



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Science - 2017

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### I19 Youth Satanism and Forensic Investigation: The Case of the “Beasts of Satan” in Italy

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The goals of this presentation are to examine the phenomenon of juvenile or “acid” Satanism and its relation to youth deviance and to propose an effective approach for the investigation of suspected ritual crimes. After attending this presentation, attendees will develop a further understanding of the characteristics of youth Satanism, coupled with understanding the scientific and forensic investigations of ritual crimes in Italy, including analysis of the famous Italian case of the “Beasts of Satan.”

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a better understanding of the differences between Satanism and youth deviance, including discussion of the relevant psychological risk factors.

The “Beasts of Satan” is a very well-known case that occurred in Italy. It dealt with a history of murders and suicides that were intertwined with Satanism and esotericism. The “Beasts of Satan” were a group of serial killings in which crimes were committed between 1998 and 2004. They were unusual crimes committed with great ferocity and utilized such items as satanic symbols, inverted crosses, and the number 666, which is a number that some people relate to the Apocalypse.

The police investigation began in the mountain home of one of the group members, where they found obvious traces of drugs, including cocaine, heroin, benzodiazepines, and books concerning satanic rituals.

This presentation will attempt to highlight factors that can influence the tendency of young people to affiliate with and join such groups, as well as the psychological characteristics of the group members, leading to the different levels of “acid” Satanism. Especially noteworthy is how juveniles in this group were dedicated to the use of significant physical and psychological violence while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, leading to the vicious killing and even suicides of several members of this group. This presentation will also utilize the forensic evidence of these crimes, specifically for the famous murder of Ms. Mariangela Pezzotta, as it provides a deeper look into the interpretation of the satanic symbols used during the crime, which eventually led to recognizing and identifying this group. During this particular investigation, it was discovered that at least three other young men, and likely more, had been murdered at the hands of this group. Attention will also be paid to the psychological risk factors that lead individuals to affiliate with such a group, the irreverent gestures used by these groups during the commission of such heinous crimes, as well as several pieces of forensic evidence, such as fingerprints, DNA, and crime scene analysis. Through this analysis, it is suggested that utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to examine all related factors is the best method to solve such complex crimes. This presentation will demonstrate how the use of criminological factors, anthropological factors, and physical forensic analysis could be very important factors to provide insight into these crimes.

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#### **Acid Satanism, Forensic Evidence, Symbols**