

Flesh Eating Ants

Today is my shift at the laboratory. Yesterday's results were intriguing but inconclusive. 13 dogs, 6 cats, and a full deer that we tranquilized and kidnapped from Lusk Forest and Recreation Center. One may think, "that is not *nearly* enough animals for testing," and I would completely agree. Our line of work is extremely time-consuming and excruciating, but it is necessary for scientific understanding. I take a glance at our most recent results:

Time to consume (min)	General Consumption Scatterplot	Animal	Ants?	Eaten?
.	dog	yes	yes
.	dog	yes	yes
.	dog	yes	yes
.	dog	yes	yes
	# of flesh eating ants	+635

Images of mountains fill my head. Mountains of paper. Mountains of hard work going to waste. It stains my mind. I slash out the pages with the red pen connected to my ear seconds ago. How are we supposed to know whether flesh eating ants will eat flesh when presented with flesh with data like this? You can never jump to conclusions in science. Everybody knows you need replication in a study. Just because flesh eating ants ate dog flesh and cat flesh and deer flesh and horse flesh and cow flesh when presented with dog flesh or cat flesh or deer flesh or horse flesh or cow flesh does not necessarily mean that they would do it during a second trial. Science is

very multifaceted in that sense. Often times there are confounding variables that one needs to assign control groups for. Unfortunately, this probably means we need to funnel additional funding from the Center for Global Cooperation into extorting freshmen senators in D.C. I would do the math in my head for how much money we have to spend on the fire ant control group and the parasitic ant control group and the cockroach control group but I am currently driving my vehicle through the undeveloped countryside. Perhaps that is why I was thinking of mountains.

Most people do not value replicability and peer review as much as I do. You cannot just use personal experience to make *a priori* conclusions in science. This line of thinking is not only unscientific, but it is also seditious and dangerous. Somebody could end up thinking they are right, and that we are wrong. They love to bring up the time we were caught lying about the termites in the white house, even though we were not lying, and if we were lying then it was for the good of the public. Or the time we were wrong about the death rates from Rhinoceros Pox in Namibistan, even though we were not wrong, and if we did turn out to be wrong then that means we simply did not replicate the study enough. Oh, I am getting angry just thinking about it. The International Policy Institute was a big help in writing the bill to make spreading termite propaganda an exile-able offence. Not to boast, but I did draft 46 out of the 700 pages. The length makes sure only smart people can read it, just like a good scientific publication. Just as I was calming down, I remembered my mother. I think about how mothers are not very scientific either. They do not give you a reason for why you must make your bed if you are just going to sleep in it again. They say “because I said so” without providing a single source to back up their claims. Oh, I am trembling just thinking about it!

Speaking with simpletons about any current event or scientific issue is exhausting. They really think they can just state an unsubstantiated claim about Rhinoceros Pox or the White

House Termite Incident or the Invasion of *Omoritus* without presenting a peer reviewed study published by a credible journal. Moving to Boston for my undergraduate studies was the best decision I ever made. Leaving behind my parents and their unscientific demands to prepare breakfast, I interned for researchers at the University of Lexington and did *real* work like preparing their breakfast. After I test out a couple many multiple thousand more animals for my postgraduate, I can finally present my findings to Prof. Dr. Johannesburg PhD, M.D. Then we can move on to more important issues, like whether flesh eating piranhas will eat fish flesh when presented with fish flesh. Palpable. My years of studying Prof. Dr. Johannesburg's (PhD, M.D.) thesis "Dorylus And Flesh: Determining Optimal And Hypothetical Models For Inquiry On The Status And Ethical Considerations With Regards To Animal Rights, Ecosystems, And the Environment On The Status of Flesh-Eating Ants And Their Ability To Eat Flesh When Presented With Flesh" will finally be utilized for – would you look at that; he missed a capital letter in the title. How avant-garde. I should try that next time. I remember we needed a new shipment of ants just now. Perhaps I could get some on the way. I check our budget for this week:

starting stipend: \$3.402.533

EXPENSES:

> legal fees for animal disappearance - \$789.300

//lobby to repeal FOIA on tuesday, protestors know about the 2009 New York State Zoo scandal and are demanding the death threat transcripts

>2/12/2020 flesh eating ants - \$70.000

>2/13/2020 flesh eating ants - \$70.000

>2/15/2020 flesh eating ants - \$70.000

>2/17/2020 flesh eating ants [BOGO] - \$90.000
>2/19/2020 flesh eating ants; lim Edit. FIRE ANTZ EXTREME™ - \$150.000
>1/04/2020 animal shelter - \$456.150
> lab equipment - \$15.734
> personal expenses - \$937.828 ¢42
//treasurer comment: need itemized list for personal expenses ASAP!

I thought long. Maybe we should spend less on lab equipment. Well, in any case we can request more funding from the Department of Science again. Preposterous – this imbecile secretary did not capitalize a single letter! How unprofessional. I decide to forget it as my mind wanders. Pondering on how much taxpayer money we could siphon out of various executive departments by staging another national emergency, I suddenly become nostalgic of my time as a civil servant. Through my own hard work, I was assigned a senior position at the Department of Information Direction through a personal connection with the director. This was in 2006. What a productive year. That was when we began the focus groups for the completely spontaneous and unplanned 2007 invasion of Omoritus. I was the one who suggested rewording “war” to “Operation for Local Interests™.” Prof. Dr. Johannesburg’s (PhD, M.D.) colleague at the Humanitarian Initiative Council (or was it the Council for Humanitarian Initiatives?) had the brilliant idea of promoting American values like cookie-cutter housing and debt slavery to the Omiritian population through a network of NGO’s. It is a wonder how they survived so long as a civilization without concepts like public schooling and quinquennial economic recessions. They can complain and protest and riot and beg for humanitarian aid and be put down and protest again, but we have already planned the occupation for the next two presidential administrations, so for now they will have to enjoy the economic prosperity we provide. The good thing about

GDP per capita is that it increases as the population decreases, *ceteris paribus* (a negative correlation! I shiver with excitement).

My nostalgic trip came to a halt almost as abruptly as my Subaru Highlander, which had collided with a deer. Like reflex, I had my hand on the door and the thought on my mind that this was the perfect opportunity for a free test subject. I wait for a second, taking in the silence, disturbed only by the hissing of the deflating airbag. Where is my pen? It is not on my ear. I could check later, I thought, and then exited the vehicle. There on the ground lay the stag. Instead of dying, it chose to wail and moan, which irritates me – it being alive makes my job considerably harder. I have about a minute to observe it before its heart stops beating. The antlers are a natural white and seem as if they would be smooth to rub. I would not like to rub its eyes. There are no pupils, but I feel as if it is looking at me. I begin to think that maybe it is angry at me, or defeated, or perhaps ashamed, and I almost feel bad for it. I remember that this is just speculation, and that if I want to prove it is sad, I need to replicate the experiment by running over a large sample size of diverse deer to eliminate bias.

My ear feels wet. I rub it – blood. That is the only thing we have in common right now. We are both bleeding, and we are both mammals. But it would be unscientific to suggest we have anything in common. Deer blood has a higher iron content than human blood. Ah, it is still staring at me! Its limbs are beginning to move less often, and the glistening of its eyes is fading into hide. I turn around and walk back to the car. For some reason, I want the minute to last longer. We need more test subjects to determine whether flesh eating ants will eat flesh when presented with flesh, so maybe what I feel is an urge to capitalize on this opportunity. This cannot be so, I think, because I also want to leave it there. I turn around again and observe. The fur matches the color of the surrounding fields which have darkened as the sun has just set. It

seems as if I rubbed it once, I would want to rub it again. My attention is drawn back to the eyes. All that has changed is that they are closer to being shut, but I feel as if the creature has given up, or maybe it is keeping them open because it is hopeful. This is just speculation. I try not to care for the animal and check the statistics:

Sample Size: 5306 *Odocoileus Virginianus*

Proportion of Sample Eaten by Flesh Eating Ants When Presented with
Flesh Eating Ants: 100%

Standard Error: 0.06

Notes: has yet to be replicated with 5306 more specimens

I was almost convinced to leave it there after thinking the data may be conclusive when I realized that all 5306 deer may only have been eaten by flesh eating ants when presented with flesh eating ants due to margin of error. I cannot spread misinformation. The Department would not like that. I reach for the pen on my ear but am instead jolted by the cold of the blood I forgot about. I jerk my hand back and observe it as if it were a sample of ants. Maybe it is because of the increasingly horrifying sounds produced by the deer, or the alien red on my hand, but I do not know what I am looking at. Everything is out of place, and I am late to the laboratory. The deer lets out its last wail. I wipe more blood onto my fingers and cross off the data on the sheet with a messy X. Deer are very heavy, I think, as I lift it by its front limbs and begin dragging the corpse towards my trunk. Maybe we will need an extra test subject. Maybe the data will never be conclusive. I stop to rest after a couple seconds of dragging and drop to the ground panting. That fur did not feel good to touch at all. Once this experiment is over, I hope never to handle deer again. Its eyes are closed now, but I open them manually to take a look; they are still staring at

me. Taunting me, forcing me to pity it. Oh, everything is a mess, and nothing is where it is supposed to be. I am so angry!

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I am driving my vehicle again. Throughout the trip, I catch myself looking at the glancing at the rearview mirror many times, forgetting that it has already died. Just in case, I will take this one to the lab too. Then we can publish our study.