

Columnist Rod Dreher Unpublishes Bonkers Column Linking Anthony Bourdain's Death to Asia Argento's 'Ties to the Occult'

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Argento and Bourdain in 2017 Photo: Getty Images

Rod Dreher is a conservative Christian columnist and a hot take-writer in a unique and very strange class of his own. His latest attempt was a column about Anthony Bourdain's death (oh no), which tried to tie sin, suicide, transgender identity and witchcraft together (oh *nooo*), all stuffed into a piece of writing so incoherent and so poorly received that he's elected to take it down. In short: Dreher implied that Bourdain died because his girlfriend, Asia Argento, was into "the occult."

Dreher is best known as a proponent of the so-called "[Benedict Option](#)," in which Christians would retreat from this sinful and fallen society and form their own communities. And yet, for some reason, Rod has not yet retreated, continuing to gift us opinions like calling what he terms "transgenderism" a "[cult](#)" and implying, without evidence, that kids are peer pressured into becoming trans. As *the New Republic* points out today, he's also [fallen into a number of controversies around race](#), as he keeps making bad, thin, and easily disproved arguments about the superiority of (implied: white) Western civilization.

Dreher has also somehow found time to delve into some truly contorted conspiratorial rabbit holes. His column on Bourdain, which you can read in archived form [here](#), begins:

Somebody in my Twitter feed last night observed that “the Internet” was making a pretty good case for Anthony Bourdain’s suicide being tied to the occult. Say wha’? Lo, [it turns out that his girlfriend Asia Argento is a witch, and not just a casual one either](#). There’s lots of extreme darkness there, right in the open. She flaunts it. Bourdain, the poor fool, was doomed the day he met her.

Dreher links there to an extremely credible-seeming site called Vigilant Citizen, in which everything, pretty much, is taken as a symbol of the occult. A sort of peace sign that Argento flashed on the red carpet one time, Kat Von D’s wedding, the death of XXXTentacion: the devil is, truly, hard at work.

Screenshot: Vigilant Citizen’s homepage

Vigilant Citizen identifies Argento as “occult elite,” because she’s the daughter of famed horror director Dario Argento and has talked online about esoteric spirituality and magic and witchcraft.

In the world that Dreher and the Vigilant Citizens inhabit, of course, that’s tantamount to inviting Satan right into your house to delicately dismember babies on your kitchen counter. Inevitably, it devolves into Pizzagate: the Vigilant Citizen blog claims that Argento put a “spiral symbol” on her daughter’s face in an Instagram photo that looks similar to an FBI-identified symbol that “little boy lovers” use. (The supposed list of pedophile symbols [is in a document released by Wikileaks](#); law enforcement [has kind of a mixed track record](#) on uncovering sinister symbolism.)

Dreher then manages to turn this whole odd rumination into an extended analysis of the Baphomet statue that the Satanic Temple created and tried to put up, first on the grounds of the Oklahoma, then the Arkansas state capitol buildings. There’s no transition, really: he just goes right from Asia Argento’s supposed occult ties to Baphomet. He writes:

Do you remember a few years back when some Satanists in Detroit erected a large statue of Baphomet, and caused public controversy over it? [The BBC spoke to Lucien Greaves, a Luciferian priest, asking him to decode the symbolism of the statue.](#)

Lucien Greaves is not a “Luciferian priest,” but the spokesperson for the Satanic Temple, [a non-theistic Satanist organization](#) that regularly engages in spirited trolling to make points about religious liberty.

With the Baphomet statue, the Satanic Temple was pointing out that here in America, we either represent religious groups equally in public governmental spaces or not at all: if you want a Ten Commandments monument, you also have to accept a horned, winged goat-god. (The Baphomet monument was rejected by Arkansas state legislators, who then went on to [install a Ten Commandments monument](#) on the

grounds of the statehouse. The Satanic Temple says [it plans to sue](#) on religious discrimination grounds.)

Dreher somehow missed all of that, taking the Baphomet statue instead as yet more evidence that “the satanic” is making its way into public life. Baphomet, and “the rapid and forceful mainstreaming of transgenderism,” that is:

The boy and girl are two children who are at Baphomet’s feet, and look up worshipfully at it. The point here is that the destruction of male and female is satanic. The rapid and forceful mainstreaming of transgenderism, abetted by technology, is causing the physical and psychological destruction of so many children and teenagers. It is not coincidental.

All of this is so profoundly vapid, incoherent and bizarre, that Dreher was forced to publish several updates to his column.

“Um, no,” reads the first, “I don’t think Asia Argento killed Anthony Bourdain. Come on. I think the darkness around her did an already unstable and depressive man any good at all.” The second claims that he just got off the phone with a former “Luciferian” friend (sure, Rod) who totally agrees with him.

And then, finally, he [yanked the whole blog down](#), writing that he didn’t mean what he wrote and published on the internet:

Hey, I took down the Bourdain post because it was being widely interpreted as disrespectful to Bourdain’s memory. I apologize; that was not my intent. I’m a big admirer of his, and do not want to insult him inadvertently. Plus, I’m going to be away from the keys all morning, and not able to manage comments.

P.S. And I apologize for not being clearer in my post: I do not blame Asia Argento for Bourdain’s suicide. Bourdain is responsible for Bourdain’s suicide. I regret that I implied otherwise.

Thus ends another, very dumb chapter in Rod Dreher’s curious career. For good measure, however, we reached out to Lucien Greaves for comment, the spokesperson for the Satanic Temple. He offered a statement that Rod could perhaps refer to the next time he tries to do some critical thinking.

Greaves writes:

It’s difficult to debate such half-formed thoughts and nebulous innuendo. Dreher asserts that Bourdain, “the poor fool,” was doomed “the day he met” Asia Argent, though later he updates to say that he’s not foolish enough to believe Asia killed him — “Come on!” — only that her occult-related “darkness” did him no good. The digression about Baphomet and “[t]he rapid and forceful mainstreaming of transgenderism” having taken a psychological toll on Bourdain, unqualified by any

evidence, is facially absurd. Why should Bourdain be uniquely affected? And if the psychological toll of the Rights Revolution isn't unique to Bourdain, why are we not experiencing a dramatic increase in rates of suicide nationwide?*_ And what of the transgender people who are less likely to commit suicide in a more welcoming culture? And who said "transgenderism" was a particular fixation of Argento's occultism to begin with? If Dreher is truly concerned about religious practices having deleterious psychological effects that lead to destructive behaviors, I should like to direct him to investigate the phenomenon of sexually predatorial pederast priests.