

MICHAEL JACKSON'S LLAMA: DID HE BEAT IT?

When Michael Jackson's llama Louise was found dead, the coroner attributed the death to natural causes. But a number of questions remain unanswered: Why was no autopsy performed? Was the body moved after its death? Why was vital police evidence ignored? Was Jackson sexually and physically abusing the animal? And most importantly, was Jackson directly responsible for his llama's death?

BY YEYA YABLONOWITZ

At 6:15am on January 26, Encino County Police received an anonymous telephone call: something was amiss at the Jackson mansion. Deputy Wilbur Smith was filled with trepidation as he got into his squad car and headed for the outskirts of town. Actually it was a miracle that nothing had happened before. A star of Michael Jackson's calibre is such a likely target. Had Jackson been kidnapped, or worse, assassinated? Would the badly understaffed Encino police department become the scapegoat of the nation for letting something, *anything*, happen to Michael Jackson? Smith was actually somewhat relieved when he was let into the mansion by Katherine Jackson to discover that Michael's live-in companion, Louise the Llama, had died during the night. But something was wrong.

The llama's legs were splayed suggesting that the animal had been moved to the pen after it died. Perhaps even more suspicious was the ear to ear slash under the llama's chin which was still bleeding. Michael Jackson was nowhere to be seen.

When the youngest Jackson finally did show up half an hour later dressed only in a bathrobe, he claimed to know nothing of Louise's death and that he had just gotten out of bed.

But it seemed to Deputy Smith that Jackson was surprisingly wide awake for someone who had just woken up. The blood stains on Jackson's hands were also suspect.

By 8:00 a.m. the coroner for Encino County, Mortimer Jones, had arrived with a detective. Smith took Jones aside and told of his suspicions, but Jones said to keep things quiet and he, Jones, would investigate. But Jones did not examine the body or interrogate Jackson. Rather the coroner spent the entire two hours he was at the mansion drinking Pepsi Free and talking with Katherine Jackson. The two talked of their mutual friend, Michael's cousin, Jedediah Jackson. Jedediah was the District Attorney

for Encino County and one of his first acts in office had been to appoint a then little known pathologist by the name of Mortimer Jones to the position of chief coroner.

Lake Titicaca Peru is a long way from Los Angeles. It was on the Andean slopes bordering the lake, where conquistadores once raped and pillaged, that Louise had her infancy - roaming free in the green meadows. Yes, those were happy times, but Peru - with the unemployment and starvation of most South American countries - is no place for a llama to grow up. Thus it was that at the tender age of six, Louise headed across the mountains to Columbia, got a job on a boat smuggling drugs to California and illegally immigrated.

Life can be rough for a young llama in California who doesn't speak English very well, and it wasn't very long before Louise was picked up by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It was at the animal shelter that Louise met her soon to be best friend, Farrah the Fawn.

Louise didn't have to stay at the animal shelter very long. Within the month, she was adopted by Clement and Isadora Atlee. By Valentine's day 1983, Louise was settling into the Atlee's well furnished but spacious two bedroom bungalow in Anaheim - just across the street from Disneyland. Then in June, Louise was introduced to Michael Jackson.

Louise met Jackson through Farrah the Fawn. Farrah's cousin was one of Michael's pet deer and she had given Farrah two backstage passes to the Michael Jackson concert at the Bolero Club in beautiful downtown Encino. The Bolero Club was wholly owned by Jackson Enterprises and Michael sings there occasionally to keep the local fans happy.

Louise didn't want to go. She had heard stories about the fast-paced lives of rock stars who sustained themselves through sleepless nights with endless amounts of drugs and alcohol. It was not the sort of life that suited a

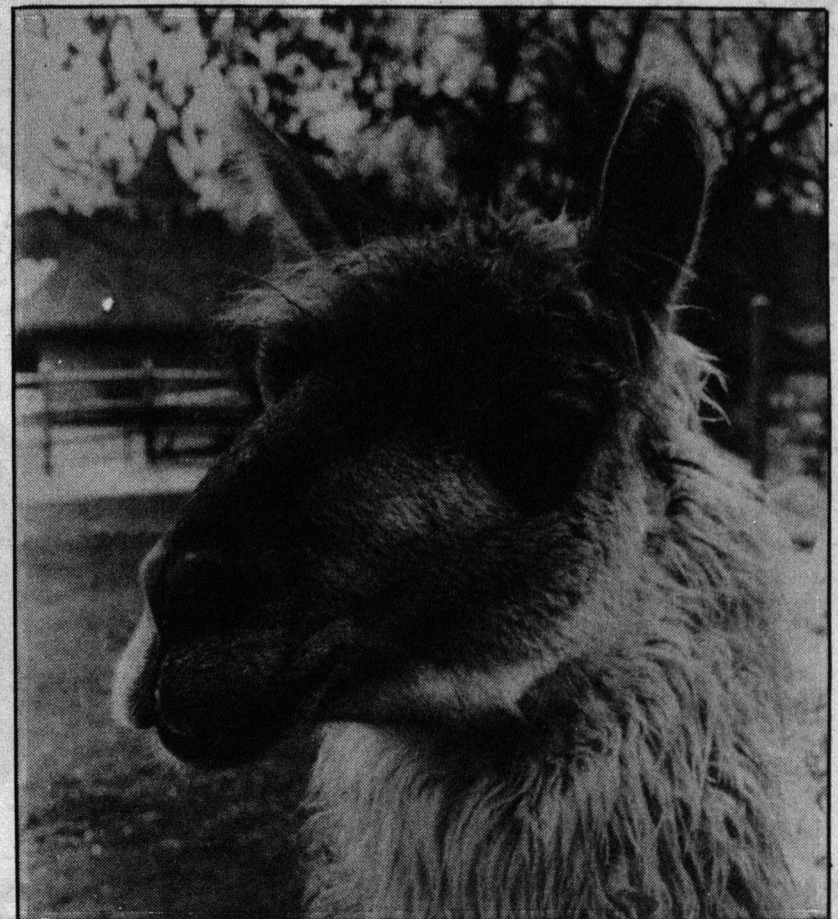
young innocent llama from Peru. But Farrah convinced Louise to go. Louise enjoyed the show much more than she had suspected, still, it was with foreboding that she went backstage to meet the enigmatic pop star.

Jackson immediately took to the young llama. He sang to her and stared deeply into her eyes while the small group of admirers sipped Pepsi. Likewise, Louise was impressed by Michael's finely detailed nose, his widened eyes and his heightened cheekbones. The boy wonder was not at all like Louise's parent's had described rock stars.

The body of Louise the Llama arrived in the Encino County Morgue at 11:00am on January 26. The corpse

was immediately put on a slab and shoved into the cooler. Coroner's records show no other deaths that day, but the body stayed in refrigeration all Thursday and Friday. On Monday, Jones finally examined the body. Despite the evidence presented by Deputy Smith, Jones concluded there was no foul play and an autopsy was not necessary. The official coroner's report lists cause of death as a cardiac arrest. The report says Louise was standing up when she died and the gash under her chin occurred when she fell down. There is no mention of the unusual position of the llamas legs and the blood on Jackson's hands. Due to Jones' advice, Smith's police report contains none of this information either.

I knew Louise was in trouble when the young Mr. Jackson said the reason he liked llamas so much was because they were one of only three animals that could have intercourse face to face (the other two are humans and alpacas)," says a tearful Isadora Atlee. "At first we were so proud of little Louise going out with a famous singer...he seemed to make her so happy.



Louise in her prime, the calm reflection of Titicaca still sparkles in her eyes.