

Bear Attacks

*The
Deadly Truth*



by **JAMES
GARY SHELTON**

BEAR ATTACKS – THE DEADLY TRUTH

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Sample from Chapter - Carcass Defence Behaviour

They had snowshoes on, as there were patches of snow up to three feet deep. Terry was about 25 yards ahead of Joe and had just worked his way through a thick patch of alder when he came to an elevated log that crossed the flag line. Joe was blazing station # 692 with his axe as Terry put his right snowshoe over the log. Terry looked ahead at a spruce tree about 40 feet away and saw what looked like a porcupine moving through the low, downward-hanging limbs.

A funny feeling in his stomach caused Terry to pull his snow-shoe-clad-foot back over the log. When his foot hit the ground, a large grizzly exploded out from under the limbs and came directly at him.

Terry's shock turned to terror as he screamed and reached for his bear mace in the front pocket of his cruise vest; the bear had come silently, but Terry's scream caused it to stop 20 feet away. Quickly, he turned and yelled at Joe, "Grizzly," as he pulled the bear spray from his vest. When he turned back, the bear was lunging at him, but when he made eye contact, the grizzly again hesitated. The bear's stare was the most awful, deadly-looking thing Terry had ever seen, and he knew that the bear was about to rip him to shreds.

Terry then realised that he had to stand his ground in order to save himself. He dropped the bear spray and went for the 12 gauge Mossberg Slugster that was slung across his back. The grizzly had started its final charge when the first dose of 00 buckshot hit it in the face at seven feet—the bear stopped, but didn't go down. The second round of buckshot hit the bear's face again, but the bear was still standing. Terry desperately worked his last shell into the chamber—it was a slug. When the gun went off, the grizzly was knocked over backwards.

Meanwhile, Joe had done a very brave thing: Instead of running away from the battle for life that was unfolding in front of him, he ran up behind Terry to help him. The bear went wild; it was spinning around on its side, roaring and bellowing at the top of its lungs. Terry ripped his vest off and shoved it at Joe, yelling, "Get me more ammo quick, get a slug round."

Joe tore into the vest, pulling the contents from the back pocket; he found birdshot, then buckshot, and finally, several slug shells. He slapped them into Terry's waiting hand. The grizzly was up and turning towards them when the slug ripped into its chest just behind the right front leg.

The bear collapsed on its side and lay still for a moment, then jumped up and ran to their right, stumbling and bellowing as it went out of sight. They could see that the grizzly still had ample power, and it sounded like the bear was coming around

behind them in the timber. Then, all of a sudden, it was very quiet. Terry and Joe looked at each other; they couldn't believe they had survived the attack. But they had to get back to the heli-site without being ambushed. What a terrible situation.

After calming down a bit and putting more ammunition in the shotgun, they gathered up their equipment and started back down the traverse. They moved slowly, back to back, Terry with the gun ready and Joe holding two cans of bear spray. They expected an explosion of fury to come at them any second from the thick brush. A heavy dose of adrenaline was surging through their bodies. They were breathing in gulps.

They had to make two creek crossings on the way back. At these points, the creek noise drowned out their hearing, and they felt even more vulnerable. The bear could've stalked very close, without them hearing it. It was a great relief to get past the creeks so they could have another survival sense working for them.

It had started snowing when they initiated their retreat, which seemed like a bad omen. It seemed to take forever to get back to the drop site, but what a relief it was to be in the open slide area. They moved to the center of the slide runout; this allowed them to see all around for a hundred yards. Joe radioed for the helicopter to come pick them up right away, as they had been attacked by a bear, and it might still be stalking them.

Terry had faced a horrible death up close and knew that the awful glare of the bear's eyes would be etched in his mind forever. Gradually, he could feel his tightened stomach muscles loosening, and he felt lucky to be alive. Joe was also relaxing a bit and feeling good that Terry had been able to save them. There was no doubt in their minds the bear would have killed them. It sent shivers down their spines to realise they hadn't carried the shotgun with them the two previous days. They didn't know why they had brought it today.

The two men maintained their vigilance and readiness to defend against the grizzly. The 40 minutes of waiting for the chopper seemed like four hours. It was a great feeling when they heard the 'whomp, whomp' of the rotor and an even better feeling when they were airborne. As they flew to the attack site, Terry had the pilot call the other crews in the area to warn them about the wounded bear.

After searching for a few minutes in the direction the bear had run, they spotted it lying in a pool of blood, trying to crawl up a steep slope. Terry had felt the most horrible feeling of terror when the grizzly lunged at him, but now had unexpected feelings of sorrow watching the bear trying to pull itself along. He knew he'd had no choice in shooting the grizzly but now felt bad about what had happened—he

wanted the bear's suffering to be over.

Back at camp, after four hours of calming themselves down, they decided that the incident had to be brought to a conclusion. They flew back to where they'd seen the bear and spotted it lying under a tree on its back—it appeared to be dead. They could see an avalanche chute about 200 yards away that was suitable for landing. They dropped two rolls of ribbon from the air; that way they'd be able to tell when they were getting close to the bear. After landing, Terry took out the Marlin 44 he'd borrowed from a friend at camp and loaded it. The pilot shut the machine down so they'd be able to hear everything around them. They approached slowly. When they were within 80 feet, they could see the bear clearly. Terry put six rounds in the grizzly to make sure it was dead.



Terry Deline holding up right front paw of the large male grizzly that almost killed him. Courtesy Terry Deline

Sample from Chapter – Denise Satre

It has been difficult for me to write down these thoughts, but people must be realistic about bear attacks. I know that Sven would not mind if you print the part that we deliberately omitted from the newspaper article, if it will wake people up and save lives.

When we found Sven, the bear had decapitated him and eaten part of his upper torso. I want people to understand the horror of it, to understand my pain at seeing the bear drop something that rolled down the hill and then realising it was my husband's head. I can only hope that he died quickly, but I don't know that he did.

I am very distressed that a bear biologist made the statement that my husband's death resulted from our encroachment on bear habitat. This is a traditional ranching community; there has been no recent expansion. There has, in fact, been a reduction in range use.

I can't say enough about the people who helped search for Sven. They were a wonderful bunch of people who placed Sven and his family above their own safety. Some of them came very close to the bear during the night—most of them were only carrying torches. I will miss them, but never forget their bravery after I am gone.

There are many reasons why I am moving back to Australia, and one is that I no longer feel safe here. We not only have a lot of bears, but also a large population of cougars. There have been several serious incidents in this area with cougars since Sven's death. I have two small children that deserve to, at the very least, play around our house without fear of dangerous animals. We have had cougars right next to our home. If I were to stay here, I would have to break the firearms laws all the time to adequately protect my children—that is unacceptable to me.

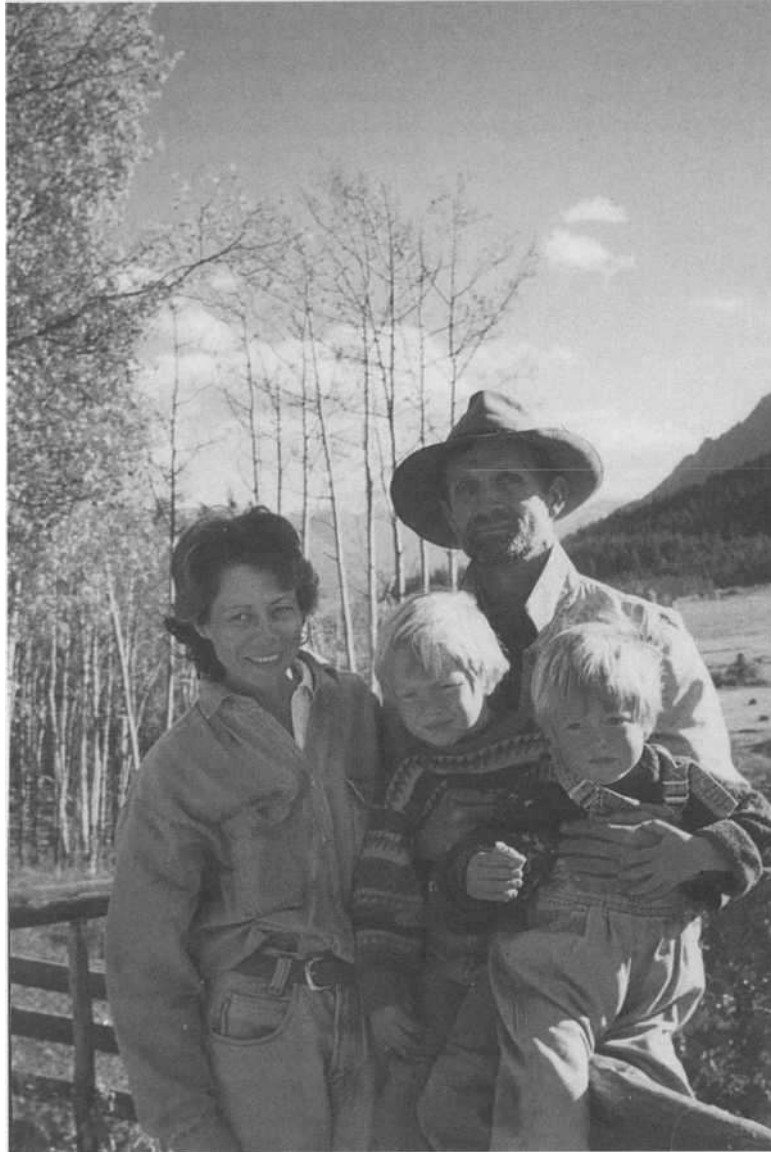
The kind of culture that exists in places like Tatlayoko Valley is a national heritage that should be preserved. But with the government's policy of maintaining predator populations at maximum where we live and work and the determination to limit firearms availability, it is becoming difficult to enjoy this lifestyle. It's hard for me to understand why ranch hands and other field workers in remote areas cannot carry sidearms for protection against wild animals, especially if we're not allowed to reduce predator populations.

I love animals as much as Sven did. I don't want bears or any wildlife killed without good reason. But human life must come first. Since time began, man has been able to protect his family from predators, and I cannot believe that people

who have lived and worked in areas like this for generations are now denied this right.

Mr. Shelton, I'm heartened by what you are doing and know that it benefits people; I thank you for that.

Denise Satre



Denise, Sven, and their two sons. Courtesy Denise Satre

"This book contains an assemblage of the most accurately detailed bear attack stories you'll ever read. But more than that, this is the only publication with a complete explanation of the underlying causes for these terrible events.

In addition, there are two secondary themes running through these pages that distinguish this book from all other bear books: an exploration of how natural systems really operate, and a thorough examination of the battle now raging in many areas of North America between conservationism and preservationism.

The author's views are based on over 30 years of bush experience and research while living in the remote central coast of British Columbia. His knowledge is not that of an observer, but rather, as a participant in nature.

This material indicates that a significant portion of our cultural beliefs regarding bears and other predators is not only incorrect, but, unfortunately, dangerous.

Gary Shelton's first book, *Bear Encounter Survival Guide*, has become the authoritative work on how to survive bear attacks. It contains the first-ever definitive description of bear aggressive behaviour and provides realistic strategies for surviving bear attacks. It is now used by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Western Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, plus hundreds of companies and thousands of individuals.

This second book is also destined to become required reading for those who share the woods with bears."

Angela Hall, Editor,
Coast Mountain News,
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