

## Special Report

# ALABAMA MUTILATIONS

By Frances Anne Ecker

From October, 1992 to April of this year, northern Alabama was the scene of a series of cattle deaths which prompted investigations and polarized opinions far beyond the counties involved.

During that time, 32 cattle were found dead with multiple body parts missing. Some of the carcasses, by most accounts only four or five, bore evidence of cutting by artificial means. The cuts appeared to have been inflicted after the animals were dead. The damage did not appear to be the work of poachers, since desirable cuts of meat were left in favor of lips, sexual organs and patches of hide. Many of the cattle owners also expressed doubt that it was the work of predators.

An aspiring mystery could hardly have found more fertile ground.

### UFOs in Fyffe

The UFO mystery had already made itself felt in the general area. In 1989, the Sand Mountain village of Fyffe was the scene of several spectacular UFO sightings. Many of the area's solid citizens saw a huge, triangular object doing aerodynamically unreasonable things. Among the witnesses were Fyffe Chief of Police Charles Junior Garmany, his Assistant Chief Fred Works and Carey Baker, editor and publisher of the Rainesville, Alabama *Weekly Post*.

Having been barraged a short time earlier by seemingly out-of-this-world objects seems to have made the citizens more receptive to the idea that strange things might be happening to their cattle,

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**FIELD KILLS**—*Two victims of the enduring and some say UFO-related tragedy of cattle mutilations which recently hit DeKalb and Marshall counties in Alabama.*

*Photos courtesy of Ted Oliphant*

particularly after mutilation researcher Linda Moulton Howe showed up in February to take photographs of the dead animals and underscore the UFO-mutilation connection.

Feelings quickly polarized, with some officials taking the position that there was a genuine problem, possibly of paranormal origin; others were happy to answer inquiries by saying the reports were just so much offal.

### More than 30 mutes

Since Oct. 20, 1992, when John Strawn of Albertville found one of his Black Angus cows dead with what appeared to be unusual injuries, more than 30 cattle mutilations have been reported in Marshall and DeKalb counties.

Then suddenly in late March,

the reports ceased.

On April 7, 1993 the Fyffe police department held a press conference to announce that they didn't know who was doing the mutilations, they probably would never know, but they believed it was extremely important to make an effort to find out.

The claims from Alabama will have a familiar ring to those who remember the cattle mutilation waves of the 1970s and 1980s: animals found with sex organs and lips removed in clean, smooth cuts; carcasses apparently drained of blood; evidence of high heat at the wound sites; mysterious lights and helicopters seen in the sky.

### Geography

Marshall and DeKalb counties comprise the area from the brow of

Sand Mountain to the gorge of the Tennessee River. It is largely an agricultural area; many residents are part-time farmers and own small herds of cattle. There are no large airports nearby. Most air traffic consists of light planes from regional airports, military traffic from surrounding bases and the blue-and-gray Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) helicopters that periodically check the power lines.

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As with the 1989 UFO sightings in Fyffe, law enforcement personnel figure prominently among witnesses. In January, the wife of Tommy Cole, Albertville police department's Chief of Detectives, was disturbed by the sound of a helicopter hovering so low over their house that the building seemed to vibrate. When she went to investigate, she reportedly saw a white helicopter with blue markings, and four men in business suits inside.

The next day, Cole found his 95-pound Black Angus steer, dead with its underbelly neatly removed.

#### Working with FAA

Cole has been working with the Federal Aviation Administration in trying to identify the origin of the often unmarked craft. He himself has seen the helicopters, which he identifies as Bell Jet Rangers. "One night, I saw four flying side by side over Highway 75, going toward DeKalb county," he said. "We've seen them circling the pastures with spotlights. When we threw our spotlights on (one we saw), every light on the helicopter went off and he took off."

During the April press conference, Fyffe police officer Ted Oliphant announced that numbers from one mystery helicopter had been given to the FAA, which had reported that those numbers were

#### "not on file."

Anne Aldridge, spokeswoman for the FAA in Atlanta, confirmed that the agency was working with local law enforcement investigating the illegally low-flying craft in the area, and confirmed that the numbers on one chopper that had been given them were indeed not listed.

But the likely reason was less than mysterious. Aldridge said that the agency suspects the number was erroneously reported, because the number, if legitimate, would have been issued to fixed rather than rotary wing aircraft.

#### Causes speculated

No one has been able to come up with a satisfactory explanation for the mutilations, although since it has been reported that roughly half of the dead animals were found near high tension lines, some have speculated that the Tennessee Valley Authority was involved.

Cole discounts the idea that the cattle deaths are related to the use of defoliants along the right-of-way of the TVA power lines. "They haven't sprayed those lines for five years," he said.

Cole also rejects the argument that the farmers are mistaking predator and scavenger damage for something more mysterious. "The state labs don't think it's predators," he said, pointing to necropsy reports from Auburn University and the state agricultural laboratories, reports that say, "cause of death—unknown" and refer to damage "like (that of) no known predator."

#### Other comments

Randy Amos, Albertville chief of police, reads the reports differently. "The pathology reports were inconclusive as to cause of death," he said. "We have four confirmed cases in Marshall county where the

animals appear to have been cut, but they're cut after death. This isn't the kind of thing that satanists do. They celebrate blood sacrifice holidays, but usually don't do it in a field with a dead animal.

"We have a lot of wild dogs and coyotes around here," Amos continued. "Predator kill isn't uncommon. . . . The unusual thing is that everybody has a theory about what's causing it—from predators to aliens, satanists and swamp apes from Florida."

DeKalb County Sheriff Harold Richards takes a dim view of the mutilation issue. "I think you got coyotes, buzzards eating those cattle," he said. "I haven't seen a thing that couldn't be explained that way. The cow with its under gone 'in a clean cut?' I saw that cow. It was in a shed. When we got there, two dogs were at the front of (the carcass) and two at the back. They had to be chased off. And there were strips of skin hanging down from the (mutilated) area."

#### Predator explanation disputed

However, Dr. James Armstrong, Auburn University professor of zoology and wildlife sciences, took exception to the claims of predator damage. "For many of the cattle, there is no way the coyote or other predator inflicted those wounds. There are other animals such as vultures that will eat at the softer regions of a cow, but there's not going to be these clean, surgical type cuts."

DeKalb county agricultural agent Curtis O'Daniel agreed that some of the carcasses showed mortem cuts, though he favors looking for terrestrial suspects. With respect to a cow found in Syl-  
vania, Alabama, he said, "Somebody took (that cow). And I think when they found out what happened, it'll be somebody and not some Martian or something."

O'Daniel allowed that maybe three or four of the 32 reported

mutilations showed signs of human intervention. "You have a few cases where a swatch of hide was taken," he commented. "Well, scavengers will eat almost everything else before they go for the hide."

O'Daniel added, "There aren't any more dead cattle than is usual for winter and spring. That's important to remember. "This is a bad time of year for cattle. They've come off winter feed; many of them are deficient in magnesium. The ones that calve will many times die from grass tetany. The bulls, steers and cows without calves don't usually die from it. The calves are good targets for predators, and we have a huge coyote population around here. One of the reasons is that the farmers don't dispose of their dead cattle, they let them lie in the field. This feeds the scavenger population."

#### *Mutes 'suspicious,' says policeman*

Fyffe police officer Ted Oliphant also disputes the predator theory. During the press conference, he stated that of the 35 cattle deaths he has investigated, 32 were "suspicious in nature."

A San Francisco native, Oliphant came to Fyffe while making a documentary on UFOs with partner Bob Brown, coordinator of the International UFO Congress and Film Festival and proprietor of Video City video stores.

Oliphant moved to Fyffe, stopping on the way to take a seven-week course at the Jacksonville State University Police Academy. He then became a Fyffe policeman, joining Chief Junior Garmany and Asst. Chief Fred Works, witnesses to the 1989 flying mystery triangle. He has reportedly spent the last year investigating UFOs, cattle mutilations and working on a book.

Oliphant, who declined to be interviewed, told the press confer-

ence that there was heat damage "in excess of 300 degrees on the tissue of the animals." The source of the findings of high heat traces is Dr. John Altshuler, Colorado hematologist and pathologist who has long been involved in examining tissue samples from cattle mutilations.

Alabama state veterinarian Dr. Lee Alley failed to corroborate Altshuler's claims. "We saw no evidence of high heat in the samples we examined," he said, "just normal postmortem changes."

One carcass appeared to have been dusted with a white, flaky powder. Oliphant sent a sample of the dust to an unnamed eastern university for analysis. He reported the laboratory's findings at the April press conference:

"After two tests, the scientist

determined that the substance was composed of aluminum, titanium, oxygen and silicon in significant amounts," he stated. He added that the amount of titanium was larger than he would ever expect to see in any substance, and that there was "no way this combination of elements could ever occur in nature."

Oliphant sent a second sample to another scientist for a second opinion, promising that when the study was completed the results and the name of the testing institution would be made public.

#### *Industrial use of titanium*

Barry Michaels, a chemist for the paper industry, has pointed out that titanium dioxide known as

*continued on page 47*

**CLASSIC CUTS—**  
Above: site of udder removal..

Below: Rib bones exposed where a section of hide was apparently sliced off.

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*continued from page 9*

C.I. Pigment White 6 bears a strong similarity to the mystery dust.

This substance, used in the manufacture of paper plates, towels, writing paper and the like, is 90-99.9 percent titanium dioxide and 20 percent aluminum, silicon or zinc oxide, according to the *NPIRI Raw Materials Handbook*. A paper-plate producing plant is located in Albertville, about 15 miles from the refuse heap where the carcass was discovered.

There have been no further mutilation reports from Sand Mountain.

#### *Official conclusions*

The DeKalb and Marshall County Sheriff's departments and the Alabama Department of Agriculture say the mutilations were cases of failure to recognize normal deaths and scavenger damage.

However, the Fyffe police department, the Albertville Chief of Detectives, Dr. James Armstrong and Dr. John Altshuler say there's mystery afoot.

Put simply, there's much official disagreement concerning the Alabama mutilations. So much, in fact, that it's sometimes possible to see it in one container. At the press conference, Oliphant had passed out a press release and was taking questions. A reporter queried, "I think you said that some of the cuts in the past have been found to be between cells?"

"I never said that," Oliphant replied quickly.

"Oh, you never did?"

"No, I've never heard that or anything like that. Never."

Yet about halfway down the first page of the investigation guide he had just handed out, with his name at the top, it read: "In some cases, mutilator cuts have been accomplished by cutting in between cells."

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## (5) MUTILATIONS

ly, she supposedly predicted the exact date of the attempted assassination of President Reagan, three months before it happened. Obviously, Merrell's hostility has not slowed this lady down!...

We hear by the grapevine that abduction expert Budd Hopkins has cancer, and wish to express our sincere regrets, in spite of our negative opinion about his research....

We don't know much about Rich Butler as a UFO abductee, but we are aware of the fact that he also claims to have psychic powers; and he may well be right about this. Your editor, who very rarely wins at any gambling game, won \$250 in an Atlantic City casino recently, by following a specific instruction from Butler. Co-incidence? Phil Klass would say yes; we simply admit we don't know!...

We are told that there will soon be a motion picture based on Jacques Vallee's "Messengers of Deception" and two of Vallee's other recent books. The screen writer is Tracy Torme, son of singer Mel Torme, who was also involved in "Fire in the Sky" and several recent UFO-related documentaries...

Alleged psychic Uri Geller has made it into the National Enquirer again, this time with specific predictions - most of them negative - for England's royal family, for the year 1993. (Geller now lives in England.) Most startling prediction: Queen Elizabeth II will abdicate in favor of her eldest son Prince Charles, who will "work wonders in bringing world peace". He will also "work with scientists to create a natural cure for baldness". He will earn millions from this, which he will donate to the poor in Somalia. Just remember that you first read it HERE!...

In early April your "Smear" editor heard a rumor that renegade UFO lecturer Bill Knell, speaking somewhere on the West Coast, had stated that ufologist Bill Cooper was killed somehow during February. We thereupon called Cooper, at his somewhat-secret phone number, and learned that Knell is wrong again! In fact, Cooper will be lecturing on June 13th at "UFO Expo West", in Los Angeles. Others on that program include several people we know, and even "Smear's" own Erik Beckjord has infiltrated the speakers list. Hopefully your editor will also attend this convention....

Behold - Terrell & Frances Ecker, former publishers of the St. Johns River (Florida) MUFON UFO Newsletter, have been demoted in the MUFON hierarchy for "Doctrinal Error", and now publish a new, independent zine called "The Ufologist". It seems that the Eckers and their associates do not accept the Gulf Breeze photos, etc., made by Ed and Frances Walters. Their current issue consists mostly of an amazing series of fairly recent UFO incidents in Puerto Rico, which at least one of their group (Fearon Hicks) has investigated personally. "The Ufologist" is published quarterly for \$15 per year. Write to: P.O. Box 1359, Palatka, Fl. 32178. (Our thanks to "The Ufologist" for the ET cartoon on Page 4 of this issue.)...

The cattle mutilation phenomenon has moved to Alabama from Colorado, with 32 cases reported in two northeastern counties since last October. In about 90% of the cases, unmarked helicopters have been seen in connection with these weird events. Farmers in the area are driving around with high-powered rifles in their trucks. Good show!...

"Smear" Headquarters has been blessed by the arrival of a free coffee mug, courtesy of the Fund for UFO Research, which is in league with the International UFO Museum & Research Center at P.O. Box 2221, Roswell, New Mexico 88202. This cup features a facimile of an alleged article from the Roswell Daily Record, dated July 6th, 1947. These mugs will cost you \$10 each, through the Museum. Ours was free, and well worth the price!

### Failed Astronaut Bends Spoons For Living

Dr. Brian O'Leary, former NASA astronaut who quit due to an anxiety about flying, has now gone on the spoon bending lecture circuit. He recently paid a visit to Wagner's Country Inn in Westlake, OH, fetching \$16.00 a head to teach people to bend spoons. The Audience Spoon Bending Workshop was expecting 500 to 700 people which, if he did this on a fairly regular basis, would pay considerably higher than NASA, and is a lot safer.

SSM.

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bargo, lo cierto del caso es que han transcurrido encuentros cercanos negativos con este género de criaturas que han demostrado su capacidad de hacer daño tanto a animales como a seres humanos, en varias ocasiones de manera letal.

La fallecida investigadora B. Ann Slate detalló los ataques padecidos por un número de granjeros estadounidenses durante la década de los '70. Entre ellos se encontraba Bob Calusinsky, quien se hallaba cosechando maíz en el mes de agosto de 1974 cuando de repente "alguien" le propinó un golpe tremendo al hombro derecho. Las altas mazorcas de maíz no le permitieron ver a su atacante, aunque esa misma tarde, Calusinsky y sus compañeros se percataron de una criatura de más de siete pies de altura, con ojos rojos y cubierta de pelo pardo que corría a través del cultivo, dejando a su paso un olor pestilente en el aire. Slate también investigó el caso de un joven fotógrafo, John Sohl, quien recibió un golpe fuertísimo que le hizo recorrer 15 pies de distancia en el aire, mientras intentaba tomar una fotografía de un "Pie Grande" en una cantera desierta del Condado de Citrus, en la Florida, en 1976. Estos Yetis pendencieros se distinguían por su estatura promedio de siete pies, mucho más baja que la de sus congéneres en el noroeste o noreste de los EE.UU. Sus colores oscilaban del pardo al negro y del blanco al gris. En los lagos pantanosos de la Florida - apuntó Slate - existían seres más pequeños aún, con una estatura promedio de cinco pies, con orejas chicas, colmillos visibles y pies con seis dedos.

En el mes de mayo de 1976, un Yeti con pies de tres dedos se dedicó a hostigar a la familia de Donald Duncan, un ranchero de la Florida. El Yeti arrancó de cuajo los postes de la verja del rancho, destrozó inmisericordemente los conejos pertenecientes a la familia y desgarró un perro Doberman, rompiéndole el

# teapacible

Por Scott Corrales - EE.UU.

-Exclusivo para Evidencia OVNI-

pescúez con una fuerza descomunal. La familia Duncan decidió, por fin, mudarse del rancho cuando el Yeti mató a un caballo pura sangre que pesaba más de 1,500 libras, arastrándolo por la quijada desde el pastizal hasta el patio de la casa.

Más dramáticas aún resultan las pesquisas de Dennis Pilichis, reconocido investigador forteano, quien detalló a cabalidad los sucesos casi dantescos que

Arriba: la rara huella de un Pie-Grande de tres dedos.

tomaron lugar, sin provocación alguna de parte humana, durante la oleada de avistamientos de "Pie Grandes" en el verano de 1981 en el estado de Ohio.

En el mes de mayo de 1981 [nótese la continua aparición de este mes en los casos de Pie Grandes] cierto número de residentes en las cercanías de Rome, Ohio, se convirtieron en víctimas de una serie de ataques concertados por los seres peludos: marcas de garras de una pulgada y media de profundidad aparecieron en el costado de un caballo empleado para tirar vagones de leña recién cortada; una gallina y varios patos pertenecientes a un granjero aparecieron mutilados, sus cadáveres rodeados por pisadas enormes e impresiones de huellas en la tierra. El protagonista de esta horrible odisea lo sería un granjero llamado Robert S. tendría una serie de encuentros armados con un número de criaturas de distintos tipos que se dedicaron a sitiar su propiedad desde el 26 de junio de 1981 hasta octubre del mismo año.

Durante la primera fatídica noche, una enorme figura negra de ojos rojos que andaba en cuatropatas, parecido a un gorila, comenzó a emitir una serie de gritos en el pinar al frente de la casa de Robert S., quien no dudó en dispararle un solo balazo con su escopeta 4-10. El ser comenzó a lloriquear antes de huir a toda prisa del lugar.

Robert S. y sus hijos estimaron que la criatura tendría unos 9 y 1/2 pies de estatura, con el pelo largo e hirsuto, y los ojos tendrían el tamaño de una bola de beisbó, rojos y con luz propia.

interpretations of the evidence. In an editorial, the *Sangre De Christo Chronicle* called for a serious inquiry (July 28). (*Albuquerque Journal*, Aug. 14)

• **More Mutilations**—Rancher Max Córdova, of Truchas, lost three cows to mutilation on or about August 17. Details of the mutilations were typical, although apparently the carcasses were not shunned by ordinary scavengers some days later. Three men who handled the dead cows came down with flu-like symptoms "shortly after" contact with the carcasses. Several of the Córdovas neighbors reported a "significant increase in vehicle traffic" on the dead-end road where the kills occurred, at about the same time the mutilations likely took place. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Aug. 23; *Rio Grande Sun*, Espanola, Aug. 25)

• **More Eagle Nest Mutilations**—Rancher Eli Hronich lost two more cattle on August 15 and 17. Rancher Leroy Moore lost one. Hronich allegedly saw a helicopter before the incidents. Independent researcher Gail Staehlin stated that pathological examination of tissue confirmed that "hemoglobin surrounding the cuts has been cooked at a very, very high heat." Author Linda Howe agreed, and added, "What was peculiar is that lung tissue had been totally ravaged by pneumonia bacteria." (Peculiar? Wouldn't this suggest a natural death and subsequent predation?) Meanwhile, the deputy director of the State Livestock Board arrived to begin an investigation. Reportedly he was considering the possibility that lightning may have caused the tissue damage. (*Sangre De Christo Chronicle*, Angel Fire, Aug. 25)

• **An Interrupted Mutilation**—A man tending cattle in Luna Canyon on September 13 allegedly witnessed a mutilation. Larry Gardea said he heard a loud hum about 5:30 p.m. and saw cows running away from the noise. A strange beam pulled three struggling cattle through the trees toward the sound. Gardea shot at the beam with a 30.06 rifle, and the hum stopped. One of the three cows that had been in the beam was dead and mutilated, one injured, and one missing. Gardea fled and returned with deputy sheriff Greg M. Laumbach. Laumbach said the cow's right jaw was skinned, and the tongue, anus, and reproductive organs had been removed. The wounds were smooth-edged and bloodless. Gardea characterized the sound he heard as being "like a transformer, or the sound an arc-welder makes,

a dull hum" (the Taos hum, perhaps?). (*Daily Optic*, Las Vegas, New Mexico, Sept. 15)

• **Researchers Profiled**—Five of the investigators covering the New Mexico flap have their views aired in an article in *The New Mexican*. David Perkins, whose involvement goes back to 1975, now feels that mutilations are only one aspect of a Jungian phenomenon encompassing all strange events. Filmmaker-author Linda Moulton Howe and musician Chris O'Brien are both pursuing an extraterrestrial explanation. Scientist Howard Burgess commented on the reluctance of the scientific community to investigate the phenomenon. Computer operator Gail Staehlin has become New Mexico's "leading authority" on mutilations, and she was recently put in charge of a grant aimed at solving the mystery. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 18. Credit: D. Perkins/UFONS)

• **Summary of Mutilation History**—*The New Mexican* published a list of animal mutilations in New Mexico from August 1975 to August 1994. The detailed catalogue shows that, since July 24, seven animals have been killed, four belonging to Eli Hronich. The first half of the year saw between five and 25 incidents (20 that occurred on one ranch were said to have occurred between April 1993 and early summer of 1994). Similarly, the total for 1993 is given to be between 12 and 32. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 18)

• **Summary of Current Flap**—In the same issue as the foregoing, *The New Mexican* reported that 46 cattle had been mutilated in New Mexico in 1994. Ranchers Hronich and Trujillo (who lost 20 cattle) were discussed and Trujillo was said to have seen black helicopters. Trujillo believes that Los Alamos National Laboratory is involved, but the only so-called support given for this notion is an account of blue snow that fell on the area in 1955, after a nuclear test in Nevada. Some residents were burned and sickened by the snow. As in almost all of the flap articles, mutilation details are listed meticulously, if by now quite redundantly. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 18. Credit: D. Perkins/UFONS)

• **More Background**—In the same issue, *The New Mexican* also ran an article on the beginnings of the phenomenon. A mutilated cow was supposedly found near La Cienaga in 1947. The famous case of Lady, the Apaloosa mare mutilated in 1967, is detailed. A number of associated strange phenomena are mentioned, nota-

bly metallic dust containing large amounts of potassium and magnesium, from a UFO near Taos in July 1978. On the question of missing blood, former FBI agent Ken Rommel, Jr., whose 1980 study concluded that natural predation is the explanation of choice, notes that the post mortem settling of blood can lead observers to assume that no blood is present. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 18. Credit: D. Perkins/UFONS)

• **TV Takes Note**—Notice (not an advertisement) of an upcoming *Sightings*, and a *TNT/Larry King Special* concerning the flap. (*Sante Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 18. Credit: D. Perkins/UFONS)

• **Flap Receives National Attention**—U.S. Senator Pete Domenici offers federal help in a state probe of cattle mutilations. (*USA Today*, Sept. 21. Credit: M.E. Collins/COUD-I)

• **The Story Spreads**—An article picked up from the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* briefly summarizes the flap. Two ranchers not mentioned in previous articles are interviewed: Ted Hasenbalg, who lost a bull (and two cows in the 1970s), tends toward an extraterrestrial explanation. Lonnie Pribble, who lost three cows last year, considers Satanic cults a possibility. Dr. Dave Getzy, a veterinarian, suggests that there are natural reasons for the observed effects. (*Lexington [KY] Herald-Ledger*, Oct. 4. Credit: J. Slone/UFONS)

• **A Possible Mutilation**—The death of a cow 20 miles west of Clayton on September 27 was considered suspicious, but not called a mutilation by Dwayne Massey, New Mexico's Livestock Board inspector. The cow's rectal area had been removed, but the tongue was intact. There was no apparent blood around the animal, no tracks, nor signs of a struggle. The article also mentions (for no discernable reason) that "three weeks ago in Mora County" a man had reported witnessing two cows being dragged through brush by a "sound 'beam'" which stopped when he shot at it—apparently a garbled version of the Larry Gardea story. (*Albuquerque Journal*, Oct. 4. Credit: D. Perkins/UFONS)

• **Mutilation Discredited**—Veterinarian Ben Konishi, of Alamosa, Colorado, said the cow found dead near Clayton, New Mexico, had died of pneumonia and had not been mutilated. The cow's owner, however, said the animal was seen grazing, apparently in good health, the day before it was found dead. The owner also

## ANIMAL ATTACKS

### Killer Caterpillars

As if you didn't have enough to worry about, there exists in Brazil a venomous, hairy species of caterpillar whose sting can cause burns and internal bleeding. It has been responsible for the deaths of five people. The hairs act like hypodermic syringes, and the injected venom interferes with blood coagulation. Perhaps the beast is the larval form of Mothman. (*The Toronto Sun*, Jan. 13, 1994. Credit: Gene Duplantier)

### Bad Birds

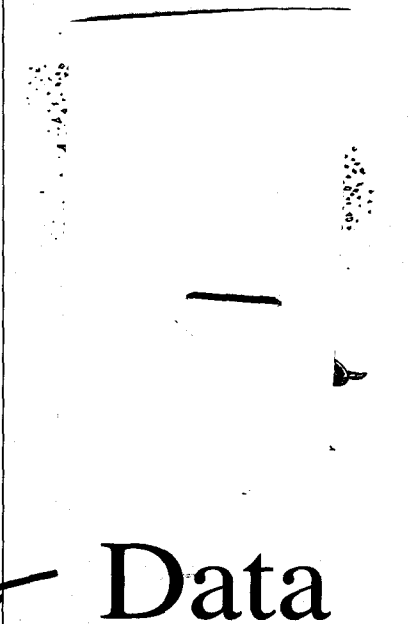
Those vultures from Virginia are at it again. (See *IJ* #72, p. 49) According to farmers in Radford, Virginia, more than 90 calves and sheep have been killed by flocks of black vultures numbering close to 100 birds. The federally protected birds belong to one of the largest flocks east of the Mississippi River. They roost at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Since it is against the law to shoot these birds (you can be fined up to \$6,000 and sentenced to six months in jail), farmers have resorted to driving their tractors at full speed at flocks going after cows, setting off fireworks, throwing rocks and firing shotguns loaded with blanks, all to no avail. Experts believe that the flock at Radford increased in size because of the warm winter, which meant the vultures would not migrate farther south. (*Washington Post*, April 8, 1995)

Not to be outdone by their scavenging cousins, great horned owls were going after poodles last winter. In Corinth, Maine, sometime between January 8 and 14 (the report is vague), Robin Kinney let her poodle out into the back yard, and it was promptly attacked by an owl with a five-foot wingspan. The poodle escaped with talon marks on its head and neck, but Ms. Kinney reports that the owl dived at her when she went out around an hour later. Earlier in the month, a great horned owl carried off a 20-pound poodle-pekinese crossbreed and killed it, in the nearby town of Greenville (see *IJ* #72, p. 48). Experts say that the owls probably mistook the dogs for rabbits. (*New York Times*, Jan. 17, 1995. Credit: Jett)

### POed Pachyderms Strike Again

Something is upsetting the world's elephant population and they've decided to take it out on humanity. In Kenya, a herd

# Damned



## Data

"A procession of the damned. By the damned, I mean the excluded. We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded."—Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*, chapter 1.

of elephants plunged into the Indian Ocean and swam more than a mile off shore to Mada Island in the Lamu Archipelago. There they uprooted coconut palms and mango orchards, destroyed other crops, and generally raised cane. Authorities tried to calm the locals by claiming that their island was on the regular migration route for centuries. Strange that the islanders never noticed this before. On the other side of the world, an elephant alert was declared in West Bengal, India, when 55 elephants in three herds were reported to be advancing towards towns and villages. One herd of nine adults and two calves ate the rice crop in the village of Mahishodoba and generally panicked the populace. ("Earthweek" by Steve Newman, *Alexandria* [VA] *Journal*, Aug. 11, 1995; *The Fairfax* [VA] *Journal*, Sept. 6, 1995)

### Giant Beaver Redux

A second tale of big bad beavers with attitudes (see *IJ* #72, p. 50) comes from INFO's back yard in Fairfax County, Virginia. In this case, a beaver who has been variously described as being as big as a

cocker spaniel or weighing between 50 or 60 pounds went after a woman's ankle, harassed a pair of two miniature dachshunds, and refused to back off when confronted with brooms and automobiles. The beaver, who prefers to be known as Mr. Beaver, has been chewing down neighborhood trees at an alarming rate, leaving in his wake scores of angry home owners with yards full of tree stumps. They have hired a "free lance" wild life biologist to trap the beaver and take it away to a local animal shelter where it will receive a lethal injection. (Unless, of course, Mr. Beaver demands a trial before a California jury.) (*Washington Post*, Aug. 10, 1995)

## ANIMAL KILLS

### Chinese Sheep Commit Suicide

The Xinhua News Agency reported that 249 sheep and goats out of a flock of 530 committed suicide by jumping into a lake. Twenty herdsmen battled to save the flock but reported that the animals would jump back in after they were pulled out. No one knows why these animals acted as they did, and Chinese scientists are investigating. ("Earthweek" by Steve Newman, *Alexandria* [VA] *Journal*, Aug. 4, 1995)

### Deadly Marsupial Malady

A mystery plague is killing off large numbers of kangaroos in South Australia. Australian scientists believe that the disease is an inflammation of the brain. The disease was first noticed when kangaroos began drowning in rivers and stumbling into highway traffic. ("Earthweek" by Steve Newman, *Alexandria* [VA] *Journal*, Apr. 21, 1995)

### Disappearing Cats

In Gig Harbor, Washington, at least 15 cats have been killed or have otherwise disappeared. Whatever is killing the cats has left a trail of tails and other body parts all over neighborhood front lawns. Homeowners suspect coyotes or even a bear, and have hired trappers to rid the neighborhood of this menace to felines. (*Seattle Times*, Aug. 2, 1995. Credit: Jett)

### Mystery Virus Strikes Australia

There's another new killer virus out there, this time in Australia. On September 21, 1994, 21 horses came down with a severe respiratory disease and 14 died along with their human trainer. The virus, which comes from the same family as the



En la *Serra do Roncador*, ambos investigadores encontraron formaciones rocosas semejantes a las de Paraúna. La existencia de grandes cuevas y túneles les hizo pensar en una posible conexión subterránea entre ambas regiones, apartadas entre sí casi 300 Km.

¿Sería Paraúna la ciudad que Fawcett buscaba? Los nativos del Mato Grosso le hablaron de una ciudad con una gran pirámide y en la cual se proyectaba una luz muy intensa sobre las construcciones de piedra. La forma piramidal sobre la sierra de Paraúna y los fenómenos luminosos que allí ocurren podrían ser los mismos mencionados por los poco precisos indígenas que debieron, incluso, haber despedido a Fawcett de su objetivo. En pocos días habíamos obtenido de la Fundación del Medio Ambiente de Goiás las imprescindibles vituallas y un todo terreno para desplazarnos por la región. A nosotros se sumaban el conductor Zeferino dos Santos, el mecánico Sandoval Aparecido Barbosa y el periodista Willy Silva. Con sus conocimientos de la sabana, ellos nos ayudarían a abrirnos camino entre la maleza a golpes de machete.

También se unieron a la expedición Roberta Fonseca y Tania de Jesús, estudiantes de biología y psicología respectivamente, que buscaban nuevas informaciones sobre la fauna y flora locales, así como las condiciones sociales en las que se desarrolla la vida de las pocas decenas de campesinos que habitan la región.

## El arranca-lenguas y otros seres

—Si “ellos” no quieren, nosotros no llegaremos a Paraúna—, me dijo *Volpone*.

—¿Ellos? ¿Quiénes?— le pregunté.

—Los habitantes del mundo subterráneo.

*Volpone* y algunos otros investigadores suponen que algunos de los ovnis que aparecen en Paraúna podrían no venir del espacio, sino de un mundo subterráneo. Campesinos que entrevistamos a lo largo de la expedición nos dijeron que las luces —generalmente no muy grandes— entran y salen de la sierra de Portaria.

### *Acantilados de la Sierra de la Portaria: entradas para los mundos subterráneos.*

160 Km. separan Goiânia del pueblo de Paraúna. Después hay que adentrarse por una carretera de tierra para acceder al Valle de la Herradura, el lugar donde supuestamente se concentran los misterios. Antes de entrar al valle algo nos llamó la atención: tres reses adultas muertas a lo largo de la carretera, en un espacio de menos de 500 metros. Bajé del todo terreno y me acerqué a los animales para fotografiarles, tapándome la nariz con un pañuelo a causa del hedor que desprendían los cuerpos.

A primera vista tenían el cuerpo intacto, salvo los ojos, que podrían haber sido arrancados por los buitres. Sin embargo, el detalle más interesante es que se les habían extirpado los órganos sexuales y el área alrededor del ano. A una de las reses le habían sido practicados, además, orificios perfectos en los cuartos traseros. Preguntamos a unos vaqueros que por allí pasaban sobre la causa de las muertes. Encogieron los hombros y contestaron que no sabían. Lo que sí afirmaron es que todas habían muerto en el mismo día.

—“Quizá haya sido el arranca-lenguas”, me contestó con cierta reticencia uno de ellos.

—“¿Qué es eso?” Volví a preguntar.

*Vuelo sobre Paraúna. Al fondo, la impresionante vista de la Sierra de las Galés.*

*El todoterreno de la expedición entre formaciones geológicas de la sierra de las Galés.*

Sierra de las Galés: roca  
forma de cáliz mitológico que  
aporta al entorno curiosas  
connotaciones.

### Pirámide sobre la Sierra de la Portaria: ¿Un recuerdo de pueblos anteriores a los incas?

—“Yo nunca lo he visto, pero dicen que es un bicho o monstruo peludo que le arranca al ganado sólo la lengua o los órganos sexuales”.

No sería la primera vez que durante el viaje alguien aludiera al “arranca-lenguas”. El mismo Sandoval afirmó que, en los años cuarenta, su padre vio varios animales muertos a los cuales les faltaba la lengua. Un campesino nos contó que los últimos casos en Paraúna habían ocurrido hacia diez años. En la biblioteca pública de Goiania encontré, en una obra del estudioso del folklore Zoroastro Artiga, una referencia a esa criatura: entre 1929 y 1935 el pánico cundió tras la aparición de una criatura semejante a un mono al cual se le atribuyeron una serie de muertes entre el ganado. Otros hablaban de algo similar a un hombre bajo y cubierto de pelos oscuros. Muchos *garimpeiros* —buscadores de oro— y recolectores de caucho habían sido atacados por la criatura. La cabeza de un hombre apareció arrancada y pinchada en una estaca; no parecía que hubiera sido cortada por algún instrumento, sino desgarrada del cuerpo. El miedo y las pérdidas fueron tantas que los ganaderos llegaron a pedir al ministerio de agricultu-

ra ayuda para capturar o matar al extraño animal.

Otra criatura extraña que habita Paraúna es el *pe de garrafa* o “pie de botella”. Según cuenta la tradición, se trata de un ser de apariencia parcialmente humana, con una sola pierna, que deja una huella semejante a la de un culo de botella y cuya voz es un quejido espeluznante. Un campesino nos contó que unos días atrás había oído los lamentos desgarradores del “pie de botella”: “Hacia mucho tiempo que no le oía”, nos comentó.

José Joaquim Días, otro campesino de la zona, nos dibujó sobre la arena la forma de sus huellas: “Muy esparcidas entre sí, parece que camina dando saltos”. Zoroastro Artiga citaba a un tal Winson (*Le Folclore du Pays Basque*) que daba a conocer la existencia en las Vascongadas del *Basajaun* (el señor salvaje), una criatura de un sólo ojo y cuya única pierna también deja una huella circular... ¡El hermano europeo del *pe de garrafa*!

El autor del reportaje se acerca al cadáver de una vaca cuyos órganos sexuales fueron misteriosamente extirpados.

## Monumentos megalíticos

“El estado de Goiás siempre estuvo relacionado con antiguas tradiciones de ciudades perdidas, reinos encantados y monumentos ciclópeos. Mucho se habla sobre descubrimientos sensacionales en la región limítrofe del Mato Grosso, más concretamente en la *Serra do Roncador*, donde se supone que el coronel Fawcett buscaba una ciudad perdida”, me dijo Luis Galdino, uno de los más reputados estudiosos de civilizaciones perdidas en Brasil.

“El valle de Paraúna fue un importante santuario prehistórico, una fortaleza natural cuyo único acceso natural, orientado hacia el norte, fue tapado por una imponente muralla de piedras irregulares cuyo espesor oscilaba en torno al metro y medio. En algunos tramos se encuentran muros enterrados hasta unos tres metros de profundidad”, añadió.

Nuestra expedición pudo localizar entre los matorrales del *cerrado* —así se llama la sabana brasileña— esa muralla que en ciertos tramos tiene 5 metros de altura, después de lo cual nos dedicamos a explorarla a lo largo de casi cuatro kilómetros. Sus bloques —algunos