

Anatomy Of A Demon Possession

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"You've seen life through distorted eyes . . . You know you had to learn . . . The Execution of your mind . . . You really had to turn . . . The race is run, the book is read . . . The end begins to show . . . The truth is out . . . The lies are old . . . But you don't want to know." © Copyright 1973, Rollerjoint Music, SABBATH, BLOODY SABBATH, Black Sabbath.

When William Peter Blatty, presently author and movie-producer of the scripts on THE EXORCIST, then a junior at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., read an August 20, 1949 story of a demon possessed 14-year-old boy who resided in Mount Rainier, Maryland, as a baptized and sometimes practicing Catholic, Blatty's blood began to rise with excitement. He absorbed everything he could on the case from the news. THE EVENING STAR and THE TIMES HERALD also ran accounts, and while they had enough meat to sink a few healthy teeth into, it begged more questions than answers. Who was the boy? Who was the exorcist? What really happened? Where? Was it all a put on?

It was news-rookie Jeremiah O'Leary that did the initial digging for THE EVENING STAR story of August 19: "Priest Freed Boy of Possession by Devil, Church Sources Say." It was O'Leary's dog-eared battle to get the facts that started the ball rolling.

"My recollection and our files say that I was told the first phenomena began to occur on January 18, 1949, with the exorcism taking place later that year," O'Leary's voice boomed from the cassette tape sent to this author. "I myself didn't hear about it till the month of August. It was quite old--nearly eight months old by the time that I got involved as I did."

O'Leary recalls that he spotted a one-paragraph item called a "filler" in the CATHOLIC REVIEW. It spoke about the successful exorcism, something that have tintillated any warm-blooded Catholic, but when he approached the Acting City Editor Daniel Emmett O'Donnell about covering the story for the STAR, Emmett's calm but emphatic reply was: "Junior, I think that's one we'd better leave alone."

Bull! O'Leary knew a good mystery story when he saw one, so he got ahold of a Burke Walsh of the Catholic News Service, one of several people he contacted during his three-day search, and slowly bits and pieces began to fall into place about a case that was to be partially the basis of a world-renown motion picture and book on demon possession. O'Leary never was able to question all the principle people personally, but he uncovered enough facts to reveal that the boy was infested with a pretty strange malady.

Editors O'Connell and Egan shunned O'Leary's manuscript, so O'Leary took it directly to the Managing Editor Herbert F. Corn, who was no sheep, but felt exorcism still taboo-so the story ended on page B-3, "a good place to hide a controversial story in those days".

Fellow editors had a few unkind words for O'Leary, but he might have saved them: The next day the story was on page one of THE WASHINGTON POST and it began to appear about the nation. William Peter Blatty walked about with a sense of the supernatural after reading the story, and he discussed the case with Father Thomas Bermingham who taught

him at Brooklyn Prep and was then Master of Studies at St. Andrew's -on- Hudson, a jesuit seminary. Bermingham vaguely recalled the story of a priest in his thirties who was turned white-haired in his successful exorcism of a demon. The gossip was that this priest was called upon again to try the art in case of the Mount Rainier boy. Could it be confirmed? Blatty took a long shot. A jesuit friend in Los Angeles thought he knew who the exorcist was, and he gave Blatty the name and address. The reply was breathtaking:

" . . . as you stated in your letter, it is very difficult to find any authentic literature on cases of possession; at least, I could not find any when I was involved in such a case. Accordingly, we (a priest with me) kept a minute account each day of the happenings each preceding day and night, one reason being that our diary would be most helpful to anyone placed in a similar position as an exorcist in any future case.

"My hesitancy in giving the details of the case of possession is due to two facts. First 'I', who delegated me as the exorcist, restricted me not to

publicize the case. I have been faithful to his instructions.

"Secondly, it would be most embarrassing, and possibly painfully disturbing to the young man, should he be connected in any way with a book detailing events that took place in his life some years ago. Since a case of possession is a very rare occurrence, he would certainly connect his own experience with any such account.

"I can assure you of one thing: the case in which I was involved was the real thing. I had no doubt about it then and I have no doubts about it now . . ."

Father Bermingham reminded Blatty that the story would make an interesting piece for publication, and this idea was fueled when he attended a class directed by Father Eugene Gallagher in the Fall of 1949 where he spoke on the Exorcisms by Christ. Lo and behold, when Gallagher spoke of the 13-year-old boy (the 14 years are erroneous), a young man, Arthur "Powell" claimed that a relative of his was a psychiatrist at St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital and had been personally involved in the case.

Powell said that his relative was given a copy of the "exorcist's diary" and he asked Father Gallagher if he wanted a copy. "Yes, of course!" Father Gallagher gleefully submitted the carbon copy to the President of Georgetown University, then Brian McGrath, S.J. He asked for a copy to be made. But when Gallagher retrieved the diary the next day, the President's secretary explained that only nine pages were left. Dangit! Father Gallagher swore he'd never loose those nine pages.

Blatty continually approached the priest for a copy (can you imagine the frustration?), but Gallagher steered him around. Blatty did eventually get a copy many years later.

In the heat of the aftermath, some time during August of 1949, Father Gallagher met a priest about 65, and they talked about the case while on the Gervase porch of Georgetown University. He recalls the name of the priest as Father Francis O'Hara, now deceased. Father O'Hara floored him with another revelation--he was an assistant exorcist with the major exorcist in the case. Father O'Hara said he was living in the St. Louis University complex in St.

Louis, near the St. Francis Xavier Church, where the exorcism partially took place. The exorcist was President of that university at the time. "He described himself as taking part in the exorcisms," said Father Gallagher. "And as going to his room below the exorcism room after his stint."

Two other "minor" diaries had been circulated by priests that were somehow involved in this case. Here, together with the total of all documents and related facts is the complete story of "the demon possessed boy of Mount Rainier," inhibited only by space limitations and some medieval-like suppression of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Devil, You Say?

"Yes, I'm coming! All right, hon! I'm coming!" (Chris)

"Mothhhhhheerrrrrrrrrr!" (Regan)

WILLIAM PETER BLATTY ON 'THE EXORCIST', Bantam Books, © 1974.

The "exorcist's diary" reveals that it was January 15, 1949 that the strange

sounds began. The family, living in a middle class Washington suburban development (still living nearby) would be confronted by weird tales by the boy that something was scratching on the walls. He stayed with his grandmother when not in school, and while the parents worked, and one could imagine the parent's exasperation at such "stories" upon coming home from work.

"A dripping noise was heard by Roland and his grandmother in the grandmother's room. The noise continued for a short time and then the picture of Christ on the wall shook as if the wall had been bumped." Later that evening a definite scratching sound under the floor boards near the grandmother's bed. From that night on, the scratching was heard every night about seven o'clock and would continue until midnight.

The family was sure it was rodents causing the noises, so they hired an exterminator to take up the floor boards and remove the wall panels to spread poison around. But the noises increased for ten days--and then stopped. Had the "rodents" died? The boy, who the diary calls Roland Doe, still insisted that

he heard the sounds for a period of three days in which the family heard nothing.

Then the sounds moved downstairs to the boy's bedroom. This time, it was like squeaking shoes along the bed and it was heard only at night when the boy went to bed.

The squeaking sound continued for six nights. That night the scratching again became audible. As the boy, the mother, and the grandmother lay on the bed, the sounds came at them as the "rhythm of marching feet and the beat of drums". This sound would travel the length of the mattress and back again. It would be repeated over and over. Finally, the mother shouted: "Is that you, Aunt Tillie?"

Enter another mystery: Mathilda (Tillie) "Hoffmann" plays an intricate part in the demon scenario. It was suspected that her frantic interest in spiritism layed the way for the supernatural phenomena. The boy was crazy about his aunt, who lived on Warner Avenue in St. Louis County, and during visits with her, she would demonstrate

the art of the occult. One of her pastimes was the Ouija board.

During this precise time the sounds were driving them wild. Maybe a trip to "Aunt Tillie's" would help. They made way to the aunts, but one Sunday they took a drive to "escape the nerve-racking sounds". Suddenly, a few miles on the road, a lap robe in the back seat began to curl up; God, and quickly following Roland was thrust tight against his mother, both, squeezed as if by an invisible hand. In a state of fright they arrived back at the aunts, and the father reached for the ignition key to shut the car off.

"Where's the key?"

It was later discovered under the seat, neatly tucked away. This was the aura that surrounded the aunt who died eleven days after the 15th on January 26, 1949. The family thus suspected some connection in Mount Rainier.

"The mother continued asking questions but had no verbal reply. She asked this question: 'If you are Tillie, knock three times.' There were waves

of air striking the grandmother, mother and boy and three distinct knocks were heard on the floor. The mother asked again: 'If you are Tillie, tell me positively by knocking four times.' Four distinct knocks were heard. Then there followed claw scratchings on the mattress."

The scratchings would reach a peak which turned into violent shaking of the mattress. One one occasion the coverlet of the bed was pulled out from under the mattress and the edges stood up above the surface of the bed in a curled form as though held up with starch. When the witnesses touched the bed spread, the sides fell back to a normal position. The scratching on the mattress seemed to be a continuous thing.

An orange and a pear flew across the entire room where Roland was standing. The kitchen table was upset with Roland making no physical motion. Milk and food were thrown off the table and stove. The bread board was thrown onto the floor. Outside the kitchen a coat on its hanger flew across the room. A Bible was thrown directly at the feet of Roland--but didn't injure him. At school the boy's desk moved about the room as if a planchette on an Ouija board.

Carpets he stood on would slide across the floor, and chairs he sat in rocked or flipped over.

Some of the family's neighbors were skeptical of the weird happenings and mocked the victims when they invited them to stay at their "unhaunted" houses. There, again, Roland's bed would shake violently and chairs in which he sat would flip over or swivel. Furniture would begin to race about the room more than once. Foot mats turned into "magic carpets" and they would glide--Roland on them--across the floor. "At first, the boy took it as some kind of joke," says one diary. "But it became more than a joke."

"These events began in Mount Rainier where some of the boy's relatives still live," said O'Leary. "They in turn consulted these men of the cloth and a doctor--a doctor Robert Hottel who died in early 1974 in Virginia--and was a general practitioner who I knew well. He dismissed the boy as psychotic and would have nothing more to do with the case. So, medical advice was consulted at some point." But much paranormal activity was to take place before full-

fledged medical examination was given Roland.

Two Lutheran ministers were called in on the case. A rabbi also examined Roland and discovered the boy to be speaking in what seemed to be Hebrew or some form of glossotolia (inspired babblings). A professor from the Department of Oriental Languages at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., was asked to investigate: *He said Roland was speaking in Aramaic, the language spoken in Palestine in Jesus' day!*

O'Leary said: "In general terms I understood that the rabbi, the priest, and the minister were each involved in turn, with the Lutheran first. Eventually, the boy was passed along to the Georgetown University Hospital, and at some point, I do not know the date, the boy became a convert to Catholicism because he had rational periods during which there was no seizure of any kind. That was one of the conditions under which the Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle, who is also retired, agreed for the exorcism to take place."

The thought of exorcism meant that the clergy were convinced that an invisible entity had entered the boy's body. The family's minister, a Reverend "Perlow," gave a sympathetic ear, though he claims to never have become personally involved. One of the ministers, perhaps an associate, was asked to investigate: A Reverend Shultz.

Reverend Shultz asked if Roland could stay at the parsonage on the night of February 17. About 10:00 p.m. the boy and minister decided to retire to a room with twin beds. Roland quickly went into a state of somnambulism or deep sleep for ten minutes when, in the dark, the bed started to vibrate very violently and the strange noises were again heard in the walls. Reverend Shultz raced to turn the lights on--Roland was sitting, almost in tears, on the vibrating bed. Shultz began praying but the noises became louder.

The minister asked the boy to get into a heavy arm chair, tucking his knees under his chin and his feet upon the chair. He wrapped a blanket about Roland and placed Roland's hands and arms around his knees.

Then the chair began to mysteriously move--move until it was against the wall and proceeded to tip over!

"It's going over with me, Pastor!"

A scatter rug on which Roland stood "moved slowly until it got to the wall and then it stopped," Shultz said. "There was no movement on his body." When things quieted for a moment, Shultz decided it was again time for sleep, but this time he made a bed for the boy on the floor out of a pallet, blankets and a pillow. Once Roland fell asleep, Shultz watched intently for any movement. Suddenly, boy and bedding, slid across the floor under the larger beds until Roland bumped his head on a bedpost. Again the bed was made, and again the bedding and boy "whipped around in a tight circle" and zoomed under a larger bed. The minister said the boy's hands were completely exposed, his body rigid--the blankets didn't even wrinkle.

"The whole thing moved as a unit," said Shultz.

One diary continues: "The manifestations increased. Pictures fell from the wall. The breakfast table went up into

the air and turned upside down." But when the boy went into trance-like states, as words and numbers began to appear on his skin, the family realized that they were up against something beyond the farthest limits of abnormality.

THE FINGER OF SATAN

"I am the world that hides the universal secret of all time. . . . Destruction of the empty spaces is my one and only crime I lived a thousand times I found out what it means to be believed The thoughts and images, the unborn child that never was conceived." A NATIONAL ACROBAT, Black Sabbath, © 1973, Roller-joint Music.

A psychiatrist was invited to examine the boy who was very irritated by the questions and procedures, but the psychiatrist said he could find nothing wrong with the boy--he said he never believed in poltergeist phenomena and he wasn't about to start.

Whether or not the staff at St. Elizabeth's Mental Health Hospital was involved is not openly asserted, but

Earl Coon of the Protestant Chaplain Activities has acknowledged that they were part of it.

Another physician gave Roland a checkup but found him a normal boy, though somewhat high-strung. Also, a spiritualist was to use his formula for ridding people of spirits but he had no success. If the "force" in Roland was the last Aunt Tillie how does this stand with the theory that the spirit was not able to be removed by the spiritualist?

Regardless, the phenomena continued. According to Father John J. Nicola, technical consultant to the movie THE EXORCIST, visiting relatives witnessed a large easy chair in which Roland sat levitate and then flip over. As they discussed the disturbance, a vase rose slowly and hung in the air, then quickly dashed itself against the wall, spraying fragments about the room. A scientist friend of the family scoffed at the reports. He was invited to stay at the Doe's home and see the levitations too. Sure enough!

After thoroughly checking the room and bed, he also witnessed the mattress

raise into the air along with the boy. He couldn't explain it.

When the mother washed Roland as he sat on the sink, a word rose up on the flesh of his back. "Who is it?" she screamed, "Stop it! Who's doing these things?" The word was an obscenity that gave way to answer to the mother's questions: *Tilly*--denoting the late aunt. The mother asked: "What do you want?" *Go* next appeared on the boy's flesh. "Go where?" The word *Louis* manifested in deep red on Roland's ribs. The time of departure was answered as *Saturday* on the boy's hip. On his chest the numbers $3\frac{1}{2}$ denoted the weeks they were asked to stay in St. Louis. All these "skin brandings" happened when the mother and others had clear view of the boy's hands.

The diary entitled "Diabolical Possession in 1949" states:

"The mother had a relative married to a Catholic, and when the case was described to him, he said: 'If what you say is true, you should consult a priest.' The family lived about a quarter of a mile from the church in

Mount Rainier and the father of the boy called the rectory and made an engagement to talk to one of the priests. Father Albert Hughes happened to be the one. When the boy's father came the next morning and explained the case. Father Hughes gave him some holy water and blessed candles and explained how to use them." Father Hughes claims never to have seen the boy.

When the mother had sprinkled the holy water around the room, she placed the bottle on a dresser and it was picked up by the "force" and smashed. The "exorcist's diary" states that another bottle flew across the room but did not break. A holy candle was lit and flame shot up to the ceiling and had to be extinguished for fear that it would start a fire. When the mother held a lit candle alongside of Roland at night the whole bed--mother and son--"moved back and forth with the swaying of the mattress". Prayer only aggravated the phenomena.

In order to get relief, the mother again telephoned Father Hughes--when suddenly the telephone table was smashed by some unseen hand and splintered into

multiple pieces. Damn! The priest approached the Catholic Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle to see if an exorcism couldn't be inaugurated.

During this time, a Catholic priest accompanied one of the Lutheran ministers to Roland's home, both men were suddenly knocked flat by an "invisible force". The priest, who spent the night in the room of the boy, suddenly found himself attacked by furniture, the mat he slept on would slide about the floor, and a bottle from a shelf was propelled to the floor, cracking the tiles, but not the bottle.

? When Roland went into one of his seizures he would exhibit great violence, and the bed had to be padded to prevent him from hurting himself. The boy would often be strapped down by fetters and restraints.

When one of his aunts approached him he slammed her against a wall some feet away. Roland, who weight only 93 pounds, could break the restraints. He tore a bedspring from the mattress and used it as a knife, inflicting a wound on a priest from his wrist to elbow.

The Roman Ritual of Christian Exorcisms says that four major stipulations are part of a genuine demon possession:

- 1) The victim is not suffering from some normal melancholy or illness.
- 2) The victim must speak expertly in some strange tongue or to understand it when spoken by another.
- 3) He must be able to devulge future or hidden events.
- 4) The victim must exhibit powers that are beyond his age and natural condition.

Father Hughes never carried out the exorcism. The family instead opted for extensive medical and neurological examination at Georgetown University Hospital where he was examined under controlled conditions during a $3\frac{1}{2}$ day period. His bed would be propelled across the room, and when in a seizure, he would curse in languages from bygone ages. The Menninger clinic is also mentioned but no official confirmation is forthcoming.

"He went to the Georgetown hospital to be examined under controlled conditions," said O'Leary. "Prior to the archbishop's decision to authorize an exorcism, I have been told all these manifestations continued in the hospital room. I was told that the hospital bed was slammed across

the room. There was no one pushing it. They had to strap him down because he was violent--marks appeared on his chest even though his hands were down.

BEYOND THE NATURAL

"Oh, mother, make him stop! Please 'stop' him! 'Stop' him! He's trying to kill me! He's-----! Oh, please stoopppppppppp himmmmmmmmm, motherrrrrrrrrr!"
(Regan) WILLIAM PETER BLATTY ON 'THE EXORCIST'.

The family made haste to Normandy, Missouri to stay with relatives there in hopes of finding some solution. The phenomena continued. Aunts, uncles, cousins and friends witnessed the swaying of the mattress, the upsetting of bedroom furniture and the scratching on the mattress. No School was branded on Roland.

One of his cousins was in a religious class of Father Raymond J. Bishop at St. Louis University in the Spring of 1949. He spoke of exorcisms and how it relieved people from what Christianity called demonic torment. After class,

the cousin, who we will call Daryl, rushed to talk to the priest. He explained what was happening to the visiting relative of 13: Could the priest help?

Father consulted an associate, Father Lawrence Kenny, and also the President of the university, Father William Bowdern, S.J. Father Bishop was permitted to see the boy and pray for him as well as give the priestly blessing. Father Bishop went to the home of the Does in Normandy on March 9, blessing the house and room where Roland was kept. He placed a "second class" relic of St. Margaret Mary--pinned--to the bed of Roland. But the swaying of the mattress and the scratching continued. The mattress would move back and forth in the direction of the bed uprights.

Roland was perfectly still while the mattress would move three inches one way and then the other and seemed to stop after fifteen minutes. Father Bishop sprinkled St. Ignatius holy water on the bed in the form of a cross and the movement ceased "quite abruptly". When the priest stepped out of the room the motion began again. Once, Roland screamed, and when his mother pulled back his pajama top there was "zig zag" scratching "in

bold red lines on the boy's abdomen".

The shaking of the mattress, the scratching which resembled "marching soldiers" continued on March 10. Father Bishop was not present. The second class relic of St. Margaret was thrown on the floor with the safety pin open. No human had touched it, but the removal obviously frightened Roland.

THE EXORCIST

"You thought that it would be . . . easy . . . From the very start . . . Now I've found you . . . I don't think you're so smart . . . I only have one more question . . . Before my time is through . . . Please I beg you tell me . . . In the name of hell . . . Who are you? . . . Who are you? WHO ARE YOU?, Black Sabbath, © 1973, Rollerjoint Music.

The exorcist, Father William Bowdern, along with Father Bishop, were picked up by relatives of Roland following the March 11, 9:00 p.m., Novena service at the St. Francis Xavier College Church.

Father Bowdern took a "first class" relic of Xavier along for a Novena blessing in honor of St. Francis Xavier. Bowdern brought a crucifix containing relics of several of the North American martyrs and of St. Peter Conisius.

Again at 11:00 p.m., the relic of St. Margaret Mary was snatched from the bed, and with safety pin open, thrown across the room to the mirror with enough force to sound like a "pellet" on the glass. Roland began to shout downstairs for help. Suddenly a "cross" was branded on Roland's left, outer arm, as if scratched by a thorn. It remained for forty-five minutes. Father Bowdern read the Novena prayer of St. Francis Xavier and he blessed Roland with a piece of bone from the forearm at St. Francis Xavier. A crucifix reliquary was safety pinned under Roland's pillow, and this time, no shaking of the mattress or scratching appeared.

Finally, the group of people went downstairs to discuss the history of the case. Fathers Bowdern and Bishop left for the evening, when a loud noise came from Roland's room, and five relatives rushed upstairs. A 75-pound bookcase in

the boy's room swiveled in a full circle, a bench turned over, a crucifix propelled itself across the room and the other moved to the foot of the bed. Then the bed began to once again shake violently--and only stopped when the family shouted in terror: "Aunt Tillie, stop!"

An aunt, now a 74-year-old lady, told motion picture director William Friedkin that one evening Roland awoke screaming:

"All of a sudden the mattress started going, just raised up in the air, and down, up and down, and my sister hollared for me, so I ran in and tried to help. I said that there was nothing in that room that could harm us, and I said to my nephew. 'I'm going to lay down with you and there isn't anybody that will bother us!'

"Oh, I'll tell you that mattress just raised both of us right up into the air! We both flew off and my nephew started out of the bedroom. I happened to have a table up against the wall with a vase of flowers on it and I got out but as my nephew tried to leave,

that table actually flew in front of the door and would not let him out!"

Even though the family knew little Latin they attempted to sing "Ave Maria" in that tongue to somehow save themselves from the terror about them.

Obsession had slowly over the weeks lapsed into possession. On March 16, St. Louis archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of the Catholic tribunal gave Bowdern permission to begin an official exorcism. Bowdern prepared himself for the exhausting ritual through a "black fast" of bread and water for spiritual fortification. Father O'Hara speculated that Bowdern may have lost as much as 40 pounds before the whole ordeal was over. *Diabolical Possession in 1949* says: "The seizures took place in the evening when the boy went to bed and would last from eight o'clock to twelve or one, intermittantly, and then the boy would go off into a perfectly normal sleep for nine or ten hours. It was thought that if the prayers would be recited earlier everyone could get more sleep, but the seizures would rage on from about nine o'clock at night till two or three in the morning.

The night Fathers Bowdern and Bishop, accompanied by a St. Louis jesuit scholastic (believed to be either the Fathers Walt "Henderson" or Lawrence Kenny) led Roland in an act of contrition and then began reciting the ritual prayers of exorcism. Roland could cry out in terror, demonstrating violent rages, screaming, cursing and parroting of Latin phrases which Bowdern would reach in climatic points the 27 pages exorcism ritual, and it says in part: "I cast thee out unclean spirit, along with the least enroachment of the wicked enemy, and every phantom and diabolical legion. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, depart and vanish from this creature of God . . . " Other instructions in that ritual tell the exorcist to "pronounce the exorcisms in a commanding and authoritative voice, and at the same time with great confidence, humility, and fervor. And when he sees that the spirit is sorely vexed, then he oppresses and threatens all the more."

POSSESSION!

"Well, are you the Devil?" (Karras)

"Not quite." (Regan/Demon)

"I am a demon. A devil, if you will." (Regan/Demon)

"Which one?" (Karras)

"I do not think you would wish to know." (Regan/Demon) WILLIAM PETER BLATTY ON 'THE EXORCIST'.

Roland had "quiet" periods in which he had no need of handlers or restrains. His parents thought it might be best to baptize the boy in hopes of expediting the exorcism. The priest began instruction and soon, according to one diary, "on the appointed morning he rose, took a shower, ate his usual breakfast and set out for the church in a car driven by his uncle. Just before reaching the church the boy grabbed his uncle by the neck and said: 'You son-of-a-bitch, you think I am going to be baptized, but you are going to be fooled!'"

The uncle was just able to seize the emergency brake and avert a collision by an inch.

No one wanted to create a scene so Roland was taken to the third floor of the

rectory which stands in back of the church but faces Lindell Boulevard. The rite commenced, but everytime he was asked: "Do you renounce Satan and all his work?" he would go into a rage. Only after several hours of repetitious reciting was the boy able to say: "I do renounce Satan and all his works." *Diabolical Possession in 1949* says: "This violent opposition of the devil to the baptism would seem to indicate his former baptism was invalid." (this probably refers to his Lutheran baptism, but rumor has it that the boy was also given a first baptism into Catholicism while in Maryland)-"after the baptism he was quiet for several days but the devil was playing possum. He returned. In one of the his seizures a priest from the D.C. area was holding the boy's wrist, but he turned his hand far enough around to stratch the Father's arm so severely that he was unable to raise it for several weeks and had to ellivate the host at mass with one hand."

The chronology of events during late March and April are very confusing. Some say he was taken from a rectory and placed in Alexian Brothers Hospital in South St. Louis where he was finally

exorcized. Others say he was taken to the hospital in March but moved to a rectory on March 21. Another version said he was taken from Normandy, Missouri back to the Washington-Baltimore area where he was refused admittance to a clinic--returning to St. Louis. Roland, however, was definitely held at the Alexian Brothers for about a month, made a short trip to Washington, and then back to Alexian Brothers. Dr. Louis Rhine of the Duke University parapsychological laboratory mentions a clinic in the Hyattsville, Maryland area. The Menninger clinic has also been mentioned.

One of the former jesuit scholastics, a Father Walt "Henderson," said he was officially forbidden to talk by the Church, but, yes, sure, there was poltergeist activity: "I was aware of the poltergeist activity." Father Henderson may have been the jesuit student who was given a swift blow by Roland that broke his nose.

Violence was demonstrated often. One night as they rode Roland across a large river in the area, he broke the grip of two big scholastics that held him in the back seat of the automobile, dove into

the front seat where Father O'Hara and a scholastic driver were situated. Roland grabbed the steering wheel and tried to catapult them into the river. The car banged against the guard rails as it zig-zagged across the lane.

At times, it would take as many as ten people to restrain Roland during one of his seizures. "He would tear the sheets and pillows to pieces. Tear the top shirts and undershirts of those holding him. He would kick," says *Diabolical Possession* in 1949, "and coming out of a seizure he would complain of feeling very hot and would ask for a glass of water."

Roland said that in his early seizures the "evil spirit" seemed to carry him down into a pit of about 200 feet deep where there was intense heat and vile evil spirits. In the beginning, also, he seemed to be in a long dark cave with a tiny bit of light at the far end. He said that as the exorcisms progressed the lighted end seemed to become larger and larger. In one of the exorcisms the spirit in the body of the boy pointed to one of the priests and said: " 'What is the use of you

being here, you will be with me in hell in 1957'".

The diary also says the amount of spittle was unusual because Roland would discharge as much as half-a-pint at one time. Bowdern, at times, had to wear a windjammer raincoat because of Roland's continuous "vomiting"--sometimes "shot" at the priest. At one time, the exorcist had to have a towel to protect himself for the boy moved his head like a cobra, continuously aiming his face with spittle. "The spittle would go under the towel, over the towel, or around the towel and strike directly on the priest's glasses, and the boy's eyes would be closed the whole time." A person on intravenous feeding can only vomit five quarts of liquid in a twenty-four-hour period: Roland vomited enough to fill a good-size room.

He would ask for a glass of water although it was always spat back on the bystanders. Sometimes the "psychic chill" was so noticeable in the room that Bowdern also wore an overcoat to keep warm. When the priest demanded to know the name of the "demon" and to know its time of departure, Roland would

winced and rolled in sudden spasms of pain. "During the seizures the boy would utter the vilest obscenities, curses, blasphemies and ribald songs, all in a high falsetto voice that was off key." Thirty brandings appeared on his stomach, chest, temple, throat, thighs, calves and back during a two hour period. As Bowdern demanded to know the name of the demon "Well, Spite" appeared on Roland's chest. The word "Hell" also appeared on his chest--and he rocked and rolled in pain. He cursed and screamed in obscenities that included a big bass tone. The stench was almost unbearable.

The exorcists wore around their necks a receptacle containing the consecrated host and they constantly read from the Roman Ritual book, which, then, was written in Latin--Roland seemed to have expert knowledge of its use.

One of Roland's aunts visited him in the hospital: "He was fine," she said, "and then all of a sudden he just acted like a devil, and growled and snarled at us and finally the nun told us we'd better go." When Daryl "Hoffmann" was first asked about the hospitalization of his cousin, he said he rather not talk

about it because "it wasn't exactly the nicest thing to go through".

Father O'Hara said that he witnessed a most peculiar acrobatic. He said to Father Gallagher: "One night the boy brushed off his handlers and soared through the air at Father Bowdern, standing at some distance from his bed in surplice stole, the Blessed Sacrament, pyx on his chest, and the ritual book in his hands. Presumably, Father was about to be attacked but the boy got no further than the book, and when his hands hit that, I assure you, Gene, I saw this with my own eyes, he didn't tear the book, he dissolved it! The book vaporized into confetti and fell in small fine pieces to the floor!"

BEGONE, SATAN, BEGONE!

"Where can you run to? . . . What more can you do? . . . No more tomorrow. . . Life is killing you . . . Dreams turn to nightmares . . . Heaven turns to hell. . . Burned out confusion . . . Nothing more to tell . . . " SABBATH, BLOODY SABBATH, Black Sabbath, © 1973, Rollerjoint Music.

Certainly some type of sophisticated atomic or electrical power was involved, so intrically tied in with the brain of the possessed person. Typically, a physicist from the University of Washington was asked to look at Roland Doe. As he stood near the bedside of the raid-like boy a table vibrated and then slowly lifted off the floor, rising to the ceiling--then it returned to the floor.

Flabbergasted, the physicist told the attendants: "There is much about electrical energy that we still do not fully understand."

The possession was at its highest peak. The severity progressed. The exorcists felt that failure was impending: How long could the boy hold up under the strain? Where did he derive the energy to survive? Could the exorcists remain sane or in good health? "The parents were now almost nervous wrecks and weakened from loss of sleep and Father Hughes tried to find a place for the boy in some hospital or sanatorium in the Washington-Baltimore area," says *Diabolical Possession* in 1949. The priests had approached Roland's parents

and asked if Roland could be instructed during his quiet periods so that he could eventually take his first Holy Communion. Maybe it would stop the possession? Bowdern prepared to take Roland to the Washington area as planned. They took the train, and during the trip Roland went into a burst of violence, struck Bowdern in the testicles, shouting: "That's a nut cracker for you, isn't it?"

Custodians struggled to subdue Roland who fell into a deep sleep.

Continues Possession: "Father Bowdern explained to the archbishop that he was pastor of a large church and had an elaborate Holy Week planned and felt obliged to return for it. However, he promised the archbishop that he would remain until someone else could be appointed to carry on the case. Father Hughes invited his pastor to witness the boy's actions but suggested he carry the sacraments.

"The pastor carried in a pyx, in a purse, and in his inside pocket. The boy was in a seizure and recognized the presence of the blessed sacrament. It was placed on a dresser. But the danger of the boy reaching it caused the pastor to return

it to his pocket."

The diary also says: "The parents were now almost nervous wrecks and weakened from loss of sleep, and Father Hughes tried to find a place for the boy in some hospital or sanatorium in Washington-Baltimore area but none would receive him. It was decided to (again) take him to Alexian Brothers sanatorium in St. Louis."

The parties tried to administer Roland's first Holy Communion by giving him a small particle of the host and washing it down with a spoon of water. When the time came it was impossible to get the host near his tongue, but finally after several hours they succeeded in placing it on his tongue, and three times he spat it out. Eventually, success was achieved."

Roland urinated excessively. During his seizures he would yell the vilest obscenities, curses, blasphemies, and ribald songs all in a high falsetto voice that was off key--or a low booming bass.

The priest tried to explain a little about Our Lady of Fatima on April 2nd--the first Saturday of that month--to Roland because it was a day dedicated to Our Lady--but the knowledge did nothing to stop the seizures. At this time he was also being taught the rosary and did so with great piety. Roland had difficulties with the Rosary because when he began recitations he would get through the credo, and the Our Father, and the Hail Mary as far as the word *Jesus*. "Upon pronouncing this word he felt a burning sensation and said: 'Look at my legs!'" says *Possession*.

"They were streaked with long red welts as if someone had stratched them. He began again, and at the word *Jesus* another burning paid for a couple of seconds, and the picture of a red devil appeared on his thigh. Every time he pronounced the word *Jesus*, he felt a burning sensation and a red mark appeared somewhere on his person. He faltered once anticipating the pain, but continued on bravely."

After a comparatively quiet period Roland broke into one of the worst tantrums he ever had: A satanic visage

of a demon with hands held above its head and webs stretching from its hands to its shoulders--horns projecting from its head--visualized in deep red on Roland's calf. A mysterious X was branded on his chest, and the word EXIT in two inch letters appeared on Roland's back for a period of four hours. While sitting on the bed near the boy, Bowdern watched a branding appear no more than two feet away extending from Roland's inner thigh to his ankle. The skin ruptured and drops of blood appeared.

Ernest "Schaffer," a male nurse near retirement now, had to help clean Roland's room back in 1949 in the hospital. He no longer talks. But five years ago he told how the room had mysterious debris and how objects were reported to fly about the room.

The diary also says: "In the course of the exorcisms, the spirit was asked: 'What is your name, and when will you depart?'

"The first time these words were asked the spirit replied: 'Shut up! Shut up!' He is obliged to answer, but he did it in a confusing manner.

In answer to the question of his name the words 'Hell, Spite!' appeared in red letters, suddenly, on the boy's chest. In reply to the questions of departure, red numbers 4, 8, 10, 16, some in Roman numerals, appeared on the boy's body and arms. He also said: 'I will not go out until a certain word is pronounced and this boy will never say it.' There also appeared a red arrow that ran from the boy's throat to the bottom of his abdomen--and it was thought that the spirit might go out by way of the urine as had happened in some cases."

The researches later decided this "branding" may have been the days on which various demons departed from the boy, if more than one was involved.

During one quiet period, Roland was sitting in bed reading a book about Our Lady of Fatima, having the book on his knees, when suddenly he went into a seizure hurling the book across the room. When he was given a glass of milk he also threw it across the room--even on the last days, a brother gave a plate of chipped beef to him, when Roland rushed to one side of the room and threatened to "brain" anyone who got

near him. One brother crawled under the bed to get Roland, while another slowly approached from another side. Roland threw the dish against the wall scattering the beef over the room.

Possession says: "It was hoped the possession would end in Holy Week but it continued through Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday and even more violently--Easter Monday, April 18, was the worst day, and the exorcist was getting thoroughly discouraged." It was reported that Fathr Bowdern and Roland's mother were both on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Again and again, Bowdern recited the ritual demanding to know who the demon was. Roland shouted in Latin: "O priest of Christ, you know that I am the devil. Why do you keep 'bothering me?'" Roland's demon also said: "I am always in him. I may not have much power always, but I am in him."

Bowdern researched the literature on demonology for a clue that would halt the impending failure. He found an interesting case in 1870 and he borrowed some practices. On the night of April 18,

1949, Bowdern, with the aid of hospital attendants and the custodians near the room, placed a necklace of religious medals around Roland's neck and placed a crucifix in his hands. Rather than rage, Roland became surprisingly quiet and polite--almost normal--asking questions about the ritual. Bowdern wouldn't be fooled because he was aware of the *Ritual* admonition to not engage the demons in dialogue. Instead, Bowdern again demanded to know *who* the demon was and *when* he would depart!

Roland went wild! He exclaimed he was a demon named in the Old Testament. Five Alexian Brothers rushed to the violent boy to constrain him.

Bowdern, almost a walking corpse, incessantly recited the ritual--again and again without stop--till 11:00 p.m. when Roland screamed in wanton hysteria, rocking and jumping in a spasm as if his insides were churning about, and suddenly he shouted with a smile: "He is gone!"

Roland explained that at that time he saw a brilliant figure, seen from the waist up, clothed in a "close-fitting white garment which had the appearance of scales.

The hair was long and flowing in a wind. The right hand held something like a flaming sword or a light pointed downward. It was Saint Michael the arch-angel . . . suddenly, at 11:00 p.m., a new voice was heard from the boy--a beautiful, deep, rich bass which exclaimed: 'Satan, now, now, now! To the pit where you belong. In the name of Dominous . . . "

At that moment the boy felt a tearing sensation in the pit of his stomach, relaxed, and lay perfectly quiet. "Then at some distance down he saw the evil sprits standing at the mouth of a cave from which flames issued. Then the spirit reluctantly withdrew into the cave, the opening closed, and across it appeared the word SPITE. Thus the possession was ended."

Roland told the doctors who began to question him as to what he felt all this time up until that moment. One of the custodians remembers that Roland said: "You know, for a long while now, I think, I have felt that a big rubber-band was wrapped around my inside, around my stomach, and somebody has been pulling it, pulling it, pulling it, and I've

been afraid, afraid, afraid--and today it **SNAPPED** or something like that!"

COMPLETE RECOVERY

"Regan, come on, honey, we have to get going". (Aside to Dyer)

"She doesn't remember any of it."
(Chris)

"That's good." (Dyer) William Peter Blatty on 'The Exorcist'.

The diary entitled *Mount Rainier Case of Possession* states: "The boy seems now perfectly normal. He is back in Washington attending a Catholic High School, his parents attend mass. His 22-year-old cousin is under instruction. . . a few words about the boy's background: One of his grandmothers had been a practicing Catholic until the age of 14. However, she lapsed and was married outside the Catholic Church. . . the boy himself was a perfectly normal, healthy lad of 14. The parents have ceased going to the Lutheran Church, saying that when they were in direst need it was the Catholic priests who helped them.

They have not yet become Catholics though they go to mass regularly."

Approximately two weeks after the incident, Roland and his parents left for Maryland. Roland wrote Father Bowdern on May 22 that he was very happy and that he was enjoying his new dog.

"Possibly the purpose behind the whole affair was the conversion of people," continues *Mount Rainier Case of Possession*. "Maybe God has something special in store for the boy. At any rate, once faith is strengthened in the existence of the Devil, the Power of the Church, and the providence of God. One of the doctors interviewed by Father Hughes said he believed that a number of people consigned to institutions as hopelessly insane were in reality demons."

Father John Nicola, who had investigated demonology for a number of years, was allowed to see an official document on this case now in the Roman Catholic Chancery in Washington, D.C. It was signed by forty-one witnesses to the strange and paranormal phenomena. When the archbishop of New Orleans,

Philip M. Hannon (who had been stationed in Washington), was asked about the document, he said: "I think it would be improper for me to speak to you about the facts concerning the case which you mentioned in your letter of May 14. It was a personal matter and I think that the person involved has a right to privacy in the matter."

Father Raymond J. Bishop likewise adhered to the official Catholic secrecy: "I have been refusing all information especially because Cardinal Carberry has restricted the case, just as his predecessor Cardinal Ritter had done." Father Bowdern was contacted on the telephone and he told this writer: "I have nothing to say one way or another about it--at all. I want nothing to do either with the book or the movie. No, no, I'm not interested at all. I have nothing to say--really. I'm sorry--I don't want to be involved in any way at all."

The Roman Ritual of Exorcisms says about the exorcist that "he should fulfill this devout undertaking in all constancy and humility, being utterly immune to any striving for human aggrandizement, and relying, not on his own, but on Divine Power."

Joe Cassidy of *The National Enquirer* announced to this writer that in that magazine's attempt to cover the story, they did locate the real boy, now a 38-year-old father of three children, married, and selling insurance in Northern Virginia. The interviewers for *The Enquirer* said that Roland was undecided as to whether he wanted his name or any intimate information given out. He said that he had only hazy recollections of that period. It was speculated that he did read the book and had seen the movie, *THE EXORCIST*.

"I am a layman and I have no concept of what a diabolical possession looks like, if indeed it exists," also said Jeremiah O'Leary of the case. "I was and I am a practicing Catholic and I have no great difficulty accepting mysteries in our religion, things that I cannot understand. So, for better or worse, I tend to accept that there are things such as diabolical possession. I believe in a higher power and a force for evil. Anyone who does not believe in evil has not been looking around him, whether or not it is a creature called Satan, or the Devil, or a collection of imps . . . I have made no intellectual appraisal.

"Do I believe there was such a case?" continues O'Leary. "I do. I believe there was a case of diabolical possession, mainly because a number of people who I knew and respected also believe it."

DISEASE OR DEMON?

"We call it somnambuliform possession. Quite frankly, we don't know much about it, except that it starts with some conflict or guilt that eventually leads to the patients delusion that his body and his mind have been invaded and are controlled by an alien intelligence; a so-called spirit." (Clinic director)

WILLIAM PETER BLATTY ON 'THE EXORCIST'.

Sally Defty, a reporter for the St. Louis POST-DISPATCH NEWS spent considerable time tracing the "boy".

"I wanted to meet the man himself," she said. "I tracked him laboriously for two years of college: Then it went blank. I made two attempts to interview the father who pretended not to know what I was talking about. The second visit I was thrown out, so the topic was dead.

"I was very puzzled with the relatives here in St. Louis, either they are great actors or they really did seem genuinely bewildered. They said, yes, they remembered that he was visiting that year, but they didn't remember anything about him--it's very skillfully done."

Darn it anyhow, was this all staging? Daryl Hoffmann spoke very sincerely when the movie came out in St. Louis. He said they had been approached by all kinds of T.V. and radio people, and the family had gotten together and decided not to say anything to anyone. "It wasn't exactly the nicest thing to go through," he insisted.

Mysterious enough, five months after that conversation, Daryl Hoffmann again reiterated that he didn't want to give out information to the press. When asked about the "diaries" he said he knew nothing about them--he wasn't sure his cousin had been in St. Louis that year. He knew no one in his family who attended St. Louis University or knew priests from there. This, in face of the fact that his mother was the "aunt Tillie" of Roland.

Melvin Hoffmann likewise professed ignorance. Claiming he was in the military service at the time, he said he knew nothing. He asked if the cousin had been contacted. He was told that Roland wasn't really speaking. "Then why should I have to tell what I know," was the slip, "which is nothing," he quickly added.

The family was soon identified with a multimillion dollar law suit against Blatty for alleged "invasion of privacy," a possible explanation for their statement at ignorance on the case.

Professor Juan D. Cortés of the Georgetown University Psychology Department also felt the case was partially a "put on". He based his conclusion on several points.

Professor Cortés, along with Florence Gatti of Georgetown University, have made an intensive study *The Evidence against Demons, Possessions, and Exorcisms* and also *Demons, Possession and Exorcisms*. Basically these professors claim that the original idiom of the Old and New Testaments fail to point out that supernatural entities are involved in

possession--called devils, but, rather, these were metaphor or symbols for psychotic and neurotic behavior.

"Jesus and the apostles *never* practiced exorcisms (in spite of a tradition which has endured up to the present believing the opposite)," says the authors. "There is absolutely no difference between the healings of those 'possessed' and of those 'non-possessed'. Jesus cured them all with his presence, his command, his words, his touch. Obviously these conclusions have nothing to say against the existence of the Devil or Satan. It is also obvious that many persons throughout history have believed themselves to be possessed. But the examples from later centuries show clearly that they were suffering from 'psychological' disorders such as conversion reactions (hysteria), dissociations reactions, hysterical epilepsy, and even, at times, coprolalia (foul, dirty, language)."

Since it was not possible to point to a natural cause in cases of alleged possession in the New Testament, the disorder was attributed to a demon, say the authors; the cause of the illness being internal, no external causes or

deformities were visible, and therefore, they were thought to be possessed by unknown, malignant forces, by demons.

Father John J. Nicola, technical advisor to the film THE EXORCIST, and for many years an investigator of the occult, student at the Gregorian College in Rome and a theological graduate, takes an opposing viewpoint. Nicola says:

"In their attempt to 'demythologize' Sacred Scripture, a number of modern exegetes and theologians are interpreting these and also other biblical references to the devils and demons as 'personifications of evil in general' and of 'physical and mental diseases in particular'. I think that the question which each of us must answer for himself is whether this is a genuine enlightenment, or rationalization or a rejection of faith. Certainly, in formulating such a judgment, attention must be given to advances in science and also to the philosophy and spirit of our time. Personally, I believe that the demythologizers are barking up the wrong tree in the context of the diabolical."

Father Corte's speculates that a great number of cases of possession are just common forms of hysteria and neurosis.

The more complexed and inexplicable cases could be a form of schizophrenia (known as the multiple personality or Jekyll-Hyde Syndrome where a person is preoccupied with an inner world removed from outer reality, believing he can be several people at any one time), and what has come to be known as "Tourette's Syndrome" or Coprolalia, where a victim develops violent outbursts of obscenity that are quite beyond the patient's control. Tourette suffers show abnormal brain waves and other organic neurological symptoms.

Father Nicola doubts that Tourette Syndrome could explain all cases of demon possession. He acknowledged that ninety percent of the victims can be helped or cured with the drug haldol or haloperidol.

But he asks: What about the remaining 10 percent--the Church never claimed that demon possession was prevalent, just existent! Furthermore, Nicola points out, it does not explain the psychic or paranormal manifestations in such cases as the 1949 Mount Rainier case.

Cortés, on that point, says that the three major diaries on the case are inconclusive. There are many fuzzy points and inconsistencies. Two diaries mention the boy as 14 years-of-age. One says he was born in June, 1935--he would then be 13 in 1949. The "exorcist's diary" says the aunt Tillie died about two weeks before the first sounds were heard. Cortés says such confusion denotes a makeshift nature about the case. He says that Reverend Shultz even suspected that the boy was somehow scratching himself, because one chest message was written upside down on his chest as it would be if the boy wrote it himself. Reverend Shultz was hard put, however, to explain the poltergeist (noisy-ghost) activity.

Father Cortés just could not help but feel that the whole affair was suspiciously tied in with the "boy" somehow. "One lady in Washington was careful to find the dates when the first happenings occurred on Saturday--second ones too," says Cortés. "As you know, on Saturdays the boy had to be at home because there is no school."

Father Nicola recently publicized the Mount Rainier case where "there are abundant written accounts and innumerable witnesses. Nearly all the witnesses, as a result of their experiences, were convinced that the devil had possessed the boy and had been driven out by the exorcism. The facts are well-documented." To which Father Cortés replies:

"I find Father Nichola very naive and very credulous . . . (in his book on demons) he said he was going to change things, but he did not say he said he was going to exaggerate, that he invents things." Father Nichola's reply to that was, yes, sure, he did color facts in his thesis to protect the identity and privacy of the real people involved. He told this writer: ". . . from the sentence in my book, 'without naming the persons or the places, and fabricating, changing and getting sufficient other details to shield the identities of those involved . . .' one would get the picture that I do not care to discuss or give any information (harmful to the victims)."

Father Nicola says whether demon possession is real lies with the scientific evidence that some supernatural phenomena was involved. Two typical cases are those of Maria Anna Dfefferhorn (1892) and the case of the 1973 Daly City Poltergeist: Past and present examples.

The case of Maria Dfefferhorn was preserved in the diocesan archeives of Metz in the old French province of Alsace-Lorraine by the pen of the Bishop Laurent. It was a dramatic case in which Maria would change from a sweet girl into a laughing, sarcastic being whose tongue would extend and roll about while her eyes glowed with a fierce hue. Rages would come often, and she would demonstrate paranormal activities by flying through the air, roaring like a lion.

Maria was thrown about the room by an invisible force and no one was able to constrain her. Her features would often become transfigured from some animal figure to, even in one instance, that of a "weeping angel". The exorcism "had the effect of producing the most fearful contortions, and there was no cessation of the appalling screams . . . she

experienced burning and stinging pains all over her body . . . the Evil One had thrown the rigid form of his victim right across the altar into the body of the church, and with such violence that the noise of her fall on the stone floor could be heard by all present, although no bodily injury appeared to have been done to her . . . (she spoke) in sentences in languages which Maria cannot speak in her normal state; and they had been uttered in a harsh and hallow voice, wholly different from her own."

It was a possession that ran for many weeks, and the girl would go into rages that six priests could not prevent her from being dragged about by an invisible presence. Bishop Laurent was assisted by several clergy, including a holy priest Professor Engling. During the final moments of the exorcism, at 9:30 p.m., as the sacristan rang the Angelus churchbell, the demons departed. Maria became very exuberant and began reciting the Rosary in thanksgiving. She shortly returned to Luxemburg where she reported no relapse after that day.

A most recent incident was the case of the "Smiths," a couple who first lived

in South San Francisco in July, 1972, and began reporting to friends strange sounds in the house, apparitions or "shadows" were reported moving about, and furniture would be tossed or drawers removed from dressers. The family would watch from outside the house to prove to themselves that burglars were not involved. They suspected hoax, and set up makeshift "traps" or situations that might "catch" the culprit--but hoax seemed erroneous. During July, objects would also disappear. A black onyx ring disappeared from a shelf. An hour later, the ring mysteriously appeared in the kitchen. Again, about an hour later, it appeared in still another room. July was a month of multiple happenings: Objects would dart about and actually hit members of the family. On July 21 at about 9:20 p.m., Jan discovered the baby's crib burning. That same night, something invisible grasped Mary Smith's neck and knocked her backwards trying to choke her. Jan Smith was slapped very hard, and Brian Smith was knocked all the way across a hall by an unseen force.

A telephone receiver hit Jan, a bed shook and moved several inches, and a spray can hit Jan and later was seen

floating through the air. Many objects did like acrobatics in the following weeks. Then the "entities" started to set fires about the house. The first one was in Jan's bedroom, the others appeared in the kitchen, in two other bedrooms, and in the baby's crib. The family also watched a towel unravel from a roll and float across the room, land on the electric stove and burn up.

Jan's skirt caught on fire--and another time, with baby in crib, the mattress would ignite--though the baby was never hurt.

On August 4, 1973, after many months of fear and exasperation, Father Karl Palzelt, 57, of the Our Lady of Fatima Church in San Francisco, began his investigation of the phenomena. He witnessed many poltergeist activities: Broken windows, dents in the wall, ceilings and doors from thrown objects. He saw many burnt objects. The Archbishop Joseph T. McGuckken allowed Father Palzelt to begin an official exorcism, which began August 19, 1973. But before the "demons" left, the priest had to conduct the ritual 15 times. The 8th of September was the end.

Father Nicola insists that the Church has been cautious if not scientific before labling a case a demonic possession. "No analysis of the case can disprove other interpretations. One can respond with reliance on faith, or on both. Only time will issue a definitive judgment."

EVIL OR NO?

"The main problem of psychology is not the absolute problem of evil but its existence in the human personality. This is called by Jung the Shadow, an archetype which is the hidden, repressed, and for the most part inferior and guilt-laden part of our personality that stretches back as far as our animal ancestors and comprises the whole historical aspect of the unconscious."

FREUD, JUNG, AND OCCULTISM, "Jung and the Devil," Wandor Fodor, University Books, © 1971.

Since the multi-million dollar movie, and the all-time bestselling book, THE EXORCIST, has crossed the nation and moved into other countries, the clergy

in general has been, either, up in arms, or otherwise very enthusiastic about the theme of both productions.

The Bishop of New York, Paul Moore, Jr., stationed at the Protestant Episcopal Church of New York, summed it up this way:

"I guess you would say I am agnostic on the issue of the presence of demons or the existence of a 'personal' devil. However, I have seen time and again in my own ministry behavior which could only be classified as demonic. By this I mean behavior that goes beyond normal selfish and sinful action; that goes beyond the symptoms normally associated with hostility; behavior which seems to have a particular infectious and injurious effect on other people.

"God certainly works through psychological processes. There is no reason to think evil doesn't do the same thing. Therefore, I take issue with any kind of statement which says this is not a neurosis, this is demon possession."

The Rev. Robert Blair Ruble of St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown, Penn., went a little further:

"The devil in man is a consequence of man's sinful nature. The idea of the devil being physically exorcized from a person is ridiculous.

"In the baptism of Jesus, He was filled with the Holy Spirit, then went into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. I interpret this as a figurative story that implies Christ was tempted throughout His life, as we are."

Monsq. Joseph Baker of the Catholic Tribunal in St. Louis was not as skeptical for several reasons. He had investigated cases of obsession and in several cases was convinced that an evil personality was involved:

"The Church really approaches possession with definite skepticism. It's the last assumption the Church makes. But, in some situations, when there is no natural explanations, and the exorcism works, you can be reasonably sure that there is demonic possession."

But other clergy concurred. Father Eugene Gallagher, the priest mentioned earlier as having received a copy of the "exorcist's diary," said he met Satan face to face in a number of possessions. He recalled the case of the Camden City housewife who heard voices for over ten years. He saw her personality change right before his eyes and her tongue move to speak as if a different person.

"I see the Devil as a malignant intelligence, a disembodied spirit who's after us because we've been created in God's image."

Ah! Father Gallagher, a typical Catholic Priest, who speaks in a leltling Hazeleton-flavored Irish broque, considers himself a rough and ready individualist in many ways. When he was a 22-year-old seminary student he was reading taboo topics such as Jung, Freud, Adler on such things as homosexuality, necrophilia, coprophila.

He summarizes as such: "It's always been difficult dealing with the miracles of Christ—walking on water, changing water to wine, curing the sick,

raising the dead. But especially difficult to explain is Christ's expelling demons. Neither Jesus or his followers knew what they were. Even today many Catholic priests consider these psychic disturbances."

Mysteries remain; are we saying no one need be dogmatic about them? Frank Sheed, author, publisher and lay theologian felt that the question of evil and the Devil to be intricately tied up in the maze and complexity of human endeavor: "The Devil is in some way in the same crises as the followers of Christ. The followers of Christ, ourselves for instance, mean to serve him but half the time we are serving ourselves and not doing what he wants. But then again and again we are contrary--we are cutting across what he wants: We go to confession. Similarly the people who have given Christ up already, and are, to some extent, tools of the Devil, are tools that he cannot trust all the time any more than Christ can trust us. We are in a mixed world and its more complexed as time goes on. And I am reminded of a phrase of Chesterton: 'Probability of selfishness is involved in the very fact of our having a self'."

William Blatty added further insight: "Defenses against Satan I would consider to be prayer, on a general level--or to get more specific about it--the use of the sacraments, whereby one might consider the sacraments a very special defensive weaponry-of grace-or of the supernatural in an area of combat with supernatural forces.

"Why call it grace? Call it 'a very special energy' of the kind that is in possession," continues Blatty, "possibly of evil forces that are not kindly disposed to humans."

Perhaps the answer to this breath-taking mystery of the supernatural lies in what science may have to one day reveal about psychic phenomena. Others say religion has already disclosed those answers. Blatty would no doubt agree that psychicism is permeated through the whole "Satan-Religio" syndrome. He recalls that he had a difficult time getting down to work on THE EXORCIST while he was secluded away in 1969 at a rented cabin at Lake Tahoe on the California-Nevada border.

"When I walked into the steam room I was wearing a jesuit medal on a single

chain around my neck. I remember it distinctly because I'd worn the medal for years and I noticed it when I undressed.

"But the next morning when I awoke and looked in the mirror I found I had two chains and two medals around my neck. The second one was a coppery Immaculate Conception medal, old and worn smooth, exactly like the one my mother had always worn around her neck.

"To this day there is no explanation of how the medal could have gotten there. I was alone, so it couldn't have been put there in my sleep by someone.

"I knew instantly that my mother was trying to tell me I was on the right track--to get back to writing the book."

Well, not everyone agrees that it may have been your deceased mother, Mr. Blatty, but certainly someone--

SOMEONE!