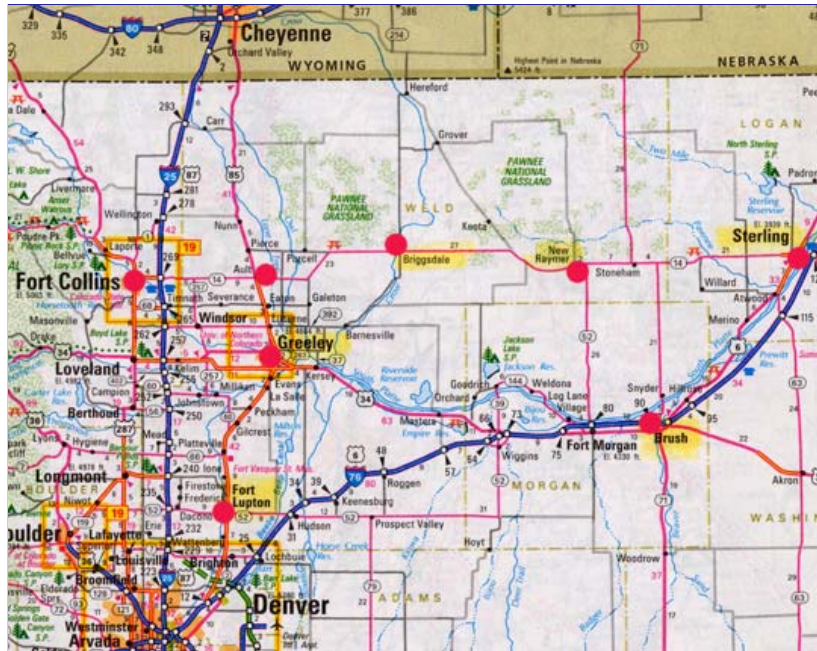




Part 5: 1980 Animal Mutilation High Strangeness Files

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“There was a chemistry sophistication in the actions of whoever broke into my lab and took all the calf samples.”
- Iona Hoepfner, Briggsdale High School Science Teacher



From Fort Collins to Briggsdale to Sterling, Colorado, the red dots on the map include some of the ranching communities where animal mutilations were reported repeatedly in the 1970s and 1980s.

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October 17, 2009 Albuquerque, New Mexico - The following continues from Parts 1- 4 about the 1980 animal mutilation high strangeness summary I typed up for my private research files and am now sharing for the first time in this Real X-Files series. This segment follows up on Briggsdale science teacher, Iona Hoepfner's, investigation of the two steer mutilations on the Roland Ball ranch five miles west of Briggsdale discovered Tuesday, September 16, 1980. On Thursday, September 18, the Balls took Iona out to the pasture to take tissue and fluid samples from the freshest dead calf. A month later on October 15, 1980, I talked with Iona by phone about her investigation.

Interview Notes from Phone Conversation with Iona Hoepfner on October 15, 1980

Iona told me that Weld County Sheriff Andrews had cut a triangle-shaped piece of hide in the calf's belly that included part of the 4-inch circle excision the mutilators had done. Wanting to look at both the mutilator's cut line under a microscope and compare to the Sheriff's known cut, Iona Hoepfner used her own scalpel to cut around the mutilator's circle and Sheriff Andrew's excision for one large sample from the freshest calf.

Iona tried to get blood from a leg vein, but could not. So, she put her syringe in the carotid artery. She said she should have gotten a syringe full of blood. But she could only extract about 5 cubic centimeters (ccs) of a nearly transparent, maroon-colored fluid. She thought perhaps it was mostly serum with some

corpuscles.

She also took smear samples from the mouth fluids around the calf's teeth and tissue samples from the eyes and skin.

There was a pool of red-colored fluid about 3 to 4 centimeters deep and 12 to 13 centimeters across near the calf's head. There was also some of this red-colored fluid near the calf's belly. The strange fluid did not absorb into the loose, crumbly soil and was not even evaporating while a hot wind blew. Iona gathered some of that red liquid into a vial.

Iona also tried to take samples from the two puncture wounds on the back of the calf's neck. She told me, "The strange thing was, there wasn't any interstitial fluid or blood in those holes." She tried to get something from the holes on a smear glass, but couldn't get anything because the holes were so dry. Eventually, Iona took a small incision from inside both holes, about 1 centimeter into each hole.

Iona measured the diameter of the holes. Each puncture was 5 millimeters in diameter. The distance between the puncture holes was 2 centimeters. Each went into the calf's neck approximately 3 to 3.5 centimeters. The punctures were approximately 5 centimeters to the right of the steer's spinal column at approximately the thoracic vertebrae. Was this the same type of hole in the Bateman heifer?

Iona said she tried to probe the holes, but it was hard to know exactly how deep the holes had gone into the calf because the underlying muscle tissue might have closed up some after death. She did not know.

Iona said the first things that came to her mind when she examined the puncture wounds were "towel clamps used in hospital surgery." She is also a medical school drop out and had worked with them.

Iona took all her samples back to her lab immediately and set up cultures in her incubator, did some stains and around midnight, her husband and the high school coach joined her in the lab after a football game. She had opened up windows because the calf sample smelled bad, so the men helped her close the windows and lock up.

At 6:30 AM, 6.5 hours later, the school's maintenance crew got to school and an hour later at 7:30 AM, they called Iona Hoepfner to ask, "Did you leave the door open and stuff all over the floor in the lab?"

Iona immediately left for the school and was shocked to discover that someone had gone through everything. They took all her fluid samples from the steer, all the cultures in the incubator, which was inside a cabinet and would not have been found unless the intruder was specifically looking for the cultures and was persistent enough to go through every cabinet in the room, which the intruder had done.

Iona told me, "The strangest thing was that the vial containing the liquid sample from the ground had apparently been emptied into another container that the intruder carried because the sample jar I had put the fluid in and labeled was left on the counter along with the screw cap that had been on it. Now the sample jar was empty. So, the intruder had to have transferred that liquid to some other container.

Furthermore, the intruder went through my chemical cabinet. A bottle of formaldehyde had been set aside as if to be taken. Instead, what was missing was my brand new methyl alcohol. And the intruder also transferred that alcohol to some other container because the methyl alcohol container was empty in the cabinet.

"Whoever took those calf samples did not want them contaminated by formaldehyde and decided instead to put the specimens in the methyl alcohol. At least that is my speculation. In fact, I myself intended to store the specimens in the alcohol, too. Whoever went through the lab also was looking for specific-sized lab containers. There was a chemistry sophistication in the actions of whoever broke into my lab and took all the calf samples."

"Who knew you gathered the samples from the calf?" I asked.

"The Ball family, my family and most of the Briggsdale community's 63 residents. I am the only scientifically knowledgeable person living here and I was expected to help the Balls investigate the strange deaths of the two calves."

Iona told me some other odd details about the theft. The windows were all

locked except one, which she never opened because she always put student science projects on a ledge in front of that window. It was the one window in her science lab that was open as usual, but not a thing on the ledge had been disturbed.

"Could the intruder have picked the door lock or used a credit card to open the door lock?" I wondered.

"Well, my husband tried sliding a thin metal plate in the door and was able to open it, so the room was not very secure."

The Briggsdale High School Superintendent did not want the theft reported publicly because he was afraid it would upset the residents and students too much. But who was watching Iona Hoepfner on Thursday, September 18, when she went to the Ball ranch to gather samples from the mutilated male calf?

Continued in **Part 6** - What happened to Weld County Sheriff's Samples?

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More Information:

For further information about worldwide animal mutilations, please see **Earthfiles Archive** for ten years of reports (a few titles listed below). Also, please see my books *Alien Harvest*, the 2-volume *Glimpses of Other Realities*, and my documentaries *A Strange Harvest* and *Strange Harvests 1993* now available in DVD format in the **Earthfiles Shop**.

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