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## Raw Sewage Dropping On Salt Lake City

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**April 1999 Salt Lake City** - More than twenty times since April 9, 1999, residents south of Salt Lake City, Utah have waked up to find their roofs, sidewalks, cars and yards splattered with liquid feces during the night. At first, investigators looked to airplanes in the sky. The FAA investigated but could not match the splattered neighborhoods with specific plane traffic. As the incidents have repeated, law enforcement is now looking for vandals on the ground.

Jennifer Dobner is a crime reporter at *The Deseret News*. I talked with her and later Captain Lee Smith of the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office. First, I quoted an Associated Press report for Jennifer Dobner's comment.

### Interviews:

**Jennifer Dobner, Crime Reporter, The Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah:**

**"JENNIFER, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT, 'GOBS OF THICK, RAW SEWAGE HAS FALLEN FROM THE SKY MORE THAN A DOZEN TIMES SINCE APRIL 9, SOILING AS MANY AS SEVEN HOUSES AT ONCE.'**

That's true. They don't seem to know what it is. Initially, they thought -- they know this, they tested it and it contains e-coli bacteria. Which means it's fecal material. But they don't know if it's of human origin or if it's from an animal. All they know about the first cases they have seen is that it looks to have been dropped, the splatter and everything would come from the top and move down towards the ground.

### **THIS WOULD MEAN SOMETHING PERHAPS COMING FROM AIRCRAFT OVERHEAD?**

Well, that theory has been discussed, but they have not been able to link it to any aircraft. And at first they said if it was airline sewage, it would be treated with like a blue material and so there would be blue liquid mixed in with the matter and that hasn't proven true. No one's caught anybody. Nobody's seen anything. At this point, there is no evidence linking it to any particular source. It's quite puzzling."

**Capt. Lee Smith, West Patrol, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office:** "The victims of this simple act of vandalism -- that's what it is -- are coming out and discovering this stuff on their cars and in their yards and they are reporting it.

**THERE WAS A REPORT IN ASSOCIATED PRESS THAT SAID A MAN NAMED TOM PERKINS HAD DROPPINGS IN HIS HOUSE OR YARD AND WAS QUOTED AS SAYING IT WOULD TAKE A 600 POUND PIGEON WITH DIARRHEA TO PRODUCE THE COVERAGE THAT PROMPTED HIS SON TO ASK, 'DAD, WHAT'S ALL THE MUD DOING ON THE HOUSE?'**

If it was one of those first incidents, that would be a good description. There was

a lot of material spread out and it was spread out over several houses. I think that's why the HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) people were convinced that it was an accidental discharge from an airliner because of the volume that they were dealing with and the pattern would suggest it did come from the sky and being spread out over four or five (actually seven at one time) different houses -- that would suggest that the height and the speed were consistent with an aircraft. That's why I say law enforcement wasn't even involved in the first couple of weeks of this because we weren't suspicious that it was pranksters at work. What we were seeing in the news reports was it very possibly could be an accidental discharge from an airliner.

### **HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT TRYING TO TRACK DOWN PERPETRATORS LIKE THIS?**

Tracking them down is not how we are going to solve this. It's educating the public to stop looking up, stop looking for the answers in the sky, and start watching specific activity on the ground, especially at night, and when -- and if it continues with this activity, pretty soon somebody is going to see something that's going to shed some light on who's doing what. And the investigation lead us to the culprits."

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### **More Information:**

The Taylorsville City Council has offered a \$2500 reward for information that might lead to the arrest of whoever is behind these raw sewage drops on the suburbs south of Salt Lake City. The contact number is 801-535-5291 and ask for Detective Mallas.

#### **Credits**

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