

Wolf's Saga A Tale Of Paradoxes

Feds Who Once Hunted It
Want It Back in Southwest

The Associated Press

BLUE PRIMITIVE RANGE, Ariz. — He is a strong, compact man, teeming with suspicions. Under the brim of his felt cowboy hat, he eyes you with wariness before revealing his deepest feelings about El Lobo, the Mexican gray wolf.

"I've got a cause, and my cause is my family ... and when that predator threatens my family, I'm going to fight it," rancher Tim Robart says, drawing heavily on a cigarette.

"If they want to live by predators' rules, then I'll live the same way. ... My only recourse is to remedy the situation."

Here, amid the mysterious box canyons and towering pines where El Lobo once roamed, Robart is not the only one who harbors anger.

Hitting a nerve

Ranchers across the wilds of eastern Arizona and New Mexico see themselves in a crucial battle for self-preservation. The cattlemen's enemy: a federal agency that wants to restore a top-of-the-food-chain predator that their ancestors spent decades trying to wipe out.

"To me, it's just not fair to cattle or to people. It's ludicrous," Robart says. From the turn of the century to the 1940s, ranchers and federal agents waged a brutal, successful campaign to rid the West of wolves, so talk about restoring the animal stirs deeply ingrained passions. There are no

Mexican gray wolves running free, and most cattlemen want to ensure things stay that way.

The object of their scorn, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, says it has a mandate under the Endangered Species Act to restore the wolf to the West. It wants to begin releasing Mexican wolves

EL LOBO: Mexican wolf coming in '97

onto federal land in Arizona and New Mexico as early as 1997, with a goal of establishing 120 wolves in the wild by 2004.

But even the most ardent wolf supporters think ranchers will prevail again.

"I'll bet you \$100 right now it won't happen," says Arizona State University professor David Brown, a biologist and wolf expert. "I'd be glad to lose, but I don't think so."

"You don't see any congressmen saying, 'My district sure would like to have those things,'" Brown said. "I don't see Gov. Symington saying, 'Boy, I wish we had some wolves back in Arizona.'"

"Anti-conservation is at a hyper pitch right now, and you're talking about an animal that's going to take livestock."

Into the spotlight

Present in the Southwest since the Pleistocene, 11,000 to 12,000 years ago, the lobo once roamed from central Mexico to Texas and northern Arizona but is considered one of the rarest land mammals in the world. Its recovery is rated by international experts as the highest priority of the nation's three gray wolf recovery programs.

El Lobo's cause got a boost earlier this year when Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and a herd of reporters watched as the Mexican wolf's larger cousin, the North American gray wolf, was reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park and the wilderness of central Idaho.

But the shy and secretive Mexican wolf has never received that much attention, even though the stakes are considerably higher. While thousands of northern gray wolves are in the wild, most experts believe the only remaining Mexican wolves are locked in cages.

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"TYPICAL TEEN-AGER":

Kara Dawn Garner's mother said that before the streets, drugs and prostitution, her daughter "was a typical teen-ager" who attended school in a small Colorado town, played on a softball team and liked 4-H.



A Mother's Cause

It could have been a Central Avenue trick, an old boyfriend or a drug deal gone bad that killed Kara Dawn Garner last June. But whatever the reason, her mother is determined to know the truth.



UNHAPPY ENDING: Albuquerque Fire Department officers wash blood off the sidewalk June 15 after Kara Dawn Garner was found dead in the parking lot of the Rainbow Garden Roller Drome. Albuquerque police say such killings are difficult to solve because witnesses often run in the same shady circles and are reluctant to talk to investigators.

Story by CARLA CROWDER
Photographs by DENNIS DAILY
Of the Journal

FARMINGTON — An early picture of Kara Dawn Garner shows a blue-eyed, 3-year-old with pink foam curlers wound in her blonde hair.

The most recent one shows her face down in a parking lot with three bullet holes in her body. It flashed across the 6 o'clock news the night in June after Garner, 23, was shot and dumped outside Rainbow Garden Roller Drome on San Mateo Boulevard near Central.

"A prostitute's dead and nobody's been arrested," was the way Albuquerque Police Department homicide Detective Doug Shawn recently summed up his case.

Garner was a prostitute and a crack-cocaine addict. But before she was either of those things, she was a girl in Cortez, Colo., who loved to ride her bicycle and play with Barbie dolls.

"She was not streetwise. She did not grow up on the streets. She did not grow up around the drugs. She just was not brought up that way," said Garner's mother, Jeannie Riggott, a nurse in Farmington. Garner agreed to talk about her daughter recently because "I just want people to know she was a good person in a lot of ways."

A painful journey

Riggott can trace almost every step in her daughter's path from the hills of rural Southern Colorado to the seedy motels of Albuquerque's Central Avenue.

She can recall the dead-of-night trips driving down NM 44 to bond Kara Dawn out of the Bernalillo County Detention Center.

"I would rather do anything than go to that detention center and pick Kara Dawn up. But she would call me, and she'd be crying, and she would want to come home," Riggott said. "One time I went and got her, and she didn't have any shoes."

Garner, who worked the streets to support her drug habit, is one of at least a dozen Albuquerque homicide victims this year whose deaths were drug-related.

Some of the victims lived on the streets, or from one squalid crack house to the next.

Sometimes the slayings are hard to solve because witnesses run in the same shady circles as the victims and are hesitant to come forward.

In Garner's case, "nobody's talking about it," Shawn said. "It could've been a trick, a bad drug deal, an old boyfriend."

The detective also is looking closely into a specific clique of drug dealers believed to be connected with a spate of this year's drug violence.

But nothing short of the killer's arrest is enough for a grieving mother.

"If it had been some attorney in Albuquerque's daughter, or some policeman's daughter in Albuquerque had been shot, they would be doing everything they possibly could to find out who did it," Riggott said. "But because she was a prostitute and a drug addict, I don't want them to push this back and let it go."

In four years of ragged street life, Kara Dawn Garner never lost touch with her family.

"She would call me crying and tell me, 'Mom, I'm so tired of living like this.' She'd beg me to help her. So I would send her money. I'd go get her. I'd bring her home. But it would never last," Riggott said.

"And I'd ask her 'Why do you do this?' And she said, 'It's an addiction. You don't know what it's like until you've been there,'" Riggott said.

Family secrets

Riggott, now 42, was 19 when she had Kara Dawn, her first child. Within a few years, she and the father divorced, but he remained a part of Kara Dawn's life, Riggott said. "He knew she'd been in trouble. He knew she'd been in jail. He had no idea why," Riggott said.

"... I didn't want him to know what she was doing because she was always kind of like 'daddy's little girl.'"

Kara Dawn's father and grandparents thought she'd been arrested for shoplifting, which was also on her record. They didn't know about the prostitution.

Only Kara Dawn's mother knew the truth.

Kara Dawn attended school in Dolores, Colo., a small community outside of Cortez. She played on a softball team; she liked 4-H.

A high school photo shows Kara Dawn standing in front of a mantle wearing an emerald-green prom dress. "She was a typical teen-ager," her mother said.

A former secretary at Dolores High School remembers Kara Dawn: "She was just a good kid, pretty and bubbly and fun-loving," said Beverly

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An extended honeymoon

Johnson-Bradley Harmony Far Cry From King, Luna

By JACKIE JADRNAK
Journal Capitol Bureau

SANTA FE — The honeymoon still appears to be going strong for Gov. Gary Johnson and Lt. Gov. Walter Bradley.

Not only does Bradley talk to the governor regularly at his side at news conferences, but his staff even has access to the gubernatorial vending machines.

It's a new era.

After a term in which Lt. Gov. Casey Luna got so frustrated with Gov. Bruce King that he ran against him in last year's Democratic gubernatorial primary, Bradley paints a rosy picture of his relationship with

Johnson.

And Bradley said in a recent interview, he doesn't intend to run against Johnson in the 1998 Republican primary.

"We both want to effect change in the way government serves people," Bradley said.

They've been keeping in close touch on those efforts, he said.

Bradley said he participates in strategy meetings with Johnson. He can get same-day access to Johnson if he needs it. And the two offices' staffs meet once a week. "I'm not precluded from any meeting the governor has going," Bradley said.

In turn, Johnson had glowing comments about Bradley.

Press secretary Diane Kinderwater said Johnson told her: "You talk about civil service, this gentleman (Bradley) is really out to see things improve in New Mexico."

She said Johnson has a great partnership with Bradley and "loves his input."

Shared visions

This is a switch from the days when King overturned appointments Luna made once when King was out of state and when Luna's staff was barred from using vending machines in the governor's office suite.

"That doesn't mean that on all issues we agree," Bradley said. "But we share a vision and goals on what we want to do with state government."

Bradley has been outlining some of that vision in talks with state employees over the past few months. He said he is trying to impress on them that they need to serve their clients. And their clients, Bradley said, are the tax-paying citizens.

"The basic, general idea is that state government needs to get back to being service-oriented," the former state senator said.

Carrying out one of his campaign pledges, Bradley has been holding small-business advocacy hearings around the state. At those hearings, he invites business owners to tell him what barriers government puts in their way.

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