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Warning: There is a photo of the trapped dog at the end of this story – it is extremely graphic!



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Tony and Natalie Lazenby's Rottweiler, Grizzly, died Wednesday after being caught in a Conibear 220 trap that had been set in their Dimond-area neighborhood.

Trap kills family's dog inside city limits

Pet is believed to have followed scent of bait to neighbor's porch

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One minute a family dog named Grizzly was playing in front of the house, the next he was shrieking and thrashing wildly, a trap locked in a death grip around his head, his face distorted by the pressure and pain.

The 4-year-old Rottweiler, pet of Tony and Natalie Lazenby and loved by others in the neighborhood, died a couple of hours later, his throat crushed, the Lazenbys said.

It took four people to get the trap off the dead dog's head.

The Conibear 220 spring-loaded trap that killed the dog Wednesday is now in the hands of authorities. It's designed to kill foxes, beavers and coyotes. Dogs occasionally die in

them, too, but typically while on hikes with their owners in wild places, and typically in areas open to trapping.

Not in a neighborhood full of dogs, cats and kids, where this trap was set. The Lazenbys think one of their neighbors set and baited it, but no charges have been filed against anyone.

Enforcement supervisor Bradley Larson said Animal Control will be turning the case over to Det. Jackie Conn, who handles animal cruelty crimes for the Anchorage Police Department.

It's against the law to negligently set a trap in city limits -- punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 and a year in jail.

It's also a crime for any person, with criminal negligence, to maim, mutilate, torture, kill or do any number of horrible things to animals.

The Lazenbys are devastated by Grizzly's death, and driven to see the person who killed him held responsible.

"We want to make sure it's properly prosecuted and properly handled, so the law does what it's designed to do," Natalie Lazenby said Friday. "We're going to fight this until we don't have any breath left."

THE DOG SCREAMED

The Lazenbys bought their house three years ago in this old, tucked-away neighborhood just east of the Old Seward Highway and south of Dimond, an area with an eclectic mix of trailers, houses and combinations of the two.

"All the neighbors know each other," Tony Lazenby said. "We congregate. We have barbecues in the summer."

Grizzly's best dog friend was a 6-month-old black German shepherd named Mid who lives nearby. On Wednesday morning, the Lazenbys got a call asking if Mid could come play.

Tony Lazenby was shoveling his driveway about 8:30 that morning as the two dogs romped, trying to catch snow flying off his shovel. He got distracted for a couple of minutes, the dogs wandered off, and then he heard his dog scream.

Grizzly came running back with his head in the trap, all bloody and crazed with pain -- "Hideously so," Natalie said.

"There's nothing I could have done to get it off of him," said Tony.

It wasn't easy but the Lazenbys were able to get the dog into the house and secured in their room.

"Our bedroom looked like a crime scene," Natalie said.

Frantic and unsure what to do, they made a flurry of frustrating phone calls before finally getting some help.

Grizzly was still alive when two animal control officers arrived. They wrapped the dog in a blanket and took him to Pet Emergency on Lake Otis. By the time the dog got into the emergency room he was dead.

Afterward, the officers returned to the house, and the police showed up. They followed the dogs' tracks through the snow to a neighbor's house, where they found a bucket on the porch baited with meat, Tony Lazenby said.

It was a plastic bucket with some grooves cut into it," he said. "That would hold the trap open with the bait inside. When an animal would put its head in to get the bait, it would trigger the trap.

"It was fresh snow so you could see the area where Grizzly was spinning around trying to shake it off."

The neighbor was not home at the time, and the Lazenbys have not contacted him.

"It's been tempting," Natalie Lazenby said. "But we're respecting the investigation."

"What if it had been a kid?" Tony Lazenby said. "It's just perplexing to me."

SAD AND MAD

The Lazenbys got Grizzly four years ago as an unexpected Christmas present from Tony's mother.

"They get such a bad rap, the breed," Natalie said. "We really wrestled with whether to keep him.

"We're so glad we did because he was such an exceptional animal. I don't think he even knew he was a dog, let alone a Rottweiler. He was just a perfectly little child in a doggie suit. I could leave a side of beef thawing in the kitchen and he wouldn't dream of touching it.

"My mom called him her grand pup. He was just so dearly loved."

Grizzly's gruesome death has stunned the neighborhood.

"I just can't get over it," said Ruby Stratton, owner of Grizzly's playmate Mid. "He didn't bother anybody. Not at all.

"It could have been my dog," she said. "They were together that morning."

Yes, the Lazenbys admit: Grizzly was off leash.

"But he wasn't unsupervised," Natalie Lazenby said. "He wasn't running amok."

"I'm thinking he wouldn't have gone to the neighbor's if he hadn't smelled the bait," Tony Lazenby said.

Neighbor Lily Doss-Puder called the Lazenbys "highly responsible" dog owners.

"Tony always took care of that dog," she said. "He was always watching him. That dog was on his radar 24-7."

Doss-Puder loved Grizzly and so did her 3-year-old son. The two played together a lot.

"You'd walk up to the dog and he would just start jumping on you and kissing your face," she said. "Dog-licks all the time. Just the friendliest dog ever. My son just fell in love with him. I mean, I loved that dog myself, but he grew up with that dog practically.

"We're all shocked about it and saddened and mad. We're going to all miss Grizzly."

