

Investigating *THE DEADLY SNOW* Mystery

A REVIEW BY DARRELL SMITH

An oddly warm, pink-tinged snow. A ranch family's serious health problems, with no obvious cause. So many dead sheep that the family fell into poverty (and records of investigating veterinarians disappeared.)

Strange visitors who appear to be from the government, apparently searching for something. Mysterious armed chaperones who hovered over the family as they were tested for radiation levels at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

That night-marish scenario befell a Wyoming ranch family in 1959. For nearly two decades, George Brandsberg interviewed Preston and Laura Mitchell family members and others, and dug into musty records, investigating the incident.

Having known George for more than 40 years. I can state that he possesses the soul of a reporter and a persistent determination to uncover the facts. So I trust his research and, sad to say, the conclusions he reaches in *The Deadly Snow*.

He makes a a convincing case that the ranch family and their livestock, especially the sheep, suffered radiation poisoning, caused by atomic (weapons) testing or possibly a lost bomb that fell from an aircraft.

He bolsters his conclusions by citing records of other Americans who apparently suffered similar consequences from ill-advised atomic bomb testing when radiation was spread by wind or soldiers were ordered to enter contaminated areas. Why would the government jeopardize its citizens' health?

Those of us old enough to remember the Cold War know the answer to that: The effects of atomic testing were not well-understood and the defense establishment was under tremendous pressure to develop weapons that could deter what was accepted as a serious and credible threat from the U.S.S.R.

Or, as George puts it on page 330, "Clearly concern over national security tainted the quality of justice in America at the time."

If you're intrigued by what amounts to a government conspiracy to conceal the truth, even at the risk of human life, or would like to learn about the harmful side effects of the Cold War on ordinary citizens, you'll like *The Deadly Snow*.

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