

The Chupacabras Diaries

offend our friends, like the one who just called, claiming that he has photographs, and believing in extraterrestrials by heart. The history of the gods discusses extraterrestrials as backward spirits who live off the blood of human beings or animals. However, the lungs were extracted from the bodies and burned...for this reason, the aspect he wanted to discuss and insinuate that it was extraterrestrial just because Martín said so, I feel is incorrect. The day Jorge Martin sees an extraterrestrial I hope he'll come here and show me photographs, because he's simply a scholar of these matters; and I respect him greatly for it, but he is neither a contactee nor has he ever seen an extraterrestrial. He's merely a scholar, of course, and he has a magazine, and if he's gone as far--which I doubt--as to conclude that it was an extraterrestrial who caused the situation he is very wrong, and both myself as parapsychologist and Dr. Edwin Velazquez as a veterinarian invite him to tell us the contrary. All right?

Caller #5: Well, I only called to tell you that.

Host: Thank you for your call.

Caller #5: I've always thought that it was a wild animal like Armando said...was that his name?

Host: Arnaldo Ginés, correct, from Channel 11. As Arnaldo said, the people he interviewed spoke about wild dogs. The problem is that if one goat is killed, it soon becomes ten, or twenty. Like our friend the caller said, he exaggerated that there were twenty goats when it wasn't true. The owner of the farm has gotten in touch with Edwin and the animals were ill, you know? But, thanks for your call.

Caller #5: Bye.

Host: It'll be until next...the board is still loaded, but we're out of time...

* * *

The recording ended abruptly. I rewound the tape and played it once more, this time in the car, on an hour-long journey to a nearby town. I played it once more on the way back, and still couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Translation is my profession, and transcribing tapes from one language to another to produce a written record is a routine task. In preparing the transcription you have just read, I couldn't help wondering if the skeptics realized that they had been pinned against the ropes from the very first call (NOTE: I have gone over the tape once more after the transcription to insure fidelity. I deliberately omitted ad-libs for the sake of felicity in communication as well as the numerous overlaps in conversation between host, guests, and callers. I understand Drs. Acosta and Velásquez's points of view, and hope they realize no disrespect is intended).

The "feral dog" theory would soon become the equivalent of "swamp gas" in the Chupacabras wave. As has been observed

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elsewhere, the thought of one-fanged, bloodthirsty Fidos roaming the countryside is enough to make the most snowbound tourist cancel a planned and paid vacation to the Continent of Puerto Rico, as the ad agencies call it. Contradictions, which can be appreciated in the transcript, were forcibly invoked to support the dog bite theory; last-minute solutions (the animals being sick) sought to rescue the skeptics from the deepening water in the radio studio. As Frank Herbert has Muad'Dib say in the memorable banquet scene in *Dune*: "I never saw a man drown around a dinner table before."

The callers represented a cross-section of the island's demographics. Caller #1 was a middle-aged woman, obviously knowledgeable about the subject of unidentified flying objects, but quite willing to concede that animals such as the legendary Tasmanian Devil could cause such havoc among bovines. The host and guest mounted an ineffective defense when they sought to deny that any UFOs had been reported in the Orocovis area, when the networks had been broadcasting such testimony for over a month.

Caller #2, another middle-aged, soft-spoken woman, triggered the skeptics' defenses in a spectacular way, prompting the host to become just a touch discourteous. The insistence that it had never been anything but dogs (with sharp canines, excuse the pun) behind the Orocovis slayings became a mantra rather than a theory. The situation fell apart with the ultimate non-sequitur concerning the existence of latrines in rural Puerto Rico.

Caller #3, a middle-aged man, asked the sensitive question regarding why hadn't dogs, feral or otherwise, cause similar damage before. Rather than limiting himself to answer the question, the zoologist took the offensive, challenging that the belief in UFOs, previously described as a safety valve or mental alibi for a distressed population, caused these periodic manias. The pitfall lay in the fact that no mutilations were ever reported during the refractory periods when people weren't "hallucinating Martians," so to speak. The host responded to the demand that he furnish proof of the validity of parapsychology by making an arrogant remark aimed at putting the caller down.

But the coup-de-grace clearly belongs to Caller #4, the medical technician who challenged the zoologist's expertise by saying that a televised autopsy had prompted experts to say that something was definitely unusual about the bull that remained both uncorrupted and free from rigor mortis. Reeling from the verbal punches, there was nothing left to do but issue a vague threat of verifying the story with the veterinarian who performed the autopsy.

Caller #5, a grandmotherly woman, appeared to be only caller to go along with the pooch-oriented scenario the skeptics had set up, only to whimsically add that "a lion" could have made the single puncture mark. Chagrined, the skeptics were forced to agree with her, but took advantage of the conversation to direct a few blows against the believers in any extraterrestrial intervention in

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the Orocovis scenario.

We do not know if Dr. Acosta revisited the subject on the next installment of his show. Only Arnaldo Ginés statement that the killings appeared to have abated in the Orocovis region rang true. After a brief lull, the killings would begin anew.



Puerto Rico's mountainous interior harbors a number of mysteries. El Yunque dominates the horizon.
(Photo C. Evans-Corrales)

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IV. Stalking the Beast

There are no hard and fast rules for monster hunting. Certainly, cryptozoologists can indicate the most suitable equipment to take on an expedition, but every researcher, from Heuvelmans to Lara to Chorvinsky, has his own method. Some might opt for a "photo safari" approach, hoping to capture photos of the elusive critter. Others might consider carrying firearms in case there should be a replay of the Goatman incident, where a cornered entity began hurling tires against his pursuers with the ease of a frisbee thrower. Certainly Mayor Soto and his unarmed cadres, using a cage built from welded iron fencing and with a goat as bait, constitute another option.

Jorge Martín, like Salvador Freixedo before him, would not be considered a monster-hunter by these standards. They have gone for documenting the eyewitness testimony with vengeance, realizing that the human component of the phenomenon is the only facet over which we can truly say to exercise any control, or claim any knowledge. It is also better than returning home empty-handed after outfitting a massive hunt.

Some of the cases were fascinating: the industrial complex that couldn't find any security guards to work the graveyard shift, because three "Goatsucker"-like creatures had been seen at the same time; the people waiting for the bus in broad daylight who saw the Chupacabras walking down the street they were on; the driver waiting at a stoplight who thought "a dog" was crossing the street in front of him, only to realize that it was a creature he had never seen before; the woman who looked out the window in the midst of Hurricane Luis only to see the Chupacabras standing at a distance, impervious to the rain, wind, and lightning; the man with the machine gun who fired a hail of hot lead against the creature, but was too scared to report his case on account of his illegal firepower...The Martins' files are filled with accounts that will make a fantastic, absorbing book when it is finally published.

Flashback: The Moca Vampire

During the 1975 wave, Freixedo observed that the smallness of Puerto Rico allowed any investigator to hop into a car and drive to the scene of the events in an hour or two--something that would be difficult to do in his native Spain, much less in the United States. It was this closeness that enabled him to be one of the first people on the scene at Moca.

"During an evening in which UFOs were sighted over the town of Moca," Freixedo says, "two ducks, three goats, a pair of geese, and a large hog were found slain the following morning on a small farm. The owner was going insane, wondering who in the world could have visited this ruin upon him. The animals betrayed the wounds that have become typical of this kind of attack, and of course, they were all done with incredible precision. I did not doubt for one

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moment who could have been responsible for the crime...I got in my car and visited the area immediately, and realized what was filling the animals' owner with wonder and fear: there wasn't a trace of blood in any of the animals, and in spite of the fact that the dead geese had snow-white feathers, upon which the slightest speck of blood would have shown up immediately.

"Over the next few days, the newspapers continued reporting on the growing number of dead animals found in the region. No explanation could be found for these mysterious deaths. I visited the rural areas on various occasions to investigate the events firsthand and found that the farmers were as intrigued by their animals' deaths as they were by the enigmatic lights they could see in the nocturnal skies. One of them told me that the lights reminded him of the revolving lights on top of a police cruiser.

"During one of my forays, I was able to see a black and white cow spread out in the middle of the field. I got out of the car and tried to reach the cow, which wasn't easy. The dead beast had characteristic wounds on its neck and on its head. Skin had been pulled back on one side of its head, as if by using a scalpel, and the opening to one of its nasal orifices was missing, although there was no indication of rending. In spite of the whiteness of its head, there wasn't a single drop of blood to be seen. The farmer who escorted me could not stop wondering what had caused his cow's death. He related how that very same night he had heard his dogs barking furiously, and that a blind elderly woman who lived on the edge of the field had told him that the cattle, which ordinarily spends the night outdoors, had kept her from getting a good night's sleep due to their frantic, maddened running from one end of the field to another."

The benefit of twenty years hasn't added much to the investigator's arsenal. Researchers of the paranormal still stand over the carcasses of bloodless, mutilated animals wondering what explanation might satisfy the pleading look on the rancher's face. Can the ufologist, cryptozoologist, Fortean investigator or paranormalist really "level" with the animal's owner, who has just lost a valuable investment or a beloved pet, and start spouting wisdom about EBEs, killer UFOs, interdimensional beings that need blood for their sustenance, and other standards of the occult? On the other hand, can the skeptic tell the same distressed farmer that an "archetype" or figment of the popular imagination just put a finger-sized hole through an animal's throat?

Avians and Aliens

Is the Chupacabras merely another of the winged weirdos -- ranging from pterodactyls to Mothman-like creatures -- that have characterized the Fortean nature of Puerto Rico's cases? Apparently, the winged monsters retain a fondness for their old stomping grounds in the mountains, as exemplified by the following case.

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Georgie Quiñones, a citizen of Naranjito, a community located in the island's interior, reported how his mother had run into a being she at first thought was a child, because its height and build resembled that of a three year-old boy. The being was standing next to some hedges, and upon closer inspection, Mrs. Quiñones realized that she was in fact staring at something that she had never seen before--it had a large head and eyes, a flattened nose, and a delicate jawbone that appeared to be connected to the creature's body.

Creature and woman held each other's gaze, until the latter began feeling faint and nauseous. Taking advantage of her discomfiture, the being abandoned the area with stunning speed. The small intruder apparently belonged to the same order of beings seen earlier in Orocovis. Prior to this encounter, Mr. Quiñones' mother had also witnessed a flight of "gigantic" birds flying over the area two weeks earlier. One of the immense birds was described as having a "hump" on its back. Being familiar with eagles and the native *guaragua* (a kind of hawk), she assured her son that the birds did not resemble either of these. One of the birds landed on the branches of a nearby tree, causing it to bend on account of its weight.

Mrs. Quiñones also found that forty-seven of her chickens had been found dead on her property, adding a touch of horror to a strange situation. One of the dead hens had a considerable puncture mark on it, large and deep enough that a finger could be stuck into it. A neighbor of Mrs. Quiñones' had an encounter with a small humanoid that allegedly "jumped him" and caused him to flee in panic.

The Canóvanas Sightings

The summer brought sporadic sightings and reports of the Goatsucker, while UFO activity remained constant. The situation did not pick up again until the focus of activity had shifted from Orocovis to the coastal town of Canóvanas.

Canóvanas is a prosperous community that benefits from its location on Route 3, which handles the heavy traffic between San Juan on one end and Fajardo on the other. The majestic, mist-enshrouded peaks of El Yunque are only a stone's throw away, and the excellent beaches of Luquillo attract thousands of local and foreign tourists. Canóvanas also boasts the spectacular El Comandante, one of the finest race tracks in the entire world. It was this fortunate piece of real estate that the gargoylesque creature called the Chupacabras would select as its own.

Residents of Canóvanas' Lomas del Viento neighborhood were treated one evening to a rather spectacular UFO sighting. One of them, Victor Rodríguez, told Jorge Martín that around 11:45 p.m. on the night of the event, he became aware of the scintillating object that descended upon a group of trees. The light, described as

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"round and brilliant," took off from the area as if it had been spotted.

Lucy Batista, residing in the Alturas de Campo Rico neighborhood, commented on the curious noises associated with the Chupacabras--inhuman screams resembling the combined sounds of a cat yowling and a goat's braying. Not only did it cause her to feel fear, it also caused all of her animals to panic. One night, she heard the sound of an animal running behind her house. At first, she thought it was a horse until the terrifying cackle filled the air, causing her to fear for the safety children in her household.

During her interview with Jorge Martin, Mrs. Batista expressed her belief that a link existed between the creature or creatures known as the Goatsucker and the lights seen entering and leaving El Yunque, facing her development. Her husband and her son had also witnessed the brightly-colored lights that maneuvered above the mountain rainforest.

Believing at first the lights belonged to National Guard helicopters on nocturnal maneuvers, she soon realized that the lights were executing a number of senseless maneuvers every single night--standing still, ducking, flying in circles--that no helicopter is able to do. Motivated by curiosity, her husband and son drove up the tortuous mountain road to El Yunque, proceeding on foot to avoid detection by patrols. An encounter with Forestry Service workers put their expedition to an end, and both were turned back. She now believes that the lights correspond to what are commonly called flying saucers.

"The creature being seen everywhere in Canóvanas must be an extraterrestrial," she told Martín during the course of the interview. "The drawings that are going around show a combination of extraterrestrial and terrestrial animal. This is the conclusion that we've reached, and the conclusion of the people who've seen it." Other residents of her area refer to the creature jokingly as "The Rabbit" on account of the shape of its hind legs, or "The Kangaroo," for its ability to take prodigious leaps with its powerful legs.

In the light of all the commotion the creature's antics caused in Canóvanas, many of the locals were surprised that no agencies aside from elements of the Civil Defense had chosen to look into the matter. "The Department of Natural Resources was called, but no one was sent to investigate. Perhaps they thought this situation was something cooked up by the townsfolk." One local grumbled.

The fact of the matter is that the witnesses were subjected not to the negative influence of MIBs or hostile government agents, but to the scorn of their own peers. A young woman named Mariane, interviewed by Martín, indicated that her husband's co-workers had taken to teasing him by calling him Goatsucker all the time. Other members of their family, who had also expressed their belief in the

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existence of this creature, or had seen it with their own eyes, had also been subjected to ridicule. "This creature isn't a joke," she said angrily. "I didn't make it up, either. It's real."

Undoubtedly, one of the foremost witnesses of the Canóvanas sightings, whose credibility was never an issue, was a pious gentleman named Daniel Pérez who was well-regarded in his community. Mr. Pérez had encountered the Goatsucker not once, but twice.

Interview with Daniel Pérez

Martín: We're here with Mr. Daniel Pérez of the Campo Rico sector, which has been affected by the appearance of the mysterious creature that has been seen in the area over the past couple of weeks. Don Daniel, we understand that you've had the opportunity to see the creature on two or three occasions in very important circumstances, because you saw it by daylight and were able to distinguish certain important features. We would like to ask you what you saw, what meaning does it hold for you, and what you think about the situation?

Pérez: Well, it was around a quarter to seven in the morning...I heard a kind of moan, something going: "Oooooo", something strange, so I got up and went to the window, and saw nothing at all. When I was about to close the window, I heard a buzzing sound [makes buzzing sound], which prompted me to look out again. At that moment, the creature descended, apparently flying. Yes, it came down, and it descended on a large stone that is on my property, some twenty feet away from where I stood. As soon as it made contact with the stone, it took impulse again, rose into the air, and cleared the trees ahead without touching a single leaf. It's a creature measuring some three feet in height, I'd say, when it isn't erect, but when it stands straight, must be some five feet tall. Its hind legs are long, its forelegs are short, he's somewhat cute, has a little belly, and...from the top of its head all down its back it has some sort of fins that move. When it was about to take off, the fins moved in the direction it was headed. I really didn't see its eyes, but its head is large...the eyes are big, but I couldn't see what color they were. Its face is small and pointy. The following day, at the same time, I saw it heading back in the opposite direction. Its skin is squirrel-colored and I can't describe it properly...

Martín: Why's that?

Pérez: Because I can't describe it as fur or as skin properly said. It's something that causes a rather strange sensation. In fact, my first impression upon seeing the creature was to remain silent. In other words, well, I...

Martín: They tell us that you were deeply impressed and affected by the creature's presence.

Pérez: Well, I thought it would be best to keep quiet and not tell anyone, but then I told my wife, and she told the neighbor lady, and it took off from there. I originally thought about keeping it to myself, feeling that if I tried explaining it to people, they wouldn't believe me. As far as my personality is concerned, I have no mental reservations whatsoever about there being creatures in other parts of the universal system...to my understanding, this in no way contradicts the Scriptures, because God, in his immense labors, has things we've never seen nor heard.

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Martín: You're telling me this because...it seems that you felt that it could be some sort of alien life form.

Pérez: I think so.

Martín: And why's that?

Pérez: According to the way I see it, a creature that flies without having enormous wings...

Martín: Didn't you see it fly?

Pérez: I didn't see any wings as such. It does have some sort of fins that apparently help him glide...

Martín: What do those fins look like?

Pérez: They're triangular in shape, but sometimes, when it's in the air, they can be mistaken for hair, perhaps because of the speed with which he moves them, they could be interpreted as hair, but not to my understanding.

Martín: But you're saying they're not very big.

Pérez: They're some six to eight inches long. They protrude from its spine.

Martín: Six to eight inches...how many do you think there are? We've been told that it has a kind of crest.

Pérez: They're not all the same size. They go from medium-sized, mix in with the larger ones on its back, and then diminish. Honestly, I can't say if it had a tail, or I didn't see a tail as such. Maybe those who've seen it have pictured the fins that run downward to be part of a tail, but to me they ended on the creature's back.

Martín: The majority of witnesses have described spines or quills coming out of its back.

Pérez: I had the same impression when I saw it flying, coming in. But I'll tell you again--he moves them so fast that he makes it seem that they're hairs, but as soon as it stopped, I didn't feel they were hairs, as such.

Martín: [garbled] Were you able to make out the shape of its eyes.

Pérez: Its...Its eyes were rather large, but I honestly didn't see the color. Now, the shape--

Martín: Basically we're talking about an eye looking like this--

Pérez: Two inches, more or less.

Martín: Ahhh, we've been told that the eyes are slanted--

Pérez: Yes, inclined--

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Martín: Almond-shaped?

Pérez: Inclined upwards...like so.

Martín: Um...the hands. Could you see its hands?

Pérez: The hands are tiny.

Martín: Tiny?

Pérez: Yes.

Martín: How many fingers, if any?

Pérez: I honestly didn't see...

Martín: What are its legs like?

Pérez: The legs are rather, rather long. When he landed, he did this: He came down...

Martín: Bent its legs...

Pérez: Exactly, then he took off. I understand that he doesn't fly as a result of impulse--he flies by nature.

Martín: But what has to be seen...what you're describing, and what others are describing, in regard to the spines or fins on its back, just wouldn't be enough to impel a body of that size.

Pérez: That's what I found so strange. According to what I could see, he uses the fins to guide the direction of his flight, but when he's in the air, he apparently crosses them. They buzz [makes buzzing sound] and many have perhaps confused the fins with hairs, since they move so quickly.

Martín: So it flies with those appendages?

Pérez: With those appendages or whatever [they are]. But he also uses them, apparently, to orient himself.

Martín: When you saw it the second time around, and you heard the buzzing, you were looking at it from where?

Pérez: I was at the, the...the window of my house, looking out. He was heading toward my house, and I thought he was going to land on the stone, but he turned when he reached the gate and turned upward.

Martín: In other words, you didn't see where it was coming from?

Pérez: No, no I didn't.

Martín: You saw it when it went by at the moment.

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Pérez: That's correct, yes.

Martín: You're a religious man...you're well-liked in the sector, and you're seen as a very serious person. And I congratulate you on that, because everyone we've spoken to holds you in very high regard. But...you were telling us a short while ago that you feel this doesn't contradict...it's having a relationship with something extraterrestrial...this doesn't contradict the Scriptures?

Pérez: [unintelligible]

Martín: I know, I know, but if this is so, and what we're dealing with isn't terrestrial, what implications would this have for you?

Pérez: Well, for me...ah, it would confirm what, what I've always believed, that there could be life elsewhere in the universe. And it would mean that God is even greater than I previously imagined, and as I said earlier, in the course of his immense works he may have ordained life elsewhere, which shouldn't alarm us or surprise us. I understand that these are the things the Bible tells us are reserved for the eyes and ears of the faithful, and that...well, much in the same way we're trying to get to the Moon, and we send ships to Mars and to other countries (sic), they may be trying to reach us, as we've found drawings of extraterrestrial beings, or whatever you want to call them, made by human beings who lacked the intellectual powers that we have today. These things are there...they're facts that can't be denied.

Martín: Is there anything you would like to add, or to say to the people who may be listening to this interview, something you may want to tell them based on your experience?

Pérez: Well, I urge people not to be alarmed, as far as I know he hasn't attacked any human beings, and...if they should see him, well...take it as naturally as possible, um, they're going to be somewhat surprised, but it's only natural, and not to create fantasies about it or treat it as a joke. If there's something I've come to learn is that these things should not be taken in jest. The fact that one hasn't seen it...shouldn't make you disbelieve it. But most importantly, don't think it's some sort of "goof", as they say...

* * *

The transcript of Martín's interview with the religious Canovanán was proof that educated, perceptive members of the population--immune to the sensationalist press--were providing highly detailed accounts of their experiences with the elusive creature.

Pérez's testimony was vital for an important reason. First and foremost, he was privileged to have seen the "monster" twice --on its way to and from an unguessed-at location--and was able to contain whatever fear or concern he may have had for his safety or that of his family, thus allowing him to take a long look at the entity and study its peculiar characteristics.

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The excellent identikit image composed by Jorge Martín, which had been featured on the first page of San Juan's El Nuevo Día newspaper, was revised on the basis of the Pérez testimony. The "spikes" running from the creature's head down its back were apparently fin-like appendages that vibrated so quickly it made them seem like hairs to other witnesses, particularly those who did not stick around to take second look.

Nonetheless, his testimony created an added complication. Where it had been believed that the entity merely took prodigious jumps from one location to another by means of its powerful hind legs, it was now capable of wingless flight by means of these buzzing appendages. While the wings of a hummingbird are theoretically too small to support its weight, *eppur si muove!*, as Galileo would have said. Could this be the case with the Goatsucker? Pérez also corroborated descriptions of the creature's head, eyes (though not their color), arms, and legs.



The updated version of Jorge Martín's highly accurate composite drawing of the Chupacabras. When shown this image, witnesses state that it more closely resembles the creature than any other illustration being circulated. Fangs, previously missing from the first draft, have been added. The creature's color alternates between pale grey, green, and brown, although an albino creature was mentioned during one report. (Drawing ©1995 Jorge Martín)

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V. Into the Realm of Beasts

Perhaps no single area in the realm of paranormal studies evokes more reactions -- positive and negative -- than the appearance of strange bestial creatures, ranging from winged entities and oversized felines to grotesque, hairy simian creatures. They elude police and hunters, yet become plainly visible to suburbanites emptying the trash; they have been seen hurling fifty gallon drums at their pursuers, yet also appear to have a ghostly, insubstantial aspect which allows them to vanish almost instantly; they have been reported in every single location possible, from the tropical rainforests and high mountains to the heavily congested streets of our metropolitan areas.

Researchers have shunned research into these apparitions as a sure-fire way to achieve disrespectability, even among fellow investigators of the unknown. The scientific and academic establishment scoffs benignly at these reports, confident in that what isn't known to them isn't knowledge. Meanwhile, to this very day, thousands--perhaps hundreds of thousands--of witnesses around the globe continue to report encounters with physical entities that defy explanation.

In the restless years between the two World Wars, journalist H.P. Wilkins visited the Belgian city of Bruges, and looked into a most curious story regarding an ancient monastery, once occupied by members of the Dominican order. At the turn of the century, Wilkins' host told him, the monastery had been turned into a boarding house for the use of students and tourists. However, many paying guests refused to stay the night in many cases because of a an apparition, described as "damned inhuman" and emitting a foul odor.

The owner of the monastery turned boarding house did not relish the prospect of losing any more customers, and contracted a crew of builders to break up the stone floor of a cellar which was believed to be the root of the problem. Nothing was found underneath the cold medieval stones, but when the cellar walls were broken, the builders discovered an alcove containing bones which were not in the least bit human. A pathologist was summoned to examine the bones. After examining the disquieting find, the pathologist declared that they belonged to an adult rather than an infant. Aside from that, he was unable to say much more on the monstrosity.

The journalist was told that once the bones were removed to the Belgian Medical Museum, no further disturbances were reported. Wilkins ends his treatment of the subject by speculating if the remains were those of a creature resulting from "some nasty amour of the unnatural type denounced in the books of the Pentateuch, or the remains of some horrible thing teleported to Bruges from some world in space."

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This quasi-Lovecraftian account may be dismissed as a fanciful Gothic anecdote related to a visitor to a foreign country, but could those bones, lying in the dusty ossuary of some European medical establishment, be the only physical proof of the existence of non-human creatures which slip in and out of our world?

Perhaps the man-apes known as Sasquatch, Yeti, Ucumari, etc. constitute the greatest and best known variety of mystery creature, and the only kind whose study has received a tacit nod from officialdom. Anthropologists have even gone as far as establishing its identity as the Gigantopithecus, an anthropoidal creature which may have survived into modern times by keeping clear of *homo sapiens*. The historic record contains mentions of these beings, such as that they were used by the ancient Medes and Persians as ferocious battle animals, and that Nearchos, Alexander the Great's admiral, encountered communities of these creatures on the barren shores of the Persian Gulf, living in crude huts made out of whalebones. Medieval bestiaries faithfully included them under such headings as Woodwose, Wild Man, Vampires and other demihumans. Bigfoot may have given rise to the Nordic myth of giant Trolls. All this appears to point to an elusive physical being which has been repeatedly encountered throughout the centuries.

Argentina's Salta region has been the focus for a number of hairy hominid sightings for many years. This rugged, mountainous region could not differ more from the Sasquatch's forested Pacific Northwest: arid, desolate landscapes meet vast salt deserts, such as the Puna de Atacama, where rainfall is almost nonexistent.

Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros, Director of Research for Mexico's CEFP, provides the following information: In 1957, Dr. José Cerato and geologist Claudio Spitch discovered the footprints of a Bigfoot-like creature at an elevation of almost 16,000 ft. The prints, according to Spitch, were so large that they precluded the possibility of having been made by a human being. A month later, José Santolay ran into the alleged maker of the footprints, a large, fur-covered creature that emitted sharp cries which terrified the onlooker. Authorities looking into Santolay's claims surmised that it could have been the *Ukumar Zupai* described in the legends of the Coya inhabitants of the region.

Seventeen years later, Benigno Hoyos, a worker in the vicinity of the Arízaro salt desert, had a face-to-face encounter with one of these creatures, firing upon it with his gun. According to anthropologist Silvia Alicia Barrios, hunters have successfully apprehended live specimens of Bigfoot's southern cousin. One such case involves the capture of a family of Ukumaris--a mother and two offspring--by Andrés Olguín. The two young Ukumaris were allegedly turned over to a Paraguayan zoologist.

In late December 1993, there were repeated Bigfoot incidents in New Mexico, among them, sightings of a large hairy creature near

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a major highway; a white Bigfoot, another similar creature stalking a herd of elk, and more amazingly, a report of a large man-ape that hurled a dog over a six-foot fence. The Bigfeet were also active in Pennsylvania during January 1994, causing a flurry of excitement for a number of days.

Pennsylvanian researcher Stan Gordon's files include a 1995 case in which a young man, home alone in a part of the state notorious for its manifold Bigfoot sightings, ran barefoot across a freshly-tarred driveway to get away from a screaming creature prowling in the vicinity. Unlike its counterpart on the Pacific coast, the Pennsylvania Bigfoot has shown an inclination toward appearing in suburban areas and closer to human habitation.

But what about other simian creatures of a slightly less substantial nature? Noted authors Jerome Clark and Loren Coleman discuss the appearance of one of these man-beasts at a séance in Poland during the 1920's. According to the testimony of Colonel Norbert Ochorowicz, witness to one of these apparitions, the ape-like creature often caused fear among the sitters, but did not have an evil disposition and expressed "goodwill, gentleness, and readiness to obey."

Among the Pennsylvanian sightings mentioned earlier are some which border on the paranormal: three-toed creatures seen in the proximity of UFO's, others which could be pierced by flashlight beams as if not really there (holographic projections?), and the classic case of a woman who heard the sound of raccoons or a dog rattling through the cans on her porch, and upon going outside to inspect, was confronted with a seven-foot tall hairy ape. The woman fired almost point-blank at the creature, which "just disappeared in a flash of light...just like someone taking a picture." Gordon notes that many of those involved in UFO/Bigfoot cases have experienced phenomena such as strange presences in their homes and other occult manifestations.

During the earlier wave of cattle mutilations in the mid-'70s, which shall be referred to throughout this work, Puerto Rico was also visited by the ubiquitous big hairy monsters. Many witnesses to these Bigfoot-type creatures agreed that they ranged in height from 4 to 7 feet, with black or brown fur, presenting a generally humanoid appearance, and had a penchant for destroying plantain and banana trees, tearing them open to extract their nutritious sap. One witness managed to fire his pistol against one of these rampaging creatures with no apparent effect. An issue of *ENIGMA!* magazine featured a photograph taken of this apparently vegetarian "smallfoot", who was christened "El Comecogollos" (roughly translated as the "Banana Tree Eater," a most unwieldy monicker) by the irreverent island media. The creature's existence and exploits, however small, became a regular feature in certain local comedy shows.

The "Comecogollos'" apparently placid nature and vegan ways did not mean that the other hairy hominids under investigation were

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equally sanguine. A document obtained by researcher Jorge Martín deals with a preliminary investigation into one of these cases, in which a Bigfoot-type entity embarked upon a spree of raids against animals kept in henhouses, pens, and hutches in the community of Trujillo Alto. The Alamo family, who witnessed one such raid on their property, described the hairy intruder as having glowing blue eye and greater proportions than the "Comecogollos".

Another manimal nearly caused a resident of Rexville, a suburb of San Juan, to have a heart attack in the summer of 1991. Eduardo Velasco stepped out to his backyard one day only to discover that the eighteen rabbits he kept in neat hutches had been ripped to pieces by the fury of some powerful unknown entity. "It" had torn its way right through the resistant wire of the hutches to reach its prey.

Winged Wonders

To many, winged humans and humanoids belong strictly in the realm of myth (Daedalus and the Garuda, respectively) or in the literary domain of magic realism, as exemplified by Gabriel García Márquez's *A Very Old Man with Very Big Wings* or Pedro Prado's *Alsino*. Cryptozoologists and Fortean researchers, however, know these flights of fancy are firmly grounded in sightings of weird, often hostile anthropomorphic which move through the air with wings entirely too small for their size and apparent weight.

The Caribbean island of Puerto Rico is the heavyweight champion of apparitions of these strange winged wonders. Some cases go as far back as the turn of the century, while others have occurred -- too close for comfort -- in this very day and age.

On April 23 1995, Reynaldo Ortega, a resident of Naranjito, P.R. (where Georgie Quiñones' mother had an encounter with winged oddities in Ch. 4), saw a gigantic "bird" standing the roof of his house. Ortega had gone out to look for a small goat on his property, since the epidemic of animal mutilations on the island was at its greatest virulence. Ortega described the winged oddity as a creature between three and four feet tall, with the body and dense black plumage of an eagle, a thick neck, and piercing eyes. The nightmarish raptor had an even more peculiar characteristic Ortega would never forget: it had a wolf-like muzzle instead of a beak.

This "griffin", for want of a better description, did not harm the terrified onlooker, but others were not quite so lucky. A worker in a sugarcane field near the town of Patillas was allegedly assaulted in broad daylight by a huge flapping "thing" that toppled him to the ground.

During the early Nineties, residents of the communities surrounding the controversial Laguna Cartagena reported seeing a ghastly bird-like creature perched on a metal fence. The grotesque

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avian had leathery wings, scales, and a horned head. The witnesses produced sketches of what they had seen, which to all extents and purposes, resembled a pterodactyl.

Pterodactyl-like birds, curiously, have been reported elsewhere on Puerto Rico at different times. One witness recalled that during her high-school years, while walking down a street with friends in broad daylight, she experienced the sensation of "time" slowing down around her: this bewildering sensation made it seem as if her companions were speaking and walking in slow motion, and made the air appear rarified. In the clear sky above, she saw a large winged creature flap its wings and issue a cry that was apparently not subjected to the time-lag effect. Once the bird had flown out of sight, time resumed its normal "speed."

Surprisingly enough, the protagonist of this singular experience had no knowledge or interest in Prehistory. It was a considerable time later that she realized that what she had seen a pterodactyl, after learning about them in school. The experience has remained in her mind forever.

A number of hypotheses have been put forth to account for the persistent reports of unusual animals in a small but environmentally-varied island such as Puerto Rico. Rationalists, such as distinguished political thinker J.M. García Passalacqua, have put it down to the island's uncertain political status, which generates subconscious anxiety. In his opinion, this political anxiety translates into apparitions, both religious and not so. The problem with this hypothesis is that UFOs, monstrous beings, and religious apparitions occur in many parts of the world where there is no anxiety of a political identity (to wit, the U.K., Spain, the U.S., etc.).

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VI. An Incredible Month

The tail end of the summer of 1995 was dominated by "Roswie," the nickname given to the controversial lifeless protagonist of the Roswell Alien Autopsy aired by the FOX television station in the U.S. and by TELEMUNDO in Latin America. Many high-ranking UFO investigators had already viewed the debatable footage earlier, but the democratic transmission allowed everyone to join the fray. The large-headed, immobile "spaceman" stole whatever headlines were being commanded by the alive and kicking Chupacabras.

At this point, the newspapers began to give the Goatsucker regular coverage, with at least some latest exploit of the bloodthirsty being recounted in the daily papers.

It becomes necessary to make an explanation at this point. Puerto Rico has four newspapers serving the needs of its 2.7 million inhabitants. Foremost among them is *El Nuevo Día* (The New Day) which remains the public's choice for information. It is followed by the English-language *The San Juan Star*, a well-produced tabloid formerly belonging to Scripps-Howard, with fine international and domestic coverage.

The rest of the market is occupied by two radically different newspapers: the weekly *Claridad* (Clarity), a government watchdog that advocates independence and espouses nationalist causes, and *El Vocero* (The Town Crier), a tabloid whose headlines, in bright red uppercase letters, often surmount a grotesque photograph of a murder or auto accident. Unlike Stateside tabloids or Mexico's *Ovaciones*, it provides little or no celebrity coverage.

The first three have traditionally handled any supernatural material gingerly. *El Vocero*, however, has always rushed in where angels fear to tread, developing consistent UFO/paranormal coverage as the situation demands it. Julio Víctor Ramírez, a respected journalist, brought a degree of maturity and professionalism to the "saucer beat" throughout the early '90s and up to the present; Rubén Darío Rodríguez covered the fanged bird which caused a sensation in 1989, and so forth. Many have chosen to disregard these facts and simply dismiss the UFO/paranormal coverage along with the sensationalistic car crashes, homicides, crimes of passion, and other matters that fill *El Vocero*'s pages. This is not an effort at portraying this newspaper in a better light, only to stress that not all aspects of it should be condemned. Unless stated otherwise, the following diary entries reflect events which appeared in *El Vocero*.

Tuesday, October 31, 1995

Halloween was never like this. At best, I recall the antics of a few boys, like my friend Toti Troia, who would take advantage of the cover of darkness to

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throw eggs against anything in sight -- homes, cars, neighbors he disliked -- but nothing ever matched the supernatural madness produced by the Chupacabras, particularly on a night like this.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto and his band of cammo-clad hunters made it clear than not a single member of their 200-man militia had been armed during their latest foray into the tropical night in pursuit of the Goatsucker. Looking to all the world like a Recondo leader from the Vietnam War, Mayor Soto made it clear that the small arms fire heard that night had issued from the weaponry in the hands of fearful citizens.

Mayor Soto was clearly pleased at the response elicited by his nocturnal patrols in search of the winged intruder: news of the Chupacabras and its nefarious deeds had made worldwide headlines. According to the mayor, one of his constituents had described the beast as a creature some three feet tall, which could increase its height suddenly, and was endowed with either a crest or horns on its head. It also had large hind legs resembling those of a kangaroo. This matter, stressed Mayor Soto, was a very serious one, and that his patrols served the added purpose of calming the citizens of Canóvanas. His political opponent, Melba Rivera, who expects to unseat Soto in next year's elections, has gone on record saying that the incumbent mayor is doing his level best to discredit the city by his ridiculous antics.

Wednesday, November 1, 1995

What a way to start the month. The Goatsucker, as it is called, or its peers are crisscrossing the countryside, laying waste the small animal industry that had characterized rural Puerto Rico for decades. This time, the predatory gargoyle descended upon the community of Sábana Grande, located near UFO-haunted Laguna Cartagena.

A report filed by police officer Abraham Báez of the Sábana Seca police noted that a Nubian goat belonging to José Vega Lugo was found in a lot adjacent to Route 167, which leads to Barrio La Torre. The officer's report states that the animal was found missing an eye and displayed a curious wound on its neck. The carcass gave no indications of having been attacked by dogs, but the goat's innards were outside its body. The animal had also been rendered bloodless by its nameless attacker.

José Vega Lugo discovered that his goat had been slain at 3:00 p.m. in a lot near his property. Neighbors found several black hairs entwined in a barbed wire fence.

Lt. Medina, the interim chief of the Sábana Grande district, noted that the wounds inflicted on the hapless goat "were precise and without any rending." Perhaps to keep at bay the more fanciful explanations for the goat's demise, he promptly added that there had been reports concerning the presence of feral monkeys in the area. Three years earlier, an unknown assailant had decimated a flock of sheep belonging to a doctor from the nearby city of Yauco. The dead animals presented the same throat punctures and had inexplicably lost all their blood.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto's paramilitary antics may have been scorned by his political opponents in Canóvanas, but were hailed as pro-active by Carlos De Jesús, manager of "Junker Correa," an auto salvage lot located on the main highway running from Caguas to Rio Piedras. Mr. De Jesús insisted that the course of action taken by the mayor of Canóvanas was neither foolish nor futile.

De Jesús' junkyard had just been the Chupacabras' latest lunch stop. Upon opening for business at 7:00 a.m., he was puzzled that the five sheep and four

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geese he kept on the premises had not come out to greet him, demanding their morning meal. Manuel Correa, the junkyard's proprietor, accompanied De Jesús in search of the animals, only to find they were all dead.

"The Chupacabras is a serious matter, not a cause for levity. The government should pay greater attention to this weird situation. Right now, only farm animals are being killed, but in the future, it could well be our own children or grandchildren." De Jesús declared emphatically to reporter Rubén Darío Rodríguez from *El Vocero*.

Thursday, November 2, 1995

The Chupacabras or Goatsucker has hit the big time. No, it hasn't decided to kill circus elephants or giraffe -- an Associated Press writer has apparently picked up the story and broadcasted it on the newswires.

This time, it was residents of Ponce who had the dubious pleasure of the visit. The Chupacabras feasted on four cats and five dogs in the Lajés and Bellavista neighborhoods of the city.

Angela Lajés told the press that she woke up in the morning and found that her dog, who had been put outside in perfect health the previous evening, was dead. Aside from a trickle of blood around its anus, the dog was described as being desiccated and with a few viscera exposed.

Mrs. Lajés ran to her neighbor, her sister Angela Santiago, who told her that two cats on her property had been found entirely dry, as if they had nothing inside them. "I heard the sounds of a fierce fight last night, but I felt afraid to come outside, but the fact of the matter is that a number of animals have been slain without any explanation whatsoever."

Other reports continue coming in from the Halloween spree embarked upon by the seemingly supernatural Chupacabras. Today's newspaper reports that twenty parakeets--hardly containing enough blood for a creature the size of the Goatsucker--had been found slain in the coastal town of Yabucoa, down the road from the prestigious Palmas del Mar resort. Not satisfied with killing the parakeets in their cage, the bloodthirsty creature topped the night off by relieving five goats of their vital fluids.

Mr. William Rodríguez's five goats were inspected by Officers Lozada and Ortiz of the Yabucoa precinct, who noted that the animals had been slain in a manner identical to the other deaths reported all over the island.

Melba Rivera, the politician who hopes to unseat Canóvanas' Mayor Soto in the '96 elections, has asked Illeana Carlo, the Commonwealth's Controller, to look into the possible misuse of funds, personnel and equipment by Mayor Soto during his patrols in search of the Goatsucker. Rivera's letter to the Controller stated unequivocally that Mayor Soto "had embarked upon yet another propaganda act characteristic of his administration. Not satisfied with placing Canóvanas in ridicule, Chemo Soto has also taken advantage of the situation to squander public funds which could well be used to help our needy townspeople...the hunt for the Chupacabras resembles something lifted from the old "Fantasy Island" episodes. Undoubtedly, a need for public recognition has caused the Mayor to resort to ridicule, to the great embarrassment of his constituency."

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Monday, November 6, 1995

So far it's only been animals, but the fear behind every single mind on the island was that the Goatsucker would get it into his head to give human hemoglobin a try. Two fishermen who had cast their hooks by the banks of the Canóvanas River almost became an entree, according to Obed Betancourt, a writer for *El Vocero*.

The two men had been fishing buruqueñas (a sort of Caribbean shad or sunfish) in the early evening (7:30-8:30 p.m.) in the Barrio Palmasola section of Canóvanas, when they suddenly became aware of a sound in the vegetation behind them. Luis Angel Guadalupe and Carlos Carrillo, his brother in law, were convinced that the thing which interrupted their nocturnal fishing was none other than the Chupacabras itself. Guadalupe observed that it was "horrible--like the devil himself," proceeding to describe the creature as a having large ears, oval and luminous eyes which alternated between orange and red, claws, and wings. The nightmarish intruder stood anywhere between four and five feet tall.

This close encounter prompted both men to run faster than either of them had ever run, while the Chupacabras pursued them flying above the treetops. Upon reaching his house after the mad footrace, Guadalupe availed himself of a machete and turned around to see the Goatsucker, ready to pounce, perched on a nearby hutch. But battle wasn't joined--the gargoyle jumped to the ground, leaving deep prints in the earth, and dashed back into the woods, tearing down the hutch, fences, and other structures in its path.

Perhaps it wasn't hungry. It was later learned that earlier that evening, the winged terror had slaughtered fifteen peacocks and a heifer belonging to one Miguel Domínguez.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto and thirty of his "Ramboes" -- the militia-like posse of fearless Goatsucker hunters -- patrolled the areas in question in search of the creature. Mayor Soto expressed a belief at one point that the Chupacabras prowls the riverbanks to drink water after killing its prey.

Tuesday, November 7, 1995

The Chupacabras strikes again: this time it has chosen to add a cat to its monotonous goat and lamb diet. Striking at a junkyard, it killed a cat, a sheep, and apparently swallowed an entire lamb, since the third animal being kept by the junkyard owner never turned up again.

The junkyard, known as "Junker Tito", is located on Route 1 between Caguas and Rio Piedras, a heavily-trafficked urban corridor. Perhaps the solitude that reigns over these used auto parts cemeteries is perfect for the creature's depredations, since this is its second strike at a junkyard. "Junker Correa" and the sheep it held were victims to the Goatsucker a few days earlier.

Victor Ortiz, owner of "Junker Tito", had this to say to the press: "We have no idea if it all happened on Sunday night or in the early morning hours of Monday. When we opened for business on Monday morning, we were surprised that the animals hadn't come looking for us as was their custom. A short while later, we

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found the dead cat, two almost-dead sheep and a missing lamb."

Ortiz went on to add that in spite of the muddiness of the junkyard's terrain, there were no footprints to be found anywhere. However, there were signs that a fierce fight had ensued between the animals and the attacker, who vanquished them in the end. The dead animals had the characteristic circular puncture marks around their necks.

Wednesday, November 8, 1995

The Chupacabras, now believed to be merely one of many creatures, continued its killing spree throughout the island's central municipalities, this time leaving fifteen guinea hens completely bloodless. The dead birds exhibited bizarre stinger marks, as if they had been attacked by a swarm of bees. This event transpired in the locality of Cidra, at a body shop owned by Juan R. Colón.

A few days earlier, a Cidra mechanic had seen a veru strange creature land on a tree branch. Not willing to risk ridicule, he confided his experience to a cousin. The mechanic repeatedly stated that he had never seen anything similar in his life, and believed that he had quite possibly seen the notorious Chupacabras.

The undercurrent of fear caused by the Chupacabras spread throughout the city of Caguas and its outlying suburbs as a result of the mind-bending killing of a large horse and four goats belonging to Efraín Rojas, Jr..

The animals, kept at Mr. Rojas' property off Route 183, which links San Lorenzo to Caguas, were found with deep incisions in their chests, one of them leading directly to the heart. No stains of blood spillage were found on the ground, nor was any blood left within the carcasses.

Jonathan Rojas, a high school student, claims to have woken from a deep sleep at 2:30 a.m. after hearing the noise made by the horse kicking the door to its paddock. Upon taking a quick look through his bedroom window, he was amazed to see an odd, pyramidal object some sixteen feet tall by twenty feet wide floating amid the heavy fog.

Rojas added that the object seemed to have a sort of entrance or doorway, and was hovering over a small brook some three hundred feet away from his house, as if supplying itself with water. He fell asleep once more, awakening at five in the morning to see the same object in place. This time he alerted his uncle, who was only able to distinguish an intense glow departing from the area as he looked out the window.

Thursday, November 9, 1995

Mrs. Ada Arroyo, identified as the assistant director of the Mount Sion Nursing Home outside Barrio Turabo Arriba in the city of Caguas, fell victim to a nervous breakdown after seeing the infamous Chupacabras. According to the story, the event took place at 7 p.m.. Mount Sion is a peaceful and inviting facility, equipped with a large and modern swimming facility.

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Mrs. Arroyo was quoted as saying: "I heard screams similar to those made by a lamb being slaughtered. I went out to the patio and managed to see a strange hairy figure, grayish in color, covering its body with a pair of wings. It had a flattened, vulpine face, with enormous red eyes." Mrs. Arroyo added that the creature held her gaze with its mesmerizing eyes before taking off into the air, vanishing from sight immediately.

It was later learned that the noises identified by the nursing home director came from a herd of cattle downhill from the place where she spotted the winged oddity. No dead animals were discovered.

Other animals in Rio Piedras weren't so fortunate: two sheep, a goose, and a turkey were found dead the following day. It was rumored that the Chupacabras had been active in the area only days before, when a 150 lb. sheep was found dead and drained of all its blood. No footprints were found around any of the victims.

Friday, November 10, 1995

Word on the streets has it that the Chupacabras is hiding out in the vast natural cave systems that riddle Puerto Rico like a piece of Swiss cheese. Hundreds of residents of the town of Aguas Buenas, famous for being the birthplace of Luis Muñóz Marín, the Commonwealth's founder and first governor, believed that the famous, bat-infested caves of their region were providing shelter for the Chupacabras.

Mayor Carlos Aponte, taking a page from Mayor Soto's book, decided to organize a posse and go after the creature, which had already left its calling card in Aguas Buenas. The entity appeared in broad daylight and killed a rooster and two hens at a private farm located at Barrio Camino Verde, before being scared away by the screams of local residents who witnessed its deeds. Those selfsame residents allegedly saw it enter the gloomy caves. The police, members of the Civil Defense, and dozens of townsfolk headed to the cave area, but none dared venture into them for fear of cornering the creature.

Saturday, November 11, 1995

Gun control is a non-issue in Puerto Rico. Not only is it a citizen's right to bear arms, but it is safe to say that one of every three island residents owns a weapon, registered or not. This freewheeling ownership of sidearms enabled farmer Elliot Feliciano to open fire against a nocturnal predator which turned out to be the hellish Goatsucker.

According to Feliciano, a large animal jumped the fence surrounding his home, prompting the armed response. While he cannot say for sure if he scored a hit, the farmer believes that the sizeable creature may well have been the Chupacabras. He described the beast as being some 3 to 4 feet tall, endowed with large eyes, and with what appeared to be wings.

Police report 95-5-050-15435, filed by police officers Gonzalo Tubens and José Toro, states that an animal making a noise that the complainant could not identify was shot at on the property. A search by both officers revealed no trace of the Goatsucker.

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The El Rosario sector, located between Mayagüez and San German, has been gripped by fear since the first sightings of the gargoyle-like creature began, prompting farmers to safeguard their animals. UFO sightings over the mountainous region of Maricao (a notorious materialization point or "window area") have done nothing to assuage these concerns.

Two locals claimed having seen a brilliant, round object flying over the Sábana Grande area. The following day, elements of the local police found an eighty-pound goat which had been killed by means of strange wounds to its throat, and rendered bloodless.

Monday, November 13, 1995

The possibility that the mysterious Chupacabras could well be an extraterrestrial force was reinforced by a very strange occurrence which took place in the town of Vega Baja.

Although five chickens were found entirely drained of blood in the backyard of the property owned by Julio and Julia González, the most spectacular event appears to have been the strange mark placed upon the forearm of the couple's daughter this past summer.

Oralis González, 5, was marked with a tatoo-like impression which read OJO-10-OJO after an alleged account with nonhuman entities. While the child is reluctant to discuss what exactly transpired, and her parents discouraged mention of it for fear that it would affect her studies, it is generally acknowledged that this supposed event has triggered the child's IQ, causing her father to describe her as a prodigy.

Little Oralis' experience came to light while police officer Pablo Robles interviewed Mr. Gonzalez about the dead poultry found in the backyard. The chickens were found lying in a perfect row, giving the impression that they were "sunbathing." This charming notion was soon put to rest when it was discovered that the animals were dead and drained of their blood.

Tuesday, November 14, 1995

The UFO question rears its ugly head again. An anonymous resident from Aguas Buenas claims to have seen fiery spaceships shooting "elevators" of light against the ground, primarily at sites where bloodless and mutilated animals have been found. In this anonymous witness' opinion, the dreaded Chupacabras is simply a being from another world in space. The man, age 37, insists on the need for anonymity out of concern for his wife and children. He lives near the renown Aguas Buenas cave system.

When asked to describe the luminous elevators, he explained that they resemble "cones" of opaque light whose interior cannot be seen. He theorizes that some kind of suction must lift whatever is on the ground toward the unidentified object above, whose dimensions cannot be made out due to the alternating green, red, and yellow lights surrounding it. By tying loose ends, the Aguas Buenas resident believes that the recently slain ox and two goats found near his home

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could have been sucked upward to the vehicle, had their blood extracted, and then been deposited back on the ground when discarded.

Other residents elaborated upon this theory, surmising that the Chupacabras may have been a creature "lowered" to earth from a spaceship which was then unable to retrieve it due to some technical difficulty, thus leaving it to roam the countryside in search of sustenance.

Wednesday, November 15, 1995

A society raised on Friday the 13th movies, the exploits of Freddy Kruger, and splattergore films is usually immune to monster stories, but what happens when a creature that could well be an escapee from one of these celluloid nightmares sticks an arm through an open window?

Ask the wife of Bernardo Gómez, who saw with her own eyes how a clawed hand belonging to a long, thin, hairy arm entered through her bedroom window just as she was getting ready for bed. The claw seized a teddy bear sitting on a counter top and shredded it in seconds. Mrs. Gómez hurled a coffee cup at the sinister appendage, which withdrew immediately. She managed to see a single red eye and the left side of the intruder's face, who promptly vanished into the heavily wooded area behind the house.

These events took place in the city of Caguas, directly south of San Juan. Agents of the police, Civil Defense, and the Municipal Guards responded to the emergency phone call, finding a slimy substance deposited against the torn window, as well as an unidentifiable piece of flesh that had apparently been left behind as the creature beat a retreat.

The Technical Services Division of the local CIC agency dusted the window for fingerprints, but were unable to find any. A thorough search of the nearby wilderness failed to reveal any sign of the mysterious intruder.

Thus far, city dwellers had felt safe from the attacks of this elusive creature or creatures. Yet the same evening that Mrs. Gómez underwent her harrowing experience, two hens and their chicks had their blood drained by a Chupacabras-like entity in the heart of San Juan's Puerto Nuevo neighborhood, a heavily built-up area filled with shops, restaurants, and main avenues. The owner of the slain hens had gone to nearby Dorado for the day, and returned to find the hair-raising scene.

Thursday, November 16, 1995

The long-suffering citizenry has decided to fight back. Neither monster, nor alien, nor gargoyle will ever crush the human spirit: the residents of Barrio Caín Alto in the town of San German chased the Chupacabras away as it was poised to kill three fighting roosters belonging to one of the neighbors.

This foiled attack took place in the afternoon, when the people of Barrio Caín Alto heard the commotion taking place in the area where the cockfighting roosters were kept. Three of the neighbors ran into the nightmarish attacker, who appeared to hesitate at the sudden appearance of the humans, whose fear was overcome by intense rage: they began throwing stones at the Chupacabras, who rose to its full height and sprang upwards into the air, flying off in the direction

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of a nearby hill.

The three rockslinging witnesses described the intruder as being a grayish brown simian creature with large, almond-shaped eyes, an oval face, and small hands protruding from its shoulders.

In his regular column on UFOs, Julio Victor Ramírez, who reported most of the UFO incidents taking place during the 1991-92 sightings, observed that area residents did not link the Chupacabras with UFO activity. He pointed out that farmers in Western Puerto Rico linked the Goatsucker with giant vampire bats which may have been introduced deliberately or not from their habitats in South America.

Wednesday, November 22, 1995

Rubén Darío Rodríguez observed in a column that elements of the Department of Natural Resources had completed tests on a number of dead rabbits which betrayed deep puncture marks. They returned a stunning verdict: the wounds on the hapless bunnies could not have been produced by anything native to Puerto Rico.

The investigators thought it strange that the dead rabbits had been found outside their cages, which showed no signs of having been forced open. One of the rabbits had punctures in its paws and was covered in a slimy substance (which would later be found at a number of sites). The slime also underwent analysis, but no report on the findings was ever issued.

Coincidentally (but perhaps not), the rabbit killings took place in the town of Gurabo, where the vampire bird had been discovered in 1989.

Thursday, November 23, 1995

Reason enough to panic, yet no one did: The Chupacabras' depredations are coming closer to the urban sprawl of San Juan. This time it struck in Carolina, a municipality bordering the island capital. A small mongrel dog belonging to Demetrio Rivera was found dead.

According to Mr. Rivera's testimony, his dog was tied out in the backyard, as was customary, when it suddenly began barking furiously. But the barks soon turned to pitiful moans, as if something were suffocating the small pet. This prompted Demetrio and his daughter Ivette to turn on the patio lights and take a look. The allegedly heard the strong fluttering of a winged thing flying away: their dog, near death, was covered with a strange slime, like the one found on the Vega Baja cattle.

The canine was so terrified by what it had seen and experienced that it refused to let its owners come closer. After a while, the Riveras were able to pour water on their beloved pet and remove the curious "goo" that covered it.

Maribel Arroyo, a resident of the same neighborhood as the Riveras, also had a visit. Mrs. Arroyo, who runs a chicken farm, stated that she heard the cries of large birds over her farm. The following day she discovered that thirty of her hens had been slain and rendered bloodless. The unfortunate fowl had puncture marks in their throats and bellies.

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The puzzling slime, reminiscent of the substance made famous by the film *Ghostbusters*, was also found on the window of a home in the Cañaboncito sector of Caguas, where "something" introduced a long, hairy arm into the window of the house and shredded a teddy bear that happened to be within its reach.

Friday, November 24, 1995

The very real possibility that witchcraft could be at the root of these mysterious killings was aired in the media for the first time, just as a UFO connection to the Chupacabra situation was reinforced by a close encounter near Toa Baja.

A resident of this town, less than half an hour from San Juan (in good traffic, that is) told the media that he had a close encounter with a small, 4 ft tall creature shortly after residents of the city of Arecibo were treated to the sight of a "saucer" crossing their skies.

A slight whiff of high strangeness accompanied this case in Toa Baja: policeman José Matos, sent to investigate, found a number of dead heifers lying in a perfect row down the middle of a lonely road in the Hoyos sector of Toa Baja. The oddity was that no heifers of the kind slaughtered can be found anywhere for miles around the area. No one claimed the carcasses, leading to the belief that they were slain elsewhere and deposited in Toa Baja for some reason.

The eerie disposition of the carcasses was captured in a photograph taken by Baltazar Vázquez of *El Vocero*. It led many residents of the area to speculate about the possibility that a warlock or witch was making use of the animal's blood.

Saturday, November 25, 1995

It was a matter of time before the lunatic fringe chimed in, ready to drop its two centavos worth on the Chupacabras scare. This time, the fringe was embodied by Brother Carmelo, a clairvoyant from Caguas who wanted to describe the creature and the best methods to capture it.

Brother Carmelo was quick to state that the Goatsuckers (note the plural) were definitely extraterrestrial. "These creatures are vampires who nourish themselves on the fresh blood of their victims. They are purplish grey in color, have fiery red eyes, are equipped with a short tail and could have two small, horn-like protuberances on their heads. These beings can only come out at night, and they spend the day in places where the vegetation is extremely dense or else in deep caves."

Brother Carmelo, in his infinite, supernatural wisdom, added that: "Not everyone can capture one of these beings. To do so requires the use of laser beams or a silver bullet."

Need any more be said?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Monday, November 27, 1995

The Chupacabras (whether singular or plural) appeared this time in Rincón, a small seaside town which may have been Columbus' landing site during his discovery of PR in 1493 (an honor disputed by the neighboring cities of Aguadilla and Mayagüez).

Five goats, described as "costly" by reporter Tomás de Jesús Mangal, were found comatose and bloodless out of a flock of 29 such animals. One of the goats died, but as of today, the other four remained between life and death. A local veterinary had kept them alive by means of judicious injections of a coagulant known as Azium, which stanchd the bleeding caused by the creature's trademark single puncture to the animal's jugular. The owner of the flock, Edwin Lorenzo Féneguez, was beside himself at his considerable loss.

Things took a darker turn when elements of the pseudo-UFO research group NOVA appeared on the scene. The leader of this cultlike organization declared that the remaining goats, the ones that had not been attacked by the Goatsucker, would die anyway. His explanation? They had been injected with a poisonous substance that would bring about death within a matter of days. This hardly comforted Mr. Féneguez. The elements of the NOVA group aired their utterly unfounded theory that the bloodsucking creature was one of twenty which had descended to Earth to conduct experiments with human blood in order to produce blood viruses aimed at eliminating humanity.

An official from the Commonwealth department of agriculture, Hector López, visited the Féneguez farm and asked the distraught owner to touch neither the dead goat nor the 4 dying ones until his agency had had an opportunity to run a number of tests on them.

On a lighter note, a young student theater from the José Julián Acosta School, Daynalee Cardona, has written a prose poem on the Goatsucker which could become the basis for a stage production on this phenomenon.

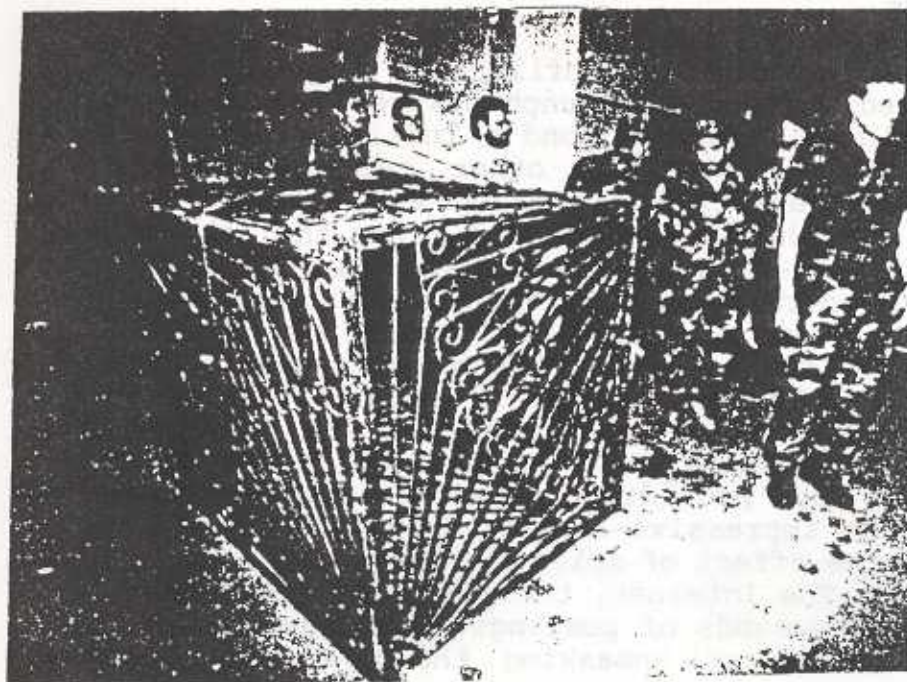
Tuesday, November 28, 1995

Proof of the Goatsucker's existence? Hardly. The papers reported the discovery of a footprint or handprint --the very first found since this rash of animal mutilations began--at the site of an attack near Vega Baja. Photographs showed a splayed, six-fingered (or six-toed?) print in the clay-like ground. More impressive was the viscous slime left around the neck of a wounded cow.

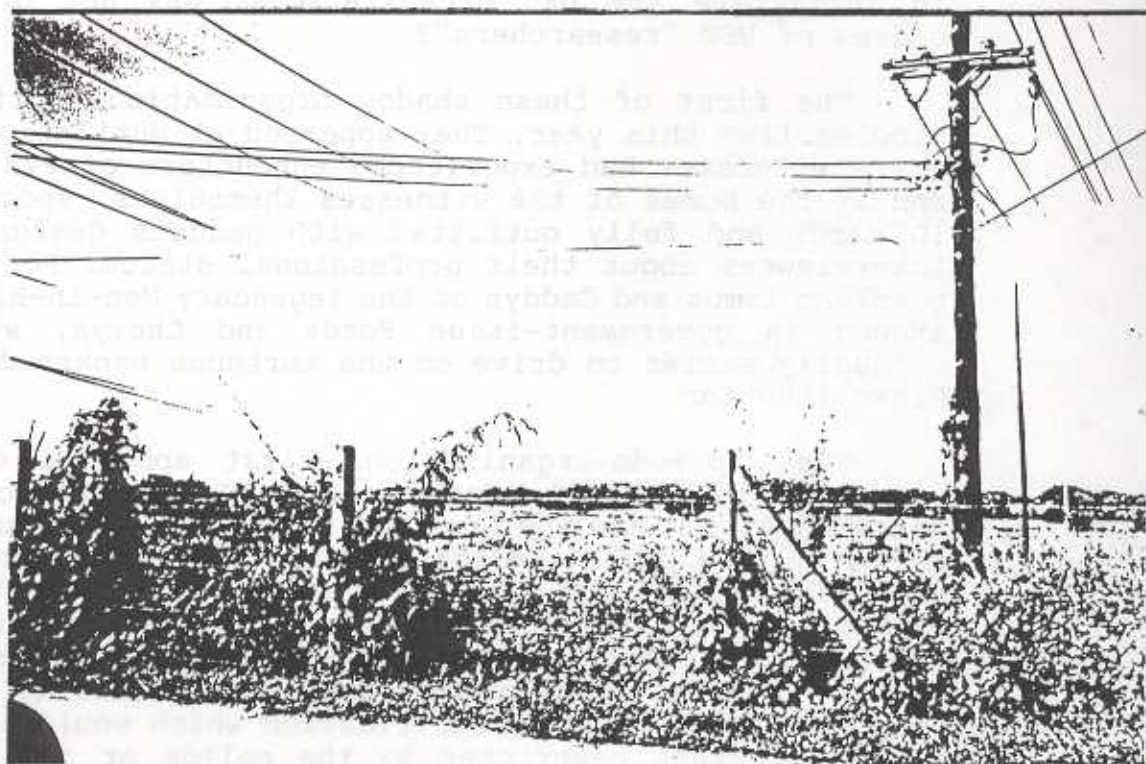
The bloodsucker was only steps away from becoming a victim itself. Police sergeant Jesús Medina Montes regretted not being able to steal a few shots against a "being" shaped like a bird and which fluttered while making a loud noise with its mouth. The Chupacabras would have paid dearly for the wounds inflicted upon a number of steers, among them a large Zebu bull.

Sergeant Medina told *El Vocero* that a local landlord, Anselmo Rodríguez, toured the property after the Goatsucker's attack, only to discover that much of his heard was bleeding from their humps. Some of the beasts were covered by a slime that could not be properly described. Irene Mercado and her 9 year-old niece allegedly saw the creature "fly away" from the area that night.

The Chupacabras Diaries



The mayor of Canóvanas, José R. "Chemo" Soto, stands beside the cage built to capture the elusive Chupacabras. (Photo EL VOCERO)



Tropical pastureland outside Canóvanas--the Chupacabras' favorite stalking location. (Photo C. Evans-Corrales)

The Chupacabras Diaries

VII. The Infiltrators

Webster's Dictionary defines an infiltrator as one who "enters or becomes established gradually or unobtrusively." We speak of infiltrating enemy lines, of James Bond's infiltrating into the archvillain's stronghold, and many other references. The UFO community, a Hydra-like entity whose heads are always snapping against another, has been howling in protest since the late 1950's that it's been infiltrated--like the labor movements earlier this century--by government operatives, outside agitators (echoes of *The Graduate*), and agents aimed at the spreading of disinformation. NICAP was infiltrated by these types, APRO probably was, and MUFON possibly is. From reading the vast corpus of saucer literature that has piled up over the decades like stacks of National Geographics, we can infer that the mission of these putative agents has been to drive ufologists mad by providing false leads, tantalizing evidence, and above all, impressive-looking documents like the MJ-12 papers, which have the effect of splitting up an already divided community even further. The Internet, the modern equivalent of the Roman Forum, contains thousands of postings which "name names" in real or imaginary efforts at unmasking the moles lurking in ufology's mainstream.

The infiltrators--whose existence is undeniable--have honed their techniques over the past thirty years, leading to the development of a bold new technique: rather than taking the trouble to infiltrate the UFO organizations, why not create their own cadres of UFO "researchers"?

The first of these shadow organizations surfaced in Puerto Rico earlier this year. They appeared at mutilation sites, places where witnesses had experienced encounters of every single kind, and at the homes of the witnesses themselves, sporting impressive ID cards and fully outfitted with gadgets designed to persuade interviewees about their professional status. Forsaking the gas-guzzling limos and Caddys of the legendary Men-In-Black, they drove around in government-issue Fords and Chevys, which were also eminently easier to drive on the tortuous backroads of the Puerto Rican interior.

These pseudo-organizations first appeared during research conducted by CEDICOP (Center for UFO and Paranormal Study and Dissemination) into the Orocovis situation. Subsequent information received by CEDICOP indicated that the members of these shadow organizations were in possession of "directories" with the names of witnesses to the mutilation phenomena and UFO activity. Their *modus operandi* consisted of interviewing these witnesses and offering them membership in their organizations, promising to provide them with special means of identification which would allow the holder access to areas restricted by the police or similarly important agencies.

At this point, we may well wonder if this equivalent of the

The Chupacabras Diaries

All Access backstage pass is merely a delusion aimed at ensnaring the unwary. The power to cross police lines would be reserved for agencies like the FBI (à la Mulder and Scully), DEA, and other Federal agencies. How could an allegedly civilian UFO study group acquire such clout?

Efforts at discrediting serious UFO research also took a high-tech approach. Items disseminated on the Internet created the impression that a UFO had crashed on the island during the month of July, creating a brief flurry of electronic messages from one researcher to another. This untruth was "substantiated" by the clever distribution, from an unknown source, of promotional materials (glossy photos) from a cable TV special depicting the bodies of dead aliens found at the Roswell, N.M. crash site. The special's cleverly fabricated corpses were circulated as the real thing among UFO *aficionados* on the island. These shenanigans prompted a response by *Evidencia Ovni* in the form of an editorial denouncing these efforts at deception. Photos of the special effect dummies, clearly identifying them as such, accompanied the editorial.

The shadow organizations increased their visibility to parallel the rise in Chupacabras activity. One of them, calling itself NOVA, operated out of the western shore of the island. Another, dubbed UFO, wore black caps with the unimaginative name of their organization stitched on them. As featured in an earlier section, these groups expressed a belief that the Goatsucker was one of two dozen beings whose task was that of depopulating the earth, leaving it open for alien colonization efforts. They also claimed that the Goatsucker was "the source of the AIDS epidemic" and was unstoppable (perhaps they should have tried Brother Carmelo's silver bullets).

Aside from casting a pall of ridicule upon the entire situation, and discrediting any clear-headed investigations underway, the groups clearly had a dark side: they claimed to have been endowed with such broad powers as to be unstoppable by the FBI or Puerto Rico State Police, and had offered membership in their ranks to a number of people, even a prominent Political Science professor at the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras. These activities were discussed openly on Jorge Martín's radio program, *Ovnis Confidencial*, in a conference with Argentinian ufologist José Aldonati and other local researchers. After having denounced their activities on the air, the phantom groups went into hiding--one of them even eliminated its trademark black outfits.

What can we make of the seemingly infantile yet dangerous behavior displayed by the phantom groups? Only that someone is interested in keeping control on UFO information emanating from Puerto Rico at any cost.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Friday, December 1, 1995

The Chupacabras has chosen the Caguas suburb of Bairoa as its latest stomping ground, feeding off rabbits kept in outdoor hutches throughout the area. Rafael Ortiz, one of the individuals affected by these mysterious depredations, found two of his rabbits slain by means of holes in their necks. Another four were removed from their cages. According to Ortiz, he had heard some noises coming from the backyard area in which the hutches are located, but much to his regret, didn't pay very much attention. At daybreak, he was confronted with the sight of the dead animals, and noticed the others were gone.

On the southwestern corner of the island, in the picturesque city of San Germán, a pair of ducks, a rabbit, and two chickens were added to the Chupacabras' tally of slain animals. As has happened in all the other cases picked up in these diaries, owners find their animals in the morning when they are getting ready to feed them (recall the number of junkyard cases in November).

Some of San Germán's residents claim having seen a strange being standing some three feet in height, brownish-grey in color, with slanted eyes, small hands, and equipped with what appeared to be wings. This creature was allegedly responsible for the death of a goat in Barrio Caín Alto. Nonetheless, the Police and other government agencies have chosen to dismiss the matter as a joke.

The city of Guánica, site of the landing of U.S. forces during the Spanish-American War of 1898, was also chosen by the Chupacabras for something other than its beautiful bay and fine beaches. A police report filed by Lt. Noel Quiles states that two goats and thirteen roosters were found slain with peculiar marks on their bodies at Barrio La Montalva. Officers responded to a call by an unidentified resident who had found that all his black hens had been slain by strange perforations, while all the white hens had been shredded by the claws of a predator. Lt. Quiles was hesitant to say that the Chupacabras had been at work here. He circumscribed himself to saying that the birds had been slain by an unknown assailant.

A second complaint was filed by Reinaldo Serrano, who found two dead goats upon returning home at 6:00 a.m.. According to Serrano, the goats had been alive and healthy when he left for work earlier that evening. Although neighbors admitted to having heard strange noises, none saw the intruder.

Friday, December 8, 1995

Six sheep were left bloodless by a mysterious attacker, according to a police report issued by the Homicide Division of the Carolina Municipality Center for Criminal Investigation. The locale was none other than Barrio Campo Rico, the Chupacabras' regular feeding ground. The police report did not rule out the strange creature as the "perpetrator" of the incident.

At around 4:00 a.m., neighbors were wakened from their sleep by horrifying noises. A local man who happened to be walking by the place where the Chupacabras' attack took place was so frightened by the feral screams that he dropped his lunch box and broke into a run away from the area. Police officers reporting to the location found five dead sheep, and a sixth one with an unusual wound on its head. It did not recover.

The Chupacabras Diaries

The Chupacabras was not blamed for another bloody killing in which two dozen cockfighting roosters were torn to pieces. To the relief of local law enforcement, the crime was readily attributable to pack of wild dogs. Edwin Velázquez, of Yabucoa, lost all of his fighting cocks, a misfortune estimated at almost four thousand dollars.

Tuesday, December 12, 1995

As if the loss of the six sheep only a few days ago hadn't been enough, the residents of Canóvanas' Barrio Campo Rico are now being mocked by the Chupacabras, which has taken to running at a blinding speed after cattle and other animals. According to a police report, the mystery beast spent the weekend chasing frightened animals from one field to another, and even managed to steal a piece of meat that had been left out as bait.

Lt. Jorge L. Rivera, who has been in charge of police response to the citizenry's complaints about the creature, observed that the creature emanates a smell resembling that of paint thinner. Local newspaper El Vocero quoted him as saying: "There is a great deal of concern here [in Canóvanas]. This isn't a joke or a humorous situation."

Last month, when one of Lt. Rivera's men fired against a strange animal he thought was the Chupacabras, a small sample of blood was secured and sent for analysis. An anonymous veterinarian who handled the tests declared that the samples were neither human, nor canine, nor belonging to any known species. These samples have since been consigned to a Stateside laboratory, and no results will be available until after the holidays.

(We broached the matter with investigator Jorge Martín during our stay. He added that the results had yielded levels of proteins and acids that did not correspond to any member of the animal kingdom, but that the blood also contained strong traces of chlorophyll!)

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

A curious vigilante movement has arisen as a result of the Chupacabras' depredations, and possibly in imitation of Mayor "Chemo" Soto's posses. These armchair "regulators" have the distinct advantage that they merely conduct their nocturnal watches from the comfort of their own homes, most often sitting in their back patios, terraces, on their rooftops, and even in "duck blinds" located amid the branches of massive tropical trees. A respected professional from the town of Juncos explained that around nightfall, he sits in a chair with his back to the wall, wielding a hunting rifle and in the company of a German Shepherd, hoping to "get lucky" one night and bag a Chupacabras.

Other armchair vigilantes have conducted their silent watches of the warm tropical night from the slopes of El Yunque to Orocovis. One of these self-appointed sentries has apparently discovered a correlation between the phases of the moon and the Chupacabras' attacks. It would seem that the elusive creature takes advantage of moonless nights and of the waning moon to pursue its hunting activities.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Thursday, December 14, 1995

Seers and mystics continue to proliferate as the situation becomes more and more complex. Aside from "Brother Carmelo" and his Lon Chaney-inspired silver bullet theories, there is now "Brother Serafín" who claims to have plotted the trajectory of the Chupacabras' flights over the island. On an island a hundred and ten miles long by a scant forty five miles wide, the trajectory put forth by the seer matched many of the places where killings have occurred, such as Naguabo. Brother Serafín boasted of employing "sensory waves and vibrations" (!) to find the Chupacabras' lair, conveniently located at the heart of El Yunque. Unlike the earlier mystic, Brother Serafín had complete confidence in his psychic gifts, stating that he had been chosen in his youth to do good and to make predictions about the future. His TV set-like ability to capture waves and vibrations enabled him to learn that the Chupacabras comes from another world within our own galaxy, and that its kin are slowly dying out due to genetic reasons.

Serafín's "vision" of the creature(s) describes them as being hideous, having a pestilent odor about them, hair-covered wings, tall but not very strong, and with the ability to "charm" its prey until it sucks out their blood. He added that the creature sleeps during the day and moves about at night, and that the creature will soon go into "hibernation", perhaps in underground caverns.

A resident of Naguabo, José Luis Oyola, discovered that a number of the rabbits he owned had been bled dry by a creature leaving vampiric puncture marks on their bodies. This attack had a distinguishing feature: many of the rabbits were missing, as if the attacker had first chosen to slake its thirst, and then take other bunnies "to go." In this case, the victim believed neither in apes nor aliens--he was firmly convinced that the mysterious deaths were brought about by evil forces.

Tuesday, December 19, 1995

The bloodthirsty Chupacabras struck again after laying low for a period of time. This time, residents of geographical locations as disparate as Naguabo (south of San Juan) and Guayanilla (on the island's Caribbean shores) experienced the loss of chickens and rabbits.

Undaunted by their losses, local residents have managed to find some grim humor in their predicament: a number of citizens of Caguas suggested that the Chupacabras' name be changed to that of the *Gallinejo* (a contraction of "gallina"--chicken--and "conejo"--rabbit), since according to their tabulations, the nocturnal predator has slain a greater number of those two animals than goats or larger creatures.

Nemesio Vargas of Guayanilla lost a dozen chickens to the Chupacabras on the previous evening. Grimly, he estimated his losses -- attributed to the Chupacabras' supper -- at less than a hundred dollars, and denied that dogs of any breed could have caused the strange deaths of his birds. While he refused to