

Mutilation: ‘There’s a lot of concern about this and there needs to be’

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eyes made out the dead body of a cow lying on its side in the dirt.

“At the moment I didn’t think anything of it,” Stubblefield said. “But then when I looked closer, you know, it didn’t look right.”

The skin around the cow’s mouth was sliced away, and its tongue, glands and sex organs had been cleanly removed. A piece of the cow’s ear was cut off and placed on its neck.

“It’s a very unusual cut,” Stubblefield said. “There was no blood.”

He found no footprints or tracks as evidence of someone traveling through the area. Stubblefield first thought it might be the work of wolves, so he called authorities to get some answers.

According to Stubblefield, the Oregon State Police responded to the scene on Sept. 12 and confirmed it as a mutilation kill. The Oregon State Police trooper with knowledge of the case could not be reached for comment

prior to deadline on Friday, Sept. 25.

“We got lucky because we found the cow within a couple days of when it had been killed, so it really yielded some good photos and hopefully some good evidence,” he said. “What’s more disturbing is now that we’ve identified this as a mutilation kill, we’ve actually discovered we had two other ones.”

Stubblefield raises cattle as part of a small ranching operation between Pendleton and Ukiah. He said these other two potential mutilations occurred within the last six months. One was a cow of his own that was found in an “extremely remote location unconnected to this site,” while the other finding belonged to another rancher. That cow was found on Stubblefield’s property.

Neither were found as timely as the one discovered on Sept. 12, he said, but the Oregon State Police were informed of them and an investigation is underway.

The scene Stubblefield stumbled onto shares dis-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Cattle graze on the forested land along Dixie Ranch Road outside Ukiah on Friday, Sept. 18, 2020.

turbing similarities with thousands of other cattle and livestock in the Western United States that have been mutilated and left with little to no evidence of a suspect or motive.

In each instance, cattle are usually found with their tongues and genitals carefully removed without signs of a struggle. In the 1970s, hundreds of these reports spurred a FBI inquiry into the phenomenon that was largely unsuccessful, which the agency chalked up to a

lack of jurisdiction where the cattle were found.

In July and August of 2019, the report of five bulls mutilated on the Silvies Valley Ranch in Harney County grabbed headlines across Oregon, and another mutilation was later reported at the border of Lake and Deschutes County in September that year.

According to a report from the *Capital Press*, a cow was found mutilated earlier this year near Fossil in Wheeler County on July

23. The carcass was found upright with its legs tucked underneath it, and authorities located a partial boot print about 100 yards away from the scene.

“There’s a lot of concern about this and there needs to be,” Stubblefield said.

Theories around cattle mutilations and their culprits have ranged from UFOs and aliens to government conspiracies and satanic cults, which Stubblefield isn’t subscribing to.

“I’m a believer that this is a little more practical and this is criminal behavior,” he said.

With that in mind, Stubblefield is asking all ranchers and residents in the area to be on the lookout for additional mutilations or suspicious activity. Those with information or who come across anything similar are encouraged to call the non-emergency line for the Pendleton office of the Oregon State Police at 541-278-4090.

“If anybody finds one of these unusual ones, they need to stay away from it — don’t even come close to

it — and call Oregon State Police immediately,” he said. “Any evidence that can be preserved is going to help solve this seemingly unsolvable case.”

For now, the carcass of Stubblefield’s mutilated cow remains in the same spot he found it. Though none were in place prior to the discovery of the dead cow, trail cams are now staged in the area to monitor it.

According to Stubblefield, that footage has revealed another disconcerting detail: predators and scavengers are avoiding and refusing to eat the carcass. Coyotes have approached the area but keep their distance, he said, and birds will land on the body briefly before flying away.

Stubblefield read the reports and heard the stories of other Oregon ranchers finding mutilated cattle before, but now he’s hoping the death of his own will finally provide some answers to the decades-long mystery.

“This is too much,” he said. “It’s got to stop.”

COVID-19: Clatsop County had the most new daily cases with 73

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But Allen said all options, including rollbacks of the phased reopening of counties, were “on the table” if the case count continues rising.

“We’ve all worked too hard beating back the tide of the virus to let that happen,” he said.

Allen encouraged Oregonians to make sure they are following key actions to avoid the virus: Wear a mask when with others, keep at least 6 feet apart, wash your hands frequently, and try to limit the number of people you are with at any given time.

Allen said the rise in infections was “discour-

aging” for hopes that more school districts could have in-class teaching.

Despite the spike in cases and reports of clusters at the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, Gov. Kate Brown is expected to give final approval to Pac-12 football games — without fans in attendance — in Eugene and Corvallis, according to Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state’s top infectious disease expert. Games could start as early as Nov. 6.

The 457 new cases topped the previous record of 430 cases on July 19. Oregon has reported 32,314 cases this year.

The numbers mirror a

rise nationwide in infections. The Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center reported Sept. 25 that there have been over 7 million cases in the United States, with more than 203,500 deaths. Worldwide, there have been 32.3 million cases and over 985,000 deaths.

Johns Hopkins reported that Oregon’s positive test rate over the past week was 8%. That is less than the record 12.4% in March soon after the coronavirus was first reported in the state. Oregon health officials have said anything above 5% could set off an exponential rise in cases.

Oregon had the lowest coronavirus testing percent-

age of any state over the past week at 0.8 per 1,000 residents, the center reported. Oregon officials say the wildfires that burned over a million acres have disrupted testing capability and statistical gathering across the state.

While having the 8th lowest overall number of infections per capita of the 50 states, Oregon’s infection rate over the past 14 days has risen 38%, according to a *New York Times* analysis of local and state health data.

The *Times* reported Oregon has had 280 cases at 15 universities and colleges. Oregon Health and Science University in Portland has 127 cases, the University of

Oregon in Eugene has 59 cases and Oregon State University in Corvallis has 52 cases. All other campuses have fewer than 10 cases.

Clatsop County reported 73 new cases Sept. 25, the largest count in Oregon. Sidelinger said the outbreak at Pacific Seafood and an after-hours barbecue held by employees of a company he declined to identify had driven cases up in the county.

Multnomah County, which includes Portland, was second at 62 cases. Other large totals were reported by Marion County (58), Washington County (51), and Lane County (50).

Leann Johnson, OHA

Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion, announced that the state will partner with 206 organizations and tribal governments on a \$45 million grant program to address “the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Oregon’s communities of color.”

The grants come from federal CARES Act money that the Oregon Legislature’s Emergency Board had previously allocated for such purposes.

The state has added a new resource for mental health and other issues. Go to safestrongoregon.org or call 800-923-4357. Information is available in 12 languages.

Downtown: Art builds community

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concept with the hope that the development commission could offer some financial support in the future.

Charles Denight, the associate director of the commission, said the project doesn’t fit neatly into any of the urban renewal district’s existing programs, but he also added that how the commission spends urban renewal dollars is at their discretion, and they don’t necessarily adhere to a program to spend money.

“They’ve done it in the past and I’m sure they’ll do it again,” he said.

Denight said what he liked about Old West’s proposal is that the bank has already agreed to make a financial contribution to



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Construction equipment sits at the site of the former We Sell Staff building in downtown Pendleton on Friday, Sept. 25, 2020. The neighboring Old West Federal Credit Union purchased the lot with the intention of expanding its parking lot.

the project.

And although it may not be a perfect fit into one of the commission’s assistance programs, Denight said a

community space based around the Old West alleyway was one of the concepts presented in the city’s original urban renewal plan.

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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WALLOWA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

APPLICATIONS DUE: September 28, 2020 at 5pm at Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce Office Range \$42,000 - \$52,000

COMPENSATION: Range \$42,000 - \$52,000

POSITION TITLE: Executive Director

STATUS: Full Time and reside in Wallowa County

COMPENSATION: Salary Range \$42,000 - \$52,000

BENEFITS: Vacation, Holiday, Sick Leave, and Simple IRA

SCOPE: The Executive Director is the face of the Chamber and is responsible for implementing the mission and work plan of the organization. This individual provides leadership within the Chamber and the community, helping create a favorable “business and living” environment in Wallowa County.

ACCOUNTABILITY: The Director is responsible to the Board of Directors and reports directly to the President.

APPLY BY RESUME: Please include a letter of introduction and resume. Resume is to include contact information, education, work history (including starting and ending dates), and three references (2 professional and 1 personal). Send resumes to: Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce PO Box 427, Ste B, Enterprise Oregon 97828 Email: info@wallowacounty.org, 541 426-4622

The Wallowa County Chamber Board of Directors is looking for a special individual to fill this unique opportunity. Desired professional attributes include but are not limited to:

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Dynamic approach to creativity, initiative, collaboration, and leadership.
- Enthusiasm to effectively work in a community and regional partnerships.
- Exceptional customer service skills.

OVERALL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Strong leadership and organizational skills.
- Strong verbal and written communications skills.
- Knowledge of financial processes used in non-profit organizations.
- Skilled with various computer programs.
- Strong marketing and promotional skills.

QUALIFICATIONS

College degree in business administration, marketing, planning and/or other related field, or equivalent experience.

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