

Big Adventure: They're dog-napped! (A truck was taken, too.)

November 21, 2019



Gary Maschmeyer of Brookings decided to go birding on the loop trail around Lola Lake in the Pistol River area at 8:50 a.m. Nov. 8.

“It was foggy and cold, and my two chihuahuas, Billy and Bella, didn't want to go with me,” Maschmeyer said. “So, I left them in my truck.”

When he returned at 10:30 a.m., his tan 1998 Mazda truck - and the dogs - were gone. “I called 911 from my cell phone and reported that my truck had been stolen, with the two dogs.”

Three deputy sheriffs and two state troopers responded to the call. One of the troopers gave Maschmeyer a ride home. “He told me that all law enforcement agencies in Coos, Curry and Del Norte counties had been notified and that if they found my truck or the dogs, they would call me.”

Meanwhile, Maschmeyer's daughter, Cassie, who lives out of state, posted pictures of the two dogs and her dad's pickup on social media. "My dad's 1998 Mazda was stolen at Pistol River along Hwy. 101 today at 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.," she said. "Along with his 2 dogs. We really only care about the dogs."

"If they pushed the dogs out, this bed and two banana boxes were in the truck that they lay on. Maybe someone will see the boxes on the side of the road to give a lead where the dogs are."

"I waited all day," Maschmeyer said. "No one called. Not much sleep that night."

At about 9:00 the next morning, Maschmeyer took a call from a woman who identified herself as a housekeeper for a motel in Grants Pass, fully 100 miles from Brookings. "She asked me if I was missing two tan chihuahuas, one named Bella," he said.

"When I told her we lived in Brookings, she asked how the dogs got so far from home. I told her the dogs were in my truck when it was stolen the day before.

"She told me there was a brown Mazda pickup parked at the motel. I told her that was my truck and to call the sheriff's office and let them know."

Even as deputies arrived at the motel, Maschmeyer and his wife, Jill, were already on their way to Grants Pass. The officers were surprised to also find a stolen Ford SUV they'd been looking for parked right next to Maschmeyer's truck. The SUV had been stolen in Klamath Falls.

Officers got a room key from the manager and went into the suspects' unit without knocking. Both of the suspects, a man and a woman, were still in bed. Loaded rifles and pistols were on the floor on either side of the bed.

According to Maschmeyer, both were convicted felons and had active felony warrants for their arrest.

The truck and the SUV were packed with stolen items, some from yet another truck the pair had burglarized the night before at an economy motel.

"One of the sheriffs asked me if I had left my keys in the truck," said Maschmeyer. "When I told him I hadn't, he asked me if I kept a spare key hidden around the truck. I told him that I did not.

"He then reached in my truck and pulled a key from my ignition and said this is a Mazda key." Maschmeyer pulled his keys out of his pocket to show the deputy he still had them.

The officer compared the two keys. They were different, all right, but so close that the suspects' key had worked in Maschmeyer's truck.

"So, this is how it all happened," said Maschmeyer. "On Thursday, 'Bonnie and Clyde' stole a Ford SUV from Klamath Falls and then decided to take a drive along the Oregon coast with their new vehicle. They spotted my truck parked in a dirt area next to U.S. Highway 101. They knew it was a longshot, but if the Mazda key they had would fit my truck. they had an easy theft."

Sure enough, their key worked. So, they drove both vehicles to Grants Pass and stopped at a motel. There, the pair spotted a pickup with some “good stuff” in the bed. They stole that stuff and drove on to another motel for the night, Maschmeyer said.

“When at home, Bella wakes me up every morning at 5:00 to go outside,” he said. “She evidently did that at the motel. Being the irresponsible people that they are, they must have let both dogs out, shut the door and went back to bed.”

When the housekeeper came to work, she saw the two dogs. She assumed they belonged to one of the motel’s guests and kept an eye on them so they wouldn’t wander off. After a couple of hours, she decided the dogs didn’t belong to a guest there and instead might be lost.

“Billy was scared and wouldn’t go near her, but Bella did,” he said. “She saw Bella’s nametag with a phone number.

“Because of Bella’s nametag, we got our dogs and truck back. The people in Klamath Falls got their SUV back, the man at the motel got his stuff back, and two felon scumbags were arrested for vehicle theft, burglary and being felons in possession of restricted firearms.

“The police said there will be a separate charge for taking the dogs.

“Way to go, Bella! Our hero!”