

## LETTER FROM ALASKA

**GRIZZLY FATE**  
Treadwell and Huguenard in front of Willy Fulton's plane, the Pumpkin, at Kaffia Bay, Alaska, August 2002. Inset: Big Red Mo



# THE MAN WHO LOVED GRIZZLIES

For Timothy Treadwell, the grizzlies of Alaska weren't just the world's largest terrestrial predators. They were his soul mates, his salvation, and his cause. Last October, when a 1,000-pound male tore him and his girlfriend, Amie Huguenard, to pieces, Treadwell died as he'd lived—by the bear

BY NED ZEMAN

**H**e lived way out here, where it was just him and Alaska and to hell with everyone else. Here he was alone but never

lonely, didn't even know what loneliness was. Soon everyone would be gone for the year, even the grizzlies. Days earlier, the place had crawled with bears, splashing through the streams, flipping boulders like dice. Then the creeks slowed, the salmon run thinned, and they were gone.

As they did every October, the bears were heading deeper inland, toward their dark mountain lairs, where they would sleep through the long winter. Only the stragglers remained here in Kaffia Bay, scrapping for what little food remained, hoping against hope that there was still a salmon or two in the creeks, or a few unpicked elderberries to be had somewhere between here and the mountains, among them a forbidding peak known as the Devil's Desk.

It was raining now and foggy. Slate-gray storm clouds hung low over the bay. Normally the water was so clear he could see straight to the rocky riverbed. But with the gloom and the rain swirling in sheets, the water was gray, churning. His hair was icy, almost crystalline, and his coat was soaked. He had a toothache, and he was tired. Even by his spotty hygienic standards—years in the Alaskan wilderness do that to you—he was filthy.

He was 28 but looked older. Anyone who says nature is the fountain of youth hasn't lived in the wilds of southwestern Alaska, where winters test even those genetically adapted to endure them—from the indigenous peoples, the Alutiiq, to the caribou and the killer whales, the moose and the wolves, the seals and the sea lions.

But especially the bears. For centuries, this corner of the subarctic has been known as Grizzly Country. Of the estimated 32,000 grizzlies left in the United States, around

BOTH BY WILLY FULTON

31,000 live in Alaska, where they are, in more ways than one, larger than life. Known as Kodiaks, the bears on Kodiak Island are easily the world's largest, standing upwards of 11 feet tall and weighing as much as 1,500 pounds—the size of three Bengal tigers, five mountain gorillas, or eight men.

Even those who shoot them agree that grizzlies are wonders to behold, possessed of uncommon beauty and human-like qualities that border on the mystical. For centuries, local tribes saw them as gods or shamans. It was a worship born of fear, since grizzlies are the world's largest terrestrial predators, dominating the food chain with their power and size, speed and cunning. Capable of dragging a moose up a mountain and devouring it entirely, a grizzly eats whatever he wants, whenever he wants—including, at times, other grizzlies.

He knew this better than most, having seen it happen year after year to victims bigger and tougher than he was. As the sun disappeared, he moved slowly through the rain, shambling in that ungainly way of his. That's when he saw them, lurking low and quiet in the alders. There were two with strikingly similar features: both adults, both weather-beaten, both golden. He'd seen them before, especially the male, who until recently had traveled alone—had been a "rogue."

Now, it seemed, the male had taken a mate, a small, pretty female. Together they nested in a dense thicket of alders, near some of the age-old bear trails that crisscross Kafia. He approached them cautiously. Inside their carefully constructed habitat, the golden pair stirred. He stood upright, inhaling the cold air, eyes straining to see. At this point, instinct took over and everything became a blur. It was October in Alaska, and he was a bear.

The golden couple, Timothy Treadwell and Amie Huguenard, lived by bears and died by bears. He was 46, she 37. They looked younger than their ages, and increasingly they looked alike: lean, fit, beach-blond. Neither was Alaskan, except in their minds, which had become tuned to that strange frequency that pulls a rare few into the deep wilderness, and ever closer to the line separating humans and animals.

After the couple's ghastly deaths—the first fatal mauplings in the history of Katmai National Park—criticism was aimed squarely at Treadwell, a charismatic bear enthusiast who for years had been the Kodiaks' defender and goodwill ambassador, albeit a self-appointed one. With his good looks and goofy, surfer-dude demeanor—he lived in Malibu and had Hollywood benefactors—Treadwell had incessantly tempted death and fought bogeymen, both real and imagined.

Treadwell's also became the latest cautionary tale in a world gone animal-mad. Roy Horn (of Siegfried and Roy) getting mauled

by one of his white tigers. "The Crocodile Hunter," Steve Irwin, feeding the man-eaters while holding his baby. Photographers Barbara Tyack (mauled in Kenya by a baboon), Bruno Zehnder (frozen to death in Antarctica among penguins), Michio Hoshino (killed in Siberia by a grizzly), and Peter Beard (trampled by an elephant in 1996). Primatologist Dian Fossey, likely killed by gorilla poachers.

Treadwell also battled poachers, if largely those of his imagination. He wasn't a scientist and had no formal training. He was a naturalist, an activist, a writer, and a photographer—not to mention a recovering addict, a Peter Pan, and a fabulist. A few weeks before his death, Treadwell wrote to a friend, "My photographs and stories are looking to the deep and secret world of bears that I do not believe any person has ever witnessed. One day I'll show this work to the public. Until then, I'll keep living it."

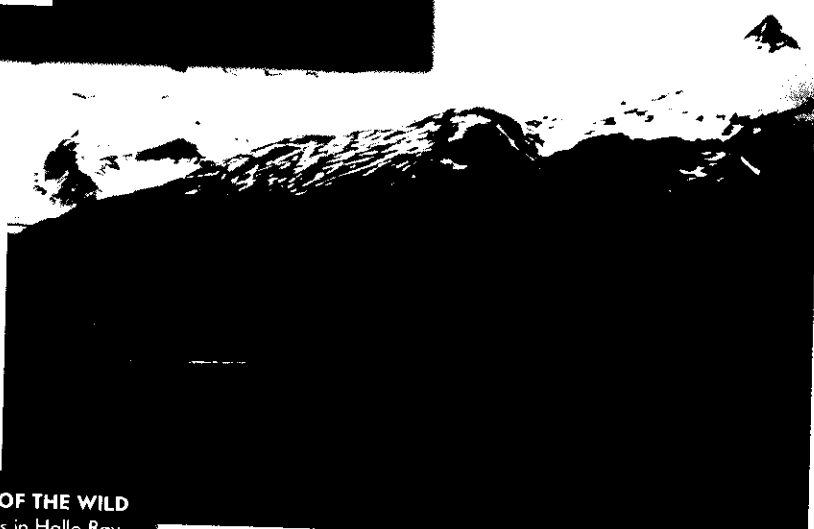
Even those who had long predicted Treadwell's death granted him this: he was a believer, who walked the walk. And he was in love.

Love. Inevitably for people who love animals, that's the million-dollar word. Having failed to find love or sanity or God, these bereft souls drift outward and inward, essentially



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**CALL OF THE WILD**  
Grizzlies in Hallo Bay, Alaska, 1997. Top, Treadwell measures grizzly paw prints in the late 1990s.



becoming exaggerated versions of the old shut-in down the street, with her 20 cats.

In his 1997 memoir, *Among Grizzlies*, Treadwell obliquely referred to a "haunted" and "miserable" youth, in which he was a "handful" for his parents, whom he neither named nor described (other than to say they "loved me and did the best they could"). His dreams were escapist, typically involving interspecies transference in which he bore claws, fangs, or wings that transported him far from Ronkonkoma, on Long Island, where he was the third of five siblings (also unnamed), and where he coveted a teddy bear named Mr. Goodbear. "In my mind, I became a grizzly," he wrote. In his chest beat "the heart of a wild animal."

Intentionally or not, Treadwell was forging his own narrative,

a classic quest in which the solitary hero puts the past behind him, slays dragons at every turn, and heads into the great unknown to find the holy grail. To wit: after two years at Bradley University in Illinois, Treadwell walked away from everything—his identity, his family, even his surname: Dexter. At Bradley, Tim Dexter had set three-meter diving records; in *Among Grizzlies*, there was no diving, no college, no Dexter.

Tim Dexter died in Long Beach, California, amid a cloud of drugs, guns, and brawling. He was arrested twice (for assault and for illegally firing a gun). He lived with cokeheads and dealers, slept with a loaded M16, and nearly overdosed on a “speed-ball” of cocaine and heroin. One night, tripping on LSD, he nose-dived off a third-floor balcony and landed facedown in the mud (which rendered a perfect imprint of his face, including his sunglasses). “I need to be somewhere really remote, far away from people,” Dexter told a friend. “This might seem crazy, but when I was young I used to pretend I was a grizzly.”

Every adventurer has his epiphany, and Treadwell’s occurred in the biggest state, whose dangerous frontier beauty had always lured adventurers and escapists, among them Chris McCandless, the doomed young soul who died trying to live off the wilderness (and who was immortalized in Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild*). Everything is bigger in Alaska, except the population, which is roughly on a par with Vermont’s; the 49th state is bigger than Texas, California, and Florida combined; it has 17 of the country’s 20 highest peaks and a glacier the size of Switzerland.

And then there are the bears.

During Treadwell’s first visit to Alaska, in 1989, a grizzly surged out of the bush, flashing razor teeth and fixing its gaze on Treadwell. Man and beast locked eyes. “The encounter was like looking into a mirror,” Treadwell recounted. “I gazed into the face of a kindred soul, a being that was potentially lethal, but in reality was just as frightened as I was.”

The grizzly fled. Where others would have seen a bear being a bear—if confronted, grizzlies will sometimes “bluff-charge” humans, and almost always flee—Treadwell saw something deeper, a “mutual recognition” that transcended conventional assumptions about interspecies communication. Given Treadwell’s issues, one could chalk up his Big Moment as a classic case of Freudian projection: *Bereft White Male, 32, seeks salvation, love, family. Humans need not apply.* That said, virtually no one disputes that Treadwell had been, in one way or another, saved by the experience. “A revelation,” he called it, and he never touched drugs again.

**K**odiak Island looks like the love child of Ireland and Hawaii, especially in summertime, when sunshine makes the greens greener—green mountains, green fjords—and the North Pacific bluer. The island lies at the heart of a 177-mile-long archipelago off the coast of southwestern Alaska. In June, when Treadwell would typically arrive, the sky stays blue until midnight.

Heading into the town of Kodiak, Treadwell passed the aging canneries and commercial-fishing boats along the Gulf of Alaska, whose waters teemed with halibut, shrimp, and crab, not to mention sea lions and spouting killer whales. Essentially a fishing village—one stoplight, a few dozen businesses, a big blue Russian Orthodox church—Kodiak looks either glorious or gray, depending on the weather, which is surprisingly mild (similar to Vancouver’s) but profoundly foggy, windy, and wet (like Glasgow’s).

Each year 30,000 tourists pour into Kodiak, and most desire either to see bears or to shoot bears. In town, most businesses honor both the animals and the hunters who “take” them—a phenomenon Treadwell grasped the moment he checked into the Kodiak Inn, a rustic little hotel whose lobby features a giant stuffed grizzly.

“Goofy.” That was Wanetta Ayers’s first impression of Treadwell the day he materialized in front of her desk at the Kodiak visitors’ bureau. Actually, that was everyone’s first impression, followed by “childlike.” Alaskans can spot 48ers a mile away, usually via their new Cabela’s boots, and Treadwell was screamingly obvious: Prince Valiant haircut, black baseball cap (worn backward), black sunglasses, black coat.

Displaying more testosterone than experience, Treadwell confounded Alaskans, who tended to view grizzlies as “thousand-pound Rottweilers,” in the words of Dan Eubanks, who tends bar at the Kodiak Inn. Treadwell was always spoiling for a confrontation, particularly with hunters. In his goofy way, he’d smile and say, “How would you like it if I was talking about murdering one of *your* relatives?” Alaskans didn’t know whether to laugh or kick his ass.

Ayers and another local, Kathleen Parker, became Treadwell’s protectors and interpreters, calmly explaining that many Alaskan families, including Ayers’s, grew up eating wild game, often out of necessity. Treadwell had that effect on people. They always wanted to protect him, even those who disagreed with everything he believed in. Bill Sims, a renowned hunting

guide and pilot, first encountered Treadwell in the Katmai National Park & Preserve, located on the long peninsula about 30 miles west of Kodiak Island.

**S**pecifically, Treadwell was by Hallo Bay, in a savanna-like meadow he called “the Big Green.” Blessed with Alaska’s highest concentration of bears, the Big Green was steeped in grizzlies, who clammed on the flats, lazed in the grass, and tended their cubs. Because bear hunters were prohibited and bear viewers welcome, most of the grizzlies, having been habituated to civilization, treated humans with equanimity, even curiosity. Huffing and splashing and digging the scene, thousand-pound “killers” strolled the beach right alongside people.

And there was Treadwell, crouched in the grass, talking to bears in his soft singsong voice: “Hey there, little bear.” He gave them cute names—Cupcake, Mr. Chocolate, Ms. Goodbear—and spent much of his time with Booble, a female whose golden fur matched her disposition. Treadwell shot endless video of Booble, who certainly seemed to like the attention. She would lie a few feet from Treadwell, napping and gurgling and playing with her toes.

Treadwell went everywhere Booble did, including the rivers where grizzlies spent late August, feasting on the salmon runs. Squatting like fat old men, the grizzlies just waited for red sock-eyes to bounce off their chests and rocket into their mouths. Holding salmon like hot dogs, they ate only the fatty parts, discarded the remains, and then grabbed more fish. Fatter by the day, they entered a state of loginess known as “walking hibernation.”

When he was in the woods, Sims preferred watching the most amusing creature of them all, Treadwell, endlessly popping in and out of the trees. Finally, loping up to Sims in that surfer-dude way of his, Treadwell introduced himself. Sims found him inter-

**“I gazed into the face of a kindred soul, a being that was potentially lethal, but was just as frightened as I was,” said Treadwell.**

esting, in a loopy sort of way. Next thing Sims knew, Treadwell was giving ad hoc grizzly seminars to some of Sims's clients.

"Welcome to the world of grizzly bears, which some people call 'brown bears,'" he would basically say, sometimes employing an Aussie accent, which he typically dialed up for women and children. "Grizzlies live further inland than browns, but they're basically the same bears. They can run 35 miles an hour, jump 11 feet in the air, and smell carrion from miles away. They're highly intelligent—after monkeys and us, the world's smartest animals. Smarter than dogs."

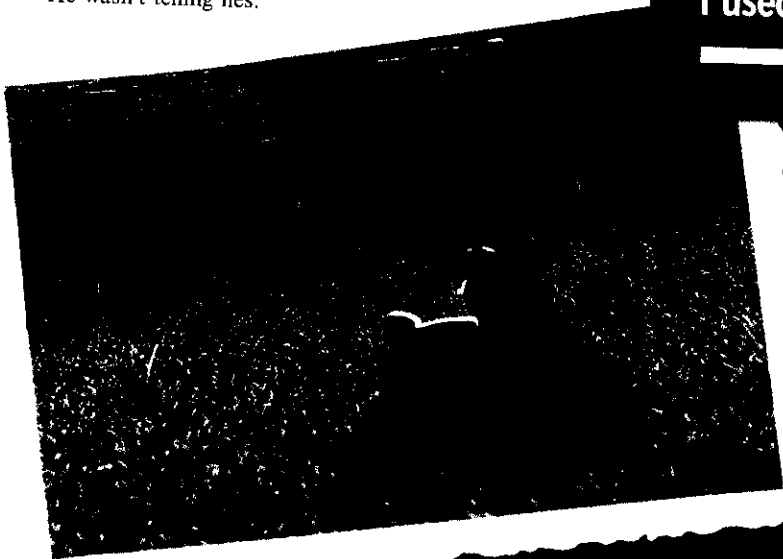
Inevitably, visitors inquired about the grizzly's darker tendencies, such as infanticide, cannibalism, and the occasional human mauling. "Grizzlies are misunderstood," Treadwell would say. "They can kill you with one swat. But, really, they're very shy around people. They see you, they think, Hunter! When they attack, which they hardly ever do, it's because you surprised them or fed them—fear or food."

He wasn't telling lies.

"These bears just tolerate us," Sims argued. "They've only got one thing in mind, and that's to get as much food in their bellies during summer because they've got a long winter ahead. They're not here to be our friends."

Treadwell fell silent, preferring Sims's company and food, which he devoured immediately, partly out of hunger, partly because he didn't want the bears smelling it and getting any ideas. Sims offered him fresh halibut to cook at his camp. "If

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you don't mind, I'll eat it here," Treadwell said, and did just that, eating it exactly as a bear would.

"Timothy," Sims frequently said, "your love for these bears is going to get you in some serious trouble."

"If it happens, it happens," Treadwell replied. "God forbid, if a bear takes me, let him go."

Every year, before heading out to the bears, Treadwell told his friend Kathleen Parker he loved her and said, "This is going to be my best summer yet! If I don't come back"—he'd grin—"this is what I love doing."

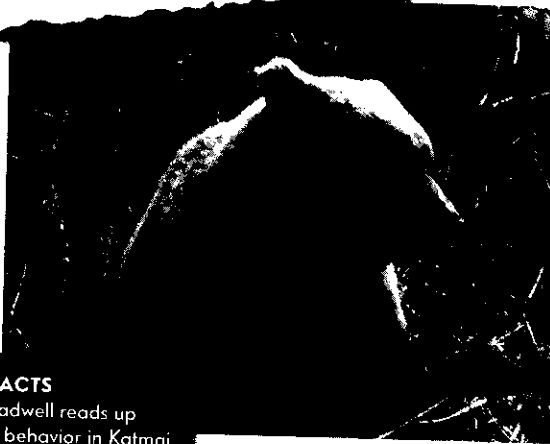
Alaska averaged about five maulings a year, mostly "defensive attacks." Over the last 100 years, the "killer bears" had killed only 45 people; in the last decade alone, dogs killed 21.

Sims began packing lunches for Treadwell, who normally subsisted on power bars, peanut butter, and Coke; his wildlife skills were, in the early going, rudimentary. His homely little campsite was out in the middle of everything, utterly exposed. One bear entered his supply tent, opened a "bear-proof" container, and stole 50 power bars. When grizzlies weren't bumping into his tents, storms were knocking them over; sometimes he stayed up all night, out in the wind and rain, holding on to his tent. "I should have been doing this a long time ago," Treadwell said after moving into an alder patch. "That was just lack of experience."

Still, unlike almost everyone who lived and worked among grizzlies, Treadwell neither carried pepper spray nor put an electric "bear fence" around his camp. "Doesn't seem fair to the bears," he'd say. "Why should they suffer for me?"

**BEAR FACTS**

Top, Treadwell reads up on bear behavior in Katmai National Park as a curious grizzly looks on, 1994. Above, Downey, one of Treadwell's favorite grizzlies.



Men have always told bear stories. The earliest prehistoric cave drawings portrayed dancing bears and devil bears, god bears and man bears. The confusion was only natural, since the distinction between *Homo sapiens* and *Ursus arctos* wasn't entirely clear, and sometimes seemed only a matter of posture. Actually, the difference was perfectly clear to bears; it was the

slow-witted *Homo sapiens* who took centuries to fathom and mimic the bears' simplest skills: hunting, fishing, foraging, spelunking.

By one theory, man and bear arrived in Alaska together, more or less, crossing a massive land bridge that once connected Asia and North America. That was 40,000 years ago, before the Bering Sea covered the bridge, and brown bears the continent. Some, it is believed, were trapped on an Arctic ice sheet and evolved into polar bears.

The rest became gods. "The grizzly is half human," thought the Tlingit tribesmen. Other tribes called bears "grandfather," "cousin," or "four-legged humans," according to *Giving Voice to Bear*, a 1991 book by David Rockwell. Sioux healers performed "grizzly dances," whereas the Ojibwa saw bears as shape-

shifters—sometimes bear, sometimes shaman. And Dakota boys spent days crawling, snorting, and ritualistically “making a bear.” Many tribal rites required initiates to acknowledge, summon, or “be” bears.

And with good reason, since grizzlies out-ranked them in the food chain. The members of some tribes wouldn't look a bear in the eyes; others wouldn't even say “bear.” And most agreed that the one thing more dangerous than a pissed-off bear was a pissed-off bear that smelled blood, specifically menstrual, specifically a girl's first. Ojibwa girls were quarantined in huts during their first period cycles, and a menstruating girl was called *mukowe*: “she is a bear.”

White explorers and settlers, including Lewis and Clark, were no less respectful. “The Indians give a very formidable account of the strength and ferocity of this animal [*sic*], which they never dare to attack but in parties of six eight or ten persons,” Lewis wrote in 1805, when up to 100,000 grizzlies roamed the North American wilderness. Calling them “furious and formidable,” Lewis added, “It is astonishing to see the wounds they will bear before they can be put to death.”

White hunters used nature's great leveler. “If you get crippled for life, you carry about you a patent of courage which may be useful in case you go into politics,” explained one hunter about the mystique of his avocation. “Besides, it has its effect upon the ladies.” And so began a century-long shooting spree that chased grizzlies out of every state except Alaska and those bordering Yellowstone or Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Today, were it not for federal protection, grizzlies would exist only in Russia, in Canada, and in zoos, possibly under their Latin designation, *Ursus horribilis*.

Like all bear stories, Treadwell's got better with each telling. Sometimes he claimed membership in an old Aussie clan, the Treadwells; other times he claimed to have grown up as a poor English orphan. But that's pretty much all he said. He just didn't discuss his background.

By then Treadwell lived north of Malibu, near Zuma Beach, where his tiny apartment housed what few possessions he had. Working a series of bartending jobs in and around Santa Monica, he would scrape together just enough money to finance his Alaskan summers. Because he disliked cars—too claustrophobic—he rode a motorcycle, a Honda Magna he called “the Big Red Machine.”

His bear-centricity was obsessive but not monomaniacal. He was a movie buff, an N.F.L. fan, and a closet MTV fan. And he especially loved women, who frequently loved him back. Conversations with his best guy friend, Warren Queeney, went like this: Girls, girls, girls, bears, girls, girls, bears. The whole grizzly-guy thing was catnip to women. “It's not me,” Treadwell said. “It's my bear work they're attracted to. I never got laid like this until I started talking about bears.”

But it never seemed to work out. Every spring, girlfriends asked the same questions: “What's going on? Where do we stand?” Actually, they stood on the phone in Los Angeles while Treadwell stood in Alaska. His most enduring friendship had been with Jewel Palovak, whom he'd met while working at Gulliver's, a medieval-themed restaurant in Marina del Rey. One night, she found Treadwell grilling a thick ahi tuna. “Oh, this is for the dog,” he said. “We're having burgers.”

With hunters, Treadwell would smile and say, “How would you like it if I was talking about murdering one of your relatives?”

In 1994, after *People* magazine published a short profile of Treadwell, HarperCollins offered a book deal. Treadwell certainly had material: piles of tapes, notes, letters, and musings of the sort that could be written only during endless hours in the wilderness, when his only non-ursine entertainments were reading, listening to music, and playing with Timmy, a scrappy red fox who endlessly fetched a tennis ball.

Working as Treadwell's co-author, Palovak helped focus his boundless enthusiasm, and, in 1997, *Among Grizzlies* was published to modest sales and reviews. The book proved a welcome antidote to a burgeoning publishing subgenre: bear-attack books, which popularized and fetishized ursine horror: *Killer Bears*, *Attack of the Killer Grizzly*, *Bear Attacks: The Deadly Truth*.

By then Treadwell was familiar to the quarrelsome agglomeration of scientists, naturalists, and lay enthusiasts known collectively as Bear People. Bear People didn't know what to make of Treadwell, and weren't to be confused with Grizzly People. The latter was Treadwell's new fund-raising apparatus, a decidedly grassroots operation headquartered in Palovak's kitchen; it published Treadwell's work and financed his “expeditions,” as he now called them.

Having established what he was for, Treadwell now emphasized what he was against: poachers and park rangers. For decades, poachers had run freely through the wilderness, zipping in and out aboard undetectable boats and bush planes. Some were trophy hunters, others profiteers who carved out the bears' gallbladders and smuggled them to Asia, where they were peddled as aphrodisiacs.

Treadwell warned of gun-toting hooligans skulking in the murky Katmai nights. Sometimes he chased them off, he reported; one time, he said, they menaced him with guns. It was just their dumb luck that he never seemed to have a camera during these encounters. Also, there was the small matter of those pesky rangers and jealous Bear People, who claimed that poaching was no longer a problem in Katmai.

Meanwhile, the Park Service was enforcing a “seven-day rule,” which required campers to relocate every week. Its rationale—something about allowing others access to prime campsites—did not sit well with Treadwell, whose faith in rangers had been shaken in 1998, when they fined him \$150 for storing a food item in an Igloo cooler instead of a bearproof container. (“I am outraged and hurt,” he protested.) To foil the rangers, Treadwell code-named his “secret locations” when referring to them in letters, calling Hallo Bay “Aubrey,” after Bill Sims's granddaughter.

Treadwell commiserated with three of the world's top Bear Persons: Charlie Russell, Doug Peacock, and Barrie Gilbert. Russell and Peacock had spent decades living with and defending grizzlies, and all three recommended tough love: use bear fences. Although Gilbert hadn't lived the grizzly life—he was a professor at Utah State University—his was rare expertise. In 1977 a grizzly attacked him in Yellowstone, tearing off most of his face.

Before Amie Huguenard loved bears, she loved Treadwell. They met in 1996, in Boulder, Colorado, where Huguenard worked as a physician's assistant. Though raised in Indiana, Huguenard felt at home in Boulder, spending endless hours hiking and biking the Rockies, even in winter. She was lean, fit, and windswept, as if born in Levi's and fleece. She had attend-

ed college there, at the University of Colorado, then returned after getting a master's degree from the University of Alabama.

Sometimes her appearance fooled people. She was tiny—five feet zero, 100 pounds—and seemed shy. When she and Treadwell were around other people, he did the talking. But in private, among friends, she wasn't shy at all, revealing a high-pitched laugh and huge stamina; after a 15-hour workday, she'd run for miles. One of the osteopaths she worked with, Dr. Phillip Stahl, knew he could always get a rise out of her by joking about protected lands or baby seals. "They're very important," she would reply.

After attending one of Treadwell's lectures, Huguenard couldn't get him out of her head. In January 2000 she wrote him a letter. "Dear Mr. Treadwell," she began. "I had the pleasure of attending one of your presentations . . ."

It began as friendship. "Great person," Treadwell scribbled beside Huguenard's phone number. "Good heart." Treadwell, being Treadwell, kept things light and loose. He wasn't thinking about the future, except as it pertained to bears.

He was working hard to sell his footage and expertise to television and movie studios. He filmed a segment of Paramount Television's *Wild Things* series, and was "technical adviser" on *Brother Bear*, an animated Disney movie. He took meetings with talent agents at CAA. Most notably, he produced and starred in a Discovery Channel special, *The Grizzly Diaries*. The show, which premiered in 1999, was mesmerizing: "Watch, amazed, as he comes face-to-face with an 850-pound bear."

And it was all true, more or less. Even the biggest males brushed against Treadwell, sniffing his camera. "Hey, sweetie," he'd say, and the giants would shamle away. Or not. Before Booble went off to gather food—the only time a mother will leave cubs—she nudged her little moppets toward Treadwell. In fact, several mothers availed themselves of the new day-care service, parking the kids at Treadwell's feet, heading off to run errands, then returning.

That bears were comfortable around Treadwell was indisputable. One of the few people who spent extensive bear time with him, Joel Bennett, thought the interaction ran deeper. A longtime bear activist and photographer, he saw that look in the bears' eyes. They looked at Treadwell the way dogs and cats looked at their keepers, as if trying to communicate something. What, exactly, he couldn't say.

**K**afia Bay was surrounded by a mountainous jungleland devoid of flat, open spaces. Landing there required Willy Fulton, a 42-year-old ex-cowboy with a thick mustache, a taste for Pink Floyd, and 6,000 flights under his belt. Fulton was a bush pilot, one of those souls who, using neither co-pilots nor landing strips, routinely negotiated the fiercest elements and meanest terrain. Bush pilots land on mountains and glaciers, in rivers and seas.

Fulton always landed in style, in a 1958 de Havilland Beaver with four seats, floats, and an orange-yellow exterior. When

making its daily buzzes over Kodiak Island, the plane looked like a flying jack-o'-lantern. Hence its nickname, the Pumpkin. By 1999, Fulton was Treadwell's main pilot and confederate. (Bill Sims was busy running a lodge up north.) Three or four times a year, he shuttled Treadwell between Kodiak and Kafia, which was roughly 15 miles northeast of the Big Green.

Everything about Kafia was rough, including its only regular visitors, grizzlies, who had not been habituated to humans. And the only way humans got through Kafia was via the byzantine trails and tunnels forged and frequented by grizzlies. Otherwise, Kafia was an impenetrable alder thicket. Code name: "the Grizzly Maze."

Kafia bears often got ornery, snorting and growling and bluff-charging. The last sounds more benign than it is, for the simple reason that the chargee never thinks, Oh, he's just bluffing. But Treadwell knew how to read bears. One day in 1998, while he was camping with Bennett, the alders shook wildly, followed by what Bennett could describe only as "a King Kong-like situation" charging down the hill. "Jesus!" Treadwell cried, leading Bennett out. "Let's go! Now!"

In his memoir, Treadwell briefly acknowledged what Bear People call the "25th Grizzly": "one that tolerates no man or bear, one that will kill without bias." But he rarely gave voice to such unpleasant realities. When Bill Sims reminded him that

#### FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS

Fulton with the Pumpkin at Kodiak Island, August 2002. He was the first one to arrive on the scene of the killings.



**A day before his death, Treadwell told Fulton, "We made the best choice of our lives. Thank you for risking everything and helping us."**

bears kill bears, Treadwell said, "I really don't want to hear that." And whenever Wanetta Ayers inquired about bears who had obviously been killed by other bears, Treadwell shrugged. "Nature," he said. "The cycle of nature is continuing."

Occasionally, Treadwell crawled and grunted like a bear. I am grizzly, he sometimes told himself, when summoning courage. I am grizzly.

**T**readwell became semi-famous in 2001, thanks to David Letterman. There he was, in the greenroom with Samuel L. Jackson, then he bounded onstage like a big, shaggy puppy. "The thing that I do is live as much like an animal as I can," Treadwell said, half joking. Later, while defending the grizzlies' unfair reputations, he blurted, "They're kinda party animals out there." It just popped out—the way things did when he got excited. Letterman displayed some of Treadwell's photographs, includ-

ing one of a big, nasty male, and later asked, "Is it going to happen that one day we read a news article about you being eaten by one of these bears?" The crowd roared. "This is dangerous work," Treadwell replied, making such a good impression that within a year Letterman called him back for an encore.

Before going on, Treadwell phoned his friend Warren Queeney, whom he called "25" (after the number on Queeney's softball uniform). Queeney called Treadwell "66," reasoning that he was one digit shy of satanic. "Twenty-five, it's 66," Treadwell said. "I'm on the 44th floor of this great hotel. Too bad you're not here. We could've took a shit out the window."

Hollywood returned the love. Leonardo DiCaprio reportedly contributed nearly \$25,000 to Grizzly People, which attracted several famous fans, including Pierce Brosnan, Gisele Bündchen, and screenwriter Robert Towne. Corporate sponsors—Patagonia, Konica Minolta—also chipped in. "Behind me is a beautiful wild brown grizzly bear here in Alaska," Treadwell said in a 2001 anti-poaching video. "Thanks to a grant from Leonardo DiCaprio and Leonardo DiCaprio's foundation to Grizzly People, I'm able to protect these animals. . . . People might be coming for these animals, try to hurt them."

Alaskans took a dimmer view, and tensions escalated. Grizzly People published a photo of a bear poacher "in action." But the man was actually a bear-viewing guide, and Treadwell had to apologize. He ignored Bear People Barrie Gilbert and Charlie Russell after they suggested he was sending mixed messages—preaching caution while displaying little. "At best he's misguided," said former Katmai National Park superintendent Deb Liggett. "At worst he's dangerous." In private, she implored Treadwell to "be safe," according to the *Anchorage Daily News*, adding, "My staff will never forgive you if they have to kill a bear because of you."

Treadwell gave grizzly lectures far and wide, and his target audience wasn't old enough to write checks. Although he had erased his own childhood, he never quite outgrew it. (When not in Alaska, his daily breakfast consisted of raw vegetables, bread, candy corn, and Coke.) The silly names and the singsong voice were meant for bears and kids:

"We stay how far from bears?"

"A hundred yards!"

"If a bear approaches, we . . . ?"

"Don't run!"

"And we don't feed them, because a fed bear is a . . ."

"A fed bear is a dead bear!"

The kid thing, like the bear thing, had an effect on the ladies, including Huguenard, who was now in her mid-30s. She wanted a relationship and let Treadwell know that. "I think you're amazing," he replied. "But I'm really not the settling-down type. It's just the way I am, and I won't change."

That it was a line didn't make it untrue. The more Treadwell's peers began settling down, the faster he headed in the opposite direction. "I don't want any little ones running around," he told Kathleen Parker. He'd hurt enough women, and some had hurt him. Either way, he always ended up pissed off and heading back to bears, who never disappointed, never judged, never tried to change him.

Officially, he and Huguenard were just friends, not lovers; unofficially, they fell somewhere in between. Treadwell dithered,

pulling away, then crept back closer, then away again; in romance, as in life, he ran hot and cold, with a tendency toward the dramatic. (His journal entries consistently indicated "the best day ever" or "the worst day ever.")

Huguenard refused to whine. "Tim's not [a family] guy," she told a friend. "He is who he is."

Her faith paid off in the strangest ways. In Kafia, Treadwell contracted giardiasis, an intestinal parasite often called "beaver fever," owing to one of its sources—water contaminated by beaver fecal matter. Running a 104-degree temperature and hallucinating wildly, Treadwell phoned Huguenard and Palovak, neither of whom was in Alaska. "Why did you leave today?" he said to Palovak. "I saw you just walking today."

Treadwell refused to leave, so Huguenard Express Mailed drugs to Bill Sims, who air-dropped them over Kafia. Later,

in Kodiak, Treadwell looked gaunt, having lost 30 pounds. "I'll talk to Amie," he told Wanetta Ayers. "She'll advise me what to do."

Huguenard's first visits, in 2001 and 2002, both deepened and complicated the "friendship," as Treadwell called it. Though practically half his size, Huguenard hauled as much gear as he did; she hiked farther, faster,

and higher. The quiet suited her, and so did the bears.

"Like heaven," she later told friends. "You haven't lived until you've bathed in a river with bears."

At first, in the Big Green, the grizzlies were a little nervous-making. But Treadwell proved a perfect guide, calmly repeating the safety rules. He never approached the bears, but sometimes they approached him. Treadwell would stand perfectly still, whispering instructions to Huguenard and salutations to bears. Grizzlies brushed right past—close enough for them to feel their breath, and sometimes their fur.

Naturally, he continued to give them names, among them Baby Letterman. His favorite was Downey, a fluffy young female who was to the Maze as Booble was to the Big Green. Downey was the poster bear, endlessly rolling on her back and popping out of the water.

But a few large males showed no love at all, among them a nasty old bear whose photo had been shown by Letterman. "The Big Red Machine," Treadwell named him (after one of his motorcycles).

The Machine ruled Kafia absolutely and neither man nor beast dared get near him; at one point, Treadwell had to hide in the farthest corner of the Maze. "I would love to be his friend, but he's not that type of bear," Treadwell concluded. "The Red Machine is from the old days, the old days of when bears came here and the sight, the smell of a person meant poacher, meant death. . . . How can I communicate to him that I am friend and all the rest are foe?"

Now Treadwell watched as an even fiercer bear forcibly deposed the Machine. Although smaller than the other males, the new alpha bear fought off all comers and earned his name, Demon. At various times, both the Machine and Demon had qualified as the dreaded 25th Grizzly, Treadwell felt. He made sure Huguenard gave the males wide berths, which usually wasn't difficult, since neither bear wanted anything to do with them. Except once—when an aggressive male bear growled, backed them off, and disappeared.

"A short sunny streak is still on the horizon," Treadwell wrote

If a grizzly attacked, the plan was simple. "Pull up, back away, or do nothing. Feel as if there's ice in your veins and be fearless."

## LETTER FROM ALASKA

in his journal on July 25, 2003, having just returned to the Maze, alone. "Wow! Wow! Wow! One of the most exciting days in my life at the Mazes—Back Creek. Popping over the Secret Trail . . . I could see several bears. Freckles still ruling—holding up the main area of the Back Creek—then a bear that looked like Downey, two that looked like Emmy and Baby Letterman." He followed them down a narrow bear trail shrouded by alders. "100% Downey! Arguably the closest bear for me in my entire life."

In late August, when the salmon run was slowing to a trickle, Demon reigned. A female dared to fish near him in order to feed her undernourished cubs. "Although I do not officially recognize the mother bear," Treadwell noted, "she seemed to know me." Then: "Demon exploded onto her. She fought him, appearing about one third his immense size. She successfully held him off—Or more likely Demon just let her be. Good Demon."

Just after dawn on August 21, Treadwell awakened to the sound of bears. "Much danger for me," he wrote. "I felt a great deal of paranoia, and rightfully so." Some 500 yards away, the creek "was loaded with bears and trouble. The chemistry between the bears was explosive—three killer bears . . . I felt the tension growing."

After a grizzly fight involving several bears, including the Machine, Treadwell found comfort in Downey, and vice versa. Emerging from the creek, banjo-eyed, Downey slopped right up to Treadwell, like a spooked dog that had found its master. Visibly relaxing, Downey sniffed the video camera and romped around Treadwell, who stood near the water's edge, looking as he always did after months in the wild: sunburned, not an ounce of fat to spare, hair bleached nearly white.

"Downey is seven years old, and I've known her since she was

a spring pup," he said into the camera. "Like she was my own sister. And we've been here together." He looked at Downey. "You are the most beautiful thing," he said, and turned back to the camera. "And I will care for her. I will live for her. I will die for her." He was in tears.

Something about Treadwell seemed different, softer. He picked fewer fights with people, and at least tried to make peace with the Park Service, having at one point offered his services as Katmai's "official bear keeper."

"Amie's coming in today," Treadwell noted on September 14. "She's my girlfriend. She's wonderful."

In the Maze, Huguenard felt fear only when she was out there alone. "You're not alone," Treadwell said.

"I know," she replied.

"And you know what to do."

If a grizzly attacked, the plan was simple. "You have a second or two to get through it," Treadwell often said. "All by making an instant choice. Pull up, back away, or do nothing. Just feel as if there's ice in your veins and be fearless. He'll hate that."

She suffered everything, even the weasels. They had bedeviled Treadwell's campsite for weeks, usually under cover of darkness—squirring between the tarps, clawing at the tent, attacking in waves. "Get out! Get out!" Treadwell screamed, frantically shaking the tent. He later wrote, "These literally three-pound wormy animals were kicking my ass." He burst out into the Alaskan night, chasing weasels with a stick.

Late September brought crueler weather, which therefore lured more weasels and spiders to Kafia's only dry place: the campsite. Huguenard had a large issue with small spiders, which skittered all over the Maze: wolf spiders, crab spiders, orb-web spiders. That none were harmful was beside the point, since

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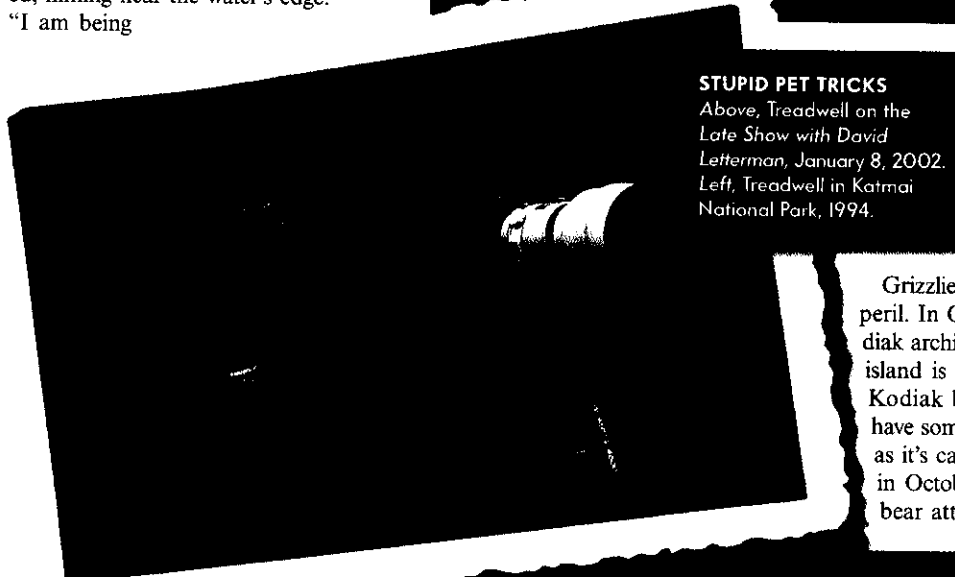
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arachnophobes tend to fear what spiders represent—i.e., death, disease, darkness—more than what they do (although they fear that too). The usual remedy, insecticide, wasn't an option. Treadwell wouldn't harm a fly.

Huguenard toughed it out, though sometimes on tiptoe or swaddled in mosquito netting. Treadwell never ventured far from her, always keeping a watchful eye—but rarely filming her. He tried, but she was shy about that. "It's about the bears," she'd say, retreating into her fleece. But one time, when she wasn't looking, Treadwell taped her anyway. She was out near the rocky shoreline, watching the bears. Slowly, she looked back at Treadwell with an expression that read, We're O.K., right?

Her nervous excitement was fitting, since the grizzlies were in the final stretch of their summer cycle, competing for the last fish. While the Machine lived in exile, Demon hovered in the creek, foaming at the mouth. "It is said that giant male bears do not allow much any animal near their food source," Treadwell reported, filming near the water's edge. "I am being



#### STUPID PET TRICKS

Above, Treadwell on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, January 8, 2002. Left, Treadwell in Katmai National Park, 1994.

let in very close to Demon and his food source. And, in a further sign that he trusts me, he has actually turned his back to me."

On September 26, Treadwell and Huguenard left Kafia with mixed emotions. Treadwell hadn't seen Downey before they left, and Huguenard hadn't seen reason to leave. Actually, he wanted to leave more than she did.

At the airport, Treadwell discovered that their tickets cost more than expected. Plus, he didn't like the ticket lady's attitude. He turned to Huguenard. "I can't believe we're leaving," he said.

"What do you want to do?" she asked.

"What do you want to do?"

"I wanna do whatever you wanna do."

Treadwell contemplated the Downey situation and the forecast, which called for heavy rain, which meant fuller creeks, which meant he needed to call Palovak to reschedule their departure. "You're gonna think I'm crazy," he told her. "But there's a fish run and we're going to go back . . . and we want to make sure Downey's O.K. What do you think? Do you think I'm crazy?"

"I think you're gonna do whatever you're gonna do," Palovak replied. "Be safe. Good luck. And call me."

It rained and rained. In Kodiak, they passed three days waiting for the sky to clear. With another client, Fulton probably wouldn't have flown. But this was Tim, and he and Amie were practically vibrating. "We haven't said good-bye to them properly," they explained. On September 29, they were back in

the Pumpkin, heading out for one last week in the Maze.

The weather had turned colder. The sky was gray; the landscape, ghostly. The alders were grizzly brown, making it even harder to see the bears. In fact, as the Pumpkin touched down in the water, there wasn't a single grizzly on the coast. They were on the move, heading inward and upward in search of what little food remained. Most of the salmon were gone, as were most berries,

and bears who weren't fattened up needed to address the issue before the Big Sleep, which lasted roughly from November to April. Those who didn't eat enough were doomed to starvation or even predation—sometimes by other grizzlies.

Grizzlies outside the park face even greater peril. In October, hunters pour into the Kodiak archipelago, loaded for bear. (The main island is not protected, and so neither are Kodiak bears.) Because grizzlies seem to have some sort of sixth sense—"bear sense," as it's called—they tend to be on high alert in October; in fact, several years ago two bear attacks occurred this time of year.

**"Is it going to happen that one day we read a news article about you being eaten by one of these bears?" David Letterman asked.**

Both victims were hunters whose bleeding quarry had been smelled, claimed, and defended by hungry grizzlies.

One of the hunters bled to death; the other survived after stabbing the bear 20 times, then crawling for miles. As usual, though, the bears hadn't viewed humans as food, only as threats to their food. That's why most mauling victims live to tell the tale; once subdued, they're presumably as unappetizing as they are unthreatening. The most infamous time grizzlies preyed on humans was August 13, 1967, in Montana's Glacier National

Park—the “Night of the Grizzlies,” when, in separate incidents, bears killed two young women. The victims had three other things in common: spooked bears, unsealed food, and menstrual blood.

As the Pumpkin headed back to Kodiak, Treadwell and Huguenard excitedly splashed onto the rocky shore, bush-whacked over a small hill, and set up camp in their thicket, about 500 yards from the water. Two blue tents—one for them, one for supplies.

They heard bears before they saw them, crunching along the trails and tunnels, huffing and thumping through the brush. “Tracking through the jungle paths, many areas you can not see more than a few feet ahead,” Treadwell had written to Bill Sims. “It’s not *if* you will come across the bears in these paths. It’s how often. Some bears are fine with it, some shy. And a few, like some of the big boys, can come after you hard.”

On October 4, the Maze was golden with sunlight and grizzlies. And there was Downey, fishing and flopping and camera hogging. Euphoric, Treadwell called Fulton by satellite phone. “I’m hoping you can come out because you know where we are,” he said. “The weather was a little dicey. But, let me just tell you, just between Amie, myself, and you, every fish ran, every bear was here. We made the best friggin’ choice of our lives. . . . Once the [rain] settled down, boy, it was amazing out here. Thank you so much for risking everything and coming out and helping us that day. I know it seemed kinda weird, but thank you.”

The next day, Treadwell phoned Palovak and had her call the airline. Pretending she was Huguenard, she made sure their seats were together. “Do you still want your low-fat meal?” the ticket lady asked, and confirmed their seats for two days later, on October 7. Both reservations were to Los Angeles. Before meeting Treadwell in Alaska, Huguenard had quit her job, landed a new one at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and set up their new place in Malibu.

**D**uring their last day in the Maze, Treadwell and Huguenard sat in their tent, packing their gear and listening to the rain. The only other sounds came from the occasional bear huffing or grunting or thumping along one of the trails just outside the tent. Bears had dug “daybeds” all over the place, and scat was everywhere.

Outside the tent, one of the bears wouldn’t knock it off. He bumped the tent and shook the alders, and he was right there. After a while, Treadwell had had enough. He unzipped the tent and stepped out into the twilight. He didn’t bother putting on his sneakers, which sat outside the tent, next to Huguenard’s. Crackling underfoot, the ground was weedy and cold, not far above freezing. The alders obscured what little light there was, and he couldn’t see more than 20 feet ahead. He moved slowly.

That’s when he saw the bear, or when the bear saw him. Hearts racing, eyes straining in the dusk—humans and bears have roughly the same eyesight—the two males stood no more than five feet apart. Both were hungry and weather-beaten, especially the bear. He looked like he might be the area’s oldest grizzly. His coat was mangy, and his rib cage protruded. Decades of battle had scarred his body and disfigured his face; his jaw drooped low, revealing gnarled teeth. He weighed 1,000 pounds.

Treadwell did what he always did in these situations. He

waved his arms, shook the alders, and made himself bigger.

Inside the tent, Huguenard heard the commotion, which lasted longer than it typically did. Treadwell was saying something, presumably to the bear, but his voice was too faint to decipher. “Is it still out there?!” Huguenard shouted. At which point the alders shook harder and Treadwell’s voice became a shriek. “Get out here!” he shouted. “I’m getting killed!”

Unzipping the tent, screaming as loudly as Treadwell, Huguenard confronted a massive blur of limbs, fur, and violence. The bear was all over Treadwell, dwarfing him. Following protocol, Huguenard yelled, “Play dead!” Treadwell went limp, or tried to. Shortly thereafter the bear came at him again, tearing into him with one-and-a-half-inch teeth and four-inch claws, and battering him with skillet-size paws.

Shouting and crying, but keeping her wits, Huguenard tried Plan B. “Fight back!” she yelled.

The harder Treadwell fought, the louder the bear raged, taking dead aim at Treadwell’s head (as attacking grizzlies typically do). Treadwell weighed his dwindling options, yelling, “Hit him with a pan!”

Moments later, in all likelihood, Huguenard watched helplessly as Treadwell lay pinned on his back, staring up at the Big Red Machine.

“It’s not *if* you will come across the bears in these paths. It’s how often,” wrote Treadwell. “And a few . . . can come after you hard.”

**A**t noon the next day, the weather remained grim. So Fulton took off while he still could, disappearing into the thick storm clouds that shrouded his 50-minute flight to the Maze. As usual, he landed in the water, then idled toward the craggy beach. The fog hovered low; the afternoon was

raw and wet, in the low 40s. Normally, Treadwell’s gear was already on shore, like luggage outside a hotel. Now there was nothing there, and no one. Not a bear in sight.

Finally, 15 feet ahead, he detected signs of life. The alders shook rhythmically, the way they usually did when Treadwell dried out his tarp, and Fulton glimpsed a figure there. Having tied the Pumpkin to a rock, Fulton headed up into the alders, which were about eye-high. “Tim!” Fulton shouted, and shouted again. No reply.

He got a bad feeling and wanted the trusty 12-gauge shotgun he usually kept in the Pumpkin. Moving fast, he turned and headed back. As he untied the plane, Fulton glanced over his left shoulder. Behind him, creeping swiftly through the alders, came the Machine. The bear hadn’t made a sound, and now he moved toward him, huffing and thumping and closing fast as Fulton scrambled into the cockpit and slammed the door.

The Machine wouldn’t quit, thundering right up to the plane. As Fulton’s throat tightened and his limbs went numb, the bear moved away, along a coastal trail, eyes locked on the Pumpkin, as if daring Fulton to come out. Which Fulton couldn’t. That firearms were prohibited here was beside the point, because his shotgun was back in Kodiak.

Fulton pulled the throttle and ascended over the Maze, watching as the bear returned to the campsite, or what was left of it. The tents had been flattened. Circling low over the campsite—15 times, 20 times—Fulton couldn’t scare off the bear and couldn’t locate the couple. He radioed a dispatcher, who contacted a nearby ranger station, about 90 miles away in tiny King Salmon. At 3:20 p.m., carrying three armed rangers, a white-and-yellow Cessna 206 float plane headed into swirling rain, dense fog, and fading daylight. Landing at the Maze would be a nightmare, so

Fulton talked the pilot through it, advising him to fly as low as possible, until he spotted the Pumpkin.

By the time the Cessna arrived, at 4:26, Fulton had spent nearly three hours in and above the Maze, periodically glimpsing the bear. It was difficult to see, so Fulton had to return to the plane to flash his lights. Inside the Cessna, one of the rangers glimpsed the bear atop a hill. Then the bear disappeared.

Two of the rangers, Allen Gilliland and Derek Dalrymple, carried 12-gauge shotguns; the third, Joel Ellis, a .40-caliber handgun. Crouched in "low ready" positions, they climbed the hill. Though still unarmed, Fulton guided them up through the alders, where Treadwell had been ripped to pieces. His remains were scattered along one of the bear trails, and the grizzly had been eating them. "Anyone here?!" they yelled over and over. The noise was intentional, since the last thing they wanted was a surprised bear.

Or bears. They didn't know how many they were dealing with. Nor were they sure whether Huguenard was dead or alive. "Hey, bear!" they shouted, then paused in the alders for a couple minutes, awaiting back-up from Alaska state troopers due to arrive any minute. Scanning the hillside, they saw nothing and heard nothing.

"Bear!" Gilliland yelled, pointing to his right, where the grizzly had appeared out of nowhere, five yards from Ellis. The men shouted and shouted. Undaunted, the bear stepped toward them. Ellis fired first, then Gilliland and Dalrymple, hitting the bear's neck, shoulder, and left eye. Slowing, the bear absorbed 8 rounds, then 12, then 15. He dropped five yards from Fulton, struggling and groaning. Ten seconds later, having taken 21 rounds, the bear died.

Almost immediately, Fulton said, "I wanna look that bear in the eyes." After confirming that this was the same grizzly he'd seen earlier, Fulton and the others headed up to the campsite. There they found one of the flattened tents unzipped and facing a five-foot-by-four-foot pile of dirt, grass, leaves, and sticks. After kills, grizzlies commonly conceal their food in a "cache" like this one, and evidently the bear had been defending his. The cache was littered with human remains.

Two state troopers arrived, and some of the group conducted a perimeter search. At that point, Gilliland spotted a second bear moving up the trail they'd just walked. "Bear!" he yelled. The bear hesitated for a couple of seconds, then retreated. Moments later, Gilliland yelled again: "I found something!" He thought he'd heard the telltale popping of bear jaws, but saw no bears; instead, he saw a war zone, which would confirm their worst suspicions. Treadwell and Huguenard had been killed the way grizzlies usually dispatched prey—by going for their heads.

Rain and dusk fell faster. While the troopers photographed and videotaped the scene, Fulton and the rangers took deep breaths, gathered the remains, carried them down to the planes,

and headed back up for more. Shortly thereafter, trooper Chris Hill shouted, "Bear!"

That's when they glimpsed a third grizzly in the brush. Though smaller than the first bear, the young "subadult" was far swifter, and was silently creeping 30 feet behind the men. Gilliland fired a warning shot. The bear slipped through the alders, appearing and disappearing. "Take a shot if you have one!" Ellis yelled.

"I don't have a good shot!" Gilliland replied.

The bear reappeared, paused briefly, stalking them in a "quartering" position—a posture they assume when faced with a threat. When the bear moved on them, Ellis and Hill opened fire. The bear fell and struggled to get up—until Gilliland shot it in the back of the head.

In the days and weeks following the Man-eater Attacks (as they were sometimes called), rumors flew: poachers had murdered Treadwell and Huguenard and left them to the bears; the couple had offered themselves up as grizzly martyrs; the killer bear was still out there, hunting humans; Huguenard had

#### KODIAK MOMENT

The Big Red Machine, July 2002. Treadwell believed he might be the "25th Grizzly," who killed without bias.



"The Red Machine is from the old days when the sight, the smell of a person meant poacher. . . . How can I communicate that I am friend?"

been pregnant, or menstruating, and her blood had attracted grizzlies from miles around. There was even a kind of second-gunner theory, which held that the larger bear had been a patsy, taking the fall for the smaller assassin in the grassy knoll.

If the facts indicated otherwise—and they did—answers remained elusive. Forty-two hours after the shootings, the weather cleared enough for investigators to land in Kaffia and slice open the Machine, whose belly revealed human remains, and whose markings revealed his past: he'd been tagged after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. Aside from basic wear and tear, though, the necropsy revealed no major malfunctions. The Machine was just another old grizzly.

Except he wasn't. When the investigators arrived, the smaller bear had already been torn apart and cached by other grizzlies. While it remained possible that the smaller bear (or a third bear) had initiated the attack, only to have his prey

stolen by a bigger bear, logic and circumstance suggested differently. The Machine lay exactly where he had died, untouched by bears.

Three weeks later, by order of the Park Service, the Maze remained closed to outsiders. The only sign of life began: DANGER—BEAR-CAUSED FATALITY. By then, the grizzlies were long gone, having left behind only one pile of small bear bones and a second pile of bigger bones.

"A person could *not* have designed a more dangerous location to set up a camp," concluded bear biologist Larry Van Daele, who later said, "Who knows what goes on inside a bear? Bears don't 'think' the same as people do. What we do know is that Mr. Treadwell was not acting like most people do around bears, and consequently wasn't treated like most people."

Even Treadwell would have agreed with that; one of his favorite quotations came from a state official who predicted that Treadwell would "end up on some bear's breakfast plate." Ultimately, though, Treadwell's legacy hinges less on what one thinks about him than on what one thinks about "intelligent" animals. Those who believe men are men and beasts are beasts will always view the recent attacks as a cautionary tale whose quixotic antihero caused four violent deaths.

Those who detect a deeper interspecies connection—those who ask a Chihuahua how his day was, or who counsel their calicoes—tend to view the deaths as bittersweet tragedy. After

all, just about every wild kingdom worth exploring was assayed by obsessive "lunatics" who laughed at danger: Dian Fossey, Thor Heyerdahl, Ernest Shackleton. Treadwell amassed more than 12 years' worth of field research, and some of the same scientists who ridiculed him have jockeyed for his research. At one point, Treadwell called his friend Louisa Willcox, Wild Bears Project director for the Natural Resources Defense Council, and pleaded, "Will you get these scientists off my back?"

**"Your love for these bears is going to get you in serious trouble," Sims said. Treadwell replied, "If a bear takes me, let him go."**

Anyone who questions Treadwell's motives hasn't seen his tapes, in which the mere sight of bears makes a grown man spin in circles, dancing by himself. And although Treadwell's poacher claims were exaggerated, often wildly so, his camera never lied. Last year he happened upon a man-made wooden

structure resembling a football goalpost. In February, the Park Service acknowledged that the structure had indeed been a "skinning post" constructed by poachers.

But the most disquieting recording is the one nobody will see. For some reason, Treadwell's video camera taped the first six minutes of his attack (on audio only, since the camera was packed in a bag, with its lens cap on). The recording is a horror, documenting an onslaught so ghastly that it gave one of the troopers nightmares. That said, one can't help but hear the obvious: by the end, the sounds of man, woman, and bear were one and the same. □

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