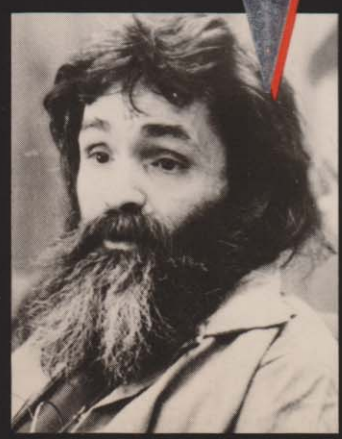


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THE ULTIMATE EVIL

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MAURY TERRY

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THEY CAME FACE TO FACE WITH
THE ULTIMATE EVIL...**

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JULY 1976–AUGUST 1977. New York City is terrorized as the “Son of Sam” murders leave six dead and seven wounded.

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**...AND THE EVIL WON—
TO KILL AGAIN.**

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MAURY TERRY is credited by law enforcement officials as being an expert on the "Son of Sam" case and on cult killings. He has researched and written more than forty articles on the topic and has served as associate producer and on-camera host for five nationally syndicated television specials based on his work. Terry won the 1982 United Press International's Enterprise Award for investigative reporting. He has also acted as a consultant in the Atlanta child murders investigation. *The Ultimate Evil* is his first book.

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—Steve Dunleavy, Channel 5 (N.Y.) news reporter and former metropolitan editor for the *New York Post*

THE ULTIMATE EVIL

*An Investigation into a
Dangerous Satanic Cult*

Maury Terry



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For Robert and Joseph Terry; to those who
were always there; and in memory of the
innocent slain.

Contents

Introduction	xi
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PART I ON TERROR'S TRAIL

I Satan at Stanford	3
II The Gun of August	21
III "Knock on Coffins"	41
IV Her Name Was Stacy	67
V Countdown: The Final Week	93
VI Catch .44	116
VII Confession	141
VIII "Sam Sleeps"	167
IX The Process	191
X Into the Maze	221
XI Blood in the Badlands	244

PART II WEB OF CONSPIRACY: The Dominoes Fall

XII "Hello from the Gutters"	261
XIII Minot? Why Not?	285
XIV A Matter of Murder	314
XV Inside the Biggest Case	331
XVI The Most Unlikely Ally	366
XVII "Sam" Speaks	392
XVIII "Hunted, Stalked and Slain"	418
XIX What's Happening, America?	437

XX From the Belly of the Beast	459
XXI A Coast-to-Coast Conspiracy	497
XXII A Call to Copco	520
XXIII In Death's Valley	55^
XXIV Murder Reigned in Southern California	588
XXV Death Mask	612

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INTRODUCTION

On August 11, 1977, the day after David Berkowitz was arrested for the "Son of Sam" murders, I began what would become the journey of a lifetime; a frustrating, rewarding, painful and sometimes harrowing voyage deep inside one of the most notorious murder cases in U.S. criminal history. On the surface was the enigmatic David Berkowitz, but far below was an infinitely more frightening specter—that of a network of satan-worshipping cults that crisscrossed the United States.

Into this abyss I reluctantly walked, not knowing that I had vastly underestimated the scope of the Son of Sam case. I would go looking for the truth, only to find the truth almost too frightening to contemplate.

This, then, is not a Son of Sam story. Rather, silhouetted against the explosive backdrop of the .44-caliber homicides, this is the story of the search for that nameless force behind the .44, and numerous other deaths, rapes and arsons from coast to coast. The trail would lead from the "gutters of New York City"—to borrow from a Son of Sam letter—to the mansions of Beverly Hills, the wheat fields of North Dakota and into the hushed silence of a church in Palo Alto, California.

It would take me from the offices of top law enforcement officials to the desolation of a half dozen prisons and into the homes and lives of the families of homicide victims.

The search would also introduce me to people whose dedication and commitment to exposing the truth jeopardized their careers, and still they fought on. In my own case, I was subjected to a false, unsuccessful smear campaign waged by a few officials in the New York City Police Department; and a well-known "church"—actually a disguised cult—devised intricate plans to discredit me because its leaders feared the investigation would lead to their front door.

And then there was the public; that considerable number of citizens who believed in the cause and came forward with

sometimes crucial information that had been ignored by the NYPD as it strove to preserve its own "solution" to the case. Some images are crystal clear today. Among them: the old woman from Manhattan who didn't trust the police and took a bus to North Dakota to present data to startled sheriffs' deputies there; District Attorney John Santucci—himself—standing in a downpour on a Queens street corner to meet with a woman who insisted on secretly offering him information she considered important; an angry key witness, Cacilia Davis, recounting how authorities tried to bury details she provided; a saddened Michael and Rose Lauria recalling an overlooked clue as they relived, in painful detail, the night their daughter, Donna, was murdered by Son of Sam; a prison associate of Berkowitz weeping because a tip he sent out of jail was received too late to perhaps prevent a double homicide. Human stories all, and they weave through the course of this story.

There was tragedy, too. One of my sources, a sensitive Yonkers teenager who lived near Berkowitz, hanged himself; and a reporter helping me—a friend—was killed in a car wreck after confronting a possible suspect and telling him his actions were being monitored. There was no overt evidence of murder, but the timing and circumstances remain troubling.

And regarding murder, if past pattern is a reliable indicator, people will die as a direct result of this book. The reason for that assessment will become evident as the story unfolds.

It has not been a joyous journey, being one marked by frustration, tragedy and then more frustration. But there have been many highlights. Along the way were five television specials, one of which earned United Press International's annual Enterprise Award for investigative reporting; dozens of analytical newspaper articles for the Gannett chain; and numerous appearances on television and radio news programs and talk shows to discuss the investigation. In the Midwest, my work was recently incorporated into an eight-hour course that has been presented as an educational aid to several police departments.

In addition, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and its chairman, Roy Innis, sought my counsel in the Atlanta child-murders probe; and I participated peripherally in Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald's attempt to prove his innocence in the infamous "Green Beret" murder case that was the subject of the book and television miniseries *Fatal Vision*. These and other cases

have come my way as a result of the work on the "Ultimate Evil" investigation.

My files are under lock and key in a location known only by me and two law enforcement officials. The names of all suspects and the information provided by all informants are in the hands of the proper authorities. If my safety or that of anyone close to me is ever jeopardized, several people whose names are at the top of a special list will come under rapid and intense scrutiny. Some of those people can't be named in this book, but all are at least referenced as to profession, place of residence and the like.

Throughout the inquiry, the disdainful face of what intelligence operatives term "disinformation" leered over my shoulder. For instance, a psychiatrist who knew nothing about crime-scene analysis or the new evidence suggested in print that there was no conspiracy. Why? Because Berkowitz refused to answer *his* questions about it.

Over the years, I have been asked many times why I put any faith in Berkowitz. How did I know he hadn't fooled me as well? My reply has always been that I *didn't* believe Berkowitz per se; I believed in the evidence—evidence which was uncovered long before he ever whispered the word "cult." Only then, when information gained in prison was supported by existing data or confirmed by follow-up investigation, did I acknowledge his credibility.

An author—who never met Berkowitz but wrote a book on him—stated that he found David "terrifying." I *have* met David Berkowitz, and I don't find him terrifying. Rather, the real terror is to be found in the national expanse of the Son of Sam and related cases, and in the knowledge that many of those involved, including masterminds, are still walking the streets today.

There is not one shred of evidence to suggest they have stopped recruiting young people, stopped twisting impressionable minds or stopped planning the periodic slayings of innocent victims. That is the bottom line. But the opening line—although no one knew it—was written in blood more than a decade ago, on a serene university campus in California.

PART I

**ON TERROR'S
TRAIL**

We had pure panic. The city was exploding around us.
—Steve Dunleavy, *New York Post* columnist

I am still here. Like a spirit roaming the night.
—Son of Sam letter

. . . the pinnacle of Heaven united with pure hatred raised
from the depths of Hell.
—Robert DeGrimston, satanic cult leader

Satan at Stanford

At 11 P.M. on October 12, 1974, the lush, sprawling campus of Stanford University was alive with the sounds of Saturday night. From scattered pockets of partying, exuberant bursts of harmony, laughter and the *thump, thump, thump* of reverberant bass guitars drifted from dormitory windows and doorways as the student population unwound from a week's worth of classes, study and football fever.

The love affair with big-time sports was enjoying a resurgence at the university, long known primarily as a bastion of academic excellence. But Jim Plunkett's Stanford Indians had ridden a dark horse out of nowhere to upset the world in the Rose Bowl game on New Year's Day of '71. Four seasons later, the pride still burned with the memory, and the fervor lingered yet on autumn Saturdays.

And although it was mid-October, Columbus Day—a time of smoldering dry leaves and ripening pumpkins in the northern reaches of the country—it was a clear, pleasant evening in Palo Alto. A light breeze gently rattled the gum trees and palms that studded the campus and bore the musical merriment from one distant corner of the sparkling complex to the other.

There were many such nights in the friendly climate of California's Silicon Valley, which nestled some forty miles to the south and east of San Francisco. The Valley's nickname, and the whole of Santa Clara County, which enveloped it, spoke of tomorrow, progress and affluence.

The general vicinity of Palo Alto, including nearby San Jose, was home to a considerable number of high-technology corporations—such as IBM—which had erected laboratories or development centers for the manufacture of advanced computer circuitry. Silicon is a nonmetallic element critical to the production of semiconductors: hence the Valley's label.

And since Stanford graduates were harvested annually by the area's corporate residents, the school functioned as an integral component of a community that was science- and academia-oriented, a domicile of the prosperous and an enclave of both the scholar and the pragmatic business executive. Although Stanford and other local institutions were regarded as hallmarks of philosophical liberalism, the Valley itself was considered a refuge of conservative mores and politics—especially when compared with its raucous northerly neighbor, San Francisco, or to that hissing viper vat located a more reassuring 350 miles to the south—Los Angeles.

To Valley citizens, nearby Frisco was the site of 1967's "Summer of Love"—and the haven of homosexuals, flower children, unwashed hippies, freaked-out bikers and Jefferson Airplane acid-drooling rock. It was a breeding ground of occult deviance and satanism, and the harbinger of the notorious North Beach section, where Carol Doda and friends would shake their booties and other such things nightly on the sweaty stages of Big Al's and the Condor Club.

But to nineteen-year-old Bruce Perry, studying this October night away in a campus apartment at Stanford, those activities were as foreign as the Latin he'd soon have to master as a diligent second-year pre-med student.

Around him, out of doors, the sounds of Saturday were faint in the wind, and only remotely tempting. Bruce Perry was dedicated to his work, and a weekend with Hippocrates was as normal to him as was an evening with Led Zeppelin to some of his less industrious counterparts across the campus.

Not that Bruce was always serious. He did have his moments. But for the immediate future, they seemed as long ago and far away as his hometown of Bismarck, North Dakota.

By all accounts, Bruce Perry was an ail-American boy from an ail-American town whose family nurtured him with a Norman Rockwell Americana upbringing. The son of a comfortably set dentist, Dr. Duncan Perry, the handsome, curly-haired Bruce was a standout in both the classroom and sports in Bismarck. His days at Bismarck High School had been alive and full.

When he graduated in 1973, he was the honored holder of a smattering of track and field records in North Dakota—including the state mark for the quarter-mile. He was popular, deeply religious, and participated in the Fellowship of Chris-

tian Athletes, both in school and at summer camps. In short, Bruce was a sure-shot pick to succeed in the world. And even more than that, since August 17, 1974, Bruce was a married man.

His young, blond bride, also nineteen, also from Bismarck, and also immersed in religious causes, was his high school sweetheart, the former Arlis Dykema. As Bruce labored over his assignments that October night, Arlis busied herself around the small but cozy corner apartment the couple shared on the second floor of the university's Quillen Hall, a residence for married students.

As it neared eleven-thirty, Arlis gathered up some letters to Bismarck family and friends and told Bruce she was going out to mail them. Bruce shrugged at his bride, then decided to pack up his work and get outside for a while himself. He realized Arlis was showing signs of restlessness and that he hadn't done very much to liven up her evening.

Bruce was still adapting to the idea of being married. Marriage was adjustment, his parents advised, and was subject to growing pains. Not that he didn't love Arlis. He was happy she was with him and they shared long hours of contentment and caring. In many respects, they complemented each other. But Bruce regretted that he'd seen so little of his fiancée the previous year. He had been alone at Stanford while Arlis remained in Bismarck, working with her religious friends, attending Bismarck Junior College and squirreling money away for their wedding.

During their months apart, the couple maintained regular contact, but it wasn't the same as being together. People can grow in any number of ways in the year after high school.

Bruce took the concept of traditional marriage to heart; his religious background wouldn't have permitted otherwise. Arlis, he was confident, felt the same as he did. Life would be good, Bruce believed, with children and a comfortable home. But first they had to survive Stanford and cope with the added demands that came with preparation for a career in medicine or dentistry. Bruce had a high hill to climb, and he knew it. But he was optimistic he'd make it, and Arlis would be there to help him.

Arlis herself was an Everyman's vision of Middle America. She was a studious young woman who'd also served as an enthusiastic cheerleader at Bismarck High for three years.

Rounding out her life, she was a devout, practicing Christian who swelled with a religious ardor that was almost a quaint artifact of a simpler, more compassionate past in the U.S.A. of 1974.

A friend to many and confidante of some, Arlis was a pretty girl; tiny, almost fragile in stature. She had a quick smile, an inquisitive, probing nature and that overriding passion for the lections of the Lord.

Always in motion, she passed some of her idle hours at Stanford with frequent, long walks around the campus—sometimes jogging to release her pent-up energy. She had shoulder-length, wavy blond hair, wore glasses and—being fallible—was possessed of an occasional streak of self-righteousness that could grate on the nerves of those less enthralled with the Holy Word than she was. And more than anything else, religion seemed to dominate Arlis' life.

Like her future husband, Arlis belonged to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Bismarck. She'd also joined Young Life, a student evangelical society whose members taught Sunday school, studied the Bible and strove to spread the Message to the masses. Included among those masses was the North Dakota drug culture.

And since Arlis didn't employ halfway measures when it came to her faith, she was an outgoing, insistent missionary of God.

Maybe it was there, in that consequential corner of her being, that she angered the devil.

There had been a boy in her life before Bruce, friends say, but they don't reveal much about him. Only that it was puppy love—hearts and flowers long consigned to a scrapbook by the time she and Bruce fell in love.

Their bond was their religion. Slowly at first, they were drawn together, and then the romance gathered steam. There was a period of dating and courtship; a year of long-distance engagement while Bruce scrambled through his freshman year at Stanford; and finally a picture-book wedding ceremony held at the Bismarck Reformed Church on August 17, 1974.

Then, after a week's honeymoon at a rustic cabin owned by Arlis' parents, it was back to business as the new Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Perry drove west and settled into their California home as September began.

Several weeks later, on October 1, one of the couple's major

concerns evaporated when Arlis was hired as a receptionist at a Palo Alto law firm, where she listed her part-time experience at the Bismarck dental office of Duncan Perry as a reference.

The supplemental income would ease the financial strain, and Arlis also now had a way to fill her days while Bruce attended classes. In her free time, she continued to explore the expansive campus, often stopping to pray at the large, decorative Stanford Memorial Church in the quadrangle. Bruce, when his schedule allowed, would accompany her there.

Whether or not Arlis was slightly bored is impossible to determine. But she did miss her Bismarck family and friends. She was young, not accustomed to being away from home, and Bruce's responsibilities—which included tutoring freshmen in math—occupied much of his time.

In one letter to North Dakota she lamented: "Friends are hard to find here. Many times I've been tempted to go knock on doors asking if anybody needs a friend. But I guess we just have to appreciate each other and trust the Lord for new friends, too."

Arlis also discovered pronounced lifestyle differences between the Dakotas and California. "Nobody [here] is very personal at all," she wrote. "They don't even say hello when you ride up the elevator with them."

Arlis was indeed a long way from home.

The Dakotas are ruggedly beautiful in their simplicity and remoteness. Ironically, while that inaccessibility has helped maintain a low crime rate, it has also contributed to the law-breaking that does exist. Young people everywhere tinker with drugs and liquor, but in North Dakota experimentation sometimes lingers on because the state, and others like it, are devoid of the diversions available in more populous areas with major metropolitan centers. In short, some people can become burdened by too many "wide open spaces" for too long a time.

On the other hand, the Dakotas have been spared the incredible amount of crime which bubbles in the big cities, where festering ghettos and teeming industrial districts provide a conducive backdrop for organized mayhem of every variation, major-league narcotics dealing, murder, rape and mugging.

This new and rapid-paced world was overwhelming to Arlis, who, like so many before her, suddenly found herself a small fish in a sizable pond. Bruce Perry empathized with his wife's adjustment phase, having endured it himself a year earlier.

Sensing her mood that Saturday night, he decided to join her on the walk to the mailbox.

At about 11:30 P.M., apparently in good spirits, the young couple strolled from the high-rise campus apartment building. Engrossed in conversation, they ambled across the school grounds and suddenly began to argue. The reported subject was minor, ludicrous, in fact, unless other matters were occupying one's mind at the time. A tire on their car was slowly losing air, and each thought the other should have filled it.

The bickering continued as they strode in the direction of the Memorial Church, which loomed before them in the distance. It was about 11:40 P.M.

Ostensibly miffed at Bruce, Arlis halted abruptly, faced him and emphatically stated that she wanted to be alone. She told her husband she intended to visit the church and would see him later at the apartment, which was about a half mile away.

Equally annoyed, Bruce turned from his wife and hastened back across the campus, oblivious to the sounds of revelry wafting around him as he walked. He didn't notice whether anyone was watching him.

At approximately 11:50 P.M., Arlis Perry pulled open the massive outer doors of Stanford Memorial and entered the foyer, where another set of portals offered access to the main body of the church.

Stanford Memorial is ornate and somewhat imposing. It is a decorous, breathtaking edifice, and as Arlis stepped inside she saw a veritable rainbow of scarlet and gold. There were rich velvet tapestries of red and purple; and montages, sculptures and candelabra of immaculately polished, glistening gold. Above it all was a magnificent golden dome.

In front of Arlis, and elevated several steps from the floor of the church, was the main altar. To either side were rounded alcoves which contained additional pews, all angled to face the altar. In rough outline form, the building resembled a thick, three-leafed clover, with the altar alcove in the center.

The church, as always, would be shuttered at midnight by a campus security guard. And since it was nearly twelve, only two other worshippers sat in a silent vigil of prayer. These young people, who occupied a pew to the right of the center aisle in the rear of the church, noticed Arlis in the subdued perimeter lighting as she softly padded down the main aisle,

eased her way into one of the front rows on the left and knelt to pray.

For her nocturnal visit, Arlis dispensed with formality. She wore a dark brown jacket, a blouse, blue jeans and a pair of beige wedge-heeled shoes.

Bruce Perry, having returned to Quillen Hall, was still fidgety about the altercation with his wife. He probably gave no thought to the futility of mailing letters late on a Saturday night—Arlis' stated reason for wanting to go out. With no Sunday mail collection at Stanford, the letters wouldn't be processed until Monday morning.

It is also unlikely he considered the possibility that Arlis might have wished to go out alone and used the letters as an excuse for doing so. And he probably didn't reflect on how their argument grew so out of proportion—resulting in Arlis' continuing to the church by herself. But there was no reason for Bruce Perry to have been analyzing such thoughts as he paced the apartment and worked out his irritation.

Back in the church, as Arlis meditated at midnight, the two worshippers behind her rose to leave. It was now closing time. Looking over their shoulders as they departed, they saw that Arlis hadn't moved from her pew. She was now alone in the cavernous house of worship.

Outside, a passerby spotted a young man who was about to enter the building. He was casually dressed, and had sandy-colored hair which was parted on the left. He was of medium build and wore a royal blue short-sleeved shirt. He appeared to be around twenty-three to twenty-five years of age. For some reason, the witness noted the man wasn't wearing a watch.

Security guard Steve Crawford was a few minutes behind schedule when, at 12:10 A.M., he stood in the rear of the church, looked for stragglers and saw none. There was no sign of Arlis or the sandy-haired stranger. Crawford then spoke aloud into the apparently empty, dimly lit church: "We're closing for the night. The church is being locked for the night now. If anyone is here, you'll have to leave."

He was answered by his echo rebounding off the muted statues and shadowed walls and rolling slowly back to him. Satisfied, Crawford shut the doors, locked them and walked away—leaving Arlis Perry alone with the devil. In the house of God.

Almost certainly, she was already in Satan's grasp when

Crawford voiced his notification. From wherever she was being hidden, she would have heard him calling out, listened to the great portals clanging shut and heard her heart pounding in the deathly stillness that followed.

But she probably never believed she wouldn't leave the church alive.

At about that moment, Bruce Perry was nervous. He disdained arguing over trivia. He was unhappy that his bride was alone somewhere on the campus after midnight, and he didn't take to cooling his heels waiting for her in the apartment.

So he hurriedly set off to rendezvous with Arlis. If the church was closed, their paths would cross on the way. But they didn't—and Bruce found himself puzzled and slightly concerned. It was now 12:15 A.M., and he stared at the front of the darkened church. The doors were locked. And where was Arlis? He walked around to a side entrance, which was also secured, and then circled to the rear of the building. But she wasn't there either. Bruce then decided to comb the campus; and left.

At about this time, a passerby thought he discerned some noise inside the church, in the vicinity of the choir loft. But he was uncertain, and kept walking.

Bruce's tour of the campus was futile. Growing increasingly anxious, he abandoned his search and returned to Quillen Hall. But Arlis wasn't there. He didn't think his wife had been *that* upset. And since she didn't know anyone at Stanford yet, she couldn't have just dropped in on some party. No, Bruce reasoned, she must be walking it off, calming herself down before coming home. And so Bruce Perry waited and worried.

At 2 A.M., on his next series of rounds, security guard Steve Crawford again checked the church. He tried all the doors and assured himself they were locked; he said later that he also walked through the building—as he was supposed to—and saw and heard nothing.

Across the campus Bruce Perry was in a quandary. At 3 A.M., he finally had enough and reached for the telephone. He dialed the Stanford security police and reported his wife missing, telling the dispatcher Arlis might have fallen asleep in the church and been locked in at midnight.

Responding to the call, Stanford officers went to the church. They would later say they examined its outer doors and found them locked. Unfortunately, that action was irrelevant. The

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