

The Black Cathedral

The following is taken from an unpublished manuscript - RING OF EVIL - by Charles Walker and Toyne Newton.

(Information regarding The Black Cathedral first appeared in 'Race with the Devil' by Charles Walker - published in 1989 - isbn 1-871362-03-2 which is now out of print)

The Black Cathedral is a London based magical order which may well have links with hierarchical groups involved in the appropriation of real occult power at various sites in Southern England. One former initiate who managed to escape the clutches of this group told her story to *Elymas.

In 1965, some nine months after the death of her mother, Mary was still attempting to come to terms with her bereavement. She turned to spiritualism as a way of keeping in contact with her late mother, needing assurance that her mother was now at peace, having been released from the suffering she had endured whilst alive.

During one spiritualist meeting she was approached by another person present who claimed to be experiencing something similar to her - the loss of a loved one - and who offered help by suggesting that she might discuss things with a friend of theirs who understood. This friend was a witch, and Mary was told that witchcraft would provide much more in the way of help than she had received so far.

An introductory meeting was arranged at which she was also introduced to the High Priest who informed her that 'the initiation ritual contained things which those new to occultism often found a little strange and perhaps even disturbing at first'. He went on to say, 'Given time, and bearing in mind that whatever happens is essential in order to make magic work, you will get used to it. This sort of thing has been going on for thousands of years, generation after generation. It is far more natural and powerful than Christianity, which did not come into being until much later. This is the Old Religion'.

That veiling disclosure by the High Priest provided a clue as to what was to follow if Mary joined the group, but as she was still extremely depressed by the loss of her mother and unable to make rational decisions at that time, she decided to go ahead under the false notion that it would bring spiritual solace to her in her time of need.

Her initiation into the Order was swift by any standards. Ten days after that first meeting she was taken to a large Victorian house in Highgate known as 'The Black Cathedral'. The atmosphere inside was unlike anything she had ever experienced before. It seemed electric, charged with psychic energy.

There were numerous small ornaments depicting Pan and various other gods and goddesses inside the entrance hall. The walls of the hallway were adorned with pictures of witchcraft and occult ceremonies throughout history. As she ascended the dimly lit staircase her eyes focused on a sinister life size image of a goat illuminated from below by two large candles which flickered as the draught caught the flame.

Before she was taken into the temple Mary had to go into a special preparation room where a black hooded cloak had been especially laid out on the bed.

'For the initiation you must wear nothing but this robe' she was told. 'All associations with your past life must be forgotten, for tonight you are to become one of a privileged group of people who live by the rules of Satan.'

This was the first time that she had heard the name of Satan mentioned, and whilst changing into the black robe she began to wonder what was going to happen next whilst feeling the first waves of disquiet. She didn't have long to wait, a tall, slender woman with long dark hair and pale skin entered the room and asked if she was ready - whereupon she led Mary by the hand into the temple, which was a large room illuminated only by candles.

Mary was led to a position at the edge of a circle which had been drawn earlier and around which stood the other members of the group. The edge of the circle was decorated with elaborate symbols, brass incense burners and four large black candles in ornamental holders which were placed at each of the four compass points.

For the next half an hour there was a considerable amount of indiscernable chanting - it seemed in some strange language. Sometimes the High Priest alone would recite some incomprehensible incantation, then at other times the whole group would follow suit and join in. The nature of the proceedings had a hypnotic affect with the participants appearing to be in a trance- like state, their actions being almost zombie like.

Then suddenly it stopped and the High Priest beckoned Mary to enter the circle. Once she had stepped inside a cup of red liquid was passed around from one member to another.

Each clasped the chalice tightly in their hands and bowed to the High Priest. Finally the chalice was passed to the High Priest who then proceeded to anoint Mary with its content - starting on her feet and then the rest of her body, finishing with her forehead. Each time he anointed her he repeated the words 'accept this Priestess O Horned One, mighty Satan ruler of the universe, in to this your temple'. Once this process was completed she was instructed to repeat after the High Priest the following -

'I ask of the mighty one to be accepted in to your temple. I will obey the commands given to me by your appointed priest and will follow the path - the only true path'.

It was at this juncture that she realised that the chalice whose contents had been rubbed into various parts of her body - contained blood. The thought made her feel quite ill and she wanted to protest but was in no position to do so, and therefore went through with the rest of the ritual, which lasted for another two hours. Mary had to stand in the centre of the circle whilst the others chanted with great intensity and danced around her.

Once again she was unable to identify the specific type of language being used, but she was acutely aware that as this was her initiation, the whole ritual was directed towards her, and at certain stages whilst encircling her the whole group pointed directly at her, virtually accusingly, which she interpreted later to be a reminder that events inside the temple were secret and to reveal any details was against their lore.

Her initiation culminated in a specially prepared feast of red wine and cakes. 'By the time the meeting eventually wound down, several group members were quite drunk', she said.

The next meeting fell on Halloween, one of the most important dates in the occult calendar. At this congregation the High Priest had ordained that a Black Ceremonial Sacrifice rite would take place, the details of which he claimed to have secured from ancient text. This, in part, involved each member drinking the blood of a freshly sacrificed animal. Mary herself never witnessed the sacrifice, she was just informed like the rest of the group that a suitable creature had been sacrificed at a special ritual some thirty minutes previously.

This was apparently quite a common practise, though later group members revealed to her that they had indeed witnessed the blood sacrifice of domestic animals. After drinking the blood and reciting the incantations which had been written on special parchment, the High Priest and four Elders left the main temple for ten minutes just before the main mass. On returning to the temple they proclaimed that an initiate had been found guilty of betraying the craft and would therefore be punished in the form of ten lashes with the High Priests "cord of office"

They were, in fact, knotted pieces of rope which left severe flesh marks on the victim's back as he was held by two others while the High Priest administered the punishment. No-one present - save for Mary - showed any emotions whatsoever as each heavy stroke lashed into the victim's back, scoring the flesh in the process. In fact several of those present seemed to obtain considerable enjoyment out of the proceedings at the expense of the unfortunate victim who was certainly suffering extreme pain and distress.

The punishment ritual was followed by the main ritual which as well as chanting, involved the use of drugs this time, and the partaking of group sexual activity in which Mary was forced to take part.

Although Mary wasn't actually forced to take drugs, all other types of ritual celebrations were compulsory, and she knew that defiance in respect of not participating would result in another punishment in similar vein to that which she had just witnessed. Under those circumstances she decided to go along with the group's requirements.

Before long however, she knew she had to get out of the perpetual nightmare she unwittingly found herself plunged into, and she knew, also, that it would take courage to attempt to disentangle herself from it.

First, she indicated to the High Priest that she no longer wished to attend meetings. 'I was told that I had pledged my allegiance to the group, its principles and beliefs'. She later told Elymas. 'With the exception of illness I was obliged to attend every meeting. Failure to do so would result in serious action being taken' she added.

Mary did not attend the next meeting and within a few days she received a visit from two group members who reminded her once again of her obligations, warning her that direct action would be taken against her if she didn't change her mind quickly. After several months of continued threats and harassment, they finally resorted to physical violence. On three separate occasions Mary was beaten up, suffering severe bruising as a result and whilst her

injuries were not quite serious enough to warrant a prolonged stay in hospital, nonetheless she felt unable to explain them to her closest friends who knew nothing of her involvement with the occult.

When it became obvious to the Order that Mary would not give in to their threats and demands, she was told that if she ever reported her experiences to anyone, she really would suffer.

They finally left her with this chilling warning: 'We will be watching your every move for some time to come. You will never be released from the promise you made when we accepted you into our fold.'

Today Mary has a wiccan coven of her own in Sussex and counsels young people who have become involved in drugs and Satanism. She had first met Elymas some years ago but it took several counselling discussion meetings with Elymas before she felt able to recount her experiences,

It should be stressed at this point, that although Mary's preliminary interest was spiritualism there is no connection between soiritualism and satanism. It was of course an ill-fated chance that Mary happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and meeting the wrong people at a period in her life when she was extremely vulnerable. However Mary was, in fact, let off very lightly.

Vows of allegiance were passed on, handed down to new generations and not easily broken in an order such as this one. Even now Mary still fears that some form of retribution could be taken by the group if they knew her exact whereabouts, particularly if, as we suspect, some of the people who were involved at the time of her initiation have now ascended the snake-like malefic power spiral to hold office in the higher echelons of The Black Cathedral.

It would appear that, like the Friends of Hecate, The Black Cathedral's activities were mainly concerned with black ceremonial, diabolical magical rites at the time of Mary's initiation. It would also seem that Satan was in name only as a symbol of the lore of reversal rather than attempted invocation as a deity. The lengthy periods of chanting which Mary witnessed even at first degree level, indicated that this was a deadly serious Black Order who were priming and preparing their disciples for more complex and deep ritualistic development on entering the inner circle.

Efforts to trace other possible members of The Black Cathedral hit a brick wall, despite some considerable help from Mary. How active the group is these days is not known but certainly Mary suggested at the time that there was no shortage of recruits. Again it will take more members, if there are any brave enough to have left as Mary did, to come forward before any further investigations can be carried out.

*Elymas - he was the High Priest of a wiccan coven based in Brighton and a valuable source of information during the early investigations at Clapham Wood and FOH. He passed away some years ago.