



Dear Friends,

The really great news is the flood of outstanding books and papers that enriches our understanding of false memories and the relationship between memory and emotion. The really bad news is that many people have not read these materials. The good news is that FMSF readers can do something about one small area of ignorance.

Following is a sample of some of the new books and not-so-new books:

*Mistakes Were Made (but not by me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts* by Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson (p. 3) explains, in a most entertaining way, how the theory of cognitive dissonance applies to the recovered memory phenomenon (and other areas).

*Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case* by Carol Pogash (p. 5) is a page-turning story that describes a family destroyed by their uncritical acceptance of beliefs in satanic ritual abuse and recovered memories. It is an amazing case study.

Both *The Fate of Early Memories* by Mark Howe, Ph.D. and *Myths of Childhood* by Joel Paris, M.D. conclude that there is no scientific evidence to support the notion that early traumatic experiences will necessarily have a powerful influence over adult lives. (p. 5, 6) These books provide a comprehensive review of the research with children.

A few of the recent papers mentioned in this issue:

Simona Ghetti, Ph.D. and colleagues (p. 7) explored the experience of subjective forgetting to learn what it could reveal about memory for child trauma. Among other things, they found that if child sexual abuse “was forgotten in childhood, it was also likely to be recovered in childhood, rather than later on in adulthood.” They “found no evidence of adult recovery of [child sexual abuse] memories.”

The results of a paper by Depue and colleagues (p. 6) and another by Payne and Corrigan (p. 8) seem to be contradictory. The Payne paper found that strong emotion makes it very difficult to intentionally forget a memory. The Depue paper, on the other hand, seems to say that it is possible to intentionally forget an emotional memory. Who is

right? How does it affect our understanding of claims of repressed memories? On page 2 is an excerpt from an article by Ost and Wade that may help put the studies in perspective.

So much exciting research about memory in the past two decades! Yet, sadly, some people in influential positions appear not to have read anything about memory since 1988. We admit that we were shocked (before a happy ending) when a reader recently called our attention to the Counseling and Psychological Services section on the Carnegie Mellon web site. (<http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/counseling/concerns/child.html>)

“If you remember being sexually violated as a child, trust your memories, even if what you’re remembering seems too awful to be true. Children simply do not make these things up.”

“Whether or not you have specific memories, if you suspect that you were sexually abused, then you probably were.”

The web page encouraged vulnerable students to consider the list of symptoms from *The Courage to Heal* by Bass and Davis (1988).

“There are many ways that people experience the harm that results from having been sexually abused. Consider the following questions (Bass and Davis, 1988)”

As long ago as 1994, the American Psychological Association and American Psychiatric Association issued statements warning that a list of symptoms was not a reliable way to tell if someone had been abused. Most such lists are so vague that any normal person will have experienced some of them at some time.

Carnegie Mellon is not the only university whose

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Counseling Service is in a time warp. The University of Illinois offers similar advice at: <http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/brochures/sexualAbuse.htm>. This is a dreadful state of events.

The good news is that officials at Carnegie Mellon are removing the misinformation—saying that the material was posted without the appropriate vetting.

How many other university counseling service sites have misleading information?

It's time to get to work. If each newsletter reader checks the counseling service website of the university that he or she attended and/or the university or universities close to where you now reside, we should be able to get ample information. In the next newsletter issue, we can print a list of those colleges or universities that seem to be responsible and those that are irresponsible. That should give us some idea as to whether this is a selective or a widespread problem in university counseling services. Once we have that information, we can make a systematic effort to correct those counseling services that need to be brought into the 21st Century.

Please mail or email the information you get to:

- [pamfreyd@earthlink.net](mailto:pamfreyd@earthlink.net).
- Please put FMSF in the header so your message is not trapped in a spam filter.
- Please include the name of the university counseling service you check and also the web page address if you find misinformation.

One of the new tools that we will have at our disposal to help educate those who need it is a newly published collection of family stories from the British False Memory Society. (p. 3) The slim book was developed for just this purpose.

As always, we thank you for your wonderful enduring support. We thank you for your very prompt response to our annual appeal. Only one percent of the FMSF budget is used for raising the funds that are needed to operate and that is because of your help.

We look forward to learning the results of your investigations into the offerings of the counseling services of universities with which you are familiar.

**Pamela**



### Can We Forget Bad Memories?

Comments by Ost, J. & Wade, K. (2007) on Depue, B.E., Curran, T., Banich, M.T. (2007). Prefrontal regions orchestrate suppression of emotional memories via a two-phase process. *Science* 317, 215-219. Excerpt from *British False Memory Society Newsletter*, 15(2). 4-8. Full article can be found at: [http://www.bfms.org.uk/Text\\_Assets/September%202007%20Newsletter.pdf](http://www.bfms.org.uk/Text_Assets/September%202007%20Newsletter.pdf)

“So does this research tell us how to forget bad memories? The stark answer, despite newspaper claims to the contrary, is no. We’ve all had the experience of cringing, and trying to distract ourselves, when a memory for an embarrassing event suddenly comes to mind. Most of us try, often with limited degrees of success, not to think about events that upset us. This is called suppression—and psychological research shows that we are not very good at it. This is mainly because the rule (“I must try not to think about X”) contains the thing one is trying to forget. Thus, most of us cannot help but picture a white bear, when explicitly instructed not to...

“Likewise, survivors of trauma generally find it difficult not to think about the events they have witnessed. Nothing in the Depue et al. experiments suggests that people can be trained to do this more effectively... If it could be shown that people could learn to effectively ‘suppress’ traumatic memories—would this offer hope for PTSD sufferers? Again—contrary to the newspaper article—the answer is no. Most treatments for PTSD do not involve helping survivors to ‘forget’ their experiences. Rather they aim to help sufferers change the way they react to, and cope with, their traumatic experiences (although PTSD itself is highly controversial; see Rosen, 2004, for excellent discussions).

“More worrying, however, is the claim made in the opening lines of the article by Depue et al. (2007). They state that whilst there is evidence that people actively try to suppress memories, ‘others claim that memory repression or suppression is a clinical myth in search of scientific support’ (p. 215). This sleight of hand, in which suppression and repression are conflated, is problematic—the two terms are not interchangeable. Suppression... refers to cases where people actively try not to think about something, usually with very limited degrees of success (Anderson & Green, 2001; Depue et al., 2007). Repression, on the other hand, is when an individual is allegedly unable to remember something because the mind has unconsciously blocked out any memory of the event. Years of psychological research have indicated that this is indeed a ‘clinical myth’

“Yet the work of Anderson and colleagues, and Depue and colleagues, has somehow been seized on as providing evidence that it exists. This is probably because important qualifications—such as the distinction between suppression and repression—are of little interest to non-psychologists and headline writers. The accurate reporting of scientific findings is critical if we are to prevent further confusion in an area already plagued with misunderstanding and therapeutic folklore. Unfortunately, media reports of the Anderson and Depue work have provided the “take home” message that the latest advances in technology are showing that people can, consciously or unconsciously, block out memories of traumatic events. In fact, the evidence actually supports the opposite conclusion—survivors of trauma generally have difficulty forgetting the experiences they have been through.”



## Stories of British FMS Families

*Fractured Families: The Untold Anguish of the Falsely Accused*

Norman Brand (Editor). British False Memory Society. 2007

*Fractured Families* is the first book to be published by the British False Memory Society. It is a collection of eighteen short stories ranging from two to five pages. Some of the stories are written by falsely accused families and some by people who have experienced recovered memory therapy. In addition, there are several brief comments by professionals.

The book is small, just eighty-nine pages. It was conceived both as a way to help families and also as a document that could be presented to legislators, academics, clinicians, child protection workers and everyone in the criminal justice field as a way to help them understand the catastrophe that befalls families when a false accusation of abuse based only on claims of recovered memories explodes. The stories express the heartache of the families and they tell the story of the spread of FMS in Britain.

Madeline Greenhalgh has been the head of the British False Memory Society for almost a decade. Her words best explain the book:

“After 13 years of working with the BFMS the most moving and powerful aspect of the work has been to experience the level of anguish and suffering endured by families who, in so many ways, are just like yours and mine. Most parents have attempted to bring their children up to the best of their abilities and to willingly make sacrifices for them, in the way that we all do, because they are our children and we will do almost anything for them. Barring the untimely death of a child there can be little that equates with the pain of losing a child as a result of being falsely accused of the heinous crime of child sexual abuse. The level of indignation we feel at being falsely accused of even a petty matter strikes at our moral being. How can anyone who has not experienced being falsely

accused of child sexual abuse ever understand the enormity of such an injustice? We cannot, but we can listen and learn from those who have been caught in the fallout. There is no better way to highlight the seriousness of this problem than to bring together a collection of these stories from families who reveal numerous common features in their heart-rendering accounts.” pp 18-19.

*Fractured Families* is available via <http://www.amazon.co.uk>. It can also be ordered directly from the British False Memory Society using Visa or MasterCard credit cards. The price from the BFMS is £6.99 plus £1.34 postage. Contact Madeline Greenhalgh at [Madeline@bfms.org.uk](mailto:Madeline@bfms.org.uk)

Childhood abuse is, of course, a dire problem not to be underestimated. But adult abuse by fervent accusers, often of a crusading vigilante nature, based on events that never occurred, is a life-shattering experience.”

Professor Larry Weiskrantz, Fellow of the Royal Society. p 83. *Fractured Families*

“Allegations are thrown and yet, in many of these cases, no legal investigation is instigated, leaving accused persons without any opportunity to put their side of the story. This is not a one-sided matter to be left smoldering without attention. Many families are trapped in the grief for the loss of their loved ones and their life as it was before being accused. They have never been allowed to respond to the ‘bombshell’ that was dropped without warning. It is time to recognize that a plea of innocence, or, as it is more frequently referred to, ‘a denial of guilt’, does not always equate to being ‘in denial’. This caveat has fostered an environment where an individual who is falsely accused is damned if they do and damned if they don’t.”

p. 9. *Fractured Families*

The depth of society’s condemnation of the sexual abuse of children, which we share completely, is also a measure of the agony of the falsely accused, as they face the effective loss of a loved family member—an experience frequently compared to that of bereavement.”

p. 84 Norman Brand. *Fractured Families*



### **Cognitive Dissonance Theory: A Possible Explanation for Why Most Returners Don’t Mention the Accusations?**

*Mistakes Were Made (but not by me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts*  
Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson  
Harcourt, Inc. (2007)

“We are all capable of believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proved wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right.” George Orwell (1946)

Quoted in *Mistakes Were Made*.

If you have ever asked yourself why only two or three therapists have spoken up and apologized for the recovered memory fiasco or why so many of the returning accusers want to reunite with their families but not talk about the consequences of their horrible accusations, then you will certainly want to read *Mistakes Were Made (but not by me)*. Although this lively and engaging book spans a wide number of topics, the authors devote a significant portion to an analysis of the recovered memory movement. [1]

In the introduction, distinguished social psychologists Tavris and Aronson explain that, “As fallible human beings, all of us share the impulse to justify ourselves and avoid taking responsibility for any actions that turn out to be harmful, immoral, or stupid.” Indeed, they note that, “most people, when directly confronted by evidence that they are wrong, do not change their point of view or course of action but justify it even more tena-



ciously.” Self-justification “allows people to convince themselves that what they did was the best thing they could have done,” but, they note, that it is not necessarily a bad thing. The authors wrote this book in an effort to help us understand self-justification so that we can move beyond it.

Tavris and Aronson argue that the concept of “cognitive dissonance” is “the engine that drives self-justification.” [2] Cognitive dissonance is the uncomfortable state we experience when we have ideas that conflict. The greater the internal conflict the more the need to resolve it. If this begins to sound a bit dry, rest assured that the authors give wings to the concepts they address. The fascinating anecdotes and the witty prose make this book a delightful read from cover to cover.

1. An example from the book that will resonate with FMSF readers is from a deposition of Bessel van der Kolk, MD. (pages 106-107)

*Q:* Are you aware of any research on the reliability or the validity of clinical judgment or clinical predictions based on interview information?

*A:* No.

*Q:* What’s your understanding of the current term “disconfirming evidence”?

*A:* I guess that means evidence that disconfirms treasured notions that people have.

*Q:* What’s the most powerful piece of disconfirming evidence that you’re aware of for the theory that people can repress memories or that they can block out of their awareness a series of traumatic events, store those in their memory, and recover those with some accuracy years later?

*A:* What’s the strongest thing against that?

*Q:* Yes. What’s the strongest piece of disconfirming evidence?

*A:* I really can’t think of any good evidence against that...

*Q:* Have you read any literature on the concept of false memories using hypnosis?

*A:* No.

*Q:* Is there research on whether clini-

cians over a period of years develop more accurate clinical judgment?

*A:* I don’t know if there is, actually...

*Q:* Is [there] a technique that you use to distinguish true and false memories?

*A:* We all, we all as human beings are continuously faced with whether we believe what somebody feeds us or not, and we all make judgments all the time. And there is such a thing as internal consistency, and if people tell you something with internal consistency and with appropriate affect, you tend to believe that the stories are true.

Notice that Dr. van der Kolk avoids cognitive dissonance by avoiding learning about ideas that might contradict his beliefs. Notice, too, that van der Kolk appears to be confident that he knows if a client is telling the truth and whether a memory is true or false based on his experience and on his judgment of the story’s “internal consistency.” Research has shown repeatedly that neither therapist experience nor internal consistency are reliable determinants of the truth.

2. See *FMSF Newsletters* July/August 2004, Volume 13 No. 4 and July/August 2005, Volume 14 No. 4 for discussions of cognitive dissonance by Mark Pendergrast.



## Memory Study Out of the Lab

### *Everyday Memory*

Magnussen, S. and Helstrup, T. (Editors)  
New York: Psychology Press (2007).

Magnussen and Helstrup introduce the scholarly papers in *Everyday Memory* with the results of a survey from three representative samples of 1000 adult Norwegians. The survey questioned the beliefs of ordinary people about memory. The questions covered such topics as whether people thought that training could make memory stronger or whether there was a limit to how much information could be remembered. These beliefs are then compared with what science has shown and set the stage for the scholarly discussions that follow.

The editors’ intent was a book covering general aspects of memory in everyday contexts that are not found in other texts. It is geared for readers with some background in cognitive psychology who are interested in how

memory works in everyday situations but not necessarily familiar with the technical details of the research. The book is the cumulative work of an international group of cognitive psychologists invited to Centre of Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in Oslo 2003-2004.

Although all of the work ultimately adds to our understanding of memory and thus false memories, a few chapters address the concerns of FMSF members directly. For example, one of the questions that people were asked was if they thought that memories for dramatic events would be worse, as good or better than memories for everyday events. Most people’s beliefs agreed with what science has shown—that memory for dramatic events is as good as, or better than, memory for ordinary events. But they also asked if people who have had frightening and dramatic experiences and who claim memory loss are being truthful. Most people thought that they were truthful but this belief varied with the respondent’s educational level. The more education, the more a person was apt to believe. They note:

“Psychoanalytically inspired thinking has been absorbed by society, especially by intellectuals, but detached from its theoretical basis and diluted. In Norwegian daily language, the concept of repression has become almost synonymous with forgetting but with special reference to unpleasant memories, such as remembering an appointment with the dentist. So the idea that extremely unpleasant memories can be completely blocked is readily available. The finding that the proportion of participants accepting the idea of repression increased with years of formal education is an indication that the belief derives from intellectual theory rather than from folk psychology. However, the ideas of folk psychology are consistent with science. The concept of repression has been difficult to support empirically...as it does not stand the test of rel-

evant real-life studies of traumatized individuals... Indeed, trauma-induced psychogenic amnesia is extremely rare, if it exists at all... Rather, studies of war veterans, some of whom may themselves have committed gruesome acts, and of victims to such acts, point in the opposite direction: These memories persist all too well.” [1]

Another chapter that FMSF readers will likely find of interest is “Memory illusions and false memories in the real world,” [2] written by Gail Goodman and colleagues. The authors state in the first paragraph that everyday memory is of importance to all society because lack of knowledge can lead to miscarriage of justice. Using actual cases from Norway and the United States, they show compelling examples of false memories and what science has explained about their development.

The chapter concludes with a summary of what the authors believe is known about false memories:

1. “We believe there are several different routes to false-memory formation. Some routes may be self-generated. Other routes involve highly suggestive or coercive techniques. In any case, important contributors to false-memory formation include that the individual accepts that the event was plausible, that the individual develops a mental image of the event, and that the individual does not apply optimal source monitoring to the ‘memory’...”

2. “[C]onversations between friends and group members, who have no explicit intentions to contaminate memories, adversely affect people’s recollections... Social influence appears to be most potent for memories that are held with lower confidence...”

3. “There are important individual differences in tendencies toward memory errors, including false-memory errors.” Researchers are now identifying some of the factors such as age or dissociative tendencies or lack of confidence in one’s memory.

4. “There are mechanisms that

guard against false memory.” Understanding these mechanisms may lead to strategies that can be taught.

*Everyday Memory* is an excellent addition to the arsenal of scholarly books about memory.

1. Page 21. Chapter 1. Magnussen, S., Endestad, T., Koriat, A., Helstrup, T. What do people believe about memory and how do they talk about memory?

2. Page 178. Chapter 7. Goodman, G.S., Magnussen, S., Andersson, J., Endestad, T., Lokken, L., Moestur, A.C. Memory illusions and false memories in the real world.



### **EST + Satanic Cults + Recovered Memories = Disaster**

*Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case*

Carol Pogash

William Morrow (2007)

In 2006, the media spawned a “feeding frenzy” over the Susan Polk murder trial in Contra Costa County, California. Susan, who was charged in 2002 with stabbing her husband 27 times, had insisted on defending herself. Not surprisingly, the trial was colorful and entertaining—“infotainment.” Jury selection began on February 26, 2006 and the trial ended on June 16, 2006 when the jury found Susan Polk guilty of the second-degree murder of her 70-year-old husband, psychologist Felix Polk.

Although this case was not reported in the FMSF Newsletter, it is one that we followed closely through newspaper accounts. In fact, at one point the defense called the Foundation to ask for information. Susan Polk had recovered memories that her husband had abused her and wanted to use those memories to justify the murder. (The Foundation position on the unreliability of such memories, however, seemed not to be what the caller sought!)

The Polk family saga that culminated in the murder trial began when a 14-year-old Susan Polk began psychotherapy with Felix Polk, Ph.D. A number of years later, Felix Polk

divorced his wife and married Susan. He and Susan had three children. When their first child was a toddler, not long after the McMartin trial, the Polks became convinced that their child had been abused in a satanic cult. Felix Polk took to the lecture circuit in California in the late 80s giving talks about the dangers of satanic cults. Previously Dr. Polk had been an advocate of the human potential movement, embracing the cult-like EST (Erhard Seminars Training) program. In the 90s, Felix Polk drifted to the recovered memory movement. He and Susan came to believe that her father had abused her. Later, as Susan and the marriage disintegrated, Susan believed that she had recovered memories that Felix had abused her.

Author Carol Pogash has done a service for us all in *Seduced by Madness*. Her thorough investigation of the people involved in this sad case provides a perspective that was missing in the ongoing reports of the sensational trial. FMSF Newsletter readers will almost certainly find the first part of this book fascinating as it traces the Polk family’s ready adoption of belief in practices lacking any scientific foundation: EST, satanic cults and recovered memories. The book paints a remarkable picture of a person and a family that is ultimately undermined and destroyed by uncritical belief in bizarre fads.

*Seduced by Madness* is a page-turner.



### **Books Briefly Noted**

*The Fate of Early Memories: Developmental Science and the Retention of Childhood Experiences*

Mark L. Howe

American Psychological Association:  
Washington, DC, 2000

According to author Mark Howe, the focus of *The Fate of Early Memories* is a consequence of the widespread beliefs that “early experi-

ences, at least traumatic ones, can exert their influence on later adult behavior and do exist in memory regardless of whether they can be recalled.” The author’s purpose is to examine these beliefs in the light of scientific evidence. He notes that it is “a particularly fortuitous time to write such a book” because there has been so much new research in the field. The result is a scholarly, scientific and comprehensive book about the” development of the survival of memories in long-term storage and their subsequent recollection.”

Howe carefully constructs his arguments by examining the scientific research at each stage of development. For example, there is a chapter on memory development from birth to 2 years and another looking at the preschool years. Each chapter is introduced in a clear manner and concludes with a summary of the main finding. This makes the book accessible to a general audience.

The author concludes that scientific research does not support the popular claims about the influence of early traumatic experience on later development. He notes that these modern folk beliefs have had serious consequences and that they need to be counteracted with empirical facts. It is encouraging to know that this book is available to students and researchers.

“It is this belief that early experiences can exert such a powerful influence over people’s lives, and that these so-called formative events can be remembered, that served as the impetus for writing this book...there is a need to counteract these beliefs about early memories of experiences with the empirical facts.” (p. xii).

Mark L. Howe, Ph.D. is a professor of psychology and dean of Graduate Studies and Research at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

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### *Myths of Childhood*

Joel Paris

New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2000

In *Myths of Childhood*, psychiatrist Joel Paris challenges some deeply held cultural beliefs. They are: 1) that personality is formed by early childhood experiences; 2) that mental disorders are caused by early childhood experiences; and 3) that effective psychotherapy depends on the reconstruction of childhood experiences. The book marshals the scientific evidence to counter these beliefs. For example, he shows that genes and environment significantly affect personality, that mental disorders are influenced by genetic predispositions, and that the quality of the relationship between the patient and therapist and the quality of their collaborative work are related to curing effects of therapy.

Paris notes that although some people are indeed badly affected by early experiences, “most people with an unhappy childhood do reasonably well as adults. A predisposed and vulnerable minority is most affected by adversity.”

It is the myths of the importance of early childhood experiences that underlie the beliefs leading to the recovered memory movement. According to Paris:

“The history of the recovered memory movement can also be seen as a warning. It will go down in the history of psychology as one of its greatest scandals, creating a cult that has sometimes threatened to bring the entire practice of psychotherapy into disrepute. The conviction that childhood is the main source of adult symptoms is the ultimate basis of the theories of repression and dissociation. This powerful belief system can lead to serious errors in clinical practice. The concept of recovered memory takes some of the most common but misleading premises underlying psychotherapy, and places them in a distorting mirror.” Page 93

Joel Paris, M.D., is Professor of

Psychiatry at McGill University in Montreal.

“Paris’ book is an important and necessary step away from the culture of belief and tradition, toward a culture of knowledge and science.”

Leif Edward Ottesen Kennair

Review of *Myths of Childhood* by Leif Edward Ottesen Kennair, Chief Psychologist, Nordfjord Psychiatric Center, Norway can be found at: <http://www.human-nature.com/nibbs/03/paris.html>

“The concept of recovered memory takes some of the most common but misleading premises underlying psychotherapy, and places them in a distorting mirror.”

Joel Paris, page 93



### New Research Papers

#### With Practice Some People Can Suppress Newly Formed Memories

Depue, B.E., Curran, T., Banich, M.T. (2007). Prefrontal regions orchestrate suppression of emotional memories via a two-phase process. *Science* 317, 215-219.

Brendan Depue, a doctoral candidate at the University of Colorado, and two of his professors have found that people are capable of suppressing the memory of unpleasant pictures. This research received much media attention as some reporters assumed it addressed the recovered-memory controversy. According to the author, it does not.

Researchers asked 16 people to look at two pictures at the same time. One picture was a disturbing image, for example a wounded soldier or a bad car accident; the other picture was a neutral face. There were 40 different pairs of pictures that the subjects learned.

After they had memorized the pairs, the subjects were shown only the pictures of faces and asked either to think about, or not to think about the



disturbing picture with which it was associated. As they did this, their brains were observed using a functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner f(MRI). The fMRI images showed that the subjects seemed to shut down specific portions of the brain when asked not to remember.

Later the participants were shown the faces and asked to write down which image had been paired with them. About half the time the participants forgot the disturbing image. Depue commented "At first, you can't successfully suppress (the memory)," but "after repetition of the items, you get control of them. In the end, there is actually suppression."<sup>[1]</sup>

When interviewed about this research, Elizabeth Loftus commented that she feared, "This will be used as a supposed piece of proof that [memory] repression has been discovered in the brain. This is not evidence for that but people will try to pretend that it is."<sup>[2]</sup>

Depue, however, has commented that there is considerable debate over whether repressed memories and suppressed memories are even interchangeable terms, or whether repressed memories exist at all.<sup>[3]</sup>

"The debate over repressed memories probably won't be resolved in my lifetime. I think the important thing here is that we have identified neural mechanisms with potential for helping the clinical community develop new therapeutic and pharmaceutical approaches for people suffering from emotional disorders."<sup>[3]</sup>

"My prediction is it won't be as easy to suppress something that's long-standing and personally emotional."<sup>[4]</sup>

"We have shown in this study that individuals have the ability to suppress specific memories at a particular moment in time through repeated practice. We think we now have a grasp of the neural mechanisms at work, and hope the new findings and future research will lead to new therapeutic and pharmacological approach-

es to treating a variety of emotional disorders."<sup>[3]</sup>

1. Mishra, K. (2007, July 13). Rather not remember? You can fuggedaboutit. Retrieved from <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/07/13/MNG3FQVJJP1.DTL>
2. Smith, M. (2007, July 12). Practice forgetting and memories fade. Medpage Today. Retrieved 7/14/07 <http://www.medpagetoday.com/tbprint.cfm?bid=6146&topicid=146>.
3. (2007, July 16). Suppression of emotional memories shows potential in treatment of emotional disorders. Medical News Today. Retrieved from <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com> <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/76760.php> on September 6, 2007.
4. Ganguli, I. (2007, July 13). Creating psychopaths! You can forget the unhappy past sez study. Reuters <http://www.signs-of-the-times.org/articles/show/136395-Creating+Psychopaths!+You+can+forget+the+unhappy+past+sez+study>. Retrieved July 13, 2007.

### Other comments about the Depue et al. research

"We do know that very serious emotional memories are, in general, very remembered."

Art Shimamura, UC Berkeley  
Mishra, K. (2007, July 13). Rather not remember? You can fuggedaboutit. Retrieved from <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/07/13/MNG3FQVJJP1.DTL>

"The stimuli may be unpleasant, but they are hardly traumatic."

John Kihlstrom, UC Berkeley  
Ganguli, I. (2007, July 13). Creating psychopaths! You can forget the unhappy past sez study. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.signs-of-the-times.org/articles/show/136395-Creating+Psychopaths!+You+can+forget+the+unhappy+past+sez+study>. 7/13/07

"For a mother haunted by the memory of her son's suicide, it is hard to imagine that you'd ever get her to forget that the event occurred."

John Gabrieli  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Ganguli, I. (2007, July 13). Creating psychopaths! You can forget the unhappy past sez study. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.signs-of-the-times.org/articles/show/136395-Creating+Psychopaths!+You+can+forget+the+unhappy+past+sez+study>. 7/13/07



"Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it."  
Michel de Montaigne

### Self-Reports of Amnesia for Child Abuse No Substitute for Corroboration

Ghetti, S., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman, G.S., Gordon, I.M., Quas, J.A., Alexander, K.W., Redlich, A.D., Jones, D.P.H. (2006). What can subjective forgetting tell us about memory for childhood trauma? *Memory & Cognition* 34 (5), 1011-1025

Most research examining whether people may have forgotten past abuse has relied on self-reports. There are only a few studies that have taken a prospective view, i.e. have examined adults with documented childhood abuse. Simona Ghetti and colleagues wondered to what extent retrospective reports may reflect actual forgetting. The researchers believe that the comparison is important to determine if subjective reports may be substituted for documented child abuse.

The authors questioned child sexual abuse victims whose cases had resulted in criminal proceedings in the mid 1980s. The vast majority remembered (81% to 88%) and the prevalence and predictors of their disclosure was previously reported (Goodman et al., 2003). This paper focuses on "self-reported experiences of forgetting and memory accuracy among disclosers."

Subjects were asked about the details of their abuse after they had disclosed. They were also asked if they had ever forgotten it and, if so, they were "asked to describe the reasons why they had forgotten." This paper looks specifically at how the subjects characterized their forgetting experiences and what factors might predict such experiences. The specific factors they examined were: 1. The severity of abuse; 2. The relation between victim and perpetrator; 3. Whether the victim had maternal support; and 4. The involvement in legal system. They also examined individual differences such as age, gender, or ethnicity.

Twenty-one of the 138 people reported that they had experienced a

time when they had no memory for the documented abuse. The authors found, “Victim age, maternal support, relationship to the perpetrator, and ethnicity were not significant predictors of subjective forgetting.” The most frequent reasons endorsed for the forgetting were: “I felt afraid, and I did not want to think about it.” “It was so horrible that I pushed it out of my mind.”

The researchers looked particularly at five individuals who reported a period of time when they would have been unable to remember their abuse even if someone had asked them about it. They found that if child sexual abuse “was forgotten in childhood, it was also likely to be recovered in childhood, rather than later on in adulthood.” They “found no evidence of adult recovery of [child sexual abuse] memories.”

Research with a population of people whose cases had gone to court may not be typical of most abuse cases. Such people would almost certainly have had greater occasion to talk about the abuse. Nevertheless, the researchers conclude: “It may be problematic to use subjective forgetting as a proxy for actual amnesia when drawing conclusions about the fate of CSA memory.” The “differences between subjective and objective memory underscore the risks of using subjective measures to assess lost memory of abuse.”



### **Emotional Memories Persist**

Payne, B.K., Corrigan, E. (2007).

Emotional constraints on intentional forgetting. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 43(5). 780-786.

Keith Payne and Elizabeth Corrigan ask whether people continue to remember emotional memories even when they would rather forget them. They note: “a strong memory for a painful event will help avoid it in the future, while a strong memory for a pleasant event will help seek it out again.” There seems good reason that emotional memories will be remem-

bered.

Previous studies of intentional forgetting of emotional memories have used emotion-laden words as stimuli. This study used pictures that had been previously tested to affect participants’ moods. Previous studies, i.e. McNally et al. 2004, had focused on who might show “enhanced or disrupted intentional forgetting.” This study examined whether “emotional events resist intentional forgetting.” Is intentional forgetting different for emotional memories compared to neutral memories?

Two hundred-eighteen undergraduates studied two lists of picture items. Half of the participants were told to forget the items in the first list and half told to remember them. The pictures were both pleasant and unpleasant or neutral. Then students were tested.

The results of the study showed that “when participants tried to forget emotional or neutral memories, they were able to forget only the neutral ones.” Both the pleasant and unpleasant memories persisted.

“Our findings add to accumulating evidence that emotion places limits on the ability to control the contents of the mind. Our results suggest that even a relatively mild emotional reaction can undermine intentional forgetting. But this doesn’t necessarily mean that emotional memories can never be intentionally forgotten. If the motivation to forget is powerful enough, individuals might be able to overcome the effects of emotion by enlisting additional coping strategies. A different study would be needed to examine what treatment and coping strategies might be effective in helping people voluntarily forget an unwanted memory.”



“What is memory? Not a storehouse, not a trunk in the attic, but an instrument that constantly refines the past into a narrative, accessible and acceptable to oneself.”

Stanley Kaufmann

### **New Research Adds to the Evidence for Caution in Use of Anatomical Dolls with Young Children**

“The victims of abuse are often very young children, who are quite difficult to interview. Consequently, many professionals—including police officers, social workers and mental health professionals—employ anatomically detailed dolls, assuming that a young child will have an easier time describing what happened using a doll. Notice that this assumption entails the further assumption that a young child will be able to think of this object as both a doll and a representation of himself or herself.”

“In several independent studies,... investigators have asked preschool children to report what they remember about a checkup with their pediatrician, which either had or had not included a genital check. Anatomically detailed dolls were sometimes used to question the children, sometimes not. In general, the children’s reports were more accurate when they were questioned without a doll, and they were more likely to falsely report genital touching when a doll was used.”

“Based on my research, I suspected that very young children might not be able to relate their own body to a doll. In a series of studies in my lab...[a researcher] placed a sticker somewhere on a child—on a shoulder or foot, for example—and asked the child to place a smaller version of the sticker in the same place on a doll. Children between three and three and a half usually placed the sticker correctly, but those younger than three were correct less than half the time. The fact that these very young children cannot relate their own body to the doll’s in this extremely simple situation that does not have memory demands or emotional involvement supports the general case against the use of anatomically detailed dolls in forensic situations with young children. (Because of many demonstrations akin to this one, the use of dolls with children younger than five is viewed less favorably than in the past and has been outlawed in some states.)” page 34,35

DeLoache, J. S. (2006). Mindful of symbols. *Scientific American Mind*, 17(1), 71-75.



## Canadian Supreme Court Hands Carte Blanche to Social Workers.

Adriaan J.W. Mak

Syl Apps Secure Treatment Centre and B [social worker] v. B.D. and family, Supreme Court of Canada 38  
Decision can be found at: <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2007/2007scc38/2007scc38.html>

On July 27, 2007, Justice Rosalie Abella, appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004, wrote her first and long awaited tort decision, namely: that neither treatment centers nor social workers caring for children apprehended by the Children's Aid Societies owe any duty of care to the families of these children.

Twelve years earlier in 1995, R.D., an imaginative, shy, and gifted, fourteen year old girl who was the oldest daughter in a closely knit and nurturing immigrant family of four children and a grandmother, had written a fictional story, describing how a female character had been sexually and physically abused.

This story, referred to in court documents as an "essay," sparked a series of tragic events, beginning with the apprehension of the young author by the Children's Aid Society, which had received temporary wardship. This was followed by the girl's placement in a foster home.

Away from the protection of her family, the girl became suicidal. Subsequently the girl was transferred to several psychiatric facilities, where her condition continued to worsen and she made other suicide attempts. These events finally caused her to be placed in a "secure" treatment centre under the special care of social worker B.

The local police apparently found that the girl's essay was indeed fictional, since no charges were ever brought against the parents, nor were any of the siblings of R.D. removed from the family to be placed under the care of the Children's Aid Society.

What happened behind the doors in the facilities where R.D. had been placed after being denied contact with her family, may never be known. Certainly a very big transition had taken place because the girl consented to be made a permanent ward of the Crown in October 1996.

When the girl reached the age of eighteen a judge confirmed that the parents had been cleared of any wrongdoing, yet that he had no power to cause her to rejoin her family.

Her family then sought \$40,000,000 in damages, alleging that R.D. had been treated negligently as if her parents had actually physically and sexually abused her. This caused the daughter to choose not to return to her family.

Although a lower court judge decided to dismiss this

claim, the family appealed. Justice Laskin of the Ontario Court of Appeal writing for the majority reversed the lower court and allowed the family's appeal to proceed. Laskin argued that a secure treatment facility and social workers employed there, may indeed owe a legal duty of care to the family of a child in their care.

The treatment facility appealed this decision and the case then went to Canada's Supreme Court, where Justice Abella, a renowned human rights and family lawyer, an advocate for the rights of the disabled, and the rights of women, argued:

*"... child protection work is difficult, painful and complex because catering to a child's best interest . . . means catering to a vulnerable group at its most vulnerable. Those who do it, do so knowing that protecting the child's interests often means doing so at the expense of the family. They must be free to execute this mandate to the fullest extent possible. The result they seek is to restore the child, not the family."*

It should be noted that the literature cited in the court decision conspicuously omits the names of researchers who have been critical of the way in which child care workers have often repeatedly and suggestively questioned children.

At the time this took place (1995) books such as *Jeopardy in the Courtroom* by Ceci and Bruck were available. Certainly the local police had been made well aware of this research.

We are also not told that any members of the judiciary ever listened to tapes of these all important first interviews of Children's Aid Society social workers with R.D.

Adriaan Mak is the Canadian contact for people falsely accused of child sexual abuse and victims of misguided therapy. In the next issue members of the D. family will tell of their 12 year long ordeal, as well their efforts and continuing hopes to be once more united with their truly restored daughter, granddaughter and sister.

□

### Charges Dropped

A Rhode Island legal case provides an example of the importance legal precedents may have in recovered memory cases.

On June 15, 2006, a Rhode Island woman accused a 48-year-old man of raping her 32 years ago in 1975 when she was 16. The woman claimed that she had repressed the memory. The charge was a single incident of rape alleged to have occurred sometime within a seven-month time frame. No date or place was provided and no evidence beyond the woman's recovered memory has been given.

In Rhode Island, there is no statute of limitations for charges of first-degree sexual assault and the case was presented to a grand jury that returned an indictment against the man. The man, Harold Allen, who grew up in the same

neighborhood and who knew the girl as a teen, maintained his innocence. Married, with two high-school age children, he had never been previously charged or arrested for anything – not even a traffic offense.

A year later on July 13, 2007, the Rhode Island Attorney General announced that the charge against the man had been dropped. The dismissal noted that because of the case law in Rhode Island, “the high burden for admissibility, at trial, of testimony based on repressed memory” [would create] “a legal impediment that the state is unlikely to overcome.”

A spokesperson for the office stated that he did not think that the woman’s recovered memory evidence would be allowed in court. He said “Decisions from many state Supreme Courts from across the country have made clear that repressed or recovered memory is a genuinely contentious legal issue. We are acknowledging that her evidence would not likely hold up. I suppose there is a very small chance, but it would be very small.”

The dismissal form mentioned the case of State v. Quattrocchi, a recovered-memory case that went to the Rhode Island Supreme Court. That court decided in 1996 that any case that relies on repressed memory must have a pre-trial hearing on the evidence.

The defendant’s attorney, Walter R. Stone, commented that “This man’s whole life has been ruined,” and he wondered why the case went as far as it did considering the lack of evidence. The Rhode Island Attorney General Patrick Lynch said, “Perhaps a prosecutor’s greatest power is to dismiss a charge and end an unwarranted criminal prosecution.”

John Quattrocchi, the attorney whose case resulted in Rhode Island law, said that the good news about the Allen case is that once it reached the higher levels of the prosecution team, it was dismissed. He said that the

legal community education work of the FMS Foundation in the 90s had a significant effect in Rhode Island. Quattrocchi added, however, that the bad news is:

“local police and a low level prosecutor were blissfully ignorant about false memory and wanted to be politically correct. They had likely never read my case. They were able to charge Allen and present his case to a Grand Jury. Predictably, he was indicted and left to dig himself out of a deep hole. I shudder to think what would have happened if there had not been a local precedent looming over the case. I shudder to think of what may go on in states that do not have such clear precedents about the reliability of claims of recovered memories.” [1]

1. Quattrocchi, J. (2007, September 4). Personal email correspondence.

Belluck, P. (2007, July 13). Rape case is dismissed in Rhode Island. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/13/us/13rape.html?ei=5088&en=51204cc4917fd261&ex=1341979200&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all> on 8/30/2007.

Kuffner, A. (2007, July 13). Lynch drops rape charge. *Providence Journal*. Retrieved from [http://www.projo.com/news/content/CHARGED\\_DR\\_OPPED\\_07-13-07\\_F66C28D.32886b4.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/CHARGED_DR_OPPED_07-13-07_F66C28D.32886b4.html) on 7/13/07.



### **Nebraska Court Rules Star Witness May Not Testify**

State of Nebraska v. Donald J. Sykora, CR 05-148, District Court of Sarpy County. (January, 2007)

On May 29, 2007 Sarpy County Nebraska District Judge William Zastera ruled that Lenora Kay Parker could not testify about her childhood memories of her mother’s murder in 1971. Parker, who was 4-years-old at the time of the murder, is the chief witness in the case against her father, Donald Sykora. Judge Zastera disallowed Parker’s testimony because her memory had been enhanced by a 30-hour cognitive interview, a technique he said was not scientific and could produce false memories.

According to media reports, two federal agents and a police officer

interviewed Lenora Parker for four days in a row. The interview was conducted in a meeting room in a fire station that had been converted to a more relaxing environment with items such as a recliner, a sofa and soft lights. In a cognitive interview, subjects are first asked open-ended questions and they respond in a narrative fashion.

The purpose of the interview was to help Lenora Parker remember the details of her alleged vision of her father strangling her mother. The interview was not tape recorded. Instead, one officer took notes as he sat in another room and observed. At one point during the interview, the group left to visit the grave of Parker’s mother.

Ronald Fisher, a Florida International University professor of experimental psychology, testified that cognitive interviews are as reliable or more reliable than standard police interviews. He said that people usually provide more information in a cognitive interview.

Daniel Wilson, chair of the Creighton University psychiatry department, testified for the defense and said that there is no scientific evidence that demonstrates that a cognitive interview is a reliable way to extract a traumatic memory from an adult who had witnessed an event 35-years-ago when she was 4. Wilson was also concerned about the great duration of the interview and the impact of the visit to the mother’s grave.

In his decision, Judge Zastera noted that the Parker interview did not follow recommendations for standard cognitive interviews and that the questions of a federal agent were so suggestive that Parker’s testimony would not be reliable.

The prosecution is challenging the judge’s ruling. A decision on the motions is expected before the end of the year.

John Reisz is Deputy Sarpy County Attorney. Sykora is represent-

ed by Don Fiedler of Omaha.

Midlands News Service (2007, January 14). Sykora case takes new twist. *Bellevue Leader* (Omaha), 1.

Midlands News Service. (2007, May 25). Key witness can't testify in Sykora murder case. *Bellevue Leader* (Omaha). Retrieved from [http://www.zwire.com/site/tab3.cfm?newsid=18387235&BRD=2712&PAG=461&dept\\_id=559850&rft=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/tab3.cfm?newsid=18387235&BRD=2712&PAG=461&dept_id=559850&rft=6)

See Whitehouse, W.G., Orne, E.C., Dinges, D.F., Bates, B.L., Nadon, R., Orne, M.T. (2005, Summer). The cognitive interview: Does it successfully avoid the dangers of forensic hypnosis? *American Journal of Psychology* 118(2). 213-234.

□

### Crimes Against Children Have Declined

Finkelhor, D. Jones, L. (2006). Why have child maltreatment and child victimization declined? *Journal of social Issues*, 62(4), 685-716.

Between 1993 and 2004, various forms of child maltreatment and child victimization declined as much as 40-70%. That included physical abuse, homicide, aggravated assault, robbery and sexual abuse. Substantiated cases of childhood sexual abuse have declined by 49% according to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

When these data were first presented, some people questioned whether the results were real or statistical artifacts. The authors present their evidence for considering that the improvements are genuine. They think that it is important for policy-makers to understand why this trend took place so that it can be extended or elaborated. They wonder why the data have received so little attention.

"[I]t would seem to make sense to draw greater attention to the declines. We are actually quite baffled about why recent epidemiological reports on child maltreatment have given so little attention to the issue.

□

F R O M O U R

R E A D E R S

### Wrong Event?

Although our family's experience begins as it did for many of you, it ends with a different twist. In 1992, we experienced the same bombshell many of you describe. In our case, the incomprehensible charges focused on age 3 1/2, and they were the result of the iatrogenic counseling of our married adult daughter.

Perhaps a bit different in our case was the detailed description of the "rape" that was supposedly abetted by my wife. She was accused of slapping our daughter when our daughter told her of the incident. We never slapped any of our children.

It was not until three years later in 1995 that we pieced together what must have happened. We read a local news article: "Suspect's Past Becomes Issue: Man Charged with Molestation Fondled Others, Prosecutors Say." That fondling was said to have taken place 25 years ago.

The accused man and his wife had a young daughter who was my daughter's teen-age schoolmate. They invited her to a weekend at the Omaha Fair. My daughter was enthusiastic about going, but upon her return she asked me a strange question: "Why did you let me go?" Surprised, I responded: "Why? Didn't you have a good time?" "No," she replied. "I don't want to talk about it." We didn't pursue it. We had no suspicions even though hospital tests because of her subsequent headaches found no physical pathology. Rape never occurred to us until we read that 1995 article.

The charges against us which had seemed so incomprehensible then began to make sense. Possibly the events of the Omaha weekend became skewed to a belief in incest when she was 3. Perhaps the man's wife had actually slapped our daughter as a

scare tactic to prevent any charges. We will never know for sure.

Unfortunately, our daughter's belief remains focused upon her false memory of being raped when she was a toddler. Sadly, the alienation remains even today

A loving dad

□

### After 20 Years

FMSF families: Keep up your courage. After 20 years of being lost to us, our estranged daughter is back from her nightmare of abuse and satanic memories. Her exact words were: "I'm all the way back!"

Her return has been very slow, taking more than 2 years. Happily, we are now once again as close as we were before her disastrous therapy. Sadly, she is not in good health at this time and unfortunately, she lives a thousand miles from us. But the good news is that she is planning a trip home. We took a trip to see her last year.

Someday we may understand all the whys of this terrible period. I suppose that each of us tries to make sense of the false memories in our own way.

I believe that parents must forgive their children as God forgives us. Our children have suffered as much or more than we have. I truly believe that if you keep your faith, you will get your children back.

Forever grateful mother

□

### Our Story

One of our four children went to a female "Christian" therapist who was still in training to get her MFCC. This not-yet-a-therapist worked under the direction of Satan-chasing psychologist, Dr. F. What better way for a student to impress Dr. F. than to find a patient who had actually suffered satanic ritual abuse?

My daughter had sought help at a time when her basic problem was overwork; she had a job, 3 children, and 3 stepchildren. This not-yet-certified



therapist, however, helped my daughter to believe that her problems were caused by repressed memories of satanic ritual abuse. The little bit of reality that grew into memories of satanic rituals and horrible abuse was almost certainly a real memory of a fluoroscope machine in a dark room that our pediatrician used when she was little.

As a consequence of the therapy, our daughter was told to tell all her siblings never to talk to us, write to us, or see us again. Another daughter who was also overworked in her effort to be the perfect professional, wife, and mother went to the same therapist. When her sister told this second daughter about her new memories, it wasn't long before she also believed she had endured satanic ritual abuse.

When I tried to see our daughters, they called the police—as they had been told to do. In the case of the first daughter, I would not leave her driveway until she explained why she would not return our phone calls. Up to this point, we had never been told what the problem was, and we could not understand the shunning.

The police arrived and took me to the local prison. I sat there with 6 prostitutes and drug addicts, all the while reciting the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. Some of these women surprisingly joined me.

My husband got me released that same night. We didn't try again to see those 2 daughters, and we did not see them or our grandchildren for almost 10 years. Thankfully, our other 2 children thought their sisters were imagining things and they supported us.

My brother, a Psychology Professor at San Diego State University, told me about the False Memory Syndrome Foundation in Philadelphia. The Foundation saved us from dying of remorse for something that never happened.

As a consequence of the existence of the Foundation, a show about FMS

appeared on Primetime TV. Our second daughter saw that program and realized that she had been duped by bad therapy. She soon returned to us. After another year, the first daughter also returned. Both are once again the loving daughters they used to be.

Although we have put the lost years behind us, I vow to continue to do all that I can to expose those charlatans who continue to practice bad therapy that creates false memories and dupes both women and insurance companies.

Enjoying my family again



### Afraid to Try Again

It is now 12 years since our daughter declared she was abused.

Just before she wrote us "the letter" we bought a three-flat apartment building for her. She moved in with her then five-year-old son and lived rent and hassle free for eleven years. During that time we had little or no communication. In the last four years she did "manage" the other two apartments, so she and I emailed about necessary management issues. In fall of 2006 she moved out.

I am very happy to report she has reestablished contact with her oldest brother and now seems to have a real life. Her son is a good student and a gifted artist. She is living with a stable and nice partner and she has a good job. She travels and has responsibility and, as her brother says, "no issues." This is exactly what we hoped for her.

She has not, however, contacted her sister, her younger brother or us and we will leave the situation alone. Should she ever get to the point where she can and wants to reach us, we shall respond. Her brother has taken the attitude, what is over is just that—over. He, however, did not suffer any harm from her—she just stopped communicating with him 12 years ago. He is not angry with her. Indeed, he was always a mentor to her, so perhaps it is natural

and wonderful that they now have a good relationship.

We, on the other hand, have been abused and damned. I do not think we will be able to let "it" go if not resolved in some fashion. It was too devastating. Once bitten, twice shy. Actually, I'm really afraid to try again. Her alienation may go on forever and she may never return. If that is the case, we are prepared for that.

The one thing we have had for the past 12 years is peace. She did give us that. For with her in our lives, we never had peace. From the time she manifested her manic/depressive symptoms at age 11, she wore us and the whole family down. If peace is the end result—so be it.

Right now, I still love her and salute her triumph, but I can't accept what she did and I don't like what she did and it will require some heavy duty work with her to get over it. She's very bright and must take some responsibility for what she did. That may not happen.

That being said, we were supported by FMS and will always, always appreciate what you did and what you stand for. You helped us tremendously and hope all of this someday comes to a withering end. Until then—stay strong and keep "heart."

Forever in your debt



### Is the Problem Ever Over?

I am sending my yearly contribution early because I believe we still have a crisis in mental health care. I received my "letter" in 1996. Three years later, we had a shaky reunion. In 2002, the charges surfaced again after the birth of my son and daughter-in-law's second baby. Then, there were four "pretty good" years with lots of family holidays and vacations.

Sadly, the ugly accusations have again surfaced after the birth of their fourth child. My daughter-in-law says I can't see the grandchildren unless I

take responsibility for what I did! This time, the split will be permanent. My daughter-in-law's mood swings were totally overlooked by the therapist. I am 70-years-old and can no longer tolerate the effect of this on my health.

The original accusations began when my son and his wife were seeing a therapist for marriage counseling. The therapist said that the problem in their marriage was that I, the mother, had abused my son. When I offered to meet with her so that she could get the whole picture she said, "I never see the guilty parent as they go nuts." This therapist held her sessions in her living room and she insisted on being paid in cash. There was no accountability.

I left FMSF for a few years thinking the problem was over. Is it ever? The newsletters used to upset me when things were going well, but now, once again, they are a comfort.

An anguished mother  
□

### Abstract

Rubin, D.C., Berntsen, D. (2007) People believe it is possible to have forgotten memories of childhood sexual abuse. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 14(4), 776-778.

"Pezdek, Blandon-Gitlin, and Gabbay (2006) found that perceptions of the plausibility of events increase the likelihood that imagination may induce false memories of those events. Using a survey conducted by Gallup, we asked a large sample of the general population how plausible it would be for a person with longstanding emotional problems and a need for psychotherapy to be a victim of childhood sexual abuse, even though the person could not remember the abuse. Only 18% indicated that it was implausible or very implausible, whereas 67% indicated that such an occurrence was either plausible or very plausible. Combined with Pezdek et al.'s findings, and counter to their conclusions, our findings imply that there is a substantial danger of inducing false memories of childhood sexual abuse through imagination in psychotherapy."

### Web Sites of Interest

- <http://www.theisticsatanism.com/asp/>  
Against Satanic Panics
- [comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html](http://comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html)  
The Lampinen Lab False Memory Reading Group,  
University of Arkansas
- [www.exploratorium.edu/memory/](http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/)  
The Exploratorium Memory Exhibit
- [www.tmdArchives.org](http://www.tmdArchives.org)  
The Memory Debate Archives
- [www.francefms.com](http://www.francefms.com)  
French language website
- [www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html)  
The Bobgans question Christian counseling
- [www.IllinoisFMS.org](http://www.IllinoisFMS.org)  
Illinois-Wisconsin FMS Society
- [www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp](http://www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp)  
Ohio Group
- [www.afma.asn.au](http://www.afma.asn.au)  
Australian False Memory Association
- [www.bfms.org.uk](http://www.bfms.org.uk)  
British False Memory Society
- [www.geocities.com/retractor](http://www.geocities.com/retractor)  
This site is run by Laura Pasley (retractor)
- [www.sirs.com/uptonbooks/index.htm](http://www.sirs.com/uptonbooks/index.htm)  
Upton Books
- [www.angelfire.com/tx/recoveredmemories/](http://www.angelfire.com/tx/recoveredmemories/)  
Locate books about FMS  
Recovered Memory Bookstore
- [www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm)  
Information about Satanic Ritual Abuse
- [www.angryparents.net](http://www.angryparents.net)  
Parents Against Cruel Therapy
- [www.geocities.com/newcosanz](http://www.geocities.com/newcosanz)  
New Zealand FMS Group
- [www.peterellis.org.nz](http://www.peterellis.org.nz)  
Site run by Brian Robinson contains information about Christchurch Creche and other cases.
- [www.werkgroepwfh.nl](http://www.werkgroepwfh.nl)  
Netherlands FMS Group
- [www.falseallegation.org](http://www.falseallegation.org)  
National Child Abuse  
Defense & Resource Center
- [www.nasw.org/users/markp](http://www.nasw.org/users/markp)  
Excerpts from *Victims of Memory*
- [www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html](http://www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html)  
Ross Institute
- [www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm](http://www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm)  
FMS in Scandanavia - Janet Hagbom
- [www.ncrj.org/](http://www.ncrj.org/)  
National Center for Reason & Justice

- [www.lyingspirits.com](http://www.lyingspirits.com)  
Skeptical Information on Theopostic Counseling
- [www.ChildrenInTherapy.org/](http://www.ChildrenInTherapy.org/)  
Information about Attachment Therapy
- [www.traumaversterking.nl](http://www.traumaversterking.nl)  
English language web site of Dutch retractor.
- [www.quackwatch.org](http://www.quackwatch.org)  
This site is run by Stephen Barrett, M.D.
- [www.stopbadtherapy.org](http://www.stopbadtherapy.org)  
Contains information about filing complaints.
- [www.FMSFonline.org](http://www.FMSFonline.org)  
Web site of FMS Foundation.

### Legal Web Sites of Interest

- [www.caseassist.com](http://www.caseassist.com)
- [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)
- [www.legalengine.com](http://www.legalengine.com)
- [www.accused.com](http://www.accused.com)

### Elizabeth Loftus

[www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/](http://www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/)

### The Rutherford Family Speaks to FMS Families

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### Recommended Books

#### Remembering Trauma

Richard McNally

#### Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology

S. O. Lilienfeld, S.J. Lynn, J.M. Lohr (eds.)

#### Psychology Astray:

#### Fallacies in Studies of "Repressed Memory" and Childhood Trauma

by Harrison G. Pope, Jr., M.D.

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### INDIANA

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Helen 574-753-2779

### KANSAS

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Deadline for the Winter 2007 issue is December 15. Meeting notices **MUST** be in writing and should be sent no later than **two months before meeting.**



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October 1, 2007

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The FMSF Newsletter will be published 4 times in 2007 by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. Starting in 2007, the newsletter will be delivered electronically. It is also available at on the FMSF website: [www.FMSFonline.org](http://www.FMSFonline.org) Those without access to the Internet should contact the Foundation.

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## SUPPLEMENT

### Elizabeth Loftus Settles Lawsuit

The lawsuit against Elizabeth Loftus has been settled. The lawsuit had been brought by Nicole Taus who was the subject of "Who Abuse Jane Doe?" by Loftus and Mel Guyer that was published in the *Skeptical Inquirer*. (See below for details of the Taus v. Loftus suit.)

There are three important results of the case.

First, the California Supreme Court said that the plaintiff should pay attorney fees. Subsequently, a fee motion was prepared and submitted for over \$450,000. The hearing on that motion will be heard October 2, 1007.

Second, of the 21 counts that Taus filed against Loftus and her co-defendants, Taus lost soundly on 20 of them. The right of Loftus and others to speak about the Jane Doe case remains protected and inviolate.

Third, based on a declaration that Loftus says did not correctly state the facts, the California Supreme Court left a single claim alive. Attorneys urged Loftus to settle because of the great burden that would be placed on her to litigate the single claim and to prove that it was false.

The \$7,500 that Taus demanded to settle was a pittance compared to the more than a million she had previously requested.

The settlement is not an admission of wrongdoing, Loftus categorically denies the allegations Taus made against her in that count, but she wanted to avoid further harassment by Taus and her supporters.

The case has now gone on for several years and Loftus and colleagues prevailed on all the important legal and ethical issues. By settling for a trivial sum, everyone will be spared a futile "she said/she said" trial.

\* \* \*

### Background of Loftus Case Reprinted from Spring 2007 FMSF Newsletter, 16(2)

#### Loftus Case: Court Tosses All but One Claim

Taus v. Loftus, S133805. Cal Sup. Ct. Filed Feb. 26, 2007. (Decision available at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/documents/S133805.PDF>)

On February 26, 2007, the California Supreme Court ruled in the Taus v. Loftus case that journalists and scholars can be held liable for invasion of privacy if they misrepresent themselves in order to obtain information. In a 5 to 2 decision written by Chief Justice George, the court tossed out three of the four issues under examination. Justices Moreno and Baxter dissented, arguing that all four items should have been stricken. The court ordered that Taus pay the costs of the Loftus appeal writing:

"[I]t is apparent when the determinations of the Court of Appeal and this court are viewed as a whole that the overwhelming majority of plaintiff's claims properly should have been struck in the trial court under the anti-SLAPP statute. Under these circumstances, and consistent with the fundamental purpose of the anti-SLAPP statute to minimize the chilling of conduct undertaken in furtherance of the constitutional right of free speech, we conclude that it is appropriate to award defendants their costs on appeal." Majority opinion, page 78.

Readers may recall that Elizabeth Loftus, a courageous founding member of the Scientific and Professional Advisory board of the Foundation, and Mel Guyer conducted an investigation into the 1997 "Jane Doe" case study published by Corwin and Olafson <sup>[1]</sup> after widespread claims were circulated that the study proved that people could repress and then recover accurate memories of abuse. Loftus and Guyer arrived at a very different conclusion, but before they could publish

their results, Nicole Taus and Lynn Crook filed ethical complaints against Loftus at the University of Washington in connection with the research. Although Loftus was exonerated, her records were confiscated for almost two years. In 2002, Loftus and Guyer published "Who Abused Jane Doe? The Hazards of the Single Case History."<sup>[2]</sup>

Soon after the publication of the article, Nicole Taus filed a complaint <sup>[3]</sup> against Loftus and Guyer. The complaint also named Carol Tavris, who had written about the Loftus/Guyer article, the *Skeptical Inquirer*, that had published the article, the University of Washington, and Shapiro Investigations, a firm that had helped Loftus and Guyer in their investigation. The complaint had four causes of action: negligent infliction of emotional distress, invasion of privacy, fraud, and defamation.

Some of the defendants filed a motion to have the complaint stricken. They argued that the Taus lawsuit was a "Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation" (SLAPP). SLAPP suits are retaliatory lawsuits intended to silence, intimidate, or punish those who have used public forums to speak, petition, or otherwise move for government action on an issue of public interest. The trial court denied most of the actions to strike and the defendants appealed. The Court of Appeal concluded that the majority of the Taus claims should have been dismissed, but it held that the legal case could proceed on four counts of action against Loftus. Loftus then appealed to the California Supreme Court. The case received wide attention and the Court received a number of amicus briefs, especially because of its importance to First Amendment issues.

The California Supreme Court then reviewed whether the Court of Appeal properly concluded that the following actions against Loftus should remain. The four actions were:

1) Loftus defamed Taus in a talk at an October 2002 FMSF seminar in Chicago; 2) Loftus disclosed private facts about Taus in a deposition; 3) Loftus improperly intruded into private matters by collecting information from court records; 4) Loftus improperly intruded into private matters by misrepresenting her relationship to Corwin. The Court dismissed the first three actions and ordered that Taus must pay Loftus' legal expenses.

Loftus has vigorously denied the accusation of the remaining action that she misrepresented her relationship with Corwin when she interviewed Taus's former foster mother, Margie Cantrell. Ms. Cantrell has declared that she was contacted by Loftus in 1997 and that Loftus said that she was the supervisor of David Corwin. Cantrell provided some details about Taus's life. In the majority decision, Chief Justice Ronald M. George wrote that "personal information about a person that happens to be known by the person's relatives or close friends is not information that has entered the public domain." In their dissent, Justices Carolos R. Moreno and Marvin R. Baxter wrote that Nicole Taus had no reasonable expectation that her former foster mother would not talk about her. "The majority's desire to protect society from the kind of misrepresentations alleged in the present case is understandable.....will likely chill vigorous journalistic investigation because of the inherently problematic nature of the relationship between journalists and their news sources." The California Supreme Court ordered that the claim be settled at the trial level.

An attorney who represented the news media expressed concern that the decision will cause problems for other journalists and investigators who may interview third parties. [4] He said that that it was not unusual for embarrassed news sources to later claim that they had been misled.

Supporters of recovered memories have claimed victory in this case. In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, Joyanna Silberg wrote that the California Supreme Court upheld the viewpoint of the Leadership Council, on human-subjects-research. [5] In its decision, however, the California Supreme Court on page 32, footnote 11, expressly noted that:

"[T]he Court of Appeal rejected plaintiff's claim that the first amended complaint stated a cause of action based on defendants' alleged breach of professional ethics, and plaintiff did not seek review of that ruling. Accordingly, the human-subjects-research issue raised by amicus curiae is not properly before us and will not be addressed."

Loftus's attorney said that he was pleased that most of the lawsuit was dismissed and that the Court decided that Taus must pay Loftus' legal bills. Burke said that Loftus will be able to prove that she did not misrepresent herself. "There was no trickery and no misrepresentation," he stated. "It was a four-hour interview and [the foster mother] knew who she was speaking to."<sup>[6]</sup>

Elizabeth Loftus commented that she is gratified that the vast majority of the claims were dismissed. She said that the one remaining claim is completely untrue. She also noted that in all of this case there is something missing: the voice of the falsely accused mother.

Thomas Burke of Davis Wright Tremaine in San Francisco represents Elizabeth Loftus. Julian Hubbard of Hubbard & Ebert in Redwood City, California represents Nicole Taus.

1. Corwin, D.L. & Olafson, E. (1997). Videotaped discovery of a reportedly unrecalable memory of child sexual abuse: Comparison with a childhood interview videotaped 11 years before. *Child Maltreatment* 2, 91-112.

2. Loftus, E.F. & Guyer, M.J.(2002, May/June, July/August). Who abused Jane Doe? The hazards of the single case history. *Skeptical Inquirer*, Part 1, 24-32. Part 2, 37-40. Article available at: [faculty.washington.edu/eloftus/Articles/Jane Doe.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/eloftus/Articles/Jane%20Doe.htm).

3. Taus v. Loftus. No FCS 021557, Sup. Ct. of Cal., Solano County. See *FMSF Newsletter* 12(3).

4. Dolan, M. (2007, February 27). Ruling may constrain researchers. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved on February 27, 2007 from <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-speech27feb27,1,4612801.story>.

5. Silberg, J. (2007, March 5). Ethical guides are already in place. *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-le-monday5.7mar05,1,7876122>.

story?coll=la-news-comment

6. Ward, S.F. (2007, March ). Interview methods face trial. *ABAJournal.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.abanet/journal/redesign/m5research.html> on March 14, 2007.