

Farm Journal®

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TODAY

Cattle mutilations slowed when snow and cold weather hit Mountain states last November. But they haven't stopped. Colorado county lawmen are not satisfied with reports from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation that predators caused most of the mutilations. Many ranchers also refuse to believe reports from the CBI, Colorado State University's veterinary medicine laboratory, and their own Colorado Cattlemen's Association office in Denver, which tends to blame predators. "Coyotes don't fly though the air, leave no tracks, carry surgical scalpels and blowtorches," says an Elbert County rancher who lost two costly purebreds. "Whoever is doing this is going to slip up one of these days and we'll have something more than a mutilated cow to haul into the CBI."

SLAUGHTERING the CATTLE MUTILATION MYTH

The whole thing was started as a joke by a Minnesota disk jockey and spread by a couple of convicts looking for a chance to escape. See below.

BY BURTON H. WOLFE

mutilate [verb] 1. to deprive a person or animal of a limb or other essential part. mutilation [noun].

—The Random House Dictionary of the English Language

It began as a hoax perpetrated by an astrologer and radio program host, spread to newspapers throughout the Midwest, and made national magazines such as *Saga* and *Esquire* in November and December 1975.

You probably know the story by now: Cattle are found on the range with eyes plucked out, genitals severed, ears chopped off and blood drained. On occasion it is reported there are no tracks around the dead cattle. Also it is reported that on occasion helicopters were seen hovering above the cattle.

Before the "mutilation" hoax got started, nobody attributed anything sinister, spooky or supernatural to such occurrences. Ever since cattle existed they have died and been preyed on by buzzards, foxes and other predators that pluck eyes and sever various body parts treated as delicacies. Blood is drained into body cavities. Helicopters are used by federal and state government agencies for surveys of cattle herds.

Ranchers and farmers accepted all this as routine until Minnesota astrologer Dan Fry, host of a radio program called "Cosmic Age," announced two years ago that cattle were being mutilated either by some weird Satanic cult or supernatural creatures arriving on the range in UFOs. Suddenly, farmers in Minnesota accustomed to finding dead cows with parts severed by predators began attributing the scavengings to Satanists and UFO creatures.

Through the mass communications media, including the *Associated Press* and such esteemed newspapers as the *Houston Post*, the story was disseminated to millions of people in hundreds of Midwestern cities. Reporters began to vie with each other for the most sensationalized version of how mysterious creatures from UFOs or stealthy night figures from Satanic cults were mutilating cattle.

Alarmed by the results, astrologer Dan Fry appeared on radio and television talk shows in an effort to abort his prank before the press created still more mass hysteria with it.

Burton H. Wolfe is an investigative reporter for the San Francisco Bay Guardian. He studied the history of Satanism for one year and familiarized himself with the contemporary occult scene in preparation for his biography of Anton Szandor LaVey, 'The Devil's Avenger,' published by Pyramid in 1974. LaVey's Church of Satan has wrongly taken much of the blame as a result of the cattle-mutilation hysteria. LaVey's church has compiled an extensive file on research into the cattle-mutilation hoax. Wolfe was given access to that file for preparation of this article.

"Man, there weren't any cattle mutilations," Fry explained in a typical appearance on a Texas television talk show in March 1975. "I just started these rumors as a joke."

Meanwhile, police and state government agencies were conducting their own investigations of the "700 cattle mutilations" that have "spread across the Midwest since 1967," according to *Associated Press* and various newspapers and magazines. The most thorough investigation was undertaken by a task force organized at the behest of Oklahoma Gov. David L. Boren.

It was made up of state troopers, sheriffs, detectives, cattle investigators, government security agents, health inspectors, radiation experts (to cover the UFO angle), veterinarians and wildlife experts. It covered alleged "mutilations" in Minnesota, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma and other states.

Late in March 1975, the results of the task force's investigations were released in a paper written by Oklahoma Public Safety Commissioner W. Roger Webb:

"Most of the reported deaths of cattle in Oklahoma were due to natural causes. Three animals were found to have died from gunshot wounds and one was killed by a motor vehicle. In several cases cattle had been chased by dogs or other animals and died from exhaustion or injury. Others died from malnutrition, anemia and weather stress. . . . The [subsequent] dismemberment or so-called 'mutilation' of the cattle was from scavenger animals."

What, no UFO creatures or Satanists preparing for human sacrifices? No, the task force concluded. That resulted first from hysterics, psychotics and frauds, and then the story was magnified and spread by two letter-writing convicts who are now in the Federal Correctional Institute at Marion, Illinois.

The two had previously been interred in a federal institution in Minnesota where they began the letter-writing campaign which included a large volume of correspondence to newspapers, Congressmen and law-enforcement officials. [*Straight Creek Journal* had received one of the many letters at the time alleging knowledge of mutilations in Colorado.]

The convicts convinced some of the least intelligent members of police departments that they had inside information about a group of wealthy, high-placed Satanists who had arranged the whole plot.

While not admitting that they got the idea from Dan Fry's radio program, the convicts ultimately confessed that they dreamt up the entire mutilation story as part of an escape plan. The idea was to get themselves transferred to less secure institutions from which they could more easily escape. One of the two was, in fact, transferred from Minnesota to Texas where he lead local authorities on a futile search around an old airport — supposedly the site of a number of mutilations. No carcasses were ever found but the convict did succeed in escaping from the Texas institution.

He was later apprehended in Glenwood Springs,

Colorado, after a bank-robbery attempt, was convicted of bank robbery in Colorado, and was sentenced to the state penitentiary in Canon City. During that course of his progress through the state courts, he was interviewed by Carl Whiteside, of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. During the interview, Whiteside said, the bank robber was unable to supply any of the promised details about mutilations in the state and eventually admitted the whole story was concocted to further the escape attempt.

The individual was subsequently returned to federal custody.

Similarly, the other one of the letter-writing pair had claimed detailed knowledge of a site by a lake near Cozad, Nebraska, where authorities would supposedly find numerous bodies of Satanists who had died from overdoses of PCP, an animal tranquilizer. When transferred to Nebraska and brought to the site, he was unable to lead police to any of the promised bodies, and was subsequently returned to federal custody.

Once the truth was discovered, officials tried to induce the mass-communications media to kill the story. Capt. John Murphy, head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, denounced the convicts' tales, published in newspapers and magazines, as a "pack of lies." Capt. Vern Byler, head of the Nebraska Highway Patrol criminal division, announced an investigation of a hundred phony "mutilations" showed all to be the work of scavenger animals, not "little green men from outer space or any Satanists." Charles Reiter, head of the Minnesota division of criminal investigation, reported anything but scavengings is attributable solely to "rampant rumors."

Roi Kabeck, director of criminal investigations for the South Dakota Attorney General, announced that reports of blood drained from animals were "unfounded and initiated by young, inexperienced officers making irresponsible statements." Clarence Duntz, special agent for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, said "scavengings of cattle were converted to a scare story, which created 'hear panic' in Kansas by an irresponsible lawman quoted in equally irresponsible newspapers as stating 'the type of person who would mutilate cattle might do the same thing to children.'"

Newsmen who persisted in believing the Satanist conspiracy tale — even after it was revealed as the concoction of convicts — suspected some kind of mass coverup (though they never explained who was supposed to be covering up what). These persistent newsmen demanded a technical explanation of why some officers had stated flatly the severings of limbs could only be caused by human beings using sharp instruments and why blood was drained from some of the animals. So, they got explanations.

...said he had granted a defense motion removing ... the case, but added that a motion by defense ... Ronald Pretty to exclude Maier probably will be denied.

Johnson also said Friday he had not yet decided on a prosecution motion to join the trial of Sanders with those of his 15-year-old brother, Roadie, and 16-year-old Dean Wood.

The three are charged with killing Sam and Doris Frank of North Platte, Neb., on a highway west of Cheyenne July 13. Investigators have said Frank, who was employed as a sheet metal worker in Rawlins, Wyo., had stopped to help the boys with their car.

Pretty has filed additional motions to suppress statements Robin Sanders made to police and to exclude certain evidence, particularly a physician's card found in the car allegedly abandoned by the trio.

Predators blamed for mutilations

LARAMIE — A University of Wyoming veterinarian says what may look like mutilation by humans often turns out to be the work of predators, and a recent case at a ranch near Laramie is no exception.

Dr. Herman Hancock discounted the theory of Albany County rancher Ron McDonald that something other than predators was responsible for the mutilation of a 900-pound heifer.

It was found dead Monday on the Benick Ranch 14 miles southwest of Laramie. The animal's reproductive organs, nostrils, lips, tongue and the nipples on its udder were missing.

"I've seen a lot of dead cows, but none of them ever looked like this," McDonald said. "It's just unnatural."

Hancock, who has worked at the Wyoming Veterinary Laboratory for 17 years, said the carcass was too decomposed to determine a cause of death. He said the mutilation could have been the work of fox, coyotes, mice or even birds. Hancock said he has investigated 25 to 50 alleged mutilations, and all were the work of predators.

News wire services

Aurora girl killed by truck

A 2-year-old Aurora girl was killed Saturday afternoon after she was hit by a truck on a Denver street, police reported.

Alisha Brewer of 1940 Alton St. ran out from between parked cars near the corner of 33rd and Lawrence streets and

was struck by a tractor-trailer truck driven by Donald Ray Conner of 7821 Pontiac St., Commerce City.

The child suffered head and internal injuries and was taken to Denver General Hospital, where she died.

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Cases reportedly dropping

Disease culprit in 'mutilations'

United Press International

Cattle mutilations, frequently blamed on witchcraft, religious cults and visitors from outer space, are usually caused by disease and predators, veterinarians report.

A UPI survey of the recent rash of cattle mutilations reported in Western states shows that cases have dropped off in several states since insurance companies and animal doctors joined the investigation.

Veterinarians maintain the answer is simple — cattle disease, bloating and predators. Skunks, foxes and field mice then chew on the dead cows. To the untrained eye the mysterious marks appear to be mutilations.

Cattle mutilations were reported this fall in Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois and Texas. Fifteen Colorado counties had reports of mutilations this summer.

"Too often young, inexperienced sheriff's deputies go along with the idea of mutilation," said Dr. Leo A. Zehrer, a state veterinarian from Broomfield, Minn. "I suggested they report to local veterinarians and try to determine with them the cause of a cow's death."

Before this fall, mutilations of cattle, sheep and horses were reported in at least three Minnesota counties.

But, said Zehrer, with more experienced observers taking part in investigations, "since then we haven't had one mutilation reported."

Dr. Elmer Powell, a veterinarian for the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board, investigated a dozen reported cattle mutilations. After he reported on Oct. 23 that all the animals died of explainable causes and predators and

scavengers chewed on the soft parts, no further mutilations were reported in Arizona.

Zehrer and Dr. Quentin S. Paulson of the Wisconsin Agriculture Department said insurance companies that had to pay for "vandalized" animals were responsible for better investigation into the previously mysterious livestock deaths.

Livestock men trying to collect insurance on dead cattle "probably are responsible" for spreading stories in the past 10 years about cattle being mutilated by cults, witchcraft or "visitors from outer space," Paulson said.

"When insurance companies become involved, they want positive proof of death," Zehrer said.

Rewards totaling \$8,000 have been offered in Colorado and \$3,500 in Wyoming for the arrest and conviction of reported cattle mutilators.

Dr. Walter Haugo, a Litchfield, Minn. veterinarian, said an animal sickness called *clostridium hemolyticum* — commonly known as red water disease — is one of several sicknesses in which the blood is drained from an animal, making it look as if the occult had something to do with the death.

The Wyoming Attorney General's Office said there "is sufficient reason to believe that in at least a small minority of cases, mutilation has been the result of humans wielding sharp instruments."

In Illinois, Adams County Sheriff Robert Nall thinks mutilations are "like a fad."

"As the news travels about the mutilations, then new people pick up the idea and perform these acts in their own areas," he said.

Colo. Spgs. Sun 11/27/75

mythology

People are getting so panicky they don't really stop to think these things could happen, Armstrong said.

Getting back to lightning, Armstrong said the bolt doesn't even give a cow a bloody nose, and there's nine to ten gallons of blood in a grown critter. The blood just coagulates. Three minutes after they die the blood isn't liquid anymore, it's congealed.

Armstrong said he's seen his share of dead cattle. One incident he recalled involved the death one spring of about 600 head of heifer.

"It was at the first place I ever worked, Richard Klett's Quarter Circle Ranch just above Caddoa, Colorado. The Quarter Circle had the first brand going back to territorial days. You know what they died from? Eating cockleburs. Normally, the cockleburs grow just below the sand and silt. But that was the year of the big Pueblo flood. The water washed out the silt and left the cockleburs exposed."

\$2 A HIDE

The hide was the only salvageable part of the dead cows. "We skinned them all. Took a pair of mules and a wagon, hooked into 'em and skinned them down. Got about \$2 a hide.

"Now about the helicopters," he continued, "here is my theory. When it's dry like it is, there's no way grass can straighten out after a 'copter landed on it. They're gonna leave two runner marks."

Armstrong said he could see where a cow walks on dry grass. "And the grass isn't any higher than that. Dad always said I could track an ant through a cactus patch. If a chopper landed within 100 yards of a cow I betcha I could find the tracks. You bet your boots. The signs tell you. It's not done by climbing up a hill, I can tell you that."

As for the surgeon-like cuts on the animals believed killed by mutilators, Armstrong had some ideas on that too. Fox teeth can cut an incision straight as a knife, he said, the crafty critters can also wipe their tracks clean with their tails.

Coyotes, he added, are as cunning an animal as there is and they have ways of covering their tracks too.

Armstrong said electricity sorts out the cattle and most of the time the bolt won't even leave a mark. Just like that the blood congeals. Once hit, no way can they bleed. And when the critter keels over it lays there with its tongue out, the spot where the animal predator probably starts to feed.

So goes his theory.

POISON WEEDS

Armstrong believes some of the cattle deaths can also be attributed to poison weeds.

"I've seen it all my life. When it gets real dry in cow country the cattle hunt for grass and sometimes eat poison weeds. Pasture poison, we called it."

Cattle die from any number of reasons, natural causes, poison weeds, getting a piece of staple in their body, wire will do it, he said, and so will lightning.

"You take a big fat cow who starts to run from heel flies could keel over from a heart attack. That's not unusual."

By Sid Scheiner

A veteran cowpoke who was raised on a ranch and "was heeling calves and dragging them to the fire for branding" when he was 12 years old has tabbed the current mutilations hullabaloo as so much bunk.

The skeptic, Ted Armstrong, 72, who has lived in Douglas County for about 30 years, recalls when he used to punch cows on the west side of Jordan Road.

"That goes way back to when there were hardly any fences in these parts," he said in a Press-Squire interview.

CALLS IT PANIC

"I just don't place much stock in this here mutilation business," he added. "You can't discard the idea it's being done by some cult, I guess, but I can't for the life of me see how they could mutilate -- if that's what it is -- 160 head of cattle and not be seen by anyone. I don't care how lucky they are, their luck'd of run out by now.

"Some boy and his dog would have caught 'em for sure!"

The old wrangler who lives on Motsenbocker Rd. in Parker said he has given the so-called mutilation



reports a lot of thought but just can't swallow it.

"Never heard of cattle being mutilated on the range. I don't think there's anything in it. Panic is what it is. Ranchers should be sitting down and thinking this thing out.

"Let's start with why the cattle died," Armstrong verbalized. This is a dry year on the plains, yet not one cow has been reported killed by lightning. Normally, you'd expect to have 15 to 25 down that way."

Veteran Cowpoke Pokes Holes In Cattle Mutilations Theory

SIMILAR TO SNIPPY

UFO probers enter goat mystery

By JOHN SALAS

The Pueblo County Sheriff's Department, a local Unidentified Flying Object researcher and possibly a government investigator have entered the probe into the mutilation death of a female goat Tuesday in Boone.

The animal, owned by Donald Lee Johnson, was found with a portion of its side cleanly sliced away. There was no trace of the missing hide found, nor was there any blood on the ground or in the carcass, according to sheriff's reports.

"It's definitely a mystery that should be investigated further," said Don Richmond, local UFO field researcher. "That goat died a very unnatural death," he said.

According to sheriff's reports, Johnson found the animal in its stall, turned it over, and found the gaping hole in its side. The clean incision and the absence of blood in or around the carcass prompted him to call the sheriff's department.

Detective Richard Whittaker examined the body and was unable to determine how it had died.

Whittaker at first theorized that the animal had ripped itself open on a sharp object in the barn. A check revealed no such object, not even barbed wire.

Whittaker was also baffled by the total absence of blood. It had rained hard the night before, but the animal had been sheltered from the elements by the stall, the deputy said. There was evidence that the goat had staggered a few steps before it died. Some dried body fluid was smeared against one of the walls as if the animal had brushed against it before collapsing, Whittaker said.

Johnson told the deputy that he owned a "good watchdog," and had a light near the barn area. He said, however, nothing unusual disturbed his sleep that night.

The Pueblo Chieftain and Pueblo Star-Journal attempted to interview Johnson by telephone Thursday afternoon, but he responded, "I'd like to talk to you, but there was a government UFO investigator here the other day and he told

us not to say anything."

The newspapers did make contact with Richmond, a field investigator for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization and Mutual UFO Network. Richmond and his wife, Alice, are convinced that unnatural and unexplained forces were at work in the mutilation.

Both inspected the dead animal and Mrs. Richmond remarked, "The incisions on the goat are very similar to those found on Snippy back in 1967." Snippy, a horse, was found dead on the King Ranch near Alamosa with mysterious, surgically clean, incisions on its neck. The animal's death touched off much conversation about the possibility of a visit by aliens from space.

Although the goat is the first reported incident of a mutilation in Pueblo County, other similar cases have been reported recently elsewhere in Colorado and in Kansas, Nebraska and other Midwestern states.

In Texas, the deaths were linked to a religious cult, "The Sons of Satan," devil worshippers who used the sex organs of the livestock in their rituals.

Richmond said the reproductive organs of the goat were intact. "Besides," he said, "Devil worshippers or not, they still have to leave some tracks, and none were found near the goat or the barn."

Richmond added that an expensive race horse was being quartered in the stall next to the goat's. The horse was not harmed, Richmond said.

Whittaker listed the cause of death as unknown and said the only thing the sheriff's department could do now is wait to see if any more mutilations occur.

Richmond said he will continue to investigate the case and added he will send his findings to Dr. J. Allen Hynek, professor of astronomy at the University of Northwestern and director of the UFO Studies Center in Northfield, Ill.

The goat, meanwhile, was buried by Johnson on the farm.

*Newspaper file
Circumstantial file*

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Crime *ESQUIRE*, 12/75 ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Rippers of the range

As so often happens with crime, it's a question of viewpoint, really. Given the rate of human slaughter in any large American city, it might not seem too important that between April and September of this year 129 cattle were mutilated in the state of Colorado. As a matter of fact, in 1974, there were about 3,750,000 cattle grazing in Colorado and around 37,000 of these died of natural causes, so we are not talking about an event of prime importance to the ranching business.

But no rancher in Colorado is taking this comfortable view of the matter. What the ranchers dislike is the idea of driving across their pastures and finding, as one did last August, a dead bull with its penis, rectum, testicles, tongue and an eye excised with surgical deftness and absolutely no trace visible of the surgeon or surgeons involved.

Over the past couple of years, hundreds of such mutilations have occurred in Colorado, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico and Texas. In fact, if you follow this kind of thing, you may have noticed the odd item in the newspapers about the cattle-cutting craze. I'd seen such items myself but not taken too much of an interest till my good friend Ed Sanders told me last fall that some anonymous person in Sacramento had sent him a cow's tongue in the mail. Now, Sanders is the author of *The Family*, a fine and eerie book about the Manson group. Like myself, he had taken only a passing interest in cattle mutilations. The arrival in June of what he likes to call the *lingua bovina excisa*, packed in a shoe box, at the office of his literary agent escalated his attention remarkably. In June, you may remember, Sacramento was rendered the more colorful by two young Mansonian ladies called Squeaky Fromme and Sandra Good strolling about in their red robes.

Back in 1970, when Sanders was compiling material about the Manson group, ritual murders, and other diverting practices in California, he'd examined the case of a ritual de-

capitation of a goat in Topanga Canyon. Five years later the question seemed to be whether excised animal parts had, so to speak, become part of the currency of satanic groups; whether a sliced cow's tongue was now an essential part of the ritualist's working equipment.

So far, after some investigation, Sanders has found nothing to connect the tongue from Sacramento with the mutilations in the Midwest. But he did, in the course of a drive across the country, find himself standing in the office of the sheriff of Elbert County, Colorado, looking at a Polaroid photograph. It showed a cow with its udder bag and rectum removed. The cow had been pregnant and the photograph also showed a



long, thin, unborn calf's neck and head, which the mutilators had cut and pulled out of its mother's uterus. The calf's tongue had been cut out. As Sanders later remarked to me, he could understand why the ranchers were getting upset.

The mutilation case histories make for depressing reading. In Minnesota, in the fall of 1974, a young cow was found dead with its sexual organs, one ear and the udder removed. The incision to remove the udder was made in the form of a diamond. The previous spring, the mutilation mob had turned up in Nebraska. Among its victims, a calf with its sex organs removed and its body drained of blood. On we go to Oklahoma to find reports of a Hereford cow killed by strangulation or a blow on the neck,

and with the tip of its nose, its tongue, left ear, udder and vagina all removed with a knife. And on and on, from Texas to Colorado to Montana. Behind them the mutilators always leave county sheriffs and veterinarians saying they have never seen anything like it before, and local authorities on black ritual discoursing on the importance of always using fresh warm blood, if drinking the stuff is called for.

A survey of newsclips and other literature on cattle mutilation seems to indicate that the whole business started with the mysterious death of Snippy. Snippy was a horse whose mutilated body was found on a ranch near Alamosa, Colorado, eight years ago. Snippy's throat had been cut and flesh from the head and neck removed. Also removed were Snippy's brain and stomach. Snippy's owner was convinced that his horse had been "zapped by a flying saucer." Snippy's bones may still be viewed in the museum at Adams State College in Alamosa.

U.F.O.'s are still being blamed for the cattle mutilations. Some students of the craze simply see no other explanation. Carl Whiteside, of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, evidently felt it necessary to contest this hypothesis, since he told me seriously, "We do not feel these people have any magical quality that puts them in the realm of the supernatural or some alien planet civilization."

The occupants of U.F.O.'s have not so far appeared to refute slanderous allegations about their attitude toward terrestrial livestock. People associated with occult groups, on the other hand, have been vehemently trying to distance themselves from the unknown slicers. Back at the start of the year, after twenty-three mutilations in Texas, a self-professed witch in Dallas told a local reporter she thought they were the work of "a satanist group from Fort Worth." These Texas cattle had been drained of their blood, which the witch thought was consonant with satanic addiction to blood. "They give witchcraft a bad name," she added.

A writer in *Gnostica* was even more alarmed. "Despite the obvious illogicality of it," said Isaac Bonewits, a former member of the Church of Satan, "the favorite theory right now among state and federal investigators is that occultists of some sort are involved. This of course is sheer scapegoating, since only a rank amateur would believe it possible to get usable psychic energy out of such mutilations, and a rank amateur would not be able to (a) levitate so as to leave no footprints or drag marks, (b) drain out all the blood

without leaving evidence of a pumping machine, (c) make the neat 'surgical' incisions that were used to remove organs and extremities, or (d) teleport so as to be able to perform two such operations on the same night, hundreds of miles apart."

It would be interesting to know what Bonewits would consider the talents of a professional; but he was right in thinking that at one point federal and state investigators did think that occultists were involved. For a time, indeed, they thought a solution to the great mutilation wave was at hand.

Early in 1974, a student at Kilgore Junior College in Texas wrote a paper on "The Sons of Satan," which contained detailed descriptions of how this group would mutilate cattle between midnight and sunrise. The ritual would be completed just as sunlight started to filter down on the animal through the branches of a tree. (In the absence of trees, the adepts would hold a branch over the beast and proceed as usual with this substitute.)

The teacher at Kilgore Junior College was sufficiently revolted by the theme's details to destroy it forthwith. The student said he had heard the story from a friend familiar with the satanists. An English professor from Pennsylvania told John Makeig of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* that he was familiar with the Sons of Satan group, had some of its members in his class, and had seen "some girls who'd cut off their fingers and pieces of their ears and things like that." Their "primary thrill," he added, was to eat their own flesh.

All this information was passed on to Don Flickinger, an Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent in Minneapolis. Early this year Flickinger became the main federal investigator of the mutilation phenomenon, for somewhat bizarre reasons. Cattle

mutilation is not, as a spokesman in the Justice Department stiffly informed me, a federal offense. Flickinger became involved because three prisoners in federal institutions suddenly wrote to various authorities announcing that not only did they know the satanic cult practicing the mutilations, but that this same group had compiled a "death list" of intended assassination victims. Among the alleged targets were Senator Hubert Humphrey and a federal judge in Minneapolis.

The U.S. attorney in Minneapolis, Robert Renner, put A.T.F.'s Flickinger on the case because, as he put it to me, "We thought it was the only agency freewheeling enough really to do something." The informants continued to pour out their stories: a small city near the Gulf Coast would have its water deliberately poisoned; two people in another Texas town would suffer dismemberment in the near future. Just enough of the informants' stories checked out to cause Flickinger and investigators in several states to continue the hunt for the allegedly four-hundred-strong band of rich cattle-mutilating satanists. Reputed leaders of the group in Texas were polygraphed. All survived such examinations. One of the claims was that the group was escalating from animal to human mutilations and police earnestly scanned all cases of ritualistic murders that occurred. Flickinger himself was threatened and his door daubed with blood.

Sometime in the summer of this year the federal investigation came to an abrupt end. All that a person in the Justice Department associated with the case would tell me was, "We were looking into alleged threats to elected officials from the same type of people involved in cattle mutilations and we were unable to come up with anything at all." This was not particularly illuminating, but John

WIDOW PRICE

*Oscar Price died with a hunk of steak in his throat,
dining among friends at Top of 21, a restaurant
for people on top of it all. His friends thought
him laughing, then mildly miffed, red-faced
at his wife, who salted her potato and missed his going.*

*Where she lives now (on top of a hill),
she wonders about choking. This is on days
when rocks shift place and daisies are spineless
with west wind at their backs. She watches birds,
how flycatchers take food and are gone.
It is frightening: all this shifting and bending
and flying. The thing about choking, too.
She misses Oscar, she says.*

—CHARLOTTE GAFFORD

Makeig at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* had also been receiving letters from two of the informants—convicted armed robbers in the Marion federal prison—and was able to conclude that the federal investigators had become convinced that the informants were putting out a lot of bogus information in an attempt to get moved to prisons from which it would be easier for them to escape. This view was strengthened by the fact that all three informants had indeed made escape attempts.

Thus ended federal involvement in the investigation of cattle mutilations and thus also ended the last convincing series of leads anyone has yet come up with.

What are we left with? In the hundreds of cases of cattle mutilations, no one has ever been seen at or near the scene of the crime. No trace of the perpetrators—footprints, car tracks or even evidence of the use of helicopters—has ever been detected. Many ranchers believe that helicopters have been used, partly because a large number of sightings of unidentified helicopters have been reported, partly because it seems this is the only form of transport allowing easy access to remote rangeland. Some investigators believe that such furtive use of helicopters would ex-

plain the large number of U.F.O. sightings in the affected states.

Cynics say that small predators are responsible for many of the alleged mutilations. This may sometimes be the case, but Carl Whiteside, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation officer, told me that out of all the dead animals sent to the veterinary school at Colorado State University six were fresh enough to be amenable to autopsy. One had been the victim of a predator, five had definitely been mutilated by humans. In all cases, he added, the animals had died of natural causes and the mutilations had occurred post-mortem, which he said produced curious questions: "Are the cattle being killed and mutilated by the same people, or do the mutilators come upon them and do the cutting?"

Out of all the investigations only one clue has emerged. In the late summer a Colorado rancher found a blue plastic valise on his land. In it were a cow's tongue, an ear and a scalpel.

The day I spoke with Whiteside he had just returned from a meeting of three hundred ranchers in Kiowa, Elbert County. Elbert County suffered sixty-three cases of mutilation over the summer. Whiteside said the ranchers "were literally up in

arms.... The thing that's puzzling and frightening to them is that somebody can get onto their ranch and actually cut up an animal and leave no trace. What we're afraid of is that we are going to have a homicide on our hands. A person runs out of gas, wanders onto a ranch and the next thing you know these people who are spooked become involved in a murder."

So be careful about road stops next time you drive around the mountain states. Ed Sanders, who is a vegetarian, told me that one of the ironies of driving around mutilation country was seeing trucks trundling cattle off to orthodox slaughter. You can eat steak for a lifetime and still get agitated over the fate of one animal whose organs have been sliced out by unknown cow molesters. It's the old ironic tension between homicide statistics versus humdrum death on the roads. As I said at the start, it's a question of viewpoint. Crime is only what you care to see.

And how to solve the case? One jolly A.T.F. official told me the answer is "to get two guys dressed up as a bull with specially large testicles, stand them on the range and wait." It could work, I suppose, but you can see that the investigators are getting desperate. ##

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Cattle Deaths and the FBI

If the FBI will not enter the investigation of mysterious livestock deaths in Colorado and some adjacent states then Sen. Floyd Haskell, D-Colo., should take the matter to Congress for resolution.

The incidents are too widespread—and potentially too dangerous to public order—to ignore. Narrow interpretations of what the FBI's role is vis-a-vis state authority are not adequate to the need.

There is already federal involvement. Consider this: Because of the gun-happy frame of mind developing in eastern Colorado (where most of the incidents have been occurring), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has had to cancel a helicopter inventory of its lands in six counties. BLM officials are simply afraid their

helicopters might be shot down by ranchers and others frightened by cattle deaths.

If that isn't a reason for federal involvement, we don't know what is. And the question of which federal agency investigates isn't as important as the need to bring a focus on the incidents that is broader than the jurisdiction of one state.

Killings and mutilations of livestock have been occurring in Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas and elsewhere—not just in Colorado. If there is a pattern to the incidents it would seem that the broadest possible study of them is indicated.

In any case, Senator Haskell should keep the pressure on the FBI. It has manpower and a wide range of investigatory tools. And if the FBI resists successfully, the senator should go to Congress to get the sort of attention these alarming incidents deserve.

9-3-75 P601

Insurance paid to 4 ranches on which cattle were mutilated

Associated Press

Four Colorado ranches victimized by cattle mutilations have recouped their losses through two insurance companies specializing in rural coverage.

The claims were filed under special vandalism clauses in comprehensive farmowners' policies. Farmers Union Insurance Group has paid one claim. Farm Bureau Insurance Group has paid for three cattle believed to be mutilated, a spokesman said.

If the cattle hadn't been mutilated, there would have been no obligation by the insurance firms, and the owners would have sustained the loss because death isn't covered under any policy.

The companies do offer protection for range animals against lightning and vandalism as an extra comprehensive policies.

RMN 9/16/75

Mutilations of Cattle Continue

Continued from Third Page

with sharp objects (as well as, in a few cases, also later gnawed by predators, mostly coyotes).

Secondly, Whiteside isn't sure he trusts CSU's findings that even 14 of 19 animals were mutilated. "Here, in our own lab (where technicians analyze only small skin samples), we've performed 31 tests under microscopes, and only two were mutilations," Whiteside said.

Which is why he is delighted at the prospect of having two full-time, mobile experts at his disposal to "put this problem in perspective once and for all."

Quite possibly, he suggests, they may determine that, while some cattle obviously are being mutilated, most are victims of predators. Possibly, too, the mutilators may be a small group of fanatics operating out of only one or two counties, carving up animals already dead.

That is significant to Whiteside, 33, for several reasons. First, it means "we are dealing with trespassing, not a felony."

Second, it means that the panic and fear which dominates many counties would subside.

And, third, it means that Whiteside, who spends half his time nowadays talking to politicians, reporters and outraged ranchers, would be rid of the whole problem. He has a hard time suppressing his pleasure at the thought.

"After all, then it would be a local problem, not one that merited state resources," said Whiteside, who has only 10 agents at his disposal and who freely admits that too many of them are tied up too often investigating crimes against cows, not people.

Still, Whiteside said, growing deadpan again, a crime is a crime and this one certainly must be solved.

Mainly because many trigger-happy ranchers, particularly those in hard-hit Elbert County, adjacent to Ft. Carson Army Base, are still convinced the mutilations are the work of some gory military experiment or a bunch of shell-shocked Vietnam veterans. Many are still reportedly taking potshots at any helicopter they see.

That problem has terrified many Army and National Guard pilots and recently prompted Ft. Carson officials to begin providing the CBI with complete daily flight plans.

"I'd sure hate to see some rancher murder some innocent pilot, or hiker or arrowhead hunter," Whiteside said. "All because of a bunch of nuts who may only be hacking on a cow that may be already dead anyway."

Whiteside is fond of pointing out that of an estimated 3,750,000 cattle raised in Colorado in 1974, about 37,000 died of natural causes, according to the Cattlemen's Assn.

Still, Whiteside, a former Maryland state policeman who's lived in Colorado only five years, said he's beginning to learn something about the people who populate those thousands of square miles of silent, isolated prairie:

It is not the cow that counts so much as the prospect of a bunch of wild-eyed "Manson-type nuts" daring to defile the natural order of the land they love.

Whiteside also knows that at least a dozen other states have reported similar mutilations within the last few months, from California to North Carolina, from goats to horses and pigs.

He only shrugs. He no longer has any real theories. Perhaps it's an organized, national cult. Maybe countless unrelated cults. Maybe the military, maybe UFO's, maybe anything.

But Whiteside has no doubt of one fact. Much of the recent spate of mutilations is probably the work of a bunch of thrill-seekers jumping on the bandwagon. Just recently, he added, with a short, laugh, somebody mutilated a buffalo at a Colorado Springs zoo.

Which puts more pressure—professionally and politically—than ever on the CBI to catch the culprits.

Whiteside leaned back in his chair, propped his feet on his desk and sighed, the resigned sound of a man who probably is haunted by cows even in his sleep.

And he doesn't have much hope, because he knows that beyond the continuing efforts of a handful of harried county sheriffs, the two Interior Dept. specialists probably are all the additional help he's going to get.

The FBI, asked by Sen. Haskell to intervene two months ago, refused on grounds that there was no evidence of an interstate violation.

Later, Colorado National Guard troops were ruled out too, partly because their assistance would cost the state about \$100,000 for 30 days and because such involvement would mean "activating" the guard and probably only compound the public panic.

Still, Whiteside added, there's always the reward, now up to a combined total of \$13,000, contributed by assorted Colorado organizations.

"Somebody may fink out yet," he said cynically.

COLORADO STILL PLAGUED

U.S. Promises Help in Cattle Mutilation Probe

BY BELLA STUMBO

Times Staff Writer

DENVER—November nights are freezing on the prairies of Eastern Colorado and the first two light snows of winter have fallen.

Still, despite the earlier hopes of many, the rash of cattle mutilations which began last April continues, leaving local authorities as baffled as ever.

But, for the first time, limited federal assistance has been promised.

According to Sen. Floyd Haskell (D-Colo.), the U.S. Department of Interior's Denver Wildlife Research Center will provide at least two full-time specialists in predator attacks to aid the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, coordinator of the statewide search.

Their purpose, according to Haskell's office, will be to help resolve a question which has lately begun to nag at lawmen and ranchers alike: how many of the reported cattle mutilations (now officially numbered at 202, although unofficial estimates are at least triple that) are mutilations by man, rather than predators?

These specialists will do what Colorado authorities have had neither the manpower nor the resources to do: they will go directly to the scene of a reported mutilation and perform tests there on the animal.

"Our problem has always been one of getting the carcass to the veterinarians at CSU (Colorado State University) before they were too decomposed for testing," said Carl Whiteside, head of the CBI team coordinating the investigation. "So, we still have almost no evidence and not a single, solid lead."

What evidence CBI does have, however, leads Whiteside to believe the mutilations may not be quite as bizarre as originally thought.

First, it appears that although many of the animals have been mutilated with sharp objects (usually their rectums, sexual organs, left eye, left ear, tongue and heart have been removed, all with skillful precision), they probably were already dead of natural causes, rather than destroyed by the mutilators in some mysterious manner.

As a spokesman for CSU's Veterinary Diagnostic Clinic recently reported, of 19 carcasses so far received for tests, the cause of death was determined in only 11—and all died naturally, of everything from polio to pneumonia. But, he added, 14 of the animals had been mutilated.

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Two things stumped the retired cowpuncher. First, why the predators eat the meat of some fallen animals and not others. Secondly, none of the natural death causes explained why about one third of the mutilation cases reported have happened in one county, Elbert.

Predators are usually not finicky eaters, he said. Armstrong said he noticed the eat-some leave-some trait once before when he was working on a giant Texas spread on the Lalano west of Corpus Christi. The cowboys came to the conclusion some of the meat was just tougher than others, he explained. "Maybe that's happening here too."

SOLID CREDENTIALS

As for the disappearance of the sexual organs on the cases suspected of being mutilations, Armstrong explained that predators usually go that area first to feed because of the tenderness of the anatomical portion and because it is an easy path to open up the rest of the body.

Armstrong appeared to have solid credentials as an elder statesman of the ranching industry. At the age of 15 he was breaking horses for the Figure 2 outfit south of La Junta, Colo., and spent much of his life working in cow country, including a stint taking care of Charley Croft's cattle in these parts.

As a sidelight, Ted followed the RCA rodeo circuit. His specialty was calf roping and single steer roping.

"I had 32 bones broken over the years, so you can say I paid my dues," Armstrong joked. "I was also a rodeo clown for 11 years."

For many years, Armstrong could boast that he had the lowest charter RCA number -- 251 -- until the association allowed former Dallas Cowboys NFL star Walt Garrison to take no. 32, his football jersey number.

The oldest active RCA member, Armstrong still ropes. As recently as two weeks ago, the 72-year-old ex-cowhand, stiff-boned but clear eyed, teamed with sidekick Jerry Lay to win a roping competition held in conjunction with a horse show down in Castle Rock.

Mystery Of Cattle Mutilations I

By BELLA STUMBO

(C) 1975,

The Los Angeles Times

KIOWA, Colo. — The heifer, a 700-pound black angus, was lying in a pasture a mile off the nearest dirt road, about five miles from town. It was completely bloated, its legs protruding stiffly into the air.

Sheriff George Yarnell, circling the carcass, said it probably hadn't been dead more than a day. He poked the animal with the toe of his boot, disturbing a swarm of flies.

Then, in a seemingly effortless gesture, Yarnell grabbed the animal by a leg and flipped it over, to see if its left eye was missing too. It wasn't. Neither was the left ear, the heart, the sex organs, the lips or the tongue.

All they had taken this time was the rectum. But that had been removed in the usual expert manner. The hole was almost a perfect, smooth circle where the blade had been.

"Hell, this is the least I seen done to one of 'em so far," Yarnell said.

Search For Clues

Then Elbert County Sheriff George Yarnell, a bit, weather-beaten man of about 50, dressed in the stained Stetson and grimy cowboy boots standard to this part of Eastern Colorado, went to work.

First he photographed the mutilated area from several

angles. Then he searched the rest of the carcass for some clue as to how the cow might have been killed. There was none, not even a needle mark, although the animal apparently had died instantly, without struggle.

Yarnell finally pulled out his knife to get a skin sample for the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

Rancher Loren Green, his wife Lee and two neighbors, both younger men in their 30s, watched as the sheriff crouched down and grabbed a loose flap of skin firmly with one hand. With the other he began hacking away at a strip about three inches wide, five inches long. His blade was dull.

"Hey, George, you ain't cuttin' that critter as smooth as them other fellows," cracked Green, a small, tight smile on his face. Yarnell, by nature a man of few words, only grunted.

One of the young men, looking half sick, turned away from Yarnell. "This just doesn't make any sense," he said softly. "They did this in plain sight.

Anybody looking over here at night would have seen them, their lights or something." He pointed to two white houses on a hillside a mile away. One was his.

'Doesn't Add Up'

"And what kind of people would be prowling around out here at night. To do THAT to an animal? What for? It just

doesn't add up."

Lee Gree strode up, her face rigid with anger. "They're sick, that's why it doesn't make sense," she snapped. "But I just hope I come up on one of them outfits doing this stuff. I'll shoot them on the spot if I can. Hell, if we don't fight back, if we just hole up like rabbits, we'll never see the end of this!"

Since April 7, 65 mutilated cattle have been reported in Elbert County alone.

In the same period, at least 150 cattle mutilations have been reported in 15 Colorado counties, almost all of them in the eastern half of the state. The mutilations run in a funnel-like pattern from Elbert County, located slightly east and almost midway between Denver and Colorado Springs, to the far northeastern and southeastern corners of the state, a spread of more than 500 miles.

Lately, that figure increases almost daily. So does the danger that law and order in this part of the world is about to become an empty cliché.

In the beginning, no one paid much attention to the deaths. Animals die often out here and decompose quickly in the hot summer sun. It could have been anything. Coyotes. Lightning. Poachers. Disease.

And some ranchers who recognized a mutilated carcass shrugged it off. After all, during the past decade mutilations have been reported, off and on, in as many as 20 different states. Undoubtedly, they said, it was the work of a bunch of

nuts who would get their kicks and move on.

But this time they haven't moved on. Instead, mutilated cattle have been discovered with increasing frequency over an ever-widening area.

And ranchers are comparing notes.

In an overwhelming number of cases, it seems, the animals are missing the same parts: the left eye, left ear, lips, tongue, sexual organs, rectums and sometimes the heart.

Eerie enough in itself. But there is more. Some ranchers insist the blood has been drained from the animal. Others agree that, drained or not, there is never a trace of blood on the ground around the carcass.

Equally bizarre, no tire tracks or human footprints can be found, even in muddy fields thick with hoof marks, although some animals have been discovered miles from the nearest road, others only yards from houses.

Stranger yet, the animals haven't been shot, bludgeoned or slashed to death and there is rarely a sign of struggle. How do they die?

Concern has turned into alarm, and alarm, in some counties into panic.

By May almost every sheriff in Eastern Colorado had been contacted. By June, four other states — Whoming, Utah, Texas and Montana — had reported similar mutilations, although fewer of them.

And by July, the Colorado

H. Watson

1 Colorado Continues To Widen

Bureau of Investigation had been called in to coordinate a statewide hunt for the killers. And, of course, theories continue to flourish.

Satan Worshippers

Some students of ancient religions and not-so-ancient myths think the mutilations are the work of Satan worshippers, an explanation which seems most popular in the stricken areas.

Some people also attribute the mutilations to men from outer

space, which may now rank as the second most popular explanation. Unidentified flying objects are reported two to three times nightly in some Colorado counties.

Some residents of Elbert County say the UFO is an army green helicopter, the type especially designed for silent maneuverings. And they figure it probably comes from Ft. Carson, an army base located only a few miles to the southwest of Elbert.

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At the moment, none of the unanswered questions matters nearly so much as the rumors spreading across the state, terrifying ranch women who spend their days alone and prompting their husbands to collect small arsenals of shotguns and rifles.

Trigger Happy

In Washington County, Don Stitt, a full-time electrician and part-time deputy sheriff, sat inside a cafe in the tiny town of Woodrow frowning deeply over

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the current condition of Colorado.

"I never saw anything like it before. These ranchers are carrying high-powered rifles that'll blow a hole a mile wide in anything, and they're trigger-happy! They're scared to death about all these damned rumors.

But despite the increasing mutilations, the public clamor and the political grandstanding, nothing essentially has changed.

And so, the task of catching the culprits remains in the hands of the beleaguered county sheriffs and the CBI, which has only 10 investigators in the field.

And that explains why Carl Whiteside is committing himself to almost nothing these days.

Buck Stops Here

Whiteside is head of the CBI unit coordinating the investigation. And as he stands inside his neat office at CBI headquarters in Denver, he knows the buck stops here.

"It may be a helicopter, but we can't say that for sure because we have no evidence, and we must deal only in evidence," said Whiteside.

"All I know for sure is that animals are dead, some have been mutilated and the majority of reports show the left eye and ear and sexual organs are missing," he said briskly.

"The important thing now is that we deal in fact, not fiction, so that fear doesn't become the victor," he said, "and that's what we've got in Colorado now. Fear."