



Top Stories



Bush pledges support for Turkey after meeting with PM

Businessman Álvaro Colom wins Guatemalan Presidency



Álvaro Colom Caballeros has assumed the title of President-Elect

following the run off phase of a sometimes literally violent campaign season.

Featured story

Satanism: An interview with Church of Satan High Priest Peter Gilmore



Wikinews sat down with the High Priest of the Church of Satan, Peter Gilmore, who

has led Anton LaVey's congregation of Satanists since his passing.

Wikipedia Current Events

The Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong drops over 1,500 points, or 5%, three days after a previous sizable decline. The Hang Seng registers its largest daily loss

Wikipedia Current Events

since September 2001.

- The Netherlands suspends aid to Pakistan following the imposition of emergency rule.
- Several demonstrating lawyers protesting outside the Sindh High Court are arrested.
- Italian police arrest Sicilian mafia boss Salvatore Lo Piccolo, his son Sandro and two other mafiosi in Carini, Palermo.
- A fire at a retirement home in a village near Tula, Russia, kills at least 23 people.
- Members of the Writers Guild of America asks 12,000 of its members to join a Hollywood screenwriters strike over a dispute over residuals.

•Álvaro Colom is elected President of Guatemala in the 2007 general election.

•Google and the Open Handset Alliance announce the Android mobile phone platform, a joint effort in handheld computing.

•The number of people in southern Mexico displaced by the 2007 Tabasco flood nears a million, with 300,000 more still trapped in their homes, waiting to be rescued.

National Church of Scientology recognized in Spain

On 31 October 2007 the National Court in Madrid issued a decision recognizing that the National Church of Scientology of Spain should be entered in the Registry

of Religious Entities.

The administrative tribunal of Madrid's High Court ruled that a 2005 justice ministry decision to scrap the church from the register was "against the law." Responding to a petition filed by the church, the ruling said that no documents had been presented in court to demonstrate it was anything other than a religious entity.

"This recognition marks the end of an era in which Spanish Scientologists were forced to fight for their rights to religious freedom. It vindicates the Church of Scientology and is a new beginning for all Spanish Scientologists," said Ivan Arjona, spokesperson for the National Church of Scientology in Spain.

The National Court examined the Church's formative documents and aims and purposes to determine that the National Church of Scientology of Spain has the right to be registered as a religion under Spanish law.

Last April, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia had blocked Scientology from registering as a church in Moscow and ordered payment of 10,000 euros (13,000 dollars) in damages. In September, Belgium federal prosecutors announced that they had finished an investigation which would likely lead to charges against the Church of Scientology including blackmail, breaking privacy laws, unlawful practice of medicine, and formation of a

criminal organisation.

UK celebrates Bonfire night

Every year around November 5th, people in Great Britain and some parts of the Commonwealth celebrate Guy Fawkes night to commemorate the dissident from York and his Roman Catholic conspirators who failed to blow up the houses of Parliament on November 5, 1605. This so-called Gunpowder Plot is celebrated with firework displays and sparklers, bonfires and Guy Fawkes effigies.

Fire experts, always busy around this time of year, have called for the use of safe and legal firework displays and have urged citizens to attend organised public displays. Every year dozens of people sustain injuries due to careless handling of fireworks or fires. Notably, the city of York is not having a public firework display this year, as health and safety measures would raise costs excessively.

Critics say that bonfires and fireworks are not environmentally friendly. Piles of wood prepared beforehand are attractive nests for hibernating creatures like hedgehogs, who might burn in the bonfires. Some even suggest that Fawkes' failed attack is not something to commemorate at all.

Italy arrests reputed Mafia boss Lo Piccolo

was arrested at 9:30 a.m. CET (UTC+1) in a villa in Giardinello, between Cinisi and Terrasini on Sicily. He had been on the run since 1983. His son Sandro Lo Piccolo and two other top mafiosi, Gaspare Pulizzi and Andrea Adamo, were arrested as well. All four men were among Italy's top 30 most wanted Mafia suspects, according to police officials.

Police fired several warning shots in the air as they moved in against the mafiosi, who were all armed but apparently did not put a fight. Sandro Lo Piccolo, in tears, shouted "I love you dad!" several times as he was being handcuffed. The four were put into a police helicopter and flown towards Palermo's main police station.

The arrests came on the day that Palermo held a day of memory for all victims of the Mafia. Outside the Palermo police-station a crowd of dozens of curious onlookers began to gather as well as anti-Mafia activists.

Pax mafiosa

After the arrest of Corleonesi boss Provenzano, Salvatore Lo Piccolo and Matteo Messina Denaro were thought to be the new leaders of Cosa Nostra. Pizzini (small slips of paper used to communicate with other mafiosi to avoid phone conversations) found at Provenzano's hide-out indicated that Provenzano's joint deputies in Palermo were Salvatore Lo Piccolo and Antonio Rotolo.

A 'pax mafiosa' initially settled in after Provenzano's arrest because neither Lo Piccolo nor Messina Denaro appeared to have sufficient forces to seek control of Cosa Nostra, according to the Italian news agency ANSA.

According to Ansa, "police were concerned by a couple of top-level hits they feared might spark a full-blown war of succession. Police said Lo Piccolo had the upper hand because he had been Provenzano's right-hand man in Palermo and his greater experience won him the respect of the older generation of bosses as they pursued Provenzano's policy of keeping as low as possible while strengthening their power

network. These bosses had been reined in by Provenzano when he put an end to the Riina-driven war against the state that claimed the lives of Mafia crusaders Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino in 1992."

Strengthened links with the American Mafia

Lo Piccolo is believed to have strengthened the links between the Sicilian and American mafia. Sicilian families, who were forced to flee the island in the 1980s after losing the power struggle with the Corleonesi, were being brought back from the US to fill the void left by the arrests of Provenzano and many of his lieutenants.

In August, police arrested 14 people in an operation which uncovered close ties between local Cosa Nostra families and the US-based Mafia. According to investigators, the trans-Atlantic alliance uncovered in August involved drug trafficking and money laundering.

Reserve Bank of Australia considers interest rate rise

The Australian Prime Minister John Howard is bracing himself for the probable interest rate rise on Wednesday. Experts are saying that a rise is almost certain and that as many as three could occur within the next three months. Interest rates have never risen so close to a federal election (this year's election on November 24) but the Prime Minister says that some interest rate rise is unavoidable in a good economy.

"Now is not the time to replace an experienced government on economic issues with an inexperienced government," Howard warned today. Labor leader Kevin Rudd recalls the Prime Minister's promise at the

2004 election to keep interest rates low - labelled the 'big interest rate con' by the opposition leader.

Treasurer Peter Costello reaffirms the Coalition's policy on the workplace relations laws, saying that a reversal of the laws by a Labor government would push up inflation and interest rates.

Teachers union says Melbourne Cup may be educational opportunity

A leading Queensland union says that the Melbourne Cup due to be run tomorrow at 3:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Saving Time could be used as a valuable educational tool in the classroom.

The Queensland Teachers Union president Steve Ryan said that he supported staff making their own decisions on whether to watch the race but statistics principles could be taught in conjunction with showing the race.

Mr Ryan said that incorporating the Cup into the curriculum would make statistics 'real' to work with, rather than using textbook material. "It's about making subjects real and certainly that's a good example of how you can use a particular situation."

Many religious schools in Brisbane have chosen not to show the race due to gambling concerns.

Australia Votes 2007: Howard and Rudd take 'me-tooism' to new heights

John Howard visited a shopping centre on New South Wales' Central Coast today an hour before Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd canvassed the same spot.

Kevin Rudd certainly fell into the 'me-too' trap today after he visited

the Gosford shopping centre Erina Fair this morning one hour after the Prime Minister visited the same place. When Mr Howard entered the shopping centre he was confronted by a worker who asked him who he would 'turn gay' for. The same question was asked by Network Ten show host Rove McManus the previous night.

When Howard left the shopping centre a Labor van had pulled up in the carpark. After announcing two campaign promises, Rudd entered the shopping centre and answered some journalists' questions. The Opposition Leader then went on to say to the journalists 'zob zob zob', which is a 'vernacular for a man's genitalia', according to News.com.au.

Eleven-day "Taiwan Run for UN" torch relay comes to an end

The torch line of the 11-day "Taiwan Run For UN" relay returned to Ketagalan Boulevard in Taipei City yesterday. Taiwan's president, Chen Shui-bian, launched the event as publicity and support for Taiwan's application to join the United Nations as a new member under the name of "Taiwan", alongside China. In a statement prior to the relay, Chen declared that "Taiwan and China are different countries across the Taiwan Strait."

The relay covered more than 1,200 km through 25 cities and counties since its start on October 24. The organizer of the event, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) held night-time parties in the cities of Ilan, Hualien, Taitung, Pingtung, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Yunlin, Taichung, Miaoli, and Hsinchu as the relay progressed, and finally in Taipei City to welcome the torch relay team.

Shui-bian Chen, Annette Lu, Frank Hsieh (Taiwan's 2008 presidential candidate), and Cheng-chang Su wore "UN for Taiwan" T-Shirts to the Ketagalan Boulevard rally, lit a flame and led people in a formation of "VT" (abbreviation for Victory Taiwan) line.

The rally was met with protesters from the Red Shirts, which complain of corruption in the Chen government. In addition, the China Unification Promotion Party attempted several aggressive actions but ultimately carried out a peaceful protest. Protesters had demonstrated previously, on October 24 at the start of the relay.

Even though the premier of Taiwan, Frank Hsieh insisted on the the use of products made in Taiwan during the celebration party in Taipei, mini torch lights held by supporters were "Made in China" and featured the "MIC" mark, according to Eastern Television in Taiwan. These were eventually removed by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The use of Made in China products was criticized by DPP legislator Kuo-ching Lin after the television reports.

The party ended with a queue of "VT" lines and a historical collection of two million signatures of support. The issue of Taiwan's application to the UN may become a variable in the upcoming 2008 Taiwan Presidential Election.

Businessman Álvaro Colom wins Guatemalan Presidency

Álvaro Colom Caballeros of the National Unity of Hope has assumed the title of President-Elect following the run off phase of the 2007 Guatemalan General Election, the second election since the end of the country's violent 36

year civil war. Colom, runner up in the previous election, won the Presidency with 52.23% of the second round vote after having come in first with 28.23% in the first round, defeating runner up former General Otto Perez Molina of the Patriotic Party who claimed 23.51% in the first round and 47.24 in the second.

The election came on the heels of a sometimes literally violent campaign season; over 50 candidates and activists lost their lives in the time leading up to the elections, just a handful of the 5,000 to 6,000 murders estimated to take place in the country each year. The country, listed last among Latin American nations on the UN human development index, faces issues of growing textile jobs, corruption, and a tax base inadequate to maintain basic social services.

Satanism: An interview with Church of Satan High Priest Peter Gilmore

In the 1980's and the 1990's there were multiple allegations of sexual abuse of children or non-consenting adults in the context of Satanic rituals that has come to be known as The Satanic Panic. In the United States, the Kern County child abuse cases, McMartin preschool trial and the West Memphis 3 cases garnered worldwide media coverage. One case took place in Jordan, Minnesota, when children made allegations of manufacturing child pornography, ritualistic animal sacrifice, coprophagia, urophagia and infanticide, at which point the Federal Bureau of Investigation was alerted. Twenty-four adults were arrested and charged with acts of sexual abuse, child pornography and other crimes related to satanic ritual abuse; only three went to trial with two

acquittals and one conviction. Supreme Court Justice Scalia noted in a discussion of the case, "[t]here is no doubt that some sexual abuse took place in Jordan; but there is no reason to believe it was as widespread as charged," and cited the repeated, coercive techniques used by the investigators as damaging to the investigation.

One of the most visible Satanic organizations—though one that was never a suspect or charged in any of the Satanic Panic cases—is the Church of Satan, founded by Anton LaVey. Members of the Church, such as Peter Gilmore, Peggy Nadramia, Boyd Rice, Adam Parfrey, Diabolos Rex, and musician King Diamond, were active in media appearances to refute allegations of criminal activity and the FBI would later issue an official report debunking the criminal conspiracy theories of this time.

Gilmore feels Satanists are often misunderstood or misrepresented. LaVey's teachings are based on individualism, self-indulgence, and "eye for an eye" morality, with influence from Friedrich Nietzsche and Ayn Rand; while its rituals and magic draw heavily from occultists such as Aleister Crowley. They do not worship—nor believe in—the Devil or a Christian notion of Satan. The word "Satan" comes from the Hebrew word for "adversary" and originated from the Abrahamic faiths, being traditionally applied to an angel. Church of Satan adherents see themselves as truth-seekers, adversaries and skeptics of the religious world around them.

On a windy October day in Central Park, David Shankbone sat down with the High Priest of the Church, Peter Gilmore, who has led LaVey's

congregation of Satanists since his passing in 1997 (he became the High Priest in 2001). They discussed the beliefs of the Church, current events, LaVey's children and how Satanism applies to life and the world.

Theistic Satanism (devil worship)

David Shankbone: What is your relationship to Theistic Satanists?
Peter Gilmore: We don't think they are Satanists. They are devil worshippers, as far as I'm concerned.

DS: There is one in New York who does a lot of websites.

PG: Diane Vera? She's a kook.

DS: She's also on Wikipedia. I contacted her, but I never received a response.

PG: My real feeling is that anybody who believes in supernatural entities on some level is insane. Whether they believe in The Devil or God, they are abdicating reason. If they really believe they are in communication with some sort of interventionist deity...you know, somebody can be a deist and think that maybe there was some sort of force that launched everything and now has nothing to do with it. That's not anything you can prove. It's also not a matter of faith. It's a matter of making a choice between whether there was something or there wasn't. I think maybe that is the most rational decision. I think science makes it look otherwise, but I don't think somebody like that is mad. But anybody who believes in some kind of existence in deity or spirits or anything that intervenes in their life is not somebody I hold in any kind of esteem.

DS: Have you had much interaction with the theistic Satanists?

PG: No, I just have complete

contempt for them and have no contact with them at all. If anybody does contact me and say they are a theistic Satanist we tell them to take a hike. [Laughs].

DS: Do you know what they think of you?

PG: I have no idea and I could not care. I consider it lunatic and it's Christian. If you want to believe in an existing devil then you probably believe in an existing God and you're really just a Christian heretic, you're not a Satanist.

DS: What do you think is their motivation to worship a Christian Satan?

PG: I really wouldn't know, I'd have to talk to them, but my supposition would be that they want to feel they are naughty on some level. If they really believe in these existing deities, then they have to decide what the values of them are. The Gnostics used to think that Jehovah was bad; the demiurge, and that the real God was something more in touch with what they thought humanity should be like. So, maybe these people think that Jehovah is evil and Satan is good. I just think it's equally silly whether you believe in an Easter Bunny or Zeus...it's just...irrational.

Church of Satan 101

David Shankbone: How would you define the word Satan?

Peter Gilmore: Satan is a model or a mode of behavior. Satan in Hebrew means "adversary" or "opposer"; one who questions. Since we generally are skeptical atheists, we question all spirituality. We believe that carnality is all that exists and these scourges of dimensions are fictional. So we stand against eastern and western religions that promote fictions, according to our perspectives. So we are

adversaries. Satan to us is an exemplar. When we look at how he is portrayed by Mark Twain in Letters from the Earth, or Byron, or Milton's Paradise Lost, he ends up being an inspirational symbol to us. We say we would like to be more like that. We will not bow our heads; we will be independent. We will constantly question.

DS: What is the Church of Satan?

PG: Satanism begins with atheism. We begin with the universe and say, "It's indifferent. There's no God, there's no Devil. No one cares!" So you then have to make a decision that places yourself at the center of your own subjective universe, because of course we can't have any kind of objective contact with everything that exists. That's rather arrogant and delusional, people who try to put things that way. So by making yourself the primary value in your life, you're your own God. By being your own God, you are comfortable about making your own decisions about what to value. What's positive to you, is good. What harms you, is evil. You extend it to things that you cherish and the people that you cherish. So it's actually very easy to see that it's a self-centered philosophy.

But it also requires responsibility, since you are taking on yourself. The complete onus for your personal success or failure. You can't be praying to a God or blaming a devil, or anyone else, for that matter, for what happens to you. It's on your own head. That's a challenge for most people. Most people tend to really feel that they want some kind of external support, that they are outward looking and might want some sort of supernatural parental figure, or even some sort of existing governmental authority, existing in their life.

DS: Why do you think people are like that?

PG: I think there are actually two kinds of people. There are the kind of people who need that, and the kind that don't. The kind that don't are the smaller percentage of our species. It's as simple as that.

DS: Why do you think there are those who need to have a God or supernatural parental figure?

PG: I think it's natural to them. I don't think it is something developmental, but that it's just part of their own nature. That they feel a need for something above them, whether it be human or supernatural. And they can't get away from that.

DS: In a lot of religious history and doctrine was developed by people who were oppressed as a way to explain their lot, and that their oppressors were going to "get theirs in the end." That's where Karl Marx was saying religion is the opiate of the masses, because it creates complacency with oppression now because in some other ethereal dimension equality will be achieved.

"We Satanists look at the universe in this wonderful context of that's what we are part of and that's really exciting. We don't need to single out any special part of it unless you find a place you really enjoy. The place you were born, perhaps, or the place you grew up."

PG: Well, see the idea of the "God" comes from the oppressors, and it's a way of controlling folks, by saying, "I have communication with this authority figure but you can't. I'm special." That's where priesthoods come in, but also governmental authorities and parties, let's say the Communist Party or the Nazi Party at one point. They have the key to the

way the universe should exist, and everyone needs to be subservient to them and take what they say as holy writ whether they are actually claiming it is divine or not. That's why so many of those fascist and totalitarian systems function like religions, because they put the leaders and whatever they wrote as some kind of scriptural authority that is not supposed to be debated or examined, but simply swallowed whole.

Now some people might come up with a religious belief that may counter an existing system that will help them feel better about their underdog status, and then sometimes that develops into a major religion and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it is crushed and snuffed out. That's natural to our species, that people have to find a way for dealing with their existence.

The Satanist, we look at our existence and say, "We're not going to look for something outside of ourselves. We're going to be proactive. We'll go out there and try to make a change, and we'll deal pragmatically with whatever life situations we have. So the Satanist, regardless of where he is living and under what kind of conditions, he is going to try to find a way to make his life as good as it can be based upon his own abilities and the world around him. We don't expect everybody in Satanism to be a genius, we expect people to take whatever they have by nature, and do the best with it. So in that sense, we challenge people who are our members; the only idealism we have is directed at ourselves. We try to look at ourselves and try to realize what our potential possibly could be, what talents do we have. And then we try to take those, through whatever works is needed, to take those as far as we can.

DS: What would be their motivation for doing something for society and not for themselves?

PG: Oh, absolutely! It's up for you to choose your own preferences. By being self-centered you can select your own values.

DS: Like, I get value out of what I am doing for Wikimedia, even though it's for free, there is still a value...

PG: Absolutely! What you're doing, David, is a Satanic example. The whole point of Satanism is again to choose your values, and if you become somebody that really feels you want to work for hospitals for free—a number of our members work for animal organizations because we generally cherish animals and think they are far less polluted than people with values that are anti- their nature. So, Satanists are often very giving. Because our values come from the self, people who try to tell themselves that they must be selfless, they can't really understand why you would be giving if you're a selfish person. But I think that's more a revelation of their OWN natures, meaning if they didn't have some external force making them being nice to people, they would be bastards! We Satanists, because we are relaxed, we love our lives, we love people who enrich our lives and things that are around us that we enjoy, we can be really giving. Gods can be beneficent! So when you are your own God, you can be happy to give!

DS: How would a Satanist define evil?

PG: Evil is whatever is harmful to you and the things you most cherish. It's that simple.

DS: Some people have a compulsion to rape, and it harms

them to not act upon it. If it was harmful for somebody to not go out and rape somebody, how would a Satanist address that situation?

PG: We then have to go into the realm of society, and we believe that as animals that are social, we have a social contract. When we deal with other people, our approach is that we want to have maximum freedom, and maximum responsibility without infringing on people as much as possible. So we would set up laws so we really don't have to spend all of our time defending our territory, being in some kind of castle keep situation. So anyone who is going to go out and assault undeserving people, is someone we would deem a criminal and have them locked up or dealt with in whatever way seems most appropriate, whether it's therapy, whether it's drugs, or if they can't control themselves, execution.

DS: Capital punishment is not antithetical to Satanism.

PG: Not necessarily, but essentially we would rather shrink from the government having the power to take you and murder you, because we don't have a lot of confidence in people being rational, or being truthful, and we have seen so often—especially with DNA testing—that a lot of people have been jailed and accused of murder and they were wrong. That's wrongful. So it's not this broad, "We accept capital punishment and it's fine!"

DS: "Slaughter them all!" [Laughs]

PG: Right! But there are certain situations where it would be appropriate. Say, when Colin Ferguson shot all those people. There should be absolutely no time wasted on that.

DS: But should it be the

government doing it?

PG: I think the government can have the ability but under control. There needs to be checks and balances. That whole idea in the United States that has come from so many other past forms of government is something we feel is necessary. We don't want any form of megalomaniacal government with absolute power that can do anything willy-nilly to its citizens. Satanists are generally Libertarians. They may choose their specific political alliances because it might better whatever they are trying to do in their lives, but essentially most of us are fairly libertarian people. We would like to have government as minimal as possible.

DS: Do you have a 10 Commandments?

PG: We have the 9 Satanic Statements, but we don't have commandments that are laws that are like sins. We have eleven sins that are kind of behaviors that we don't want to be doing. For us, we try to create a situation where we have some social interaction with people that can be beneficial for ourselves. But we don't set up these kinds of laws that somebody is going to punish you for. So with Satanism they are things where you kick yourself and say, "Why did I do something stupid? I shouldn't do that next time." It's better for you. It doesn't matter about anybody else on that level: you've got to not be an ass.

DS: Are there certain sites or places that are important to the Church of Satan?

PG: No, we don't really have any holy ground or anything like that. For the Satanist, if there is any kind of architecture you like, or a place you like to visit—some people like places with devil themes or where there is historical

interest. But there is nothing particularly Satanic about any location.

DS: No place with a natural significance?

PG: Well, it's the universe. We look at it like Carl Sagan and we are star stuff, we are made of the stuff of exploding stars. We Satanists look at the universe in this wonderful context of that's what we are part of and that's really exciting. We don't need to single out any special part of it unless you find a place you really enjoy. The place you were born, perhaps, or the place you grew up. Central Park. Some people are interested in a historical figure and say the place where a castle was built or a particular battle was fought, or some individual took a last stand.

DS: If someone wanted to explore your beliefs, what should they read?

PG: The Satanic Bible is the place to start, because that is the foundational literature for the organization. All of Anton LaVey's books are worth reading. The Satanic Witch is his compendium of Lesser Magic, which is our concept for how you manipulate people on a day-to-day basis to get them to do things in your favor. It's geared toward women because we think it's fine for women to use their sexuality to get what they want. It's part of nature, so go ahead! Dress for success! But it works for guys, too. Whatever you have to charm people. Glamor is worthwhile, so The Satanic Witch is useful for that. He's got collections of essays, too, and The Satanic Ritual is more for a formal setting, where different cultures were examined to see what kind of diabolical imagery was in them. Rituals can be fun to do in a large group setting; but they're not anything

you have to do. Here's a Russian one, here's a French one; here's a German one. Here's a Black Mass—what would that be like? In Satanism a Black Mass is not something we are running out and eager to do because as far as we're concerned, Christianity is a dead horse, unless in your life you feel there has been this really negative Christian influence that you need to purge, it's just kind of pointless.

And my book, The Satanic Scriptures, is worth reading, because it ties up where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. So if you only picked two, I would say read The Satanic Bible and The Satanic Scriptures, because then you'll have the book ends of the over forty year span of the Church of Satan.

On current events and politics

DS: I'd like to give you some political situations and ask how a Satanist would handle them.

PG: Okay, but I want to preface that and say we don't really determine people's political backgrounds. We feel that each Satanist who is a member of the church must make those decisions based upon their own personal values, so there can be a wide range of answers depending upon the people you talk to, whether it be abortion, governmental decisions of go to war...

DS: You can just speak for yourself, then. If you were President—

PG: —[Laughs]—

DS: —How would you handle the Israeli-Palestinian issue?

PG: I don't have a solution for that. If I did, I would be out there telling people about it, because I don't really see myself as a politician or people's interactions

with each other. I can see that there are issues on both sides of the fence and that when people are fighting over a territory, generally speaking the folks who have the power win and then they write the histories and the world moves on. But we have a situation here where there are bigger players behind the smaller nations, and it keeps this conflict enduring. So they will either have to have compromise and discussion, or one side will have to destroy the other side and "win" and then move on, which is usually the way the world works.

DS: Where do they violate Satanic principles in that conflict?

PG: Each have their own goals. I would say killing people who are just innocent folks, that's against Satanic philosophy. Terrorism, specifically, is against Satanism because we feel that justice is important, and that is giving people what they deserve. Blowing up somebody who is just wandering around is not a just approach. That's something against the social contract, and we would oppose people engaging in terrorism.

DS: What about Same-sex marriage?

PG: Absolutely support it.

DS: Abortion?

PG: I think people should practice birth control rather than use abortion as an easy way out. Again, the concept of being responsible for yourself and not to willy-nilly pregnant unless you are really interested in carrying forth the child. Since we have overpopulation generally speaking, I think abortion is something fine to be used, but I think it should not be used as a means of cleaning up after people's irresponsible sexual activity.

DS: Why do you not consider it just another operation? Some people run or exercise not realizing their limitations and pull a muscle or need an operation for that.

PG: I would look at it as if I was the fetus, I wouldn't want to be snuffed out. [Laughs]

DS: So is the fetus a sentient being?

PG: Not necessarily, it's just a piece of tissue and most human life doesn't really have that much value on a grand scale. In the universe, individual life is practically meaningless, it's sort of like droplets in a wave that crashes against a rock. Who cares about the droplets? The way life works is it is making large amounts of species of whatever it is, and it keeps moving biologically. I would just think that if it was myself as the fetus, I have a potential to become the person that I am. I wouldn't want to be snuffed out.

DS: When do you think life begins?

PG: Life is there, whether it is conscious and valuable is debatable.

DS: You mean just on a cellular level it is functioning?

PG: Yeah, it is life. Sperms and eggs are alive, they're organic, you can't say that is not life. But what I think you're looking for is the idea that Christians wants to say from conception. If people want to have abortions it really doesn't bother me, I just think they really should be more responsible. It just makes more sense. Contraception is easy!

DS: A lot of people don't like contraception.

PG: And a lot of people are morons and irresponsible, so—

DS: But then doesn't responsibility

come down to defining it for yourself in Satanism? Your statements seem to come down to a baseline level of what is responsibility? What is innocence? Whereas you were saying earlier that a lot of these things are self-referentially defined.

PG: Right, right. We allow people to make that definition for themselves, absolutely. But for me personally, you try to deal with other people around you so that you don't make their lives miserable unless there is some real overriding reason that would have to happen.

DS: Who are you supporting for President?

PG: Nobody, yet! [Laughs]. Right now, there is not really one candidate that speaks to me more than others. I generally feel that so many candidates are lacking in so many ways, that it really IS the lesser of multiple evils that you are picking. I like the old Lovecraftian t-shirt: "Cthulu for President! Why choose the lesser of two evils?" [Laughs]

DS: If you had a choice between Giuliani and Clinton?

PG: I would probably go with Hillary Clinton. Giuliani was acting like such a fascist before 9/11. He was trying to use his Catholicism to control art that was existing in this city. It was unbelievable! His popularity was really down. It wasn't until 9/11 that he stepped up and did things that were required to be a leader and make people feel more comfortable that his ratings shot back up, but he was really not somebody who was well regarded back then.

DS: That's talked about now more than it used to be.

PG: It should be now that he is running for President. People need to mention that!

DS: It's a question of how much it will penetrate the American consciousness that has mythologized him.

PG: That's the thing: he really was so mythologized at that point. We build heroes, and so many people really do deal with idealistic portrayals and not realistic ones. We have to examine these things all the time and be careful.

Religious and Satanic symbols

DS: Could you explain your logo?

PG: The Sigil of Baphomet. Heavy metal people say "Bapho-MAY!" Because they want to take it from the French Templars, where it originally came from the trials of them. But we explain it as there is a goat face in the center of a five-pointed star. The goat face represents carnality. In ancient Egypt goats were considered representations as god symbols of lust, and we think lust is an important factor of biology that keeps humanity going so we value that. The five-pointed star really comes from the Pythagoreans. That is the one figure in which every element is within the golden mean of each other. It's this wonderful mathematical symbol of perfection, organic perfection specifically. Since we are organic life and enjoy the idea of perfecting ourselves, that star is right for us in there and it perfectly fits the goat head inside. Now around it are two circles, one at the tip of the points of the star and one outside. In that are Hebrew characters starting at the bottom and going counter-clockwise spelling Leviathan. In Hebrew mythology, Leviathan was the great dragon of the abyss, this powerful Earth figure that even Yahweh was afraid of. So all these things taken together creates a symbol that Anton LeVay identified with Satanism specifically. When he started the Church of Satan,

usually upside down crosses were considered Satanic, and he saw that these different elements and felt this was a positive symbol you could tie to the Satanism he was creating.

DS: So much of the symbology references a lot of myths and superstitions, yet you're antithetical to that. How do you explain how those two notions comport?

PG: We have this approach that we take the dualities and find a third side to it, a way of integrating. You might find that even if Marxist theory, a way of finding opposites and coming with a new synthesis of the different thesis and antithesis. So this ritual is natural to people, because humans have a conceptual consciousness. Symbols let us hold much more information in conscious focus, more so than just keeping them separately. So symbols are something we function with. It's part of our nature. So using ritual activities that are symbolic and have deep meaning to us is common to our species if you look at our history from cave paintings up to every civilization currently existing.

DS: It's almost difficult to come up with a symbol that doesn't reference a superstition in some way.

PG: Absolutely! So we feel that since they are often used to support a fiction, why not let it be used to explore the inner part of our nature. For us, when we do ritual—which we call greater magic—we call it an intellectual decompression chamber. It's a place where we release our emotions, any emotions that are hindering us, and we use the symbolism we find most stimulating. We leave it in the ritual chamber, that you enjoy the

self-transformational psychodrama in the ritual where you release any emotions that are hindering yourself and then you go outside and basically pursue your life, being rational and doing what you need to do to make your life as rich as it can be.

The Iraq War: A Satanic perspective

DS: Do you think our pursuing the War in Iraq is an example of killing innocent people?

PG: Oh, of course innocent people are being killed in almost any war. It doesn't matter if it is just Iraq, because there are civilian populations who are caught between these people with agendas, and those civilians just want to live their lives.

DS: Who are the innocents?

PG: Not being involved in the particular conflict. If you are just living your life and doing what you need to do to survive, have a job, bringing in food for your family; that's being an innocent person.

DS: How has the war in Iraq affected your worldview?

PG: It hasn't changed it in the least. I see it as human behavior as usual. History is full of aggressors. Iraq to me is an interesting place where there was a totalitarian holding in check religious factions, and now that cap has been removed, the religious factions want to destroy each other. I think it's a lesson for most people to say look at how these religions were important to people who are always looking above themselves to be regulated, and they found an Earthly regulator in Saddam Hussein, and now that that regulator who actually existed is gone, they are each looking to their own interpretations of their own deities and wanting to slaughter each

other. It just shows how poisonous fundamentalist fanaticism can be, which to me is the most dangerous thing in all of human society.

DS: That is what you consider the greatest threat to humanity?

PG: Yes, any fundamentalist fanaticism is a vast threat. I'm looking for humanity to have a secular, pluralistic culture. People should be able to follow whatever fantasies or religions they want, as long as they don't impose them on other people and force other people into doing things based upon whatever kind of holy writ they have. So the biggest threat to that are these fundamentalist who want to force people into their belief systems. They want to destroy people who have sexual activity they don't think is appropriate according to their texts. It will be interesting to see in the future if people will wake up to this threat and decide to somehow corral that kind of behavior, defang people like that who are basically on a jihad, whether they be Christians or Muslims or any other religion, because we've seen in the past the Catholics were torturing people to death in the Inquisition, then the Reformation happened and different denominations and sects were killing each other. Heretics are being slaughtered. So this is not something just one religion is guilty of.

On New York City

DS: How do you feel about Hell's Kitchen, where you live, being called Clinton?

PG: I despise that. It should stick to what it really is, and it's Hell's Kitchen.

DS: When you see how New York is changing around you—I've lived here for close to seven years, and even when I moved here it was

very different.

PG: I like the sleaze, I like the history, I like to see New York being this amazing range of the highest and the lowest and I don't think New York should be cleaned up and Disneyfied.

DS: But it is.

PG: It's getting there. I did a Black Mass for the BBC in the old Hellfire Club, and that's gone and Apple is putting up a store. [Laughs] Everybody just feels safe walking around all the time now. There's still some parts of Chinatown that are still pretty rough.

DS: Where do you think the culture is going to go? Is the sanitized version here to stay?

PG: No, because if you look at anything that at one point is sleazy, at one it was new and spiffy and wonderful. So, at this point, New York is Manhattanland, it's for tourists and we've made this almost Las Vegas simulacrum of the whole thing. But it will change. As soon as the money isn't worth pumping into it to keep up the façade, all of the roughness around the edges will creep back in. It's still here, it just hides in the daytime. There's still all kinds of weird crime going on in the city when you watch the news.

DS: You see that in all the old Rust Belt cities. Reading, Pennsylvania was one of the most dangerous cities I've ever walked around in, and I thought, "This is what 1982 New York must have felt like."

PG: Yeah, I moved down to New York in 1980—that was pretty rough! [Laughs]

DS: A friend of mine once said if you took someone from 1982 New York and you transplanted them into 2007 New York, the first thing they would say is, "Where did all these people come from?!" That

the streets just used to be barren back then.

PG: I like that, too. Where I live my view of the sunset is gone because two new luxury towers have gone up. They're building two additional ones. I don't know who these people are or where they get all their money because they are charging \$6,000 a month for these apartments, and I'm thinking who is spending all this money and wandering around the city like it's a pedestrian mall? That could be in any kind of suburbia.

Marilyn Manson

DS: Marilyn Manson is a member?

PG: Yes, he's a member who has been given an honorary priesthood. When asked about what Satanism is he can be very articulate in explaining it. But his own music is his own art. His stage shows are his own, and they don't really exemplify Satanism in particular.

DS: It's more of a character.

PG: Yeah, he's created a character. We say people forget about past orthodoxies, something that was culturally popular or permeating at one point or another, people forget about that. What Brian Warner did was he looked at David Bowie and Alice Cooper and re-created and repackaged them, and made a fortune.

DS: Is he an active member?

PG: He's an honorary priest, but he does his own thing. If asked about our philosophies he can explain it. The interesting thing is when his first album came out the two of us met on a panel that we were doing about racism in music that was being sponsored by Seconds Magazine. Nobody knew who Brian Warner was at that point, and he came up to me and gave me a CD and he was all in

costume. But he said I heard about you and I wanted to meet you, so we moved aside and talked for a little while and I learned he really did understand Satanism, so I told Anton LaVey that this guy was pretty smart and this gimmick is going to do well; it's clever. He's using this serial killer in Hollywood, and he's a smart guy and creating his own persona that is probably going to be successful. It took off immediately, and when Marilyn Manson was out on tour in California he asked if he could meet Anton LaVey and he was impressed. He is a really sweet and sincere guy, which is nothing to do with what all of the world sees in just his act and his art.

On the church after Anton LaVey

DS: Does the Church of Satan have relationships with other churches?

PG: Not at all. We're not ecumenical.

DS: It would seem there are pagans or humanist religions that follow your general philosophy.

PG: I wouldn't say that. Most pagan religions are theistic on one level or another. They generally think their deities exist in some part. We don't believe Satan exists as a deity. I think there are some pagans who may look at their Gods and Goddesses as archetypes only, and in that sense that would be closer to our position because you can look at the symbol of Satan as an archetype. But, we generally don't feel we have any relation to any kind of religious organization.

DS: What is the membership numbers for the Church of Satan?

"I'm looking for humanity to have a secular, pluralistic culture. People should be able to follow whatever fantasies or religions

they want, as long as they don't impose them on other people and force other people into doing things based upon whatever kind of holy writ they have."

PG: We never give out numbers. The reason for that our founder came up with and I agree with him and keep to his policies. If people think there are too few of us, they tend to not want to take us seriously. If they think there are too many of us, they think we're a threat. There was even a point back during the Satanic Panic in the late 1980's and early 1990's when there was governmental legislation proposed to ban Satanism because they thought there were all these metal heads out there sacrificing babies, doing drugs and making child pornography. Of course, now we know, it was mostly people who were borderline Christian evangelists pretending, but then accusing their own family members and getting them put in jail, or acting as therapists and most of those people have been sued and properly censured since then.

DS: Has the church thrived after LaVey's passing?

PG: It has. Partially because we are taking advantage of technology with the Internet and global media; our website gets hundreds of thousands of hits a day and literature keeps getting translated into many different languages the world over. My own book, *The Satanic Scriptures*, the hardcover came out in April and the paperback is coming out this month. I've already got five different languages coming out and I'm negotiating four others. We are thriving, we have many members.

DS: What is your book about?

PG: It's a collection of my essays

I've written over the past twenty years talking about Satanic philosophy, how it's applied. I talk about music since I am by training a composer; I went to NYU. I have a Bachelor's and Master's in music composition, mostly focusing on orchestral work. I exception to that book is I wanted to dispel the stereotype that Satanism is associated with metal and the cookie monster voice....that's Satanism. No.

DS: It's not all Gene Loves Jezebel sounding.

PG: No. Satanic music is specific to each person. So to me, Satanic music is the symphony, which to me is the highest art form. So Beethoven, Mahler, Bruckner, Shostakovich. To me that's some of the most Satanic music ever written because the architecture is there, the expressivity is there; the reflection on the human condition is all present and it's not idealistic, it's mostly questioning or showing what a human is capable of doing. And I love architecture. Cathedrals are wonderful. I have no hatred of those because they are put to religious use. They have symbols on them, but I know those are just symbols. I love skyscrapers too.

Anton LaVey's children and estate

DS: Do Dr. LaVey's children have anything to do with the church at all?

PG: His son Xerxes is a member because he asked to be. We generally don't let people under eighteen join. We used to let people whose parents allowed them to join, but because people are so litigious we changed that. We just don't want to take the chance that some parents say, "Yes, it's okay if my kid joins the Church of Satan," and then decides that's the reason they

can't control their kid. We're just not willing to go there. But if our members have children who are interested, they can participate and become members, but that's the only way you can if you're not legally an adult. So Xerxes became a member because his mother was a High Priestess at one point.

DS: But not Zeena?

PG: No, she left years ago. She's not very bright and is very jealous. She and her paramour, Nikolas Shreck, got married I think. They wanted to take the Church of Satan over at one point and wanted Anton LaVey to retire, but he was a feisty guy and said hell no. So they quit in high dudgeon and ran off to Europe and said, "America is corrupt and horrible and we're going to Fortress Europa!" They played with being Nazi occultists, which is kind of funny because both of them have Jewish blood. They're just like clowns. They then joined the Temple of Set, which was an organization that split off from the Church of Satan years ago, in 1975, when Michael Aquino—

DS: Based on the Egyptian god?...

PG: Yeah, and they're theists. They believe that Set exists and that their priests can commune with him and that their founder is the voice of Set. So, it's like, good that they left for housecleaning. But Xena went and joined them and became a High Priestess because Michael Aquino has this Anton LaVey obsession, which is obvious since he wrote a book about him that's about a thousand pages, so he made her the High Priestess of their organization. Then she left to form an even more orthodox Setian group called "The Storm", which to us is just funny. Such theatrics. His oldest daughter Karla isn't a very bright girl. She kind of hung around the

background and once in awhile she would come out to speak in public and support her father. When Xerxes was born she kind of got miffed because she wasn't the center of attention. Karla is a jealous type. She withdrew from him, which hurt him a lot.

DS: How did the legal wrangling surrounding his estate pan out?

PG: They finally settled. What ended up happening is he had written a will. Anton LaVey's idea was that if he acknowledged he is going to die, then he'd be giving into death, so he didn't want to go to an attorney and make out a will. He was very feisty and had his own perspective on that. So he finally wrote a will out and signed it, but it wasn't notarized and there were no witnesses. So when it came to court they said it wasn't good enough. They basically split everything up between the three children, so Karla and Zeena and Xerxes all got part of the estate.

DS: Who received the copyright to The Satanic Bible?

PG: The estate. The money that comes in from that gets split up and goes to the three kids. Also there is a small percentage that goes to LaVey's companion, Diane Hegarty; she says LaVey. But they were never married and had a falling out in the early 1980's. She went off and left Satanism and sued him for palimony and he had to sell his house because of all of that, and he sold it to an old friend and member. Diane got a pile of money and she got a tiny percentage of the books that had been written up to that point. Every once in awhile she comes creeping in off the periphery to say, "Ah! I'm Diane LaVey!" and it's like, you were Diane Hegarty and you were kind of involved in it, but before the Satanic Panic happened you left and had nothing

to do with it. She was never someone who wrote or said anything of interest. She was just the pretty blonde wife of Anton LaVey. She was a nice figurehead, but wasn't of much use.

Today in History

1860 – Abraham Lincoln became the first Republican Party candidate to win the U.S. presidential election.

1935 – Before the Institute of Radio Engineers in New York, American electrical engineer and inventor Edwin Howard Armstrong presented his study on using frequency modulation for radio broadcasting.

1962 – The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 1761, condemning South Africa's apartheid policies.

1975 – Demonstrators in Morocco began the Green March to Spanish Sahara, calling for the "return of the Moroccan Sahara."

1999 – Although opinion polls had clearly suggested that the majority of the electorate favoured republicanism, the Australian republic referendum was defeated, keeping the British monarch as the country's head of state.

November 06 is Election Day in various regions of the United States (2007); Constitution Day in the Dominican Republic (1844) and Tajikistan (1994); Gustavus Adolphus Day in Sweden.

Quote of the Day

I don't think that combat has ever been written about truthfully; it has always been described in terms of bravery and cowardice. I won't even accept these words as terms of human reference any more. And anyway, hell, they don't even apply to what, in actual fact, modern warfare has become.

~ James Jones

Word of the Day

sentience; n

1. The state or quality of being sentient; possessing consciousness, perception, and thought.

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