

## Finders

## OFFICIAL USE ONLY


 DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
 UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

## REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

4700-01 (23) 8-87 (Rev. 10-1-86)

1. TECH ACQUISITION CODE

C-3

2. PAGE

PAGES

1 OF 3

3. CASE NUMBER

STATE

## "FINDERS"

## CASE STATUS

☐ Initial Report☐ Interim Report☐ Disposition☒ Open & Close☐ Index & File☐ Closing Report

REPORT DATE

DATE ASSIGNED

CLASS

S. PROGRAM CODE

10. REPORT NO.

021287

021287

II

700

One

RELATED CASE FILE NUMBERS

UNDEVELOPED LEADS TO

None

## TYPE OF REPORT

☐ Test☐ Search Warrants☐ Penetration☐ Memorandum☐ Initial Source☐ Source Detail☐ Investigative☐ Subsequent Service☐ Subsequent Report☐ Background☐ Request for☒ Cover assistance

SYNOPSIS

This office was contacted by the Tallahassee Police Department on February 5, 1987, who requested assistance in attempting to identify two adult males and six minor children, all taken into custody the previous day. The men, arrested and charged with multiple counts of child abuse, were being very evasive with police in the questions being asked of them pursuant the children and their condition.

This agent contacted SS/A, Bob Harrold, RAC/Reston, Virginia, and requested telephone numbers and names of police persons in area police departments in an attempt to follow-up on two leads which were a Virginia license number and that the children had commented about living in a Washington, D.C., commune.

Subsequently, this office received a telephone call from the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department inquiring about the men and children. This office put the MPD and the TPD in contact with each other.

## 15. DISTRIBUTION

RAC/JX; SAC/TA; RAC/DC

## 16. SIGNATURE

Walter F. Kreitzberg III  
Special Agent

A/CER

ARLIES

SE

## 17. APPROVED (Type Name &amp; Title)

Fredric D. Haiduk  
Resident Agent in Charge

S/DIV

RIB

SE

## 18. ORIGIN OFFICE

Office of Enforcement  
227 N. Bronough St., Rm 6045  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

## 19. TELEPHONE NUMBER

965-7608

## 20. SPECIALIST'S INITIALS

dtv

JCSA



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
CONTINUATION

4700-01 (27) (Rev. 12-1-77)

1. PAGE	PAGE
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2. CASE NUMBER	
3. SUB/CASE NUMBER	
one	

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION:

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, this office was contacted via telephone, by sergeant, JoAnn VanMETER of the Tallahassee Police Department, Juvenile Division. Sgt. VanMETER requested assistance in identifying two adult males and six minor children ages 7 years to 2 years.

The adult males were tentatively identified by TPD as Michael HOULIHAN and Douglas AMMERMAN, both of Washington, D.C., who were arrested the previous day on charges of child abuse.

The police had received an anonymous telephone call relative two well-dressed white men wearing suits and ties in Myers Park, (Tallahassee), apparently watching six dirty and unkempt children in the playground area. HOULIHAN and AMMERMAN were near a 1980 Blue Dodge van bearing Virginia license number XHW-557, the inside of which was later described as foul-smelling filled with maps, books, letters, with a mattress situated to the rear of the van which appeared as if it were used as a bed, and the overall appearance of the van gave the impression that all eight persons were living in it.

The children were covered with insect bites, were very dirty, most of the children were not wearing underwear and all the children had not been bathed in many days.

The men were arrested and charged with multiple counts of child abuse and lodged in the Leon County Jail. Once in custody the men were somewhat evasive in their answers to the police regarding the children and stated only that they both were the children's teachers and that all were enroute to Mexico to establish a school for brilliant children.

The children tentatively were identified as Mary HOULIHAN, white female, age 7; Max LIVINGSTON, white male, age 6; Benjamin FRANKLIN, white male, age 4; HoneyBee EVANS, white female, age 3; B.B., white male, age 2; and John Paul HOULIHAN, white male, age 2. The children initially indicated that they lived in tents in a commune in the Washington, D.C., area and were going to Mexico to go to a school for smart kids.

This office contacted the Office of the SAC/DC and spoke with SS/A, Bob Harrold. This agent requested telephone numbers and names of police persons in area departments that might be aware of said activities described by the children and to follow-up on the leads which were the Virginia license number and a check on the men's names with local law enforcement.



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
CONTINUATION

1200-01 (2/71) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l) (m) (n) (o) (p) (q) (r) (s) (t) (u) (v) (w) (x) (y) (z)

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A short time later this office was contacted by Detective, Jim Bradley of the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department. Bradley indicated that the case here in Tallahassee appeared to be strongly related to a case he was currently working in the Washington, D.C. area.

He stated that the actions of the two men in custody in Tallahassee relative the children just might give his case enough probable cause for search warrants to search premises occupied by a cult group called the FINDERS.

This agent directed Bradley to telephone TPD and discuss with police directly any activities forthcoming relative the instant case.

At this time it was determined that there was no Customs violations found to exist and therefore, this case is being closed pending receipt of additional information.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY LESD/TECS: Create a permanent DRR/TECS record.

IDENTIFYING DATA/TECS-FIN QUERIES:

AMMERMAN, Douglas Edward (F-23B attached)	SUBSTANTIATED	NCIC: Negative TECS: " CMIR: " CTR: " FBA: Negative PAIRS: Negative
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HOWELL, James Michael (CF-23B attached)	SUBSTANTIATED	NCIC: Negative TECS: " CMIR: " CTR: Negative FBA: " PAIRS: Negative
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"FINDERS" (CF-23B attached)	ALLEGED	NCIC: NEGATIVE TECS: NEGATIVE CMIR: " CTR: " FBA: " PAIRS: "
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MEMO TO FILE

To : Resident Agent in Charge

Date: 02/07/87

From : Special Agent *CP*

Subject: Customs cooperation/interest in  
Tallahassee/Washington HPD child abuse investigation.

On Thursday, 2/5/87, the duty agent, SS/A Bob Harrold, received a call from SS/A Walter Krietlow, USCS, Tallahassee, Florida. SS/A Krietlow was seeking assistance in contacting an appropriate local police agency to coordinate a child abuse investigation in with the Tallahassee Police Department. SS/A Krietlow further requested assistance in checking some names, addresses and a vehicle through the Customs Child Pornography Unit data base, and stated there was some suspicion of the subjects being involved in supplying children for the production of child pornography. Further, he was informed by the Tallahassee Police Department that the children may have been enroute to Mexico from the Washington, D.C. area. The possibility of Customs interest in the investigation due to possible violations of the Child Protection Act of 1984, and the alleged nexus with the U.S./Mexican Border were discussed and agreed upon. SS/A Krietlow related the following background information. SS/A Krietlow was contacted by the Tallahassee Police Department for assistance in identifying six children and two adults taken into custody in the Tallahassee area. U.S. Customs was contacted because the police officers involved suspected the adults of being involved in child pornography and knew the Customs Service to have a network of child pornography investigators, and of the existence of the Child Pornography and Protection Unit. SS/A Krietlow stated the two adults were well dressed white males. They had custody of six white children (boys and girls), ages three to six years. The children were observed to be poorly dressed, bruised, dirty, and behaving like animals in a public park in Tallahassee. The police were notified by a concerned citizen and all eight persons were taken into custody. The subjects were living out of a white 1979 Dodge van, Virginia license no. XNW 557. Upon being taken into custody, the adult white males refused to cooperate, one of whom produced a "business" card with a name on one side and a statement on the other. The statement indicated that the bearer knew his constitutional rights to remain silent and that he intended to do so. Upon interviewing the children, the police officers found that they could not adequately identify themselves or their custodians. Further, they stated they were enroute to Mexico to attend a school for "smart kids." SS/A Krietlow was further advised the children were unaware of the function and purpose of telephones, televisions and toilets, and that the children had stated they were not allowed to live indoors and were only given food as a reward.

After receiving the request from Tallahassee, SS/A Harrold contacted me while I was on official business, at Customs Headquarters. He requested that I conduct computer checks on the Customs Child Pornography Unit data base. The checks were to be conducted on the names, addresses, and a vehicle provided by SS/A Krietlow. After conducting the computer checks, I made direct contact with SS/A Krietlow to inform him that all the checks were negative. At that time I was informed by SS/A Krietlow that the Tallahassee police had discovered large quantities of records, to include computer discs and a U.S. passport in the van. From some of these records the police had obtained tentative identification of the two adults, and partial identification of the children. Furthermore, the two Washington, D.C. addresses had been discovered through these documents, one of which was verified through the vehicle registration. I advised SS/A Krietlow I was leaving Headquarters and he would be receiving a response to the remainder of his request from SS/A Harrold. I then left as stated and proceeded to conduct other business in the District.

A short time later, at approximately 11:30 a.m., SS/A Harrold contacted me by radio, and advised me that a Detective Jim Bradley of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) was interested in the information provided by SS/A Krietlow, was in contact with Tallahassee, and would very probably be conducting search warrants in the area later in the day. He also informed me that U.S. Customs was invited to participate due to the continuing possibility of violations of law enforced by the Customs Service. As I was already in Washington, I terminated my other business and proceeded to make contact with Detective Bradley, Intelligence Division, MPD.

Upon contacting Detective Bradley, I learned that he had initiated an investigation on the two addresses provided by the Tallahassee Police Dept. during December of 1985. An informant had given him information regarding a cult, known as the "Finders" operating various businesses out of a warehouse located at 1307 4th St., N.E., and were supposed to be housing children at 3918/3920 W St., N.W. The information was specific in describing "blood rituals" and sexual orgies involving children, and an as yet unsolved murder in which the Finders may be involved. With the information provided by the informant, Detective Bradley was able to match some of the children in Tallahassee with names of children known alleged to be in the custody of the Finders. Furthermore, Bradley was able to match the tentative ID of the adults with known members of the Finders. I stood by while Bradley consulted with AUSA Barry Bonner and obtained search warrants for the two premises. I advised acting SAC SS/A Tim Holloran of my intention to accompany MPD on the execution of the warrants, received his permission, and was joined by SS/A Harrold. SS/A Harrold accompanied the team which went to 1307 4th St, and I went to 3918/20 W St.

During the execution of the warrant at 3918/20 W St., I was

able to observe and access the entire building. I saw large quantities of children's clothing and toys. The clothing consisting of diapers and clothes in the toddler to pre-school range. No children were found on the premises. There were several subjects on the premises. Only one was deemed to be connected with the Finders. The rest were renting living space from this individual. He was identified as Stuart Miles SILVERSTONE, DOB/061941, U.S. Passport No. 010958991. SILVERSTONE was located in a room equipped with several computers, printers, and numerous documents. cursory examination of the documents revealed detailed instructions for obtaining children for unspecified purposes. The instructions included the impregnation of female members of the community known as Finders, purchasing children, trading, and kidnapping. There were telex messages using MCI account numbers between a computer terminal believed to be located in the same room, and others located across the country and in foreign locations. One such telex specifically ordered the purchase of two children in Hong Kong to be arranged through a contact in the Chinese Embassy there. Another telex expressed an interest in "bank secrecy" situations. Other documents identified interests in high-tech transfers to the United Kingdom, numerous properties under the control of the Finders, a keen interest in terrorism, explosives, and the evasion of law enforcement. Also found in the "computer room" was a detailed summary of the events surrounding the arrest and taking into custody of the two adults and six children in Tallahassee, Florida on the previous night. There were also a set of instructions which appeared to be broadcast via a computer network which advised participants to move "the children" and keep them moving through different jurisdictions, and instructions on how to avoid police attention.

One of the residents was identified as a Chinese National. Due to the telex discovered referencing the Chinese Embassy in Hong Kong, he was fully identified for future reference: WANG/Gengxin, DOB/092747, POB/Tianjin, People's Republic of China Passport No. 324999, entered the U.S. on January 22, 1987, admitted until December 31, 1987. He is in the U.S. as a graduate student in the Anatomy Department of Georgetown University. His Visa was issued on November 10, 1986, in London, England, number 00143.

During the course of the evening, I contacted Sector 4 to initiate a TECS check on SILVERSTONE, and initiate an archives check on him for the last four years. I also contacted SS/A Holloran to keep him advised of the proceedings and asked for and received permission to contact SS/A John Sullivan of the CFPD to query some names through the CFPD data base. SS/A Holloran told me he would call Southeast Region Headquarters to keep them posted on the proceedings as well. I later contacted SS/A Sullivan for the stated purpose, and in the discussion that followed, I gave him some background on the purpose of the request. I advised him that the information was not for dissemination at Headquarters, that Region was being notified,

and that Region would probably contact Headquarters later if deemed necessary. SS/A Sullivan assured me that the information would go no further until official notification was made by Region. No positive matches were obtained from the CPPU data base. I was later joined at the W Street address by SS/A Harrold. SS/A Harrold advised me that there were extremely large quantities of documents and computer equipment at the warehouse, and that MPD was posting officers inside the building there and sealing the building until morning, in which a second warrant for that premises would be obtained and executed. SS/A Harrold also advised me that the news media had been notified and had been waiting for the execution of the warrant at the 4th Street address. Detective Bradley later stated that the MPD Public Information Officer had been contacted by a Tallahassee reporter. When it became apparent the PIO had no information on the search warrants, the reporter contacted local media representatives and a check of public records containing the affidavits for the search warrants disclosed the locations and purpose of the warrants. Detective Bradley surmised that someone on the Tallahassee Police Department was the original source of information for the press. I advised SS/A Holloran of the involvement of the press, and he stated that he would, in turn, relay the information to Region. SS/A Harrold and I assisted in the transport of the evidence seized pursuant to the warrant and cleared MPD after the press left the area.

On Friday, 2/6/87, I met Detective Bradley at the warehouse on 4th Street, N.E. I duly advised my acting group supervisor, SS/A Don Bludworth. I was again granted unlimited access to the premises. I was able to observe numerous documents which described explicit sexual conduct between the members of the community known as finders. I also saw a large collection of photographs of unidentified persons. Some of the photographs were nudes, believed to be of members of finders. There were numerous photos of children, some nude, at least one of which was a photo of a child "on display" and appearing to accent the child's genitals. I was only able to examine a very small amount of the photos at this time. However, one of the officers presented me with a photo album for my review. The album contained a series of photos of adults and children dressed in white sheets participating in a "blood ritual." The ritual centered around the execution of at least two goats. The photos portrayed the execution, disembowelment, skinning and dismemberment of the goats at the hands of the children. This included the removal of the testes of a male goat, the discovery of a female goat's "womb" and the "baby goats" inside the womb, and the presentation of a goats head to one of the children.

Further inspection of the premises disclosed numerous files relating to activities of the organization in different parts of the world. Locations I observed are as follows: London, Germany, the Bahamas, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Africa, Costa Rica, and "Europe." There was also a file identified as



"Palestinian." Other files were identified by member name or "project" name. The projects appearing to be operated for commercial purposes under front names for the Finders. There was one file entitled "Pentagon Break-In," and others which referred to members operating in foreign countries. Not observed by me but related by an MPD officer, were intelligence files on private families not related to the Finders. The process undertaken appears to have been a systematic response to local newspaper advertisements for babysitters, tutors, etc. A member of the Finders would respond and gather as much information as possible about the habits, identity, occupation, etc., of the family. The use to which this information was to be put is still unknown. There was also a large amount of data collected on various child care organizations.

The warehouse contained a large library, two kitchens, a sauna, hot-tub, and a "video room." The video room seemed to be set up as an indoctrination center. It also appeared that the organization had the capability to produce its own videos. There were what appeared to be training areas for children and what appeared to be an altar set up in a residential area of the warehouse. Many jars of urine and feces were located in this area.

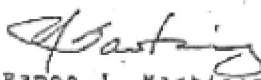
I should also mention that both premises were equipped with satellite dish antennas.

I discussed the course of action to be taken by MPD with Detective Bradley. He stated he was only interested in making the child abuse case(s). I was assured that all of the evidence would be available to U.S. Customs in furtherance of any investigative/criminal action pursued. MPD personnel were to begin around the clock review and sorting of the evidence until completed. Customs will have access after this is accomplished. This will include several U.S. Passports discovered during the search.

Upon leaving the 4th Street premises, I encountered a news media representative and was asked the reason behind U.S. Customs involvement in the investigation. I advised the reporter that I could not discuss anything and referred her to the RAC/DC. I left immediately thereafter.

There is no further information available at this time. It should take three to five days for all the information to be sorted, reviewed, logged by the MPD. I will maintain contact with Detective Bradley until the evidence is again accessible.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ramon J. Martinez  
Special Agent, USCS



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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

4700-1 (27), FPMR (38 CFR) 101-11.6

1. TICS ACCESS CODE C-3	
2. PAGE 1	3. OF 2
4. CASE NUMBER	

5. TITLE

FINDERS

6. CASE STATUS

<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Draft Pending	<input type="checkbox"/> Open & Close	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Index & File	<input type="checkbox"/> Closing Report
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7. REPORT DATE

04/13/87

8. DATE ASSIGNED

02/05/87

9. ELAIS

1

10. PROGRAM CODE

700

11. REPORT NO

1

12. RELATED CASE FILE NUMBERS

13. UNDEVELOPED LEADS TO

None

14. TYPE OF REPORT

<input type="checkbox"/> Tax	<input type="checkbox"/> Search Warrant Exemptions	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Care Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum of Interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Source Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Source Detail
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Investigative Findings	<input type="checkbox"/> Subpoena Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Subpoena Return	<input type="checkbox"/> Subpoena	<input type="checkbox"/> Return for Confidential	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, Senior Special Agent Harrold and I assisted the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) with two search warrants involving the possible sexual exploitation of children. During the course of the search warrants, numerous documents were discovered which appeared to be concerned with international trafficking in children, high tech transfer to the United Kingdom, and international transfer of currency.

15. DISTRIBUTION		16. SIGNATURE (Type Name & Title)	
SAC/VA SAC/VA Beach RAC/Tallahassee		<i>Ramon J. Martinez</i> Ramon J. Martinez, Special Agent	
17. APPROVED (Type Name & Title)			
<i>Lynwood Rountree</i> LYNWOOD ROUNTREE, Resident Agent in Charge			
18. ORIGIN OFFICE	19. TELEPHONE NUMBER		
Resident Agent in Charge	40		



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE  
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
CONTINUATION

4700-01 (27) FORM (5-84) (Rev. 1-78)

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3. ALPORT NUMBER	1

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION:

On March 31, 1987, I contacted Detective James Bradley of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). I was to meet with Detective Bradley to review the documents seized pursuant to two search warrants executed in February 1987. The meeting was to take place on April 2 or 3, 1987.

On April 2, 1987, I arrived at MPD at approximately 9:00 a.m. Detective Bradley was not available. I spoke to a third party who was willing to discuss the case with me on a strictly "off the record" basis.

I was advised that all the passport data had been turned over to the State Department for their investigation. The State Department in turn, advised MPD that all travel and use of the passports by the holders of the passports was within the law and no action would be taken. This included travel to Moscow, North Korea, and North Vietnam from the late 1950's to mid 1970's.

The individual further advised me of circumstances which indicated that the investigation into the activity of the FINDERS had become a CIA internal matter. The MPD report has been classified secret and was not available for review. I was advised that the FBI had withdrawn from the investigation several weeks prior and that the FBI Foreign Counter Intelligence Division had directed MPD not to advise the FBI Washington Field Office of anything that had transpired.

No further information will be available. No further action will be taken.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY LESD/TECS:

No action to be taken on the basis of this report.

## ctrl

- [<-- Thread -->](#)
- [<-- Date -->](#)

• Find

# [CTRL] The Finders' Keeper: An Interview with Marion Pettie

RoadsEnd

Wed, 23 Dec 1998 13:06:55 -0500

-Caveat Lector-

an article from:  
Steamshovel Press #16 1998  
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ISSN 1060-3795

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A GREAT job of reporting by esteemable CTRL member Mr. Kenn Thomas.  
Lots to think about. The players, but no game say Mr. Pettie,... maybe?  
Hmmm...

Lots of other great articles and pixs. Go out and find, if you are serious.

Merry Christmas, Ted.

Om

K

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The Finders' Keeper: An Interview with Marion Pettie

By Kenn Thomas and Len Bracken, ©1998

A 1994 reference work- on utopian communities refers to the Finders as "a rather spontaneous non-organization ... Their overall approach to life is to make it into a game--a challenging and educational process where the rules change from week to week, day to day, sometimes even by the hour." Contrast that with investigator Ted Gunderson's handwritten description, attached to Treasury Department memoranda on the Finders that Ted Gunderson circulates in a info-packet about the group: "the Finders are a "CIA front established in the 1960s. It has TOP CLEARANCE and PROTECTION in its ASSIGNED task of kidnapping and torture-programming young children throughout the US. Members

are specially trained GOVERNMENT KIDNAPPERS known to be sexual degenerates who involve children in Satanic sex orgies and bloody rituals as well as murders of other children and slaughter of animals."

The Finders group found itself in the news in February 1987 when an anonymous caller phoned police to report two formally dressed men (Michael Houlihan and Douglas Ammerman) supervising six casually dressed children--according to police, they were unkempt, disheveled and bruised--at Myers Park in Tallahassee, Florida. The police charged the men, members of the Finders, with child abuse, and Detective Jim Bradley of the metropolitan police in Washington, DC, used the arrest as a pretext to raid one of the Finders' properties there, Bradley's men seized evidence they said may have been indicative of an organized ring of pedophilic child kidnappers who made animal sacrifices to Satan.

A report by Customs Special Agent Ramon J. Martinez claimed that documents found at the Finders property "revealed detailed instructions for obtaining children for unspecified purposes. The instructions included the impregnation of female members of the community known as the Finders, purchasing children, trading, and kidnapping. One telex specifically ordered the purchase of two children in Hung Kong to be arranged through a contact in the Chinese embassy there-" Martinez also reported that the seized Finders evidence included "numerous photos of children, some nude, at least one of which was a photo of a child 'on display' and appearing to accent the child's genitals ... a series of photos of adults and children dressed in white sheets participating in a "blood ritual." The ritual centered around the execution, disembowelment, skinning and dismemberment of the goats at the hands of the children, this included the removal of the testes of a male goat, the discovery of a female goat's 'womb' and the 'baby goats' inside the womb and the presentation of a goat's head to one of the children."

Despite this, charges against the men in Tallahassee were dropped, the children were sent home to their parents unharmed (although the court attached conditions to the return of two of them), and prosecutions were not pursued in DC. Police authorities both in DC and Florida complained that the case was mishandled because the Finders work for the CIA. When Martinez went to meet with Detective Bradley to review the case, he was directed to a third party who advised that all the passport data from the seized Finders material checked out as legal. According to Martinez, "the individual further advised me of circumstances which indicated that the investigation into the activity of the Finders had become a CIA internal matter. The MPD (DC metropolitan police) report has been classified secret and was not available for review. I was advised that the FBI had withdrawn from the investigation several weeks prior and that FBI Foreign Counter Intelligence Division had directed MPD not to advise the FBI Washington Field office of anything that had transpired."

The Justice Department released Martinez's report and other documents about the Finders when it opened a new investigation into the group's activities in 1993, in part to determine if the CIA had put the kibosh on the 1987 investigation. One memo claimed that the "CIA made one contact and admitted to owning the Finders organization as a front for a domestic computer training operation, but that it had gone bad." The operation, called Future Enterprises, had hired a Finder, but dismissed him when his connection to the group was exposed. North Carolina's Democratic representative Charlie Rose and

Florida's Republican representative Tom Lewis supported and publicized that investigation, as did a former CIA operative named Skip Clemens (reported upon by Chris Roth in Steamshovel Press #111 see also pp. 295-296 of Popular Alienation.)

The Finders have more-or-less rational explanations for even the most bizarre behavior attributed to them, especially in the context of a group that exists to challenge social paradigms. Even the goat sacrifices, known as "Goatgate" to the group, have been attributed to the Finders just play-acting at being witches and warlocks, another "game" to dumbfound lookers-on. Many of the Finders' games serve as parody or put-on. The store windows of its offices include strange scarecrow artifacts and bumper sticker slogans like "Call Police" with the letter "C" missing. The words "Promise Keepers" adorn the marquis of an old theater owned by the Finders, although their meaning-perhaps something to do with the manic Mtn of the infamous Christian movement Promise Keepers--is lost to strangers. Not all the weirdest at Finders HQ is Finders generated, however. Travelers arrive at Finders headquarter in Culpeper, Virginia, an hour and a half northwest of Washington, DC, via state route 666

The Tallahassee incident and subsequent interest placed the Finders' reputation at the center of DC's conspiracy culture. That's no small feat in a town where Operation Monarch sex-slave operations and powerful pedophilic politicians rule the rumor roost. Steamshovel editor Kenn Thomas and author Len Bracken (whose 1990 novel Freeplay included fictionalized reference to the Finders) dropped in unannounced at the Finders facilities. At the time, eight former members had filed a chancery action against the group to recover money they had pooled into they currently considered a defunct partnership. More evidence that Goatgate did cost the Finders money and members. Marion Pettie was still holding court in Culpeper, however, and granted the -following impromptu interview. It is presented here as a rare look at the controversies surrounding the group, verbatim from the perspective of the main personality at its core.

Q: How far back can you trace the origins of the Finders?

A- I had two apartments back in the 30s and 40s in Washington and just kept open house. It was supported by the gift economy and I would throw something in, Some people would say I threw in my good taste. So anyway, it goes back that far. Four people here with me now have been with me for over twenty-five years- In fact, I kept another thing called the Free State back in the hippy period, back in the mountains here.

Q: The Free State?

A- Yeah, it was called the Free State and it was known all over the world.

Q: This was where?

A; About twenty miles from here. About a hundred people would usually be there at any one time. A few other people have done that. A man named Gottlieb, have you ever heard of him, a musician? He kept open house like that and the government came out and closed him down. But the local authorities let me keep it going up there.

Q: This was the 40s?

A: No, we've moved up to the 60s here. Before that, just to give you an idea of the time period, the sheriff came out and put a gun on me one day and said, "show me some ID." I showed it to him and he says, "Oh, I know you. You're the guy what keeps beatniks." So I kept open house to beatniks. We're talking about the 50s now. Going back to World War II, I kept open house mainly to intelligence and counterintelligence people in Washington. OSS people passing through, things like that. So the open house at that time was more or less at that level. The main ones were beatniks, though, like Dick Dabney. Ever heard his name?

Q: What's the name?

A: Dick Dabney, He was the number two king of the beatniks in Washington and a novelist.

Q: But the group is basically different from the Kerouac/Ginsberg/Burroughs type crowd?

A: I just keep open house. That's about all I do. It changes as people show up. Basically, we have about 600 acres up there and a few houses and people who are here more or less permanently now-They spend part of the time in this town [Culpepper] and part of the time in DC and part of the time up in the mountains, and another part traveling all over the world.

Q: But it's still basically the same drift in, drift out kind of thing.

A: Nobody signs anything.

Q: It's an interesting philosophical difference with the culture at large.

A: Personally, I'd say the only thing that has been different is --I'm closest to being Taoist.

Q: I noticed you have a Lao Tzu quote framed on the wall there.

A: Two ministers were going to come over here and pray for me. I thought you two might have been them.

Q: [laughter]

A: They said they had a problem with me being a skeptic and me being in this town.

Q: There's a church next door. That's got to be difficult.

A: How so?

O: I was thinking in terms of having a bohemian crowd around. Also, that's a real thing to infiltrate in terms of the intelligence agencies.

A: Some investigators back in the 60s tailed me for four years. At first they said they thought I was a dope dealer big time because, I didn't use it myself. Then they decided that I was a front for the CIA. They asked I was a front for the CIA. Of course I wouldn't have told them anyway, but I asked

those people, they said they ran the name through the computer and they said, "No, we don't own that guy." So then the investigator says, "I've been working on you for four years and I can't figure out what you're doing. What the hell are you doing?" So the point is that actually I'm not doing anything, just enjoying life and working on good ideas all of the time. I considered when I was 12 years old that my mission in life was to know everything and do nothing.

Q: I wonder if in the 1950s you ever encountered the name Wilhelm Reich or any of the Reichian people?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Do you have any specific memories about that?

A: At that particular time I also kept open house mainly to the humanist psychology movement. They would come up to the country and have all these various gatherings and movements and some of them were Reichians. But I wouldn't say that I'm an expert on Reich. I think I've read most of his books. I would say that I had an interest but I don't really have any inside connection to that personally.

Q: Reich's last years were in Jail, as you know, and he was considered paranoid, and they burned his books and all that. He was considered paranoid because he said he was a victim of a Rockefeller conspiracy. But Rockefeller was the money behind the New Republic which ran an anti-Reich smear campaign and whose editor, Michael Straight, later confessed to being a Soviet spy.

A: He was a little bit paranoid, they said ... when a plane would go over, hed say it was one of Rockefeller's planes...

Q: Eisenhower's...

A- It might have been a mixture of both of those.

Q: What do you make then of these stories that connect the Finders up to a pedophilia ring in the CIA?

A- The pedophiles and all that stuff..

Q: That's all smear?

A; I just kept open house to a lot of the counter-intelligence and intelligence people over the years. I have been reported to their security officers probably plenty of times for trying to find out what's going on in the world. I've tried all of my life to get behind the scenes in the CIA. I sent my wife in as a spy, to spy on the CIA for me. She was very happy about it, happy to tell me everything she found out. She was in a key place, you know with the records, and she could find out things for me. And my son worked for Air America which was a proprietary of the CIA. There are some connections, but not to me personally.

Q: But do you have any suspicions ... the Finders sounds like a real open group that attracts a lot different elements ... disinformation stories could be planted by certain elements to try to connect it to pedophilia...



A: The reason the CIA wouldn't hire me is that they wouldn't have the control factor over me. That's one of the things. They may have used me at some time without me knowing it. They have categories of unwitting agents. Maybe you two were sent here by them. But I'm pretty open about this kind of stuff, though. They wouldn't hire me as a contract employee because I wouldn't sign the papers. Anybody that's a contract employee must sign an agreement and then they pay you out the money. Well, I don't

need the money, but I am trying to find out all about them. Basically, the one sentence about the CIA is that I have been studying them since before they were born, I was studying them back in the 30s. It was ONI

Back then [Office of Naval Intelligence], and then the Coordinator of Information comes on, and after that it turns into the OSS and OSS turns into the CIAU and the CIAU turns into the CIA. So I've been studying that all of my life. But I wasn't personally working for them.

Q: The renown case, of course, took place in Florida.

A! Would you like to hear about it?

Q: I'd like to hear everything you have to say about it, actually.

A: It's very simple, We had the kids and the general idea was that they would go up to the country up there, twenty miles from here, and they would go to school, a self-governing school. Adults would be available to them, intelligent, well-balanced people. And they would never be alone with it kid so that no one could accuse them of any pedophiles stuff. At least two would have to be there. As far as I know, they did all that. Then they were just taking them on a camping trip to Florida. There were four intellectuals with them and they just happen to drive into a park and somebody was suspicious because the two men were well

dressed They had four people with them on the trip and they were all well-educated, well-balanced people. So I don't think them

was any funny stuff going on.

Q: There were just police suspicions?

A: Well, somebody called up and said, "there's two well-dressed men with some kids in a van over there," So the police come and then they take them down and by their standards these well-dressed men weren't answering the questions properly- So then they called Washington and somebody in the Washington police says, "Yeah, we know those people. They're Finders and we're just about to find out what they're up to up here and we'll use this as an excuse to go in there and rig them."

Q: So you were still under surveillance by them.

A: Surveillance? I have been personally, I know, for forty years because in other countries and so forth, counter-intelligence, come out and want to know what !'in doing ... if you go around acting mysterious and just find out what's going on, naturally, people come to find out what it is.

Q: So then it snowballs. First there are unfounded suspicions by these people and the police. The local police connect to here in Washington and they say, "oh yeah, we know about the Finders" :and that plays into their paranoia.

A, Then it goes back down to here.- Like I said, in the 60s I was under surveillance for four years, from '64 to '68, and they get all their files out and everybody starts comparing them. Basically, they come up with idea th "we don't know what with the, idea they're doing. We don't know who they're connected with," What were those people called in Holland?

Q- The Provos?

A: Yeah. We are more or less like Provos or Situationists or something like. Actually, we're not connected with anybody, other than trying to know what's going on the world and improve the world a little bit.

Q: So you haven't heard anything more about that? A guy named Skip Clemons took all this and turned it into, "this is a Satanic cult." Apparently his daughter actually successfully prosecuted somebody for satanic ritual abuse at a Montessori school. Have you heard of this?

A; Oh yeah. Maybe this is something big.

Q: There's also a computer trainingcenter that was actually training CIA guys how to operate, right?

A. There's some partial truth to it. We go out and do emergency services and get employment for a lot of people. So one of them was in there working, where you're talking about, but we didn't have any connection other than one man going down there. And the man didn't know it but he was so-called "hiring a Finder". Tile company was actually doing training for the CIA- We had no particular connection to that man other than what anybody else would call a temp worker. But it looks like on the surface that it all ties together- A lot of these things do happen, but we're not connected anymore than any of the individuals in the Provo of the Situationists were. Maybe there are some people who have been around here have been doing some intelligence work. I don't know about it. Mainly, there's no connection and it's just like I'm telling you- Individuals, I don't know. People show up. They may be sent here by the CIA, the FBI, the state police or anybody.

Q: Having it such a loose association furthers that. It's not like you join the Finders and get a membership card.

A; That's right.

Q: It's a scene. Drop in, drop out.

A: There's no such thing as the Finders. It's just a group term for people who like to hang around me. That could be anybodyThere's nothing in writing. There's not even a group,

Q: I notice you're reading Arthur Koestler's Thirteenth Tribe. Is that a particular interest of yours? Did you know Koestler?

A- I didn't know him, but I really like his books, his style of writing.

Q: Did you know Tim Leary?

A, Yeah.

Q: Was he in and out of the Finders scene?

A; At one time, when he was up in New York, he would send people down here and somebody[sic] got tired of something down here, they would go up there. It was a pretty close connection. He gave me LSD but I never took it. I kept it in the ice box in case I wanted to take it. I figured it must be pretty good if it came from him.

Q: Did he ever ask you about it afterward?

A: No. Actually, one of the people connected with Leary accidentally burned the house down. He was; putting in a sauna and he was so efficient he burned the house down and burned the LSD up- I never did take it, But I had a particularly close connection to him at that time, were talking about the 60s again, by me running a place down here and him running one up there and people going back and forth all of the time.

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STEAMSHOVEL DEBRIS, The Finders

Readers will find the most interesting material that circulates

about the Finders below. It comes from an memo entitled "Investigative Leads" with the attribution that It was "produced sometime during the 1980s/authorship unknown."

Pettie met Joseph Chiang, a chinese agent operating under Journalistic cover, in 1939 and remained in close contact with him throughout the war. Around this time Pettie also made Connections with the OSS, through George Varga, Earl D. Brodie and Nick Von Neuman (John Von Neumann's brother) -- all lowlevel OSS officers. Sometime near the end of the war, Chiang introduced Pettie to Charles E. marsh, at the National Press Club. Marsh, who ran the best private intelligence network of his era and was an intimate of FDR, Henry Wallace and later Lyndon Johnson, became, Pettie's mentor and role model, shaping[sic] his career. (Marsh's mentor and role model was Colonel Edward M. House, who was a personal advisor to President Wilson, circa 1919, often mentioned in connection to the Council on Foreign relations). Marsh died in December 1964. His last known address was Austin, Texas.

In the 1950s and 60s Marsh provided funds for Pettie to purchase hundreds of acres of farmland in Madison and Rappahannock Counties, near his estate in Culpeper County. Later Petty arranged for William Yandell Elliott (1896- ) of Harvard University to purchase a property adjacent to him, in" Madison County. Elliott was a government professor at Harvard University who was on the National Security Council's planning board and a trustee of Radio Liberty (sponsored by the CIA). As of 1984 Elliott was a board member of Accuracy in media. Wrote numerous books.

In 1946 Pettie, acting as chauffeur to General Ira Eaker, Marsh arranged for him to be trained in counterintelligence in Baltimore, Maryland. Around this time Pettie established close ties to two guards of atom bomb secrets, Captain Michael Altier (?) and Major Harry Wolanin, both retired. In 1954 Pettie recruited Eric Heiberg who lost his NSA clearance at about this time. Heiberg was redeployed as a private investigator and subsequently as a talent spotter at Georgetown University (now retired). Pettie received intelligence training at Georgetown University in 1956 and was sent to USAF intelligence training school in Frankfurt, Germany in 1956-1957. Through Marsh, Pettie got his wife a job with the CIA from 1957 to early 1961, working in Washington as secretary and in Germany for the Chief of Station, Frankfurt- Colonel Leonard Weigner, USAF (deceased 1990) trained Pettie and advised Pettie retire from active military service and surround himself with kooks, recruiting agents from youth hostels and universities. Major George Varga became Pettie's case officer, relaying Weigner's instructions until Varga died in the 1970s,

Under Varga's instructions, Pettie recruited a network of agents in Europe, including Dr. Keith Arnold (recruited in Paris in 1958) who he accompanied to Moscow in 1959 or 1960. Arnold, currently based in Hong Kong with the Roche Foundation, has made over 40 trips to mainland China and has stayed in contact with Pettie. In the 1960s Pettie established connections with the 'beat' movement. Norman Mailer and Dick Dabney (died in November 1981) frequented his Virginia farm. Dabney's widow Dana has extensive files on Pettie. Peter Gillingham (intermediate Technology. Palo Alto, CA) and Christopher Sonne (currently Goldman saches, NY) met Pettie in Moscow in 1961. In the early 60s Pettie allowed Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis to use his Virginia property for the School of Living, a 'decentralist' one-world government front organization. Around 1964 Pettie recruited Bosco Nedelcovic and deployed him to penetrate the Institute for Policy Studies (he is currently an interpreter at the war College in Washington). In 1967 or 1968 Pettie established a 'futurist, network, assisting Edward S. Cornish in founding the World Future Society and working through Roy Mason and John Naisbitt. At this time Pettie also penetrated the hippy drug culture through retired naval intelligence officers Wait Schneider (Timothy Leary and Billy Hitchcock's private pilot) and Willard Poulsen (cut out bewtween[sic] Pettie activities and those of Leary at millbrook), In 1971 Pettie infiltrated the 'human potential' movement, setting up Ken Kesey (Living Love) as a prominent guru and working through Dr. Stephen Beltz (related to Judith Beltz, a behavior modification specialist more recently deployed to the Institute of Cultural Affairs and the Meta Network cult.

Christopher Bird, former CIA officer who served in Japan and a psych warfare specialist in the Army, and author of New Age and occult books has also been associated with Pettie. Bird wrote The Secret Life of Plants with Peter Tompkins, New York: Avon, 1974, Tompkins wrote on new age subjects like the pyramids, and once served in the OSS (now anti-CIA).

Pettie's activities took a different turn in 1979 when he recruited John J. Cox. founder of general Scientific (a computer firm specializing in classified defense, contracts). Cox trained several of Pettie's Finders in computer programming and communications technologies and took two or more Of them to Costa Rica and Panama in 1980-81. Cox worked through Miguel Barzuna, a prominent Costa Rican money launderer, the Vienna, Virginia-based Institute for International Development and Cuban exile Emilio Rivera in Costa Rica and Panama. Through Cox, Pettie and the Finders linked up with several Washington area computer-oriented groups, including Community Computers, a front

organziation[sic] for The Community, a cult run by Michael Rios (aka Michael Versacc). (Pettie's son, David Pettie, is a member of the Community, Pettie's other son, George, may be the one who was in Air America) Cox also recruited Theordore[sic] G. reiss (wife; Ann), 4 reston-based computer programmer and highly active member of Werner Erhard Seminars (EST). Cox also recruited Susan Gabriel and Judith Beltz as couriers. Pettie and Cox have simulated a failing out and pretend to be enemies...

Pps 2-10

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Aloha, He'Ping,  
Om, Shalom, Salaam.  
Em Hotep, Peace Be,  
Omnia Bona Bonis,  
All My Relations.  
Adieu, Adios, Aloha.  
Amen.  
Roads End  
Kris

#### DECLARATION & DISCLAIMER

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- Reply via email to

RoadsEnd

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February 12, 1987, Thursday, Final Edition  
SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1

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## **HEADLINE: Officials Weigh Future of Finders' Children; Two Members Plead Not Guilty to Misdemeanor Neglect Charges in Florida**

*BYLINE: Marc Fisher, Victoria Churchville, Washington Post Staff Writers*

**BODY:** As police wind down their investigations of the Washington-based Finders commune, the process begins to determine the future of the six children found unkempt and hungry in a van with two Finders members in Florida last week -- a process that experts said yesterday is likely to be long and complex.

The children, who range in age from 2 to 7, will remain in emergency shelters until a March 9 hearing at which child advocates will argue that the youngsters should be declared dependents of the state, said Connie Ruggles, spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in Tallahassee.

While Florida law requires that the state try to reunite families, the state's neglect law may prevent that. And cases in other states provide precedent for dramatic state intervention in child-rearing by religious or communal groups.

The two Finders members found with the children, Douglas Ammerman, 27, and Michael Holwell, 23, pleaded not guilty yesterday to a misdemeanor charge of child neglect in Tallahassee.

Prosecutor C.L. Fordham told Leon County Judge George Reynolds III that the \$ 100,000 bond set for each of the two Finders members is justified by the mystery surrounding the case. Reynolds appointed a public defender to represent the men, who previously said they had a private attorney. Ammerman and Holwell have refused to answer questions.

The Finders, a secretive group of about 20 people who lived communally, generally refuse to talk about the group to outsiders. Their leader, Marion Pettie, advocates a philosophy of "falling limp," both physically and mentally, in the face of opposition. During his arrest last week, Holwell pretended to faint and had to be carried to a police car, police said.

The Finders' failure to seek custody of the children has puzzled Florida authorities. While spokesmen for the group in Washington say the mothers want their children back, no one from the Finders has contacted state officials, Ruggles said.

"We don't even know who the parents are," she said.

But a spokeswoman for the group said last night that the five mothers were already on their way to Tallahassee to reclaim their children.

"They waited to finish the FBI interviews first before they went to Tallahassee," said Diane Sherwood, who said the women were in San Francisco Feb. 4 when the men were arrested.

"The mothers wanted to go right to Tallahassee, their first instinct was to go right for the children . . . [but] the FBI was asking them to come to Washington, so it seemed like the thing to do. We thought there'd be papers here, a subpoena or something. We didn't really know where to go first."

Sherwood said the mothers were not aware of the arrests until two days later. A Finders spokesman said previously that communication among group members had been fragmented by police seizures here of sophisticated computer hookups and long-distance telephone numbers.

A Finders member reached at the group's warehouse yesterday said the "father of record" of each child is not necessarily that child's biological father.

"We don't consider fatherhood to be a healthy concept," said the man, who spoke on condition that he not be named. "We're all fathers of all the kids and any man who has a good relationship with the child is the father."

Sherwood ridiculed the accusations of abuse. "A hundred thousand dollars bond for a misdemeanor? What were the charges -- dirty faces and mismatched clothes? . . . If there was a mistake in judgment, it was a mistake in judgment; it's not child abuse."

Nevertheless, Sherwood said, the mothers felt that if they had been left in charge of the children, there would have been no allegations of abuse.

Despite the Finders' unorthodox child-rearing philosophy, Ruggles said "an alternative life style is not automatically neglect. But if the parents come forward and object to state custody, we would investigate the home situation."

Under Florida's neglect law, children can be taken by the state if the parents deprive children -- or "allow children to be deprived" -- of food, clothing, shelter or medical treatment. The Finders say children should be weaned from their mothers and reared by the group with little adult supervision.

Similar cases have pitted governments against groups with unusual beliefs. In 1984, police and welfare authorities in Vermont raided the Kingdom Community Church and rounded up 112 children after an investigation found that children were sometimes whipped with branches or rods for crying, daydreaming or fibbing. Criminal abuse charges were eventually dropped and prosecutors are now seeking a ruling on whether church members must send their children to school, said Vermont Attorney General Jeff Amestoy.

In another case, involving a radical New York commune called the Fourth Wall Repertory Company, member Marice Pappo said commune leaders took her infant from her because she and the child had grown too attached. Harold Mayerson, Pappo's lawyer in a custody suit, said the group denied children their right to bond with parents. But Martin Stolar, attorney for Pappo's husband, said the state "has to be very careful about what it determines is a fit environment."



Some psychiatrists argue for state protection of children living in cults and cult-like settings. David Halperin, a psychiatry professor at Mount Sinai Medical School in New York City, said members of some such groups often profess to take care of their children, but in fact ignore them.

"Within these groups, the parents tend to focus on their own state of being and children tend to be seen as an impediment," he said. "A group cannot relate to a child the same way a parent can relate to a child."

This is not the first time the Finders' child rearing has attracted government attention. A grandmother of one of the children now in Florida said her grandson and other Finders' children have been sheltered by the District twice in recent years. In October 1985, D.C. police picked up two children they found wandering "cold and hungry" near the group's warehouse, the grandmother said. A D.C. government source confirmed that the children were held "for several days" before being released.

One year earlier, District police detained a Finders member who refused to leave the house where she lived with her mother, the grandmother said. That woman's child also was placed in a city shelter temporarily.

Finders spokesman Robert Gardner Terrell confirmed both incidents, explaining that Finders children are allowed to roam freely in the country but are supervised in the city.

Staff writer Ed Bruske contributed to this report.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, DOUGLAS AMMEREMAN, AND MICHAEL HOLWELL DURING APPEARANCE IN FLORIDA COURTROOM YESTERDAY. EACH IS BEING HELD IN LIEU OF 100,000 BOND. AP

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LENGTH: 541 words

## **HEADLINE: Fla. Judge Sends 2 Finders Children To Foster Homes**

BYLINE: Marc Fisher

BODY:

A Florida judge has declared two children of members of the Finders commune to be dependents of the state. Judge Victor Cawthon last week ordered two children who grew up in the Washington-based Finders group placed in foster homes.

The judge's ruling was the final act in the state's attempt to sort through the affairs of the secretive group that found itself the subject of intense public scrutiny in February, when police in Tallahassee received an anonymous phone call about two well-dressed men and six disheveled children in a local park.

Within hours, police in Florida, Virginia and the District, joined by the FBI and even Interpol, were on the case. Authorities raided the Finders' homes, confiscated records and photographs, and publicly speculated whether the group was involved in satanism, child abuse or pornography. While none of the more lurid possibilities was confirmed, the Finders proved to be an avowedly private and elusive group of about 20 people, many of whom had lived together since the late 1960s.

Public interest in the Finders quickly centered on their unusual child-rearing philosophy, in which youngsters were raised communally and were left largely to their own devices.

The two Finders in Florida with children of other group members were held in jail for six weeks, then released when a judge dismissed child abuse charges. In March, another judge returned four of the children to their mothers, who had retained a Florida lawyer.

But at the direction of Marion Pettie, the group's founder and intellectual leader, two mothers, Kristin Knauth and Pat Livingston, refused to hire a lawyer, argue for the return of their children or even remain in Florida. They said Pettie told them that since the court had the best interests of the children in mind, they should not participate in the judicial process, according to Paula Walborsky, a Tallahassee lawyer who represented the other Finders mothers.

"Those children should have been returned to their mothers, but they didn't go through the system," Walborsky said. "The state felt these mothers had abandoned their children when they returned to Washington. I saw them with their children, and I know all these women love their children."

Connie Ruggles, spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, confirmed that the two children, Ben Knauth, 4, and Max Livingston, 6, are in foster homes. She said their cases will be reviewed every six months. "The judge felt circumstances were not right to reunite them with their family," Ruggles said.

Cawthon had closed the hearing to the public, as is his option in Leon County.

Walborsky said the state presented no evidence that the children were abused or neglected, and the judge declared the children wards of the state for "educational reasons." Ruggles declined to comment on the hearing.

George Wisnovsky of the Jacksonville FBI office said the agency "is no longer investigating the Finders."

The Finders, who announced the dissolution of their group in March, are still together and living in California, according to several people who were in contact with them in Florida. Neither Walborsky nor Ruggles has spoken to group members in recent weeks.

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## **HEADLINE: Finding Truth About Finders Proves to Be No Simple Matter**

BYLINE: Marc Fisher, Washington Post Staff Writer

### **BODY:**

In the past week, the Finders have been called both commune and cult. In police accounts, court documents and the news media, the secretive Washington-based group has been accused of child abuse and neglect, along with a sometimes nasty type of pranksterism. Simultaneously, the Finders are portrayed as accomplished academics immersed in a 20-year-old social experiment.

Police, cult-watch groups and reporters have scrambled for information -- with only mixed success -- about the Finders while two members of the group sit in a Tallahassee, Fla., jail cell, facing misdemeanor charges of neglecting six unkempt children found traveling with them in a van.

Yesterday's developments in the case of the unusual commune only exacerbated the confusion that official statements and news accounts have engendered: Virginia state police used a backhoe to dig up a 30-foot-by-12-foot plot of land at a Finders-owned farm in rural Madison County. The police, who were responding to tips that they would find bodies buried there, found nothing. "The investigation is becoming routine," said police spokesman Charles Vaughan.

A child abuse expert hired by Florida's social service agency examined the six Finders children and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to say whether they had been sexually abused. Nathan Greenberg, an Illinois psychologist, said he found no evidence of recent physical harm. Tallahassee police dropped their description of the Finders as a satanic cult, but stood by their statement that two of the children appear to have been sexually abused.

Tallahassee police continued to hold Finders members Michael Holwell, 23, and Douglas Ammerman, 27, on misdemeanor charges of child neglect and resisting arrest without violence. And police in Florida filed an affidavit in which one of the children is quoted as saying that Finders leader Marion Pettie "tells everyone what to do. He is in charge. We kids slept outside and the mommies slept inside . . . Mr. Pettie weans the kids from moms."

The whereabouts of the 66-year-old Pettie, the central figure in the group, remained a secret yesterday. Former Finders who have been in touch with the group said he is in daily telephone contact with the group.

The Finders' unorthodox approach to child raising, a communal upbringing virtually free of supervision, is the focus of the public debate over a group that has been aggressively private.

Within hours after police in Florida were tipped to the Finders van Feb. 4, and immediately after Washington police raided two Finders properties here, news accounts and official statements percolated with talk of abuse, neglect and satanic rituals. The latter accusations were bolstered by the discoveries of a circle of stones in the backyard of the Finders' W Street house and of photographs showing members and their children wearing white robes while slaughtering goats at the group's Virginia farm.

But as with all matters involving the group Pettie founded in the late 1960s as an experiment in communal life, things may not be as they seem. Supporters and critics of the group now agree that the strange rites are an example of Pettie's love for playing games, rather than an expression of pagan beliefs.

"Those goats were vicious," said a former Finders member who asked not to be identified. "The group decided to eat them rather than keep them as pets. To then create a dramatic scene with robes and so on was to impress the kids of the seriousness of killing an animal."

District and Florida police, after initially using words such as "cult" and "rituals" to describe the Finders, have softened their rhetoric. The Tallahassee police said they based their early language on District police accounts. But District police announced Monday that they had no evidence indicating that the Finders had satanic beliefs.

As investigations into the Finders continue, the evidence does not fit neatly into categories of black or white.

Some examples of the gray areas:

"Members have argued that the group is being unfairly maligned. At the same time, the group has failed to cooperate with police in Florida. Tallahassee police yesterday issued a public appeal to Robert Gardner Terrell, a Finders member who has given numerous media interviews in recent days, to contact Florida authorities. Terrell said the mothers of the six children have returned to Washington, but aren't heading to Florida any time soon.

"We don't think we've done anything wrong and as of right now, we're not planning to defend ourselves," Terrell said yesterday. In a separate interview, he commented that "when you have a storm raging and your children are stuck on an island, sometimes the best thing is not to cross the raging waters but to wait until the storm dies down."

Tallahassee police spokesman Scott Hunt said: "This has probably gone far enough. We need to have face-to-face contact with these people."

"Finders members and former members concede that they have peppered people they consider to be opponents with nasty, even abusive letters and telephone calls. That kind of behavior has gotten group members in trouble with the law, but their defenders say it is simply another case of the public's misunderstanding a group that relishes its position on the fringe of society.

A former Finders member said that members of the group used calls and letters in a "campaign that you could call harassment" against Arlington County juvenile court Judge Andrew Ferrari in 1983 when Ferrari ruled that a child of the former member should be separated from the family and placed in a group home.

Ferrari said he received calls at his office and home from several members of the group who argued that the child was being deprived of his freedom.

"They didn't threaten me," the judge said. "The attitude was, 'How could you be so unconstitutional?' "

In another case, a lawyer in Culpeper, Va., obtained a court order preventing the Finders from harassing him about a divorce case in which he represented a former member. The lawyer, John Davies, said Finders had used letters and phone calls to disconcert him.

In a third case, a former member of the group said the Finders slashed his tires after he rejected their teachings.

A former member offered by Terrell as an expert on the Finders confirmed that the group does "act as a mirror on behavior against us. We fight fire with humor. Members would call the judge and say, 'You better take good care of that kid or he'll come back some day and go after you.' Now that might seem harassing to a negative person, but I find it really very funny."

Many of the group's ways can be explained in a series of aphorisms that Pettie and group members use to describe their philosophy. "Don't explain, don't complain," they say about their secrecy. "Jokes and pokes" and "brevity and levity" are the slogans they use to explain their passion for humor.

Meanwhile the Finders have decided to talk to the press -- a move one former member called "tantamount to throwing your religion out the window" -- but have resisted dealing with the government authorities they have long considered anathema.

"It's not safe to be a communal group in this society," said a former Finder who lived with the group for four years and remains close to Pettie.

Staff writer Victoria Churchville contributed to this report.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, MARION PETTIE.

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## **HEADLINE: CIA tied to cult accused of abuse ; Justice probes links to Finders**

BYLINE: Paul M. Rodriguez; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

### **BODY:**

A Justice Department special task force is investigating whether the CIA used a cult called the Finders as a front organization to provide computer training to intelligence agents in the 1980s.

The task force is also trying to determine whether the CIA - in an effort to hide any links with the Finders - impeded local law enforcement probes of the Washington-area communal group for child abuse in 1987.

"The central question being asked is: Did the CIA have an association with this group and did it try to shut down their [state and local officials'] investigations of child abuse for purposes of protecting one or more of its operations?" said a senior federal law enforcement official familiar with the probe.

A senior CIA official yesterday denied that the agency was involved with the Finders or tried to impede police probes of the cult.

"Most days we expect our share of unusual questions, but this one is clear off the wall," a CIA spokesman told The Washington Times.

"Any claim that we obstructed justice in this case is nuts," the spokesman said.

"In fact," he said, reading from a prepared statement, "we cooperated with law enforcement authorities when questions arose in 1987."

A Washington computer-training company that employed Finders members said it trained CIA personnel, but the firm's president denied it was owned by the Finders. He said he was unaware of any use of the training for covert activities.

Justice Department officials have declined to discuss what, if anything, their probe has uncovered. "We are still in the review process," a senior official said.

The Finders, a group that has dwindled from about 40 members to fewer than a dozen, made front-page news in February 1987 when two of its members were arrested in Tallahassee, Fla., on charges of child abuse.

The case received close media scrutiny partly because of accusations that the group was involved in satanic rituals, but the charges were dismissed by a Florida judge.

The Justice Department formed the task force in mid-November after several members of Congress received copies of previously confidential U.S. Customs Service records suggesting a cover-up in the Finders case to protect the CIA.

The Times has obtained these customs records and documents from both federal and local law enforcement agencies and the intelligence community that chronicle the investigation of the Finders.

One of the key documents that have prompted the Justice Department and members of Congress to question what happened six years ago is a report dated April 13, 1987, that was written by a junior Customs Service agent who was on the original team that raided Finders property in Washington and Virginia.

"The investigation into the activity of the Finders had become a CIA internal matter. . . . [The Metropolitan Police Department] report has been classified Secret and not available for review," the agent wrote in his memo to superiors.

"I was advised that the FBI had withdrawn from the investigation several weeks prior and that the FBI Foreign Counter Intelligence Division had directed MPD not to advise the FBI Washington Field Office of anything that had transpired," the memo says.

"No further information will be available. No further action will be taken."

Other Customs Service documents and records from the FBI and Metropolitan Police provide indications that the CIA had links to the Finders or at least to some of the group's members.

A Metropolitan Police document dated Feb. 19, 1987, quotes a CIA agent as confirming that his agency was sending its personnel to "a Finders Corp., Future Enterprises, for training in computer operations."

And a later Customs Service report says that the CIA "admitted to owning the Finders organization as a front for a domestic computer training operation but that it had 'gone bad.' "

A senior Customs Service official confirmed the content of the memos and said the agency "only had a small role in the case."

A CIA official who asked not to be named confirmed that the agency had sent personnel for computer training to a company called Future Enterprises Inc.

But he cautioned, "I'm not sure if that was a Finders organization" as suggested by the Metropolitan Police and Customs Service reports.

Joseph Marinich, the president of Future Enterprises Inc., said he once had a contract to train CIA employees in computers.

But he denied that he or his firm had any involvement with the Finders or acted as a front company for the cult on behalf of the CIA. "I'm shocked and appalled that our company's name exists in any" law enforcement files.

Mr. Marinich said that when the news reports on the Finders broke in February 1987, he discovered that his tax accountant, R. Gardner Terrell, was a member of the group.

"It was a total surprise to us," and Mr. Terrell's employment was ended, Mr. Marinich said.

Mr. Terrell, who left the Finders a few years ago and no longer lives in the Washington area, could not be reached. But a friend confirmed that he worked for Future Enterprises while a member of the Finders.

Current and former members of the group said Mr. Terrell's work for Future Enterprises was separate from the group's other activities.

Current members of the Finders said they did not have any interest in Future Enterprises and denied working for the CIA or any other intelligence organization.

"I guess you could say we're odd," said Steve Usdin, a free-lance writer associated with the Finders. "But we're not criminal."

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**February 15, 1987, Sunday, City Edition**

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LENGTH: 2593 words

## **HEADLINE: Finding the Finders // Tangled trail leads to mystery group**

BYLINE: LARRY KING

### **BODY:**

On the southwest summit of a Tallahassee park sits a small playground with a slide, a merry-go-round and six painted-pony swings.

It was there, 11 days ago, that six ragamuffin tykes romped around Myers Park on a late, cloudy Wednesday afternoon. Watching them were two neatly dressed, mustachioed men who leaned against a blue Dodge Sportsman van that stank of rotting produce.

Acting on an anonymous tip, police arrived, charged the men with child abuse and placed the children in foster care. Soon officials were talking of a devil-worshiping cult, of bloodletting rituals and child trafficking.

That began the abidingly weird case of six small children and the inscrutable community from which they came - a secretive, Washington-based group known as the Finders.

Who the children are, how they got to the park, and under what circumstances - none of the answers has been confirmed. Each seems tied to the practices of the Finders, a communal group led by an elusive former Air Force sergeant named Marion Pettie.

The group has been called eccentric, playful, brainwashing, loving, destructive, even satanic - a label that police now admit was wrong.

The only consensus is that the Finders - a group devoted to odd game-playing and permissive, communal child-rearing - are very unorthodox.

Even critics admit that the Finders' philosophy is not illegal. But they say the group practices mind control and unhealthy lifestyles that can harm adults and children.

"It is not illegal what they are doing," says Father Mike Rokos, an executive board member of the national Cult Awareness Network. "But that doesn't necessarily mean it's right."

"Granted, we have an alternative lifestyle," says a Finders member who claims to be the mother of one of the children in Tallahassee. "We're different from Mr. and Mrs. America next door."

### **The children**

From the playground, the children went to the Tallahassee police station. The boys said their names were Max and Ben and John Paul and Bee Bee. The girls went by Mary and Honeybee.

"They were hungry. It was cold outside, and they'd been sleeping outside. They were tired," says police spokesman Scott Hunt. "We feel that we've got a pretty good (abuse) case to go on."

According to police reports, the children, ages 2 to 7, said they hadn't eaten since morning. They were dirty and bitten by insects. Most wore no underwear. "The older children stated that they had to do good things to be rewarded with food, and they were given oranges, bananas, carrots and raw potatoes to eat," officer Tony Mashburn wrote.

According to one court document, the children said Finders leader Pettie "tells everyone what to do; he is in charge. We kids slept outside and the mommies slept inside. The moms dress up and go out and do money jobs. Mr. Pettie weans the kids from their moms."

An expert on child abuse hired by the state of Florida, Dr. Nauman Greenberg of Chicago, said Tuesday that the children were withdrawn, isolated, depressed, "clinging" and immature.

All the children ate a lot, Greenberg said, and one even hoarded food. "One said, 'I like it here because I don't have to go outside.'" The children remain in state-run shelters, their identities still not officially confirmed. Five women claiming to be the mothers of the children arrived in Tallahassee on Friday and hired a lawyer to help them regain custody from the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Custody hearings are expected next month.

The men charged with abusing the children have been tentatively identified as Douglas Ammerman, 27, and Michael Holwell, 28, also known as Michael Houlihan. Both men are from Washington, and both are thought to be Finders members.

They remain in jail on misdemeanor charges, saddled with \$ 100,000 bail that their court-appointed attorney calls "outrageous." They have pleaded not guilty and are scheduled for trial in late March.

In the days after the arrests, police raided Finders-owned properties in Washington and rural Virginia. They seized computer equipment, documents, photographs, telephone numbers and, among other things, two goat skins and a goat head.

But if they have any clear grasp of the Finders and their beliefs, officials aren't saying so.

"So far it's very strange," says Leon County Assistant State Attorney C.L. Fordham, who is prosecuting the case. "There are more unknowns and questions in this case than in any other I've seen."

### **'Weird press'**

*Could we but in another's ear  
Our windy salutations hear,  
'Twould make us meek.  
Be quick then, as our Lord requests.  
Be truthful, full of wit and zest.  
We bid thee, speak.*

So went the message on the Finders' Washington telephone answering machine last week. A message at another number was sung in four-part harmony.

Other glimpses of the Finders last week were equally strange. A member addressed a press conference while turned away from the cameras, wearing a Ronald Reagan mask on the back of his head. At a Finders warehouse, a shredded white flag flew overhead, symbolizing surrender.

On the door of their Georgetown duplex, members pasted newspaper clippings that portrayed them as satanists.

"There is a lot of practical joking, a kind of poking fun at the majority, if you will," says Carl Shapley, a Maryland educator who says he used to visit the Finders about once a month. "These are generous, wonderful people who are very benevolent. They've gotten such weird press, it needs to be turned around as to who they really are."

It started Feb. 6, when Tallahassee police spokesman Hunt called the group "some type of satanic cult." He said adults were permitted to join the group if "they give up the rights to their children."

Meanwhile, police in rural Virginia dug up part of a Finders' farm after getting a tip that bodies were buried there. They found nothing.

By Monday police were backing off, saying they found no evidence that the Finders, as a group, practiced anything criminal.

Hunt said his satanic description came from police in Washington, D.C., and Virginia who had obtained search warrants to seize Finders' property.

One search warrant affidavit, filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, told of a clearing in the woods behind the Finders' duplex in Washington: "Several round stones had been gathered near the circle," it said, and "this practice is sometimes used in satanic rituals." The site turned out to be well beyond Finders' property.

Another affidavit, filed in Madison County, Va., contained 11 photographs of a goat-butchered session. They were taken from a Finders photo album entitled, "The Execution of Henrietta and Igor."

Many photos contained captions, such as, "The goats are tied. Max wields a knife," "Stan pronounces death sentence," "Ben eats chicken before the kill," "Max moves in," and "Dead Igor." Early news reports described these as part of a cultlike bloodletting ceremony.

The photos depict three men in white smocks butchering two goats - Henrietta and Igor - on the Finders' farm in rural Virginia. Small children are watching. The sequence culminates with the children opening Henrietta's uterus and playing with a goat fetus.

"Baby goats " the caption says.

## **The Finders**

Normally a secretive group, the Finders and their acquaintances seemed compelled to explain the group last week.

Pettie, 66, founded the organization in the late '60s or early '70s, they said, basically as a commune for educated professionals seeking self-improvement. They share finances, living quarters and child-rearing duties.

The group has about 40 adults and seven children, members say. Some of them spend summers on farmland in southwestern Virginia, winters in warm areas such as Florida. The rest of the year they live in Washington.

The goat-butcherer took place in Virginia as the group prepared to move south, explains longtime Finders member Diane Sherwood.

"None of us had ever slaughtered an animal before in our lives, we're all urban, yuppie types," Sherwood says. "We wanted the children to be in a warm place for the winter, so preparatory to the trip we slaughtered the goats. Does this sound like child abuse to you?"

Finders members include former editors, lawyers, accountants and professors, says Ann Reiss, a Reston, Va., housewife who says she has known Finders members for several years.

"They don't want permanent jobs," Reiss says. "They're into flexibility to the max."

Children are reared in an unstructured, sometimes experimental way, Reiss says. Sometimes children are separated from the adults to see how they'll interact. If children don't want to wear clothes, they don't.

"Some adult is always with them," Sherwood says. "What we try to do is respond to the kids, respond to their questions, respond to their needs, rather than to impose a structure."

Members have meetings led by an appointed "Game Caller," where they decide what to do for the coming day or week. Sometimes it amounts to just that - a game.

"For instance, sometimes they may say, 'The children are in charge today,'" Carl Shapley says. "And the adults get down and crawl around on their hands and knees and do what the children say."

Most of the time, Shapley says, Marion Pettie acts as Game Caller.

He has not been available for comment since the arrests.

"He is one of the eccentrics of our time, a totally benevolent and benign man," Shapley says. "He's like a character out of Alice in Wonderland. I think he can be the Mad Hatter sometimes, and I think he can be the Rabbit sometimes, and sometimes the Red Queen. He has kind of a twinkle in his eye all the time."

### **The trek to Florida**

Sometimes the Game Caller sends the Finders on what they call "adventures." Members, on the spur of the moment, will travel and take temporary jobs to earn money for the commune.

"One of the things they do is emergency services, typing and mailing and so forth," says Reiss, whose husband runs a computer consulting business. "One time we needed some office work done. So they came marching in, single file and singing, 30 or 40 of them."

Occasionally, adventures involve long-distance travel.

Finders say the children's trek to Florida began in January. From Washington, they say, two members took the children to Berea, Ky., to inspect a fledgling commune that interested them.

"We were kind of surprised when they showed up here before daybreak," says the Rev. Jim Wycker, a retired minister planning the commune known as New Hope. "They said they'd drove all night."

Wycker recalls that the children were well-behaved. "There was no fussin' and squallin' and yappin' and hittin' and kickin', none of it."

Finders say the men had permission from the children's mothers to take them camping in warm climates. Heading to Florida was not unusual, since members of the group spent part of the 1986 winter in a Tampa neighborhood.

"I basically consider that everybody here is helping me to parent my child," said a Finders mother who refused to give her name. "To me, having my son sent off on a trip with those men was just like sending him off with his favorite uncles."

Diane Sherwood says she was on a "working adventure" in San Francisco with the children's mothers when they heard of the arrests.

"We were frightened. We didn't know what to do. We found out on a Friday, we had a meeting on Saturday, we flew back on Sunday... By this time (Tallahassee police) had 300 people calling and saying they were the parents."

Sherwood said members will try to reclaim their children.

"It's something very difficult to explain to a judge in North Florida that the children are coming home to a perfectly proper home," she said. "We're talking about something very subjective, and the burden of proof is on us."

### **'Finders aren't harmless'**

Courtney Knauth, a Washington bank employee, doesn't think the Finders are all fun and games.

She says her granddaughter is one of the children in state custody.

And she says she has lost her daughter Kristin, the child's mother, to the Finders.

"Kristin is not only bright, but she is a very good artist. She is very good at music, and she writes like an angel," Knauth says of her daughter. "I guess my daughter was just a little depressed and was trying to figure out what she wanted to do in life."

Kristin was 21, and had just dropped out of college when she joined the Finders, Knauth says. "Nobody knew then that it was a cult. She said, 'Mom, I'm moving out. And I'll miss you.' " Gradually, Knauth says, Kristin stopped visiting or telephoning.

After three years with the Finders, Kristin cut off all communication.

Mother and daughter haven't spoken for two years.

Toward the end of their contact, Kristin was always accompanied by another Finders member who took notes of their conversations, Knauth says. They explained that they discussed their conversations with the group.

"If you want me to say that she had a vague, vacant, Zombie-like look in her eyes, I can't say that," Knauth says. "In some ways she was like herself, in some ways not. She seemed unable to synthesize new information."

Knauth says she visited the Finders' Washington duplex last week.

She was told that she might not hear from Kristin for 20 years.

"I don't think they abuse their kids, and I don't think they worship the devil," Knauth says of the group. "But the Finders aren't harmless, and we who have been in contact with them know that..."

"I don't think the bottom line of the Finders, whatever it is, is love."

*- Staff writer Lucy Morgan contributed to this report, in which material from AP was used.*

GRAPHIC: BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO, (6); BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO, Larry King, (2); BLACK AND WHITE MAP, Anne Hand; Mary; Max; Ben; Honey Bee; Bee Bee; John Paul; The door of the Finders' duplex in Washington, D.C. is covered with recent newspaper clippings; The Finders' house in Madison, Va. was a focus of last week's investigations; Map of east coast from Virginia to Florida showing 5 Finder related locations

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