

# The Devil in Dolores' Dentition



The phenomenon of demonic possession probably goes back to the beginning of history.

**Case history:** Hornbostel, Dolores, white, female, DOB 9-26-1948. Presented 2-4-1958 with generalized nonspecific complaint of toothache in ALL her mixed dentition. Dolores was diagnosed as having traumatic episodic disorder (TED) resulting from an encounter with Punxsutawney Phil, the famous groundhog whose observation of his shadow each Feb. 2 determines for the entire Northern Hemisphere whether there will be six more weeks of winter or not. In 1958, Phil did see his shadow, but in a fit of pique, refused to return to his burrow, citing early-onset claustrophobia as his prima facie excuse. In the

resulting confusion, Dolores' mother, Harriet, was nipped on the heel, and winter lasted until July 9 in Pennsylvania that year.

Subsequently, Dolores has been visited by a host of ailments ranging from post-traumatic hallucinatory visions of rabid rodents running rampant to musical interludes seemingly emanating from her amalgam fillings. She has been treated unsuccessfully over the years by a series of dentists, neurosurgeons, chiropractors, holistic tarot card readers, and clinical psychologists. The consensus: Dolores is a victim of demonic possession.

The phenomenon of demonic possession

*Continued on Page 257*



The demonic music ceased and has not returned,  
nor the patients awaiting treatment in his reception room.

Continued from Page 258

probably goes back to the beginning of history. Columbus, it is said, was possessed by a particular demon who badgered him with the notion that India, a land of incalculable riches, was but a few kilometers due west off the coast of Portugal. Scurvy, the demon assured him, was only a personal hygiene problem, not a medical one, then laughed devilishly, knowing that ascorbic acid deficiency was not a covered benefit under his Flat Earth Indemnity HMO policy.

It wasn't until Linda Blair in the film *The Exorcist* made pea soup a slow mover in grocery stores for nearly two years, that the public became obsessed with demonic possession. Further interest in the subject was heightened by comedian Flip Wilson, whose frequent infractions were explained by him as "the devil made me do it!"

The good news for dentists, whose appointment books are sprinkled with patients of questionable lucidity and their undiagnosable symptoms, is that exorcisms are on the rise. Scott Lilienfeld, a professor of psychology at Emory University in Atlanta cites the 84-page Roman Ritual instruction manual produced by the Vatican in 1999 on how to conduct an exorcism. Heretofore, when a dentist encountered a patient whose complaints were beyond any diagnosis of known dental problems, he promptly referred him to a series of specialists until the patient returned full circle to his practice with the complaint unresolved.

In an exorcism, a priest performs a ceremony that includes sprinkling holy water onto the possessed and reciting prayers ordering the devil to depart. Unfortunately, the 1999 Exorcism

Manual is not specific for dental demonic problems.

As we tread carefully into this new area of treatment modality, certain hypotheses may be necessary. For example, Sherman Wormsley, DDS of Arbutnot, Texas, having successfully rid a patient of an alleged demon who played continual hip-hop tunes from a newly cemented three-unit PFM bridge, had this suggestion: "We found eugenol sprinkled on the patient was more effective than holy water, but best of all was when we had some Buckley's formocresol blessed, and doused it liberally over the patient and nearby equipment in accordance with OSHA recommendations."

Not having any Vatican-approved prayers for his particular needs, Wormsley said he and his staff chanted excerpts from the PDR in the original English. The demonic music ceased and has not returned, nor the patients awaiting treatment in his reception room.

Dr. Wormsley feels the results of his procedure were so salutary, he is considering its possible benefits to certain concerts where "music" of this genre is *de rigueur*.

In the meanwhile, CE courses must be set up for this new modality. Pending implementation, dentists are advised to have several religious persons representing all denominations in attendance. A qualified psychiatrist certified in demonics should be on hand to oversee any problems should the demon, like Punxsutawney Phil, refuse to return to his lair.

**Pharmaceutical note:** The effects of formocresol are said to wear off the demon in six months, but will linger in your operatory for eternity. **CDA**