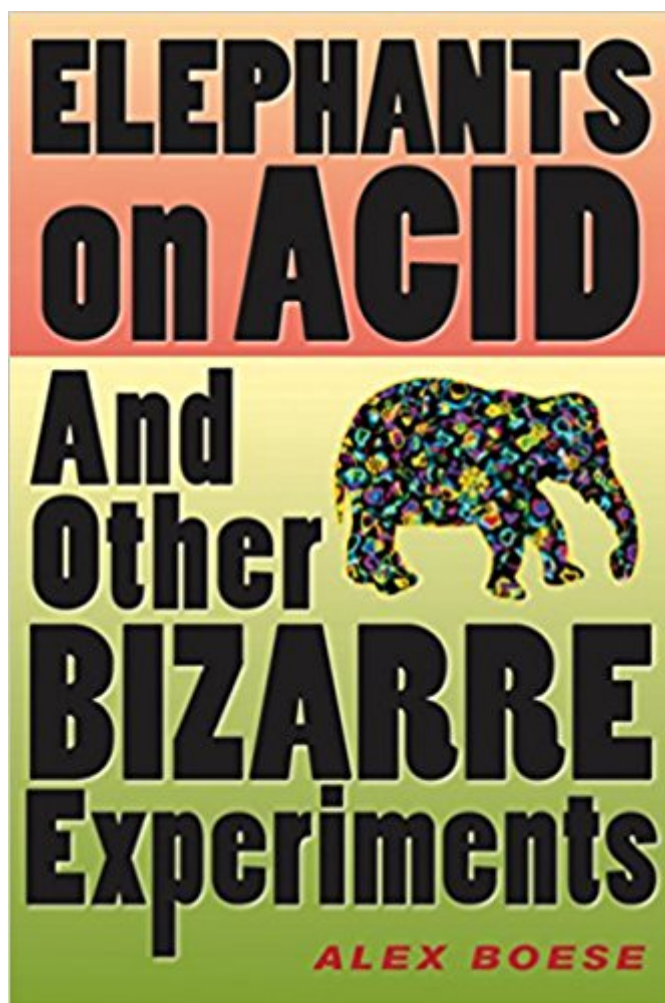


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# Elephants On Acid: And Other Bizarre Experiments (Harvest Original)



## 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

Series: Harvest Original

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Mariner Books; 1 edition (November 5, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0156031353

ISBN-13: 978-0156031356

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 55 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #80,879 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Science & Scientists](#) #36 in [Books > Science & Math > Experiments, Instruments & Measurement > Experiments & Projects](#) #50 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Trivia & Fun Facts](#)

## Customer Reviews

Author Boese (*Hippo Eats Dwarf*, *The Museum of Hoaxes*) returns with another look at scientific oddities, this time focusing on unlikely but actual experiments. Included are notorious examples such as the Stanford Prison Experiment and Stanley Milgram's infamous shock treatment obedience experiment, but it's the lesser-known studies that will generate the most interest. Disembodied heads, animal resurrection ("Zombie Kitten," "Franken-Monkey") and the direct stimulation of a subject's emotions (via electric brain prod) are some of the more grim activities Boese describes (though, thankfully, he steers clear of examples from Nazi Germany). Lighter subjects include attempts to prove the myth that the bar patrons become more attractive at closing

time and the effects of staying awake for 11 days straight. These and other tales will obviously appeal to armchair scientists, but the short, witty, ceaselessly amusing entries should delight anyone with a healthy sense of morbid curiosity. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Elephants on Acid is a collection of some of the most bizarre, curious and plain cruel experiments executed in the name of science. Among them, the LSD induced elephant of the title, Russian two-headed dogs, monkey head transplants, sleep deprivation, monkeys brought up as humans, baby reactions experiments, sexual studies, how to maximize waiters' tips experiments and missiles guided by pigeons. The book is very informative and does have its moments, but the tongue-in-cheek humor did bother me a little, specially when talking about some of the more cruel experiments, to both humans and animals. I do like me some dark humor, but I just couldn't see the funny side the author was trying to show me. I liked a lot the research and background on the experiments, specially the Victorian studies on electricity and dead bodies, as well as the neurosurgeries and famous psychology studies like the Stanford Prison experiment, that turned normal students into sadistic prison guards. On the other hand, outside of the most interesting and chocking studies, the book seemed to have a lot of filler of uninteresting ones. Ironically, the chapter on sex was so boring I found myself skipping some pages, as I did on the one on babies. Elephants on Acid does deliver on its promise as an informal compendium of the strangest side of science and the horror when moral and empathy is not considered by scientists but I think it could be improved by concentrating on the truly bizarre and toning down the internet-like humor.

This is an interesting read to say the least. If you've ever wondered how far some fringe scientists have gone in the past this is the book to start with. Let me just say, you really won't believe some of the stuff you read here, but according to the author, Alex Boese, a graduate of Amherst College with

a Master's Degree in the History of Science from the University of California, San Diego, it's all true. Considering his field of study, he should know. One of the bits I found most amazing was the experiment with a cat which actually succeeded in capturing visual information (real moving images!) from the cat's visual processing center of the brain. Another is The Isolated Head of a Dog. Completely inhumane, but an incredible tale nonetheless. The author's writing style is such that we read the information, acknowledge disgust, but are still entertained and happily move on to the next potential atrocity of scientific experimentation. Elephants on Acid and Other Bizarre Experiments, is a remarkably entertaining and educational book. Some subject matter may not be suitable for all audiences. You have been warned!

It never fails to amaze me what scientists can come up with. At times gross, at times funny, I loved this book enough to pass it on to my niece.. After she had finished reading it we went out to dinner with my sister (her mother) who had not read the book. We spent so much time discussing the book my sister got annoyed with both of us. We certainly didn't intend to leave her out of the conversation it was just that there was so much that was interesting in this book that we couldn't stop ourselves.

Cool Book.

I got this for one of my classes but the book itself is so interesting. The stories told in this book actually sound crazy and they are so interesting to read and know about!!

I think this book would be a great addition to the library of any science teacher or professor. Reading a story from the book could spark some lively discussion about the scientific method, scientific ethics, and the pursuit of knowledge. I think the reviewer who complained that this book promotes animal cruelty misses the point. The author isn't advocating the type of bizarre experiments he chronicles, he's merely reporting them. There are some experiments in here that are classics like Pavlov's experiment on conditioned response or the Milgram experiment on the psychology of obedience. There's also a part of the book about flatulence that I'm sure adolescent males will love.

If you like to read about wacky scientific experiments (that we'd never get away with today), this is for you. Fascinating!

Despite the lighthearted title this is one dark book. It describes the gruesome stories of science, and illustrates both how far we have come and also that the ugly ignorance of our past was and still is necessary for the miracles of the present and future.

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