

The Top Ten Real-Life Monsters



The top monster: a tie between Bigfoot and Mothman.

by Brad Steiger

illustrations by Dan "Wolfman" Allen

In September 2006, inspired by the 2001 poll of movie monsters conducted by the Media Psychology Lab at California State in Los Angeles, I surveyed a number of cryptozoologists, paranormalists, psychical researchers,

Fortean, and ufologists and received their nominations for the Top Ten List of Real-Life Monsters.

In first place were two weirdies who have both appeared numerous times in these pages: Bigfoot and Mothman.

Number One (Tie): Bigfoot

Tales of large, apelike creatures are found in the traditions of indigenous peoples across the globe. This group of near-human beasts sighted in the more remote, wooded, or mountainous regions of North America, South America, Russia, China, Australia, or Africa is believed by some anthropologists to represent a kind of missing link between humanity and the great apes, for its appearance is more primitive than that of Neanderthal. The descriptions given by witnesses around the world are amazingly similar: height from six to nine feet, weight from 400 to 1,000 pounds, black eyes, and dark fur or body hair from one to four inches in length covering the creature's entire body, with the exception of the palms of its hands, the soles of its feet, and its upper facial area.

In North America, the greatest number of sightings of Bigfoot have come from the Pacific Northwest, from British Columbia to northern California. In recent years, extremely convincing sightings of Bigfoot-type creatures have also been made in areas of New York, New Jersey, Minnesota, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Florida.

On October 20, 1967, near Bluff Creek, north of Eureka, California, Bigfoot hunters Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin managed to shoot several feet of movie film of what appears to be a female Bigfoot. Most scientists were skeptical, and the controversy rages on after nearly 40 years. Two Russian scientists, Dmitri Bayanov and Igor Bourtsev, have minutely analyzed every movement of the Bigfoot on the contro-

versial film and recently concluded that it had passed all their tests and their criteria of "distinctiveness, consistency, and naturalness."

On September 22, 2000, a team of 14 researchers that had tracked Bigfoot for a week deep in the mountains of the Gifford Pinchot national forest in Washington State found an extraordinary piece of evidence in a muddy wallow near Mt. Adams—an imprint of Bigfoot's hair-covered lower body as it lay on its side, apparently reaching over to get some fruit. Thermal imaging equipment confirmed that the impression made by the massive body was only a few hours old.

More than 200 pounds of plaster were needed to acquire a complete cast of the imprint. On October 23, Idaho State University issued a press release stating that a team of investigators, including Dr. Jeff Meldrum, had examined the plaster cast obtained from the mud wallow and agreed that it could not be "attributed to any commonly known Northwest animal and may present an unknown primate."

While the cast may not prove without question the existence of a species of North American ape, Dr. Meldrum said that it "constitutes significant and compelling new evidence that will hopefully stimulate further serious research and investigation into the presence of these primates in the Northwest mountains and elsewhere."

Number One (Tie): Mothman

On November 15, 1966, two young married couples were driving through the

marshy area near the Ohio River outside of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, when a winged monster, at least seven feet tall, with glowing red eyes, loomed up in front of them. The creature followed them toward Point Pleasant on Route 62 even when their speed approached 100 miles per hour.

When news of the mysterious encounter achieved local celebrity status, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Wamsley, Marcella Bennett, and Ricky Thomas said that they had seen the giant birdlike creature near the same abandoned TNT plant a few miles north of Point Pleasant. A few days later, Thomas Ury said that an enormous flying creature with a wingspan of ten feet had chased his convertible into Point Pleasant at 70 miles per hour.

More witnesses came forward with accounts of their sightings, and the legend of Mothman was born. Although the majority of witnesses described the tall, red-eyed monster as appearing birdlike, the media dubbed the creature "Mothman," because, as writer John A. Keel noted, the *Batman* television series was very popular at the time.

Intrigued by the stories, Keel visited Point Pleasant on numerous occasions and learned about the bizarre occurrences associated with Mothman's appearance, including the eerie forecast that the Silver Bridge in Point Pleasant would collapse and many people would be killed as a result. In 1975, Keel wrote in *The Mothman Prophecies* that "there would be many changes in the lives of those touched by"

Mothman, and a "few would even commit suicide." *The Mothman Prophecies* was made into a motion picture in 2002.

Researchers of the phenomenon have various theories concerning the large winged monster that haunts the marshy area near the McClintic Wildlife Sanctuary and the abandoned TNT plant north of Point Pleasant. Some say that excited, suggestible witnesses were simply observing sandhill cranes, a large bird indigenous to the area. Others suggest that toxic chemicals dumped at the TNT site in World War II may have caused bizarre mutations in wild birds. And then there are those who maintain that Mothman might be a multidimensional intelligence, angelic or demonic, that can warn witnesses of impending danger—or cause it to happen.

Number Two: The Jersey Devil

Some witnesses have said that the Jersey Devil, the legendary monster that haunts the Pine Barrens in southeastern New Jersey, is a cross between a goat and a dog with cloven hoofs and the head of a collie. Others swear that it has a horse's head with the body of a kangaroo. Most of the people who have sighted the creature also mention a long tail, and nearly all of the witnesses agree that the thing has wings. But it doesn't really fly so much as it hops and glides.

People have been sighting the Jersey Devil in the rural area around south Jersey since 1735, the year of its alleged birth. According to local legend, there was a prominent family in South Jersey named Leeds

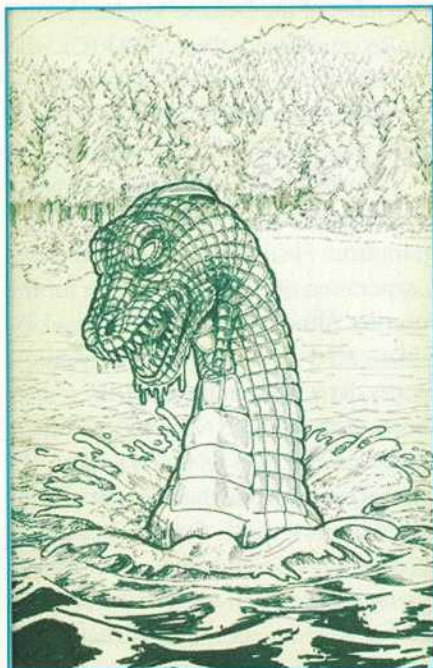
whose patriarch demanded a large number of heirs to carry on his name to future generations. When Mrs. Leeds learned that she was about to bear her 13th child, she decided that she had grown tired of being continually pregnant in order to satisfy her husband's ego. In a fit of rage, she cursed the unborn child within her and cried out that she would rather bear the Devil's child than another Leeds.

The old legend has it that Mrs. Leeds was granted her angry cry of revenge. The baby was born a monster, with devilish fangs, claws, tail, and cloven hoofs, but the extremes of its viciousness soon eclipsed the borders of Mrs. Leeds' curse. The little monster ate every one of the other Leeds children and escaped out of the chimney to begin its reign of terror among the farmers and villagers of the region.

For well over 200 years, generations of terrified witnesses have claimed to encounter the Jersey Devil. Although sightings of the monster are reported every year, the most famous series occurred in January 1909 when hundreds of men and women claimed to have seen or heard the frightening creature. So many people refused to leave the safety of their homes that local mills were forced to shut down for lack of workers.

Number Three: Long-Necked Lake Monsters

Sightings of Nessie, most often described as a long-necked monster resembling a prehistoric behemoth, have been



The Loch Ness monster.

reported in and near Loch Ness since St. Columba made the first recorded sighting in 565. Could a dinosaurlike creature actually be living in a lake in Scotland? Loch Ness is certainly large enough and deep enough. It is 24 miles long by about a mile across. It has a mean depth of 433 feet, twice that of the North Sea into which it flows through the River Ness at its eastern end. The loch never freezes, and its temperature remains fairly constant at about 42 degrees Fahrenheit year-round.

One of the more verifiable of the sightings of a large creature in Loch Ness was made in the mid-1960s by Tim Dinsdale,

Standing erect on powerful goatlike legs with three-clawed feet, the monster is generally described as slightly over five feet in height, though some reports list it as over six and a half feet. Its head is oval in shape and it has an elongated jaw with a small, slit mouth and fangs that protrude both upward and downward. A few witnesses have claimed to have seen small, pointed ears on its reptilian-like head, but all who have seen the Chupacabras after dark state that they will never forget its red eyes that glow menacingly in the shadows. Although its arms are thin, they are extremely powerful, ending in three-clawed paws.

A most unusual attribute of the Chupacabras is its chameleonlike ability to change colors even though it appears to have strong, coarse black hair that covers its torso. Somehow, the creature is able to alter its coloration from green to grayish and from light brown to black, depending upon the vegetation that surrounds it. Another peculiarity of the beast is the row of quill-like appendages that runs down its spine and the fleshly membrane that extends between these projections, which can flare or contract and also change color from blue to green or from red to purple.

Some witnesses have claimed that the Chupacabras can fly, but others state that it is the beast's powerful hind legs that enables it to catapult over walls, small trees, and one-story barns or outbuildings. It is those same strong legs that enable the creature to run at extremely fast speeds to escape its pursuers.



Chupacabras.

It wasn't long after the night terrors began in Puerto Rico before reports of Chupacabras began appearing in Florida, Texas, Mexico, and among the ranchers in Brazil's southern states of Sao Paulo and Parana. In Brazil, the ranchers called the monster "O Bicho," the Beast, but there was no mistaking the brutal signature of the Chupacabras on the mutilated corpses of sheep and other livestock. And the description provided by frightened eyewitnesses was also the same—a dark gray, reptilian creature with thin arms, long claws, and powerful hind legs.

From April to September 2000, over

a member of the Defense Ministry's Joint Air Reconnaissance Center (JARIC), who said that the 12- to 16-foot-long thing that he photographed traveling at a speed of ten knots was "almost certainly animate."

In 1968, Dr. Roy P. Mackal, University of Chicago biologist, received a three-year grant from Field Enterprises Educational Corporation of Chicago to search for the monster. Although the expedition had sophisticated photographic equipment, biopsy darts, and a submarine, the murky brown waters of Loch Ness rendered all the underwater devices relatively useless. Dr. Mackal has theorized that the type of creature that most neatly fits the mass of descriptive evidence and photos compiled by researchers and witnesses has to be some kind of large aquatic mammal that would be capable of thriving above 50 degrees north latitude.

Dan Taylor of Hardeeville, South Carolina, had been selected to join the expedition because of his expertise with submarines, and he brought with him a small fiberglass sub that he had built to explore the murky depths of Loch Ness. It was on one of his last runs around the loch that Taylor encountered Nessie. The submarine was hovering around a depth of 250 feet when he felt the craft beginning to turn, unnaturally, "like the second hand of a clock being pushed backward by a finger," he told J. R. Moehringer of the *Los Angeles Times* (August 16, 1998). Taylor knew that something had pushed up against the submarine and turned it around.

In 1971, Bob Rines, a world-renowned patent attorney, physicist, and engineer, saw Nessie for himself. There in the middle of the lake, with his binoculars focused clearly on the creature for ten minutes, he saw what looked like the back of an elephant. In 1972, Rines set up an underwater sound stage at the lake, designed to trigger lights and start a camera whenever a large object passed the station. In 1975, the camera, rigged to roll at one frame every 45 seconds, captured the image of a creature that he believes resembles a plesiosaur, an aquatic, air-breathing dinosaur that should have been extinct 65 million years ago.

Although Nessie is far and away the most famous of all monsters inhabiting inland bodies of water, there are reports of equally large, equally strange aquatic creatures in lakes all over the world.

Number Four: Chupacabras

Named for its seeming penchant for attacking goats and sucking their blood, the Chupacabras ("goat sucker") both terrified and fascinated the public at large when it first burst upon the scene in Puerto Rico in the summer of 1995. From August 1995 into the 21st century, the monster has been credited with the deaths of thousands of animals, ranging from goats, rabbits, and birds to horses, cattle, and deer. While some argue that the creature is a new monster, others point out that such vampiric entities have always existed and been reported by farmers and villagers in Puerto Rico and Central and South America.

800 animals were slaughtered by the blood-sucker in Chile. A number of investigators began to speculate that the Chupacabras had been manufactured by some secret government agency, a bizarre hybrid of various animals, created for an unknown agenda. Clergymen issued pronouncements stating that the creatures were heralding the end of the world. UFO enthusiasts theorized that the monsters had been brought here by extraterrestrial aliens who were using the grotesque creatures to test the planet's atmosphere preparatory to a mass invasion of Earth.

On August 30, 2000, Jorge Luis Talavera, a farmer in the jurisdiction of Malpaisillo, Nicaragua, had enough of the nocturnal depredations of Chupacabras, and one night he accomplished what no other irate farmer or rancher had been able to do. He shot and killed a Chupacabras.

Scott Corrales, Institute of Hispanic Ufology, reports that a specialist of veterinary medicine examined the carcass and acknowledged that it was a very uncommon creature with great eye cavities, smooth, bat-like skin, big claws, large teeth, and a crest sticking out from the main vertebra. The specialist said that the specimen could have been a hybrid animal made up of several species, created through genetic engineering.

However, on September 5, 2000, the official analysis of the corpse by the university medical college was that Talavera had shot a dog. A furious Luis Talavera declared that the officials had switched carcasses.

Number Five: Werewolves/Shapeshifters

Native American tribes tell of bear-people, wolf-people, fox-people, and so forth, and state that, in the beginning of things, humans were as animals and animals as humans. Stories of women who gave birth to werereatures are common among the North American tribal myths.

Early cultures throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa formed totem clans and often worshipped minor deities that were half-human, half-animal. Norse legends tell about hairy, humanlike beings that live in underworld caves and come out at night to feast on the flesh of unfortunate surface dwellers.

Psychologists recognize a werewolf psychosis (lycanthropy or lupinomania) in which persons so afflicted may believe that they change into a wolf at the full moon. Those so disturbed may actually "feel" their fur growing, their fingernails becoming claws, their jaws lengthening, their canine teeth elongating.

While it seems that the werewolf has always been with us, it is the recent reports of the Beast of Bray Road and the subsequent books by journalist Linda Godfrey exploring contemporary werewolf sightings that are quite likely responsible for helping the werewolf to achieve a listing in the Top Ten. As Godfrey tells it in *The Beast of Bray Road*, late one winter's night in 1993, Lorianne Endrizzi was driving down Bray Road in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, when she saw what she at first thought was a man

crouching at the side of the road. Curious as to what he might be doing, she slowed down to take a closer look. Within the next few moments, she was astonished to see that the being spotlighted in the beams of her headlights was covered with fur, and had a long, wolf-like snout, fangs, pointed ears, and eyes that had a yellowish glow. The thing's arms were jointed like a human's, and it had hands with humanlike fingers that were tipped with pointed claws.

Lorianne sped off, thinking that the creature was so humanlike that it had to be some kind of freak of nature. Later, when she visited the library, she found a book with an illustration of a werewolf. She said that she was startled to see how much the classic monster of legend resembled the beast that she had seen that night.

Doristine Gipson, another Elkhorn resident who sighted the creature on Bray Road, described it as having a large chest, like that of a weightlifter's.

A 12-year-old girl said that she had been with a group of friends walking near a snow-covered cornfield when they sighted what they believed to be a large dog. When they began to call it, it stared at them, then stood upright.

As the children screamed their alarm, the beast dropped back down on all fours and began running toward them. Fortunately for them, the monster suddenly headed off in another direction and disappeared.

While some area residents believed that the Wisconsin Werewolf was a real wolf and



Werewolf.

others reminded the concerned that bears have the ability to stand on their hind feet and to use their front paws as if they were hands, wildlife expert Don Groebner stated that neither animal was found in that area.

Number Six: Thunderbirds

The Thunderbird figures prominently in the traditions of many Native American tribes. To the Lakota of the prairie, the Thunderbird is an embodiment of the Great Mystery, the Supreme Being, that created all things on earth. While scholars over the centuries have attributed the Native

out of his pinched physiognomy and his ears were pointed like those of an animal. His long, bony fingers resembled claws.

The remarkably agile Springheeled Jack wore a long, flowing cape over his slender shoulders and a tall, metallic helmet on his head. Numerous witnesses testified that the mysterious intruder had what appeared to be metal mesh under his cloak and that he had a strange kind of lamp strapped to his chest.

It proved impossible to capture Springheeled Jack. Townspeople saw him leap eight-foot walls as he worked his way to the west, passing from village to village. Later, it was determined that Springheeled Jack stayed primarily in private parks during the day, coming out at night to knock at certain doors, as if he were seeking some particularly hospitable host. As far as it is known, the mysterious stranger never found anyone who invited him in for a visit. Most people reacted in the same manner as Jane Alsop, who went to answer the door assuming that a top-hatted, cloaked member of the horse patrol stood on the doorstep. Instead, the "most hideous appearance" of Springheeled Jack caused her to scream for help.

The monster's eyes, she later testified, were glowing, red balls of fire. Before she could flee, he seized her in the powerful grip of his clawlike fingers and projected balls of fire that rendered both Jane and her sister unconscious. When the report of the Alsop sisters' encounter reached the press, it came to light that a Miss Scales had

survived a similar encounter with Jack as she walked through Green Dragon Alley. Before she could scream for help, he spurted a blue flame into her face, thereby dropping her to the ground in a swoon.

According to the old records, Springheeled Jack knocked on his last door on February 27, 1838, when he visited the house of one Mr. Ashworth. The servant who opened the door took one look at the bizarre inquirer, then set Springheeled Jack to running with his screams for help.

Inspector Herner of the Liverpool police may have had the last mortal glimpse of the strange visitor when he was patrolling the long boundary of Toxteth Park one night in July. A sudden and vivid flash of what the inspector assumed to be lightning seized his attention and caused him to notice a large, fiery globe hovering motionless over a nearby field. The object remained stationary for about two more minutes, then, amid showers of sparks, lowered itself closer to the ground to receive the same strangely costumed character that all of England had been seeking. Inspector Herner decided not to become the hero who captured Springheeled Jack, and he wheeled his horse away from the scene. When he looked back over his shoulder, the great ball of fire had disappeared.

Number Eight: Living Dinosaurs

For at least 200 years, stories have emerged from the swamps, rivers, and lakes of African jungles that there is a brownish-

American myths of the Thunderbird to their reverence for the eagle, the largest of indigenous birds in North America, many people have claimed to have seen for themselves a great bird, far larger than the eagle, flying overhead. In fact, even in the 19th century, some witnesses were claiming to have seen flying monsters that resembled pterodactyls, the winged reptiles that became extinct 60 million years ago.

Numerous sightings of birds the size of small airplanes were reported in southwest Pennsylvania in the summer and early fall of 2001. On June 13, a resident in Greensville said that at first he mistook the huge bird for an ultralight aircraft. He estimated the wingspan to be about 15 feet and the body to be nearly five feet in length. In July, a witness in Erie County claimed to have seen a large, black-colored bird with a wingspan of about 17 feet. On September 25, a witness who said that he had a strong interest in ornithology encountered a massive bird with a head about three feet long and a wingspan of 10 to 15 feet. On November 5, a resident of Bristol, Connecticut, who was out walking his dog at dawn, said that he had sighted a giant bird-like creature the size of an ultralight plane flying over a community center.

In October 2002, Alaskan villagers in Togiak and Manokotak reported seeing a huge bird larger than anything they had seen before. Pilot John Bouker, owner of Bristol Bay Air Service, said that he and his passengers sighted a large "raptorlike" bird with a wingspan that matched the length

of his Cessna 207, about 14 feet. When Moses Coupchiak, a heavy equipment operator from Togiak, spotted the monster bird flying toward him, he said that he thought it was a small airplane until it banked to the left and flew away.

Biologists in the region said that they believed the witnesses sighted a bird known as the Steller's sea eagle, a species native to northeast Asia that occasionally shows up on the Aleutian islands and on Kodiak, Alaska. The Steller's sea eagle can have a wingspan of eight feet and is about three times as large as a bald eagle.

Number Seven: Springheeled Jack

I was quite surprised that good old Springheeled Jack should not only be on so many of the survey respondents' lists, but that he should rank so high. Apparently, this bizarre real-life monster has made an impression on people that has lasted for generations.

About the middle of November 1837, the lanes and commons of Middlesex, England, suddenly became places of dread. An eerie figure said to be possessed of supernatural powers was stalking the frightened villagers by night and effortlessly avoiding capture by the police. Because of this creature's ability to leap over tall hedges and walls from a standing jump, he was given the name of "Springheeled Jack."

Close witnesses who encountered Jack face-to-face described him as being tall, thin, and powerful. A prominent nose stuck

gray, elephant-sized creature with a reptilian tail and a long, flexible neck. The native people call it *mokele-mbembe* ("the one who stops the flow of rivers") or *emelan-tuka* ("the one who eats the tops of trees"). In 1980, Dr. Roy Mackal led an expedition into the African swamps that are "Mokey's" hangouts and stated later that the descriptions of the beast would fit that of a sauro-pod, the giant plant-eating reptile that supposedly became extinct about 60 million years ago.

J. Richard Greenwell, an expedition member from Tucson, told of having discovered huge tracks that led into the Likouala River. In his opinion, no animal smaller than an elephant could have left such a path through the thickets near the river, and, Greenwell noted, elephants always leave an exit trail when they leave a river. Whatever left these massive prints made no such sign of an exit, which may indicate that Mokey is a marine as well as a land creature.

Tracking even dinosaur-sized creatures is not that simple in the Likouala swamp-land, which is twice the size of Scotland, and thick with venomous snakes and disease-bearing insects.

On November 28, 1981, Herman Regusters, an aerospace engineer from South Pasadena, and his wife Kia claimed to have seen and to have photographed a dinosaur-like animal in a remote African lake. Mrs. Regusters said that the gigantic reptile was dark red with a long, thick neck, and longer than two hippopotamuses. Unfortunately,

the photograph taken by the Regusters was rather fuzzy, and their tape recording of the "roaring trumpeting noise" heard frequently around Lake Tele was impossible to identify.

In 1996, zoologist Professor Michelle Gupton told the British press that she was attacked by a huge water monster as she investigated the shoreline of Lake Tele. According to Ms. Gupton, the brownish-gray creature about the size of an elephant suddenly rose out of the waters of the lake right in front of her. Awestruck, she reached out to touch its smooth skin.

That was a nearly fatal mistake on the part of the zoologist. The monster snapped at her with its huge teeth, slashing out a foot-long slice of skin on the side of her stomach. Ms. Gupton said that she passed out from the pain and was later rescued by members of her party who had been searching the surrounding jungle for signs of *mokele-mbembe*. She was rushed to a hospital where her wound was treated. In her considered opinion, her experience proves that dinosaurs are far from extinct.

Dr. Bill Gibbons, a zoologist who specializes in attempting to track down new species, told the London *Sunday Times* (June 3, 1999) that he is certain that *mokele-mbembe* exists. Only recently, Dr. Gibbons said, cryptozoologists had heard reports that hunters from the Kabonga tribe had killed a *mokele-mbembe* and had tried to eat it. Its flesh proved inedible and the carcass was left to rot and be gnawed and pecked at by scavengers. But now, he hopes,

a most unusual skeleton awaits them. And if it is still there when their expedition arrives in the largely inaccessible swamps of central Africa, then we may all discover that there truly are more monsters awaiting us in the darkness—monsters that should have been extinct 60 million years ago.

Number Nine: Flatwoods Monster

Kathleen May described the alien being that she and seven other Flatwoods, West Virginia, residents saw on September 12, 1952, as looking more frightening than the Frankenstein monster. A group of excited boys, including her sons, Eddie, 13, and Fred, 12, had been at a nearby playground when they sighted a flying saucer emitting an exhaust that looked like red balls of fire. According to the boys, the UFO had landed on a hilltop in back of the May house.

Gene Lemon, a husky 17-year-old, found a flashlight and said that he was going to investigate. At the urging of her son, Mrs. May agreed to accompany him, and the other boys fell in behind them. About halfway up the hill, Lemon directed the beam of his flashlight on what he believed to be the green, glowing eyes of an animal. Instead, the beam spotlighted an immense, humanlike figure with blood-red face and greenish eyes that blinked out from under a pointed hood. Behind the monster was a "glowing ball of fire as big as a house" that grew dimmer and brighter at intervals. The 17-year-old's courage left him in a long scream of terror, and the

intrepid band of flying-saucer-hunters fled in panic from the sight that Lemon's flashlight had illuminated.

Later, Mrs. May described the monster as having "terrible claws." Some of the boys, however, had not noticed any arms at all, and some said that when it had moved toward them, it had not really walked on legs, but "just moved." Most of the witnesses agreed that the being had worn dark clothing, probably dark green. Estimates of the monster's height ranged from seven to ten feet, but everyone agreed about one characteristic of the alien—it had emitted a sickening odor, "like sulphur," Mrs. May said, yet unlike anything she had ever encountered.

Lee Steward, Jr., of the *Braxton Democrat* arrived on the scene only moments ahead of Sheriff Robert Carr, but the reporter found most of the witnesses too frightened to speak coherently. Later he persuaded Lemon to accompany him to the spot where the monster had been seen.

Stewart saw no sign of the giant alien or of the pulsating red globe of light that ostensibly served as its spacecraft, but he did inhale enough of the unusual odor to declare it "sickening and irritating." He had developed a familiarity with a wide variety of gases while serving in the Air Force, but he had never been confronted by any gas with a similar odor.

Number Ten: Dover Demon

Twenty-nine years later, William Bartlett stands by his story that the being that

he and two other teenagers sighted in April 21 to 23, 1977, in Dover, Massachusetts, was real. The “thing” that has become known as the Dover Demon was seen by Bartlett as it crept along a low stone wall on the side of the road. It stood about four feet tall and carried its hairless, rough-textured body on two spindly legs. Its arms were also thin and peach-colored. The creature’s huge, watermelon-shaped head was disproportionate in size to its relatively small torso, and it bore two large, glowing, red-orange eyes.

Bartlett, who has made his career as a painter, recently told the *Boston Globe* (October 29, 2006) that he definitely saw something weird that night. “I didn’t make it up,” he said. “It’s a thing that’s been following me for years. Not the creature—the story.”

Bartlett had his glimpse of the Demon atop the broken stone wall along Farm Street around 10:30 p.m. About two hours later, 15-year-old John Baxter was walking home from his girlfriend’s house when he claimed to have gotten within 15 feet of the monster along a creek in a heavily wooded area along Miller Hill Road. At midnight the next night, another 15-year-old, Abby Brabham, was driving home with her boyfriend when she saw what appeared to be the same weird creature sitting upright on Springdale Avenue.

Loren Coleman, who began an inves-

tigation within days of the sightings in 1977, believes Bartlett and considers the case credible. Coleman was able to interview all four teens within a week of the reported sightings and is convinced that they had not concocted a hoax. Coleman, who also coined the name “Dover Demon,” has commented that the same area in which the strange being was sighted has a tradition of unexplained activity dating from the 1700s: An apparition of Satan on horseback, tales of buried treasure, and then the Dover Demon. “It’s almost as if there are certain areas that ‘collect’ sightings, almost in a magnetic way,” the investigator told Mark Sullivan of the *Boston Globe*.

No sightings of the Dover Demon have been reported since those strange nights in April 1977. Coleman observed that the Dover creature does not match the descriptions of the chupacabras or of Roswell aliens, or of the bat-eared goblins said to have attacked a family in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, in 1955. “It’s extremely unique” says Coleman. “It has no real connections to any other inexplicable phenomena.”

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