

Grizzly Man Who Was Mauled By His Beloved Bears 'Didn't Have A Death Wish,' Reveals Ex-Girlfriend

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By **Debbie Emery** – Radar Reporter

Timothy Treadwell stared danger straight in the furry face in his extremely close encounters **with grizzly bears**, but despite the obvious risks and his **ultimate grisly demise**, his former girlfriend does not believe he wanted to die.

“Tim didn’t have a death wish. When he died he wasn’t doing anything that he had been chastised for. He wasn’t killed **approaching a bear** or anything, he kind of died in the rain with his glasses off,” his ex-girlfriend and business partner **Jewel Palovak** told **RadarOnline.com** in an exclusive interview.

PHOTOS: When Animals Attack

As **RadarOnline.com** **previously reported**, October 5 marked the nine year anniversary of when Treadwell and his girlfriend, **Amie Huguenard**, were mauled to death and partially eaten by a grizzly bear in Alaska’s Katmai National Park and Reserve after the wildlife preservationist and documentary filmmaker had dedicated his life to getting insight into their lives.

“For 13 years he did it really well, he was smart and he was brave and he was really lucky. Then one day he just wasn’t,” his longtime friend said sadly.

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While she had long been worried about Tim when he went off on his lonely adventures to the frozen tundras, Jewel was always mostly afraid of him breaking a leg or eating something poisonous.

“One year he caught a bacteria from drinking out of a stream and he completely hallucinated, he didn’t really know where he was and had to get antibiotics dropped to him. Things like that were more what I was worried about.

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“After a while getting **eaten by a bear** just wasn’t in the forefront of my mind,” she explained.

The Long Island, New York, native, who was 46 when he died, had been open about his past struggle with drink and drugs and Jewel believes the same personality traits that led to his addictions fueled his passion for thrill-seeking out in the wild.

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“He was **an adrenaline junkie**,” she explained. “He wasn’t manic depressive but he was manic about things that he was into. Maybe that is as fool hardy as a death wish because it meant he wasn’t afraid to die.

“It was a thrill of acceptance as much as danger. It is not like the bears were his best friends – they didn’t welcome him like a pet dog would – but he did immerse himself in their world and he was a presence in their lives.”

PHOTOS: Woman Mauled By Cheetahs At South African Park While Husband Takes Photos

Bears have very solid family structures, so if Tim was there **when a cub** was born it would still be with its mom three years later and be familiar with him because they saw the same person every year of their lives.

"Some of the adrenalin came not from it being dangerous, even though he was always so dramatic, but from how he couldn't believe how much he was accepted or tolerated. I think that pumped him up and made him always want more," revealed Palovak, who after dating Treadwell for three years became his closest friend and colleague.

PHOTOS: Baby Elephant Throws Tantrum At Weigh-In

"Maybe he replaced the feelings he got from drugs and drinking with **acceptance from animals**.

After initially just chronicling his animal encounters in his now infamous journals, Treadwell's inside access and manic energy sparked the 1999 Discovery Channel special *Grizzly Diaries*, which launched him from obscurity to national folklore. His life, work, and death posthumously became the subject of the 2005 critically acclaimed documentary film, *Grizzly Man*, by Werner Herzog.

PHOTOS: Super Cute Polar Bear Cub Snuggles Up To Mom

"Nobody had really done what he did before and I really think he paved the way for TV shows like *Man vs. Wild* and **Bear Grylls** because he wasn't a scientist or an actor. He just went out there every day and did what he wanted."

Tragically, it was the unique close relationship with the **800-pound beasts** that led to Treadwell's death, because "they treated him exactly like another bear. He was a weaker bear and they would attack a sub-adult like teenage boys," explained Jewel, who runs a grassroots organization devoted to protecting bears and preserving their wilderness habitat.

PHOTOS: Shocking Slaughter Of The Released Exotic Animals In Ohio

"Had the bears killed him and Amie and they had just never found anything – a head or an arm or whatever – then there wouldn't have been a movie and a TV show. Sadly, I can keep my little organization going because of the way he died.

"It is very sensational but that's what it is. You couldn't have scripted it more salaciously."

PHOTOS: Prairie Dogs Get Their Groove On

On October 6, Kodiak air taxi pilot, Willy Fulton, arrived at the camp to pick up the pair but instead discovered an abandoned camp and **a lone bear**. He alerted park rangers who found Tim and Amie's mangled remains.

Treadwell's disfigured head, partial spine, and right forearm and hand, with his wrist watch still on, were recovered a short distance from the camp, while his girlfriend was left next to the torn and collapsed tents, partially buried in a mound of twigs and dirt. A large male grizzly was shot dead after it was spotted guarding the camp, and human remains were found in its stomach.

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While he lived life on the edge, when it comes to the manner of his death, Jewel believes Tim would have been heartbroken about how events unfolded.

"He felt like he was tolerated by the bears, then that happened. He would have also been very sad that two bears died because he died, he would have been horrified."

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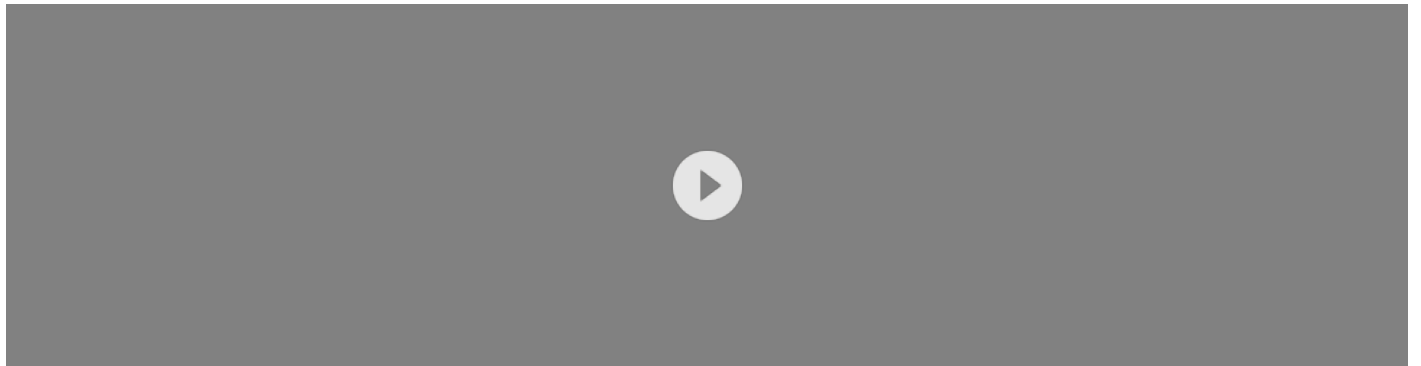
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