

Owner of attacking chimp credits deputy with saving daughter's life

BY PHIL WRIGHT

East Oregonian
PENDLETON — Tamara Brogoitti's voice on the 911 call is clear and direct.

"My pet chimpanzee has attacked my daughter," Brogoitti told a dispatcher. "She's bleeding profusely. And the animal has to be shot."

The attack occurred Sunday morning, June 20, at Brogoitti's home and ranch, across from the entrance to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office. Brogoitti, 68, spoke about the attack and death of Buck publicly for the first time on Tuesday.

"There are no ... he was my son," she said. "What I do want to do; I want to thank the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office."

In particular, she thanked the deputy who had to pull the trigger.

"He sent Buck to heaven and saved my daughter," she said. "It was a horrible thing that happened. For the rest of my life, I will thank that man for what he did."

She said the deputy acted with professionalism in a crisis.

"My daughter was losing blood, and emergency personnel needed to get to her," she said. "There were no options."

The body cam video the sheriff's office released Tuesday of the shooting shows Buck from a distance in an enclosed patio. Brogoitti is out of view, hiding in a basement with her daughter, but her voice is evident and she directs the deputy to shoot the ape.

The deputy fired once, hitting Buck in the head, killing the 200-pound chimpanzee.

"There was no pain," Brogoitti said. "My beautiful son folded forward and was with God. There wasn't a twitch. ... He just went to be with God. It was horrible, but it had to happen."

Brogoitti said she was at her daughter's side at St. Anthony



Buck Brogoitti Animal Rescue/Contributed

This photo from 2015 shows Buck, the adult male chimpanzee Tamara Brogoitti cared for at her ranch near Pendleton. On Sunday, a Umatilla County sheriff's deputy shot and killed the primate after it attacked Brogoitti's adult daughter. People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals in April warned the state Brogoitti allowed the ape to roam her property and therefore violated her permit to keep Buck.

Hospital, Pendleton. She did not get into what provoked the attack, but said her daughter, 50, suffered bites on her thighs and buttocks. The plan was for her daughter to leave the hospital Wednesday and live for a while at Brogoitti's home, where she will undergo physical therapy.

Brogoitti also complimented the medics who rushed her daughter to the hospital, and thanked the hospital staff for its "unbelievably wonderful" treatment of her daughter.

Sheriff's office flags residence

Brogoitti also did not get

into details about how she and her late husband, John Brogoitti, acquired Buck as a baby 17 years ago, only to specify it was not to exploit the animal for financial gain. Buck, she said, never appeared on a TV show, for example.

Umatilla County Sheriff's Lt. Sterrin Ward said the sheriff's office is treating this as it would any other animal attack, referring its report to the county's public health department and the district attorney's office.

The sheriff's office on June 21 released two audio clips of

the 911 call Brogoitti made after the attack took place and she was able to get into the basement with her daughter. Ward explained most of the 911 recording includes pauses with little information while emergency help arrived.

PETA warns state

Buck also pinged the radar of the nationwide nonprofit People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Brittany Peet, the PETA Foundation's deputy general counsel for Captive Animal Law Enforcement, issued this statement on Monday about the attack:

"PETA warned state authorities that Tamara Brogoitti had created a ticking time bomb by engaging in direct contact with a dangerous ape, and now, he is dead and a woman has been mauled because of Brogoitti's refusal to follow experts' advice and transfer Buck to an accredited sanctuary. Since long before the chimpanzee Travis ripped a woman's face off in 2009, it has been clear that attacks are inevitable so long as people continue to treat chimpanzees like Chihuahuas."

Oregon banned possession of exotic animals in 2010, with two exceptions:

- If the U.S. Department of Agriculture licensed the owner of the animal.

- If the owner has a valid Oregon exotic animal permit obtained prior to 2010.

Brogoitti fell into the second category. But according to PETA, Brogoitti was violating state laws and rules and the terms of her permit for keeping Buck.

PETA on April 16 sent a letter and complaint about Brogoitti to Isaak Stapleton, director of Food Safety and Animal Health, the agency under the Oregon Department of Agriculture that issues permits for exotic animals.

WALL OF MOMS

Portland protesters sue feds over injuries

BY CATALINA GAITÁN

The Oregonian

A Wall of Moms participant and a 17-year-old girl sued the federal government Wednesday for injuries they suffered during racial justice protests last summer, joining a growing group of people alleging excessive force by federal officers.

Kristen Jessie-Uyanik, 42, and Lillian "Beck" West, 17, are named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Portland. They are seeking unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

Jessie-Uyanik's voice quavered as she described the night of July 25.

She was standing outside the federal courthouse, linking arms with the Wall of Moms and wearing safety goggles and a helmet, she said at a news conference with other injured protesters.

Without warning, a federal agent aimed a gun at her head and shot her between the eyes just before 11 p.m., she said. She collapsed into the arms of the women standing beside her, blood streaming into her eyes, she said.

"I truly thought I was going to die and that I would never see my three young children again," Jessie-Uyanik said.

She was taken by ambulance to a local hospital where she received seven stitches. The wound on her forehead has since healed, but the scar is a daily reminder of getting shot, she said.

Nathaniel West spoke on behalf of his daughter, Beck, and said the two were standing beside a fence around the Justice Center downtown also on July 25. They were wearing gas masks, safety goggles, helmets and heavy clothing, he said.



Catalina Gaitán/The Oregonian

Protesters spoke at a press conference Wednesday alongside enlarged images of the injuries they sustained while demonstrating in downtown Portland in July 2020.

West said they hadn't heard any warnings to disperse when a federal agent lobbed a grenade over the fence toward them shortly after 11 p.m.

The grenade exploded next to his daughter's head, "shredding her left eardrum (and) melting and bruising the skin on her face and neck," West said. When they arrived home, they found small rubber pellets melted and embedded into the safety gear around her face.

His daughter had eardrum replacement surgery in May but will likely never fully regain her hearing, he said.

Attorneys who have previously represented the U.S. Department of Homeland Security did not respond to requests for comment.

Nathaniel West also is one of four protesters who filed a class-action lawsuit in August against the federal government alleging excessive force against peaceful demonstrators.

The suit claims the Trump administration deployed federal agents unlawfully and that the officers escalated tensions by using a variety of crowd-control tactics against nonviolent protesters, including tear gas and flash-bang grenades.

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