

“An unbelievable story told in riveting detail.”

-Kathleen Hale, author of *Slenderman*

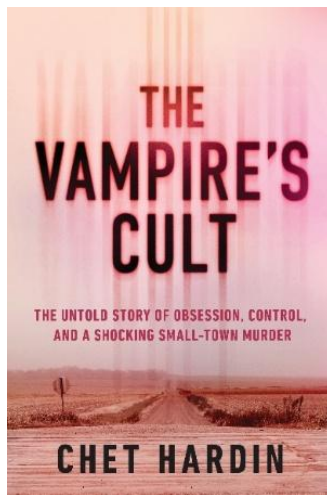
The Vampire's Cult

**The Untold Story of Obsession, Control, and a Shocking
Small-Town Murder**

By Chet Hardin

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**A self-proclaimed vampire. His harem of “witches.” And the small-town
murder that shocked America.**



When twenty-four-year-old Sydney Loofe disappeared after a Tinder date, the quiet town of Wilber, Nebraska was stunned. Days later, her dismembered body was found scattered across nearby fields—and the horrifying truth began to emerge. Sydney hadn't just met the wrong man. She had crossed paths with a deeply disturbed psychopath and his dangerous accomplice.

In *The Vampire's Cult*, investigative journalist Chet Hardin exposes the twisted world of Aubrey Trail, an aging con man who presented himself as an all-powerful being, and Bailey Boswell, the woman who called herself his “queen.” Together, they lured vulnerable young women into a spiral of sex, theft, and psychological manipulation—with deadly consequences.

Through exclusive interviews, firsthand reporting, and chilling detail, Hardin unravels the making of a modern cult—and the social desperation that feeds it. In an era defined by false realities and toxic charisma, *The Vampire's Cult* reveals just how easily darkness can disguise itself as devotion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHET HARDIN is an award-winning investigative journalist and the coauthor of *The Program: Inside the Mind of Keith Raniere and the Rise and Fall of Nxivm*.

For more information or if you would like to request an interview with the author, please contact Robin Wane at robin.wane@sourcebooks.com

EARLY REVIEWS

“Beware: *The Vampire’s Cult* is neither horror nor true crime. It so marvelously combines the two genres it may require a new genre: horror crime. Hardin tells a terrible tale of an evil cult who committed murder in a small town in Nebraska and the consequences to all involved. His telling of the tale will leave you captivated, if not mesmerized.”

– **Harry Maclean, author of *Starkweather***

“Chet Hardin was the first journalist to give me a voice. He didn't just listen to me; he understood what it means to survive something people don't want to believe. In *The Vampire’s Cult*, he brings that same persistence and clarity to a case that reveals just how far manipulation and control can go... Dark, unsettling, and at times so absurd it almost disarms you – until it doesn't. I've seen firsthand how these dynamics take hold – and this book exposes not just what happened, but how the right vulnerabilities, in the wrong hands, can be shaped into something unthinkable.”

– **Toni Natalie, author of *The Program: Inside the Mind of Keith Raniere and the Rise and Fall of NXIVM***

“In the terrifying true crime thriller *The Vampire’s Cult*, author Chet Hardin sharpens his investigative knives to penetrate a graphic and disturbing crime in America’s heartland, while also unmasking a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde hellbent on ritualistic murder. The writing is crisp and the narrative moves at the speed of a locomotive. This powerful book also begs the question: when I open an app, am I allowing the devil inside?”

– **Casey Sherman, New York Times bestselling author of *Helltown* and *The Killer and Frank Lloyd Wright***

“If you thought the 2017 murder of Sydney Loofe was bizarre, you don’t know the half of it until you’ve read Chet Hardin’s amazing account of the disappearance and murder that captivated Nebraska. Deeply reported and well-written, it offers amazing jailhouse insight into how the minds of Aubrey Trail and Bailey Boswell became so strangely and tragically twisted. A great addition to the legacy of true crime on the Great Plains.”

– **Henry J. Cordes, author of *Pathological: The Murderous Rage of Dr. Anthony Garcia***

“Chet Hardin is a fearless journalist who helped to expose the notorious ‘sex cult’ known as NXIVM. Now he applies that same skill to exploring the manipulation of deadly Nebraska cult leader Aubrey Trail. Like NXIVM leader Keith Raniere, Trail used his powers of persuasion for sex and sadism. It takes someone like Chet to dig deep into such behavior, which gives readers a better understanding of its chilling context.”

– **Rick Alan Ross, founder and executive director of the Cult Education Institute**

