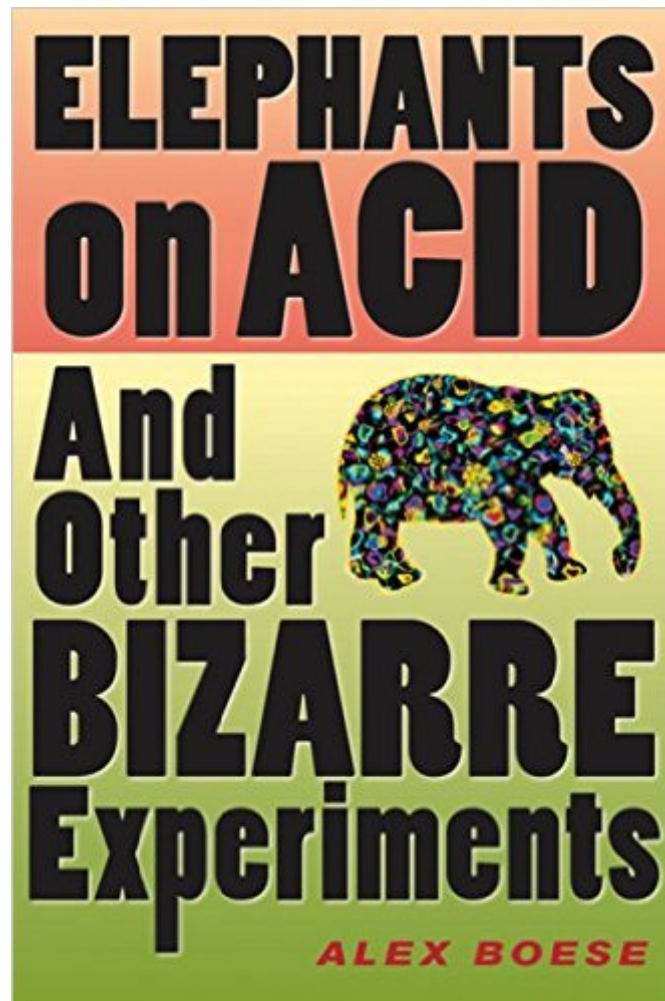


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Elephants On Acid: And Other Bizarre Experiments (Harvest Original)



Synopsis

When Tusko the Elephant woke in his pen at the Lincoln Park Zoo on the morning of August 3, 1962, little did he know that he was about to become the test subject in an experiment to determine what happens to an elephant given a massive dose of LSD. In *Elephants on Acid*, Alex Boese reveals to readers the results of not only this scientific trial but of scores of other outrageous, amusing, and provocative experiments found in the files of modern science. Why can't people tickle themselves? Would the average dog summon help in an emergency? Will babies instinctually pick a well-balanced diet? Is it possible to restore life to the dead? Read *Elephants on Acid* and find out!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Historian Alex Boese was enamored with bizarre experiments in college. During his graduate studies, Boese spent his free time tracking down the more obscure mad scientist experiments that were mentioned in his texts. He amassed a library of notes on bizarre experiments, went on to found the Museum of Hoaxes and publish two books on hoaxes, and now returns with a title about all those bizarre experiments which once intrigued and delighted him. Boese includes only research which was undertaken with genuine scientific curiosity and methodology--that which was published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. *Elephants on Acid* contains overview and author commentary on experiments from the 1800's through the 2000's, in ten different categories - surgery, senses,

memory, sleep, animal behavior, mating behavior, babies, bathroom research, human nature, and death. For each experiment, the author sets up the broader social and scientific context, describes the experimental design and results, and includes any follow-on work. Bibliographic details for each scientific publication are included. (But good luck tracking down European journals circa 1803!) The opening chapter on Dr. Frankenstein-like research is a bit unsettling (Can a head live without its body? Can asphyxiated dogs be brought back to life?). Not surprisingly, few of the Frankenstein experiments took place in modern times. The remaining chapters are enchanting glimpses at scientific fact and fiction over the ages. Boese demonstrates that waitresses who touch customers statistically receive higher tips ("Touching Strangers"), repeats the real Pepsi Challenge ("Coke vs.

This book is a little unusual, because most book that deal with the bizarre in science are either about pseudo science or about factoids. This book is about interesting findings from interesting experiments. Despite the title, the book doesn't actually deal in a great deal of bizarre experiments once you think about it. How else would you test some of the things they were looking for, with the least number of variables that can derail you. Sure there are other solutions, but these are quite good and logical choices, but they retain their bizarreness because, most of us wouldn't know how they found some of these things out. The structure of the book divides science into pursuits of ten areas, life, death, senses etc. The areas overlap but the structure is done for effect and it works. That said though, here is the first major flaw of the book, it starts out quite disgusting and macabre. Though once you've gotten through that it doesn't degrade from the general thing, though cruelty to animals and humans occasionally does pop up, however it isn't the dominant theme. The second flaw, is with the author: the early macabre experiments are a requisite for this type of book, but the jokes ... some of them are just terribly bad, and trivialize the subject matter and reduces his standing as being qualified to write about the area of science. For example: terminally ill and thus dying patients are given LSD (LSD/Acid isn't actual that common a subject in the book, but nevermind) and overall they feel more positive about their life and dying; they become more interactive and less depressed. Also, calming (harp) music is played and it has positive effects. Great experiment, great result, great avenue to do more research even without LSD. How does Boese conclude the story?

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