

Transcript to Presentation - False Memory – The Movement and the Foundation – by Anneke Lucas, SRA International Conference, July 16, 2023

Elizabeth Loftus wrote the bestseller on the False Memory Syndrome.

In 1974, the Department of Transportation awarded Loftus — then a newly minted Ph.D. in psychology — a grant to study memory distortion among eyewitnesses of car accidents. That same year, she used her findings to assist a public defender in a murder trial; and ever since Loftus has had no shortage of work as an expert witness.

In the early '90s, Loftus took a particular interest in cases involving child sex abuse. She has stated that she herself was molested at age six, and that she simply does not know how the experience might have affected her.

In 1996 the Toronto Star wrote: Elizabeth Loftus is a research psychologist, with no clinical experience and no expertise in child sexual abuse or traumatic memory, who criss crosses the continent as a highly paid witness for the accused.

Based on what is commonly known as the “Lost in the Mall study” in 1990, as Professor of psychology at the University of Washington, Loftus offered her undergrad students 5 credits for creating the study. Her student, Jim Coan, accepted.

The study subject would be his own 14-year-old little brother. With the help of their mother, Jim described 4 events his little brother had supposedly experienced as a child. 3 were true, but one was false, which was that at age 5, he'd gotten lost at a shopping mall. The 14-year-old was then asked to journal about these 4 events, and he also wrote about the mall, having accepted the details of what his brother and mother told him and elaborating further on his own.

Loftus, together with another then undergrad student Jacqueline Pickrell, then repeated the procedure Jim Coan had developed with 24 more subjects. At the conclusion of the experiment,

the subjects were told 1 of the 4 memories they were given was false. 19 correctly picked the mall memory as false. Only 6 “fully” or “partially” as the study says, believed the false memory, which included the 14-year-old boy from the pilot. The study does not specify what “partially” means in this setting. It is also not known if any of the subjects would have continued to believe the false memory over time, after the study was finished. Another key factor in the study was the role of the older sibling and/or parent as the supposed “eyewitnesses” to the fake incident, which is not only powerfully suggestive, but rather resembles tactics perpetrators use to gaslight their victims and manipulate their memories. According to Loftus, her study proved how therapists, who could never claim to be “eyewitnesses,” could implant traumatic memories of sexual abuse in their patients, even though the study was not about traumatic memory repression.

Loftus has served as an expert witness against survivors in over 300 trials, where she often cites the mall study as evidence. When Loftus publicly states, as she did in her TED talk and in many courtrooms, that “about a quarter” of people can be made to believe false memories that are externally implanted, she is actually citing the figure that originated with the six subjects in the mall study, who “partially or fully” believed the false memory suggested by their older family member, right after it was suggested to them. I am not a scientist, but considering the known facts, I cannot comprehend how any intelligent person could call the mall study anything but informal and sloppy. Other similar studies followed, in particular by Psychology professor Alan Scoboria, but none of the false memory lab experiments assess whether a recovered memory of sexual or ritualistic abuse can be implanted by a therapist, nor have any studies asked the question of why licensed therapists and social workers would be overcome with the bizarre desire to implant false memories of sexual abuse and extreme violence in some of their patients.

After developing the pilot for Loftus, Jim Coan later (1993) refined his study methodology for his own senior thesis titled “Creating False Memories” for the Psychology Honors Program at the University of Washington. He reported that “all subjects were able to identify the false memory.” Now a neuroscientist and psychology professor at the University of Virginia, Jim Coan

says that it took him a while to realize the study he worked on was making people who had been sexually abused feel like he was their enemy.” He says it was completely devastating to him. Although he has been asked to testify about false memory in countless court cases, Coan has always refused. He does not believe the mall study is sufficiently relevant. He believes Loftus may have “mischaracterized” an undergraduate assignment for extra credit. He says: “I got five points, and decades of grief.”

Loftus was an expert witness on false memory on behalf of the McMartin Pre-School case defendants, child murderer George Franklin, Boston street Priest Paul Shanley, O.J. Simpson, Robert Durst, Martha Stewart, Michael Jackson, the police officers in the Rodney King beating, The Hillside Strangler, Bill Cosby, the Duke University Lacrosse Players, Harvey Weinstein, Ghislaine Maxwell and, serial killer Ted Bundy, among many. As mentioned earlier, she has served as the star expert witness for over 300 cases to discredit survivors. She has never testified on behalf of a plaintiff in these cases.

In 1996 Loftus suddenly resigned from the American Psychological Association after 2 separate ethics complaints had been filed against her. The rule with the APA is that no member is allowed to resign while an ethics complaint is being investigated, but, Loftus claims, she “didn’t know about these complaints.” Jennifer Hoult and Lynn Crook had recovered memories of early childhood sexual abuse, had found corroborating evidence, and each successfully sued their abuser father. Lynn Crook’s father was defended by Loftus. After the verdict, Loftus lied about Lynn Crook’s case to the media. Loftus was not involved in the Hoult vs. Hoult case, but she wrote an article titled “Remembering Dangerously” citing the case as “an example of unreliable memory and implausible recovered memories.” Hoult’s father, a professor at MIT, after taking the appeal as far as he could and losing each time, then became a board member of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, of which Loftus was also a member.

The FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME FOUNDATION was founded in 1992 by husband and wife team Peter and Pamela Freyd, after their adult daughter, Psychology Professor Jennifer Freyd,

privately accused her father, a well-known mathematician, of sexually abusing her when she was a child.

To be perfectly clear, FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME has never been ratified by The American Psychological Association or any serious or mainstream diagnostic system as a psychological syndrome or an actual diagnosis. It is not now or never was listed in the DSM, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders. While it is not unusual for a syndrome to get its own foundation, it is extremely unusual for a non-existent – in other words a false syndrome - to get its own foundation.

For a while, the power of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation was such that it seemed that the only people in the world with false memories were those who reported Satanic ritual or child sexual abuse. It also seemed that the only people with accurate memories were accused abusers who were denying the abuse had occurred. A particular focus of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation was the diagnosis of dissociative identity disorder, a real diagnosis which had not been contested before.

The Freyds, who were raised together as step siblings, joined with other accused parents, and established a 'Scientific and Professional Advisory Board'.

The first people they approached were Ralph Underwager, a psychologist and Lutheran minister, and his wife Hollida Wakefield. These two had a history of supporting accused parents, like themselves.

Underwager and Wakefield claimed that their own adult children were victims of therapists who encouraged the recovery of 'false memories'.

Underwager was already well known for his views against child protection, and he had already famously stated in the media and in courtrooms that "60% of women sexually abused in childhood reported that the experience was 'good for them'".

He gave evidence for the defense in over 200 child sexual abuse cases around the world.

In 1991, a year before the False Memory Foundation was created, together with his wife Hollida Wakefield, Underwager had given an interview to the Dutch magazine, *Paidika: The Journal of Paedophilia*. Underwager had stated: "*Pedophiles can boldly and courageously affirm what they choose. They can say: I believe this is in fact part of God's will.*"

When the interview was discovered, Underwager resigned from the False Memory Syndrome Foundation Board, but his wife Hollida Wakefield, who had been part of the interview and co-authored books with her husband, did stay on as a Board member.

She said to find out if pedophilia was harmful: "It would be nice if someone could get some kind of big research grant to do a longitudinal study of, let's say, 100 12-year old boys in relationships with "loving" pedophiles."

Another Advisory Board member, James Randi, a magician and famous sceptic of the paranormal and of holistic healing methods, had been recorded as having sexually explicit phone conversations with teenagers.

The website proudly featured no less than 48 advisory board members. One psychologist, Rosalind Dymond Cartwright's profile stated: "Personal knowledge of a repressed-memory tragedy led Dr. Cartwright to join the FMSF board. And then she is quoted saying: "A friend and colleague had an adult daughter in therapy accuse him of childhood sexual abuse. It was my best judgment that this was unbelievable of the person I knew and could only be induced by the therapist." Interesting words from a doctor who has joined an organization created to attack what they claim are "unproven and unscientific" theories of recovered memories, yet her judgment was based solely on her bias towards an accused parent, without inquiry into the matter, or even a conversation with the accusing daughter. Her feeling sufficed as proof. And this was right on the website of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation.

SRA survivor Mary Knight made an excellent documentary titled "Am I crazy?" in which she questions the False Memory experts in interviews that are extremely revealing. For example, Eleanor Goldstein, who published three books on false memory, squarely puts responsibility for

child molestation with the child, on camera. Her daughter, Dr. Stacy Goldstein Sharlet who is a survivor of child sexual abuse, also appears in the film, pointing to her mother's lies. Mary Knight also interviews Elizabeth Loftus, Pamela Freyd and False Memory Syndrome Foundation Board Member Psychologist Dr. Loren Pankratz. All feel comfortable to speak freely, and Mary Knight's reactions and responses to their inconsistencies in logic, and their perversities, are priceless.

Throughout the 1990s, major media outlets typically dismissed or ignored the academic research suggesting that amnesic dissociation often occurs during trauma. Psychiatrist Bessel Van der Kolk, also featured in "Am I crazy?" says that there are now hundreds of studies on lots of different populations showing that people forget trauma. He says: "We see it in victims of sexual abuse, natural disaster, torture, rape, war, and kidnapping. And research also shows that delayed memories of abuse are as reliable as continuous memories."

In 1995, the PBS investigative series *Frontline* ran a documentary titled "Divided Memories."

Ross Cheit, a survivor and professor of political science at Brown, said: "Though this film purported to present a balanced view of (what the media termed) 'the memory wars,' it largely sided with the False Memory Syndrome Foundation." - The Foundation's Founder Peter Freyd agreed, and said the documentary was "openly an advocate for our side."

Numerous prominent academics jumped on the False Memory bandwagon. In 2005, Richard McNally, a professor of psychology at Harvard, published a blistering critique of recovered memory therapy, *Remembering Trauma*. This Harvard University Press book next received a glowing review in *Science Magazine*.

The False Memory Syndrome Foundation paid psychiatrist Paul McHugh of Johns Hopkins roughly \$110,000 to write *Try to Remember: Psychiatry's Clash over Meaning, Memory, and Mind* (2008). This False Memory Syndrome Foundation-commissioned treatise was also widely praised in the national media and by prominent scholars. For example, neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga, declared that with this book, "America's premier pioneering biological psychiatrist...

blows the whistle on sloppy and trendy thinking in psychiatry.” Describing McHugh as though he were a brave whistle blower while he was on paid assignment might have been funny, if enough people had noticed the irony.

But the mainstream press kept publishing sympathetic profiles of the academics who sided with the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. For example, in an eight-part feature published by *Slate* in 2010, titled [“The Memory Doctor,”](#) William Saletan praised Loftus as “the world’s foremost authority on the reliability of memories of sexual abuse,” echoing her belief that adults accused of sexual violence towards children have long been treated unfairly. Saletan described the fact that “repressed memories were surfacing everywhere” as a “nightmare.” Note this reversal, that the nightmare would not be the Satanic or sexual abuse of a child victim, but his nightmare was that victims were remembering the abuse. Saletan next received a national journalism award for the series from the ‘American Association for the Advancement of Science’.

False Memory Syndrome Foundation board member Dr. John Hochman, Professor at the UCLA Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, wrote an article for the L.A. Times in which he described memory recovery of sexual violence as “the ultimate crybaby solution to everyone’s pitiful human problems. It’s all someone else’s fault.” Note here, this psychiatrist’s extreme derision of childhood trauma, and again the reversal, the extreme victim blaming and extreme protection of perpetrators.

With this group of psychologists, psychiatrists, intellectuals, scientists, authors, academics, journalists and celebrities endorsing the false memory syndrome, the pseudoscience of False Memory emerged as established science. An SRA survivor friend of mine, now in her 80’s, recalls the 1980’s as the golden age for survivors, with people with Satanic abuse histories and Dissociative Identity Disorder regularly featured on television, and plenty of anonymous meetings for SRA survivors to meet. She says that Ellen Bass, one of the authors of the book “The courage to Heal” gave a talk at Harvard University in a room for 700 people, packed to overflowing. In 1991, over 80% of media coverage still treated memory recovery of sex assault

as reliable. Only three years into the public relations campaign waged by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, over 80% of the stories on these issues focused on false accusations, painting the accused as the pitiful victims.

The FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME FOUNDATION also encouraged picketing therapists' offices and exhorted followers to sue therapists. They supported, among others, survivor Laura Pasley who successfully sued her therapist for a false memory she had recovered during therapy. In Mary Knight's documentary, "Am I crazy?" Laura reveals that when she first met her therapist, she told him about a previous sexual assault when she had been nine years old, by a stranger - separate from what she later remembered with the therapist. She reveals in the documentary interview that she had repressed the memory of this assault until she was 21 years old. Laura had shared this when she had met with Elizabeth Loftus before she was sent by the Foundation on a press tour that lasted two and half years, to specifically say that all recovered memories are false.

Today, psychology students in the US are still typically taught that recovered memories are almost always false. Dr. Bethany Brand, a professor of psychology says, "There is a huge bias toward the false memory position. After all, the late Henry Gleitman, False Memory Syndrome Foundation advisory board member who taught psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote the most influential undergraduate psychology textbook in the last half century."

The enduring influence of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation of course extends to legal, academic and media circles outside of the US. It is familiar to many people across the globe, as various affiliated false memory societies have popped up in numerous countries, including the U.K., all across Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Now, are all accounts everywhere of people who were victimized as children reliable? In my own work with survivors – and I work with survivors as a fellow survivor - it has happened a few times that I privately wondered if what the person was saying was true. The reason I had my doubts was because their motive was not clear. For example, one person made herself out to be the biggest victim in the world, and she was competitive in that. Whatever I tried to reflect –

so that she would be able to relate and not feel isolated in her experience – she would use that only to convey an experience of hers that was worse than what I had described. I just did not know what of what she told me was true and what was not. I wondered about this person, and another one or two, because their motives were off. For the record, I don't categorically disbelieve these people, either, I am just saying that privately I couldn't tell. Of the hundreds of survivors who have shared their recovered memories with me, mostly, it was very clear to me that they were telling the truth.

If memories were untrue, that person could never experience personal transformation and growth as a result, that only comes from courageously facing a difficult truth. Fantasy and lies do not lead a person towards more clarity, understanding and integration. Survivors who go public often speak out after all other attempts to be heard have failed. I personally first revealed my past in an interview about my work in prisons in 2013, simply answering a question that I previously would have avoided answering. It was 25 years after my first SRA memories, and I finally felt ready. When we speak out, our motives are put in question. I should need the attention. I am doing it for the money? It's beyond ridiculous. However, the motive for anyone who is accused, even privately, is so obvious, I do find it difficult to accept that their antics have been so widely swallowed.

Dr. Jennifer Freyd has coined the term DARVO which stands for "Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender," The entire False Memory campaign has been one giant DARVO campaign.

The time has come to flip the lens and recognize that the only motive for the many psychiatrists, psychologists, intellectuals, scientists, authors, journalists and others to defend the ridiculously shaky science of False Memory, is because they are either pedophiles, practicing Satanists, or they support them. From my own experiences in the Satanic network where I was put through mind control training, I learned that this club is about conglomerating worldly power. The secret glue that keeps this club together is pedophilia.

Because the issue has recently been so much in the news, and the tide is finally turning against the blatant protection of pedophilia, some major news outlets, to their credit, have published important exposes.

On May 25 of this year, the Wall Street Journal published an investigative article: “Instagram connects vast network of pedophiles seeking child pornography” revealing that the Meta platform helps promote and connect pedophiles seeking materials involving all forms of child sex abuse. Major research was conducted with the support of Stanford University and University of Massachusetts. It was big news and all major papers had to report. Among those, it is very easy to spot the attitude towards pedophilia.

As you can see, the title of the original Wall Street Journal article has been copied for this article in Variety, a Hollywood news publication, only the word “vast” has been put in quotes... As in “it is not that big...” ? The Wall Street Journal is being dramatic...” ? And, “this only according to these researchers, not according to us.” Easy to spot the attitude, see who the authors are, and easy to do something about it once you see it.

The way Instagram helped these pedophiles connect and share was mostly by allowing them to use hashtags. One of the hashtags they were using – and I need to issue a warning here – was PEDOWHORE. That was one of the many hashtags that connected pedophiles. Do you remember that just a few years ago, the hashtag SAVE THE CHILDREN was censored and automatically removed from the platform?

Yes, it is still not back up as we’re speaking, three years on. It is of course because it is a vile extreme right-wing slogan. Save the Children.

There is no way to be neutral about the child abuse/pedophile issue – Either you support child safety and stand against pedophilia, or you support pedophilia. The issue affects everyone personally, because it shows whether someone is strong enough to protect innocence or whether someone is too weak.

The philosophy of Satanism is essentially a complex justification for inner weakness. Emotional immaturity is observable in narcissists and psychopaths, who are stuck in a very early developmental stage. Self-centeredness, not wanting to share and throwing violent tantrums are perfectly age-appropriate for a toddler. But when adults are stuck in narcissistic greed, selfishness and violence, they need to cover it in any manner possible, with control, manipulation, lies, and a lot of PR – to create an acceptable façade. Solipsistic, Satanic beliefs view toddler-stage emotional immaturity and any concurrent harmful indulgences, as being part of the true, natural state of man, and they believe themselves to be superior for supposedly knowing it and secretly living it – looking down on all of us, the stupid ones who supposedly don't know it.

It is no great wonder that reversal is such a big theme in Satanism. Reversal is essentially what DARVO is, and of course Satanists are DARVO specialists.

Perhaps though, there are still questions if this False Memory debate has anything to do with Satanism. After all, the public conversation around False Memory has been primarily centered on memory recovery of child sex abuse and not Satanic abuse, even though the rise of False Memory coincided with the squashing of numerous reports and cases in the US involving Satanic child abuse and ritual murders in the late 1980's and early 90's.

Even though recovering memories of Satanic Ritual abuse and mind control are no different in nature from recovering memories of child sex abuse, many professionals who are outraged at the way survivors of incest and child sex abuse are treated by the False Memory offense, incongruously, still believe that Satanic Ritual abuse is a fabrication, or even a right-wing conspiracy theory.

So let us take a look at the source. Here is the website of the Temple of Satan. There exists a sub-group with the aim to reverse the science of memory recovery to protect fellow Satanists accused of Satanic/sexual abuse. This campaign is called "Grey Faction."

I'm reading from the website:

“Grey Faction consists of a worldwide network of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, including mental health professionals, journalists, researchers, and others - committed to fighting pseudoscience. Our members include victims of [conspiracy therapists](#) – mental health professionals whose bizarre beliefs are transferred to their patient during therapy.”

As you can see, we have here one fine example of reversal: False Memory is, as we have seen, the pseudoscience. Although one would have to agree that all these therapists who would invent satanic abuse histories for some of their clients would indeed have very bizarre beliefs – if they made it up.

What an incredible example of turning everything upside down. The Satanists calling out the “Conspiracy Theories” against them.

There is a link for the supposed “Conspiracy Therapists” leading to 7 more links, each with more information, including one link to “Who are the conspiracy Therapists” with a hit list of therapists. the Temple of Satan Grey Faction also encourages picketing of therapists’ offices who treat survivors.

If you cannot heal, you can only run. And perpetrators or anyone who is in very strong denial about someone else’s revelations of their personal story of abuse, have no idea what it even means to begin to heal and what that process of personal integration and growth looks like or feels like. Talk of healing is like hearing an entirely foreign language to such a person. But since they understand words, they can only interpret those words as being false.

Anyone who cannot face the truth inside the world or inside themselves, is unconsciously hurled deeper into the chasm of darkness and lies. The toxic power system needs fear, and still today more fearful attention is placed on aggressive and vicious attackers in DARVO mode, rather than the quiet, humble and more realistic truth spoken by survivors.

Any truth that threatens to reveal the mechanisms and systems by which the Satanists and their mind control operations are working, would obviously require their resources and manipulations and their useful tools to ensure that these truths remain buried. Obviously, their

practice of dissociating victims' minds, by applying extreme trauma, in order to create amnesia, would be easily understood by the public if the public conversation could start with Dissociative Identity Disorder. Instead, those behind the mind control, have ensured that the Overton Window of that conversation has remained at the most basic level: "true or false."

In 2019 the False Memory Syndrome Foundation quietly closed its doors. In researching this subject, I noticed that online searches, are still highly in favor of False Memory, but American academia and the psychology field has mostly accepted the reality of recovered memory. However, the False Memory Myth is strongly being revived in Europe, at this time especially in Switzerland where some powerful testimonies of Satanic Ritual abuse and mind control have surfaced.

As we continue to speak out and continue to point to the ridiculous DARVO attempts of our perpetrators and their minions, we are gaining ground. Our own obvious lack of dark motive to speak up about such difficult and painful personal experiences are being recognized increasingly in the public, and every day, more people are willing and able to accept the dark truths we have experienced: the widespread pedophilia and the Satanic cult that is behind it.