

# DEATH ON THE RANGE

## UFO UPDATE

By Harry Lebelson

It began quite mysteriously on September 9, 1967, in Alamosa, Colorado. On that day Snippy, a three-year-old palomino saddle horse, was found mutilated near the edge of a clearing in the bush on the Harry King ranch. From Snippy's shoulders up, all traces of hide and flesh were gone. Only the skeleton of her head and shoulders remained. Subsequent examination by a Denver pathologist revealed that the flesh had been cut with such precision as to preclude the use of a knife. The examination also excluded the possibility that predators had been responsible for the animal's death. Further examination revealed that all of the animal's vital organs had been removed except for the brain. However, the brain fluid and the blood had been drained from the body.

Snippy's bizarre death was to precipitate a climate of bewilderment and fear concerning the inexplicable pattern of livestock mutilation that was to continue far into the next decade. Over the past 12 years at least 8,000 cattle have been systematically mutilated with surgical

precision in an estimated 1.28-million-square-mile area, roughly one third of the total land area of the United States.

Extensive research in affected areas from Alabama to Oregon has failed to provide any conclusive evidence as to who are the perpetrators. Qualified investigative agencies such as law-enforcement bodies, scientific organizations, and independent UFO investigative groups have not been able to offer any reasonable explanation of this curious phenomenon. At best, these agencies have furnished only circumstantial evidence.

Senator Harrison Schmitt, of New Mexico, recently said, "One of the most extraordinary facts of this problem is that the group or groups responsible for the mutilation killings have shown almost unprecedented discipline. There have been no leaks or informants to assist the state and local law-enforcement officials in their investigative efforts, at least so far as I am aware."

Concurring with Senator Schmitt is Howard Burgess, a retired radiation-

instrumentation scientist from New Mexico, now assisting the New Mexico State Police investigating mutilation cases. "The important thing is to be open-minded," says Burgess. "It has to be something with a lot of technique and a lot of money. I'm just trying to view it from a scientific or objective viewpoint and just face facts. We do keep getting data, and yet none of it fits together."

Because of the fragmentary nature of the clues regarding mutilations, various theories have been advanced to explain these mystifying occurrences. These theories can best be summed up as representing three distinct points of view: saucers, Satanists, or the CIA. The "solution" may lie with any of these or perhaps with none. Whatever the case, there is a subtle complexity that prevents the mutilation phenomenon from being as simple as some observers would have us believe.

Indeed, UFO activity has been reported both before and after mutilations have occurred. Physical traces of undetermined origin at many mutilation sites would tend to suggest an alien presence. Most of the state agencies investigating the phenomenon have turned up fragments of evidence that, if viewed collectively, could lend support to the "little green men" theory. Bearing in mind the lack of tracks seen at the mutilation sites, the absence of the "perpetrators," the fact that there were no reports of noise or disturbances, the failure of dogs to bark, and the surgical removal of selected organs and the blood of the animals, one tends to ponder on the degree of perfection of the methods employed.

Sheriff Harry L. Graves, of Logan County, Colorado, said, "I don't really give a damn who solves this problem as long as it is solved. My office will cooperate fully with an honest investigation into the matter, but I refuse to put up with the runaround we've received in the past from federal agencies that keep insisting it's a predator problem. There's absolutely no evidence that the 'mute' [mutilation] deaths were caused by predatory animals. In fact, the lack of visible footprints or tracks seems to



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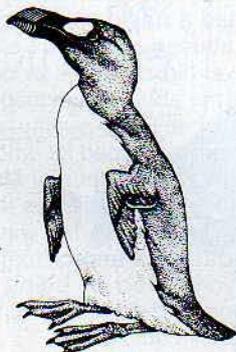
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# UFO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

leave us with little or no physical evidence or traces at all. However, there is the surgical removal of the animals' organs, coupled with the appearance of mysterious lights during the time of the mutilations, which adds a bizarre aspect to the phenomena. The irony of it all is that the so-called cause of the mutilations, the predatory animals, will not go near the mutilated carcasses." In spite of all this, there is no incontrovertible evidence linking these two enigmas—UFOs and cattle mutilations.

Perhaps the answers lie elsewhere. With all the current evidence in, the case for cult intervention seems meager at best. True, Satanic cult activity does exist and has been reported in Butte, Montana; Blaine County, Idaho; Arkansas, and parts of California. Captain Keith Wolverton, of the Cascade County sheriff's office, in Montana, remarked, "Some people believe the theory that mutilation is done by devil worshipers, and we don't discount it. It could be true." Cascade County sheriff's deputies feel that no idea is too strange and that all are worth careful consideration. Captain Wolverton stumbled on a cult site on April 14, 1976. What he found astonished everyone. About 75 yards up the side of a mountain near Butte, he found a complete circle of rocks 61 feet in circumference. It encircled a natural pit 4.5 feet deep, with a fire pit at the center. Inside the circle were two pine trees and stone tablets with various inscriptions: Five-pointed stars, swastikas, and the word *Isis* were inscribed on some of the tablets. Isis was a goddess worshiped in ancient Egypt. Her cult, whose symbol was the cow, used mutilations as part of the ritual in their ceremonies. Despite this find, if cults were responsible for the "mutes," it would only partially explain some facets of the phenomenon, while others would remain unanswered.

Richard Sigismund, of Boulder, Colorado, a doctor of psychology, said, "Cultists? If so, we are then dealing with a large and very well funded nationwide organization of such cultists whose audacity must be matched by seemingly inexhaustible financial resources and outstanding scientific and technical capabilities. That such an organization exists and would or could continue its depredations over the course of at least a decade, leaving few, if any, clues, also seems hardly likely."

The degree of sophistication attributed to the mutilators by Dr. Sigismund led those professionals involved in the inquiries to take a hard-nosed look at the facts.

The plausibility of governmental-agency influence (military and intelligence) relating to the mutilations obviously should be examined. After careful investigation by federal and state law-enforcement agents, assisted by pathologists, veterinarians, toxicologists, and others, certain patterns emerge.

Dr. Gary France, a veterinarian in Pea Ridge, Arkansas, who conducted postmortem examinations on three "mutes" in 1978, classified the technique used in excising the organs as "precision cutting." He said, "The sloppiest looked good, considering that it was done in darkness. I found bruises on the animals but no evidence of punctures that would account for the removal of the animals' blood. It seems to me that a powerful muscle relaxant was administered to bring the animals down before the blood was drawn out and selected organs [were] removed."

The widespread use of tranquilizers throughout the country as part of the mutilation process, the fact that more cows than bulls are found mutilated, the surgical precision of excising the organs, and the observance of unmarked aircraft before and after mutilations lead one to believe that a highly sophisticated organization is responsible. The techniques used by the killers are so evolved that the cause of death of the animals is seldom if ever learned. However, tranquilizing drugs used to immobilize the animals have been found and identified in the mutilated carcasses. The excising of organs of the drugged animal, especially the milk-producing ones, suggests the possibility of biological experimentation. Burgess posits the idea that perhaps a governmental agency is using livestock on which to test strains of bacteria, laser research, or microwave radiation.

Acknowledging that possibility, Ken Anderson, a Montana toxicologist, noted, "The reason more mutilated cows are found as opposed to bulls is that some lab specimens could be utilized more appropriately from the female than from the male. In the milk-producing system of the cow, the physiological anatomy would give you specific data, such as: What is being concentrated in the milk after it goes through the manufacturing and breakdown processes? Certain elements and substances would show up in the milk after a certain amount of time in ingestion. Also, if you took samples of the blood in large or small quantities, you could get, in twenty or thirty pounds of material, sufficient data for substances such as what the animal ate, or perhaps constituents of the blood, or the makeup of the plasma. It would be an ideal way to study various effects of exotic substances introduced into the animal."

Another area to be explored is the large percentage of "mystery helicopters" found at mutilation sites. They dramatically appear very near such sites, often hovering over the mutilated carcass. There have been instances of mutilations where clamp marks have been found on the legs of the slaughtered animals, possibly caused by their being airlifted by these craft. In two other "mute" cases, impressions of pod marks were found in the dirt at the site. These choppers, unmarked and varying in color, have been sighted by ordinary citizens and by a county sheriff in Colorado.

Sheriff Yarnell, of Elbert County, Colorado, sighted a helicopter at a "mute" site and gave chase, but to no avail. Three children spied a copter hovering near a "mute" and were eventually chased off by the machine.

Dr. Sigismund summed up his feelings: "Let us reason for a moment together. Some law-enforcement officers from several states have suggested that perhaps the cattle mutilations are the work of some government agency. They came to this tentative conclusion because the equipment necessary to conduct these mutilations was seemingly beyond the financial means of individual citizens and also because the scope of the problem is so large. They suggest that perhaps a military or intelligence unit is surreptitiously gathering biological samples for scientific study. I say that this is an untenable hypothesis, for the act of leaving mutilated carcasses strewn about the country would surely provoke an outcry for the apprehension of the culprits. The public clamor would, of course, blow the lid off any secret project. It is highly likely that we are dealing with well-equipped, highly capable, airborne entities using unidentified aircraft for the commission of their crimes. Unidentified aircraft, whether they be of man-made terrestrial origin or non-man-made and extraterrestrial, are by definition unidentified flying objects, or UFOs."

The list of explanations is endless, but one thing is certain: The livestock owners' losses are the mutilators' gain. The systematic destruction of personal property in several states is not a federal crime. Thus, the federal government's inability to step in at this point has given the mutilators a license to kill.

In the past five years the severe economic losses of cattlemen and ranchers because of livestock mutilation has reached \$2.5 million. New Mexico alone has experienced a three-year loss in damages of \$45,000. These personal-property crimes have had a serious effect on their victims. In Franklin County, Arkansas, cattle owners have offered a \$1,250 reward for the arrest and conviction of any persons responsible for the recent rash of cattle mutilations in Arkansas. The Wisconsin Livestock Protective Association has offered a \$2,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the culprits. The acute nature of the phenomenon in Colorado has resulted in an \$18,000 reward offer. Seldom, however, do insurance companies issue insurance on cattle to ranchers. One exception occurred in 1977 in Taos County, New Mexico, when a claim was paid to a rancher for the mutilation death of a cow.

Perhaps this climate of fear brought about the need to define the scope of this problem further through the correlation of data on a national basis. On April 20, 1979, a conference on cattle mutilations was sponsored by Senator Schmitt at the Albuquerque, New Mexico, public library for the purpose of exchanging ideas relating to the mutilation question. Investigators from across the country met with state and

federal law-enforcement officials to voice their viewpoints. What resulted was the funneling of relevant information to the media and the public, with the understanding that federal assistance in the investigation would be forthcoming. Subsequently the Department of Justice authorized the FBI in Albuquerque to join in the investigation of the mutilations. In May 1979 the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration provided a grant of over \$40,000 to conduct an animal-mutilation investigation under the auspices of the district attorney's office in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The size and scope of the problem, however, demand greater resources and more funding.

Senator Schmitt said recently, "I have been somewhat disappointed in the level of activity as a result of the conference in Albuquerque regarding the mutilations. There were indications that the Justice Department wasn't making any progress in funding. As a result, more definite language was added to the Appropriations Bill in order to appropriate funding necessary to move forward on this issue. The verbiage states: 'Due to the widespread and continuing problem of livestock mutilation, it is the committee's recommendation that the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigate the incidents which have occurred and which are prosecutable under 18 U.S.C. 1152 and 1153.' This bill, effective October 1, has been passed and now awaits President Carter's signature. I feel that over a two- or three-month period, using computer analysis, we should be able to bind together the available information and reach a solution."

In spite of this optimistic statement, one must not draw unwarranted conclusions concerning the nature of the phenomenon nor try to second-guess those responsible as to their reasons for their actions. To do so might possibly play into the hands of those who, over the years, have managed to elude detection.

To facilitate the ongoing cattle-mutilation investigations, anyone having additional information should send it to Ken Anderson of the THAR Institute, Raynesford, Montana 59469. All correspondence will be treated confidentially. ☐

*Harry Lebelson is a New York-based investigator for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization.*

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