



THE DAY THE ANIMALS TOOK OVER

The authorities finally took back control of the laboratories at Animal Pharm yesterday.

This ends a standoff that began when company staff found themselves locked out of the facilities.

Who or what did this is unclear, but a former employee has made a startling claim — that it was the result of an "uprising" by the animals in the company's labs.

Speaking anonymously, she said: "At first, we couldn't believe it ourselves. But yes, the animals took over the labs."

Animal Pharm is a pharmaceutical company that makes cosmetic products and medicines. It has long been criticised by animal rights groups such as Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), because it tests its products on monkeys, mice and other creatures to ensure they are safe for humans.

This, say animal lovers, is cruel and inhumane.

We learned that Animal Pharm was also carrying out secret research on boosting the intelligence of certain animals, for possible use in the military.

"This research was very successful — too successful," said the former employee. The animal subjects — a group of chimps and pigs — began showing signs of human-like intelligence.

The researchers were thrilled until the creatures broke out of their cages, staged a surprise attack and locked up the humans instead, said the employee.

The next morning, staff at all Animal Pharm facilities in the city found that the security system was barring them from entering their offices. They also found computer-printed notices on the front gates, informing them that the company was being sold.

Each employee would receive a generous severance check in the post, the notices said.

But the following week, an employee saw that boxes of Animal Pharm shampoo were still being delivered to shops. He smelled a rat.

He and other former staff shared their concerns with the police, but when officers tried to enter the facilities, they discovered the fences had been electrified.

It took them a whole week to get past this and the rest of the security system, which seemed to have been made stronger.

When they finally got past the fences, they were pelted with fireballs from the roof. Eventually, they managed to take over and enter the buildings.

But what they found inside baffled them.

Not only was the factory up and running, but new drugs and products were being tested on even more animals than before — horses, guinea pigs, dogs and cats.

What's more, the walls of the animals' quarters were lined with poster-size photos of humans, each marked with a big red X on top. Like the notices on the gates, these had been printed out on the company's computers.

And strangest of all, when officers entered the employees' quarters — sleeping areas, dining rooms and lounges — they found about a dozen chimps and pigs dressed in human clothing, surrounded by half-finished bottles of soda.

A source in the police department said: "One pig appeared to be walking on its hind legs, but when we entered, it quickly went back on all fours."

The animals have been seized and moved to another lab to be studied. The police are still investigating the case.

BACKGROUND

The book *Animal Farm*, written during World War II and published in 1945, is about animals who rise up against their farmer. The smartest ones, the pigs, tell the other creatures that humans are lazy and mean.

After throwing the farmer out, the animals decide to live by rules that say all animals are equal. But the pigs slowly become as bad as the humans: they change the rules, make the other animals work like slaves, lie to them and adopt human habits, such as the wearing of clothes. By the end of the story, the pigs have become lazier and meaner than the humans, and the farm is worse off.

However, the book is not really about animals — it is about people. The story wants you to think about what happens when a group of people has total control over another group, and how it gets and keeps this power.

George Orwell, the author of the book, wrote it because he wanted people to realize how badly Russia was run by its leaders after Josef Stalin came to power in 1921. Stalin mistreated anyone who disagreed with him — even those who had helped him rise to power.

FAB VOCAB

STANDOFF

A situation where neither side is winning; a deadlock between two equally strong opponents

UPRISING

When a group goes against those who have power over them

ANONYMOUSLY

Without being named

PHARMACEUTICAL

To do with drugs or medicines

INHUMANE

Cruel

BARRING

Not allowing

SEVERANCE

Money paid to an employee if his work contract is ended early

SMELLED A RAT

Suspected something was wrong

PELTED

To get hit repeatedly by something thrown at you

BAFFLED

Puzzled

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS, READ

Lord Of The Flies

By William Golding

Charlotte's Web

By E.B. White

The Lion And The Dog

By Leo Tolstoy