



ANIMAL MUTILATIONS: A DECADE OF MYSTERY

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ABSTRACT

Mutilation-deaths of animals, primarily livestock, were reported sporadically prior to 1973, with the "Snippy" case of 1967 being the most prominent. The number of true or "classic" livestock mutilation reports increased markedly in 1973, the year of the last generally-recognized UFO flap. Post-1972 mutilation case reports are examined for both common and diverse characteristics. Infrequently, UFOs have been reported at or near mutilation sites. The possibility of a "connection" between UFOs and classic mutilations is addressed. Analysis of indentations found at some mutilation sites and indentations reported at some UFO landing sites suggests a revealing correlation. Unmarked or unidentified helicopters have occasionally been reported at or near mutilation sites. Their significance and their role in the mutilation mystery are explored.

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of 1963, a series of attacks on livestock occurred in Haskell County, Texas. In a typical case, an Angus bull was found with its throat slashed and a saucer-sized wound in its stomach. It was reported that blood appeared to have been drawn from the stomach wound in a "vampire-like" manner. The citizenry attributed the attacks to a wild beast of some sort, a "vanishing varmint." As it continued its furtive forays through the Haskell County outback, the bloodluster assumed somewhat more mythic proportions and a new name destined to endure: The Haskell Rascal.

Throughout the following decade, there would be sporadic reports of similar attacks on livestock. These attacks were occasionally described as "mutilations." The most prominent example of these infrequent reports was the mutilation-death of "Snippy" the horse in southern Colorado in 1967, accompanied by area UFO sightings, a Condon Committee investigation and worldwide press coverage. But it was in 1973 that the modern animal mutilation wave can be said to have begun in earnest. To say the least, 1973 was what some Oriental sages feared most--an "interesting year." The Watergate cauldron began to boil over even as the war in Indo-China was winding down. 1973 saw the first "fuel shortage" or energy crisis." 1973 is generally thought of as the year of the last concerted UFO flap, although there



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may be reason to question that contention, given the events of two years later. It was in the year 1973 that the "classic" animal mutilations began to establish themselves in a permanent and enduring position in the historic panorama of the unexplained. In 1973 and 1974, the majority of classic mutilation reports originated in the central United States. In 1975, an unprecedented onslaught spread across the western two-thirds of the United States. Mutilation reports peaked in that year, accompanied by accounts of UFOs and unidentified helicopters. By 1979, numerous livestock mutilations were occurring in Canada, primarily in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In the U.S., the intensity of the mutilation phenomenon leveled off after 1975, with increases in activity in 1978 and in 1980. Mutilations have been reported less frequently since 1980, though this may be due in part to an increased reluctance to report mutilations on the part of ranchers and farmers.

It is not our purpose here to enumerate in great detail the most common characteristics of classic animal mutilations, though these most often include the clean, bloodless, sometimes incredibly accomplished removal of parts and sections from the bodies of livestock. There are usually no evidential residues such as tracks or ground markings, even where such markings should exist. This investigative realm is also fraught with exceptions and widely divergent evidence, though firmly embedded within a matrix of anomalous experience. Mutilation reports speak of bloodless incisions and, sometimes, bloodless carcasses; of mutilated animals found in trackless mud or snow, or in pastures other than their own; of power outages and engine failures with UFOs overhead; of mutilated carcasses decomposing at an abnormally slow rate or an abnormally fast rate; of farmers chased and shot at by occupants of helicopters; of searchlight beams and soft glows and lights of unforgettable brilliance; of near-panic in ranch country, with ranchers red-eyed and bleary from sleepless nights on watch, ready to open fire on any airborne or ground intruders; of livestock people who have shared their land with predatory animals all their lives, and who maintain without hesitation that classic mutilations are not attributed to natural predators. In the consensus of the human victims of livestock mutilations--farmers and ranchers--the most puzzling aspect of the phenomenon, even beyond the adroit surgery and the lack of bleeding, is the refusal of scavenging and predatory animals to feed on mutilated carcasses, and the odd reactions of farm dogs upon confronting (or refusing to confront) a mutilated carcass.

REPRESENTATIVE CASES

The following cases, in no particular order of significance, embody some of the most relevant aspects of the classic animal mutilation phenomenon:

Eddy County, New Mexico - January 1979. On January 22, Deputy Sheriff John C. Neill was called to a farm more than 30 miles southeast of Carlsbad to investigate what had been reported as the



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mutilated carcasses of two horses. Neill was a former United States Treasury Agent with a degree in economics and a background in advanced investigative techniques, but his experience left him unprepared for the puzzle he was about to confront. At 10:30 a.m. on the 22nd, Neill, Deputy Ray Ramirez and farm owner McDonald gathered to examine the remains of the two horses, both mares. Mare #1 lay on its left side and had suffered little decomposition. Careful examination revealed:

- (1) The eyelid and its pertinent parts had been excised on the right side only; the globe of the eye remained intact.
- (2) The tip of the external ear had been excised approximately 1-1/2 inches from its point.
- (3) The right half of the nostrils had been excised from a point about the right nasal opening to the mid-line of the nostril and continued to the bottom half of the upper lip.
(Reference 1)

No tracks or physical evidence were found in the area. There were no thrash-marks near the head and feet, and it appeared the animal died instantly. Mare #2 was found one-half mile east of mare #1, on the banks of an irrigation ditch.

- (1) The eyelid and pertinent parts had been excised as in mare #1; however, the optic nerve had been severed and the globe itself removed.
- (2) The outer ear (right side) had been severed close to the skull cap. (Reference 1)

Additionally, an extensive section of tissue and hide were cut away from the neck and jaws. The esophagus was exposed and appeared to have had an oval opening cut into one side. Portions of the genital area were also missing but Neill thought that natural predators could have been responsible for that damage. Mare #2 appeared to have died before mare #1. In fact, trapper Trent Kirkes first came across mare #2 on January 20, when he set traps around the carcass. When he later retrieved his traps, the missing right ear was found under the head of the mare. It had been severed cleanly, apparently with a sharp instrument. This was Neill's impression regarding the other parts, with the exception of the genital area on mare #2.

The property owner, Clarence McDonald, returned to work remodeling tenants' quarters on the farm. At 2:00 p.m., Deputy Neill returned to Carlsbad to report to Sheriff Tom Granger. Granger gave the go-ahead for further investigation and Neill returned to the McDonald farm at 3:30 p.m. Neill immediately observed two more dead mares, numbers 3 and 4. No. 3 displayed no wounds and no signs of rigor mortis. It had not been there previously and had apparently died between 2:00 and 3:30 p.m. McDonald was aghast "It's impossible,"



he said, "I've been here the whole time." Mare #3 was 50 yards from mare #1 and #4 was over 100 yards from #3. Like #3, the carcass of #4 displayed no wounds. Neill could not rule out the possibility that mare #4 could have been missed during the initial investigation.

The next morning, January 23, 1979, Neill arrived back at the McDonald farm at 8:30 a.m. He discovered that, while mare #3 remained intact, #4 had been mutilated in the following manner:

- (1) The right eyelid and pertinent parts were removed with a sharp instrument. The globe of the eye remained in the socket.
- (2) As with mare #2, the right upper jaw had been skinned out and the right nostril removed. The muscle tissue and skin had been completely removed to the point that all teeth could be observed. (Reference 1)

Landowner McDonald had watched the property that previous night until around midnight. He noted nothing out of the ordinary.

Carlsbad veterinarian M. C. Reynolds suggested that the horses died of "acute toxic hepatitis" (An experienced mutilation investigator has pointed out that severe liver deterioration has been noted in other mutilated carcasses). Dr. Reynolds did not offer an explanation for the mutilations, but did agree that a sharp instrument had been employed.

Around the first of January 1979, Deputy Neill investigated the carcass of another horse from which the genitals, eyes and jaw tissue had been deftly removed. For several weeks Neill photographed the carcass daily. He reports that it "never swelled up" and that no predators touched it, though it lay in coyote-infested territory. For then-deputy Neill, who now maintains his own ranching operation, the mutilation situation in Eddy County "was something that defies my imagination."

Montana - 1975. In a case that is exceptional, because of the presence of significant bleeding, a rancher in Chouteau County in north-central Montana found his cow lying dead in a ravine. A large amount of blood was in evidence, as far as ten yards away from the animal. A light powder snow had fallen overnight, but there were no tracks, except those of the cow itself. Steam was rising from the still-bleeding wounds and the carcass was warm. The cow's udder appeared removed with a very clean incision and a hole had been "bored out" of the rectal area. Coyote tracks were found 20 yards away, but no closer. The victim animal's calf, not a newborn, was missing. Nearby a newborn calf was found to be missing its tongue and one lip. It was still alive but died shortly thereafter. The rancher claimed this was not his calf nor could he explain its origin. All of the rancher's herd was accounted for except for the mutilated



cow's calf. It turned up four days later, lying in a snowbank in the same pasture. It was barely alive, but it had not been mutilated. Although the rancher's cows had never given birth to stillborn calves, four such births occurred following the mutilation. He disposed of the four stillborns in a ravine, where they were soon devoured by predators. The mutilated cow and calf were disposed of in the same manner, but the carcasses remained undisturbed by predators. Near the area of the mutilation site, investigators discovered what appeared to be horse tracks. The rancher, an experienced horseman, said he had never seen horse tracks quite like those and that he had not kept horses in that fenced-off pasture for 20 years.

According to Donovan and Wolverton (Reference 2), other pseudo-horse tracks were discovered in Montana, near Helena in the spring of 1976. By that time, not only had mutilations, mystery helicopters and UFOs been plaguing central Montana for almost two years, but an additional complication was added with reports of hairy, three-toed creatures. The reports were taken seriously by law officers, especially an investigative team in Cascade County. In the case near Helena, a boy was badly shaken after observing two upright hairy creatures in a field adjacent to his home. Searching the field, investigators found what appeared to be horse tracks. The boy's father denied that horses had ever been in that pasture.

Colorado - September 1982. Rancher Bill Dzuris and his wife, Linda, checked their cattle around noon one day, finding that all was well with the herd. The couple lunched at their home, then worked outside near the house for the balance of the afternoon. Near 5:00 p.m., Mr. Dzuris left the ranch in his semi-truck to run an errand. About a half-mile west of the ranch driveway, he noticed a cow laying where nothing had been when they checked at midday. Upon examination, it was found that half of the cow's udder had been cleanly cut off, and two remaining teats were cut off. The rectal area had also been cut out in an egg-shaped wound about a foot wide and 6 to 8 inches deep. A few days later, a cow suffered the removal of half of its udder near the border of southwestern Wyoming and northeastern Utah. Several other mutilations were reported around this time in both El Paso County and along the Wyoming/Utah border. The mutilation on the Dzuris ranch "horrified" Mrs. Dzuris considering its occurrence in broad daylight so near their home.

THE "PINKING SHEARS" EFFECT

On their farm in Johnson County, Texas, south of Fort Worth, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Kirkham prepared to retire for the evening on a Sunday night in July of 1977. They noted that the cattle on their property were bedded down as usual in a pasture directly in front of the house. Earlier that evening, Mrs. Kirkham had watched a red and white airplane make two or three passes over their pasture. Sometime that night, she heard a helicopter which seemed to hover, rather than simply fly over. The next morning a four-year-old cow was found dead



and mutilated, missing three teats and one ear. One teat and the ear appeared severed by a sharp, straight instrument. However, the other two teats were apparently severed by a notched or serrated incision. Serrated or "pinking shear" cuts have also been reported in New Mexico and Montana. Donovan and Wolverton's Mystery Stalks The Prairie (Reference 2) reproduces excellent photographs of serrated incisions.

The personnel at the veterinary diagnostic laboratory at Colorado State University are commonly thought to be among the most vocal of those attributing "classic" mutilations to predatory and scavenging animals. Their own records belie this notion, at least in part. In early October of 1975, three veterinary academicians at Colorado State University--Dr. William J. Tietz, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. A. E. Alexander, chairman of the Department of Pathology; and Dr. A. E. McChesney, a pathologist in the CSU diagnostic lab--announced that of sixteen reportedly mutilated livestock carcasses examined at the laboratory, five had "conclusively been mutilated by humans" (Reference 3). Though causes of death were not announced, the veterinarians suggested that the animals were dead of natural causes before being mutilated. The remaining eleven carcasses were "too far decomposed" to allow for effective analysis. A sample of serrated-cut hide from a mutilated cow in Montana was sent to the Colorado State University laboratory for analysis. In a report dated September 29, 1975, pathologist Dr. A. E. McChesney stated his findings:

This strip of skin had a long, straight cut edge with regular serrations (sic) (approx. 3/16 of an inch in width). Hair in one area had knowingly been clipped but in untouched areas the hair had been cut at the laceration edge. Changes on the skin edge resembled neither tooth marks of a predator nor those of wire lacerations. The changes were similar to those that could be made by a knife except for the regular striations. (Reference 4)

CELLULAR SEPARATION

September 1980, Weld County, Colorado. Science teacher Iona Hoepfner, a former medical student with degrees in physics, biology and chemistry, examined a section of mutilated hide from a calf. Her discovery could potentially be among the most significant in mutilation investigations. We will summarize a portion of her account, which we have recounted in detail in Stigmata #13 (Reference 5):

"I did careful microscopic exams on the tissue cut from the belly. It was not a cut, not a laser burn. No cell was destroyed. It (the incision) was separated between cells, cell for cell. No cell was disrupted in the mutilators' cut. There is nothing that I know of that could do such a thing." She explained that there is a natural cohesion among these tissue cells and that an incision would normally cut through the cells (at random). Incredibly, then, the cells along what was the mutilators' incision were separated precisely



along their boundaries--not an ordinary "incision" at all. According to Iona Hoepfner: "I don't think mankind has the ability to do what was done."

HEART EXTRACTIONS

Occasionally and infrequently, the heart of a mutilated animal has been removed in a highly accomplished manner. Two such mutilations occurred in Huerfano County, Colorado in 1975. Both were investigated by Louis Dirodo, chief investigator for the District Attorney's office in Trinidad, Colorado. Girodo asked Dr. Susan Colter, director of the Trinidad Animal Clinic, to attempt to remove the heart from a normally-dead heifer in the manner exhibited in the two heart-extraction cases. Dr. Colter was unable to duplicate the feat, claiming that it was not possible to remove the heart in that fashion. (Reference 6)

Leading mutilation investigator Bill Jackson, then a reporter for a Sterling, Colorado, newspaper, told writer Ed Sanders: "We had a case like that. The animal had an incision under its foreleg and it couldn't have been more than maybe 5 inches wide. Yet when the veterinarian went out there with the sheriff and cut into it, there was no heart in the animal. He said it was virtually impossible to reach in there through that incision and take the animal's heart out." This occurred in Logan County in northeastern Colorado, one of the counties hardest-hit by mutilations.

In Cameron County, at the southern tip of Texas, rancher Bill Heath discovered one of his best animals, a bull, dead and mutilated in October of 1980 (a frequent complaint of ranchers is that their "best" animals, not the weak or sickly ones, are most often victimized). Heath, who has a degree in animal science from Texas A&M University and who has dissected cattle under laboratory conditions, reported that the heart had been removed through a perfectly round hole in the left shoulder. Heath suggested that there was evidence of searing or burning of tissue, although a laboratory examination later discounted that. (Reference 7)

ARE MUTILATORS NON-HUMAN AND GREEN?

In April 1980 a farmer in Milam County, Texas, was searching his fields for a calf that had been about to give birth. As he walked through his Central Texas pastures, he suddenly saw two non-human creatures carrying a calf. Each creature appeared to have grabbed one limb of the calf and were thus carrying it between them. The beings were about four feet tall and light green or yellow-green in color. The witness could not determine if they were naked or wearing skin-tight clothing. Their heads appeared proportionally larger than human and their eyes seemed to extend partially around the sides of their heads. The farmer, frightened by the sight, quickly returned to his house. He refused to tell his family what he had seen, but it was obvious to them that something had upset him (he later told them of



his encounter). Two days later, he returned to the area of the sighting. He found the remains of a calf which he assumed was the one carried by the creatures. Only the head, feet and hide remained. It seemed the animal had been skinned, with the hide pulled inside-out up over the head; but the remainder of the body was missing. There had been no known UFO activity and the taciturn Texas farmer never postulated a UFO connection. The farmer's son wrote to Dr. J. Allen Hynek regarding the incident, and the farmer was later interviewed by Linda Moulton Howe of Denver, Colorado and Gladys Squires of Marlin, Texas.

REGARDING UFOs

Since the time of the "Snippy" case in southern Colorado in 1967, the concept of a UFO/mutilation "link" has gained a sort of sporadic, though consistent, momentum, spurred on by reports such as the following:

Goochland County, Virginia. March, April 1978. During a three-week period at least nine, and perhaps as many as seventeen cattle were reported mutilated in two non-adjoining pastures on the Virginia State Farm, a correctional facility. During this same period, State Farm guards and other area residents observed extraordinarily brilliant white lights, apparently attached to flying craft which meandered about nocturnally and appeared to periodically land behind nearby hills.

April 1978. On the same weekend, a heifer near Casper, Wyoming and a bull near Dulce, New Mexico were discovered dead and mutilated. During weeks preceding the Wyoming mutilation, UFOs were frequently reported in the Casper area. One sheriff's deputy managed to record the sound from a UFO on a cassette recorder. In New Mexico, the Dulce mutilation was only one of dozens to have been reported in Rio Arriba County from 1976 through at least 1983, with Dulce rancher Manuel Gomez having been victimized eleven times. UFO reports were commonplace in northern Rio Arriba county during the same period, with some sightings occurring on nights before mutilations were discovered the following day.

Montana. Between August 1975 and May 1976, the Cascade County Sheriff's Office in Great Falls logged approximately 130 reports of either unidentified helicopters or UFOs which seemed to be anything-but-helicopters. An extraordinary livestock mutilation siege occurred in the heart of Montana within and beyond this same period, with the highest concentration in the area surrounding and including Cascade County. Many of the sightings of both helicopters and UFOs occurred over the myriad missile sites in the area, maintained from Malmstrom Air Force Base near Great Falls. Some UFOs were observed landing at or hovering over mutilation sites.

Palermo, California. October 1975. A "dish-shaped" object with blue, red and green lights was seen the night a calf was killed and mutilated.



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Eastern and South-Central Idaho. In a several-county area centered around Idaho Falls, a UFO-livestock mutilation "flap" occurred during a period of approximately one month, from late September through late October of 1975. As in Goochland County, Virginia, both phenomena (seemingly) began and ended at around the same time. During this same September-October period, a similar UFO-mutilation siege struck several counties around Twin Falls, in south-central Idaho.

Logan County, Colorado. Some of the most publicized mutilation-UFO activity was reported here in the mid-to-late 1970's. Nearly 100 mutilation reports were logged at the sheriff's office in Sterling, and it is postulated that a significant number of mutilations went unreported. Prominent during this period were reports of a "mother-ship" type craft termed "Big Mama" by the locals. Smaller lights or craft were observed leaving and apparently re-entering the larger craft. Law officers were frustrated in their attempts to identify or close in on these objects, even in coordinated ground/air searches.

UFO ABDUCTIONS AND ANIMAL MUTILATIONS

Linda Moulton Howe's excellent video documentary, "A Strange Harvest," presents the case of Judy Doraty who, with her daughter and other family members, were seemingly followed by a UFO south of Houston, Texas in 1973. During regressive hypnosis to explain an apparent time-loss, Mrs. Doraty recalled being out of her car and in some fashion being transported on board the UFO, hovering nearby. She had watched as a calf was levitated into the craft through a beam of light, in which dust and debris could be seen swirling. Mrs. Doraty then witnessed the mutilation and dismemberment of the calf on board the craft. Shortly thereafter, she realized to her consternation that her daughter was also on board and was being subjected to a physical examination. The fear at that moment that her daughter's fate might mirror that of the calf is vividly captured in a portion of "A Strange Harvest" (Reference 8). In Colfax County in northern New Mexico in May 1980 a woman and her pre-teen son, driving on a Cimarron-area highway at night, stopped to observe two or more UFOs. The occupants of one craft were abducting a calf in some manner. The woman and boy were then abducted onto two separate craft and transported to what she understood to be an underground installation. There, the woman either witnessed the mutilation of the calf or saw that it had been mutilated. She recalled, under regressive hypnosis, seeing large vats of liquid containing unidentified body parts and one vat containing the corpse of a human male. After a few hours, the woman and child were returned to the abduction site. They have since endured considerable trauma in the aftermath of the event. Scientist Paul Bennewitz, president of an electronics firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has been the principal investigator of the Cimarron case. He claims that his investigation has revealed the location of the underground facility, a kilometer beneath the surface of northern Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. Reliable sources report that X-rays and "CAT scans" have disclosed the presence of "implanted" objects in the bodies of the abducted woman and child. The small, metallic, needle-like objects were ostensibly



inserted during the term of the abduction. Their purpose, unknown at present, will hopefully be revealed during the ongoing investigation.

There are many other accounts of concurrent or near-concurrent UFO/mutilation activity, from areas such as the Elsberry, Missouri area; Deaf Smith County in the Texas Panhandle; northeastern Nebraska; southwestern Nebraska; Washington State, north of Seattle; northeastern New Mexico; eastern Wyoming and southwestern South Dakota. Reports from other countries, sketchy though most may be, have persistently implied a UFO-mutilation tie-in. We have reported on a number of those cases (References 9 and 10), the most provocative occurring in South America. However, with a lack of more complete case data, the jury must remain out regarding the international picture. Although the possibility of "classic" mutilations on a global scale cannot be disregarded, our primary focus remains on the phenomenon as it presents itself in the United States and Canada.

INDENTATIONS AT MUTILATION SITES

Most mutilation reports refer to a lack of tracks or ground markings around mutilated carcasses. In a tiny minority of cases, evidence does exist, however, that "something" interacted with ground or soil to produce depressions or indentations. The most common variety are usually described as "pod marks," and we embarked on an analysis of these indentations. We omitted the non-"pod" markings, such as helicopter-like "skid" marks in Colorado and South Dakota; semi-circular tracks near Goodeve, Saskatchewan; and five imprints near a mutilated bull in Montana, measuring approximately 14 inches long by 6-1/2 inches wide and 5 inches deep, with each "track" 74 inches apart. We examined "pod marks" from the following locales: Alamosa County, Colorado (1967 - the "Snippy" case); Lake County, South Dakota (October 1974); San Juan, Puerto Rico (January 1975); Rio Arriba County, New Mexico (June 1976); and five cases from Logan County, Colorado (September-November 1976). The most common characteristic was an indentation approximately four inches in diameter with depths ranging all the way from one to three inches deep.

Although definitive conclusions cannot be drawn with a lack of complete data in all cases, and although a significant variety of dimensions are given among the reports, there was enough similarity among the evidence to make an interesting comparison (Reference 11).

From over 80,000 "conventional" UFO reports in Dr. David R. Saunders' UFOCAT computer file, Fred Merritt (1976) (Reference 12) assembled 110 cases which exhibited indentations or imprint patterns. Merritt extracted 37 imprint cases and classified them into five groups or "catenas," according to the imprint pattern, shape and size. It was noted that similarities existed among the types of UFOs, UFO occupants and UFO events that were associated with the resultant indentations in each of the five groups. For example, the UFO reports in "Catena IV" included some of the most unusual, even absurd, reports, featuring bizarre, aggressive occupants, and the UFOs