Ozark Howler

\*radio scratch\*

**Intro/Edmonia:** Ah, there you go, it seems you have found the right frequency. Congrats on finding the cipher in your local pharmacy. We weren’t too sure which was the most popular during the different times so we did them all.

 As usual, you are all quick on the uptake.

\*electric crackle\*

You’re listening to ZBTR 606AM. My name is Edmonia Rivers, and I’m a junior researcher here at the Bermuda Research Repository, home of Academics Anonymous. I am completing my thesis on cryptids and their impact on world cultures, and one of my requirements is using this antiquated network to inform our academics across time and space of any interesting information I dig up. Anyway, you’ll be hearing from me regularly as I research and write this dang paper.

This week in my adventures in writing a thesis on Cryptids, I “found” an advanced reader’s copy of the new Cook’s Compendium in my advisor’s office, and it’s been fantastic so far. If you haven’t read any of Agent Cook’s work, definitely check it out! He’s this agent who’s been around forever -- though with time travel it always feels like agents are around forever. Anyways, Agent Cook really likes snail mail for some reason, and he’s been writing to the Repository since it opened way back when. At some point an unlucky student --not me, thank goodness-- was charged with organizing the mountains of letters, and they decided to compile them into collections to make them more manageable.

\*cawing\* \*Book pages ripping\*

**Edmonia:** Lenore, don’t you dare try to eat this, Professor Russo will kill me. \*Sad Squawk\* Thank you. Now go back to your perch you silly bird.

So, anyway. Back to Cook’s Compendiums. This is volume… hold on… Volume 12! Wow, that’s a lot of letters. This volume mostly focuses on eyewitnesses accounts across the midwestern United States between 2018 and 2020. My favorite section so far is all about The Ozark Howler, and includes stories like this one about Agent Cook’s woebegone camping trip. Here’s an excerpt.

**Excerpt:** “We hiked up a fair way, and luckily the Ozarks do not reach much above 2,500ft because the last thing we needed was altitude sickness in the party. Alexandra --

***Edmonia: [Aside]*** that’s one of Agent Cook’s cousins.

**Excerpt:** Alexandra and I were accompanied by Alexandra’s wife Claire, as well as their neighbor and good friend Lyle. We made camp in a little hollow clearing for the night and set up watches so we wouldn’t miss a thing. Alexandra and I also set up a few traps on the ridges around the campsite, to be used to both distract and scare off the creature, should the need arise. While the majority of Cryptids and secretive creatures are obviously afraid of people, there is the odd one that is not, and things always get hairiest when you least expect it.

What had been a beautiful evening up until that point took a harsh turn when a freak thunderstorm broke directly over our camp. By midnight the rain had crept into the tent, which was of course our own fault for setting up camp in a valley. We were forced to abandon camp and head back down to our vehicles. As we topped the ridge to begin our descent, a howling scream stopped us in our tracks. A spike of lightning lit up the sky just in time for us to see the figure on the other side of the bowl, prodigiously near one of our traps, as another howl ripped the sky so loudly it drowned out even the thunder.

It was large and bear-like, as Alexandra had reported. I gather it appeared even hairier in drier weather, but drenched as it and we all were, it’s body appeared more somewhere between a bear and a large mountain cat. It’s face was decidedly more wolfish. But its scream! A mixture of fox, elk, and wolf, with a hint of hyena unless my ears deceive me, which is entirely possible. The beast reared back on its hind legs like a bear reaching for a beehive on a high branch, and its long, goat-like horns could be seen very clearly against the next flash of lightning. It returned to all fours, but that’s when it looked directly at me. I have felt many a shiver in my lifetime, but this one was unique.

Without thinking, I pressed a button on my person and set off one of the traps Alexandra and I had created. A burst of light glowed fiercely just to the side of the creature, and I grabbed my friends and fled down the mountain as I set off the other traps and charges to distract the creature. It wasn’t until we were safe in the truck and a good 15 miles down the road that any of us could breathe normally enough to discuss what had just happened.”

**Edmonia:** And that’s the story of when Agent Cook saw an Ozark Howler for the first time. This section of the compendium goes on to detail a couple other encounters folks have had with the Howler as well.

James McMann was hunting in the back country and stayed the night in a wilderness hut, only to be woken up by pounding and growling at his front door. After an hour of terror, he heard it shuffling away and chanced a look out the small window, only to see not the black bear he had assumed was there, but a much larger beast with thick horns like a rams reflecting the moonlight.

Cassie Stephenson swears she hears a Howler’s call from her mountain top back yard every night, but when pressed for access to the property, she flatly refused all of Agent Cook’s enquiries.

Bridget Harding was driving south on the Ozark Highlands Scenic Byway when she claims an Ozark Howler ran across the road in front of her car. In the hospital later, she told police that the sight had frightened her so much she had skidded off the road into a tree.

Agent Cook notes that the public should be reminded \*not\* to chase after Cryptids without the proper training and licenses, and especially not with the intention to hit them with a vehicle.

\*Ding\*

**Edmonia:** Ah, that sound means we’re at the end of our show! Time for some quick announcements and news updates:

**[AFTER THANKSGIVING - AIRS NOVEMBER 28th]**

- Don’t forget to smudge your house and salt your doorways this season, lest the ghosts of turkeys past take up residence in your kitchen and begin knocking things off the shelves and blaming it on the cat.

- As winter approaches, be sure to keep an eye out for elves. They like to swipe shiny things as much as they like to report back to the big man about who is naughty or nice.

- When doing your holiday shopping, it is always nice to hum catchy songs. Best practices include stopping just before the chorus so that any mimics lurking in the toy aisle will reveal themselves before you pay more than you bargained for.

**Edmonia:** Thanks for tuning in. Find our next frequency in your local holiday market, or for our older listeners, in their local market square.

\*knocking on door\*

**Edmonia:** Ah, and there’s my thesis advisor, that’s my cue to go!

**Dorothea:** Do you have your latest draft yet Edmonia?

\*Outro Plays\*