

RADAR'S WWII



A horse trapped in a Utah canyon gets a big lift from The HSUS

An almost supernatural tranquillity permeates the air as I travel the quarter-mile road leading to my office at the Davis County Animal Shelter. The only remaining evidence of the activities of the past three days is the "Police Line, Do Not Cross" perimeter security ribbon tied to the trees ringing a makeshift helicopter landing pad. As I look up to the vast Wasatch mountain range, I picture a steep, rocky crevice, now covered with new-fallen snow. For three days, my thoughts had focused on this canyon, where Radar, a seven-year-old quarter horse, had been stranded for two weeks. Now, he was safe in the warm, secure hospital stall at the Kays Creek Veterinary Clinic across the valley. Tears began to spill down my cheeks.

Tuesday morning, November 6, 1990, I had received a phone call from Michelle Menzenarez, who told me about a horse trapped in a deep canyon on the Francis Peak, just miles above my animal shelter. Radar had fallen from a mountain trail two weeks earlier while being used to pack equipment out from a mountain camping trip. The horse had fallen nearly 200 feet and settled on his back. His owner, Jeff Bodry, had had to cut the saddle to remove it and enable the horse to get to his feet. Free of the saddle, the horse had panicked, bolted, and disappeared from view.

For more than a week, Jeff had returned to the mountain and searched for a sign that Radar was still alive. Jeff's hopes had faded as he fought the heavy winter snow Sunday morning, November 4. Three hours after beginning his ascent into the forbidding cliffs of Francis Peak, Jeff had spotted Radar across a deep draw, up another can-

yon, approximately a mile away. Jeff reached the horse in mid-afternoon and, finding him tangled in the oak brush, had cut him free of the halter and lead rope that had rubbed deep sores on his nose and lower jaw. The horse was obviously weak, hungry, and dehydrated; Jeff estimated he had lost about 200 pounds. Jeff had spent hours trying to get Radar to eat the dry grass he managed to gather from beneath the snow, but his condition was so poor, he would not take food or water from melted snow.

Threatening wind and snow had made it dangerous for Jeff to spend much time on the mountain, and Radar had been much too weak and sore to climb the 200-yard incline to the draw that would lead them down the canyon. After securing as much grass as possible and piling it near the horse, Jeff had hiked back down and enlisted the help of a friend to return with vitamins, electrolytes, and high protein pellets, with a hope that this boost would give the horse the strength to climb out. Before they could return to Radar, however, heavy snow and wind had forced the two to bed down for the night. Huddled in frozen sleeping bags, the men had been forced next morning to turn back, suffering from hypothermia.

Michelle described how Jeff had wept as he reconciled himself to the fact that probably the most humane thing to do was to return to the mountain and put the horse to sleep. Jeff had approached Steve Menzenarez, Michelle's husband, to go with him the next day and, if circumstances were no better, shoot the horse. Michelle had become convinced that the horse must have an incredible will to live. She had insisted that something else could be done and had begun calling local humane organizations for assistance. Ogden Weber Humane Society had explained the problem was outside its jurisdiction but referred her to me.

I reassured Michelle and Jeff that, somehow, we would get Radar home again. When Michelle explained that Jeff and Steve were preparing to return to the canyon, I asked her to have them come to my office

BY DE ANNE HESS

D RIDE



STEVE MENZENAREZ



SALT LAKE TRIBUNE/RICK EGAN

STEVE MENZENAREZ

Opposite: A patient Radar awaits rescue in a canyon on Utah's Francis Peak. *Far left, above:* The HSUS's David Wills (*center*) injects Radar with tranquilizer in preparation for the airlift, then *far left, below:* assists the rescue team as it secures the helicopter sling prior to liftoff. *Left:* A tranquilized Radar makes an uneventful flight from the Wasatch Mountains to the Davis County Animal Shelter in a rescue that made the national news.



instead to give me some time to see what I could work out. All agreed that we would meet in one hour, and I prayed that, by then, I could give them a glimmer of hope.

Immediately, I called the chairman of my county commission, which is ultimately responsible for my funding. I briefly explained the situation and reassured him that, if he would let me move on this one, I would find a way to cover any cost that might be incurred. Commissioner Stevenson gave me his blessing. My next move was to locate a helicopter service, and I turned to the state Division of Wildlife Resources for some advice. The previous year, I had participated in a moose-transfer operation using "choppers," so I knew such a thing could be done. The division referred me to a local helicopter company and another in Provo, Utah, seventy miles away. The division also offered the use of its sling and a member of its crew who had experience using it. I contacted the local company and it verified that it could move large animals in slings. My next call was to local CBS affiliate KSL-TV. I contacted an anchorman I had worked with previously and found him to be very receptive. He agreed to do a story that would generate community interest and, we hoped, bring in some financing. My next call was to veterinarian Kevin Hill for advice on tranquilizing techniques. Dr. Hill was encouraging and enthusiastic about doing anything he could to help.

When Jeff, Michelle, and Steve arrived at the shelter, Jeff was reluctant to proceed with an air rescue. There was no way he could pay thousands of dollars for the rescue and still afford the medical rehabilitation Radar would need afterward. I reassured Jeff that, if he could afford Radar's medical care, I would find a way to pay for the rescue. He agreed, on the condition that I allow him to hike in one more time and confirm that the horse was still alive. Jeff, Steve, and Michelle left my office with the understanding that they would locate the horse, evaluate him, administer vitamin shots, antibiotic, and high protein food, and return word to the shelter as soon as possible. At 5:00 p.m. Steve, frozen, wet, and ecstatic, burst into my office, shouting "He's alive!" I called the chopper service and arranged for an 8:30 a.m. rescue the following day. Steve and I then met with the Division of Wildlife Resources to pick up the sling and arrange for an officer to assist with the rescue. The man would assist, we were told, but he couldn't hike in—we would have to deliver him by chopper. With no funding in place and every minute in the air adding up, I knew I could not commit to a chop-

per ride for anyone, so I thanked him for the offer, took a lesson in using the sling, and headed back to Davis County.

Wednesday, November 7, 1990: at 8:30 a.m., I was greeted by Jeff, Steve, and Michelle, dressed and ready for their ascent to the 9,500-foot Francis Peak radar tower, where they would begin their two-hour descent to the canyon. Men who worked with Jeff had come along to deliver the crew to the mountain, and they were waiting with anticipation. KSL-TV reporter Larry Lewis arrived shortly after I did and advised me that he had a chopper standing by to cover the entire rescue. Then the walls came crashing down at 8:45, when the chopper company advised me it would have to back out due to a previous commitment that had resurfaced. The overwhelming disappointment was short lived; I remembered the second helicopter company, and immediately contacted it.

"No problem, we can lift a horse," reassured Spike Kinghorn, chopper pilot. Spike estimated that 1.8 hours' flight time would be needed for the rescue, and, at \$750 per hour, we were looking at about \$1,431 just for the chopper. I swallowed hard and told him to hold a machine for me. The price was about three and a half times what we had estimated, due to the distance the chopper would have to travel to get there. I knew now that the funding had to be in place before the money was spent. A call to the American Humane Association in Denver found Carol Moulton, who explained that AHA's emergency relief funds were earmarked for natural disaster. She recommended the Humane Society of Utah. I called Gene Baierschmidt, executive director, who said he would have to consult with his board of directors and get back to me. I scrambled to find my latest edition of the HSUS newsletter *Shelter Sense*. There it was, page two: HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals, Phyllis Wright, (202) 452-1100. I told my story and my pulse quickened as I realized that the person on the other end of the phone was interested and really listening.

"I'll have someone from Mr. Hoyt's office call you right back." With renewed hope, I relayed the news to the anxious bystanders. Moments later, David Wills, HSUS vice president for investigations, was on the phone. He, too, was interested in our cause, and, after much explanation, agreed to discuss our situation with John A. Hoyt, president of The HSUS, and get back to me. David assured me that he would give me an answer one way or the other within two hours. Meanwhile, I received a call from

Gene Baierschmidt, who committed \$500 for the rescue if we weren't successful with The HSUS. Moments later, there was another call from David Wills, requesting more information, and, again, a promise that he would get back to me with a decision. Finally, after what seemed an eternity but was less than two hours after my original discussion with David, the call came that he was on his way to Washington, D.C.'s Dulles Airport and would be arriving in Salt Lake City at 8:43 p.m. to give me a hand. John Hoyt had made the commitment to fund the rescue. Cheers resounded through the animal shelter as, once again, our goal seemed in sight. David instructed me to get a supply of warm oats and more electrolytes up to the horse, replace the wet blanket Jeff had put on him the day before with a dry one, and verify that he was still alive. KSL-TV newsman Larry Lewis immediately arranged for his station's Chopper Five to fly Jeff and Steve in to deliver warm food and a dry blanket to Radar. Within an hour, vitamins, electrolytes, warm water, and a dry blanket were on their way. Our enthusiasm skyrocketed as we began to finalize plans for the rescue, scheduled to take place at 12:00 noon the following day, exactly twenty-four hours from that moment.

I met David at the Salt Lake International airport, and also met Mr. and Mrs. Hal Gardner, longtime HSUS members. (Hal is also a member of the board of directors of The HSUS.) Both Gardners were tremendously supportive of our rescue effort, and made me feel as though I was doing *them* the favor. From the moment David and I met at the airport, I sensed his tremendous commitment and dedication. His experience and expertise in the field of animal rescue was obvious as we began calculating our rescue plan step by step. David and I drove directly to meet with Dr. David Hill to discuss tranquilizing Radar for his flight.

David Wills picks up the story:

I own two horses and the thought of either of them falling down a mountainside is a sickening one. Knowing there was an animal stranded in bitter conditions after surviving such a fall was adequate reason for The HSUS to see if we could get the animal out—or, at least, that was my reasoning.

The first stop for that night was the practice of Dr. David Hill, one of two veterinarian brothers who had offered to help the Davis County Animal Control people. I explained my concerns. Tranquilization under these circumstances is tricky. First, determining the animal's debilitation is very subjective. Then, there is choosing the appropriate tranquilizer. Rompun, the drug of

choice, had caused me problems in the past. A seemingly tranquilized animal had once reacted excitedly to a loud noise and become more agitated when we tried to restrain him by hand. Proper administration of the chosen drug is critical, since too little leaves open the possibility of a horse bolting when the helicopter comes in low overhead, and too much could leave us with an animal that could suffocate in the sling or collapse upon landing. After listening patiently to my layman's recital of my fears, Dr. Hill prescribed a combination of Rompun and Torbugesic and carefully explained the proper administration and the length of time the drugs would be effective. I was tired as I got to the hotel in Bountiful, Utah, but a lot more confident we could accomplish our task.

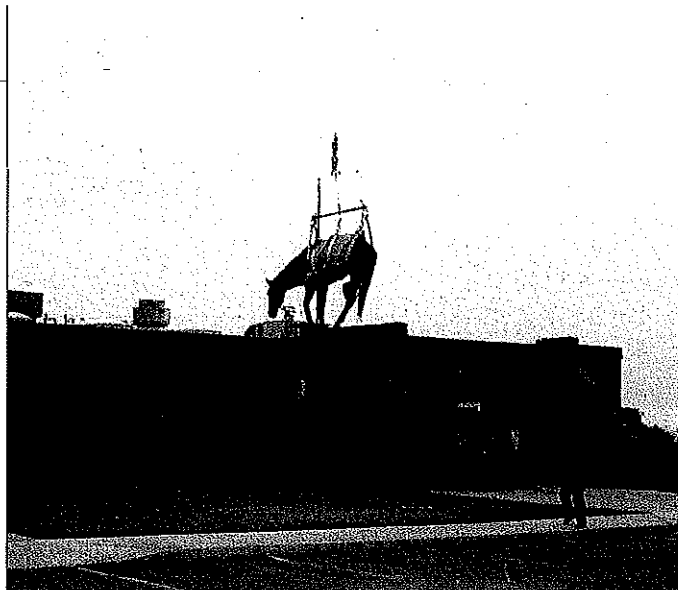
At 8:00 a.m., as I was standing at 9,000-plus feet in the freezing cold and buffeted by a gale force wind, that confidence was waning. The hike in looked ominous. The rest of the group acted as though this was another routine backpacking trip, so I kept my concerns to myself as we began the 2,000-foot ascent toward Bear Canyon and a lonely and cold horse named Radar.

The scenery was breathtaking, and the wind abated as we dropped lower down the mountainside. The only real problem was not to lose your footing or get your leg hung up against a rock or branch buried beneath one foot of snow as you descended at some very steep angles. Several times during the descent we stopped to radio our progress to those back at the Davis County shelter. At 10:15 a.m., we arrived at the spot where Radar had spent the last two weeks.

He was happy to see us. His entire demeanor changed as we eased ourselves into the canyon where he was trapped. Surprisingly, he looked good, everything considered. He'd lost a lot of weight and he was cut and banged up a bit, but he sure could have been a lot worse off.

After resting for an hour, having some hot coffee, and letting Radar calm down from his initial excitement over our arrival, we were ready to begin. He was too nervous to be given the first dose of tranquilizer intravenously so I administered an intramuscular injection and waited about ten to fifteen minutes. At 11:08 a.m., I approached Radar and gave him another injection, this time an I.V. in the jugular vein. His head drooped forward, and I said to Steve and Lou Shrope, of Davis County Animal Control, "Let's get the harness on him."

The sling was one the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources used for moose and a little too big for a horse that had dropped as much weight as Radar had, but we impro-



HSUS/HESS



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Above: Radar heads toward a soft landing at the Davis County Animal Shelter after his ten-minute helicopter ride out of the mountains. *Below:* De Anne Hess (center) comforts a tearful Theo Bodry as the Bodrys' daughter and other shelter staff members welcome Radar to solid ground.

vised and, thanks to the quiet and patient cooperation of a very drowsy horse, at 11:15 we called for the 'copter.

Spike Kinghorn knows his job. After a very high circle to get a good look at our—and particularly Radar's—position on the ground, he dropped in and lowered the cable gingerly and perfectly into my outstretched hand. I hooked it up and, after giving one last hard pull on the sling, nodded to Lou, who had the radio, and said "Take him up."

There is something about that instant when you know you are going to pull it off that is hard to describe. Elation, pride, and relief sweep through your brain as you realize how lucky you are to have a vocation that is also your avocation. As Radar was lifted and sped away to the waiting De Anne, Dr. Hill, and scores of others, the five of us on the ground looked at each other and knew we had done well.

About an hour later, we had climbed the steep side of Bear Canyon up to a ledge where Spike would pick us up. I reflected on how to answer the questions inevitably

asked by someone when we landed below. Why spend this much time, effort, and money on one horse? Was it worth it? This time, I would be ready for the questions. There is something special about a society and a people that stand up for the little guy, and I've always thought that the better we treated our animal friends, the better we would tend to treat each other.

Was it worth it? Well, for that answer, they would have to ask a lonely, cold, and frightened horse named Radar.

Editor's postscript: After a ten-minute helicopter ride, Radar was gently lowered to the ground at the Davis County Animal Shelter, where De Anne Hess, Dr. David Hill, Jeff Bodry's wife and daughter, and the animal-control department staff were waiting. He was treated for shock and dehydration, taken to Dr. Hill's clinic for several days, then allowed to go home. ■

De Anne Hess is director of Utah's Davis County Animal Control.