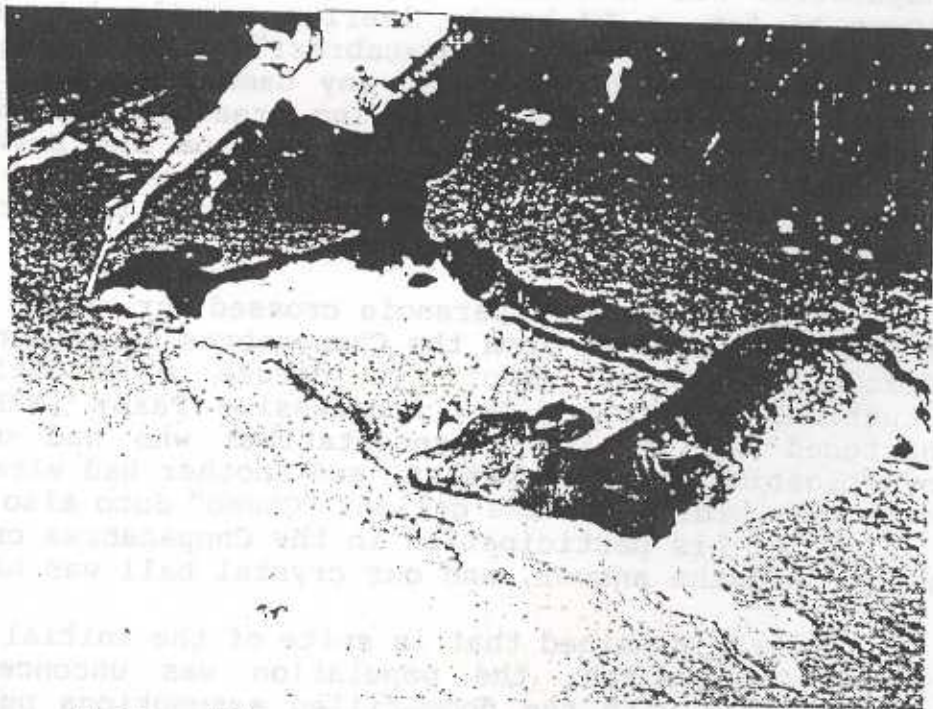


The Chupacabras Diaries

say that the mystery beast had been the culprit, he observed that the punctures in the necks and backs of his fowl corresponded to the Goatsucker's *modus operandi*.

As if not to be outdone by his new rival, "Brother Carmelo" staged a return to the scene after the Chupacabras killed five rabbits at the home of Valentín Rodríguez. The alleged clairvoyant called the newsroom of El Vocero to explain the reason for the Chupacabras' preference for animal blood (as opposed to human, hopefully!): the strange being has chosen to feed on the beasts of the field because their blood exhibits a greater purity than human blood, being free from the toxins that pollute humans. In the clarivoyants' philosophy, "the uncontrolled ingestion of fats, alcohol and nicotine by humans have made our blood unsuitable for these creatures."

(I'll have fries with my double cheeseburger, please...)



Police officer inspects the bloodless corpses of animals laid out in a single line on a lonely road outside Toa Baja, P.R. 11/13/95.

## The Chupacabras Diaries

### 8. On-Site

The winter holidays have a stronger hold on Puerto Rico than on any other comparable location in North America. Anglo-Saxon traditions--the singing of carols, wreaths of holly, and the ubiquitous Santa Claus--blend insensibly with the thundering beat of Christmas *plenas*, the melodious singing of "Jíbaro" holiday songs, and the serene majesty of the Three Kings on their way to visit the Christ-child. At a local mall, we were treated to the sight of an army of *plena* singers--beating their chimeless tambourines and singing litanies--wearing the red caps associated with Santa Claus. This revelry continues past Christmas and into New Years, then for another week into the Three Kings' Day, and for another eight days after that as part of the *octavitas*--well into mid-January.

Yet all this holiday fervor did not hold the Chupacabras at bay, nor did it comply with the skeptics' cherished belief that Christmas cheer would drive the phenomenon back into the dungeons of the imagination. From the moment we arrived in San Juan, the Chupacabras was foremost in everyone's mind, even if only as a figure of fun: a TV beauty leering saucily into the camera and tauntingly calling out "Chupacabras!" at the viewer; the endless comedy show sketches in which any damage done on the island was promptly blamed on the terrifying creature; cartoonish T-shirts depicting the intruder as a lifeguard from the "Baywatch" TV show, others showing it sipping blood out of a dead bovine through a long straw, and still others which depicted the creature debating the right kind of condiment to apply to his next kill.

A fleeting hint of paranoia crossed our minds. Could the aura of hilarity bestowed upon the Chupacabras have been encouraged by officialdom in an effort to defuse a potentially critical situation? The ruling New Progressive Party (NPP) had already chastened one of its representatives who had urged a formal investigation into the matter, and another had already "lost" his reelection bid. Would the gallant "Chemo" Soto also be unseated as a result of his participation in the Chupacabras crisis? Only the future held the answer, and our crystal ball was hazy.

The fact remained that in spite of the initial concern caused by the Chupacabras, the population was unconcerned with its activities or with the doom-filled assumptions put forth by the phantom UFO groups in their statements to the newspaper. This point is certainly worth stressing: in spite of its well-deserved reputation as the island which harbors every single kind of supernatural or ufological phenomenon, the population remains unaffected by the possibility that non-human entities are sharing their living space. If and when a formal announcement is ever made declaring that aliens (extraterrestrial or otherwise) are indeed visiting the island, or are established on it, the man on the

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

street will not perceive any "loss of self" or enter into a panic as a result of a "shattered paradigm." This resilience is perhaps characteristic of island-dwellers around the world, who are accustomed to see unusual visitors pulling in aboard ships or landing in airplanes, silent testimony to lands beyond the horizon. Any visiting non-humans would merely be a continuation of this pattern. Jorge Martín has speculated that this tolerance toward the unusual, the spiritual, and the unknown could in fact be the reason that has impelled the government to use P.R. as a testing ground for human reaction to the revelation that -- as has been stated so dramatically over the years -- "We Are Not Alone"

#### *An Early Morning Drive*

Leaving San Juan on the main artery leading eastward out of the city, Route 3, gives the visitor an idea of how congested the island really is, and how the so-called Metropolitan Area, which stretches far beyond the municipal limits of San Juan, is growing exponentially every few years, spreading out like an ink stain on a tablecloth. However, the urban environment with its garish neon signs and unescapable traffic jams ends abruptly at a given point just short of El Yunque, giving the tourist a glimpse of what life must have been like before the onset of the industrial age: cattle graze by the roadside where vendors sell *maví* and *guarapo* -- derivatives of sugarcane -- while horses roam freely without any fear of the increasing traffic. The rural bliss is already being marred by giant Wal-Marts and shopping malls popping out in the midst of the rural communities, yet there is enough vegetation to conceal an army of Chupacabras, and of what lurks under El Yunque, who can tell?

Canóvanas prides itself on being a growing municipality, and the main entrance to the town off the highway boasts monument with a Taíno chief and his spouse. Large letter spell out: "Canóvanas, Ciudad de los Indios" (Canóvanas, the City of Indians) as a well-paved street runs past the single-story concrete homes which constitute the Puerto Rican equivalent of the American tract house. But bypassing the more modern part of the city leads us to the narrow, busy streets of Canóvanas proper. Navigating through hair-raising traffic, the Town Hall (Casa Alcaldía, in Spanish) is finally within view. Our plans for speaking with Mayor Soto, however, are thwarted when two beige-clad municipal guards inform us that the Town Hall is closed in preparation for a holiday performance to be held in the *placita*, the square directly outside the municipal building. We catch a glimpse of a platform and drive off, following a street which leads us out to the rural surroundings.

The fertile plains on either side of the Espíritu Santo and Loíza Rivers have been prime grazing land for cattle since the Spaniards arrived in the 16th century. They have also proven to be a magnet for the Chupacabras -- a great number of attacks have

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

taken place in this littoral, where cows are allowed to sleep in the open at night.

As we drive farther eastward, toward Fajardo, where hair-raising screams were heard coming out of the sky earlier this year, we appear to come inexorably closer to the baleful mass of El Yunque, closed as a result of a shutdown in the Federal government. Despite the blue skies and fine sunshine, clouds cling to the mountain like cotton candy, giving it only the slightest hint of menace. With palm tree-covered Luquillo Beach on our left, the imposing bulk to the right conjures up Tolkien's descriptions of cloudy Mordor as seen from the fair valleys outside its mountains. If a similar Dark Lord commands El Yunque's lofty, verdant heights, then there is more truth to the old Taíno legends of Yukiyú than believed before.

The next town along the road is Río Grande, and the mountain rainforest is still at hand. The Navy radio towers on Pico del Este, one of the El Yunque complex's summits, can be seen through the enshrouding fog. The inspiring sight of man's triumph over nature is promptly replaced by more immediate doubts: is the U.S. military using the rainforest as a laboratory to produce mutant species of some sort or another? What of the gigantic radar complex projected for the Lajas area on the island's southern shore, bearing more in common with Alaska's project HAARP than with any other Over The Horizon radar? The flow of questions is disrupted by a road sign indicating the kilometers remaining for Ceiba and Humacao, farther down the highway. Ceiba is the municipality containing the vast Roosevelt Roads Naval Installation -- one of the foremost U.S. naval bases. The presence is strong enough to be felt at this distance.

We finally reach Fajardo, the easternmost point on the island, a thriving community looking out to the Lesser Antilles and providing ferry service to the smaller island-municipalities of Culebra and Vieques. This area has had its own share of unusual activity: not too long ago, UFOs were reported plunging into the ocean and emerging once more, and local fishermen and yachtsmen reported objects causing upboilings of water around their craft. Perhaps no other incident describes Fajardo's reputation as a strange location better than the controversial *Garadiávolo*. Twenty years after a book on the subject appeared, heated discussions regarding the creature's true nature still take place. A respected professional who visited Laguna de San Juan, a large lagoon on a promontory jutting out into the sea to the north of Fajardo, discovered a most unusual amphibian during one of his trips. The diminutive creature was able to walk on spindly legs and even climb up trees. He captured the specimen and brought it home, where it soon caused a sensation in the press. Unfortunately, it was confiscated in the dark of night by men who claimed to be with the U.S. government. It has been argued that the *Garadiávolo* was simply a common sea-ray sliced in half -- an old "sea monster" known as a "Jenny Haniver" to cryptozoologists. I can attest to the fact that

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

samples of this *Garadiávolo* were sold for the affordable price of \$7.95 at my mother's store in San Juan under the name "devilfish." Yet others who saw the original creature first hand insist that its cat-like face, eyes, and fangs could not have been the product of any hoaxing, like the "Jenny Hanivers."

The magnificent El Conquistador Hotel crowns the peaks above the fishing village of Las Croabas. Its terraced parking lot provides a spectacular view of El Yunque that cannot be fully captured by the camera. As noon approached, the fog around the mountain was dispelled by the sun's heat, lifting the veil that conceals the rainforest from the looks of the average curious mortal. Within the halcyon environment of the hotel, we asked an employee of one of the dozen boutiques on the promenade if the Chupacabras had been seen in the area. "I think people exaggerate too much," she replied with a smile.

### *The Investigators*

A writer for an Italian UFO magazine described Jorge Martín as having enough energy to spare that he could sell it. With a research caseload nearing six hundred, Jorge and his wife Marleen have covered everything from UFO sightings to landings, bizarre creatures, and paranormal activity. It is remarkable that in spite of the grueling amount of time devoted to one-on-one interviewing and on-site research they still have enough of a breathing space to put out *Evidencia Ovni*, their magazine, and do a weekly radio program. *Evidencia Ovni*, by the way, is unique in the Spanish-speaking market because it is the only publication to deal in a sober, detailed fashion with nothing but ufology and its cadet branches. The glossier magazines have wandered down the commercial garden path of New Age mysticism, self-help, and "lite" ufology.

The Martins' experiences with Chupacabras research have been described throughout this report, so there is no need to recapitulate them here. At the time of our arrival on the island, there were new reports being deposited on their answering machine every day, although the media had apparently been advised to "cool down" the subject. Jorge is quite familiar with the print media's games, having been a reporter himself, and having seen its reactions to stories involving the unusual over the decades he has devoted to studying UFOs on the island. Even during the years in which activity dwindled to a handful of cases, Jorge was the only active investigator.

We had the pleasure of being invited to *Ovnis Confidencial*, their radio program on the NOTI-UNO network, which has repeater stations throughout the island and even in New Jersey (I believe). Jorge had recently completed the tremendous show in which the proverbial whistle had been blown on the phantom groups described in the previous chapter--an act which led him to add, ruefully, at the end of the broadcast, that it might cause his show to be yanked

*The Chupacabras Diaries*

off the air. To his surprise, he not only received strong support from station management, but also caused the phantom groups to tone down their activities, at least for a little while.

The best segment of any radio program is very often the call-in portion. This is certainly true of *Ovnis Confidencial*. Half an hour into the broadcast, when this author had spoken about all and sundry with the host, an interesting phone call concerning our discussion on the Chupacabras came in. The caller, who had been given the pseudonym of "Julio Marín," had been a former military man whose involvement in certain sensitive operations had provided him with an insight on the situation. Among the items discussed up to the moment had been the Aberdeen Proving Grounds' alleged role as a harbor for strange beings, and the greenish blood that had been recovered from a Bigfoot-like creature, along with other instances around the world in which chartreuse-green blood had been reported.

*[Ovnis Confidencial, December 21, 1995 -- 10:30 - 11:30 p.m.  
Partial transcript of caller testimony]*

J. Martín: Well, we have a caller on the line who is going to be making use of the alias "Julio Marín" in view of the information he'll be passing on tonight. The subject we're discussing this evening is rather sensitive--the strange creatures currently being seen, and their link they seem to have with the UFO situation. Therefore, let's go to Line 1. Good evening! To whom are we speaking?

Caller: This is Julio Marín.

J. Martín: Good evening, Don Julio.

Caller: I heard you discussing the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. I've been there--that's where weapons, including biological weapons are tested. However, certain things cannot be tested there, which is why they have to make up wars overseas to test them out there. That so-called peace treaty [sic] in Bosnia includes Puerto Rican soldiers who don't even speak the local language. If you look closely at a photo of these soldiers, at their rifles--

J. Martín: Yes.

Caller: Certain weapons are designed, and since they can't be tested here, there has to be a conflict--

J. Martín: They take advantage of those opportunities?

Caller: Precisely. They take advantage of those opportunities...there are other sites in the U.S. where aircraft are tested, such as Nevada and Utah, which are flat, and...Arizona, which is

*The Chupacabras Diaries*

inaccessible, having mountains some nine thousand feet tall, has valleys in spite of these mountains. It is a large state, yet among the least populated ones. There are many [Indian] reservations, and within these reservations one finds--there's no better way of putting it--other reservations. It's very hard to reach them. The roads aren't always paved...to reach these places might even jeopardize the lives of those who make the attempt.

J. Martín: Excuse me, Don Julio--What's the importance of these valleys?

Caller: The importance is that these valleys house structures in which experiments of different kinds take place...call them animals or creatures or whatever you like...the indians who live on these reservations are sheep farmers.

J. Martín: Yes.

Caller: If you notice, the indians there are sheep farmers, and suddenly we get a creature called the Chupacabras...

J. Martín: So what you're trying to tell us, in fact --

Caller: ...if you put one and one together, you understand? The climate out there is, well, slightly colder...it gets cold, but still--

J. Martín: It's a warmer climate.

Caller: Yes. I remember reading that this creature seems to prefer tropical climates.

J. Martín: Don Julio, let me ask you something. Please answer only if you feel comfortable doing so, because we're aware of your position. You were once linked to an area that was dedicated to researching these strange creatures, but from the military intelligence standpoint.

Caller: Yes.

J. Martín: This is the reason you cannot use your real name tonight, correct?

Caller: Well...[unintelligible].

J. Martín: What moved you to call us tonight?

Caller: I've been hearing your show, and I've been hearing things that aren't true.

J. Martín: Such as?

Caller: Uh, well the blood...the chartreuse-green blood...just can't be. It's not ordinary blood.

*The Chupacabras Diaries*

- J. Martín: But that's precisely the reason we're discussing it tonight on our show. There have been a number of situations and cases here in Puerto Rico which we believe may be related to experiments conducted in this field. You told me confidentially a few programs ago about your knowledge that creatures matching the Chupacabras' description...had been seen in the late 1950's and were known to exist by the U.S. government, even had some of them in captivity at the time. Is there any truth to this at all?
- Caller: It's very true. These were creatures quite similar to what has been described here [in P.R.]. If you take a kangaroo, cut its tail and its a bit off its legs, it would look similar to it, but it has spines running down the length of its back.
- J. Martín: Where did you see this, Don Julio?
- Caller: I saw it at a place in...in...gosh, I really can't recall...
- J. Martín: What sort of facility?
- Caller: I remember travelling from Kansas to a state near Texas or Mexico...
- J. Martín: New Mexico?
- Caller: Yes, New Mexico...
- J. Martín: And where in New Mexico would this have been?
- Caller: It was in New Mexico, but I can't recall now...I know that there was a [unintelligible] and we went past a town called Flagstaff.
- J. Martín: And I ask you, Don Julio, why did you have to be the one to see this?
- Caller: Well, because I had a Top Secret clearance at the time, and I would volunteer to do what's known as "riding shotgun". Remember the Old West? They still use the term to refer to the guarding of the merchandise.
- J. Martín: Don Julio, since we don't want to reveal too many details that might give your identity away...did you in fact get to see one of these creatures related to the Chupacabras in that place?
- Caller: Yes, but I want to add that this creature is completely harmless.
- J. Martín: How so?
- Caller: The creature is very intelligent, and is capable of distinguishing between a human and an animal.



*The Chupacabras Diaries*

J. Martín: Are you sure of that, Don Julio?

Caller: Of course.

J. Martín: Why?

Caller: Once in Vietnam...if you go to Vietnam, you'll find the climate is...identical to Puerto Rico's. In fact, when you touch down in Vietnam you'd think you're landing in Puerto Rico. As I told you the last time, when I saw that "thing", I forgot to tell you that a light came out from under it, and two human-like beings came down to the ground. They were humans. We saw them through the binoculars, which was hard, because the light was so brilliant

J. Martín: For the benefit of our listeners, you are now describing an incident that you and your comrades witnessed in Vietnam.

Caller: My companion and myself [saw it] during a New Year's Eve.

J. Martín: This was in Vietnam?

Caller: Yes, and he was an American whose name I can't recall. We didn't notify the authorities when the event took place because we were afraid of being ridiculed.

J. Martín: Now, Don Julio, so as not to digress: in what circumstances did you see these creatures now described as the Chupacabras in Puerto Rico at this secret U.S. facility in New Mexico? What year?

Caller: This creature is a sort of pet, to put it that way. There's a radar currently being built in Lajas with the purpose of detecting aircraft.

J. Martín: With drugs?

Caller: This not only picks up aircraft but also any...any aircraft

J. Martín: Including the unidentified objects seen in the area.

Caller: Anything flying five to seven feet off the ground .

J. Martín: But let's go back to the subject, because we're out of time. Under what circumstances did you see these creatures at this secret U.S. facility in New Mexico?

Caller: They were caged.

J. Martín: Why?

*The Chupacabras Diaries*

- Caller: I don't know...they were being studied, and evidently, their sex could be distinguished...there was a male and a female, and...
- J. Martín: And what happened?
- Caller: Well, she was getting bigger and bigger--her stomach was--and, and they realized she was pregnant. And they "put her to sleep" as they say in order to study her.
- J. Martín: They sacrificed her?
- Caller: They opened her up and found another creature within, just like her. They procreate.
- J. Martín: Did this creature at any moment try to attack you or any of the people working at that facility?
- Caller: No. These creatures looked at you pleadingly with their sad eyes, and they inspire pity. They appear to be lost on an unknown world.
- J. Martín: What kind of personnel was working with those creatures at the site?
- Caller: They wore those outfits that cover the entire body, and changed garments from one room to another, discarding them as they returned. Decontamination room to the showers, discarding clothing once more and burning it.
- [...]
- J. Martín: Don Julio, please forgive the interruption, but time is of the essence. Feel free to answer only if you can. I understand from what you told me during your call a few programs ago that alongside these creatures, which according to you may have been brought to Puerto Rico as part of an experiment, is this so?
- Caller: No, they brought creatures similar to the ones which appeared in an autopsy a few years ago...they were three, one of them was a female who died from a wound to the thigh--
- J. Martín: You're referring to what appeared in the [Roswell] movie.
- Caller: The other creature died carbonized, no one knew what it was, and the third was wounded, stayed alive. I think it died of old age. This isn't the only [vehicle] to have crashed or to have been knocked out of the sky. It's all very secret, and right now I'm putting myself at risk by calling you.
- J. Martín: Don Julio,...I'm concerned about something you said earlier about your days as part of this special intelligence service where some of these creatures seen in Puerto Rico were kept.

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

These creatures seemed harmless to humans, contrary to what is being circulated by some groups in Puerto Rico. Are you certain of what you're saying?

Caller: Yes, I'm sure...they're harmless. The problem is that since they're ugly and different from us, people become afraid. They are like lemurs or those sloths that dangle from trees, only that they have a terrible odor and are quite ugly. Anyone would be afraid.

The pseudonymous caller had played hard-to-get throughout the length of the call, wandering off to other subjects and giving out as little information as possible. Naturally, he made a few mistakes, such as placing Flagstaff in New Mexico rather than Arizona, but his completely unverifiable story had an undeniable ring of truth to it.

After the program was over, we discussed the "Julio Marín" with Jorge and Marleen at a local restaurant. The caller claimed to have really been an intelligence officer during the '50s and '60s, and had been subjected to harsh treatment when he attempted to speak out about the things he had seen during his career. Throughout the conversation, his voice sounded muffled, as though he were using a handkerchief to disguise himself. The most outstanding feature about his story, had it been a concoction of bad science fiction films (and we all agreed about this), was his conviction that the creatures were harmless. Anyone trying to make up a story would have gone for the flashier "dangerous" creature à la *Alien* or *Predator*, as the phantom saucer research groups had done. His story, told in the slow, deliberate voice of a man who'd experienced a great deal of suffering, remained present in our minds for a long time after. But as we accompanied the Martíns' on some of their cases, we realized that tantalizing stories were, in fact, legion.

### *The Dog that Got Away*

Suki the pup looked like a dog sprung from a cartoonist's pen: an elongated black-and-white body surmounted by a floppy-eared head with gleaming eyes--the product of a dachshund and the hardy island mutt known as a *sato*. The spunky three-month old was a celebrity and didn't know it. It, among all the animals in Puerto Rico, had held off the Chupacabras with its sharp barking and thus avoided getting "goatsucked." Suki's tale of canine bravery (or good luck) could not have been recounted in a better location: her owner's rural home, overlooking the southern slopes of El Yunque near the town of Juncos.

Mrs. María de Gómez, a housewife in her mid-fifties, a resident of Barrio Valenciano Abajo on the outskirts of Juncos, told us how her pooch's barking alerted her to the fact that something was wrong on the high terrace overlooking her backyard

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

(which is in fact a plantation spanning several acres of exuberant vegetation) at 7 p.m. a few nights before our visit. When she went to check on the cause of the pet's excitement, she was startled beyond belief: an ashen-grey creature, weighing some seventy-five pounds and standing some four feet tall, loomed over the defiant animal in silence, as if trying to browbeat it into submission.

"It was the ugliest thing I'd ever seen," Mrs. Gómez explained. "All that stood between me and it was the screen door leading to the kitchen. A baseball bat, which my husband leaves here in case a prowler should come around, was all I could have used against it."

But something as remarkable as the puppy's defiance happened next. The housewife's eyes met those of the inhuman creature and stared it down, thinking aloud: "If you're the Chupacabras, you're a pretty sorry excuse for a creature," promptly adding the abusive word *pendejo* to her thought. The gargoylesque entity then slowly covered its pointed face with its wings, as if hurt by her rebuff. It moved away from its position, slinking against a wall and half-hiding behind a washing machine. Eventually, the chastised Chupacabras took awkward steps toward the railing surrounding her terrace, jumped on it, and flew off into the dark sky.

Mrs. Gómez was able to add a curious detail to the story: the creature's eyes were somehow able to light the entire terrace with a clear, whitish light like that of a bulb. She had no problem in making out all the physical details which had been included in her testimony. But other strange events that had transpired on the Gómez's property were no less fascinating: a black, hairy Bigfoot-like creature had been seen through the trees on the plantation only a few years earlier, and Mrs. Gómez had seen small, silver-suited "Greys" jump over a fence on her property while escaping from a watchdog, holding hands as they did so.

Beyond the tree-covered plantation, she explained, was a pond or small lake which had been used to dump chemicals by a local industry. It was eventually used to dump every single kind of waste, to the point that it would have been impossible to sit on the terrace we were on without being nauseated by the odor. It was at this point that the strangeness began. While tending to the vegetable gardens at the far end of the property, Mrs. Gómez and her daughter had seen "Greys" running toward the vicinity of the contaminated pond. This detail was interesting for the following reason. As the Martins' research has proven, many cases involving supposed alien activity on the island revolve around environmental and ecological issues, a concern for how humans seem hell-bent on polluting and destroying their own world. Could this case have followed the pattern?

The mystery birds which have made Puerto Rico's cryptozoological fauna so rich had also been seen in the trees close to the Gómez property. Mrs. Gómez pointed toward a tree where a creature looking like an owl with a tremendous wingspan had

## *The Chupacabras Diaries*

rested on a branch before spreading its wings and soaring off toward El Yunque. Her personal opinion, she told us, was that these creatures, lock, stock and barrel, came from the mountain rainforest.

### *Hand-to-Hand Combat*

We took our leave from Mrs. Gómez and drove down the twisting mountain road leading from Barrio Valenciano down to the plains, heading for the nearby town of Gurabo. The community came to mind immediately as the place where the fanged mystery bird of 1989 had made its debut, causing the sensation which filled newspapers locally and overseas.

The Chupacabras had also been seen in Gurabo, and many had experienced losses, Mr. Jesús Sánchez among them. A devout man belonging to one of the many Protestant churches which are claiming an increasing number of followers in this traditionally Catholic country, his experience with the creature could be described as nothing but hand-to-hand combat.

Our arrival at the Sánchez household coincided with a private Christmas party, so the awkwardness of discussing a questionable subject in a religious household was doubled by the reproving looks of the guests, who went by the Scriptures as far as the Chupacabras was concerned, and had no illusions at all about it.

"I'm still affected by what happened," Mr. Sánchez confessed. "I haven't been myself since the encounter, and my wife and daughters can testify to that."

The bloodthirsty predator had landed in his backyard one evening and killed the rabbits Mr. Sánchez raised there, opening the cages one by one and leaving the characteristic puncture marks on their bodies. Fearing that the creature would stage a return, since attacks were still being reported throughout Gurabo, he decided to mount a watch in hopes of overcoming it and capturing it. His wish came true: the repeat visit came at 4 o'clock in the morning only days later. The homeowner apparently blinded it with a light bulb, causing the creature to find shelter from the light behind a tree. When the light was turned off, the predator raced past him out of the darkness, allowing only enough time for a terrified Sánchez to deliver two stiff blows with his machete against the creature's skin. Shuddering at the recollection, Sánchez added, "*aquello sonó como un timbal*" -- the blow sounded like a hit on a drum.

In spite of the state in which his close encounter with the Chupacabras has left him in, Sánchez is guardedly hoping that the creature will come back for more. He has already promised himself to capture the creature, despite a threat levelled at him by an official with the Department of Natural Resources, who warned him

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

that this agency would prosecute him if he killed a "protected" creature. The defiant Sánchez riposted that a creature that is said not to exist cannot be protected by anyone, and that any action taken by the agency will only point to its complicity in the hundreds of animal killings which have plagued the island since the beginning of the year.

Not wanting to keep him from his guests, we said goodbye to Mr. Sánchez and headed back to San Juan. The expression on the witness's face as he recounted the frightening seconds when the creature rushed past him left no doubt in anyone's mind that he had experienced something utterly unnerving, and that the tropical twilight engulfing us housed a creature that could not possibly be dismissed as an rogue ape or dog.

#### *Bigfoot Enters the Stage*

Human nature is curious. Many of us prefer to carry out certain tasks at different times from others, therefore, no one should be surprised by the urge to wash a car at 2:50 a.m., which is exactly what Osvaldo Rosado was doing on December 23 -- just hours after our visits to the Gómez and Sánchez residences.

Rosado, a resident of the city of Guánica, where the Chupacabras had already made its presence felt earlier in the month, had allegedly finished hosing down his vehicle and getting ready to disconnect the hose when a strange hairy creature approached him from behind and gave him a bearhug so strong that wounds appeared on the victim's abdomen. Rendered speechless by panic, Rosado was finally able to scream and struggle with the entity until he managed to break the deadly embrace. Turning to face his assailant, he was doubly shocked to find that it was a simian creature, much taller than his own six-foot height. The shaggy embracer turned tail and ran away from Rosado's backyard. Neighbors responded to his screams, and eventually took the badly shaken victim to a hospital in Yauco to have his wounds treated.

Conflicting stories circulated for a while. One newspaper had blamed the incident on the Chupacabras, but the victim claimed never having spoken to the reporter who wrote the story. The creature in no way matched the descriptions given of the Goatsucker, and was certainly not winged--Rosado believed that the assailant must have been at least two feet taller than himself.

This landmark encounter would have been the first time that a full-sized Bigfoot creature--similar to the kind regularly seen in the Laurel Highlands area of Pennsylvania--had been reported on Puerto Rico, which had characterized itself for the activities of man-sized or smaller mystery apes, jokingly dubbed "Smallfoots" in English.

## *The Chupacabras Diaries*

### *Incident at the Lovers' Lane*

Far from observing the holidays on the 24th and the 25th of December, the Chupacabras killed a number of small animals belonging to residents of Piñones, a scattered community of homes and businesses pegged between the Torrecilla and Piñones lagoons on one side and fantastic unspoiled beaches on the other, long considered a lovers' lane. In Rio Grande, Raymond Frías, manager of a horse farm, found that an eighteen year-old horse on the property had been killed by a creature originally taken to be the Chupacabras, but the strange marks found on the dead animal's body did not correspond with the neat punctures that had become synonymous with the mystery prowler's bloodletting activities. Furthermore, the dead horse's anus had been cored and removed in the fashion typical of cattle mutilations in the American West. Was another creature at large?

The Bahía Beach Plantation and The Berwind Golf Course, some fifteen miles away from Piñones in the municipality of Loíza, had also been visited by the Chupacabras, who was apparently unimpressed by the well-manicured fairways and greens. Groundskeepers had become accustomed to seeing weird creatures and UFOs over both golf courses over the years, and there was a story circulating that the Chupacabras had chased the herons found in the vicinity of the numerous water hazards on the course. Without skipping a beat, the pro shop at one of the courses ordered a number of pricey golf club covers to be made in a comical likeness of the mystery creature--a sable critter made out of plush, with little felt bat-wings. The sheer size of both links, and the density of the tropical vegetation they contained, was not only enough to discourage any player from chasing a ball into the rough, but could have easily hidden an army of strange bloodsucking animals.

### *A Public Figure Comes Forward*

The last days of 1995 had not been heavy in Chupacabras activity, but the fact that Latin Americans from Mexico to Argentina consider December 27th--Day of the Holy Innocents--to be their April Fools' Day, references to the mystery prowler were too good not to use.

In the town of Cabo Rojo, a man had strapped a loudspeaker to the top of his car and driven through the streets warning townspeople to get themselves and their animals to safety, as the Chupacabras was reportedly in the neighborhood. Pandemonium ensued, and it remains unclear if the driver was ever charged with inciting a panic.

A radio announcer observed gravely that the Chupacabras had just killed several goats, mares, and other animals. Allowing the

### *The Chupacabras Diaries*

incredible tally of kills to sink in, he promptly broke into sweet voice informing his listeners that they'd been "had."

One true story among the many humorous ones appearing at the time was that Fernando Toledo, the president of the Puerto Rico Agricultural Association, had publicly expressed a belief that the Chupacabras could not be from this Earth. "I think that if we already know that it's not an ape, we must then be dealing with an extraterrestrial," he said candidly during a Christmas Day radio interview on NOTI-UNO. Toledo reasoned that if our solar system only has a dozen known planets, there must be other star systems in the galaxy with worlds capable of supporting life. This "thing"--as he called the Chupacabras--must come from one such point of origin.

Toledo's statement, which did not appear in any of the major newspapers, represented a landmark moment in the Chupacabras wave, as a major public figure was willing to concede that the extraterrestrial hypothesis--the butt of jokes and popular derision--was now being taken into consideration in solving the riddle posed by the creature which had caused havoc among Puerto Rican livestock.

*"It's in the Trees--It's Coming!"*

December 28th, 1995: a significant night for *Ovnis Confidencial* and for local ufology. Before the show was even ready to go on the air, phones had been ringing with callers wanting to report UFO activity taking place over San Juan and recent Chupacabras encounters. A woman from the residential suburb of Guaynabo was seeing a motionless object hovering over the power lines; a man from Cayey, where another military radar was being built, had found a number of his ducks slain by the Chupacabras and wanted to turn the carcasses over to a reputable veterinarian; in short, the silence into which the Chupacabras reports had fallen, by official decree or not, had been circumvented by direct reports from people experiencing the sightings and situations.

Minutes into the broadcast, shortly after my wife and I had given our impressions on the Chupacabras situation, a call arrived at the switchboard from Cuco Rodríguez, a UFO researcher on the southwestern corner of the island, with an update on the Bigfoot "attack": the creature that attacked Osvaldo Rosado had been seen by many other residents of the area of Guanica in which the attack had transpired. These eyewitnesses had been able to corroborate the size and description of the attacker, and more importantly, had been able to compare it with the smaller Chupacabras, which they had also seen. Hairy creatures, though not quite as tall, said Rodríguez, had also been seen around the Aerostat Installation in Laguna Cartagena.



## The Chupacabras Diaries

### IX. Some Final Thoughts

The totally unexpected furor caused by sightings of the strange entity dubbed "el Chupacabras" (the Goatsucker) by residents of rural Puerto Rico raises some serious items for debate. What should be our response, as *commonsensical* (as opposed to skeptical or prejudiced), educated individuals?

Skeptics have dismissed these events as hallucinations or worse. People do not hallucinate the deaths of their pets or their livelihoods (in the case of small animal farmers). The person whose livelihood depends on a computer does not wake up one morning, arrive at the workplace, finds his/her computer smashed to bits and say: "I'm probably hallucinating." There is extensive photographic evidence available--to all who care to see it--displaying the thoroughly unnatural means of slaughter employed by this unknown being. These animals died as the result of a single puncture mark, found on some part of the body, which apparently drained them of blood. One particularly graphic photo shows a Siamese cat with a single puncture mark right through its skull.

In the face of all the cases and situations presented here, the skeptics' knee-jerk reaction has been a steadfast insistence on blaming these deaths on (a) dogs, (b) feral monkeys, (c) vampire bats, (d) other exotic beasts. Let us examine these possibilities one by one.

(a) A plague of single-fanged, bloodsucking dogs is probably a more terrifying thought than a carload of Goatsuckers. Nonetheless, veterinarians have stuck to this unlikely possibility, regardless of the fact that dogs rend their prey and eat them, rather than extracting their juices. To date, there are no reports of mastication on any carcass found.

(b) Puerto Rico harbors a number of military animal research laboratories. The Caribbean Primate Research Center's La Parguera facility lost a number of rhesus monkeys in the 1970's, and these fugitive apes have allegedly been spreading throughout the island. Jesús Rodríguez, a veterinarian interviewed by the San Juan Star (11/19/95) stated that monkeys are notoriously messy eaters and would have left four holes and scars rather than the single puncture that has become the Chupacabras' trademark.

(c) Local tabloid El Vocero echoed the possibility that giant vampire bats had infiltrated the island in cargo shipments proceeding from South America. Eyewitness reports in no way describe a batlike creature, and normal-sized bats are fairly common in the Caribbean, so witnesses would have a good point of reference for their descriptions.

(d) The possibility of exotic pets imported by wealthy dilettante zoologists has been dear to many skeptics on the island. However, no one can imagine what kind of reptile, simian, bovine,

## The Chupacabras Diaries

etc. could fit the bill of a creature answering the Chupacabras' description. Furthermore, the USDA has a very effective control of anything--animal or vegetable--entering or leaving the island. Tourists to P.R. are familiar with the obligatory USDA inspection at the airport prior to leaving the island.

Naysayers have found it convenient to blame the entire situation on Puerto Rico's particular political status. Neither a state of the U.S. nor a free country, sociologists have long debated that this political limbo has affected people's minds. Prominent politicians have gone on record saying that as 1998 approaches--commemorating a century of U.S. occupation of the island--the greater mental stress regarding this political status will be experienced. The fact of the matter is that strange creatures are not exclusive to the island: the U.K. experiences phantom felines and lake monsters; the northwestern U.S. has Bigfoot; the northeastern U.S. is home to a number of enigmatic beings, ranging from three-toed "Bigfoot"-like creatures to even more unusual life-forms, Argentina's lake Nahuel Huapi contains a "Nessie"-like creature seen by hundreds over the years. There is clearly no "political status" question affecting the minds of the citizenry of these countries (this was discussed earlier in the book). Are we dealing, in fact, with an extraterrestrial situation? Here we are venturing into truly uncharted waters which have produced the biased reactions of many.

Puerto Rico is famous for its myriad UFO sightings, as well as encounters with strange--presumably alien--beings. As Jorge Martín of CEDICOP, the only organization conducting responsible research on the island, has stated many times, we can only deal with the human aspect of the phenomenon--witness testimony--since the other aspects of the phenomenon are closed to us. For this reason, ufology all over the world is more properly the realm of the social scientist, psychologist, anthropologist, etc. rather than the physicist or the chemist. Since the descriptions given of the Chupacabras portray it as having the head and torso of one of the creatures known as "Greys" in UFO research, one of the working hypotheses has linked it to ufology. Some of the other working hypotheses include:

*Genetic manipulation by human agencies.* TIME magazine recently featured a photo of a mouse with a human ear growing out of its back, showing the advanced development of the genetic sciences at the dawn of the 21st century. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that a level of competence has been achieved that would enable the fabrication of a hybrid being such as the Chupacabras.

*The possibility of a paranormal origin.* For many decades, a number of investigators have postulated a "paranormal" origin for beings such as the Chupacabras. The word "paranormal" triggers a number of flags in people's minds, since it has been used to describe everything from Zenner card tests to poltergeists. Suffice it to say that this paranormal theory postulates the entry into our

## The Chupacabras Diaries

"dimension" or "reality" by creatures that are not native to it by means of materialization. Before dismissing this working hypothesis as science-fiction, recent advances in physics comfortably accept the existence of other dimensions and geometry has accepted the existence of *several million* dimensions. Whether these dimensions are populated by exotic creatures or not is an entirely different matter.

No one should feel "railroaded" into accepting any of these working hypotheses as gospel: we should, however, not slam the door on the witnesses (who stand little or nothing to gain from their stories) by holding our noses and demanding "evidence." Under our system of justice, thousands are convicted on eyewitness testimony. If eyewitnesses are good enough for the courts, why can't their integrity be trusted in this matter?

There is a very real danger, however, in the proliferation of pseudo-UFO research groups whose efforts seek to spread panic among the population. One of these irresponsible organizations, calling itself "Nova," has its members going around dressed in black (like the notorious Men-In-Black who were a staple of early UFO stories) and spreading the news that the Chupacabras heralds the end of humanity, ascribing to it "the origin of the AIDS virus" and the capacity to destroy mankind and all its works without damaging the planet (a kind of "organic" neutron bomb), thus rendering it habitable for alien settlers. This kind of activity is both irresponsible and wrongheaded.

Adding insult to injury, a news crew from the "Inside Edition" TV tabloid visited Puerto Rico early in December 1995 to cover the Chupacabras story for its program. Although "Inside Edition" has covered other unusual situations remarkably well, they chose to mock the witnesses it interviewed and managed to anger Mayor José Soto of the city of Canóvanas, who has led the only organized effort by an elected official in getting to the bottom of the Chupacabras situation. Perhaps the antics of the "Nova" group, "Brother Carmelo" and other colorful characters led them to believe that it was it was all a joke.

*Conclusion:* Real animals belonging to real people are being slaughtered by a being which is not native to the Puerto Rican ecosystem. We should constrain ourselves from passing judgement on its nature until we have a better idea of what we're up against. This advice goes for both skeptics and "believers" in UFOs and other unknown quantities. Alas, time did not permit a fuller round of interviews with witnesses who had encountered the creature face to face, like Mrs. Gómez and Mr. Sánchez, nor a trip to the southwestern corner of the island. These individuals, and thousands like them, stand beside us as we turn elsewhere in search of answers.

# # # #

# HUMANOIDS



extending up to the brain and puncturing the cerebellum; additional wounds on the animal's side and belly penetrating the stomach and continuing down to the liver, parts of which had been removed and from which liquids had been absorbed; complete absence of the normal predatory signs of trauma, abrasion, scratches, or bites on the opposite side of the wounds; no natural inflammatory processes in the animal tissue, despite massive internal trauma and injury; lack of rigor mortis, with bodies remaining flexible sometimes for days after death; failure of the small remaining quantity of blood in the animals to clot or coagulate; and even some evidence of cauterization within the walls of some wounds.

What species of animal could possibly have been responsible? A profile of the culprit—or "Chupacabras," as the Puerto Ricans refer to it—suggests a Gargoylesque creature that appears to have clawed its way out of a Tolkein novel. So strange are descriptions of the creature and its behavior that some are inclined to regard it as an entity readily envisioned as either pilot or passenger of the innumerable UFOs that seemingly flock to this island like tourists.

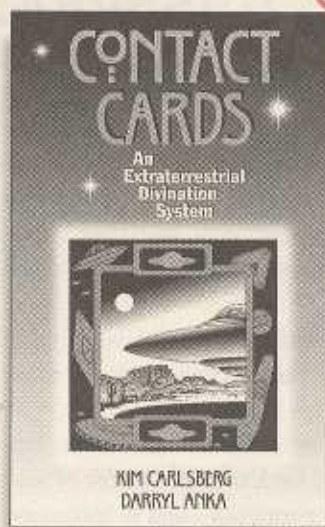
Scott Corrales steers clear of personal theory in these two wonderfully written, well-documented monographs about this ongoing phenomenon. He allows witnesses and investigators to have the limelight. What we get is a very clear-headed and objective chronicle—one that would even make the thick skin of Fox Mulder crawl.—Peter Jordan

Anka  
NM  
274

their  
ation,  
claim  
with  
beyond  
UFO  
ed to  
icious  
ogues  
estrial

ndard  
ships,  
vided  
cards  
work  
orted

book  
s for  
dis-  
attribution  
ords  
pter  
card,  
been  
ique  
the  
rem.  
outs  
mility  
out-



This system is a must for collectors of

UFO memorabilia. Although some people may consider the meaning of the cards to be vague and contradictory, other people will find this to be an excellent tool for accessing extraterrestrial information.—Luann Wolfe

**The Chupacabras Diaries:  
An Unofficial Chronicle  
of Puerto Rico's  
Paranormal Predator  
Scott Corrales**

Samizdat Press, PO Box 228  
Derrick City, PA 16727-0228  
Monograph, 1996, 71 pgs. \$10.00

**Nemesis: The Chupacabras at Large**  
Monograph, Summer, 1996 (Update), 31 pgs., \$4.95

Beginning in the spring of 1995, residents of the UFO-plagued island of Puerto Rico were confronted by a shocking development. Animals, ranging from goats to rabbits, were being killed and drained of blood by a mysterious predator. Officials blamed dogs for the small puncture wounds found in the victims' necks—a facile explanation that evoked fury among the populace, and many veterinarians. Who was this amazing dog—Cujo?

Experts who examined the slain animals said their findings transcended the mundane: small, perfectly circular holes arranged in a triangular fashion penetrating the head—one

# BOOK REVIEWS

