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Mystery Stalks The Prairie

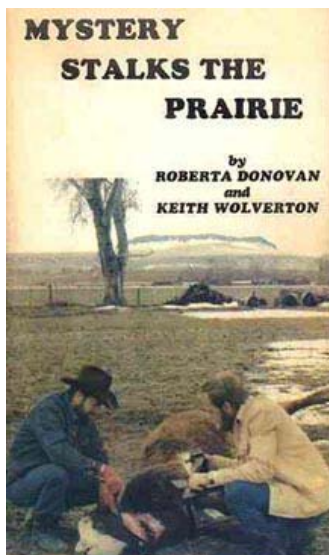
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Introduction

Keith Wolverton was the first deputy sheriff to write on the record in 1976 about his investigations of the animal mutilation mystery. The place was Great Falls, Montana and nearby Malmstrom AFB with all its Minutemen nuclear missiles waiting to launch during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Deputy Wolverton's collection of physical evidence and eyewitness testimonies indicated that the mutilators were not natural predators, disease or satanic cults.

During my own animal mutilation research in the 1980s, I talked with Deputy Wolverton about the odd serrated edge he had discovered and photographed in the Montana cases and which was found in many other mutilations ranging from Oregon to Alabama. What was the cutting instrument? Did it cauterize as it made its pinking shearer excision?

Who - or what - was killing and mutilating animals around the world - and *why*? Keith Wolverton's 1976 book, written with Roberta Donovan, has long been out of print. But now with their permission, Earthfiles.com has produced an electronic version of the original book.



Deputy Sheriff Keith Wolverton, Cascade County Sheriff's Office, Great Falls, Montana, examining a mutilated cow with Deputy Ken Anderson.

Dedication

to

John C. Krsul

Sheriff of Cascade County, Montana

and his staff, this book is dedicated with gratitude and appreciation.

Sheriff Krsul has realized, from the beginning, the importance of investigating reports of cattle mutilations, UFOs, hairy creatures and other phenomena. He has given his staff full support in their efforts to solve the mysterious happenings and his encouragement was important.

In a very real sense, without Sheriff Krsul's help, this book would not have been written.

Originally published by T.H.A.R. Institute, Raynesford, Montana.

In Appreciation

We are deeply grateful to the people who assisted in various ways with the investigations and thus, helped to make this book possible.

A special tribute goes to those individuals who reported to law officers the strange incidents they witnessed. Without the cooperation of these conscientious citizens, there would have been no investigation.

We sincerely appreciate the contributions by physicians, veterinarians, pathologists, toxicologists and others who shared their professional knowledge and skill.

Our thanks to the news media for the fine cooperation that made the task of investigation easier. Most of all, we appreciate and want to thank those members of the Cascade County Sheriff's Department who shared and are still sharing the burden of investigation. They are Undersheriff Glenn Osborne, Deputies Ken Anderson, Arne Sand, Shirley Peterson and Clerk Elaine Anderson. R.D. and K. W.



Roberta Donovan and Keith Wolverton, Co-Authors, 1976.

About The Authors

Mystery Stalks the Prairie was written by two Montanans, Mrs. Roberta Donovan of Lewistown and Captain Keith Wolverton of Great Falls, a deputy sheriff for Cascade County.

Roberta Donovan, a former newspaper reporter and editor, wrote this book and Captain Wolverton, an experienced lawman and the officer in charge of investigating reports of cattle mutilations, UFOs and hairy creatures, provided the information and technical advice.

This was the second book for Mrs. Donovan. Her fictionalized account of her father's boyhood in Montana's early days, *Ike - Boy of the Breaks*, was published in November 1975 by T.H.A.R. Institute of Raynesford, Montana.

Mrs. Donovan served for twelve years as editor of the *Lewistown News-Argus*, Montana. She continued to do freelance writing for a number of publications, including some of national scope, and was a correspondent for the *Billings Gazette*, Montana.

Mrs. Donovan was a member and past president of Montana Press Women and

in 1968 was named that organization's Montana Press Woman of the Year. She won more than 100 state and national awards for her writing. She is the mother of six grown children and seven grandchildren.

Captain Keith Wolverton, a native of Great Falls, was a member of the Cascade County Sheriff's Office from 1965 until 1990 when he retired after 25 years in law enforcement. He was one of two men responsible for establishing the Cascade County K-9 Academy where lawmen and their dogs are trained in a unique school. It was the only resident K-9 training academy in the United States. Captain Wolverton taught at the academy until 1975 when he was transferred to duty with the sheriff's office in Great Falls.

The events in this book represent countless hours of research and investigation on the part of Captain Wolverton and his fellow officers. Over the years, Captain Wolverton attended a number of seminars and special schools to continue his specialized training as a law enforcement officer.

In 1972, the Great Falls Exchange Club selected Captain Wolverton as their Law Officer of the Year from all of the Great Falls, Cascade County and Malmstrom Air Force Base lawmen, as well as area members of the Montana Highway Patrol. Captain Wolverton was active in the Cascade County Sheriff's Posse which his father helped establish and has assisted in a number of rescues. He particularly enjoyed participation in that organization because it was horse mounted. Captain Wolverton was married and had two daughters and a son.



Members of the Cascade County Sheriff's Department team look over some of the information they have assembled in their investigations of cattle mutilations, sightings of unidentified flying objects and the appearance of strange biped creatures.

Left to right, they are Deputy Ken Anderson, Undersheriff Glenn Osborne at map, Clerk Elaine

Anderson, Deputy Arne Sand and Captain Keith Wolverton. Deputy Shirley Peterson was not present.

Foreword In 1976

We live in a strange and mysterious time.

Even though technological advances that boggle the mind with their intricacy are routine tools of scientists and a wealth of knowledge that includes the know-how to put an astronaut on the moon is at man's command; still, man is faced with some mysteries that defy solution.

Among these mysteries are the many cattle mutilations reported recently in north-central Montana. Investigating law officers are baffled by bizarre cases which seem to have no logical explanation. Diligent and intensive research by officers, assisted by pathologists, veterinarians, toxicologists and others, has failed to unravel the mystery.

Facts have been established, but the important questions ... who is doing this and why? ...have not been answered.

Some persons say the mutilations are caused by predators. This is occasionally true. However, it becomes difficult to blame a coyote or magpie predator when an investigator finds an exact round patch of hide has been neatly removed by a sharp instrument, or all of the blood has been removed from the animal, or the

area around the animal appears burned, or all these incidents have occurred.

The puzzle becomes more obscure when, in most instances, no tracks - animal, human, or vehicle - are found. In other cases, investigators have found horse tracks in the mutilation area, but the landowner swore no horses had been there for many years.

This book relates some of these strange incidents, but it *does not* attempt to draw a conclusion. The events are factual, based on reports on file in the office of the Cascade County (Montana) Sheriff's office. These reports are used with permission.

Other mysterious events which may or may not be related to the cattle mutilations are also reported here. These events include numerous reported sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs), unidentified helicopters and strange hairy, man-like creatures.

Incidents reported here occurred between August 1974 and May 1976 in a five-county area of Montana which has had an appreciably large number of cattle mutilations.

Several stories and books are being written about cattle mutilations, UFOs and hairy creatures. Some may be true. But there are others that investigation has proven to be false. Some writings are dramatized and sensationalized, perhaps to stimulate greater readership.

This is not our intention. As co-authors of *Mystery Stalks the Prairie*, we have been factual within the confines of our knowledge. And where there was a choice, we have chosen to underplay the situation, as there is no desire to create fear or panic.

We had two purposes in writing this book. One is to let the American people know what is happening. We believe, but cannot prove, there are those who know what is behind these bizarre happenings, but for various reasons they are keeping silent. Others appear to ignore the situation, but it may be that they have not had access to certain facts, such as those uncovered by the Cascade County Sheriff's Department. We believe the people have a right to know.

Our second reason for writing this book is there may be a chance, however slim, that this information may help solve the mystery and may bring new evidence to light. *Mystery Stalks the Prairie* may also aid public officials to have a better understanding of what they are facing.

Except for those who are presently serving as law enforcement officers, all names of individuals have been omitted to protect them from implication in any way. But the incidents are true - or as true as it is humanly possible to tell them.

- Roberta Donovan and Keith Wolverton

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Chapter 1

A Cut with a Serrated Edge



The close-up on the serrated edge (top photo) was found on the mutilated cow pictured above. The report of an animal pathologist ruled out any possibility of the cut being done by a predator. Lawmen have not been able to determine what type of instrument may have been used to make the cut. All mutilation photographs by Cascade County Sheriff's Office.

Who?

Why?

From the beginning, these have been the two questions lawmen in a five-county area of north central Montana have asked as they investigated one cattle mutilation after another. Despite their best efforts, they have not yet found the answer. Each baffling bit of evidence is scrutinized as they persist in their efforts to solve the mysteries and put an end to the bizarre incidents.

One of the most startling clues might have gone undetected if it had not been for the law officers' meticulous examination of the dead cow's carcass. The Cascade County Sheriff's Department had been called the afternoon of September 22, 1975, to investigate the death of two cows on a ranch near Belt, southeast of Great Falls. A veterinarian, who had seen the cows earlier, suspected mutilation and had advised the rancher to call the sheriff.

Initial examination of the first cow showed lawmen that the cow had obviously been mutilated. Dead about two days, the cow's bag, teats, rectal area and

reproductive organs were removed, thus making it possible to look completely through the bag area and out the rectal opening.

What made this investigation different from those that had preceded it was the strange way the hide had been cut in removing the bag. One of the deputies, in lifting some of the remaining hide, discovered that the cut, obviously made with a very sharp instrument, had serrated edges similar to those created with pinking shears. This was the first time the officers had encountered this type of cut.

Captain Keith Wolverton, Cascade County Sheriff's Deputy, who had been working on mutilation cases for several months, decided to seek an expert opinion on the cut edge. A sample of the serrated hide was taken to a Montana medical pathologist, who confirmed the cut was made with a very sharp instrument. Captain Wolverton then took a sample to a well known veterinarian pathologist in Colorado and received the following report:

Veterinarian Pathologist Report:

"This strip of skin had a long, straight cut edge with regular serrations (approximately 3/16 of an inch in width). Hair in one area had knowingly been clipped, but in untouched areas the hair had been cut at the laceration edge. Changes on the skin edge resembled neither tooth marks of a predator, nor those of wire lacerations. The changes were similar to those that could be made by a knife except the regular striations."

The pathologist's reports were of primary importance to the small team of law officers investigating such incidents because the reports directly challenged the theory frequently advanced by some people who said mutilations did not occur, but the severance of tissue from carcasses was the work of predators.

Coyotes may feast upon a carcass, but they do not leave a neatly serrated edge where they gnaw away the hide! Colored photographs of the carcass, taken by Deputy Ken Anderson, provide additional evidence that the hide cut had a precise serrated edge.

The serrated cut discovery was considered a major breakthrough in a sometimes frustrating and often perplexing investigation. Reports of possible cattle mutilations had been received in the Cascade County Sheriff's Office since August, 1974, but the number of such incidents began to markedly increase during the late summer and early fall of the following year. Although some mutilations were attributed to predators, it was obvious in other cases something else had occurred. But what?



Another clue to the mystery was added when a section of this cut area on the jaw was examined at a laboratory. It showed that the cut not only had a serrated edge, but that it had also definitely been *burned*.

Each report was extensively investigated and bits of evidence were assembled, studied, analyzed. It was obvious that the cattle were dead. However, in many instances it was equally discernible that the cattle were mutilated. The question of who or what is causing mutilations continues unanswered today.

Many theories have been advanced. Some of them are proclaimed by concerned and reliable citizens who believe a wide spectrum of possibilities from Satan cults to flying saucers. However, these associations have not been proven. After almost a year of intensive investigation, Captain Wolverton remarked, *I'm no*

longer as eager to find out who is doing it as I am to discover why!"

Like working on a giant jigsaw puzzle, law officers have pieced together bits and scraps of information, but they are not always certain that they have a connection with the complete picture. The officers always thoroughly investigate the entire episode.

An important puzzle segment was found just 24 days after the serrated cut was discovered. On October 16, 1975, the sheriff's department was called to investigate the death of another cow in the Belt area. The perplexity of the situation was increased by the fact the dead cow was found in a securely locked pasture and there were no visible tracks in the area.

The absence of tracks has consistently been one of the most baffling aspects of the cattle mutilations in Montana. The few tracks that have been found around mutilations were those of other cattle. The absence of tracks is unusual because the ground around the dead cows was often soft, muddy or covered with snow.

Examination of this cow showed that its left jaw had been skinned, its tongue excised and the right eye removed, not from the socket, but through the bone directly above the eye.

A significant discovery was made by the veterinarian who removed certain organs and other parts of the carcass for a toxicology examination. In skinning the animal, the veterinarian found what appeared to be a needle mark on the upper left leg. The mark went through the hide and into the flesh. Did this indicate that the animal was injected with a drug to either anesthetize or kill it before the mutilation took place?



In skinning a mutilated cow, a veterinarian discovered what appeared to be a needle puncture wound in the upper left leg. The photo shows the wound (arrow) after the area around it was removed for analyses. Lawmen pondered whether the wound meant the cow had been injected with a drug to either anesthetize or kill it before mutilation.

The tissue around the mark was removed for examination, along with the heart, liver, lungs, skeletal tissue, and bladder. In addition, the cuts around the head and eye were removed for analyses. No drug was positively identified in analyses, but laboratory examination identified another unique clue. Cut areas on the jaw and around the eye not only had a serrated edge, but were burned.

Immediately after the first discovery of a serrated cut, officers tried to duplicate the cuts with various instruments, including a pizza cutter, leather stitcher and pinking scissors. The results were similar, but not identical. Perhaps, the lawmen jested, whoever or whatever was doing the mutilations had a giant cookie cutter that made the serrated cuts!

After discovery of the burned and serrated cut, officers learned from a visitor to their office, who had had experience with laser beams, that this type of edge could be produced in metal using lasers. As yet it has not been possible to

determine if serration can be produced on cowhide with laser.

Another mystifying bit of evidence surfaced when Undersheriff Jerry Skelton of Judith Basin County investigated a calf mutilation near Utica. Undersheriff Skelton was called October 9, 1975, to investigate the death of the bull calf. Its testicles had been removed, as well as the cords leading to them. The only evidence he found at the scene - and it seemed to have no logical explanation - was that several stones, weighing as much as six or seven pounds each, were moved from a nearby rock pile. The rocks were turned over and moved around.



This is bull calf in a photo taken ten days after mutilation first discovered.
A white residue stretched from the calf to the ground like a cobweb.
The substance proved to be a petroleum distillate.



Part of the calf's male sexual organs were removed through this round excision.
This mutilation took place in Judith Basin County.

Undersheriff Skelton removed some parts of the calf for examination by a toxicologist and left the carcass at the place where he found it. Ten days later, at the request of the rancher who owned the calf, Undersheriff Skelton returned to the scene. During the ten days since the first investigation, a snow had fallen in the area and later melted. The calf was found covered with a filmy white substance that stretched from the carcass to the surrounding ground like a cobweb. Laboratory tests identified it as petroleum distillate. No one seems to know why the calf was shrouded in the substance.

But perhaps the most unusual incident investigated so far has involved not cattle, but a Shetland pony. It took place in Teton County northwest of Great Falls and Pete Howard, the Sheriff, asked the assistance of the Cascade County Sheriff's Office to investigate the possible mutilation.



The five Montana counties of Cascade, Chouteau, Teton, Judith Basin and Pondera have been the focus of unusual animal deaths that law enforcement has long called "mutilations" since the early 1970s to 2002, a span of more than thirty years without a single arrest and arraignment on an animal mutilation charge. See [Earthfiles 08/18/01](#).

Captain Keith Wolverton and Deputy Arne Sand responded. The Cascade County officers and Sheriff Howard were joined by a veterinarian and two livestock inspectors. They found the Shetland stud lying on its left side. All of its male organs had been removed and it was evident a very sharp instrument had been used in the tissue removal.

When the veterinarian, in the course of his examination, opened the horse's throat, he discovered two puncture wounds with corresponding bruises. The most surprising development came when the veterinarian cut open the horse's body and found that it contained no blood, except for a minute amount which he collected in two small vials.

Since the horse had weighed about 600 pounds, the veterinarian estimated the horse should have about 60 pounds (or 60 pints) of blood. He suggested that removal of this quantity of blood with hand-operated equipment would require a minimum of 90 minutes. A battery-operated pump device would have reduced the time to approximately 15 minutes.

In subsequent cattle investigations wherein all of the blood was removed, an animal pathologist stated that it is usually impossible to remove all of the blood because when a third of the blood is removed, the veins collapse.

However, it could be done, he stated, by injecting a saline solution into the heart (while the animal is alive) to increase the heart action and pump the blood faster. He added that it is next to impossible to detect the saline solution during autopsy.

The Shetland pony was seen by its owner's neighbor about three or four days before its carcass was found. The neighbor told officers he saw the small horse lying on the bank above an irrigation ditch and thought it looked sick or dead, so he yelled at it. When it raised its head, the neighbor assumed it was all right and went on. Later the same evening he saw the horse lying on the pasture side of the irrigation dike where its carcass was found, but the neighbor was busy irrigating and he did not stop to investigate.

The veterinarian was unable to determine the cause of the animal's death. Puncture throat wounds suggested the injection of drugs or another substance to tranquilize or kill the Shetland pony.

Through investigation, it was established that the Shetland pony was mutilated during daylight hours and yet no one saw it happen or even saw anything unusual in the area. To determine the exact time of mutilations has not been possible, but it is believed most of them occur at night. Even though many mutilations are reported in Montana, not one person has ever reported seeing one take place.



One of the few mutilation cases investigated so far that

has not involved cattle is this Shetland pony which was killed in Teton county. All of its male organs had been removed with a sharp instrument and the carcass was completely void of blood. A pathologist stated that it is impossible to remove all of the blood because by the time a third of it is removed, the veins collapse.



Close examination of the Shetland pony by a veterinarian disclosed two puncture wounds in the throat. Similar puncture marks were found later in the jugular veins of other mutilated animals and in each instance, the two wounds were the same distance apart.

To be continued in **Chapter 2 - Case of the Missing Calf**

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