

THE CHUPACABRAS DIARIES

An Unofficial Chronicle of Puerto Rico's
Paranormal Predator



By Scott Corrales

A Reissue of the 90s Classic

The 1996 original did not feature a dedication. It is only fitting that the 2013 re-issue have a dedication to someone whose encouragement (and distribution) helped to make it possible:

To Robert C. (“Bob”) Girard of Arcturus Books, Inc. and his timeless words of advice: “Mystics never have any money. Price it accordingly.”

©

Copyright 1996, 2013 by Scott Corrales

**All rights reserved. The reproduction
of material in this report is prohibited
unless written permission is granted.**

Cover art: S. Corrales

Contents

I. The Opening Rounds 1

II. The Merry Month of May..... 3

*III. Junebugs, or
How Much is That Doggie In the Window?* 7

IV. Stalking the Beast 22

V. Into the Realm of Beasts..... 31

VI. An Incredible Month 36

VII. The Infiltrators..... 48

VIII. On-Site..... 54

IX. Final Thoughts..... 69

I. The Opening Rounds

For over a century now, the Puerto Rican peasantry has fervently sung: *¡Líbranos, señor, de este terrible animal!* ("Deliver us, Lord, from this terrible beast!"). It is a song accompanied by the syncopation of numerous drums called *tumbadoras*, and the percussion instruments available in the rural reaches of the island at the time. Folklorists almost surely dismiss the possibility that there might be anything to these lyrics other than an ardent Christian urge to be delivered from the devil, who is described in bestial terms. But Puerto Rico's long history of paranormal phenomena can lead even the sternest doubter to read between the lines of this peasant song.

For decades, Puerto Rico has experienced paranormal phenomena beyond the amount usually felt elsewhere in the world. Major documentaries like *Ovnis Sobre Puerto Rico: Documento Confidencial* alerted the world to a situation in which bizarre creatures, UFOs and their occupants, and religious phenomena played out on the same stage, or in different rings under the same tent. Animal mutilations presided over the weirdness of the early 1970s, mirroring the Stateside UFO wave of 1972-73, while at the same time people disappeared at the rainforest known as El Yunque. Men in Black walked into business offices, and presumably alien craft crossed the skies with impunity--one of them even pausing to be picked up on a TV commercial for a rum distillery while the camera was left running all night in order to capture a perfect sunrise from the top of a building in the heart of San Juan.

But that was then.

The modern age of weirdness kicked off with the alleged crash of a UFO in El Yunque Rainforest in 1987. Soon after, a massive underground detonation would rock the southwestern tip of the island, attracting the attention of the military. Amaury Rivera would have his controversial abduction experience--a controversy which threatened to destroy the ufological community in both Puerto Rico and Spain, and has indeed left it badly divided--in the same area a year later.

1989 kicked-off with sightings of the enigmatic, repulsive "vampire birds" which appeared in many different parts of the island simultaneously. Naysayers came forward, alleging that they were common island birds with rooster spurs grafted into their beaks. This improbable statement seemed to quell the incipient furor, but the fact of the matter is that government officials confiscated not only the birds in private hands, but even film that was being developed at a Fotomat store.

The Chupacabras Diaries

1990 and 1991 witnessed the return of the UFO phenomenon and its attendant manifestations to the Adjuntas area, a mountainous region famous for its coffee-growing plantations and as a source of high-grade copper (still unexploited). It was at this time that Laguna Cartagena, an unremarkable, kidney-shaped body of water near the towns of Boquerón and Cabo Rojo, became the alleged entry/exit point for a subterranean/submarine base that reputedly exists deep below the lagoon's surface.

The outrage over the UFO sightings reached such extremes that the mayor of Adjuntas, perplexed by the viewings, and doubtlessly irritated by the sheer volume of sightseers pouring into his normally quiet town, demanded from then-President Bush an investigation into the heavenly phenomenon accosting his constituency. It is unknown if his request ever made it to the White House.

The 1992-94 period witnessed an intensification in the number of UFO sightings, encounters, and abductions. A mysterious "aerostat" -- a kind of barrage balloon tethered to a ground station -- was flown by Federal authorities not far from Laguna Cartagena, ostensibly to help win the war against drugs, but in the process, raising countless suspicions that the aerostat was being utilized to detect UFO activity in the area.

The appearance of triangular UFOs, such as the ones reported over the Hudson Valley in the mid-Eighties, intensified during this period. 1994 ended with the strong likelihood that a diminutive alien corpse--the mortal coil of a creature shot and bludgeoned by farmers who placed it in a freezer for years--was in fact the strongest physical evidence collected on the island to date. The obstacle, however, was the unwillingness of the party in possession of the cadaver to relinquish it for study, mainly out of fear that it would be confiscated by Federal authorities.

But no one could have imagined what was being heralded by the lull in sightings and unusual activity shortly before New Years, while thousands engaged in revelry and the joys of a tropical Christmas...

II. The Merry Month of May

Jorge Martín's message on the answering machine on the afternoon of May 17th carried a certain ring of urgency. When I returned his call, the first thing he said was, "Do you have any idea what's going on down here?!"

For the next forty-five minutes, Jorge and his wife Marleen briefed me on what had been going on during their investigations in the central region of Puerto Rico's mountainous interior. Since March, animals of all shapes and sizes had been mutilated in the municipalities of Orocovis and Morovis. The authorities were stumped and no clue as to the perpetrator's exact nature had been found.

This new wave of mutilations that disturbed the normally peaceful Puerto Rican springtime was different in many respects from the classic 1975 wave investigated by Salvador Freixedo, who lived on the island at the time. Only a few cases presented the extrusion of organs that characterized the "mutes" of the American Southwest (admirably documented by Tom Adams). These new gruesome developments left animals entirely bloodless through a single neat perforation found on some part of the body.

The Orocovis mutilations were first brought to light by Arnaldo García, a radio show host and journalist with Radio Cumbre, and an affiliate of San Juan's WKAQ. While the popular perception remains that these events began in March, they had in fact been taking place in scattered locations over a period of time. One year earlier, for instance, a number of deer at the Mayaguez Zoo had been found mutilated and bloodless. At the time, it was considered prudent to conceal this fact from the public.

The mutilation "wave" also had a strong component of "high strangeness" in the form of bizarre humanoids resembling the so-called Grey aliens popularized by Stateside ufology. One of these creatures, in fact, was the first to be reported during the Orocovis flap. A police officer investigating a dead sheep on the property of Mr. Enrique Barreto suddenly became aware that "something" was staring at him from the shadows. The "thing" was generally humanoid in appearance, some 3 to 4 feet tall, and with orange-yellow eyes. Ordering his partner to stop the squad car they were in, the police officer jumped out and pursued the creature. But a truly perplexing thing happened next: the policeman was engulfed by a sense of nausea accompanied by a pounding headache when he tried to go after the creature. He was rendered so helpless that his partner had to come to his rescue.

At six o'clock in the morning on March 26, Jaime Torres encountered a similar creature in the field where Mr. Barreto's sheep were kept. Torres, an avid UFO enthusiast, had come to the area the previous

The Chupacabras Diaries

evening in the hopes of learning more about what was going on. He and his brothers had repeatedly seen UFOs since December 1994 from their home in Orocovis' Barrio Gato. A nocturnal skywatch, he felt, represented a good chance at seeing more UFOs.

In the early hours of the morning, Torres realized that a round-headed creature with elongated black eyes, a fine jaw, and small mouth, was resting on a tree limb not far from his position. This unusual being had chameleon-like pigmentation, alternating from purple to brown to yellow, while its face was a dark greyish tone.

According to the lone witness, the creature made a curious gesture, moving its head from side to side, and producing a sibilant or hissing sound that caused him to feel faint. Overcoming the sensation, he managed to see the creature drop from the tree-limb and rush off into the dense foliage. Torres decided to abandon the site as well--quickly.

José Vega (pseudonym), a neighbor to the Barreto property, claimed seeing a similar creature at a distance, keeping watch from a tree limb as journalists and investigators covered the terrain where the slaughtered sheep had been discovered. Vega confessed that although he had been looking at the creature through binoculars, it left him deeply shaken and made him feel ill.

The news division of TV Channel 11 in San Juan reported that on the night of May 11, a gargoylesque creature had been reported by a policeman and other individuals waiting at a bus stop in Santurce--the hub of metropolitan San Juan. Armed with his truncheon, the policeman struggled bravely against the five foot-tall creature outside the building which houses the Water and Sewage utility (Aquaductos y Alcantarillados). The nightmarish creature had allegedly been devouring a rat before squaring off with the policeman. It flew straight into the air, snatching the billy club out of the policeman's hand with its claw. (A similar creature was allegedly seen flying over the De Diego Expressway by drivers caught in an afternoon traffic jam. Many of them, no doubt, must have envied its freedom of movement.)

Reports issuing from the Fajardo area, where the El Conquistador Hotel complex is located, indicated that local residents were concerned by chilling screams and howls heard in the night skies, seemingly produced by something flying over the area. On May 15, 1995, Jorge Martín interviewed Mr. Dolores Torres in the mountain community of Barranquitas. According to the gentleman's testimony, he had stepped out to his backyard momentarily to cut some fresh plantain bananas for dinner when everything around him became brightly lit in shades of yellow, orange, red and white. When he looked up to locate the source of the polychromatic display, he was stunned to see a transparent cylindrical object, less than two feet long, suspended from a cable which vanished into the sky.

The Chupacabras Diaries

The next thing Torres became aware of was that a large black shape was flying or floating toward the cylinder. He was able to distinguish a grey-faced humanoid figure, sheathed in a black outfit. The figure, whose eyes had the curious detail of being shut, approached the farmer, who took a few swings at it with his machete. The cylinder and the black-clad figure disappeared, leaving Torres badly shaken and in need of medical treatment. During his interview with Martín, he declared: "Look, people have come here to tell me that the thing I saw was the Chupacabras that's been killing all these animals. Others tell me it's the devil. They're both wrong. These creatures are extraterrestrials...what use could the devil have for a cylinder with a cable attached to it? Something's definitely wrong here."

Mr. Torres was not alone in his speculation regarding an extraterrestrial origin to the entire situation. The strangeness of the animal deaths in Orocovis' Barrio Saltos had many wondering if the federal government would step into the confusing and frightening situation to investigate, particularly after it was learned that a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture had inquired into the situation, and that his superiors in Washington had developed interest in the matter as a result of media items issuing from the island.

By now, both the farmers and townspeople of Orocovis were convinced that they were faced with an extraterrestrial menace in the shape of the Chupacabras. Fifty goats had been slain in the town of Comerío, south of Bayamón, and the creature had been identified as three feet tall and hairy. The means by which the animals had been slain was common to all others on the island--incisions around the neck through which blood had been extracted, and in some cases, the absence of certain organs, such as the heart and the liver.

On May 19, 1995, the inhabitants of the beautiful lake town of Patillas were dazzled by a UFO that flew over the Valle Real urbanization. According to Moisés Picart, the vehicle lit up the hillsides and disappeared shortly after, and did not correspond to any known commercial or military craft. Amazingly bright objects had been reported over the neighboring communities of Comerío and Barranquitas, where another "high-strangeness" event had transpired.

Earlier that same week, an elderly sugarcane cutter, hard at work in the fields, suffered a heart attack after fending off an attack by a monstrous winged creature (which may or may not have been the Chupacabras) in broad daylight. A police report indicated that the man had been carrying out his work at Barrio Palo Hincado when the "bird," for want of a better description, assaulted him from behind.

Don Francisco Ruiz, a cattleman in the town of Humacao on Puerto Rico's eastern shore (south of the Roosevelt Roads Naval Facility), was stunned to discover, on the morning of May 22, that three of his goats and their young lay dead without a drop of blood in their bodies. Officer Stephen Alvarez, a

The Chupacabras Diaries

spokesman for the police department, said that the dead animals were found in the Punta Santiago section of Humacao. Puncture marks were discovered in the goats' necks, foreheads, and lens.

The results of Mr. Ruiz's crude autopsy on his animals, performed on the spot, demonstrated beyond any doubt that the carcass had been completely emptied of blood. This was the first case to take place outside the mountainous central municipalities of the island, and it would by no means be the last.

III. Junebugs, or How much is that doggie in the window?

As the month of June began, the media seemed to lose interest in the Chupacabras and in the constant animal slayings. There was the threat of another water shortage on the horizon (Puerto Rico was very nearly left waterless in 1994, when excellent weather produced no rainstorms to replenish cisterns and reservoirs). Political intrigue between one party and another, and the very real threat posed by the discovery that the U.S. Navy intended to build a huge radar array in the southwestern corner of the island. Such concerns understandably drove the Goatsucker to the back burner, but the brown mailer deposited into my mailbox on a sunny Saturday contained a cassette which proved that the critter was still at large. Only now it was the skeptics' turn to have their say.

Perhaps emboldened by the success of a "UFO" conference held at the University of Cupey on June 3 by former ufologists-turned-skeptics and disbelieving zoologists and psychologists, the skeptics felt that they could make their case on the national airwaves.

The cassette began with the obvious disappointment in the voice of José Valdez--my uncle and correspondent for my SAMIZDAT newsletter in Puerto Rico. He warned that it had been a mistake to tape the live call-in show because the guest speaker obviously didn't have the first idea of what he was saying. An hour later, I was forced to agree with my uncle.

The host, parapsychologist José Enrique Acosta, announced in a somewhat affected tone that the subject of the evening's broadcast was to be that of the "vampires" afflicting not only the island but the rest of the world. His guest, zoologist Edwin Velásquez, had apparently studied these cases in Mexico, Brazil, Thailand, etc. However, unlike what was the case in these countries, certain interests had tried make an issue out of the mutilations, alleging extraterrestrial intervention and other supernormal conditions.

The zoologist stated that his study of Puerto Rico's "vampire" problem went back twenty years, when he was employed with the now defunct Safari Park zoo. He had been invited by the media to decipher what exactly had caused the mutilations in the Moca region during the 1975 wave. Apparently, after a search of mountains, valleys, hills and dales, no cause that couldn't be attributed to dogs was ever found.

At this point, I could feel my interest in the recording rising.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Even cats and mongooses, he promptly added, were responsible for the mysterious killings. The slain animals were neither desiccated nor bloodless, as had been alleged: blood was still in evidence within the organs. The signs of attacks to the muzzles of beef cattle were indubitably caused by canine assaults.

In an incident investigated in Toa Alta, the death of a number of heifers had been attributed to an itinerant mandrill. The zoologist pondered this, and decided that if dogs hadn't caused the carnage, a mandrill would constitute a fitting replacement indeed, since mandrills are carnivorous, and the configuration of their teeth is that of a carnivore.

The host asked his guest why these things appeared to come about every two, three years or so, providing UFO believers with the theory that when lights are seen in the nighttime sky--particularly in Mexico--dead cattle usually litter the ground the following day.

Pausing for a moment, the zoologist replied that if one notices closely, it can be found that there is a refractory period between the so-called waves, the last one being the Adjuntas sightings of 1993. This time span could be understood as a period of catharsis or release that the popular mind demanded in order to cope with worldly tribulations. Belief in UFOs could best be seen as a safety valve of sorts, and people who would ordinarily never consider visiting the mountains of Orocovis were now doing so as a means of "escape."

Host: many people have said that the creature drags itself along the ground, lives in caves...is there anything to this belief?

Zoologist: Not everyone can describe a creature they see at night, and their imagination fills the blanks by association with other things. It happens very often in the Laguna Cartagena region, where feral monkeys escaped from a research institution. A person seeing one of these apes in twilight would believe they had seen a little man, thus confusing the real for the fantastic.

Host: [...] people must learn to banish their fears, as can be witnessed by the situation created around vampires, bloodsuckers, and an entire array of creatures.

Zoologist: This is dangerous, because when the humble, ignorant people of our rural areas hear that there is a bloodsucking creature on the loose, they believe it. Hysteria sets in. We should not be so sensationalistic. The media, for whatever reason, only gives one part of the story rather than the whole story.

The Chupacabras Diaries

After a commercial break, the host returned with another guest on the line: Arnaldo Ginés of Channel 11 on the telephone. The reason for his having been invited on the show was that he had of course investigated the Orocovis "vampires."

Journalist: Who said they were vampires?

Host: The callers to our show who've been saying that vampires or extraterrestrials are to blame...but since you're a scientific journalist, we'd like you to tell us exactly what transpired.

Journalist: Well, I always try to produce an objective report by having people say exactly what it is they've seen. I cannot testify to something I haven't seen, or that my cameraman hasn't filmed. All I can say is that there were indeed dead animals with wounds on their bodies which can be attributed to any creature, in all the time that we've been going to Orocovis. We did see a bull die before our very eyes, which was a very impressive sight, but aside from that, I can't lay claim to having seen anything unusual. Some of the people who've agreed to be interviewed before our camera claim, allege, having seen something strange and have even produced a number of drawings of what they saw.

Host: But your cameraman hasn't picked up anything strange?

Journalist: Not at all. We have gone out at night with infrared film in the camera and haven't come up with anything.

Host: What about these strange marks on the animals' bodies? Do they appear to have been made by dogs?

Journalist: Well, that's where I draw the line, because I'm in no way well-versed in the subject. I understand that when a dog bites, it tends to tear at the flesh, but I'm not by any means an expert in their behavior. It is curious, however, that the dead bull and the dead sheep had wounds that were similar to each other, and the animals that were wounded but didn't die displayed the same wounds.

Host: [...] Our guest Edwin Velásquez has some questions for you...

Zoologist: Yes, I would like to know if the persons in the regions remarked that there were dogs in the area, or if the wounds could be attributed to feral dogs.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Journalist: Well, at least one witness says that wild dogs could have been responsible, particularly around the property belonging to Quique Barreto, where the dead sheep were found. There is a waste dump in the area where wild animals of all kinds could have bred. It's possible, therefore, that dogs could be involved. I think in fact that Tito Chávez from Natural Resources has said that dog bites or bites caused by some other animal are more than likely the explanation, as opposed to some extraterrestrial creature as some parties have tried to make it seem.

Host: What about the dead heifer? Was it ill before it died? Was its owner treating it with some medication?

Journalist: I really don't know if it was sick. I understand that, as in Don Quique's case, when they found the animals lying there, they were injected with substances at the recommendation of a veterinarian. I suppose the same happened with the bull. It's possible that a reaction or overdose brought about the death--but I'm speculating. I understand that lab results are being expected. I would like your listeners to know that I enjoy this kind of reporting and that when it is an unusual matter, it is highly attractive for purposes of the print media and television. I become concerned, though, when hysteria begins to spread, for which reason I made a report twelve days later showing that no animal deaths had taken place. We cannot say the witnesses are lying, but it cannot be denied that something has been seen causing the attacks.

Zoologist: There is always possibility that an exotic animal is on the loose and has caused these deaths. It could have been released accidentally or on purpose, causing the damage in question.

Journalist: Well, what matters is that there have been no more attacks over the past 12 days, and the people of Orocovis can begin feeling calmer about the situation. Trust that the authorities will clear up the matter...I recall that in Camuy, a few years ago, certain pigs died mysteriously, and I'm not sure if it was ever cleared up. For many years people spoke about the Moca Vampire, but I understand that it was all a hoax...

Host: It was a hoax...

Zoologist: It was fabricated...

Journalist:...they took a bat and inserted false fangs into its mouth, or something like that.

Host: No, the fangs were inserted in a bird that was photographed in the newspapers, and it allegedly sucked blood. It turned out to be a guabairo, a bird native to Puerto Rico, into which the spurs used by fighting roosters had been inserted.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Journalist: Now, during all my time in Orocovis, no one has told me anything about animals being bloodless or having their blood removed.

Host: Of course, of course, and you've just made an interesting point. Blood specimens were drawn on the dead animals.

Journalist: Sure.

Host: But the story is that the extraterrestrials landed and left them without a single drop of blood, and this isn't true.

Journalist: Correct. No one has told me that they have no blood. I believe that there are people here and around the world who believe in extraterrestrials and have studied the matter for years, there are folks in different parts of the island and of the world who allege having seen strange lights and animals. I respect these peoples' beliefs, in the same way I respect religion and politics. But as a journalist I must stay objective, even though I have my own point of view of this situation. But I can tell people that it is a UFO only if I've captured it in my camera lens. For this reason I insist that these deaths could have been produced by an exotic animal, and that the people of Orocovis were unable to describe an animal they had never seen before...not so long ago I went to Cabo Rojo to report on some apes that were on the loose, in an area where there are no apes to begin with.

Zoologist: They're still there, you know.

Journalist: Its a highly complex matter, and the problem is that the people of Orocovis have taken it very seriously, and it has affected many local children. They can't go to school, they're restless in their sleep, and I feel that although we have a responsibility to inform people about what's going on, we're also responsible for urging them to remain calm, without having to cause an alarm.

Host: That's how it is, and Arnaldo, we would like to thank you for being on our show...everyone knows the serious and scientific approach you've taken in all your stories.

Journalist: You're very welcome. Good night.

Host: We will now begin taking phone calls on the line, only calls related to tonight's subject. Noti-Uno, hello?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #1: Hello, good evening. This is Tita Mercado calling...

Host: Doña Tita, excuse me for a minute...aside from the callers already on the line, I'm inviting our listeners from Orocovis to call us as well. I feel they deserve every chance to comment on what's going on in their community. Please go ahead, Doña Tita.

Caller #1: As I'm talking to you, The Learning Channel, I think it's Channel 30, is showing something on flying objects, UFOs, and there's a Harvard professor who alleges that they exist, and a whole lot more. My question is this: where do the UFOs seen over Orocovis fit in? Where do the...

Host: Excuse me, Doña Tita, who said anything about flying saucers?

Caller # 1: Well, according to the reports...

Host: There were no reports, photos, films, or any evidence or proof.

Caller #1: I'm sorry, but I heard on WKAQ that there are two witnesses who did see flying objects. I'm not making this up as I go along.

Host: No, no, I understand. Scientifically, there is no proof that any sightings have taken place, only sightings of lights, which are common...

Caller #1: And the decomposition [process] of the animals, which didn't take place, was something I also found strange. Furthermore, all I could say--and Don Edwin knows that I know quite a bit about animals...

Zoologist: Yes.

Caller #1: Do you remember, Edwin, the Tasmanian Devil that escaped from el Monoloro? [defunct zoo]

Zoologist: The one in Carolina, you mean?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #1: No, not the Monoloro, the other one...

Host: Safari Park?

Caller#1: That's the one! That was years ago, and it's the only thing that could...I'm looking at this objectively, but the flesh didn't rot with the tremendous heat we've been experiencing. Once, I took two geese which had been found in Cabo Rojo, with no blood and puncture marks, to a vet, who was well known here. He did the autopsy and everything, but after it was done, he refused to sign the autopsy protocol. The geese didn't have a drop of blood between them.

Host: I'm going to jump ahead of Edwin here. I'm not a scientist or a doctor like he is...

Caller #1: I think that the protocols or the Federal paperwork granted to veterinarians or importers, people having to do with fauna and flora, are afraid to receive a sanction from Federal authorities, but I'm sitting here watching extraterrestrials on channel 30, and I'm wondering what's going on?

Host: Well, you can have anything you want going on, But let me tell you from experience that I'm not an authorized embalmer, but I have done embalming of bodies during years, and blood is the first thing to decompose. When something has bled to death, there is little blood to be found. With no blood in the body, the decomposition process takes longer to come about. I imagine that the same applies to animals. Edwin can challenge me on this point if it isn't so.

Zoologist: It is so, and both the climatological and soil conditions play a role in determining this matter. Many animal corpses do not show the decomposition one would expect after many days.

Caller #1: I'd like to add that a few years ago, along with 42 other people at the Caguas Drive-In, I saw a mothership which was later featured on the first page of the old El Mundo newspaper. Among the witnesses there were judges, psychologists...

Host: I'm not saying extraterrestrials don't exist, but the animals are the subject tonight. I have to let you go, since the board is full. Noti-Uno, hello?

Caller #2: Good evening. Do they [extraterrestrials] exist or not?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Host: Look, the subject tonight isn't whether extraterrestrials exist or not, and I still haven't met anyone who has photographed them or filmed them. The day that happens, I'll do like my friend Arnaldo Ginés and respect the person who took the photo or film, which I would then present to you. I don't doubt it. My concept of extraterrestrial is different from that of most people. Someday we'll do a special program on the subject. To me extraterrestrials and Marian apparitions are the Gods which have been deified over the centuries.

Caller #2: But my question has to do with tonight's...

Host: No. As Dr. Edwin Velázquez has said, the wounds are caused by dogs. Got it?

Caller #2: So now it's dogs.

Host: No, it's not a matter of "now it's dogs." It has always been dogs that attacked the animals because the waste dumps were close. Wild dogs were seen in the area. There are no extraterrestrials in Orocovis. It isn't true.

Caller #2: Well, now there's a neighbor saying they saw dogs, and it's really confusing...

Host: No, no. There were people who claim having seen an animal skulking about, another [person] was performing a biological necessity and saw an animal climb up a tree...

Caller #2: And he made a drawing of it...

Host: Aha. Why didn't he make a drawing of it before? We're just going through a period of collective hysteria, fear. If we were living in the Puerto Rico of the 1920's, I would have believed the man who appeared on the newscast, but in the age in which we live, with toilets available, anyone who tells me they went into the woods to defecate, I can't believe...these cases are entirely different. They are not the same. [break in dialogue]...We cannot compare what happened in Mexico or in Canada with what happens here in Puerto Rico, specifically what's happening in Orocovis. Do you understand?

Caller#2: Ummm.

Host: Okay? Thanks for your call and good night. Noti-Uno, good evening?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller#3: Good evening, this is Jorge Berrios from Bayamón.

Host: Yes, what is your question for Doctor Edwin Velásquez?

Caller#3: My question is: why, if he categorically states that we're dealing with dogs, did the same dogs not attack in the same area earlier?

Zoologist: These things have always occurred. Dogs have always attacked animals and the people who live in the area and have been interviewed can attest to it. However, in this matter, for whatever reason, there is a lapse of a few years and new wave of stories emerges about UFOs or attacks on animals. It's a seasonal affair. It just so happens that now it's in Orocovis...

Caller #3: Okay, but what I'm saying is that with the sheer volume of dogs that we have in Puerto Rico, it just so happens that the dogs from Orocovis are the ones going after steers?

Zoologist: It isn't a coincidence. It happens every day.

Caller #3: With the same characteristics?

Zoologist: With the same characteristics. In other words, it's nothing strange. What's strange is that there are people who want to give it connotations of an unknown phenomenon.

Caller #3: But I ask you again: have you gone to the area?

Zoologist: Orocovis? Yes, I've been in Orocovis. And I've been to many other places on the island.

Host: Don't forget, friend, that Dr. Edwin Velásquez is a zoologist and independently from this, the government has hired him to perform this kind of work over the past 20 years. For that reason I asked him to come on this show: not just to tell you that dogs were responsible, but to give you faith in that it's a scientific matter, OK?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #3: I know, but excuse me: Noticentro Cuatro just interviewed a biologist, and the man said that in no way could vampire bats have caused such damage to the animals.

Host: We're not talking about vampires here. We're talking about dogs.

Caller #3: In closing, I would like him to tell me what kind of exotic animal can cause wounds of that nature, and bring about an animal's death?

Zoologist: Well, there are several kinds of carnivores that can cause that kind of damage. What do you want me to tell you? There are felines, and we're not talking about lions or tigers here..

Caller #3: Who won't tear their prey?

Zoologist: You have to have a certain amount of knowledge. When a feline attacks its prey, it doesn't tear at it. It suffocates it by crushing it, leaving two neat fang marks. Therefore, there is no rending of flesh.

Caller #3: Then what's the purpose of inflicting the wounds and nothing else?

Zoologist: Well, the wounds...

Caller #3: Excuse me, but when an animal attacks it's because it's hungry.

Zoologist: Usually. But these attacks by packs of dogs don't always eat the animal. For some reason, they kill the animal, become frightened, and leave the area. They don't always eat the kill.

Caller #3: Well, you haven't convinced me, but all right.

Host: But friend, I urge you to find more information at [name of bookstore]

Caller #3: But in that case--what's your name?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Host: José Enrique.

Caller #3: In that case, José Enrique, I would have to ask you to do the same. If there is no proof about UFOs, then what proof is there about what you're saying? Scientific proof on the subject.

Host: You know what happens? No UFO was ever seen, but the dogs were seen.

Caller #3: No, no, I mean about the subject you're dealing with.

Host: Well, the subject we're dealing with tonight...

Caller #3: What scientific proof is there?

Host: Well, visual [proof], for one.

Caller #3: I mean about your field, parapsychology. What proof is there?

Host: Hey, we can talk all you like about it. I've been a year and a half on Noti-Uno and have 28 years of experience behind me regarding the powers of the mind and the psyche. It's nothing religious, just the mind.

Caller #3: But I mean scientific proof.

Host: Well, the scientific proof would be proof that I've been a year and a half with Noti-Uno, have 28 years experience, and I have a really, really professional office, and I'm doing really well for myself.

Caller #3: Well, okay then. Thank you.

Host: The reason I'm telling you this is that I'm good at what I do, you know?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #3: Great. Thanks again.

Host: I'm at your service whenever you'd like to stop by my office, and I'll give you all the proof you want...The reason I'm saying this to the caller is because there are many people who try to say: what proof do you have? But as you've said, Edwin, it's something real, something that has been proven, these animals are dogs. And it's our subject tonight. Good evening, Noti-Uno?

Caller #4: Good evening.

Host: What's your question, please?

Caller #4: My name's Ricardo...

Host: Quickly, because we're running out of time.

Caller #4: I'm not a zoologist, but I've been bitten by dogs.

Host: Aha.

Caller #4: There's an observation I would like to make. I'm concerned that someone who hasn't seen these bite wounds is saying that it's a dog. I didn't go to Orocovis, but I recorded everything with great care because I'm a medical photographer. I've seen the bites of many animals, including humans.

Host: What does a medical photographer do, friend?

Caller #4: A medical photographer photographs everything having to do with medicine in order to show it to students.

Host: Do you work for some agency?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #4: I'm employed by the College of Medicine. There's an observation about animals I'd like to make. Animals--if you've ever seen a documentary on hunters--that bite other animals respond to their self-preservation instincts. Bulls have one of the strongest self-preservation instincts. This bull allowed itself to be bitten, yet did not respond to the attack by its aggressor. This is a concern for me, that a zoologist hasn't explained up to now why this didn't take place.

Host: Well, look here, friend--Edwin is going to answer your question.

Caller #4: But before he answers, let me ask him a question...

Host: Let him answer you first, then you can ask the second question. Don't go away.

Zoologist: Yes, in the bull's case, it did not display any particular type of wounds or punctures, except in one of its legs. Therefore, we can't really say that it was even a bite, and I would say that it had stepped on a nail or something similar. There wasn't even a bite, in the case of the bull in question.

Caller #4: But I'd like to give you a detail provided last night by the Director of Parque de las Ciencias, who performed an autopsy with some biologists and veterinarians on the bull.

Zoologist: Yes.

Caller #4: This bull had certain incisions on its neck, and had other incisions reaching down to its lungs, okay? After eight days, the dead animal was entirely flexible, it wasn't stiff. Those who raise cattle for commercial sales know that after eight days, no animal is going to be flexible. That's the first surprise...

Zoologist: Let me ask you something. Was the autopsy protocol...who was the person who performed the autopsy, did you say?

Caller #4: I don't recall the name, but I know that it was authorized by the mayor of Bayamón at Channel 4's request.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Zoologist: Yes, but is there an autopsy protocol? Does one exist?

Caller #4: Sure it exists.

Zoologist: And who has it?

Caller #4: The director of Parque de las Ciencias in Bayamón.

Zoologist: The director of Parque de las Ciencias performed an autopsy?

Caller #4: Yes...

Zoologist: To the best of my knowledge, the director of Parque de las Ciencias isn't a vet.

Caller #4: Well, he went there with a biologist and a veterinarian.

Zoologist: Ah.

Caller #4: I heard these words from his own mouth in a recording featured on Jorge Martín's program last night. It was aired with his own words. They got there, they opened the animal, they checked its heart, noticed the animal had died in agony, there were blood clots, eight days later the animal's blood was still liquid, and it was flexible when it shouldn't have been. They even thought, before laying a hand on the animal, that the temperature had kept it from decomposing, but at midday the heat became unbearable. I'm sure they'll communicate the results [of the autopsy] to the people in their own time. It's not normal.

Zoologist: I think that the person whom you're describing is a friend of mine, the vet at Parque de las Ciencias, Dr. Bientot. If the autopsy protocol exists, you can be sure that I'll examine it, and I'll talk to Dr. Bientot to see what's really behind all this.

Caller #4: Honestly, you should really inform yourself well, because talking without having visited the site, is a bit...

The Chupacabras Diaries

Host: But friend, what you're trying to do is--sorry for interrupting you--is make it seem as if what our friend Jorge Martín says...and I've heard his show...is that these are extraterrestrials...

Caller #4: No, I'm not talking about extraterrestrials...

Host: You're trying to create the impression that...

Caller #4: For a human to have done that would require...

Host: It's that you, you--the autopsy you're referring to is impossible. Its impossible to make such determinations in a split second. You're giving us conclusions that you yourself don't have in your hands

Caller #4: Yes, but it's evident. There is no aggression, there's nothing...

Host: But this isn't...

Caller #4: Look, when a dog bites it tears...have you ever been bitten by a dog? I've been bitten by dogs and...

Host: It's not the same thing to be bitten by a dog as by a human.

Caller #4: Look, a dog has teeth...

Host: Aha.

Caller #4: It'll stick its fangs into you and the other teeth as well.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Host: If you listened to the show from the beginning, you heard Edwin Velásquez comment that the bull may have been ill to begin with. Its death was not necessarily caused by a dog bite.

Zoologist: In fact, the animal's owners remarked to someone who was present that the animal had indeed been sick around that time, and that many of the owner's animals had been sick and were being medicated. Possibly one of the medications given to it brought about death.

Caller #4: But did you see the puncture marks on it? I've got tapes with close-ups showing that it was an animal that bites with a single fang. There are no one-fanged animals.

Zoologist: Yes, but keep in mind that these farm animals can scratch themselves against barbed wire...

Caller #4: You mean to say all the animals, so many cows and goats?

Zoologist: Tell me why can't it be so?

Caller #4: They'd better get the nail out of wherever it's stuck!

Zoologist: But tell me why can't it be so? Why can't it be barbed wire? Why?

Caller #4: Because how are you going to drive barbed wire down to the lungs? He said this himself, and you can ask him if he's your friend, that whatever pierced down to its lungs didn't damage any viscerae, which surprised him. How could something pierce a body without...

Host: Let's do something, friend. Let's--

Caller #4: I'm only asking that...

Host: Let's take up this matter with Dr. Bientot, so that Edwin can talk to him this week, discuss the autopsy, and then next Friday we can comment on it, all right?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller #4: Sure, of course.

Host: We're running out of time. Thanks for your call.

Caller #4: So long.

Host: Our last call. Noti-Uno, good evening?

Caller #5: Good evening.

Host: Your question, please.

Caller #5: Yes, I had the same thoughts about the Orocovis situation since it first started, and I've been against anything having to do with extraterrestrials, vampires...

Host: We should always look for the scientific aspect first.

Caller #5: To me, it has to be a dog...either a dog or a lion.

There's nothing else.

Zoologist: Yes, well...an animal, you're correct.

Caller #5: A wild dog or a lion.

Host: It may be, but we can't rule out extraterrestrials so as not to offend our friends, like the one who just called, claiming that he has photographs, and whole-heartedly believing in extraterrestrials. The history of the gods discusses extraterrestrials as backward spirits who live off the blood of human beings or animals. However, the lungs were extracted from the bodies and burned...for this reason, the aspect he wanted to discuss and insinuate as extraterrestrial just because Martín said so, I feel is incorrect. The day Jorge Martín sees an extraterrestrial I hope he'll

The Chupacabras Diaries

come here and show me photographs, because he's simply a scholar of these matters; and I respect him greatly for it, but he is neither a contactee nor has he ever seen an extraterrestrial. He's merely a scholar, of course, and he has a magazine, and if he's gone as far--which I doubt--as to conclude that it was an extraterrestrial who caused the situation he is very wrong, and both myself as a parapsychologist and Dr. Edwin Velázquez as a veterinarian invite him to tell us the contrary. All right?

Caller #5: Well, I only called to tell you that.

Host: Thank you for your call.

Caller #5: I've always thought that it was a wild animal like Armando said...was that his name?

Host: Arnaldo Ginés, correct, from Channel 11. As Arnaldo said, the people he interviewed spoke about wild dogs. The problem is that if one goat is killed, it soon becomes ten, or twenty. Like our friend the caller said, he exaggerated that there were twenty goats when it wasn't true. The owner of the farm has gotten in touch with Edwin and the animals were ill, you know? But, thanks for your call.

Caller #5: Bye.

Host: It'll be until next...the board is still loaded, but we're out of time...

* * *

The recording ended abruptly. I rewound the tape and played it once more, this time in the car, on an hour-long journey to a nearby town. I played it once more on the way back, and still couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Translation is my profession, and transcribing tapes from one language to another to produce a written record is a routine task. In preparing the transcription you have just read, I couldn't help wondering if the skeptics realized that they had been pinned against the ropes from the very first call (NOTE: I have gone over the tape once more after the transcription to insure fidelity. I deliberately omitted ad-libs for the sake of felicity in communication and because of the numerous overlaps in conversation between host, guests, and callers. I understand Drs. Acosta and Velázquez's points of view, and hope they realize no disrespect is intended).

The "feral dog" theory in the Chupacabras wave would soon become the equivalent of "swamp gas." As has been observed elsewhere, the thought of one-fanged, bloodthirsty Fidos roaming the countryside is enough to make the most snowbound tourist cancel a planned and paid vacation to the Continent of Puerto Rico, as the ad agencies call it. Contradictions, which can be observed in the transcript, were forcibly invoked to support the dog bite theory; last-minute solutions (the animals being sick) sought to rescue the skeptics from the deepening water in the radio studio. As Frank Herbert has Muad'Dib say in the memorable banquet scene in *Dune*: "I never saw a man drown around a dinner table before."

The callers represented a cross-section of the island's demographics. Caller #1 was a middle-aged woman, obviously knowledgeable about the subject of unidentified flying objects, but quite willing to concede that animals such as the legendary Tasmanian Devil could cause such havoc among bovines. The host and guest mounted an ineffective defense when they sought to deny that any UFOs had been reported in the Orocovis area, when the networks had been broadcasting such testimony for over a month.

Caller #2, another middle-aged, soft-spoken woman, triggered the skeptics' defenses in a spectacular way, prompting the host to become just a touch discourteous. The insistence that it had never been anything but dogs (with sharp canines, excuse the pun) behind the Orocovis slayings became a mantra rather than a theory. The situation fell apart with the ultimate non-sequitur concerning the existence of latrines in rural Puerto Rico.

Caller #3, a middle-aged man, asked the sensitive question regarding the reason why dogs, feral or otherwise, hadn't caused similar damage before. Rather than limiting himself to answering the question, the zoologist took the offensive, challenging that the belief in UFOs, previously described as a safety valve or mental alibi for a distressed population, caused these periodic manias. The pitfall lay in the fact that no mutilations were ever reported during the refractory periods when people weren't "hallucinating Martians," so to speak. The host responded to the demand that he furnish proof of the validity of parapsychology by making an arrogant remark aimed at putting the caller down.

But the coup-de-grace clearly belongs to Caller #4, the medical technician who challenged the zoologist's expertise by saying that a televised autopsy had prompted experts to say that something was definitely unusual about the bull that remained both uncorrupted and free from rigor mortis. Reeling from the verbal punches, there was nothing left to do but issue a vague threat of verifying the story with the veterinarian who performed the autopsy.

Caller #5, a grandmotherly woman, appeared to be the only caller to go along with the pooch-oriented scenario the skeptics had set up, only to whimsically add that "a lion" could have made the single puncture mark. Chagrined, the skeptics were forced to agree with her, but took advantage of the

The Chupacabras Diaries

conversation to direct a few blows against believers in any extraterrestrial intervention in the Orocovis scenario.

We do not know if Dr. Acosta revisited the subject on the next installment of his show. Only Arnaldo Ginés' statement that the killings appeared to have abated in the Orocovis region rang true. After a brief lull, the killings would begin anew.

IV. Stalking the Beast

There are no hard and fast rules for monster hunting. Certainly, cryptozoologists can indicate the most suitable equipment to take on an expedition, but every researcher, from Heuvelmans to Lara to Chorvinsky, has his own method. Some might opt for a "photo safari" approach, hoping to capture photos of the elusive critter. Others might consider carrying firearms in case there should be a replay of the Goatman incident, where a cornered entity began hurling tires against his pursuers with the ease of a frisbee thrower. Certainly the method of Mayor Soto and his unarmed cadres, using a cage built from welded iron fencing and with a goat as bait, constitutes another option.

Some of the cases were fascinating: the industrial complex that couldn't find any security guards to work the graveyard shift, because three "Goatsucker"-like creatures had been seen at the same time; the people waiting for the bus in broad daylight who saw the Chupacabras walking down the street; the driver waiting at a stoplight who thought "a dog" was crossing the street in front of him, only to realize that it was a creature he had never seen before; the woman who looked out the window in the midst of Hurricane Luis only to see the Chupacabras standing at a distance, impervious to the rain, wind, and lightning; the man with the machine gun who fired a hail of hot lead against the creature, but was too scared to report his case on account of his illegal firepower.

Flashback: The Moca Vampire

During the 1975 wave, Freixedo observed that the smallness of Puerto Rico allowed any investigator to hop into a car and drive to the scene of the events in an hour or two--something that would be difficult to do in his native Spain, much less in the United States. It was this closeness that enabled him to be one of the first people on the scene at Moca.

"During an evening in which UFOs were sighted over the town of Moca," Freixedo says, "two ducks, three goats, a pair of geese, and a large hog were found slain the following morning on a small farm. The owner was going insane, wondering who in the world could have visited this ruin upon him. The animals betrayed the wounds that have become typical of this kind of attack, and of course, they were all inflicted with incredible precision. I did not doubt for one moment who could have been responsible for the crime...I got in my car and visited the area immediately, and realized what was filling the animals' owner with wonder and fear: there wasn't a trace of blood in any of the animals, in spite of the fact that the dead geese had snow-white feathers, upon which the slightest speck of blood would have shown up immediately.

The Chupacabras Diaries

"Over the next few days, the newspapers continued reporting the growing number of dead animals encountered in the region. No explanation could be found for these mysterious deaths. I visited the rural areas on various occasions to investigate the events firsthand and found that the farmers were as intrigued by their animals' deaths as they were by the enigmatic lights they could see in the nocturnal skies. One of them told me that the lights reminded him of the revolving lights on top of a police cruiser.

"During one of my forays, I was able to see a black and white cow spread out in the middle of the field. I got out of the car and tried to reach the cow, which wasn't easy. The dead beast had characteristic wounds on its neck and on its head. Skin had been pulled back on one side of its head, as if by a scalpel, and the opening to one of its nasal orifices was missing, although there was no indication of rending. In spite of the whiteness of its head, there wasn't a single drop of blood to be seen. The farmer who escorted me could not stop wondering what had caused his cow's death. He related how that very same night he had heard his dogs barking furiously, and that a blind elderly woman who lived on the edge of the field had told him that the cattle, which ordinarily spends the night outdoors, had kept her from getting a good night's sleep due to their frantic, maddened running from one end of the field to another."

The benefit of twenty years hasn't added much to the investigator's arsenal. Researchers of the paranormal still stand over the carcasses of bloodless, mutilated animals wondering what explanation might satisfy the pleading look on the rancher's face. Can the ufologist, cryptozoologist, Fortean investigator or paranormalist really "level" with the animal's owner, who has just lost a valuable investment or a beloved pet, and start spouting wisdom about EBEs, killer UFOs, interdimensional beings that need blood for their sustenance, and other standbys of the occult? On the other hand, can the skeptic tell the same distressed farmer that an "archetype" or figment of the popular imagination just put a finger-sized hole through an animal's throat?

Avians and Aliens

Is the Chupacabras merely another of the winged weirdos -- ranging from pterodactyls to Mothman-like creatures -- that have characterized the Fortean nature of Puerto Rico's cases? Apparently, the winged monsters retain a fondness for their old stomping grounds in the mountains, as exemplified by the following case.

Georgie Quiñones, a citizen of Naranjito, a community located in the island's interior, reported how his mother had run into a being she at first thought was a child, because its height and build resembled that of a three year-old boy. The being was standing next to some hedges, and upon closer inspection of it, Mrs. Quiñones realized that she was in fact staring at something that she had never seen before--it had a large

The Chupacabras Diaries

head and eyes, a flattened nose, and a delicate jawbone that appeared to be connected to the creature's body.

Creature and woman held each other's gaze, until the latter began feeling faint and nauseous. Taking advantage of her discomfiture, the being abandoned the area with stunning speed. The small intruder apparently belonged to the same order of beings seen earlier in Orocovis. Prior to this encounter, Mr. Quiñones' mother had also witnessed a flight of "gigantic" birds passing over the area two weeks earlier. One of the immense birds was described as having a "hump" on its back. Being familiar with eagles and the native *guaragua* (a kind of hawk), she assured her son that the birds did not resemble either of these. One of the birds landed on the branches of a nearby tree, causing it to bend on account of its weight.

Mrs. Quiñones also found forty-seven of her chickens dead on her property, which added a touch of horror to a strange situation. One of the dead hens had a considerable puncture mark on it, large and deep enough that a finger could be stuck into it. A neighbor of Mrs. Quiñones' had an encounter with a small humanoid that allegedly "jumped him" and caused him to flee in panic.

The Canóvanas Sightings

The summer brought sporadic sightings and reports of the Goatsucker, while UFO activity remained constant. The situation did not pick up again until the focus of activity had shifted from Orocovis to the coastal town of Canóvanas.

Canóvanas is a prosperous community that benefits from its location on Route 3, which handles the heavy traffic between San Juan on one end and Fajardo on the other. The majestic, mist-enshrouded peaks of El Yunque are only a stone's throw away, and the excellent beaches of Luquillo attract thousands of local and foreign tourists. Canóvanas also boasts the spectacular El Comandante, one of the finest race tracks in the entire world. It was this fortunate piece of real estate that the gargoylesque creature called the Chupacabras would select as its own.

Residents of Canóvanas' Lomas del Viento neighborhood were treated one evening to a rather spectacular UFO sighting. One of them, Victor Rodríguez, told Jorge Martín that around 11:45 p.m. on the night of the event, he became aware of a scintillating object that descended upon a group of trees. The light, described as "round and brilliant," took off from the area as if it had been spotted.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Lucy Batista, residing in the Alturas de Campo Rico neighborhood, commented on the curious noises associated with the Chupacabras--inhuman screams resembling the combined sounds of a cat yowling and a goat's bleating. Not only did it cause her to feel fear, it also caused all of her animals to panic. One night, she heard the sound of an animal running behind her house. At first she thought it was a horse, until the terrifying cackle filled the air, causing her to fear for the safety children in her household.

During her interview with Jorge Martin, Mrs. Batista expressed her belief that a link existed between the creature or creatures known as the Goatsucker and the lights seen entering and leaving El Yunque, which faced her development. Her husband and her son had also witnessed the brightly-colored lights that maneuvered above the mountain rainforest.

Believing at first the lights belonged to National Guard helicopters on nocturnal maneuvers, Mrs. Batista soon realized that the lights were executing a number of senseless maneuvers every single night--standing still, ducking, flying in circles--that no helicopter is able to do. Motivated by curiosity, her husband and son drove up the tortuous mountain road to El Yunque, proceeding on foot to avoid detection by patrols. An encounter with Forestry Service workers put their expedition to an end, and both were turned back. She now believes that the lights correspond to what are commonly called flying saucers.

"The creature being seen everywhere in Canóvanas must be an extraterrestrial," she told Martín during the course of the interview. "The drawings that are going around show a combination of extraterrestrial and terrestrial animals. This is the conclusion that we've reached, and the conclusion of the people who've seen it." Other residents of her area refer to the creature jokingly as "The Rabbit" on account of the shape of its hind legs, or "The Kangaroo," for its ability to take prodigious leaps with its powerful legs.

In the light of all the commotion the creature's antics caused in Canóvanas, many of the locals were surprised that no agencies aside from members of the Civil Defense had chosen to look into the matter. "The Department of Natural Resources was called, but no one was sent to investigate. Perhaps they thought this situation was something cooked up by the townsfolk," one local grumbled.

The fact of the matter is that the witnesses were subjected not to the negative influence of MIBs or hostile government agents, but to the scorn of their own peers. A young woman named Mariane, interviewed by Martín, indicated that her husband's co-workers had taken to teasing him by calling him Goatsucker all the time. Other members of their family who had also expressed their belief in the existence of this creature, or had seen it with their own eyes, had also been subjected to ridicule. "This creature isn't a joke," she said angrily. "I didn't make it up, either. It's real."

The Chupacabras Diaries

Undoubtedly, one of the foremost witnesses of the Canóvanas sightings, whose credibility was never an issue, was a pious gentleman named Daniel Pérez who was well-regarded in his community. Mr. Pérez had encountered the Goatsucker not once, but twice.

Interview with Daniel Pérez

Martín: We're here with Mr. Daniel Pérez of the Campo Rico sector, which has been affected by the appearance of the mysterious creature that has been seen in the area over the past couple of weeks. Don Daniel, we understand that you've had the opportunity to see the creature on two or three occasions in very important circumstances, because you saw it by daylight and were able to distinguish certain important features. We would like to ask you what you saw, what meaning it holds for you, and what you think about the situation?

Pérez: Well, it was around a quarter to seven in the morning...I heard a kind of moan, something going: "Oooooo," something strange, so I got up and went to the window, and saw nothing at all. When I was about to close the window, I heard a buzzing sound [makes buzzing sound], which prompted me to look out again. At that moment, the creature descended, apparently flying. Yes, it came down, and it alighted on a large stone that is on my property, some twenty feet away from where I stood. As soon as it made contact with the stone, it gathered impulse again, rose into the air, and cleared the trees ahead without touching a single leaf. It's a creature measuring some three feet in height, I'd say, when it isn't erect, but when it stands straight, it must be some five feet tall. Its hind legs are long, its forelegs are short, it's somewhat cute, has a little belly, and...from the top of its head all down its back it has some sort of fins that move. When it was about to take off, the fins moved in the direction it was headed. I really didn't see its eyes, but its head is large...the eyes are big, but I couldn't see what color they were. Its face is small and pointy. The following day, at the same time, I saw it heading back in the opposite direction. It's skin is squirrel-colored and I can't describe it properly...

Martín: Why's that?

Pérez: Because I can't describe it as actual fur or skin per se. It's something that causes a rather strange sensation. In fact, my first impression upon seeing the creature was to remain silent. In other words, well, I...

Martín: They tell us that you were deeply impressed and affected by the creature's presence.

Pérez: Well, I thought it would be best to keep quiet and not tell anyone, but then I told my wife, and she told the neighbor lady, and it took off from there. I originally thought about keeping it to myself, feeling that if I tried explaining it to people, they wouldn't believe me. As far as my personality is concerned, I have no mental reservations whatsoever about there being creatures in other parts of the universal system...to my understanding, this in no way contradicts the Scriptures, because God, in his immense labors, has things we've never seen nor heard of.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Martín: You're telling me this because...it seems that you felt that it could be some sort of alien life form.

Pérez: I think so.

Martín: And why's that?

Pérez: According to the way I see it, a creature that flies without having enormous wings...

Martín: Didn't you see it fly?

Pérez: I didn't see any wings as such. It does have some sort of fins that apparently help it glide...

Martín: What do those fins look like?

Pérez: They're triangular in shape, but sometimes, when it's in the air, they can be mistaken for hair, perhaps because of the speed with which it moves them, they could be interpreted as hair, but not to my understanding.

Martín: But you're saying they're not very big.

Pérez: They're some six to eight inches long. They protrude from its spine.

Martín: Six to eight inches...how many do you think there are? We've been told that it has a kind of crest.

Pérez: They're not all the same size. They go from medium-sized, mix in with the larger ones on its back, and then diminish. Honestly, I can't say if it had a tail, or I didn't see a tail as such. Maybe those who've seen it have pictured the fins that run downward to be part of a tail, but to me they ended on the creature's back.

Martín: The majority of witnesses have described spines or quills coming out of its back.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Pérez: I had the same impression when I saw it flying, coming in. But I'll tell you again--it moves them so fast that it makes it seem that they're hairs, but as soon as it stopped, I didn't feel they were hairs, as such.

Martín: [garbled] Were you able to make out the shape of its eyes?

Pérez: Its...Its eyes were rather large, but I honestly didn't see the color. Now, the shape--

Martín: Basically we're talking about an eye looking like this--

Pérez: Two inches, more or less.

Martín: Ahhh, we've been told that the eyes are slanted--

Pérez: Yes, inclined--

Martín: Almond-shaped?

Pérez: Inclined upwards...like so.

Martín: Um...the hands. Could you see its hands?

Pérez: The hands are tiny.

Martín: Tiny?

Pérez: Yes.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Martín: How many fingers, if any?

Pérez: I honestly didn't see...

Martín: What are its legs like?

Pérez: The legs are rather, rather long. When he landed, he did this: He came down...

Martín: Bent its legs...

Pérez: Exactly, then he took off. I think that he doesn't fly as a result of impulse--he flies by nature.

Martín: But what has to be seen...what you're describing, and what others are describing, in regard to the spines or fins on its back, just wouldn't be enough to impel a body of that size.

Pérez: That's what I found so strange. According to what I could see, he uses the fins to guide the direction of his flight, but when he's in the air, he apparently crosses them. They buzz [makes buzzing sound] and many have perhaps confused the fins with hairs, since they move so quickly.

Martín: So it flies with those appendages?

Pérez: With those appendages or whatever [they are]. But he also uses them, apparently, to orient himself.

Martín: When you saw it the second time around, and you heard the buzzing, you were looking at it from where?

Pérez: I was at the, the...the window of my house, looking out. He was heading toward my house, and I thought he was going to land on the stone, but he turned when he reached the gate and turned upward.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Martín: In other words, you didn't see where it was coming from?

Pérez: No, no I didn't.

Martín: You saw it when it went by at the moment.

Pérez: That's correct, yes.

Martín: You're a religious man...you're well-liked in the sector, and you're seen as a very serious person. And I congratulate you on that, because everyone we've spoken to holds you in very high regard. But...you were telling us a short while ago that you feel this doesn't contradict...it's having a relationship with something extraterrestrial...this doesn't contradict the Scriptures?

Pérez: [unintelligible]

Martín: I know, I know, but if this is so, and what we're dealing with isn't terrestrial, what implications would this have for you?

Pérez: Well, for me...ah, it would confirm what, what I've always believed, that there could be life elsewhere in the universe. And it would mean that God is even greater than I previously imagined, and as I said earlier, in the course of his immense works he may have ordained life elsewhere, which shouldn't alarm us or surprise us. I understand that these are the things the Bible tells us are reserved for the eyes and ears of the faithful, and that...well, much in the same way we're trying to get to the Moon, and we send ships to Mars and to other countries (sic), they may be trying to reach us, as we've found drawings of extraterrestrial beings, or whatever you want to call them, made by human beings who lacked the intellectual powers that we have today. These things are there...they're facts that can't be denied.

Martín: Is there anything you would like to add, or to say to the people who may be listening to this interview, something you may want to tell them based on your experience?

Pérez: Well, I urge people not to be alarmed, as far as I know he hasn't attacked any human beings, and...if they should see him, well...take it as naturally as possible, um, they're going to be somewhat surprised, but it's only natural, and not to create fantasies about it or treat it as a joke. If there's something I've come to learn it is that these things should not be taken in jest. The fact that one hasn't seen it...shouldn't make you disbelieve it. But most importantly, don't think it's some sort of "goof," as they say...

* * *

The transcript of Martín's interview with the religious Canovanan was proof that educated, perceptive members of the population--immune to the sensationalist press--were providing highly detailed accounts of their experiences with the elusive creature.

Pérez's testimony was vital for an important reason. First and foremost, he was privileged to have seen the "monster" twice--on its way to and from an unguessed-at location--and was able to contain whatever fear or concern he may have had for his safety or that of his family, thus allowing him to take a long look at the entity and study its peculiar characteristics.

The creature's identikit image, which had been featured on the first page of San Juan's *El Nuevo Día* newspaper, was revised on the basis of the Pérez testimony. The "spikes" running from the creature's head down its back were apparently fin-like appendages that vibrated so quickly it made them seem like hairs to other witnesses, particularly those who did not stick around to take second look.

Nonetheless, Pérez' testimony created an added complication. Where it had been believed that the entity merely took prodigious jumps from one location to another by means of its powerful hind legs, it was now capable of wingless flight by means of these buzzing appendages. While the wings of a hummingbird are theoretically too small to support its weight, *eppur si muove!*, as Galileo would have said. Could this be the case with the Goatsucker? Pérez also corroborated descriptions of the creature's head, eyes (though not their color), arms, and legs.

V. Into the Realm of Beasts

Perhaps no single area in the realm of paranormal studies evokes more reactions --positive and negative-- than the appearance of strange beasts, ranging from winged entities and oversized felines to grotesque, hairy simian creatures. They elude police and hunters, yet become plainly visible to suburbanites emptying the trash; they have been seen hurling fifty gallon drums at their pursuers, yet also appear to have a ghostly, insubstantial aspect which allows them to vanish almost instantly; they have been reported in

every single location possible, from the tropical rainforests and high mountains to the heavily congested streets of our metropolitan areas.

Researchers have shunned research into these apparitions; it is as a sure-fire way to achieve disrespectability, even among fellow investigators of the unknown. The scientific and academic establishment scoffs benignly at these reports, confident in that what isn't known to them isn't knowledge. Meanwhile, to this very day, thousands--perhaps hundreds of thousands--of witnesses around the globe continue to report encounters with physical entities that defy explanation.

In the restless years between the two world wars, journalist H.P. Wilkins visited the Belgian city of Bruges, and looked into a most curious story regarding an ancient monastery, once occupied by members of the Dominican order. At the turn of the century, Wilkins' host told him, the monastery had been turned into a boarding house for the use of students and tourists. However, in many cases paying guests refused to stay the night because of an apparition, described as "damned inhuman" and emitting a foul odor.

The owner of the monastery turned boarding house did not relish the prospect of losing any more customers, and contracted a crew of builders to break up the stone floor of a cellar which was believed to be the root of the problem. Nothing was found underneath the cold medieval stones, but when the cellar walls were broken, the builders discovered an alcove containing bones which were not in the least bit human. A pathologist was summoned to examine the bones. After carefully observing the disquieting find, the pathologist declared that they belonged to an adult rather than an infant. Aside from that, he was unable to say much more on the monstrosity.

The journalist was told that once the bones were removed to the Belgian Medical Museum, no further disturbances were reported. Wilkins ends his treatment of the subject by speculating whether the remains were those of a creature resulting from "some nasty amour of the unnatural type denounced in the books of the Pentateuch, or the remains of some horrible thing teleported to Bruges from some world in space."

This quasi-Lovecraftian account may be dismissed as a fanciful Gothic anecdote related to a visitor to a foreign country, but could those bones, lying in the dusty ossuary of some European medical establishment, be the only physical proof of the existence of non-human creatures which slip in and out of our world?

Perhaps the man-apes known as Sasquatch, Yeti, Ucumari, etc. constitute the greatest and best known variety of mystery creature, and the only kind whose study has received a tacit nod from officialdom. Anthropologists have even gone as far as establishing its identity as the Gigantopithecus, an anthropoidal creature which may have survived into modern times by keeping clear of *homo sapiens*. The historic record contains mentions of these beings, such as that they were used by the ancient Medes and Persians as ferocious battle animals, and that Nearchos, Alexander the Great's admiral, encountered communities of these creatures on the barren shores of the Persian Gulf, living in crude huts made out of whalebones. Medieval bestiaries faithfully included them under such headings as Woodwose, Wild Man, Vampires, and other demihuman categories. Bigfoot may have given rise to the Nordic myth of giant Trolls. All this appears to point to an elusive physical being which has been repeatedly encountered throughout the centuries.

Argentina's Salta region has been the focus for a number of hairy hominid sightings for many years. This rugged, mountainous region could not differ more from the Sasquatch's forested Pacific Northwest: arid, desolate landscapes meet vast salt deserts, such as the Puna de Atacama, where rainfall is almost nonexistent.

Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros, Director of Research for Mexico's CEFP, provides the following information: In 1957, Dr. José Cerato and geologist Claudio Spitch discovered the footprints of a Bigfoot-like creature at an elevation of almost 16,000 ft. The prints, according to Spitch, were so large that they precluded the possibility of having been made by a human being. A month later, José Santolay ran into the alleged maker of the footprints, a large, fur-covered creature that emitted sharp cries which terrified the onlooker. Authorities looking into Santolay's claims surmised that it could have been the *Ukumar Zupai* described in the legends of the Coya inhabitants of the region.

Seventeen years later, Benigno Hoyos, a worker in the vicinity of the Arízaro salt desert, had a face-to-face encounter with one of these creatures, firing upon it with his gun. According to anthropologist Silvia Alicia Barrios, hunters have successfully apprehended live specimens of Bigfoot's southern cousin. One such case involves the capture of a family of Ukumaris--a mother and two offspring--by Andrés Olguín. The two young Ukumaris were allegedly turned over to a Paraguayan zoologist.

In late December 1993, there were repeated Bigfoot incidents in New Mexico, among them, sightings of a large hairy creature near a major highway; a white Bigfoot; another similar creature stalking a herd of elk; and, more amazingly, a report of a large man-ape that hurled a dog over a six-foot fence. The Bigfeet were also active in Pennsylvania during January 1994, causing a flurry of excitement for a number of days.

Pennsylvanian researcher Stan Gordon's files include a 1995 case in which a young man, home alone in a part of the state notorious for its manifold Bigfoot sightings, ran barefoot across a freshly-tarred driveway to get away from a screaming creature prowling in the vicinity. Unlike its counterpart on the Pacific coast, the Pennsylvania Bigfoot has shown an inclination toward appearing in suburban areas and closer to human habitation.

But what about other simian creatures of a slightly less substantial nature? Noted authors Jerome Clark and Loren Coleman discuss the appearance of one of these man-beasts at a séance in Poland during the 1920's. According to the testimony of Colonel Norbert Ochorowicz, witness to one of these apparitions, the ape-like creature often caused fear among the sitters, but did not have an evil disposition and expressed "goodwill, gentleness, and readiness to obey."

Among the Pennsylvanian sightings mentioned earlier are some which border on the paranormal: three-toed creatures seen in the proximity of UFO's, others which could be pierced by flashlight beams as if not really there (holographic projections?), and the classic case of a woman who heard the sound of raccoons or a dog rattling through the cans on her porch, and upon going outside to inspect, was confronted with a seven-foot tall hairy ape. The woman fired almost point-blank at the creature, which "just disappeared in a flash of light...just like someone taking a picture." Gordon notes that many of those involved in UFO/Bigfoot cases have experienced phenomena such as strange presences in their homes and other occult manifestations.

During the earlier wave of cattle mutilations in the mid-'70s, which shall be referred to throughout this work, Puerto Rico was also visited by the ubiquitous big hairy monsters. Many witnesses to these Bigfoot-type creatures agreed that they ranged in height from 4 to 7 feet, with black or brown fur, presented a generally humanoid appearance, and had a penchant for destroying plantain and banana trees, tearing them open to extract their nutritious sap. One witness managed to fire his pistol at one of these rampaging creatures, with no apparent effect. An issue of *¡ENIGMA!* magazine featured a photograph taken of this apparently vegetarian "smallfoot," who was christened *el comecogollos* (roughly translated as the "Banana Tree Eater," a most unwieldy monicker) by the irreverent island media. The creature's existence and exploits, however small, became a regular feature in certain local comedy shows.

The *Comecogollos'* apparently placid nature and vegan ways did not mean that the other hairy hominids under investigation were equally sanguine. A document obtained by researcher Jorge Martín deals with a preliminary investigation into one of these cases, in which a Bigfoot-type entity embarked upon a spree of raids against animals kept in henhouses, pens, and hutches in the community of Trujillo Alto. The Alamo family, who witnessed one such raid on their property, described the hairy intruder as having glowing blue eye, and greater proportions than the *Comecogollos*.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Another animal nearly caused a resident of Rexville, a suburb of San Juan, to have a heart attack in the summer of 1991. Eduardo Velasco stepped out to his backyard one day only to discover that the eighteen rabbits he kept in neat hutches had been ripped to pieces by the fury of some powerful unknown entity. "It" had torn its way right through the resistant wire of the hutches to reach its prey.

Winged Wonders

To many, winged humans and humanoids belong strictly in the realm of myth (Daedalus and the Garuda, respectively) or in the literary domain of magic realism, as exemplified by Gabriel García Márquez's *A Very Old Man with Very Big Wings* or Pedro Prado's *Alsino*. Cryptozoologists and Fortean researchers, however, know these flights of fancy are firmly grounded in sightings of weird, often hostile anthropomorphics which move through the air with wings entirely too small for their size and apparent weight.

The Caribbean island of Puerto Rico is the heavyweight champion of apparitions of these strange winged wonders. Some cases go as far back as the turn of the century, while others have occurred -- too close for comfort -- in this very day and age.

On April 23 1995, Reynaldo Ortega, a resident of Naranjito, P.R. (where Georgie Quiñones' mother had an encounter with winged oddities in Ch. 4), saw a gigantic "bird" standing on the roof of his house. Ortega had gone out to look for a small goat on his property, since the epidemic of animal mutilations on the island was at its greatest virulence. Ortega described the winged oddity as a creature between three and four feet tall, with the body and dense black plumage of an eagle, a thick neck, and piercing eyes. The nightmarish raptor had an even more peculiar characteristic Ortega would never forget: it had a wolf-like muzzle instead of a beak.

This "griffin," for want of a better description, did not harm the terrified onlooker, but others were not quite so lucky. A worker in a sugarcane field near the town of Patillas was allegedly assaulted in broad daylight by a huge flapping "thing" that toppled him to the ground.

During the early Nineties, residents of the communities surrounding the controversial Laguna Cartagena reported seeing a ghastly bird-like creature perched on a metal fence. The grotesque

avian had leathery wings, scales, and a horned head. The witnesses produced sketches of what they had seen, which to all extents and purposes resembled a pterodactyl.

Pterodactyl-like birds, curiously, have been reported elsewhere on Puerto Rico at different times. One witness recalled that during her high-school years, while walking down a street with friends in broad daylight, she experienced the sensation of "time" slowing down around her: this bewildering effect made it seem as if her companions were speaking and walking in slow motion, and made the air appear rarified. In the clear sky above, she saw a large winged creature flap its wings and issue a cry that was apparently not subjected to the time-lag effect. Once the bird had flown out of sight, time resumed its normal "speed."

Surprisingly enough, the protagonist of this singular experience had no knowledge or interest in Prehistory. It was a considerable time later when she realized that what she had seen a pterodactyl, after learning about them in school. The experience has remained in her mind forever.

A number of hypotheses have been put forth to account for the persistent reports of unusual animals in a small but environmentally-varied island such as Puerto Rico. Rationalists, such as distinguished political thinker J.M. García Passalacqua, have put it down to the island's uncertain political status, which, he believes, generates subconscious anxiety. In his opinion, this political anxiety translates into apparitions, both religious and otherwise. The problem with this hypothesis is that UFOs, monstrous beings, and religious apparitions occur in many parts of the world where there is no particular anxiety over political identity (to wit, the U.K., Spain, the U.S., etc.).

VI. An Incredible Month

The tail end of the summer of 1995 was dominated by the controversial and lifeless protagonist of the Roswell Alien Autopsy aired by the FOX television station in the U.S. and by TELEMUNDO in Latin America. Many high-ranking UFO investigators had already viewed the debatable footage earlier, but the democratic transmission allowed everyone to join the fray. The large-headed, immobile "spaceman" stole whatever headlines were being commanded by the alive and kicking Chupacabras.

At this point, the newspapers began to give the Goatsucker regular coverage, with at least some of the latest exploits of the bloodthirsty being recounted in the daily papers.

It becomes necessary to make an explanation at this point. Puerto Rico has four newspapers serving the needs of its 2.7 million inhabitants. Foremost among them is *El Nuevo Día* (The New Day) which remains the public's choice for information. It is followed by the English-language *The San Juan Star*, a well-produced tabloid formerly belonging to Scripps-Howard, with fine international and domestic coverage.

The rest of the market is occupied by two radically different newspapers: the weekly *Claridad* (Clarity), a government watchdog that advocates independence and espouses nationalist causes, and *El Vocero* (The Town Crier), a tabloid whose headlines, in bright red uppercase letters, often surmount a grotesque photograph of a murder or auto accident. Unlike Stateside tabloids or Mexico's *Ovaciones*, it provides little or no celebrity coverage.

The first three have traditionally handled any supernatural material gingerly. *El Vocero*, however, has always rushed in where angels fear to tread, developing consistent UFO/paranormal coverage as the situation demands it. Julio Víctor Ramírez, a respected journalist, brought a degree of maturity and professionalism to the "saucer beat" throughout the early '90s and up to the present; Rubén Darío Rodríguez covered the fanged bird which caused a sensation in 1989, and so forth. Many have chosen to disregard these facts and simply dismiss the UFO/paranormal coverage along with the sensationalistic car crashes, homicides, crimes of passion, and other matters that fill *El Vocero's* pages. This is not an effort at portraying this newspaper in a better light, only to stress that not all aspects of it should be condemned. Unless stated otherwise, the following diary entries reflect events which appeared in *El Vocero*.

Tuesday, October 31, 1995

The Chupacabras Diaries

Halloween was never like this. At best, I recall the antics of a few boys, like my friend Toti Troia, who would take advantage of the cover of darkness to throw eggs against anything in sight -- homes, cars, neighbors he disliked -- but nothing ever matched the supernatural madness produced by the Chupacabras, particularly on a night like this.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto and his band of cammo-clad hunters made it clear than not a single member of their 200-man militia had been armed during their latest foray into the tropical night in pursuit of the Goatsucker. Looking to all the world like a Recondo leader from the Vietnam War, Mayor Soto made it clear that the small arms fire heard that night had issued from the weaponry in the hands of fearful citizens.

Mayor Soto was clearly pleased at the response elicited by his nocturnal patrols in search of the winged intruder: news of the Chupacabras and its nefarious deeds had made worldwide headlines. According to the mayor, one of his constituents had described the beast as a creature some three feet tall, which could increase its height suddenly, and was endowed with either a crest or horns on its head. It also had large hind legs resembling those of a kangaroo. This matter, stressed Mayor Soto, was a very serious one, and that his patrols served the added purpose of calming the citizens of Canóvanas. His political opponent, Melba Rivera, who expects to unseat Soto in next year's elections, has gone on record saying that the incumbent mayor is doing his level best to discredit the city by his ridiculous antics.

Wednesday, November 1, 1995

What a way to start the month. The Goatsucker, as it is called, or its peers, is crisscrossing the countryside, laying waste the small animal industry that had characterized rural Puerto Rico for decades. This time, the predatory gargoyle descended upon the community of Sábana Grande, located near UFO-haunted Laguna Cartagena.

A report filed by police officer Abraham Báez of the Sábana Seca police noted that a Nubian goat belonging to José Vega Lugo was found in a lot adjacent to Route 167, which leads to Barrio La Torre. The officer's report states that the animal was found missing an eye and displayed a curious wound on its neck. The carcass gave no indications of having been attacked by dogs, but the goat's innards were outside its body. The animal had also been rendered bloodless by its nameless attacker.

José Vega Lugo discovered at 3:00 p.m. that his goat had been slain in a lot near his property. Neighbors found several black hairs entwined in a barbed wire fence.

Lt. Medina, the interim chief of the Sábana Grande district, noted that the wounds inflicted on the hapless goat "were precise and without any rending." Perhaps to keep at bay the more fanciful explanations for the goat's demise, he promptly added that there had been reports concerning the presence of feral monkeys in the area. Three years earlier, an unknown assailant had decimated a flock of sheep belonging to a doctor from the nearby city of Yauco. The dead animals presented the same throat punctures and had inexplicably lost all their blood.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto's paramilitary antics may have been scorned by his political opponents in Canóvanas, but they were hailed as pro-active by Carlos De Jesús, manager of "Junker Correa," an auto salvage lot located on the main highway running from Caguas to Rio Piedras. Mr. De Jesús insisted that the course of action taken by the mayor of Canóvanas was neither foolish nor futile.

The Chupacabras Diaries

De Jesús' junkyard had just been the Chupacabras' latest lunch stop. Upon opening for business at 7:00 a.m., De Jesús was puzzled that the five sheep and four geese he kept on the premises had not come out to greet him, demanding their morning meal. Manuel Correa, the junkyard's proprietor, accompanied De Jesús in search of the animals, only to find they were all dead.

"The Chupacabras is a serious matter, not a cause for levity. The government should pay greater attention to this weird situation. Right now, only farm animals are being killed, but in the future, it could well be our own children or grandchildren," De Jesús declared emphatically to reporter Rubén Darío Rodríguez from *El Vocero*.

Thursday, November 2, 1995

The Chupacabras or Goatsucker has hit the big time. No, it hasn't decided to kill circus elephants or giraffe -- an Associated Press writer has apparently picked up the story and broadcast it on the newswires.

This time, it was residents of Ponce who had the dubious pleasure of the visit. The Chupacabras feasted on four cats and five dogs in the Lajés and Bellavista neighborhoods of the city.

Angela Lajés told the press that she woke up in the morning and found that her dog, who had been put outside in perfect health the previous evening, was dead. As well as showing a trickle of blood around its anus, the dog was described as being desiccated and with a few viscera exposed.

Mrs. Lajés ran to her neighbor, her sister Angela Santiago, who told her that two cats on her property had been found entirely dry, as if they had nothing inside them. "I heard the sounds of a fierce fight last night, but I felt afraid to come outside, but the fact of the matter is that a number of animals have been slain without any explanation whatsoever."

Other reports continue coming in from the Halloween spree embarked upon by the seemingly supernatural Chupacabras. Today's newspaper reports that twenty parakeets--hardly containing enough blood for a creature the size of the Goatsucker--had been found slain in the coastal town of Yabucoa, down the road from the prestigious Palmas del Mar resort. Not satisfied with killing the parakeets in their cage, the bloodthirsty creature topped the night off by relieving five goats of their vital fluids.

Mr. William Rodríguez's five goats were inspected by Officers Lozada and Ortiz of the Yabucoa precinct, who noted that the animals had been slain in a manner identical to the other deaths reported all over the island.

Melba Rivera, the politician who hopes to unseat Canóvanas' Mayor Soto in the '96 elections, has asked Illeana Carlo, the Commonwealth's Controller, to look into the possible misuse of funds, personnel and equipment by Mayor Soto during his patrols in search of the Goatsucker. Rivera's letter to the Controller stated unequivocally that Mayor Soto "had embarked upon yet another propaganda act characteristic of his administration. Not satisfied with placing Canóvanas in ridicule, Chemo Soto has also taken advantage of the situation to squander public funds which could well be used to help our needy townspeople...the hunt for the Chupacabras resembles something lifted from the old "Fantasy Island" episodes. Undoubtedly, a need for public recognition has caused the Mayor to resort to the ridiculous, to the great embarrassment of his constituency."

The Chupacabras Diaries

Monday, November 6, 1995

So far it's only been animals, but the fear behind every single mind on the island was that the Goatsucker would get it into his head to give human hemoglobin a try. Two fishermen who had cast their hooks by the banks of the Canóvanas River almost became an entree, according to Obed Betancourt, a writer for *El Vocero*.

The two men had been fishing buruquenas (a sort of Caribbean shad or sunfish) in the early evening (7:30-8:30 p.m.) in the Barrio Palmasola section of Canóvanas, when they suddenly became aware of a sound in the vegetation behind them. Luis Angel Guadalupe and Carlos Carrillo, his brother in law, were convinced that the thing which interrupted their nocturnal fishing was none other than the Chupacabras itself. Guadalupe observed that it was "horrible--like the devil himself," proceeding to describe the creature as a having large ears, oval and luminous eyes which alternated between orange and red, claws, and wings. The nightmarish intruder stood anywhere between four and five feet tall.

This close encounter prompted both men to run faster than either of them had ever run, while the Chupacabras pursued them flying above the treetops. Upon reaching his house after the mad footrace, Guadalupe availed himself of a machete and turned around to see the Goatsucker, ready to pounce, perched on a nearby hutch. But battle wasn't joined--the gargoyle jumped to the ground, leaving deep prints in the earth, and dashed back into the woods, tearing down the hutch, fences, and other structures in its path.

Perhaps it wasn't hungry. It was later learned that earlier that evening, the winged terror had slaughtered fifteen peacocks and a heifer belonging to one Miguel Domínguez.

Mayor José "Chemo" Soto and thirty of his "Ramboes" -- the militia-like posse of fearless Goatsucker hunters -- patrolled the areas in question in search of the creature. Mayor Soto expressed a belief at one point that the Chupacabras prowls the riverbanks to drink water after killing its prey.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Tuesday, November 7, 1995

The Chupacabras strikes again: this time it has chosen to add a cat to its monotonous goat and lamb diet. Striking at a junkyard, it killed a cat, a sheep, and apparently swallowed an entire lamb, since the third animal being kept by the junkyard owner never turned up again.

The junkyard, known as "Junker Tito", is located on Route 1 between Caguas and Rio Piedras, a heavily-trafficked urban corridor. Perhaps the solitude that reigns over these used auto parts cemeteries is perfect for the creature's depredations, since this is its second strike at a junkyard. "Junker Correa" and the sheep it held were victims to the Goatsucker a few days earlier.

Victor Ortiz, owner of "Junker Tito", had this to say to the press: "We have no idea if it all happened on Sunday night or in the early morning hours of Monday. When we opened for business on Monday morning, we were surprised that the animals hadn't come looking for us as was their custom. A short while later, we found the dead cat, two almost-dead sheep and a missing lamb."

Ortiz went on to add that in spite of the muddiness of the junkyard's terrain, there were no footprints to be found anywhere. However, there were signs that a fierce fight had ensued between the animals and the attacker, who vanquished them in the end. The dead animals had the characteristic circular puncture marks around their necks.

Wednesday, November 8, 1995

The Chupacabras, now believed to be merely one of many creatures, continued its killing spree throughout the island's central municipalities, this time leaving fifteen guinea hens completely bloodless. The dead birds exhibited bizarre stinger marks, as if they had been attacked by a swarm of bees. This event transpired in the locality of Cidra, at a body shop owned by Juan R. Colón.

A few days earlier, a Cidra mechanic had seen a veru strange creature land on a tree branch. Not willing to risk ridicule, he confided his experience to a cousin. The mechanic repeatedly stated that he had never seen anything similar in his life, and believed that he had quite possibly seen the notorious Chupacabras.

The Chupacabras Diaries

The undercurrent of fear caused by the Chupacabras spread throughout the city of Caguas and its outlying suburbs as a result of the mind-bending killing of a large horse and four goats belonging to Efraín Rojas, Jr..

The animals, kept at Mr. Rojas' property off Route 183, which links San Lorenzo to Caguas, were found with deep incisions in their chests, one of them leading directly to the heart. No stains of blood spillage were found on the ground, nor was any blood left within the carcasses.

Jonathan Rojas, a high school student, claims to have woken from a deep sleep at 2:30 a.m. after hearing the noise made by the horse kicking the door to its paddock. Upon taking a quick look through his bedroom window, he was amazed to see an odd, pyramidal object some sixteen feet tall by twenty feet wide floating amid the heavy fog.

Rojas added that the object seemed to have a sort of entrance or doorway, and was hovering over a small brook some three hundred feet away from his house, as if supplying itself with water. He fell asleep once more, awakening at five in the morning to see the same object in place. This time he alerted his uncle, who was only able to distinguish an intense glow departing from the area as he looked out the window.

Thursday, November 9, 1995

Mrs. Ada Arroyo, identified as the assistant director of the Mount Sion Nursing Home outside Barrio Turabo Arriba in the city of Caguas, fell victim to a nervous breakdown after seeing the infamous Chupacabras. According to the story, the event took place at 7 p.m.. Mount Sion is a peaceful and inviting facility, equipped with a large and modern swimming facility.

Mrs. Arroyo was quoted as saying: "I heard screams similar to those made by a lamb being slaughtered. I went out to the patio and managed to see a strange hairy figure, grayish in color, covering its body with a pair of wings. It had a flattened, vulpine face, with enormous red eyes." Mrs. Arroyo added that the creature held her gaze with its mesmerizing eyes before taking off into the air, vanishing from sight immediately.

It was later learned that the noises identified by the nursing home director came from a herd of cattle downhill from the place where she spotted the winged oddity. No dead animals were discovered.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Other animals in Rio Piedras weren't so fortunate: two sheep, a goose, and a turkey were found dead the following day. It was rumored that the Chupacabras had been active in the area only days before, when a 150 lb. sheep was found dead and drained of all its blood. No footprints were found around any of the victims.

Friday, November 10, 1995

Word on the streets has it that the Chupacabras is hiding out in the vast natural cave systems that riddle Puerto Rico like a piece of Swiss cheese. Hundreds of residents of the town of Aguas Buenas, famous for being the birthplace of Luis Muñóz Marín, the Commonwealth's founder and first governor, believed that the famous, bat-infested caves of their region were providing shelter for the Chupacabras.

Mayor Carlos Aponte, taking a page from Mayor Soto's book, decided to organize a posse and go after the creature, which had already left its calling card in Aguas Buenas. The entity appeared in broad daylight and killed a rooster and two hens at a private farm located at Barrio Camino Verde, before being scared away by the screams of local residents who witnessed its deeds. Those selfsame residents allegedly saw it enter the gloomy caves. The police, members of the Civil Defense, and dozens of townsfolk headed to the cave area, but none dared venture into them for fear of cornering the creature.

Saturday, November 11, 1995

Gun control is a non-issue in Puerto Rico. Not only is it a citizen's right to bear arms, but it is safe to say that one of every three island residents owns a weapon, registered or not. This freewheeling ownership of sidearms enabled farmer Elliot Feliciano to open fire against a nocturnal predator which turned out to be the hellish Goatsucker.

According to Feliciano, a large animal jumped the fence surrounding his home, prompting the armed response. While he cannot say for sure if he scored a hit, the farmer believes that the sizeable creature may well have been the Chupacabras. He described the beast as being some 3 to 4 feet tall, endowed with large eyes, and with what appeared to be wings.

Police report 95-5-050-15435, filed by police officers Gonzalo Tubens and José Toro, states that an animal making a noise that the complainant could not identify was shot at on the property. A search by both officers revealed no trace of the Goatsucker.

The Chupacabras Diaries

The El Rosario sector, located between Mayagüez and San German, has been gripped by fear since the first sightings of the gargoyle-like creature began, prompting farmers to safeguard their animals. UFO sightings over the mountainous region of Maricao (a notorious materialization point or "window area") have done nothing to assuage these concerns.

Two locals claimed having seen a brilliant, round object flying over the Sábana Grande area. The following day, elements of the local police found an eighty-pound goat which had been killed by means of strange wounds to its throat, and rendered bloodless.

Monday, November 13, 1995

The possibility that the mysterious Chupacabras could well be an extraterrestrial force was reinforced by a very strange occurrence which took place in the town of Vega Baja.

Although five chickens were found entirely drained of blood in the backyard of the property owned by Julio and Julia González, the most spectacular event appears to have been the strange mark placed upon the forearm of the couple's daughter this past summer.

Oralis González, 5, was marked with a tattoo-like impression which read OJO-10-OJO after an alleged account with nonhuman entities. While the child is reluctant to discuss what exactly transpired, and her parents discouraged mention of it for fear that it would affect her studies, it is generally acknowledged that this supposed event has triggered the child's IQ, causing her father to describe her as a prodigy.

Little Oralis' experience came to light while police officer Pablo Robles interviewed Mr. Gonzalez about the dead poultry found in the backyard. The chickens were found lying in a perfect row, giving the impression that they were "sunbathing." This charming notion was soon put to rest when it was discovered that the animals were dead and drained of their blood.

Tuesday, November 14, 1995

The Chupacabras Diaries

The UFO question rears its ugly head again. An anonymous resident from Aguas Buenas claims to have seen fiery spaceships shooting "elevators" of light against the ground, primarily at sites where bloodless and mutilated animals have been found. In this anonymous witness' opinion, the dreaded Chupacabras is simply a being from another world in space. The man, age 37, insists on the need for anonymity out of concern for his wife and children. He lives near the renown Aguas Buenas cave system.

When asked to describe the luminous elevators, he explained that they resemble "cones" of opaque light whose interior cannot be seen. He theorizes that some kind of suction must lift whatever is on the ground toward the unidentified object above, whose dimensions cannot be made out due to the alternating green, red, and yellow lights surrounding it. By tying loose ends, the Aguas Buenas resident believes that the recently slain ox and two goats found near his home could have been sucked upward to the vehicle, had their blood extracted, and then been deposited back on the ground when discarded.

Other residents elaborated upon this theory, surmising that the Chupacabras may have been a creature "lowered" to earth from a spaceship which was then unable to retrieve it due to some technical difficulty, thus leaving it to roam the countryside in search of sustenance.

Wednesday, November 15, 1995

A society raised on Friday the 13th movies, the exploits of Freddy Kruger, and splattergore films is usually immune to monster stories, but what happens when a creature that could well be an escapee from one of these celluloid nightmares sticks an arm through an open window?

Ask the wife of Bernardo Gómez, who saw with her own eyes how a clawed hand belonging to a long, thin, hairy arm entered through her bedroom window just as she was getting ready for bed. The claw seized a teddy bear sitting on a counter top and shredded it in seconds. Mrs. Gómez hurled a coffee cup at the sinister appendage, which withdrew immediately. She managed to see a single red eye and the left side of the intruder's face, who promptly vanished into the heavily wooded area behind the house.

These events took place in the city of Caguas, directly south of San Juan. Agents of the police, Civil Defense, and the Municipal Guards responded to the emergency phone call, finding a slimy substance deposited against the torn window, as well as an unidentifiable piece of flesh that had apparently been left behind as the creature beat a retreat.

The Technical Services Division of the local CIC agency dusted the window for fingerprints, but were unable to find any. A thorough search of the nearby wilderness failed to reveal any sign of the mysterious intruder.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Thus far, city dwellers had felt safe from the attacks of this elusive creature or creatures. Yet the same evening that Mrs. Gómez underwent her harrowing experience, two hens and their chicks had their blood drained by a Chupacabras-like entity in the heart of San Juan's Puerto Nuevo neighborhood, a heavily built-up area filled with shops, restaurants, and main avenues. The owner of the slain hens had gone to nearby Dorado for the day, and returned to find the hair-raising scene.

Thursday, November 16, 1995

The long-suffering citizenry has decided to fight back. Neither monster, nor alien, nor gargoyle will ever crush the human spirit: the residents of Barrio Caín Alto in the town of San German chased the Chupacabras away as it was poised to kill three fighting roosters belonging to one of the neighbors.

This foiled attack took place in the afternoon, when the people of Barrio Caín Alto heard the commotion taking place in the area where the cockfighting roosters were kept. Three of the neighbors ran into the nightmarish attacker, who appeared to hesitate at the sudden appearance of the humans, whose fear was overcome by intense rage: they began throwing stones at the Chupacabras, who rose to its full height and sprang upwards into the air, flying off in the direction of a nearby hill.

The three rockslinging witnesses described the intruder as being a grayish brown simian creature with large, almond-shaped eyes, an oval face, and small hands protruding from its shoulders.

In his regular column on UFOs, Julio Victor Ramírez, who reported most of the UFO incidents taking place during the 1991-92 sightings, observed that area residents did not link the Chupacabras with UFO activity. He pointed out that farmers in Western Puerto Rico linked the Goatsucker with giant vampire bats which may have been introduced deliberately or not from their habitats in South America.

Wednesday, November 22, 1995

Rubén Darío Rodríguez observed in a column that elements of the Department of Natural Resources had completed tests on a number of dead rabbits which betrayed deep puncture marks. They returned a stunning verdict: the wounds on the hapless bunnies could not have been produced by anything native to Puerto Rico.

The investigators thought it strange that the dead rabbits had been found outside their cages, which showed no signs of having been forced open. One of the rabbits had punctures in its paws and was covered in a slimy

The Chupacabras Diaries

substance (which would later be found at a number of sites). The slime also underwent analysis, but no report on the findings was ever issued.

Coincidentally (but perhaps not), the rabbit killings took place in the town of Gurabo, where the vampire bird had been discovered in 1989.

Thursday, November 23, 1995

Reason enough to panic, yet no one did: The Chupacabras' depredations are coming closer to the urban sprawl of San Juan. This time it struck in Carolina, a municipality bordering the island capital. A small mongrel dog belonging to Demetrio Rivera was found dead.

According to Mr. Rivera's testimony, his dog was tied out in the backyard, as was customary, when it suddenly began barking furiously. But the barks soon turned to pitiful moans, as if something were suffocating the small pet. This prompted Demetrio and his daughter Ivette to turn on the patio lights and take a look. The allegedly heard the strong fluttering of a winged thing flying away: their dog, near death, was covered with a strange slime, like the one found on the Vega Baja cattle.

The canine was so terrified by what it had seen and experienced that it refused to let its owners come closer. After a while, the Riveras were able to pour water on their beloved pet and remove the curious "goo" that covered it.

Maribel Arroyo, a resident of the same neighborhood as the Riveras, also had a visit. Mrs. Arroyo, who runs a chicken farm, stated that she heard the cries of large birds over her farm. The following day she discovered that thirty of her hens had been slain and rendered bloodless. The unfortunate fowl had puncture marks in their throats and bellies.

The puzzling slime, reminiscent of the substance made famous by the film *Ghostbusters*, was also found on the window of a home in the Cañaboncito sector of Caguas, where "something" introduced a long, hairy arm into the window of the house and shredded a teddy bear that happened to be within its reach.

Friday, November 24, 1995

The Chupacabras Diaries

The very real possibility that witchcraft could be at the root of these mysterious killings was aired in the media for the first time, just as a UFO connection to the Chupacabra situation was reinforced by a close encounter near Toa Baja.

A resident of this town, less than half an hour from San Juan (in good traffic, that is) told the media that he had a close encounter with a small, 4 ft tall creature shortly after residents of the city of Arecibo were treated to the sight of a "saucer" crossing their skies.

A slight whiff of high strangeness accompanied this case in Toa Baja: policeman José Matos, sent to investigate, found a number of dead heifers lying in a perfect row down the middle of a lonely road in the Hoyos sector of Toa Baja. The oddity was that no heifers of the kind slaughtered can be found anywhere for miles around the area. No one claimed the carcasses, leading to the belief that they were slain elsewhere and deposited in Toa Baja for some reason.

The eerie disposition of the carcasses was captured in a photograph taken by Baltazar Vázquez of *El Vocero*. It led many residents of the area to speculate about the possibility that a warlock or witch was making use of the animal's blood.

Saturday, November 25, 1995

It was a matter of time before the lunatic fringe chimed in, ready to drop its two *centavos* worth on the Chupacabras scare. This time, the fringe was embodied by Brother Carmelo, a clairvoyant from Caguas who wanted to describe the creature and the best methods to capture it.

Brother Carmelo was quick to state that the Goatsuckers (note the plural) were definitely extraterrestrial. "These creatures are vampires who nourish themselves on the fresh blood of their victims. They are purplish grey in color, have fiery red eyes, are equipped with a short tail and could have two small, horn-like protuberances on their heads. These beings can only come out at night, and they spend the day in places where the vegetation is extremely dense or else in deep caves."

Brother Carmelo, in his infinite, supernatural wisdom, added that: "Not everyone can capture one of these beings. To do so requires the use of laser beams or a silver bullet."

Need any more be said?

The Chupacabras Diaries

Monday, November 27, 1995

The Chupacabras (whether singular or plural) appeared this time in Rincón, a small seaside town which may have been Columbus' landing site during his discovery of PR in 1493 (an honor disputed by the neighboring cities of Aguadilla and Mayagüez).

Five goats, described as "costly" by reporter Tomás de Jesús Mangal, were found comatose and bloodless out of a flock of 29 such animals. One of the goats died, but as of today, the other four remained between life and death. A local veterinary had kept them alive by means of judicious injections of a coagulant known as Azium, which stanching the bleeding caused by the creature's trademark single puncture to the animal's jugular. The owner of the flock, Edwin Lorenzo Féñez, was beside himself at his considerable loss.

Things took a darker turn when elements of the pseudo-UFO research group NOVA appeared on the scene. The leader of this cultlike organization declared that the remaining goats, the ones that had not been attacked by the Goatsucker, would die anyway. His explanation? They had been injected with a poisonous substance that would bring about death within a matter of days. This hardly comforted Mr. Féñez. The elements of the NOVA group aired their utterly unfounded theory that the bloodsucking creature was one of twenty which had descended to Earth to conduct experiments with human blood in order to produce blood viruses aimed at eliminating humanity.

An official from the Commonwealth department of agriculture, Hector López, visited the Féñez farm and asked the distraught owner to touch neither the dead goat nor the 4 dying ones until his agency had had an opportunity to run a number of tests on them.

On a lighter note, a young student theater from the José Julián Acosta School, Daynalee Cardona, has written a prose poem on the Goatsucker which could become the basis for a stage production on this phenomenon.

Tuesday, November 28, 1995

Proof of the Goatsucker's existence? Hardly. The papers reported the discovery of a footprint or handprint -- the very first found since this rash of animal mutilations began--at the site of an attack near Vega Baja. Photographs

The Chupacabras Diaries

showed a splayed, six-fingered (or six-toed?) print in the clay-like ground. More impressive was the viscous slime left around the neck of a wounded cow.

The bloodsucker was only steps away from becoming a victim itself. Police sergeant Jesús Medina Montes regretted not being able to steal a few shots against a "being" shaped like a bird and which fluttered while making a loud noise with its mouth. The Chupacabras would have paid dearly for the wounds inflicted upon a number of steers, among them a large Zebu bull.

Sergeant Medina told *El Vocero* that a local landlord, Anselmo Rodríguez, toured the property after the Goatsucker's attack, only to discover that much of his herd was bleeding from their humps. Some of the beasts were covered by a slime that could not be properly described. Irene Mercado and her 9 year-old niece allegedly saw the creature "fly away" from the area that night.

VII. The Infiltrators

Webster's Dictionary defines an infiltrator as one who "enters or becomes established gradually or unobtrusively." We speak of infiltrating enemy lines, of James Bond's infiltrating into the archvillain's stronghold, and many other references. The UFO community, a Hydra-like entity whose heads are always snapping against each other, has been howling in protest since the late 1950's that it's been infiltrated--like the labor movements earlier this century--by government operatives, outside agitators (echoes of *The Graduate*), and agents aimed at the spreading of disinformation. NICAP was infiltrated by these types, APRO probably was, and MUFON possibly is. From reading the vast corpus of saucer literature that has piled up over the decades like stacks of National Geographics, we can infer that the mission of these putative agents has been to drive ufologists mad by providing false leads, tantalizing evidence, and above all, impressive-looking documents like the MJ-12 papers, which have the effect of splitting up an already divided community even further. The Internet, the modern equivalent of the Roman Forum, contains thousands of postings which "name names" in real or imaginary efforts at unmasking the moles lurking in ufology's mainstream.

The infiltrators--whose existence is undeniable--have honed their techniques over the past thirty years, leading to the development of a bold new technique: rather than taking the trouble to infiltrate the UFO organizations, why not create their own cadres of UFO "researchers?"

The first of these shadow organizations surfaced in Puerto Rico earlier this year. They appeared at mutilation sites, places where witnesses had experienced encounters of every single kind, and at the homes of the witnesses themselves, sporting impressive ID cards and fully outfitted with gadgets designed to persuade interviewees about their professional status. Forsaking the gas-guzzling limos and Caddys of the legendary Men-In-Black, they drove around in government-issue Fords and Chevys, which were also eminently easier to drive on the tortuous backroads of the Puerto Rican interior.

These pseudo-organizations first appeared during research conducted by CEDICOP (Center for UFO and Paranormal Study and Dissemination) into the Orocovis situation. Subsequent information received by CEDICOP indicated that the members of these shadow organizations were in possession of "directories" with the names of witnesses to the mutilation phenomena and UFO activity. Their *modus operandi* consisted of interviewing these witnesses and offering them membership in their organizations, promising to provide them with special means of identification which would allow the holders access to areas restricted by the police or similarly important agencies.

At this point, we may well wonder if this equivalent of the All Access backstage pass is merely a delusion aimed at ensnaring the unwary. The power to cross police lines would be reserved for agencies like

the FBI (*à la* Mulder and Scully), DEA, and other Federal agencies. How could an allegedly civilian UFO study group

acquire such clout?

Efforts at discrediting serious UFO research also took a high-tech approach. Items disseminated on the Internet created the impression that a UFO had crashed on the island during the month of July, creating a brief flurry of electronic messages from one researcher to another. This untruth was "substantiated" by the clever distribution, from an unknown source, of promotional materials (glossy photos) from a cable TV special depicting the bodies of dead aliens found at the Roswell, N.M. crash site. The special's cleverly fabricated corpses were circulated as the real thing among UFO *aficionados* on the island. These shenanigans prompted a response by *Evidencia Ovni* in the form of an editorial denouncing these efforts at deception. Photos of the special effect dummies, clearly identifying them as such, accompanied the editorial.

The shadow organizations increased their visibility to parallel the rise in Chupacabras activity. One of them, calling itself NOVA, operated out of the western shore of the island. Another, dubbed UFO, wore black caps with the unimaginative name of their organization stitched on them. As featured in an earlier section, these groups expressed a belief that the Goatsucker was one of two dozen beings whose task was that of depopulating the earth, leaving it open for alien colonization efforts. They also claimed that the Goatsucker was "the source of the AIDS epidemic" and was unstoppable (perhaps they should have tried Brother Carmelo's silver bullets).

Aside from casting a pall of ridicule upon the entire situation, and discrediting any clear-headed investigations underway, the groups clearly had a dark side: they claimed to have been endowed with such broad powers as to be unstoppable by the FBI or Puerto Rico State Police, and had offered membership in their ranks to a number of people, even a prominent Political Science professor at the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras. These activities were discussed openly on Jorge Martín's radio program, *Ovnis Confidencial*, in a conference with Argentinian ufologist José Aldonati and other local researchers. After their activities were denounced on the air, the phantom groups went into hiding--one of them even eliminated its trademark black outfits.

What can we make of the seemingly infantile yet dangerous behavior displayed by the phantom groups? Only that someone is interested in keeping control of UFO information emanating from Puerto Rico at any cost.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Friday, December 1, 1995

The Chupacabras has chosen the Caguas suburb of Bairoa as its latest stomping ground, feeding off rabbits kept in outdoor hutches throughout the area. Rafael Ortiz, one of the individuals affected by these mysterious depredations, found two of his rabbits slain by means of holes in their necks. Another four were removed from their cages. According to Ortiz, he had heard some noises coming from the backyard area in which the hutches are located, but much to his regret, didn't pay very much attention. At daybreak, he was confronted with the sight of the dead animals, and noticed the others were gone.

On the southwestern corner of the island, in the picturesque city of San Germán, a pair of ducks, a rabbit, and two chickens were added to the Chupacabras' tally of slain animals. As has happened in all the other cases reported in these diaries, owners find their animals in the morning when they are getting ready to feed them (recall the number of junkyard cases in November).

Some of San Germán's residents claim having seen a strange being standing some three feet in height, brownish-grey in color, with slanted eyes, small hands, and equipped with what appeared to be wings. This creature was allegedly responsible for the death of a goat in Barrio Caín Alto. Nonetheless, the Police and other government agencies have chosen to dismiss the matter as a joke.

The city of Guánica, site of the landing of U.S. forces during the Spanish-American War of 1898, was also chosen by the Chupacabras for something other than its beautiful bay and fine beaches. A police report filed by Lt. Noel Quiles states that two goats and thirteen roosters were found slain with peculiar marks on their bodies at Barrio La Montalva. Officers responded to a call by an unidentified resident who had found that all his black hens had been slain by strange perforations, while all the white hens had been shredded by the claws of a predator. Lt. Quiles was hesitant to say that the Chupacabras had been at work here. He circumscribed himself to saying that the birds had been slain by an unknown assailant.

A second complaint was filed by Reinaldo Serrano, who found two goats dead upon returning home at 6:00 a.m.. According to Serrano, the goats had been alive and healthy when he left for work earlier that evening. Although neighbors admitted to having heard strange noises, none saw the intruder.

Friday, December 8, 1995

The Chupacabras Diaries

Six sheep were left bloodless by a mysterious attacker, according to a police report issued by the Homicide Division of the Carolina Municipality Center for Criminal Investigation. The locale was none other than Barrio Campo Rico, the Chupacabras' regular feeding ground. The police report did not rule out the strange creature as the "perpetrator" of the incident.

At around 4:00 a.m., neighbors were wakened from their sleep by horrifying noises. A local man who happened to be walking by the place where the Chupacabras' attack took place was so frightened by the feral screams that he dropped his lunch box and broke into a run away from the area. Police officers reporting to the location found five dead sheep, and a sixth one with an unusual wound on its head. It did not recover.

The Chupacabras was not blamed for another bloody killing in which two dozen cockfighting roosters were torn to pieces. To the relief of local law enforcement, the crime was readily attributable to a pack of wild dogs. Edwin Velázquez, of Yabucoa, lost all of his fighting cocks, a misfortune estimated at almost four thousand dollars.

Tuesday, December 12, 1995

As if the loss of the six sheep only a few days ago hadn't been enough, the residents of Canóvanas' Barrio Campo Rico are now being mocked by the Chupacabras, which has taken to running at a blinding speed after cattle and other animals. According to a police report, the mystery beast spent the weekend chasing frightened animals from one field to another, and even managed to steal a piece of meat that had been left out as bait.

Lt. Jorge L. Rivera, who has been in charge of police response to the citizenry's complaints about the creature, observed that the creature emanates a smell resembling that of paint thinner. The local newspaper, *El Vocero*, quoted him as saying: "There is a great deal of concern here [in Canóvanas]. This isn't a joke or a humorous situation."

Last month, when one of Lt. Rivera's men fired against a strange animal he thought was the Chupacabras, a small sample of blood was secured and sent for analysis. An anonymous veterinarian who handled the tests declared that the samples were neither human, nor canine, nor belonging to any known species. These samples have since been consigned to a Stateside laboratory, and no results will be available until after the holidays.

(We broached the matter with investigator Jorge Martín during our stay. He added that the results had yielded levels of proteins and acids that did not correspond to any member of the animal kingdom, but that the blood also contained strong traces of chlorophyll!)

The Chupacabras Diaries

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

A curious vigilante movement has arisen as a result of the Chupacabras' depredations, and possibly in imitation of Mayor "Chemo" Soto's posses. These armchair "regulators" have the distinct advantage that they merely conduct their nocturnal watches from the comfort of their own homes, most often sitting on their back patios, terraces, on their rooftops, and even in "duck blinds" located amid the branches of massive tropical trees. A respected professional from the town of Juncos explained that around nightfall, he sits in a chair with his back to the wall, wielding a hunting rifle and in the company of a German Shepherd, hoping to "get lucky" one night and bag a Chupacabras.

Other armchair vigilantes have conducted their silent watches of the warm tropical night from the slopes of El Yunque to Orocovis. One of these self-appointed sentries has apparently discovered a correlation between the phases of the moon and the Chupacabras' attacks. It would seem that the elusive creature takes advantage of moonless nights and of the waning moon to pursue its hunting activities.

Thursday, December 14, 1995

Seers and mystics continue to proliferate as the situation becomes more and more complex. Aside from "Brother Carmelo" and his Lon Chaney-inspired silver bullet theories, there is now "Brother Serafín" who claims to have plotted the trajectory of the Chupacabras' flights over the island. On an island a hundred and ten miles long by a scant forty five miles wide, the trajectory put forth by the seer matched many of the places where killings have occurred, such as Naguabo. Brother Serafín boasted of employing "sensory waves and vibrations" (!) to find the Chupacabras' lair, conveniently located at the heart of El Yunque. Unlike the earlier mystic, Brother Serafín had complete confidence in his psychic gifts, stating that he had been chosen in his youth to do good and to make predictions about the future. His TV set-like ability to capture waves and vibrations enabled him to learn that the Chupacabras comes from another world within our own galaxy, and that its kin are slowly dying out due to genetic reasons.

Serafín's "vision" of the creature(s) describes them as being hideous, having a pestilent odor about them, hair-covered wings, as tall but not very strong, and with the ability to "charm" their prey until they suck out their blood. He added that the creature sleeps during the day and moves about at night, and that the creature will soon go into "hibernation," perhaps in underground caverns.

A resident of Naguabo, José Luis Oyola, discovered that a number of the rabbits he owned had been bled dry by a creature leaving vampiric puncture marks on their bodies. This attack had a distinguishing feature: many of the

The Chupacabras Diaries

rabbits were missing, as if the attacker had first chosen to slake its thirst, and then take other bunnies "to go." In this case, the victim believed neither in apes nor aliens--he was firmly convinced that the mysterious deaths were brought about by evil forces.

Tuesday, December 19, 1995

The bloodthirsty Chupacabras struck again after laying low for a period of time. This time, residents of geographical locations as disparate as Naguabo (south of San Juan) and Guayanilla (on the island's Caribbean shores) experienced the loss of chickens and rabbits.

Undaunted by their losses, local residents have managed to find some grim humor in their predicament: a number of citizens of Caguas suggested that the Chupacabras' name be changed to that of the *Gallinejo* (a contraction of "gallina"--chicken--and "conejo"--rabbit), since according to their tabulations, the nocturnal predator has slain a greater number of those two animals than goats or larger creatures.

Nemesio Vargas of Guayanilla lost a dozen chickens to the Chupacabras on the previous evening. Grimly, he estimated his losses -- attributed to the Chupacabras' supper -- at less than a hundred dollars, and denied that dogs of any breed could have caused the strange deaths of his birds. While he refused to

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

As if not to be outdone by his new rival, "Brother Carmelo" staged a return to the scene after the Chupacabras killed five rabbits at the home of Valentín Rodríguez. The alleged clairvoyant called the newsroom of El Vocero to explain the reason for the Chupacabras' preference for animal blood (as opposed to human, hopefully!): the strange being has chosen to feed on the beasts of the field because their blood exhibits a greater purity than

The Chupacabras Diaries

human blood, being free from the toxins that pollute humans. In the clarivoyants' philosophy, "the uncontrolled ingestion of fats, alcohol and nicotine by humans have made our blood unsuitable for these creatures."

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

8. On-Site

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

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

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

The fact remained that in spite of the initial concern caused by the Chupacabras, the population was unconcerned with its activities or with the doom-filled assumptions put forth by the phantom UFO groups in their statements to the newspaper. This point is certainly worth stressing: in spite of its well-deserved reputation as the island which harbors every single kind of supernatural or ufological phenomenon, Puerto Rico's population remains unaffected by the possibility that non-human entities are sharing their living space. If and when a formal announcement is ever made declaring that aliens (extraterrestrial or otherwise) are indeed visiting the island, or are established on it, the man on the street will not perceive any "loss of self" or enter into a panic as a result of a "shattered paradigm." This resilience is perhaps characteristic of island-dwellers around the world, who are accustomed to seeing unusual visitors

pulling in aboard ships or landing in airplanes, silent testimony to lands beyond the horizon. Any visiting non-humans would merely be a continuation of this pattern. Jorge Martín has speculated that this tolerance toward the unusual, the spiritual, and the unknown could in fact be the reason that has impelled the government to use P.R. as a testing ground for human reaction to the revelation that--as has been stated so dramatically over the years--"We Are Not Alone."

An Early Morning Drive

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

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

The fertile plains on either side of the Espíritu Santo and Loíza Rivers have been prime grazing land for cattle since the Spaniards arrived in the 16th century. They have also proven to be a magnet for the Chupacabras -- a great number of attacks have taken place in this littoral, where cows are allowed to sleep in the open at night.

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

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

We finally reach Fajardo, the easternmost point on the island, a thriving community looking out to the Lesser Antilles and providing ferry service to the smaller island-municipalities of Culebra and Vieques. This area has had its own share of unusual activity: not too long ago, UFOs were reported plunging into the ocean and emerging once more, and local fishermen and yachtsmen reported objects causing upboilings of water around their craft. Perhaps no other incident describes Fajardo's reputation as a strange location better than the controversial *Garadiávolo*. Twenty years after a book on the subject appeared, heated discussions regarding the creature's true nature still take place. A respected professional who visited Laguna de San Juan, a large lagoon on a promontory jutting out into the sea to the north of Fajardo, discovered a most unusual amphibian during one of his trips. The diminutive creature was able to walk on spindly legs and even climb up trees. The man captured the specimen and brought it home, after which it soon caused a sensation in the press. Unfortunately, it was confiscated in the dark of night by men who claimed to be with the U.S. government. It has been argued that the *Garadiávolo* was simply a common sea-ray sliced in half -- an old "sea monster" known as a "Jenny Haniver" to cryptozoologists. I can attest to the fact that samples of this *Garadiávolo* were sold for the affordable price of \$7.95 at my mother's store in San Juan under the name "devilfish." Yet others who saw the original creature first hand insist that its cat-like face, eyes, and fangs could not have been the product of any hoaxing, like the "Jenny Hanivers."

The magnificent El Conquistador Hotel crowns the peaks above the fishing village of Las Croabas. Its terraced parking lot provides a spectacular view of El Yunque that cannot be fully captured by the camera. As noon approached, the fog around the mountain was dispelled by the sun's heat, lifting the veil that conceals the rainforest from the looks of the average curious mortal. Within the halcyon environment of the

The Chupacabras Diaries

hotel, we asked an employee of one of the dozen boutiques on the promenade if the Chupacabras had been seen in the area. "I think people exaggerate too much," she replied with a smile.

The Investigators

We had the pleasure of being invited to *Ovnis Confidencial*, their radio program on the NOTI-UNO network, which has repeater stations throughout the island and even, I believe, in New Jersey. Jorge had recently completed the tremendous show in which the proverbial whistle had been blown on the phantom groups described in the previous chapter--an act which led him to add, ruefully, at the end of the broadcast, that it might cause his show to be yanked off the air. To his surprise, he not only received strong support from station management, but also caused the phantom groups to tone down their activities, at least for a little while.

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

[Ovnis Confidencial, December 21, 1995 -- 10:30 - 11:30 p.m.]

Partial transcript of caller testimony]

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

Caller: This is Julio Marín.

The Chupacabras Diaries

J. Martín: Good evening, Don Julio.

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

J. Martín: Yes.

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

J. Martín: They take advantage of those opportunities?

Caller: Precisely. They take advantage of those opportunities...there are other sites in the U.S. where aircraft are tested, such as Nevada and Utah, which are flat, and...Arizona, which is inaccessible, having mountains some nine thousand feet tall, and has valleys in spite of these mountains. It is a large state, yet among the least populated ones. There are many [Indian] reservations, and within these reservations one finds--there's no better way of putting it--other reservations. It's very hard to reach them. The roads aren't always paved...to reach these places might even jeopardize the lives of those who make the attempt.

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

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

J. Martín: Yes.

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

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

J. Martín:It's a warmer climate.

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

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

Caller:Yes.

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

Caller:Well...[unintelligible].

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

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

J. Martín:Such as?

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

J. Martín:But that's precisely the reason we're discussing it tonight on our show. There have been a number of situations and cases here in Puerto Rico which we believe may be related to experiments conducted in this field. You told me confidentially a few programs ago about your

The Chupacabras Diaries

knowledge that creatures matching the Chupacabras' description...had been seen in the late 1950's and were known to exist by the U.S. government, who even had some of them in captivity at the time. Is there any truth to this at all?

Caller:It's very true. These were creatures quite similar to what has been described here [in P.R.]. If you take a kangaroo, cut off its tail and a bit off its legs, it would look similar to it, but it has spines running down the length of its back.

J. Martín:Where did you see this, Don Julio?

Caller:I saw it at a place in...in...gosh, I really can't recall...

J. Martín:What sort of facility?

Caller:I remember travelling from Kansas to a state near Texas or Mexico...

J. Martín:New Mexico?

Caller:Yes, New Mexico...

J. Martín:And where in New Mexico would this have been?

Caller:It was in New Mexico, but I can't recall now...I know that there was a [unintelligible] and we went past a town called Flagstaff.

J. Martín:And I ask you, Don Julio, why did you have to be the one to see this?

Caller:Well, because I had a Top Secret clearance at the time, and I would volunteer to do what's known as "riding shotgun." Remember the Old West? They still use the term to refer to the guarding of the merchandise.

The Chupacabras Diaries

J. Martín: Don Julio, since we don't want to reveal too many details that might give your identity away...did you in fact get to see one of these creatures related to the Chupacabras in that place?

Caller: Yes, but I want to add that this creature is completely harmless.

J. Martín: How so?

Caller: The creature is very intelligent, and is capable of distinguishing between a human and an animal.

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

Caller: Of course.

J. Martín: Why?

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

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

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

J. Martín: This was in Vietnam?

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

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

J. Martín: With drugs?

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

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

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

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

Caller: They were caged.

J. Martín: Why?

Caller: I don't know...they were being studied, and evidently, their sex could be distinguished...there was a male and a female, and...

The Chupacabras Diaries

J. Martín:And what happened?

Caller:Well, she was getting bigger and bigger--her stomach was--and, and they realized she was pregnant. And they "put her to sleep" as they say in order to study her.

J. Martín:They sacrificed her?

Caller:They opened her up and found another creature within, just like her. They procreate.

J. Martín:Did this creature at any moment try to attack you or any of the people working at that facility?

Caller:No. These creatures looked at you pleadingly with their sad eyes, and they inspire pity. They appear to be lost on an unknown world.

J. Martín:What kind of personnel was working with those creatures at the site?

Caller:They wore those outfits that cover the entire body, and changed garments from one room to another, discarding them as they returned. Decontamination room to the showers, discarding clothing once more and burning it.

[...]

J.Martín:Don Julio, please forgive the interruption, but time is of the essence. Feel free to answer only if you can. I understand from what you told me during your call a few programs ago that you were alongside these creatures, which according to you may have been brought to Puerto Rico as part of an experiment, is this so?

Caller:No, they brought creatures similar to the ones which appeared in an autopsy a few years ago...they were three, one of them was a female who died from a wound to the thigh--

J. Martín:You're referring to what appeared in the [Roswell] movie.

The Chupacabras Diaries

Caller: The other creature died carbonized, no one knew what it was, and the third was wounded, stayed alive. I think it died of old age. This isn't the only [vehicle] to have crashed or to have been knocked out of the sky. It's all very secret, and right now I'm putting myself at risk by calling you.

J. Martín: Don Julio, ... I'm concerned about something you said earlier about your days as part of this special intelligence service where some of these creatures seen in Puerto Rico were kept. These creatures seemed harmless to humans, contrary to what is being circulated by some groups in Puerto Rico. Are you certain of what you're saying?

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

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

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

The Dog that Got Away

Suki the pup looked like a dog sprung from a cartoonist's pen: an elongated black-and-white body surmounted by a floppy-eared head with gleaming eyes--the product of a dachshund and the hardy island mutt known as a *sato*. The spunky three-month old was a celebrity and didn't know it. It, among all the animals in Puerto Rico, had held off the Chupacabras with its sharp barking and thus avoided getting

"goatsucked." Suki's tale of canine bravery (or good luck) could not have been recounted in a better location: her owner's rural home, overlooking the southern slopes of El Yunque near the town of Juncos.

Mrs. María de Gómez, a housewife in her mid-fifties, a resident of Barrio Valenciano Abajo on the outskirts of Juncos, told us how her pooch's barking alerted her to the fact that something was wrong on the high terrace overlooking her backyard (which is in fact a plantation spanning several acres of exuberant vegetation) at 7 p.m. a few nights before our visit. When she went to check on the cause of the pet's excitement, she was startled beyond belief: an ash-grey creature, weighing some seventy-five pounds and standing some four feet tall, loomed over the defiant animal in silence, as if trying to browbeat it into submission.

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

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

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

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

ecological issues, a concern for how humans seem hell-bent on polluting and destroying their own world. Could this case have followed the pattern?

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

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

Hand-to-Hand Combat

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

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

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

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

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

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

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

Bigfoot Enters the Stage

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

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

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

Incident at the Lovers' Lane

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

A Public Figure Comes Forward

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

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

A radio announcer observed gravely that the Chupacabras had just killed several goats, mares, and other animals. Allowing the incredible tally of kills to sink in, he promptly broke into a sweet voice, informing his listeners that they'd been "had."

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

The Chupacabras Diaries

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

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

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

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

IX. Some Final Thoughts

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

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

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

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

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

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

(d) The possibility of exotic pets imported by wealthy dilettante zoologists has been dear to many skeptics on the island. However, no one can imagine what kind of reptile, simian, bovine, etc. could fit the bill of a creature answering the Chupacabras' description. Furthermore, the USDA has a very effective control of anything--animal or vegetable-entering or leaving the island. Tourists to P.R. are familiar with the obligatory USDA inspection at the airport prior to leaving the island.

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

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

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

The possibility of a paranormal origin. For many decades, a number of investigators have postulated a "paranormal" origin for beings such as the Chupacabras. The word "paranormal" triggers a number of flags in people's minds, since it has been used to describe everything from Zenner card tests to

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

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

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

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

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

####

The Chupacabras Diaries

Friday, January 5, 1996

Two goats were slain by the Chupacabras in Caguas' Barrio Cañaboncito. Police officials reported to the scene after being alerted by Wanda Rivera, who discovered her two young goats dead within their concrete and wire cage, which was still closed and gave no signs of having been forced.

Three sheep were also bled dry at the residence of Jose Ramos Aponte in Aguas Buenas. According to the owner, he rose early on Thursday morning to find that his animals were agonizing from their puncture wounds.

Tuesday, January 8, 1996

The Chupacabras attacked a farm in Canóvanas, killing a pair of sheep belonging to Monchito Colón. Police officers Orlando Marín and Rosa Santiago reported to the site. Just as the police reached the area, another call was received from José Febo, who had allegedly just seen a creature with pointed ears, a strange profile, and a shaven head. Febo encountered the creature as it rested on a tamarind tree. When it noticed the human, the entity jumped off the tree and ran "like a gazelle."

Thursday, January 11, 1996

Mayor José Soto of Canóvanas, who led expeditions in search of the elusive Chupacabras back in November '95, made a formal request from Police Commissioner Pedro Toledo to help him obtain the resources needed capture the creature. While the commissioner met with Mayor Soto, no allocation of police resources was made.

The creature attacked the Canóvanas area once more, killing a sheep and a rooster belonging to Tomás Santiago Lopez. The sheep was badly wounded and was later put down by a local veterinarian. Mayor Soto visited the Santiago farm, located in Barrio Cambalache.

Monday, January 15, 1996

The Chupacabras Diaries

Two sheep found dead on a farm in Lajas, P.R.. Wisbel Ayala, head of the Civil Defense, looked into the matter, declaring that a veterinarian identified only as "Dr. Ruiz" had offered to analyze the carcasses which had been "attacked by the monkeys which live in the area." The possibility that the carcasses will be frozen and shipped to the CDC in Atlanta hasn't been ruled out.

CHUPACABRAS UPDATE

February 20, 1996

According to SAMIZDAT correspondent José Valdez, the unusually cold weather conditions Puerto Rico experienced during January 1996 kept Chupacabras activity to a minimum. He speculates that the creature may have gone into some sort of hibernation for a period of time. The fact of the matter is that the elusive creature is back, and has even been reported on the island of Vieques -- 20 miles off the Puerto Rican mainland.

January 12, 1996

The police seems unable to protect even its own. Police colonel Agustín Cartagena, who owns a farm near Caguas, P.R., received a visit from the Chupacabras. The intruder killed 22 animals--an assortment of ducks, chickens, and guinea hens. This incident apparently took place just days after six sheep were killed on the property of police lieutenant Jorge Rivera, whose farm is located in Canóvanas.

January 18, 1996

The Chupacabras turned its thirst for blood against five ducks, slaying four and leaving one mortally injured. However, it found its match in the fierce flock of geese kept by Mrs. Luz Bonilla in her Guaynabo backyard. Even the Chupacabras meets its match now and then, it seems.

According to Mrs. Bonilla, the geese made a racket in the wee hours of the morning. Upon venturing to her backyard to see what had happened, she was faced with the sight of the dead ducks. Mrs. Bonilla added her voice to a growing number of citizens demanding a serious investigation by the Commonwealth government into this matter.

On the other side of the island, reports came in from a number of sources reporting a flurry of UFO activity. Police officials confirmed receiving distressed phone calls regarding this unusual activity. The sightings allegedly took place over the Costas, Sabana Yeguas and Candelaria sectors of Lajas. The objects were described as triangular in shape and moving at prodigious speed across the night skies from south to west. Curiously enough, the UFO reports coincided with the arrival of several squadrons of jet fighters from USAF. Local residents were awakened to a deafening sound, only to find the fighters making low-level runs over

their homes. The police could not speculate as to why the Air Force had chosen to embark on practice runs in the area.

January 19, 1996

A professor from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, Dr. Juan A. Rivero, has become part of the scientific task force which is currently investigating the puzzling deaths of animals throughout the island--deaths attributed to the creature known as the Chupacabras.

Dr. Rivero expressed his support for the theory that the animal deaths caused throughout the island have been caused by Rhesus monkeys which were brought to Puerto Rico's offshore islands for research purposes. A Harvard graduate and director of the Puerto Rican Zoological Society, Rivero suspects that most of the strange animal deaths which took place during 1995 were caused by the Rhesus, which has been known to kill for the sport of it.

January 25, 1996

Julio Victor Ramírez, staff writer for *El Vocero*, described the strange disappearance of a Siberian Husky and the death of a number of animals belonging to Antonia Rodríguez García, a Mayaguez housewife who notified local authorities about the incident.

According to the report filed by police officer Carlos Rivera, the victim reported the loss of a pair of rabbits and one of her dogs. One of the rabbits had curious incisions on its neck, while the other showed signs of ripped flesh. The animals gave the appearance of having been drained of blood. The mutilations appear to have taken place at 3:00 a.m., and the police report indicates having discovered chunks of raw meat mixed with fur from Mrs. Rodríguez's missing dog.

The dog engaged in a fierce encounter with the intruder, which tore off a clump of the Husky's fur during the fray. The report did not speculate if the rabbits had been killed by the Chupacabras or by a more mundane creature.

The Chupacabras Diaries

January 26, 1996

A dead pet is a cause for great sadness in any family, but a beloved pet found shredded by an unknown force, perhaps a supernatural one, inspires sheer terror.

Julio López and his family can attest to this, having experienced it themselves on the evening of January 23, 1996 when they returned to their home in Urb. Las Carolinas near Caguas. The pet in question--a rabbit belonging to Mr. López's youngest daughter--was found torn to bloody shreds in cage, which showed signs of violent destruction. Some kind of dark excrement--different from that of cows, horses, dogs or apes--was found on the site. It was suggested that the darkness was the result of having ingested blood.

Mr. López was quoted by San Juan's *El Vocero* newspaper as saying: "The shape in which the cage was left was incredible, being built out of metal tubing and linked wire...they took out the rabbit, killed it, and tore out its heard and other entrails." López added later: "This is the work of a supernatural agency--neither a dog nor an ape nor a snake could have done such a thing.

Ironically, Mr. López works as a butcher for a Caguas butcher shop. He expressed understanding what people throughout the island have felt when they discover their beloved animals have been viciously slain. His twelve year-old daughter still weeps uncontrollably over her dead rabbit.

February 3, 1996

The authorities have sought solace once more behind theories of ravenous monkeys and one-fanged dogs--the Nineties equivalent of "Swamp Gas". A turkey belonging to Herminio García, a beekeeper from the Mayaguez area, had the dubious distinction of being the first animal of its kind to be slain by the Chupacabras. The gobbler was found dead with claw marks on its neck.

The Chupacabras Diaries

The interagency task force led by Wisbel Ayala, entrusted with the task of analyzing the spate of mysterious deaths around the island, took the dead animal away for autopsy purposes. Ayala expressed the belief that although there were no witnesses, a monkey attacked the turkey. The owner did not have time to see the assailant, since by his own admission, as soon as he heard the sounds made by the attacker, he ran to grab a shotgun in hopes of defending his animal, but arrived too late.

Of a total of nine confirmed cases in western P.R., four have been submitted to forensic analysis with inconclusive results. The cases remain officially open.

February 8, 1996

Mayor José Nazario of Lajas has never seen a UFO despite persistent sightings over his municipality in southwestern Puerto Rico. He belittles the importance of the phenomenon, but did not wish to engage in argument with local ufologists on the matter. Mayor Nazario's position on the matter differs significantly from that held by Humberto Ramos, Mayor of Adjuntas, the mountain community where UFOs became an everyday occurrence in the early 90's. Unlike his colleague, Ramos has seen the maneuvers of unknown lights in the skies over his municipality.

February 8, 1996

The Chupacabras returned in full force to the Quebrada Negra sector of Canóvanas, killing at least two sheep and mutilating an unspecified number of other animals. The incidents occurred around 3:00 p.m. in a farm owned by Mr. Elias Reyes, who told authorities that his dead livestock had puncture marks on their necks and bellies, as well as torn flesh in their hindquarters, through which inner organs were apparently extracted. Mr. Reyes refused to believe that apes or wild dogs could have committed such a horrifying act, and called upon Governor Pedro Roselló to show some leadership concerning this distressing situation.