

In 1978 I was appointed to the County Animal Control Advisory Committee and served for two years. I joined forces with Rod Shippy, our County AG Advisor to try to get some sensible nonlethal solutions to the problem, solutions that were science based, and not based on killing . At the time the seven Federally funded County Trappers were using cyanide traps, and poisons. i was aColumnist during that period for a weekly, very successful alternative county newspaper called The Mendocino Grapevine. I wrote a weekly column called “American Grandstands”. After going out on Horseback with one of the trappers for an overnight check of the traps he had set in the days before, I wrote a column and called it “On the Trail with the Trapper”. I told of the empty traps, of the randomness of their placement, and of the various vertebrates he had caught which included a lamb, a squirrel, and a coyote. He released the first two but killed the Coyote and cut off his ear to bring back as proof. I will never forget the fear in the Coyotes eyes when Mr. Berry took out his revolver , walked up to the Coyote, who had almost chewed off his leg to escape the traps claws. He pulled away on his chain as far as it would let him and when he could go no further, he looked over at me . I will never forget the look of fear in its eyes. Mr. Berry walked up to him and from a distance of just about a foot, put the gun to the Coyotes ear and pulled the trigger. The frightened animal fell dead, but he lives on in my mind and will forever. The next week I wrote a column and Called it "Murder in Cold Blood".