

# Chupacabra: The Hispanic Vampire Beast

## Fact sheet for journalists and press

### Chupacabra Basics

- *Chupacabra* literally means “goat sucker” in Spanish, named for its reputed favorite prey
- Chupacabra is the third best-known monster in the world (after Bigfoot and the Loch Ness monster), and the second-best known vampire after Dracula
  - It is claimed to suck the blood out of many animals including chickens, pigs, sheep, cats, and cattle
- First sighted in August 1995 in Canovanas, Puerto Rico, by a woman named Madelyne Tolentino
  - Fearful mobs armed with everything from machetes to machine guns took to the streets during the 1990s hunting for the chupacabra vampire beast
    - First reported in the continental United States in Miami, Florida, on March 11, 1996
  - Eyewitness descriptions vary widely, but it appears in two main forms:
    - 1) A bipedal beast 4-5 feet tall with large red or black alien-like eyes, spikes down its back, and long claws, sometimes reported to have wings. It was widely seen between 1995 and 2000 in Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, and Florida, then the sightings died down. No bodies of this type have been found.
    - 2) A hairless, four-legged Canid (doglike animal); mostly sighted in Texas and the Southwest since about 2004. About six dead “chupacabras” have been recovered; DNA results have found normal animals (mostly dogs and coyotes).
- Many Latin Americans believe the beast was created in top-secret U.S. Government experiments in Puerto Rico; others believe it is an alien, a military weapon, or a myth
  - In 2010, investigator and author Benjamin Radford discovered the origin of the chupacabra, and wrote the definitive book on the beast: *Tracking the Chupacabra*.



Type 1, “original” chupacabra, ca. 1995–2000

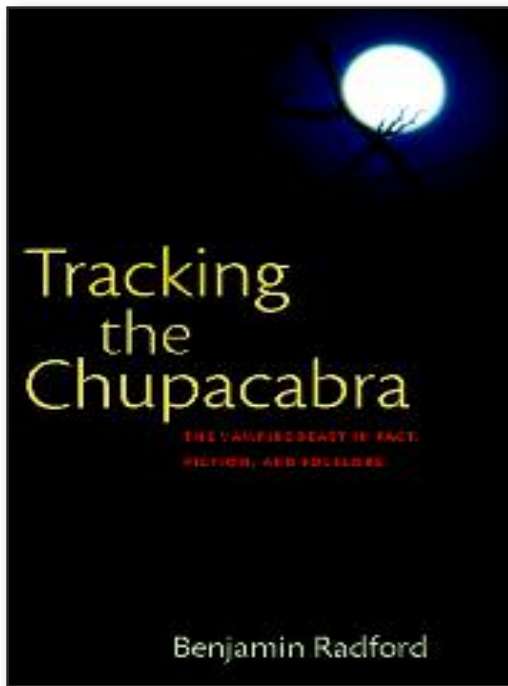


Type 2, Texas chupacabra, ca. 2004–present

For additional reliable,  
scientifically accurate  
information on the chupacabra:

[www.ChupacabraMystery.com](http://www.ChupacabraMystery.com)

or Benjamin Radford at 505.891.3661



*Tracking the Chupacabra: The Vampire Beast in Fact, Fiction, and Folklore*  
University of New Mexico Press, 2011

“An amazingly thorough book... Having sequenced the DNA of three purported chupacabras myself, I am impressed at the depth to which Radford delves into the backstory behind the chupacabra. Radford provides an easy to read yet scholarly coverage of this subject.”

--Dr. Todd R. Disotell, Professor of Anthropology,  
New York University

“*Tracking the Chupacabra* combines detective work, scientific analysis, and a keen sense of human psychology to unravel the mystery of the chupacabra.”

--Dr. David Daegling, author of *Bigfoot Exposed*  
and Professor of Anthropology, University of Florida

“The chupacabra is one of the great mysteries of the past few decades. On one hand you have this strange, alien-like monster suddenly appearing out of the blue in 1995 Puerto Rico. People were finding dead, apparently bloodless animals around the island, and it generated a lot of fear and panic. One famous eyewitness saw it, and fueled by tabloid reports and news media it spread like wildfire to other Spanish-speaking areas. It was known around the world by 1996. But by 2000, almost no one was reporting that monster anymore. This vampire seemed to have had its fill of blood, and more or less vanished.

But then around 2004 ranchers and farmers in Texas began finding livestock had been attacked, and it seemed that the chupacabra was back--but this time in a completely different physical form. Not a bipedal, spiky-backed beast but small, hairless, dog-like animals. In the case of the most famous beast, the ‘Cuero chupacabra,’ I was asked to be part of the History Channel TV show *MonsterQuest* and flew to Texas to examine the dead monster. I spent about a week interviewing the chupacabra’s owner and examining the carcass.

Yet when these dead, four-legged creatures are tested scientifically, the DNA identifies them as known animals, mostly dogs and coyotes. In fact, I discovered that it is physically impossible for these recently-found animals to be the chupacabra. People were using the name “chupacabra” to mean just about any weird or odd animal they saw, alive or dead, regardless of any connection to vampires or blood loss. Basically, people were using the word without knowing what it meant. Another main mystery was the chupacabra’s sudden appearance; how could an animal simply appear out of nowhere? I spent five years researching the creature, interviewing eyewitnesses and forensic experts, visiting Puerto Rico, Texas, New Mexico, and the jungles of Nicaragua. I finally solved the 15-year-old mystery of this vampire’s origin: the world’s best-known image of the chupacabra came from a Hollywood horror film called *Species*, whose monster was designed by Swiss artist H.R. Giger.”

### About the author / expert:

**Benjamin Radford** has a degree in psychology, is managing editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* science magazine, author of five books, and a regular columnist for Discovery News and LiveScience.com. Radford has done first-hand research into mysterious phenomena including psychics, ghosts, exorcisms, miracles, Bigfoot, lake monsters, UFOs, crop circles, and many other topics. He has appeared on the Discovery Channel, the History Channel, the National Geographic Channel, MSNBC, ABC News, CBS, BBC, CNN, and in many publications including *Wired*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and *Vanity Fair*. His Web sites are ChupacabraMystery.com and RadfordBooks.com.

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