



## Dozen Mutilated Cats Found in San Diego, California

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Since September in the Ocean Beach and Point Loma U. S. Naval training Center areas, a dozen cats have been found cut in half or mutilated and left in yards or on house steps.

### Cats mysteriously found dead around Peninsula

By KEVIN CHRISTENSEN  
The Beacon

The recent bout of feral cat killings originally reported at the former Naval Training Center (NTC) has hit domestic outdoor cats around Ocean Beach and Point Loma.

"The incisions that were made were remarkably clean, there were no bite wounds and almost no blood. We think that it was done by human hands," Lasee also pointed out that the cat had also received serious head trauma, leading to the suspicion that the cat was knocked out before being cut.

Nikon Gurfield, DVM, performed necropsies. Of the three necropsy reports obtained by the Peninsula Beacon, two of the analyses determine that the deaths are attributed to canines or coyotes. In the third case, the cause of death is determined as "acute cardiovascular disease."

millimeter-thick intertwined rope around the cat's neck "tight enough so that a single finger cannot fit between the rope and neck." Gurfield comments in the report that "The lesions [on the cat's neck] are consistent with, though not specific, for strangulation." The report also states that no evidence of any other material was

October 4, 2001, *Peninsula Beacon*, Ocean Beach and Point Loma, California.

Earthfiles, news category.

**October 20, 2001 Ocean Beach, California** - Since September at least a dozen domestic and wild cats around the Naval Air Station in Point Loma or a neighborhood in Ocean Beach have been found cut in half, similar to the Austin, Texas cases, or completely eviscerated by a clean, bloodless excision in the belly from which all internal organs were removed.

One of the cat owners talked to me this weekend about her loss. Alicia Baskette is an attorney who specializes in workers compensation insurance defense. She and her husband were shocked when they found only the front half of their dead 10-year-old male cat across the street on Monday, September 10.

### Interview:

**Alicia Baskette, Attorney, Ocean Beach, California:** "He did appear to have been cut in half. The top half was remaining with its head. The bottom half was gone, and it looked like he had been cut with a knife. It didn't look like an animal. It wasn't jagged. There were no teeth marks. There was no blood. He was in a very visible spot, almost as though the person wanted us to find him right away which we did the next morning. We saw him the evening before and he went out and did not come back in. Then the next day we found him across the street. And there have been some cat mutilations in San Diego at the Naval Training Center which I have read about in the paper, so that was the first thing that came to my mind was that someone had mutilated him. Although my husband and I couldn't imagine how it happened. We didn't hear anything. It's

right across the street from us. It's a very quiet neighborhood. He wasn't a friendly cat and we couldn't imagine him volunteering to go with someone he didn't know how that happened. We didn't see any footprints or dog prints.



Example of half cat, not in San Diego, but in Plano, Texas Incident Report #91-44994, August 31, 1991. Photograph taken by Plano, Texas Police Detective Mike Box.

We started talking to our neighbors. One of the neighbors said it happened to another lady about 8 blocks away. You've got to call the authorities because some one is cutting cats in half in our neighborhood. So, we called the Humane Society and we called Animal Control and the Police Department. And we just got the impression they really weren't that interested. They said the thing to do was to send him to the County Vet which we did. We unburied him, he was sent to the County Vet for a necropsy report and it came back coyote. But there are no coyotes in our area. And how could he be so perfectly cut in half? Why would they leave half of him if they were hungry and that's why they killed him?

Coyotes howl when they kill and that nothing happened. So, it just seemed to not be a good explanation for how he died. And our vet, Dr. Berg, told us that she had seen another cat come in like that just a few days prior, or just the day before. And she thought it was a human killing because the cut was perfect and it didn't look like any animal could have done something like that. And there continued to be a series of cats. The most recent one I know about was last week.

So now they are doing investigations in our area because they did get a UC-Davis pathology report saying it human killing was involved.

### **THE WOUND THAT CUT YOUR CAT IN HALF WAS COMPLETELY BLOODLESS WHEN YOU FOUND IT?**

It looked bloodless. No blood on the ground. The cut wasn't bloody."

#### Veterinarian Examines Half Cat:

The Baskettes discussed the September 10 death of their cat with veterinarian, Dr. Christy Berg, who said she had seen another similar half cat the day before and had herself necropsied two cats that had large surgical ovals of flesh removed from their abdomens along with all internal organs and the cuts were confirmed by pathology examination to be cut with a sharp metallic instrument.

**Christy Berg, D.V.M., Sunset Cliffs Animal Hospital, San Diego, California:** "In the most recent ones, the cat was found without abdominal organs.

### **WAS IT A SLIT THAT WENT FROM THE CHEST BACK TO THE ANAL AREA?**

It wasn't a single slit. It was more a round, there was a large chunk of fur and skin removed as well. The incision extended from the borders of the ribs, including some of the ribs, down and around in a sort of circular excision down to the back legs.

**THE EXCISION ITSELF WAS BLOODLESS?**

It was clean and it had been done post mortem. These cats were killed by head trauma. After they had already been killed by some sort of head trauma and then the organs were removed after the cat had already passed away.

**BECAUSE THERE WAS NO BLOOD?**

There was no bleeding associated with the wounds, yeah.

**THERE WAS NO PUMPING OF THE HEART AFTER THE DEATH AND EXCISIONS?**

Right.

**IN YOUR PRACTICE AS A VETERINARIAN, HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BEFORE?**

No, I haven't seen any of this until the last couple of months.

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A VET?**

Almost six years.

**DID YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW STUDY THE EXCISION TO LOOK FOR CAUTERY SUCH AS A LASER MIGHT DO?**

There is no evidence of any burn on them. They have been looked at by a couple of different pathologists, both local as well as a private lab, and they didn't see anything associated with a burn or laser.

**WHAT WAS THE BOTTOM LINE ON THEIR ANALYSIS?**

There have been some conflicting reports. Some of the cats appeared as if they might have been victims of coyote attacks. The most recent ones have been consistent with some sort of human involvement.

**BECAUSE IT IS CLEARLY SURGICAL AFTER THE DEATH AND THE HEAD TRAUMA?**

Because of the surgical wounds at post mortem. The cutting wounds post mortem. Most of our coyotes can't do that!

**RIGHT. AND HAVE YOU SEEN ONE OR TWO OF THESE ANIMALS YOURSELF?**

Yes, I have. Two of them have come into this hospital.

**DID YOU DO NECROPSIES ON BOTH?**

We did only gross necropsies. And basically the two we saw were killed by some sort of head trauma and subsequently had their organs and large patch of stomach flesh removed.

**IT WAS PRETTY MUCH A NEAT CIRCLE OR OVAL?**

Yes, absolutely. There was no evidence of tearing at all.

**YOU WOULD COMPARE IT TO A SCALPEL?**

More like a large pair of shears.

**SCISSORS, AND YOU WOULD SAY THAT WHY?**

Because there was a single wound more like a cutting and the hair was consistent with cutting. You can't cut hair and skin with a scalpel blade like that."

Another Odd Case

Pathology confirms strangulation and acute cardiovascular collapse in 3-year-old female cat found dead with three strands of 3 millimeter thick rope around her neck.

This is a young adult intact male black domestic short hair feline weighing 10lbs in fair nutritional and poor postmortem conditions.

**GROSS DESCRIPTION**

There are 3 strands of 3mm thick intertwined rope around the neck. The rope is tight enough so that a single finger cannot fit between the rope and the neck. There are many fleas on the haircoat. There are tan formed feces in the rectum and colon. The heart weighs 15.6 grams. The lungs are mottled dark red and float in formalin. The stomach is full of tan ingesta. There are multifocal 2mm-1cm diameter flat areas of pallor on the surface of the liver. The liver is firm. There are multifocal 1mm diameter white flat foci on the spleen. The mesenteric lymph nodes are enlarged. The urinary bladder is empty.

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## More Information:

### [\\$600 Reward Posted for Information About Mutilated Cats in San Diego](#)

Alicia Baskette, Attorney, and her husband have put up a \$500 reward for information and a neighbor has added another \$100 reward.

**To report information**, call Barbara Caliri, Director, Feral Cat Coalition, San Diego:

**(619) 465-0941**

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