

WEIRD TALES

Tracking down 'The beast of Bray Road'

Monster or mirage, the sightings sound like something out of 'Believe It Or Not'

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“Clap for the Wolfman,” was a song some people might remember from the '70s. It was sort of a self-promotion for the famous bearded deejay, “Wolfman Jack.” But people around parts of rural Elkhorn are clapping for what they say looks like a real wolfman—one that doesn't play records.

The rumors floated around town for two years or so before I heard them. A wolfish-looking creature that ran on two legs and had been seen around the Bray Road area, stealing chickens, eating roadkills and scaring the daylight out of locals who (sometimes literally) ran into it.

Although the stories seemed like grist for the National Enquirer's mill, they were consistent enough to be intriguing. A certain number of people, good honest working folk, had seen something—something unusual. Something scary. Something hairy that relished pavement patty dinners!

The logical place to start was the county humane officer, Jon Fredrickson. It turned out Fredrickson has a manila folder in his files marked “Werewolf,” filled with note cards detailing six or seven such “sightings.” One referred to unusual tracks, another to a hairy pointy-eared creature seen chasing down a deer on two legs.

Another described a Burger King employee who saw a man-like creature running in mid-November. The employee allegedly said he could not believe what a fast and powerful runner the thing was.

Fredrickson's best guess is that the mysterious beast is actually a coyote or even a wolf, both of which have been unofficially reported in the area.

There are at least two people, however who would disagree with Fredrickson. I found out about them through the grapevine, and both agreed to tell me their versions of what they saw. I'll call them Barbara and Pat, since both were reluctant to go public with their real names for understandable reasons. (It seems society is less than kind to people who claim to have seen werewolves.)

The two women are unrelated, but both saw the crea-

ture on different parts of Bray Road in the evening hours. Barbara is a working mother, age 26, and Pat is a high school student. And both are entirely serious about what they saw.

Here are their stories in their own words:

Barbara: I was driving home one night on Bray Road, and I saw this thing on the side of the road. As I came up to it in my car, its back was to me so I saw it had ears and the whole bit. It was kneeling!

Its elbows were up, and its claws were facing out so I knew it had claws. I remember the long claws. And it was eating road kill or something, and as I drove by and I saw all this, it looked right at me and didn't run. It didn't get spooked or anything.

And it had like glowing eyes, which probably were a reflection of my headlights. It was right on Bray Road, right before the Bray farm, on the curve. And I saw it.

He was brownish-gray ... and he had big teeth and fangs. And he looked at me. He turned his head to look at me.

It was about the size of an average man, 5-foot-7 maybe, about 150 pounds. It was holding the thing it was eating palms up, with the real long claws and the pointed ears. He had a big long nose and a long chin, like this on this picture (she pointed to a drawing of a “werewolf” from a library book).

This is exactly what I saw (the picture). This is it. This is what it looked like.

This happened to me two years ago. And after I'd heard that Pat had an incident with it, I decided to go to the library. I looked through a few books they had for a picture of what it looked like, and I found that picture.

The knees were bent in a kneeling position, like a human would do.

It was night, and it was quite large, but I know what I saw. You don't mistake something like that. I don't take Bray Road in the dark anymore.

Pat: It was October this year, on Halloween. I was going down Bray Road, and it was kind of smoggy out, and my front tire got lifted off the ground. I'd hit something. So I kept going about 50 or 60 feet, right before Sitler



Linda Godfrey/The Week

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Road, and then I got out of the car.

I'm looking around the side to see what it was, 'cause I'm thinking I hit a small animal. I hit a bird the same night and so I'm thinking I just killed another animal.

There was nothing on the road, no blood or anything. I didn't see anybody, and I felt like if I hit it, it should have stayed there. I walked to the end of the car, and here comes this thing, and it's just running up at me!

You could see the chest of this thing because it was

ting the ground hard. I've never seen a human run as fast as that and my uncle was a track star. (If he'd gotten me) I probably would have been dinner that night.

It was bigger than any dog I've seen around here. We had a couple of Rottweilers and we had one that was a real big one, and this thing was bigger than he was.

And he had more hair.

It was brown. You could see the hair; dark colored. It wasn't black, though. Long straight hairs. Coyotes don't get that big. I've seen a coyote. They were suggesting it was a bear at my house but I told them it wasn't that big.

But it was bigger than any animal I've ever seen around here. When the nails hit my car it was like, mmmph! (she clapped her hands together forcefully). It hit the top of the trunk and it slid off. The fog made the car wet. But when it was going down it scratched (the car).

This did not look like a German shepherd. I swear to that.

I went to go pick up my mother's boyfriend's daughter, and on the way back she saw it, kneeling down eating or something. She's 11, and I picked her up from trick-or-treating, so it was around 9 p.m. She said, “Look at that THING!” I said, “Yeah, look at it,” and I pressed on the gas.

The mind tends to play tricks on people after you've been scared, and I admit I was afraid. I'm not going to say it was a werewolf. I'd say it was a freak of nature, one of God's mistakes.

It's weird because you don't think something like that exists ... but if you see a creature like that, it tends to leave the mind wondering.

Barbara's mother also had a story to tell. She said a neighbor of hers woke up at 4 a.m. because her dogs were “going crazy” barking outside. The woman said she went outside and heard a long, constant howling sound. “She said it was so scary,” said Barbara's mother, “that she couldn't get back to sleep. And she does remember it was a full moon.”

Barbara's mother also heard from a male acquaintance that he had seen some sort of creature that was bigger than a dog or wolf by a creek. He didn't know

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what it was.

One other family admits to seeing a mysterious creature. Karen Bowey, who lives on Bowers Road, said her daughter Heather saw it. Heather, who was then 11, was out playing with a friend two years ago when she came running home, frantic with fright.

“She said she thought it was a big dog, until it stood up,” remembered Bowey. “We said, ‘What do you mean, stood up?’ She wanted us to go down there but we just blew it off.”

Heather's memory of the incident is vivid. “It had silver-colored fur with brown in it,” she said, “and its face was shaped like a coyote's. But the back legs were shaped differently. When it stood up, they looked bigger than a dog's or coyote's, like they could stand up and jump and stuff. It was looking at me.”

Heather said the creature continued to stand and look at them, until the children realized it wasn't a dog and started running back to the house.

“I looked back and saw it running toward us kind of like a dog would run but with bigger leaps. It got halfway to the house, then turned around and went back into the cornfield,” Heather said.

Bowey said Heather was not the type of child to lie or make things up. “I just think it's a very curious thing,” said Bowey. “I don't think it's human. I think it's a mix and it gives the impression it's deformed.”

There are other rumors that no one I contacted would own up to, such as the one that claims a local hunter found identifiable tracks on his land, or the one that says a woman and her two children saw a dark, hairy creature on two legs chase a deer out of the woods—and keep up with it!

Most people do seem to agree that something is out there. They just don't know what it is.

Fredrickson, the humane officer, still sticks to his coyote-wolf theory. “Sometimes when a wolf or coyote is ready to pounce on an animal,” he explained, “it'll actually spring up, which gives the illusion that it's standing. So if they caught sight of the animal at just the moment it was lunging, it could have appeared to be on two legs.”

Nevertheless, Fredrickson concedes there are a lot of people who really believe they've seen something out of the ordinary. And he doesn't know quite what to make of it.

He probably said it for everyone, though, when he made this observation — “The county is getting stranger.” Wolfman Jack would have loved it.



