

Self-proclaimed 'cult expert' is exposed for sex crimes

by Herbert Quinde

Rev. Michael Rokos, the former national president of the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) and an Episcopal priest, was recently exposed as a homosexual sex pervert, arrested in 1982 on charges of "soliciting lewdness" and given a six-month probationary sentence. Using various subterfuges, Rokos concealed his true identity until Oct. 25, when the *Baltimore Evening Sun* reported that he had resigned as president of the Cult Awareness Network "to fight a religious group's charge that he was convicted for soliciting an undercover Baltimore City policeman in 1982."

Rev. George Robertson, a Baptist minister associated with a religious advocacy group called Friends of Freedom, made the charges against Rokos. Robertson and other ministers have been at odds with the CAN in the Baltimore area. Rokos resigned as head of the CAN in August, after the allegations surfaced. At their national conference in early November, the embarrassed CAN leadership glossed over an explanation for the resignation.

"Reverend" Rokos has been paraded around through the national media as a "cult expert." He is touted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith and affiliated media outlets as an expert on "the LaRouche cult," and presents himself as a chaplain to the Maryland State Police (which he is not). He is a nationally known lecturer on "political cults" and Satanism.

He was used, in collaboration with the ADL, in an extortion scheme against Rochelle Ascher, a political associate of Lyndon LaRouche who was convicted of "securities fraud" in a political frameup in Virginia. The ADL and the Virginia prosecutorial task force are trying, with Rokos's help, to revoke Ascher's bond (she is currently free on bond pending appeal of her conviction). Rokos has also applied his libelous "cult" analysis to Lewis du Pont Smith, another associate of LaRouche who was declared "mentally incompetent" by a Pennsylvania judge, because he contributed funds to the LaRouche political movement. On this fraudulent pretext, Smith, who is an heir to the du Pont family fortune, was stripped of his civil rights, including the right to marry his fiancée.

Now, not only Rokos himself, but the Cult Awareness Network itself, are badly discredited. The "anti-cult" experts

are the ones who are now revealed to be the kooks and cultists.

Just the facts . . .

The details of Rokos's sex crimes are contained in an affidavit by Joseph G. Wyatt, the arresting police officer. Wyatt describes his encounter with Rokos during a stakeout by vice squad officers who were attempting to clean up male prostitution in Baltimore's Patterson Park.

Wyatt reports that on the night of July 3, 1982, he was posing as a male prostitute (or "bait") in an operation designed to target their patrons. Wyatt, at the time 22 years old, was chosen for the assignment by his police superiors because he looked like a young teenager. At 2:00 a.m. he was approached by Rokos, who drove up and asked him if he would "go for a drive." Wyatt refused. Rokos left, then returned and again solicited the officer.

"I turned and walked to his car." reads the report. "As I approached, the driver constantly stared in my direction. I said to him, 'What do you want?' He said, 'I want you to go home with me.' I then asked him, 'What are you interested in?' He stated, 'I want you to tie me up, put clothes pins on my nipples and make me s—k your d—.'"

At this point, officer Wyatt signaled his backup units, informed Rokos that he was under arrest, and attempted to seize the ignition key of his car. Rokos grabbed the officer's arm and began a struggle which required two other officers to subdue him. He was booked on a violation of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 27, section 15 (e) (to solicit lewdness), and was charged with resisting arrest.

According to experts on deviant sex, the use of clothespins is considered "extremist" and a "fringe" practice even by many sexual deviants.

According to Wyatt, Rokos misspelled his name to the booking sergeant, identifying himself as "Rokas," gave a false address, and also said that he was a "vicar in the Catholic Church."

Wyatt says that this surprised him, since, "being a life-long Catholic and not knowing what a vicar was, I looked it up in the dictionary and found it defined as a Minister in the Episcopal Church. Because of my relative inexperience as

an undercover Vice Officer I was shocked, to say the least, to learn that the suspect was a Minister in the Episcopal Church.”

He points out that the misspelling of the name was the reason the records have never surfaced until now, and adds that, “Although the arrest took place over eight years ago, I still vividly recall the incident. I recall the incident because this was my first undercover arrest and because of what the suspect, Michael Rokos, solicited me to do to him sexually and his subsequent resisting of my arrest of him.”

Wyatt concludes by explaining that he didn’t realize the implication of the misspelled name until four years later, when he saw Rokos on television, billed as an expert on Satanic cults who was consulting with local police departments. “I was very surprised to learn that any police agency would use Rokos as an expert because of his previous vice arrest and conviction. Over the past several years I have read many newspaper articles concerning Mr. Rokos’ expertise on Satanic cults; however, I still did not notice that his name was spelled differently from the arrest report I wrote on the night I arrested him.”

Rokos denies that he was convicted on the lewdness charge (the “resisting arrest” charge was dropped). Rokos’ lame defense is that he took probation before sentencing by the judge, and thus has technically not been convicted, according to the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. Judge Hillary Caplan sentenced Rokos to six months’ probation and fined him \$100 plus costs.

The Overington case

Most recently, Rokos was caught in an extortion plot—which involved NBC-TV, the ADL, and the national “Get LaRouche” task force—in which a former supporter of the LaRouche movement was brainwashed into believing her financial support was ill advised. The elderly victim, Helen Overington, said in an NBC-TV interview that it was only after a year of intense pressure that she relented in her support of LaRouche’s policies. Reverend Rokos is known to have met with members of Overington’s family, who attempted to extort fundraiser Rochelle Ascher into repaying contributions that had been freely given—or else have her bond revoked and be sent immediately to prison.

The Overington children have made financial contributions to the CAN, and referred people to Rokos as someone who can help in “deprogramming” supporters of LaRouche. The Overington children have written numerous newspaper articles praising the CAN and urging people to contact CAN and Rokos.

In the June 1990 issue of the CAN newsletter, there is a two-page article on Helen Overington written by her family, along with a full-page ad asking people to call a special Western Union hotline to send a pre-written message to Congress. The message asks congressmen to press for further Justice Department prosecutions of LaRouche and his associates.

The CAN’s protectors and associates

Rokos has been a high-profile anti-LaRouche spokesman. He has been on radio talk shows and has given seminars to police organizations, as well as public forums, denouncing LaRouche. In what legal observers say may have been illegal interference in a federal congressional campaign, Rokos addressed a seminar of Delaware County, Pennsylvania police chiefs in September, in which he charged that congressional candidate Lewis du Pont Smith is an “extremist.”

Until recently, Rokos seemed to have been politically protected. When Rokos was subpoenaed, by the defense, to appear at Ascher’s bail revocation hearing, an ADL-connected judge in Maryland quashed the subpoena without any legal basis.

Rokos has some strange associates. The CAN advisory board includes Rabbi Maurice Davis, whose son was convicted in the early 1980s for sex crimes. Rabbi Davis was an early booster of the Jim Jones People’s Temple cult. Esther Deitz, past director of B’nai B’rith Cult Project, and Fr. James LeBar, a Roman Catholic priest who is an anti-cult specialist, also serve on the CAN’s board.

But one of the strangest new recruits to the CAN cause is former Massachusetts Assistant U.S. Attorney John Markham. The October 1990 issue of *CAN News* reported that Markham was a scheduled speaker at the CAN’s national conference in Chicago. “Markham participated in the successful prosecution of Lyndon LaRouche and six followers on a federal court indictment,” reports the newsletter.

“Markham’s presentation will focus on the various legal bases for prosecuting cult leaders for criminal acts they have initiated among their followers. He will highlight courses of action for making local prosecutors aware of how to develop cases with such a dimension as a viable legal strategy.”

But nowhere does the newsletter report that Markham was himself a member of the Process Church, a Satanic cult which associated with psycho-killer Charles Manson. Founded in Britain in the 1960s, the Process Church was headed by Robert de Grimston, who published a book, *As It Is*. He wrote, “Christ said: Love thine enemy. Christ’s enemy was Satan and Satan’s enemy was Christ. Through love, enmity is destroyed. Through love, saint and sinner destroy the enmity between them. Through love Christ and Satan have destroyed their enmity and come together for the END. Christ is judge, Satan to execute the judgement.”

Even in the hippie heydays of San Francisco during the 1960s, Process disciples were considered weird. Their heavy Satanic “rap,” combined with their bizarre appearance (they wore long black velvet cloaks and purple neck ruffs) and their arrogant use of their dogs, almost exclusively German shepherds, to fend off street people, made them universally unpopular with ordinary hippies.

A CAN spokesman told *EIR* that Markham was forced to cancel his appearance at the conference “due to illness.”