

# Freedom Matters

## A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

### Tree Huggers Beware. Predators Own the Trees and the People

Here is a true story, as told by J. Zane Walley, about the heavy handed introduction of wild animals into a landscape lived in by humans. It's happening in Wisconsin, too, and it's only a matter of time until an innocent person is killed by these large natural predators. It is one thing if people choose to go into wilderness. It is an entirely different thing to force wilderness onto people who are living in a tamed environment. When done without overt consent, it is not merely wrong; it is evil.

**See editorial comments at the end of the story.**

#### CAUGHT TWIXT BEASTS & BUREAUCRATS

New rules from a softer society, far removed from the land.

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"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," Jesus instructed the apostles as he sent them into the world with his word. He knew of the danger wolves presented, and metaphorically used their grim fame to instruct his disciples. American colonists and pioneers experienced the havoc of wolf attacks on humans and livestock and did their best to eliminate the plague.

In recent years, a softer society, far removed from the land, has unwittingly stood idle as nihilist wildlife devotees, championed by politically-correct appointees on federal regulatory boards, have succeeded in reintroducing the wolf scourge.

Wolves running free in America do have a hint of Jack London adventure, a particular seductiveness to the soul, and they are certainly handsome animals. These Disney-like fantasies abruptly evaporate in the physical actuality of a face-to-face attack. Such an attack happened-happened recently-not to woodsmen, or miners, nor cowboys, but to an average urban family on a camping trip. Luckily, they were able campers and defended themselves against the wolf assault. What they were not prepared for was the political aftermath. They found themselves caught between beast lovers and bureaucrats, amidst the wolves of politics.

Over a simple lunch, the Humphrey family falls into easy conversation. The two daughters talk their dad, Richard, into telling stories about his far-flung travels in Micronesia, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. They love his stories for they are gentle, amusing stories of people he met, befriended, and endeavored to understand. And Richard doesn't just spin yarns, he shares, and underlying each story is a kindly parable of people getting along with each other. He gently educates as he smiles and talks, and the girls cling to each of his words. They lean their heads against their mother, and Helen unconsciously and fondly strokes their hair, usually not speaking, for she is a lady of few but earnest words.

The Humphrey family and two dogs, Buck and Sam, live in suburban Tucson, Ariz., but it is clear their hearts aren't there. For years, every possible free moment has been spent in the desert and mountains of the West. They hunt, hike and camp often. Camp is like home, a large heavy-framed canvas tent with table, chairs, and a wood stove. It is a cozy, livable shelter that has often been a classroom for the young ladies.

Helen and Richard chose to home-school so even in the wilderness education goes on, with Mom and dad as teachers and the wilds as mentor and laboratory.

Richard and his daughters were in the tent studying when the wolf attack began. Helen sweeps silver wings of long hair away from her face as she recounts the harrowing event. Tears flow freely. "Buck saved us and then God saved Buck. If Buck hadn't gotten between my daughters and the wolves, they would have attacked them."

Buck is the venerable family dog. He's a dappled-gray stalwart fellow, the best of breeds, an All-American mutt and treated as a valued member of the family. He sensed danger near the camp, went looking, and discovered two recently released Mexican wolves lurking close to the tent behind a thicket of undergrowth too close for Buck's protective instincts. He found the wolves exactly where the younger daughter was getting ready to build a playhouse. As Buck confronted the wolves, Helen was several yards away from camp near a stream, reading. "I sensed something wrong, horribly wrong. It was as if a black dread swept over me. I began running toward the tent and screaming, 'Dick, come quick!'"

This camping trip was to be a celebration of Richard's retirement as a U.S. Postal Service letter carrier and the family's newfound freedom. Camp was set up late on a chill April evening, near a well-traveled tourist route, in a spot they had camped for the last 20 years. The following morning Richard was up early, sawing wood for the campfire and tent stove. "I felt something funny, like something was watching me," Richard remembers. "I looked around and saw what I thought at first was a dog. It was close, low to the ground and was stalking me. Then I saw it had a collar and a transmitter box. I assumed it was a hybrid wolf. I noticed a second one in the trees. I thought they had been released in a wilderness area far to the north, near Alpine."

He walked to the tent, woke the family, told them they had wolves in camp, and loaded his wife's rifle. They moved outside the tent and spotted the wolves 30 or 40 yards away. They yelled and made noise, which partially worked. The wolves backed off, but as Richard recalls, "They acted more like dogs than wildlife unaccustomed to humans." Later they heard howling which they assumed was about a half-mile away. "We didn't break camp and leave," Richard explains, "because we thought the wolves were just passing through."

After breakfast, Richard began the girls' lessons and Helen left to read. Almost an hour later, he heard his wife of 23 years screaming. "I stepped out of the tent and she told me to get the rifle." They could hear the sounds of Buck shrieking as he fought

**Readers' Bulletin Board.** e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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for his life with the wolves. Richard began yelling to run them off. One wolf detached from the fray and ran away, but, as Richard chillingly reminisces, "All of a sudden, a wolf came around a tree toward us, and not in a walk but in a run. That's when I shot. I was thinking how fast wolves could run and I couldn't let him get any closer."

Richard's shots stopped the wolf less than 50 feet away from his family. "I didn't have time to get scared. All I could think was, they release five or six at one time and I didn't know how many more were out there. When it was all over...then...I was so, so scared."

Buck staggered out of the undergrowth and came between Richard and Helen on three legs. "He's moving under his own power and not dragging his guts," Richard remembers thinking. Buck was seriously mauled with several deep gashes and a badly shattered front leg. Richard, an experienced hunter, made sure the wolf was dead. The Humphreys bandaged Buck's wounds with towels and rushed to find a veterinarian. They didn't take time to break camp and pack their gear: the family was too concerned about Buck's condition. They stopped at a state highway maintenance yard near their camp and notified a lady of the shooting. "She was shocked," Richard recalls. "She said they had a mule, didn't know that wolves had been released nearby and worried the wolves might attack her mule."

The lady had no telephone. Richard, a by-the-book sort of fellow, knew the mandatory 24-hour reporting period for killing endangered species, so as they drove toward a vet's office in Clifton-Morenci, Ariz., he used a construction worker's mobile phone to notify Arizona Game and Fish of the incident. The doctor was only at his office in Clifton-Morenci two days each week, so they had to drive 100 miles to Safford, Ariz. to get suitable medical attention for Buck. Before leaving Clifton they stopped at a store and borrowed a pencil from a clerk to write down the doctor's telephone number in Safford. They called his office to let him know that they were en route with a dog that had been injured by wolves. "The vet was ready for us," Richard says. "He said it was one of the worse cases he had ever attended."

They left Buck at the animal hospital in Safford and began the long trek back to their campsite. Stopping in Clifton-Morenci to return the borrowed pencil, they met an undercover U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) officer filling a huge cooler with ice, presumably for the wolf cadaver. The investigator was in a rush to get to the scene before dark, so they followed him back to the campsite. When they arrived at camp, their agonizing ordeal began in earnest.

The wolf attack and Buck's brush with death had traumatized the family; even so, the investigator proceeded with his interrogation. "He was undercover so we agreed not to disclose his name," Richard says. "I invited him inside the tent to sit at the table and told my story. An agent from Arizona Fish and Game, John Romero, had arrived and stayed away from the tent as if he didn't want to hear it. I thought he might be on our side a little more than the federal agent so I called him over. He was very hesitant and took no notes."

For six drawn-out weeks the questions and interrogations continued by telephone and in person. The nameless agent and his supervisor even brought the investigation to the Humphrey home. The inquisitors had an unwelcome surprise waiting. Alarmed, Richard had an attorney present and a video camera set up to record the meeting. "I could tell they didn't like that! The supervisor played games with me; he played hard to trip me up," Richard earnestly declares. "They had questions and information from a biologist who obviously knew nothing. They were concerned about the way the bullet went in and weren't even sure if Buck had been attacked. I asked them if they had

checked the dead wolf for dog bites. They had not even done that."

Likely the supervisor was making sure he covered his own tracks, for the shooting had developed into a media spectacle, a push and shove soapbox melodrama between environmental activists and the FWS. Richard had accidentally become a political pawn and scapegoat. Facing prison and financial ruin, he was painfully aware of his jeopardous position.

Environmental groups were enraged that FWS did not prosecute Humphrey, and they took their views public with the help of willing and often inaccurate media. Richard and his family watched helplessly as a sly leak in FWS released inflammatory, slanted information, and green activists convicted him in a kangaroo court frenzy of newspaper and television interviews. "REAL MEN DON'T KILL WOLVES" charged a bumper sticker printed and supplied to the public by Tucson-based, Wildlife Damage Group. "Federal Wildlife officials are lying and covering up the truth about the killing. The whole so-called official account of this is a lie. I don't believe any of it, not at all," spokesperson Nancy Zierenberg angrily stated to the Tucson Citizen.

"We've got to make an example of this guy," demanded Bobbie Holaday of Preserve Arizona's Wolves. "There is no excuse. It is totally illegal."

Before the facts in the shooting or even Humphrey's name were released, the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity (SWCBD) pressed a demand for indictment. In a series of interviews with the Tucson Citizen, their spokesman, Peter Galvin accused, "This whole thing has turned out to be a travesty. The fact they have failed to prosecute is just another indication that the U.S. government is not making wolf recovery a priority. We are now examining our legal options."

Galvin threatened to charge FWS with "dereliction of duty" because they did not charge the killer. He further indicated they might seek legal action against the shooter. SWCBD used their web site, and perhaps the FWS leak, to further polarize the public by reporting, "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to investigate the killing. They apparently do not believe the shooter's story that the wolf attacked his dog. Even if the dog had been attacked, it would not legally or morally justify killing a severely endangered species. It is looking more and more like the killing was malicious, not just ignorant."

During the whole outrage, Humphrey maintained his silence. He sought the advice of confidante, G. J. Sagi, publisher of Outdoor News and an experienced publicist. Sagi had known Humphrey for years. "My mom was homebound and paralyzed because of a stroke," Sagi recalls. "She was in bad shape and dad had to stay with her constantly. They would go for days without seeing Thanyone except for their postman, Mr. Humphrey. He was concerned and would always drop in with a cheery word and check on them when he delivered the mail. I knew what kind of man I was helping."

Sagi and the Humphreys worked out a plan to counter the negative publicity and inaccurate articles. Humphrey wanted a chance to tell the true story. He and his family are deeply religious and felt a blight on their name would be intolerable. The antagonistic forces Humphrey was between had a lengthy chronicle of clashes. Environmental activists had virtually litigated the U.S. Department of the Interior into the March-April 1998 release, ignoring the objections of those citizens who would be affected. New Mexico Governor Gary E. Johnson vehemently opposed the release, bluntly saying it was based on an "absence of credible information and should not be endorsed by this office." The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, along

with eight other livestock organizations in New Mexico and Arizona, sued in late March 1998 against the release of the wolves. Scant days following the filing of the suit, wolves were covertly released with no public notice.

The vacationing Humphrey family had no hint of the release controversy's magnitude when they inadvertently became the focal point. They did not even know they were in a wolf release area. "It was late afternoon when we arrived and began setting up camp," Richard recounts. "There was nothing posted. I had heard about the release program, but all publicity indicated it was far to the north in a wilderness area."

They had no way of knowing that the release pens, where wolves were being fed road-kill twice per week by FWS, were not more than a mile from their camp. FWS had guaranteed in public meetings that "Notice of general wolf locations will be publicized." If they had followed through with their pledges to the public, the Humphreys' calamitous situation would not have occurred. "Had there been signs identifying the area as a wolf release site," Richard acknowledges, "we would have never camped there!"

After spending years and almost \$3 million on the wolf release program, why would FWS release dangerous predators so close to civilization and a major highway without posting warnings? Why would they choose an area traveled by large numbers of tourists where camping was common? One reason is that FWS contends that wolves aren't dangerous. Their official line is, "There are no documented cases of wolves attacking and killing or severely injuring people in North America."

One wonders how much actual research went into that statement. Recently documented attacks by wolves on humans were available in several newspapers and in historical documents at the very time FWS made their doubtful statement. (See sidebar.) Conceivably, Mr. Humphrey was under criminal investigation for killing an animal technically not a wolf. The science behind the Mexican wolf release program is labeled as tainted by several biologists. They suggest FWS released genetically-flawed animals, which are not really wolves, but rather hybrids. The agency refutes the opposing reports by quoting their own science. If the animals that attacked the Humphrey family were wolf-dog hybrids, attacks on humans were likely and well documented. Even Wolf Park, staunch defender of wolves, circulates wolf-dog warnings. "A person, especially a child who tripped and fell, or who is moaning, crying, or screaming, may be considered wounded prey and attacked. Grave injuries, even death, are all too frequent in such cases."

In a current effort to ban wolf-dogs in Virginia, the Humane Society sent fact-sheets to Virginians urging them to contact their legislature to ban wolf-dogs. The literature portrays wolf-dogs as potential killers and claims attacks are disturbingly common. Six grinding, nervous weeks after the shooting, the nightmare was finally over for the father and husband who simply defended his family. He was informed no charges would be filed.

Richard now resolutely believes the wolf release is dangerous and wrong. He is humble, but serious, when he says, "We didn't have to go public, but wanted to tell people about our experience, and hope and pray it will prevent this from happening to others."

Helen, the lady of few but earnest words, is straightforward in expressing her feelings. "We feel that both the wolf and our family are victims. They put out a potentially dangerous animal-an animal that is not afraid of man, which was fed by man, and put too close to man. There were no warnings that wolves were in the area. The vets say our dog will never fully recover; and I'm just thankful it wasn't my children who were injured. The wolf did go after my husband, daughters, and me. My husband had no choice. He was protecting us. I hope that what happened to us never happens to anyone else."

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## Editorial Note by Freedom Matters

Note some of the issues raised in this incident

1. For one thing, hybrid wolves can hardly constitute an endangered species, because they are not a natural species. They are man-made.
2. Environmentalists shoot themselves in the foot, when they claim in court that nursery reared salmon cannot be counted as part of an endangered species, because such salmon do not have the natural history of the wild salmon. By that position, any alleged species that environmentalists introduce that have any taint of the unnatural about them, either genetic or behavioral, do not constitute an endangered natural species.
3. The right to defend oneself from harm is the most fundamental right we have. It is not merely an affront to our constitutional protections, but it is an affront to the very basis of ethics and human behavior, to take away that protection. Yet, that was what was attempted in the above incident. The environmentalist position was that the Humphries had no right to defend themselves from an attack by a wild animal. We need to band together to fight, politically and in court, any attempt to deny any of us the right of self-protection.
4. Then, there is the issue of the "King's Deer." The government claims ownership of wild animals. Where is the liability then, when the government's wild animals trespass on private property? On what legal basis can government seize your property, without compensation, as "habitat" for its wild animals? Yet, the federal government is doing it. Government is busy trying to solve that problem by taking away our private property. Unfortunately, government has had the connivance of the courts in this attempt. That is not surprising, because the courts are part of government.
5. Who are the predators in this incident? Is it the Humphries? The wolves? The government agencies? Or the environmental wolf lovers? Note the neither the government agencies nor the environmental wolf lovers can reasonably be argued to be acting in their own defense, and it is at least dubious that the wolves were.

We invite comments from our readers on problems related to the issues of wild animals.