



## Unusual Cat Deaths from London to San Jose, California

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**October 3, 1999 San Jose, California** When I was in England this summer for the total solar eclipse and to study the crop formations in Wiltshire, I learned that over the past year the London Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has received dozens of reports from residents who have found on their sidewalks or front yards their cats and rabbits disemboweled, cut in half and even decapitated. And usually without blood at the site.

Since at least the 1970s, a similar pattern of cat mutilations has been reported in Vancouver, British Columbia; Falls Church, Virginia; Lee, New York; Los Alamos, New Mexico; Ahwatukee Foothills, Arizona; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Florida; Tustin, California and now this year since May - in San Jose, California where two dozen cats, a raccoon and a rat have been found disemboweled, cut in half and oddly skinned.

Some historic background: In 1978 in St. Catharines near Toronto, Canada, authorities were frustrated by more than 100 missing cats and dogs and many others found in their owners' yards skinned, decapitated, disemboweled, cut in half or paws removed, without blood at the site.

Earthfiles, news category.

### [The New York Times Report About Mutilated Cats](#)

Ten years later on August 13, 1989, *The New York Times* reported about 67 cats found mutilated in Tustin, California - a suburb of Los Angeles near Santa Ana. The *NYT* wrote:

"Some of them were cut in half with what some say is almost surgical precision, others disemboweled or skinned. One resident said, 'There is never any blood at the scene, the animals are often dismembered with surgical precision and paws and other body parts are often left on the ground in strikingly similar arrangements. No one ever seems to hear anything, nor do dogs bark during the killing.' It was believed the cats are captured, taken elsewhere, their blood drained and organs removed, then replaced on their owners' lawns."

Cycles of cat mutilations have re-occurred in Tustin and in Plano, Texas an affluent suburb north of Dallas. In 1991, 1993 and again the past couple of years, police received dozens of reports about cats found cut in half, usually with the front half near the owners' yards or sidewalks. Plano Police Detective Mike Box also had missing reports on more than 80 domestic house cats that wore collars and I. D. tags, but were never found. Detective Box investigated satanic cult activities, but could not find any evidence that connected them to the mutilated and missing cats and other animals such as dogs.



Half-cat photographed by Plano, Texas Police Officer for Incident Report No. 91-44994, August 31, 1991.

In 1992-1993, Vancouver, British Columbia had a rash of cats found cut in half - usually the front half was found on the owner's lawn. The Supervisor of Animal Control for the Vancouver City Pound told reporters, "The cats are clearly being butchered by someone. It's a real surgical job. And all I hope is that these cats were already dead when they were cut in half." At the time during those rash of cat mutilations in Vancouver, I was working with pathologist and hematologist John Altshuler, M. D., in Denver, Colorado. We were able to obtain one of the half cats - the front half - for analysis of the abdominal excision. Dr. Altshuler confirmed that the entire excision had been cut with something hot enough to cook the collagen and hemoglobin.

By September 15, 1999, the *San Jose Mercury* newspaper headlined "Cat killer menaces southern San Jose." The article began, "A killer is stalking the cats of southern San Jose, mutilating 21 felines since May 31 - primarily pets taken from owners' yards at night and returned dead, often dismembered and skinned."

More than 2,000 fliers were distributed by police into south San Jose neighborhoods warning owners to keep their cats indoors. And the Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley posted a cash reward that has kept growing as animals have been discovered. It's now more than \$20,000.

The Director of Animal Services for the Santa Clara Humane Society, Marcia Mayeda, talked to me recently about what has happened so far.

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## Interview:

**Marcia Mayeda, Director of Animal Services for the Santa Clara Humane Society, San Jose, California:** "The first case happened around May 30 or 31, although it wasn't reported to us until the end of June when we had found three cats within just a two day period that had been mutilated and disemboweled and returned to their owner's property and left on the front lawn - either the owner's or the next door neighbor's. When that happened, this person whose cat was killed in May like that called us and said the same thing had happened to their cat.

Since then, we've had a total of 22 animals, all cats, except for one rat and one raccoon that have been mutilated and killed and in most cases the cats have been returned to their owner's property for them to find.

### COULD YOU GIVE A DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST CAT, EXACTLY WHAT WAS EXCISED?

The internal organs were removed as well as the lower portion of the body. The animal was severed in half and the upper torso and the front legs and the head remained.

### THE BACK HALF WAS GONE?

Right.

**THE INTERNAL ORGANS, INCLUDING THE HEART, WAS REMOVED FROM THE UPPER HALF?**

Yes, that was all removed.

**IN TERMS OF BLEEDING, WAS THERE ANY BLOOD?**

No, when we found the animals, it became quite obvious that they were being killed somewhere else because where they were returned there was no blood, there was no hair lying around, no signs that any of this happened there. So, we're confident that the animals are kidnapped and taken somewhere else where this is done and then they are returned. Also, it's a pretty significant undertaking with what they have done with the animals and there would certainly be a lot of noise and people would see this happening.

**HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE GETTING INTO PEOPLES' YARDS AND GETTING THESE CATS AND RETURNING THEM WITHOUT BEING SEEN?**

Well, it's very easy to get the cats. People allow their cats to go outside and cats normally will lay on the front yard, front porch, maybe wander over to the neighbor's house. So, it's really easy to grab one. It's not like they're going into the back yards to get the animal.

Our volunteers have been out in those neighborhoods passing out fliers to inform people to keep their pets inside and it's amazing how many stray cats or even owned cats are just running loose they come across. And it's very easy for them to pick them up and take them if they wanted to.

**HAVE ALL THE CATS BEEN RETURNED TO FRONT YARDS?**

No, not all the cats have been returned to their owners. We don't have owners on every single cat, and probably three-fourths of the cases we do. What has also happened - they may have been returned to the next-door neighbors but what we believe has happened is that those cats have hung out at their neighbor's house as well as the owner's house. Cats will typically pick 3 or 4 houses area for their territory. The animals are probably taken from that site, so that's why they were returned to that site instead of next door.

**BUT HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN IN FRONT YARDS?**

Yeah, it's always been in front yards.

**IN TERMS OF DEMOGRAPHICS, THE PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOOD - HAS THIS BEEN FOCUSED IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WAS 3 X 10 BLOCKS, A TIGHT NARROW AREA?**

Well, it's San Jose, but it's mostly the suburban area. It's not a really big city in the sense that there aren't high rises. It's a residential area and there's a main road that's called Almaden Expressway that is a kind of main thoroughfare for that area and most of these have happened along Almaden, like a block, or two in, so we think what's happening is that whoever is doing this is familiar with the area. We're really perplexed about who is doing this and why? At first we thought it was satanic related, and I guess that's still possible.

**BUT SO FAR NO ONE HAS COME UP WITH ANY EVIDENCE TO LINK IT TO ANYTHING, RIGHT?**

Right. Not that we're aware of.

**WHEN WAS YOUR MOST RECENT MUTILATION REPORT?**

This morning we had a rat - and it was dismembered in the same way that all the cats had been done. Previous to this, we had two cats a week ago Monday so that would be on the 13th.

**OF SEPTEMBER. SO WITH THIS RAT ON SEPT. 21ST, IT'S STILL AN ONGOING PHENOMENON...**

Yes.

**YOU HAVE NO LEADS?**

Right.

**NO REAL EVIDENCE?**

Right.

**ONLY THESE MUTILATED BODIES?**

Right.

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RAT?**

The rat was decapitated, but the head was still there and the body was still there and the internal organs were removed and it looked like it was partially skinned.

**NOW WHEN YOU SAY IT WAS DECAPITATED BUT THE HEAD WAS STILL THERE, DO YOU MEAN THAT IT HAD BEEN CUT OFF AND LAID NEXT TO THE BODY?**

Yes.

**NO BLOOD?**

No, not really.

**WAS THERE ANY BRAIN TISSUE IN THE SKULL?**

It looked like it would have been. We don't look for it, but the skull was still intact and down toward the neck was still connected, so I don't see how they could have removed it."

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## **More Information:**

If you have information to share or want to learn more about protecting pets, here are some numbers to call.

- A 24-hour hot line for tips and information leading to the capture of the San Jose cat mutilator has been established by the Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley.  
Call: (408) 727-6529 for round-the-clock dispatch.
- To contact San Jose police investigators, call: (408) 277-4161.
- For information about how to train your outdoor cat to become an indoor cat, contact the Society's Animal Behaviorist Help Line at: (408) 727-3383, Ext. 753.
- For information on what neighborhood groups can do to organize and the link between animal cruelty and human violence, call the Humane Society of the United States at (888) 213-0958.

## **Credits**

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