and was liberally administered during World Wars I and II. Thousands of tons of garlic were used, and it really worked in checking the spread of gangrene. (Thus the use of garlic to ward off vampires.)

“Sunlight impedes bacterial growth, as does excessive heat. (Vampires always avoid sunlight; and one way to destroy them is cremation.)

“Holy water (water and salt, blessed by a priest) when applied to diseased flesh would probably act on it as acid does to normal flesh. Salt was often used as an antiseptic in the past. The belief that vampires cannot cross bodies of salt water may be related to this, too.”

FROM AN EXPERT ON AGING

One of the results of our 1982 Vampire Census — which will be the subject of another book — was a letter from a noted scientist who has spent many years in researching of the aging process. He believes that a long-chain fatty alcohol known as triacontanol sustains certain metabolic processes which may be responsible for the unique characteristics of vampires such as their exceptionally long lifespan and their outstanding strength and endurance.

There are many more theories and thoughts I could tell you about, but the ones here, along with the facts and the educated guesses, should give you a glimpse of the mounds of information we've dug through during the past years.

New data pours in constantly, from our correspondents around the world, from newspaper and magazine articles, from people who are doing their own research and share their findings with us; and every item is weighed and measured by our staff, then filed for reference whenever a new case comes up.

There seems to be no end to the new cases. Sometimes I feel that, rather than being near the end of our research, after ten years we've only just begun.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNRISE - THE CONCLUSION

It isn't easy to write a conclusion to this book. It seems like I've begun this chapter a hundred times, and each time I had to stop because a new case would develop that I wanted to include. This could go on indefinitely — just as our work at the Center does. So I've decided to end this book at the beginning.

You see, all the case histories and all the experiences the Vampire Research Center has had in its first decade have simply set the stage for what is to come. Now that we've gained acceptance as legitimate researchers, we're collecting even more amazing data. There are new projects and new experiences just around the corner; and we're beginning to shed some light on the dark subject of vampirism. We're learning that when you get a good, up-close look at something frightening, it isn't quite so fearful after all.

It's six o'clock in the morning as I write this, and for the past hour I've been watching the shadows of the trees through my back-yard window. At night, in the moon-lit haze, it's eerie out there. But the sunrise slowly erases the shadows, and the ominous scene becomes one of familiar objects in the morning light.

As I watch the shadows disappear, it brings to mind how the past ten years have been a sort of "sunrise" on the fear-shadowed subject of vampirism. We started in the dark, unsure of what we would find and also fearful of it. Our research has filtered some light on vampires,

but there are still a lot of shadows to erase. We haven't got the whole picture yet. All we are sure of is that vampires definitely do exist. It's unclear what causes them to react as they do to blood. They still frighten us, but not as much; we're beginning to understand them. Hopefully, the next few years of our research will complete the "sunrise" and we'll really know what vampires are.

There are those who will say that our work is simply unprovable hearsay. They will say that people claiming to be vampires, showing us coffins they have constructed, drinking blood in our presence, and describing their experiences on tape is no proof. People want names, dates, evidence of bodies, sightings of vampires at work — otherwise it could all be written off as the delusions of individuals imagining they are something that they are not. This is fair criticism. Just because someone claims to be a vampire and shows up at the Vampire Research Center, it is not evidence of a true vampire. But after our examinations and evaluation, when we place that individual into one of the four vampire categories, we've gotten closer to the truth than anyone has dared to get before.

Our critics would have us dissect the creature, or destroy it. Others demand that we exhibit these blooddrinking individuals on television or show their photographs, or at least bring one to a radio talk show. My answer to these critics is to point out that the goals of the Vampire Research Center do not include being entertainers, nor will we betray the confidence of individuals whom we have interviewed. We couldn't get the data we're looking for if we did — and we could also put ourselves into a dangerous situation by

revealing the identity of these people. Blood-drinkers shun publicity with a passion, and this is quite understandable. Many who had let their blood lust be known ended up in mental institutions or as targets of death threats from people who believed them cursed by Satan, or who simply want to be rid of them. Like the vampire, I myself had to become less accessible to the public because of death threats; and I only *study* blood drinking.

Of course, the Vampire Research Center is not protecting criminals, or encouraging disturbed individuals to drink blood. We have referred many people to helpful agencies when it seemed warranted. We also work closely with law enforcement officials. Evidence of crimes is always reported, and in return we are consulted in certain police cases where blood drinking is involved, because we understand these individuals more than the police do. But we do not make our interviewees the subject of entertainment.

The unsettling truth is that there is an awful lot of blood-drinking going on — by true vampires and vampire-like persons, as well as blood fetishists — and the more we can understand this phenomenon, the better able we will be to deal with it.

To those who still feel our findings are unprovable, I'd like to point out that I've yet to see an Abominable Snowman on the Tonight Show; I've yet to see a crew from the evening TV news reporting from inside a UFO; not one creature from outer space has ever been interviewed by any talk show host that I've heard of. And yet there are hundreds of books on these subjects, all claiming to be true.

As far as the information collected by the Vampire Research Center so far is concerned, I myself am not fully satisfied. There's much more to learn. I'm fascinated with the idea of finding something in blood that will prolong life or keep people young-looking and healthy. In fact, one of our upcoming projects at the Center is Project Vampire. This is an experiment where we will feed laboratory animals a diet of blood of their own species for several generations, to see if they live any longer than their control group.

We all hope to hear from Elizabeth again, and somehow I truly feel we have not heard the last of that puzzling case.

Another project underway is our recently-released World's First Official Vampire Census and its follow-up, the L.O.V.E. Census (Last Official Vampire Evaluation). These are questionnaires about Vampirism and blood drinking in the United States today. We're getting hundreds of responses, some with incredible stories, and they're coming from every single state in the nation. When we process and analyse this information we will release it to the public. As it appears now, the question is not whether vampires are real, but rather, how many and where they are — and how we should deal with them.

The map on page 59 shows the vampire population in our country as we have ascertained it as of June, 1982.

So the cases go on, and the hoaxes, and the phone calls, too, even though our telephone numbers are now unlisted.

And precious new facts keep turning up.

It's almost dawn.

The sun is rising.

APPENDIX

HOW THE VRC CATEGORIZES, INTERVIEWS, AND EXAMINES ALLEGED VAMPIRES

The following is a modified version of the methods used at the VRC. Because of the nature of these investigations, not everything can be revealed.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Callers are divided into two categories: pranksters and candidates for further interview.

Vampire Attack Reports

Where did attack occur? When? How? To whom?

Witnesses?

Description of vampire.

Description of wound, if any.

Did victim go to a doctor? Why not? or Result? Did police receive report of attack? When? Precinct? Case number? Action? or Why no action? or Why not reported to police?

We often receive vampire attack reports long after the actual attack occurred. Besides calls from the victims themselves, we get calls from their friends and relatives, and these people do not have all the details. Sometimes the callers were not aware of our organization at the time of the attack, then came across us in a telephone book; and sometimes as much as a year goes by between the attack and the report to us. With this time element involved, the reports become a mixture of amnesia and embellishments as well as truth. Any wounds are healed, and there is no chance to document them with photographs.

The most we can do with this type of information is catalog it. We try to calm and soothe the callers, and hope that now that they are aware of our research they will report any future vampire activity they hear of. However, the possibility of another attack occurring in the same area or to the same person is very slim. The true vampire would not risk detection in such a manner.

Calls From Self-Confessed Vampires

The questions we use to validate these callers cannot be revealed. Obviously, we would be ruining the effect of these questions on any future calls we receive. Anyone who is reading this and wanted to pull off a hoax could prepare answers for us; and the time and expense involved in disproving hoaxes is exorbitant. Suffice it to say that we ask questions that determine how much the caller really knows about vampires.

“Transylvanian” accents usually indicate that the call is not serious, but this is not always true. Our researchers are being tested by the callers just as we are testing them, and many an important report has begun in jest until the caller felt comfortable with us.

Questions and Sounds that Help Prove Validity

Where are you calling from? Area code? Zip code?
Weather?

Are you at a private phone or public booth?

We must be aware of background sounds, snickers and chuckles, breathing, pauses that indicate less — than — spontaneous answers, and also note if noises such as traffic, etc., correspond to where the caller says he/she is calling from.

And again, there are several other criteria which can't be revealed.

FACE — TO — FACE INTERVIEWS

After deciding that a caller is a good candidate for further interview, we try to arrange a personal meeting. Often, the caller refuses, and there are two reasons for this. First, the good hoaxer knows his trick will be discovered. This is just as well, as hoaxes add very little to our research. The second reason for refusal is fear of being exposed to the general public as a true vampire, and risking the consequences. Often, one of these people (who are, generally, not true vampires but believe they are) will call us several times, and eventually we win their confidence.

Those who finally agree to meet with us undergo an intense, three-part interview and investigation in the presence of at least three staff members. This can last up to two hours:

Part I

This segment is to further eliminate hoaxes.

Name? Birthday?

Did you graduate from high school? When? or Why not?

Did you attend college? Graduate? Major study? Did you attend any trade schools?

Since high school, what jobs have you held? How long?

Present occupation?

Since birth, where have you lived? Traveled?

Married?

Any children?

Part II

This part of the interview contains a more intense line of questioning, aimed at the actual blood-drinking habits and knowledge of vampirism. Many of these questions are “loaded” and the answers tell us more than the “vampire” may expect.

Why are you here?

What is a vampire?

Why do you think you are a vampire.

How long have you been a vampire?

Describe your first blood-drinking experience.

When did you first know you were a vampire?

Do you drink human blood? Animal blood? Both?
Difference?

Why do you drink blood?

What does blood taste like?

Do you prefer it chilled or warm? Mixed with another
liquid? Other?

How do you store blood?

How do you feel when you drink blood? After you
drink it?

Did you ever get sick after drinking blood?

Did you ever have hepatitis?

How much blood do you drink at one time?

How often do you drink blood?

Where do you get the blood from?

How do you extract blood?

Do you prefer blood from veins or arteries? Why?
Difference?

How did you learn to extract blood?

How do you feel if you don't drink blood?

Has your health changed since you've been drinking blood?

Has your appearance changed?

What type of bed do you sleep in?

What other foods do you eat? How much? How often?

Part III

We now advance to a physical examination. After obtaining a complete medical history from the individual, we request that he/she put on a loose smock which leaves much of their arms and legs, neck and back visible. We then do the following:

Visual examination of the hairline and neck to note any scars that would indicate plastic surgery. Palpation of the face for indication of plastic implants.

Eyes: Color; response to light; bloodshot?

Breath

Teeth — condition, orthodonture work, unusual characteristics.

Arms, armpits, inner thigh, back of knee — any needlemarks noted.

Skin condition — scars, discolorations, etc.

Oral temperature.

Tissue samples from mouth.

Hair samples, with root.

Blood samples, ideally three — immediately before drinking blood, right after drinking it, and several hours after (this requires the total cooperation and trust of the individual).

Evaluation of overall physical condition —
musculature, firmness, agility, any aches or pains,
etc.

Our three-part examination always ends with our reassurance and promise to the individual that all information and findings from the interview will be absolutely confidential and not revealed in any way to anyone.

THE VAMPIROLOGIST'S FIELD INVESTIGATION KIT

Walkie-Talkies
Map of Area
Candles & Matches
First Aid Kit
Bible, Holy Water
Paper & Pens
Star of David

Tape Recorder
Binoculars Portable
Radio Geological
Hammer Crucifix
Camera, Garlic
Flashlight

Each of these tools has its purpose, and most of them are self-evident. The crucifix, Star of David, Bible, holy water, and garlic all pertain to superstitious beliefs about vampires. These help us to weed out the hoaxes and vampire-like people...if the “vampire” reacts to any of them in the classical, Dracula-type way, we’re pretty sure we’re not dealing with a true vampire.

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Dr. Kaplan has devoted many years to research of strange phenomena and their causes. In 1971 he founded the Parapsychology Institute of America and later that year, the Vampire Research Center at Elmhurst, New York. He is considered the Father of Vampirology, and has been recognized around the world for his unique studies.

He has lectured across North America, appeared on over 800 television and radio programs, and is a well-known personality in England, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, and Canada. He received the Albert Einstein Award for his exposure of the Amityville Horror as the "world's greatest hoax" and in 1982 was elected to the Parapsychology Hall of Fame.

A true non-traditionalist, Dr. Kaplan obtained his Ph. D. in Sociology from Pacific College, a "university without walls", in 1977, after writing a thesis on the sociological implications of parapsychology.

CAROLE KANE has devoted over a decade to research of occult phenomena. She has slept in haunted houses, staked out a poltergeist, talked to vampires, attended seances, and watched an exorcism. She has interviewed a man possessed by an entity from outer space, delved deeply into the mystery of the Egyptian pyramids, and experienced and practiced hypnotism. When lecturing on these and other mysteries in our world, she has fascinated local school, radio and television audiences.

Among her consultants are witches, psychics, hypnotists, and a ghost named Jerome.

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