



Eric Gregory for the Daily Nebraskan

If you look real close, you can see prints of what I assume to be an elk. This picture was taken along the shore of North Catamount Lake.

# Bigfoot

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stream's canyon became steeper, the forest thicker.

About 50 yards past the foot-bridge, I began to smell a nauseating stench.

The odor was a locker-room effluvium; a thick, noxious stench like an overweight lineman's armpit after late-summer drills.

Brienzo had said that when he went to Green Mountain Falls in March, he found large human-like footprints in snow behind Dan's house. In the area of the footprints, Bob had told me there was a heavy, musky stench that smelled "like someone who hadn't showered in 10 years."

While searching the stream bed, Eric found a large print in light gravel about two feet from the stream. The odor was incredibly heavy in the area. We found other prints -- one that looked like it was from a large cat and others that looked like hoof prints from a deer or an elk.

The large print was shaped like a human foot and was much deeper into the gravel than our own footprints. But, because the print was in coarse material, there were almost no details.

A few hundred feet up the path from the print, the smell began to dissipate. We stopped searching for tracks along the stream and began a fast gait up to North Catamount Lake.

We found out later from Dave W. Oates, a forensic and analytical specialist in the wildlife division of

the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, that during mating season elk release a strong odor that can hang in an area for days.

Oates described the smell of an elk in rut as a "heavy, sweet, sickly odor." Elk are in rut during Sep-

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**You can't identify a dragon turd if you've never seen a dragon turd. Likewise, you can't identify a bigfoot hair if you're not sure you've seen a bigfoot hair.**

Fahrenbach  
scientist at Oregon Regional  
Primate Research Center

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tember and October, Oates said. We smelled the odor in late September.

Both Masias and Brienzo, however, have said they smelled the odor in months other than September and October. It all was terribly confusing but we still had our trump card -- the hair.

After searching the lakeshore

for a while, we headed back down to Green Mountain Falls. We wanted to reach the town before nightfall so we could set our second bigfoot trap behind the Dablers' cabin -- the sight of the break-in. We figured that from there, we were within 100 yards of four possible creature sightings.

At the Dablers', we set up a sardine and oriental-flavored Top Ramen trap about 60 feet from the patio. We decided that we would not have a campfire that night.

As night fell, a few porchlights began to dot the village below. Miles off, a dull glow hung in the sky -- the halo of Colorado Springs.

Green Mountain Falls began to weary, the dogs tired of barking, the townspeople tired of driving. By 11 p.m., the town was nearly silent, the air nearly freezing. We sat and watched. By 2 a.m., I was completely frozen and completely frustrated. We decided to give up.

The sun crawled over the ridge much too early the next morning. I gave Eric a wake-up beating and crawled into the morning. We began hauling our gear to the car.

Within the hour we were ready to go. We said good-byes to Dan and the Rocky Mountains and drove down Hondo street, past the Church in the Wildwood, onto Highway 24 and on to Lincoln in a final effort to make some sense of the whole mess. In Lincoln, we would hand the hair, and the story, over to science.

The weeks passed. I found out the one thing scientists don't like to do is to speculate on the existence of strange creatures. I had to send

See **BIGFOOT** on 15

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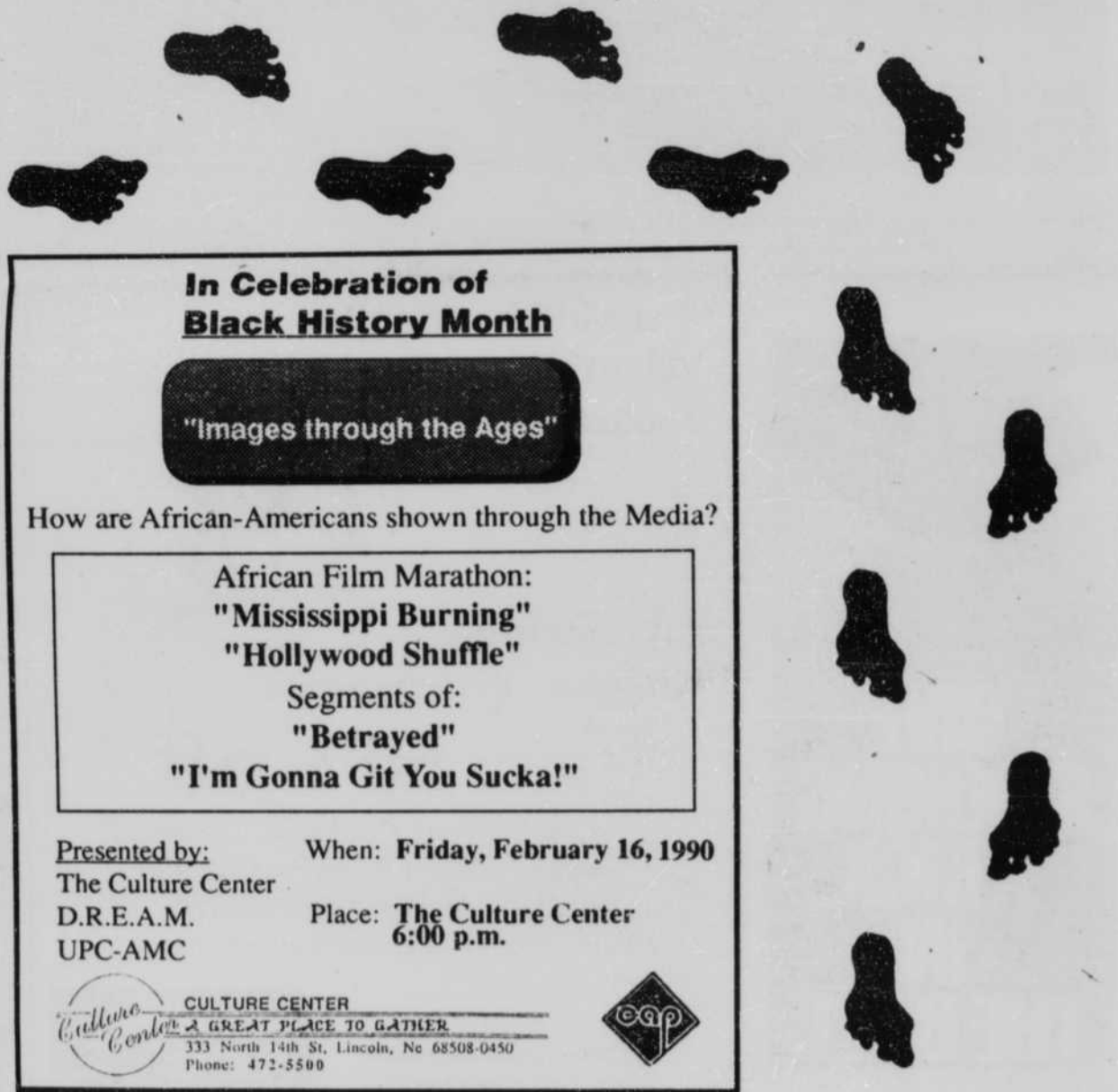
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