

Vampire cult accused of murder, mutilation

MURRAY, Ky. — For years, this quiet college town was perhaps best known as home of the national Boy Scout museum. Now it is newly notorious, and its residents increasingly afraid, with the discovery that some of its teens belonged to a vampire cult.

The news that four area teenagers are suspected of beating a Florida couple to death was frightening enough. Now prosecutors say the youths were involved in a strange role-playing game that went much too far — from the mutilation of animals to drinking each other's blood and eventually

stranger

THAN FICTION

to murder.

Few would discuss the case with outsiders, but the cult was the hot topic of hushed gossip among residents.

"People are talking about it," said Greg Duncan, sipping coffee at the Hungry Bear restaurant. "Some people are afraid."

Details remain sketchy but the secretive cult known as "The Vampire Clan" is believed to have been active in Murray, where members were suspected of break-

ing into an animal shelter and mutilating two puppies.

"The fear of the unknown is always greater than the fear of the known," said another man at the Hungry Bear, who refused to give his name.

Murray, a semi-rural town of about 13,000, lies in southwestern Kentucky near the Tennessee state line. Murray State University is there, a 8,300-student school known for its basketball program.

Now the town is linked to three Murray teens arrested along with another youth from nearby Mayfield. All four, along with the daughter of the slain couple, were arrested on Thanksgiving night in Baton Rouge, La. All are suspected

in the Nov. 25 slayings of Richard and Naoma Wendorf of Eustis, Fla.

Police say Rod Ferrell met the Wendorf's 15-year-old daughter, Heather, when he lived in Eustis with his father. Ferrell, 16, moved back to Murray last year to live with his mother.

It was Ferrell who police think broke into the animal shelter, stomping one dog to death and pulling the legs off another. Neighbors at the public housing complex where he lived say they never noticed anything unusual about him or his mother, Sondra Gibson.

Yet Ms. Gibson is herself charged with solicitation to commit rape. Police say she wrote to a

14-year-old, inviting sex and hinting she was involved in vampire-type activity.

"I longed to be near you ... to become a Vampire, a part of the family immortal and truly yours forever," the letter reads. "You will then come for me and cross me over and I will be your bride for eternity and you my sire."

Accused with Ferrell and Ms. Wendorf of killing the Wendorfs are Dana Cooper, 19, of Murray, and Scott Anderson, 16, of Mayfield. Charity Keesee, 16, of Murray was charged with being an accessory to murder.

Extradition proceedings in Baton Rouge are to begin Monday.

—The Associated Press

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