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23 “Half Cat” and 2 Deer Mutilations Confirmed Since March by Austin, Texas Law Enforcement

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On Wednesday, September 5, 2001, at 7:30 a.m., this deer was found dead in the front yard of a northwest Austin, Texas, home. Its abdomen was cleanly cut open as if by a sharp instrument and all internal organs were bloodlessly placed near the animal's body in the upper right of photograph above. Videotape image courtesy Channel 8 News, Austin, Texas.

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23 mutilated half cats, like this one photographed at the Plano, Texas Police Department north of Dallas in 1991, have been investigated by Austin police and Travis County Sheriff's Office since March 2001. Photograph courtesy Plano, Texas Police Department, August 31, 1991.

September 8, 2001 Austin, Texas - A month ago on August 11, I reported “Unusual Cat Deaths in Austin, Texas and Navarre, Florida” at **Earthfiles.com**. At the time, six cats had been found cut in half with no blood or signs of struggle. But a lot more has happened since then and on Thursday, September 6, Austin police and representatives from the Travis County Sheriff's office met with residents of northwestern Austin at the Balcones Country Club to announce that the cat mutilations have climbed to 23.

Since March 2001, at least 23 half-cats were found cut in half behind their front legs in the northwestern residential area of Austin, Texas. The internal organs and spine sections are cleanly severed, but there is very little if any blood at the scene and no signs of struggle,

leading investigators to speculate that the cats are being cut up somewhere else and then returned to their home vicinity. The Austin Police Department and the Travis County Sheriff's Office have been investigating and a large monetary reward has been offered for any information about the perpetrators. Currently, there are no current suspects and law enforcement officials are baffled.

Further, law enforcement said the mysterious phenomenon is accelerating and even two deer have been found with abdomens cut by what appears to be a sharp instrument without blood. The most recent mutilated deer was found on Wednesday, September 5, 2001, at 7:30 a.m., in the front yard of a northwest Austin home. Its abdomen was cleanly cut open as if by a sharp instrument and all internal organs were bloodlessly placed near the animal's body as shown in the photograph at the top of this page.

There is now a \$9,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and an Austin mutilated cat website will soon be hosted by law enforcement to help coordinate information and control rumors.

One of the residents at the meeting was veterinarian William Campbell, D.V.M., who lost one of his own cats in August. His office, the Anderson Mill Animal Clinic, performed a necropsy on the front half of his cat and discovered two small puncture holes in the base of the jaw that extended through the tongue up to the base of the skull. I asked Dr. Campbell what happened in the September 6th meeting.

Interview:

William L. Campbell, D.V.M., Anderson Mill Animal Clinic, Austin, Texas: "There was a lot of discussion about how these cats are being immobilized. I think that's what kind of worries everybody. What's happening there? It's a little hard for everybody to figure out how do you immobilize these cats to even do this.

In other words, a cat is pretty nimble and fast.

Exactly.

How are they kept (still) in order to be cut in half?

Exactly.

And no blood.

Yes. And really no evidence of gun shot, bow. There is just nothing there. And sometimes because pieces are missing. But the police would not help us any there because that was on a lot of peoples' minds and they said they couldn't comment on that. And the only cat I saw which was mine, there wasn't enough left of her to tell anything. We could not figure out cause of death.

When I last talked with you and your colleague, Dr. Jasen Trautwein, about your own cat that was killed and mutilated, there had only been a half dozen and that was the middle of August. We are now at September 7 and the number of cat deaths is up to 23.

The time line no one could put together a time line for us. Maybe with the website, someone will. The only thing we got out of the meeting was that the first one happened last March and the last one just happened a few days ago and that it seems to be accelerating.

The number of cases has gone from 6 to 23 in less than a month. Have you seen any photographs of the last cat mutilations to compare to others?

No. Nothing. It's real frustrating.

Even at the law enforcement meeting, they did not try to show photographs?

No, not a thing.

But as far as you know from talking with the owners of other cats and hearing the local news, it is the same procedure in which cats are being cut behind the front legs?

As far as I know. Of those 23 cats, I don't know specifics on any of them, other than just vague 'cut in half' or 'beheaded.' Those are the two comments that we kept hearing, 'beheaded.' Does that mean behind the shoulders? Who knows?

Did the police say that in all these instances, they still lack blood and evidence?

No, they would not comment on that.

Everything has been focused in the same area where you live?

I'm actually on the fringe. There is a center of activity in the area and as far as I know, I'm about the furthest out of anybody. But there is a central point of little neighborhoods that seem to be the focus.

That's the Balcones and Spicewood Springs area?

You could call it that, sure.

The meeting was held last night at the Balcones Country Club?

That's right. There were a couple of guys who have had their cats killed.

The two people who spoke and who had their cats mutilated, what did they say?

About the same experience I had. Mutilated cats, middle of the night, no signs of a struggle, nothing except mutilated cats.

Were the front halves there?

Let's see. One guy just said his cat was cut in half. The other one said his cat was cut in half and found the liver in his yard. The front half was in the neighbor's yard, I think.

Did they talk about the deer mutilation Wednesday?

Not a whole lot. It's just another thing that's got people nervous. But no, not really.

Because it is supposed to have been disemboweled in a very clean, bloodless way with an excision.

I don't know enough about that. I don't know what to say.

In terms of the 23 cats and accelerating numbers of deaths, did the police advise you as a homeowners group about what they are going to do next to investigate?

Basically, just increasing patrols or telling people to keep looking out your windows and see what's going on. That's about it. Not much else to go on. I think the impression they left us with. It wasn't an impression, it's what they told us, is that they have no leads.

No leads at all.

No. Nothing.

If the police are saying it is increasing, how in the world is it happening with so much police attention? They are cruising around the neighborhoods. So how do the cat mutilations continue to increase?

I think there was some discussion that they are not cruising around enough. We're kind of in the suburbs, newly annexed, and there were some complaints that we need to see you all out here patrolling. I think their main comment was, 'We need you all helping us. We need

everybody watching and see if you can let us know something.' Their comment was that's usually how most crimes like this are solved is some neighbor seeing something.

Do you know if they have rfound any more of those small puncture marks under the jaw as you did on your cat?

No.

If the police and Animal Cruelty have, they haven't told you?

Right.”

More Information:

If anyone has any information about the cat and deer mutilations in Austin, Texas, please call:

Roy Erwin, Austin Police Department's Animal Cruelty Peace Officer in charge of investigation: **512-708-6022**.

Travis County Sheriff's Office: **512-473-9721**.

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