

# Michael Todd

22 West Washington Street  
Suite 1500

Chicago, Illinois 60602

RECEIVED

DEC 23 2015

Div. of Policy, Perf. &  
MGMT. Programs

December 17, 2015

Public Comments Processing  
Attn: Docket No. FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0166  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: BPHC;  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

**VIA EXPRESS MAIL  
w/TRACKING**

**REF Comment of Docket FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0166, Big Cat Rescue Corp. PRT-75301B.**

Dear Madam or Sir:

I am writing to comment on the above reference docket number, in particular **Applicant: Big Cat Rescue Corporation, Tampa, FL; PRT-75301B.** *"The applicant (Big Cat Rescue) requests a permit to import one captive-bred male tiger (Bengal tigris) for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species through conservation education and zoological display."*

Big Cat Rescue of Tampa, Florida is an extremely dangerous place for their animals and the public. The amount of safety and animal care violation it has received is massive. Just a few months ago, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission conducted a detailed inspection that uncovered over 70 violations. The founder herself has been officially suspected of murder by local authorities connected to her past husband and co-owner, (See PEOPLE magazine report, and recent news report of authorities still searching, Jan 2015, enclosed).

In addition, the attached links document a very dangerous and shady environment. The issuances of this permit to such a firm would certainly circumvent the mission statement of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. If I can answer any further questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Mike Todd

*Mike Todd*

Enclosures

**OTHER REFERENCE BACKGROUND ON  
BIG CAT RESCUE CORP, TAMPA, FL  
Docket: FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0166  
RPT-75301B**

**"Big Cat Rescue" - FRAUD - MURDER - LIES - PROFIT**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U9lwrzk13c>

**Big Cat Rescue Lies**

<http://bigcatrescuelies.blogspot.com/>

**Expose a Scam - Big Cat Rescue**

<http://www.exposeascam.com/showthread.php?139-Big-Cat-Rescue-Scam-and-Fraud>

**Merchants Circle - Big Cat Rescue, Investigated and found to be a scam**

<http://www.merchantcircle.com/business/Big.Cat.Rescue.Corp.813-920-4130/review/list>

**Big Can Rescue - Not a sanctuary, but a "Scamtuary"**

<http://www.venomlist.com/forums/index.php?/topic/24381-big-cat-rescue-scamtuary/>

**The truth about Big Cat Rescue - A big scam**

<http://topcatsroar.wordpress.com/2012/05/08/the-truth-about-carol-baskin-big-cat-rescue-florida-bcr-and-global-federation-of-animal-sanctuaries/>

**The Rip Off Report - Scamming by Big Cat Rescue**

<http://www.ripoffreport.com/directory/Big-Cat-Rescue.aspx>

**Animal Abuse - Big Cat Rescue throws live bunnys to feed the big cats while staff laughs.**

[http://www.bunspace.com/forum/thread?tid=14878&posts\\_tgp\\_no=last](http://www.bunspace.com/forum/thread?tid=14878&posts_tgp_no=last)

**Big Cat Rescue - A massive collection of documents on BCR and what a scam this place is!**

<http://www.rexano.org/BCR.htm>

**Other Enclosures:**

USDA Inspections

Florida Inspections

Murder Investigation, Carole Baskin, a/k/a Carole Lewis, PEOPLE magazine (full version copy)

Police Still Digging: Jan 2015



**FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
**CAPTIVE WILDLIFE INSPECTIONS FORM**



Ref #: FWSW14OFF15055 Inspection Date: 11/07/2014 Time: 0900 Classes: ☒ I ☒ II ☒ III  
 County: Hillsborough Activity: ☐ ESA ☒ ESB ☒ ESC ☐ Ven ☐ ROC ☐ PPL ☐ PPNC ☒ Rehab

Permittee: Carole Baskin DOB: 6/6/1961 Business Name: Big Cat Rescue  
 Sex: ☐ M ☒ F Phone: (Business) 813-493-5464 (Emergency) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: 19802 Easy Street Facility Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_  
 City Tampa State FL Zip 33625 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location Lat/Lon: N 28 ° 03 ' 622 W 82 ° 34 ' 266 Email: Carole.baskin@bigcatrescue.org

Inv. William King/Inv. Rick Brown/Inv. Shelby  
 Inspecting Officer: Williams Person Accompanying: Mrs. Gale Ingham  
 Reason for Inspection: ☐ Initial ☒ Routine ☐ Complaint ☐ Follow Up ☐ Previous Problems NOT Corrected  
 Complaint #: FWSW14OFF15055 Nature of complaint: Routine inspection

Citation Issued: ☐ No. (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Warning Issued: ☐ No. (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Violation(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECKLIST:** (For those marked explain in comments below)

- |  |                                     |  |                          |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1). Sufficient perimeter FENCE NOT provided                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 11). NO Safety entrance for CLASS 1 & 2 wildlife                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2). Enclosures DO NOT MEET/EXCEED caging requirements                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 12). PERIMETER/BARRIER fences NOT provided                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If not, provide date of acquisition                                  |                                     | 13). Complete WRITTEN records NOT kept up to date as required        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3). Animals NOT PERMANENTLY marked - VR, ROC, other                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 14). FOOD & WATER containers NOT clean                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4). Cage doors NOT key LOCKED  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 15). Proper DIET not provided per species                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5). Cages, Paddocks, pools appear NOT to have been CLEANED,          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 16). FOOD SPOILED or CONTAMINATED for any animal                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RAKED, SCRUBBED, & DISINFECTED within prescribed                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 17). INSUFFICIENT food & water                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| schedules  |                                     | 18). Transport cages DO NOT MEET transport requirements              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6). Fecal & food waste NOT properly STORED/DISPOSED OF               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 19). INFANTS/JUVENILES only at this time                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7). Enclosures DO NOT provide adequate surface water drainage        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 20). ELEPHANT ride without required authorization                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8). Animals DO NOT appear to be HEALTHY (not including rehab)        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 21). NO Critical Incident/Disaster Plan                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9). NOT free of wounds, injuries, skin irritations (not incl. rehab) | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 22). Contact information for contiguous land owners/neighbors NOT in | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10). Animals NOT PROVIDED adequate protection from extremes          |                                     | Critical Incident/Disaster Plan (Class I possessors)                 |                          |
| Of Temp  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 23). CIDP - Part B - NOT on site                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Of Weather   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |                          |

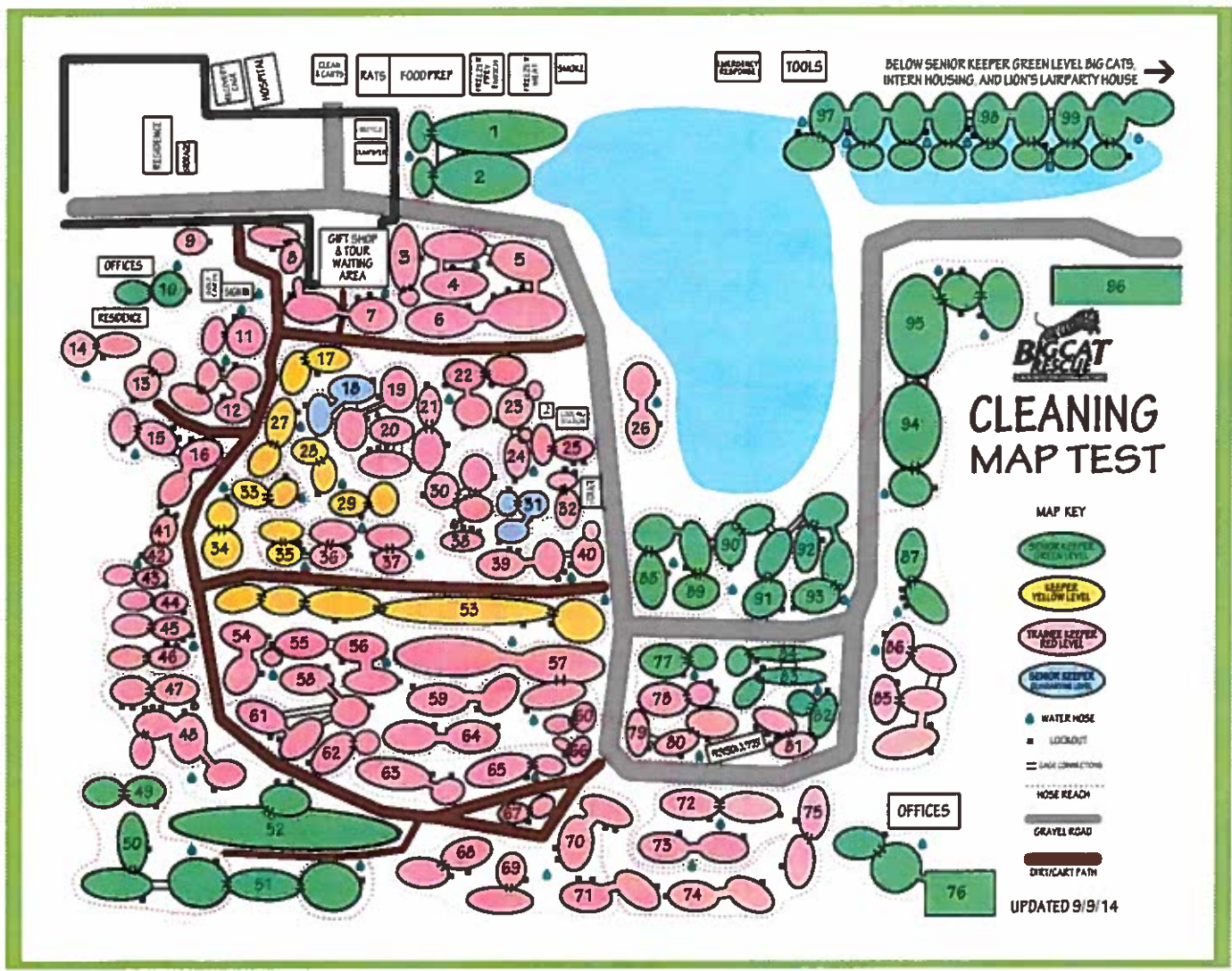
**CURRENT INVENTORY (Species):** Binturong 1.0, Bobcat 13.17, Caracal 2.1, Civet 1.0, Cougar 5.6, Geoffroy 1.0, Leopard 5.3, Lion 2.1, Lynx 4.1, Ocelot 0.2, Sandcat 1.1, Serval 7.14, Tiger 6.5

**COMMENTS:**

This was an unannounced routine inspection. Mrs. Gale Ingram who is the operations manager of the facility was present during the inspection. The facility is located on forty-five (45) plus acres in an urban area of Hillsborough County. The facility is completely enclosed with an eight foot perimeter fence with locking gate. The material trade marked as Rhino wall utilized on the west side noted during a previous inspection conducted by Lt. Steve DeLaCure on 10/05/2010 meets the required 11.5 gauge wire requirement. Majority of the enclosures are constructed of galvanized welded panels of structural strength exceeding nine gauge chain link/equivalent. The enclosures meet or exceed caging requirements although most are irregular shapes, with overlapping panels, integrated sub-terrestrial supports 8-12 inches deep and horizontal trusses which contribute to the structural integrity of the enclosure despite the absence of structure support poles holding the cages from falling over. The enclosures utilize hog rings that are 9 gauge link/equivalent to connect the panels together.

There are four open top enclosures that are constructed with welded steel panels with the wire greater than 9 gauge chain link and supported with steel poles. The vertical wall height is 15' with a inward 45 degree 5' overhang. Incorporated at the terminal end of the overhang is a 1' cantilever vertical lip to provide additional escape prevention.

All animals appeared to be healthy with food and fresh water provided. All enclosures had the proper enrichment, shelter and are maintained in sanitary conditions. Listed below are the violations that were noted during this inspection. To identify each enclosure the cleaning map number system was utilized. All rules pertaining to the violations will be attached at the end of this report. All violations shall be corrected within 30 days from the receipt of this report or further action may be taken.  
 (Any included photographs may not be inclusive of all identified discrepancies observed during the inspection, but may be representative of other discrepancies associated with the identified cage, structure or required equipment and described within this report.)



Cleaning map with numbering system



#### Enclosure 7

1. Tree coming through breaking upper wire degrading the integrity.
2. Rusted/pitted wire on attached upper panel on food and water lockout –replace
3. Clean and treat surface rust on metal frame door on food and water lockout.



Tree upper wire



Rusted/pitted wire upper panel



Surface rust on support pole

#### Enclosure 8

1. Food and water lockout support door right corner cracking- replace
2. Clean and treat corrosion areas around enclosure.



Support pole cracking

### Enclosure 9

1. Clean debris off enclosure.

NOTE: The chicken wire is being utilized to prevent outside pest and not used for containment.

### Enclosure 10

1. Cut branches out of fence adjacent to trailer.
2. Remove vine growth and debris off roof.
3. Remove palmetto vegetation that is blocking view of seam connecting the two panels.
4. Remove dead tree/limb through wire.
5. Readjust support beam due to being a weight bearing support.
6. Replace rusted ceiling panel over stucco shelf.



Support beam



Tree limb remove



Dead tree in wire

### Enclosure 11

1. Tree outside of enclosure branches coming through wire. Remove
2. Dead tree inside enclosure. Remove
3. Rusted and pitted wire on water box. Replace
4. Water box separating door framework corroded. Clean, treat, or replace







Wire pitted water lockout

#### Enclosure 12

1. Replace lockout panel upper corroded.
2. Small tunnel door/lower pipe support replace due to corrosion.
3. Replace door patch corroded and pitted.



Upper tunnel door



Lower pipe

#### Enclosure 14

1. Separating door framework wire corroded. Clean, treat, or replace.
2. Spring loaded clips used to attach interior door to the framework. Clips have to be the same or like material. The spring loaded mechanism and bolt doesn't meet the requirements.

#### Enclosure 16

1. Dent in wire containment hog rings disconnected or stretched. Replace





#### Enclosure 41 and 42

1. Replace water box adjacent to public walkway.
2. Treat and paint rust on wire (water box) #42

#### Enclosure 44

1. Clean and treat or replace safety gate wire.
2. Replace rusted roof panel where tree comes through.
3. Hog rings not attached. Check enclosure and correct.
4. Remove small tree in back coming through wire.



(1)



(3)



(2)



(4)

#### Enclosure 45

1. Remove debris from the top.
2. Replace wall panel rusted and degraded wire ground level.



(1)

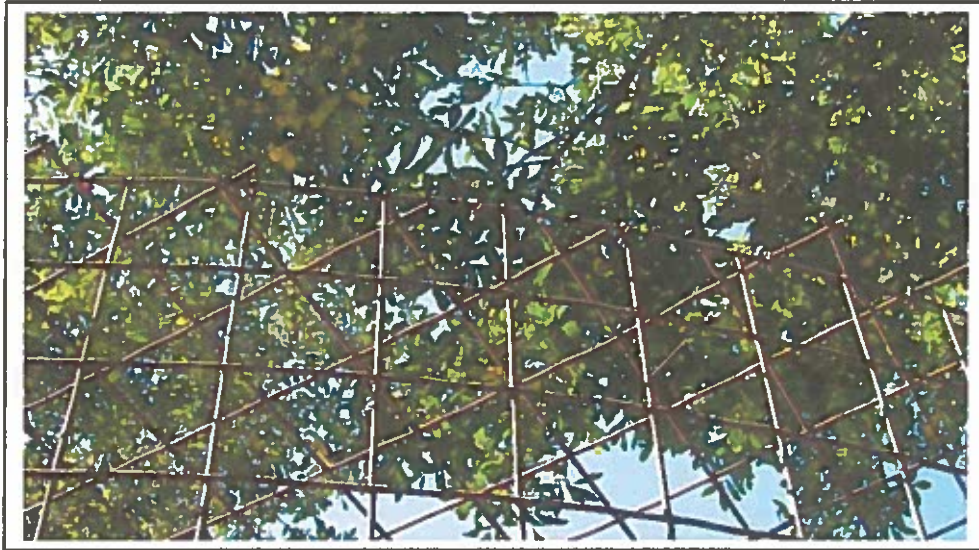


(2)



#### Enclosure 48

1. Top panel add ties or replace panel to connect lower portion.

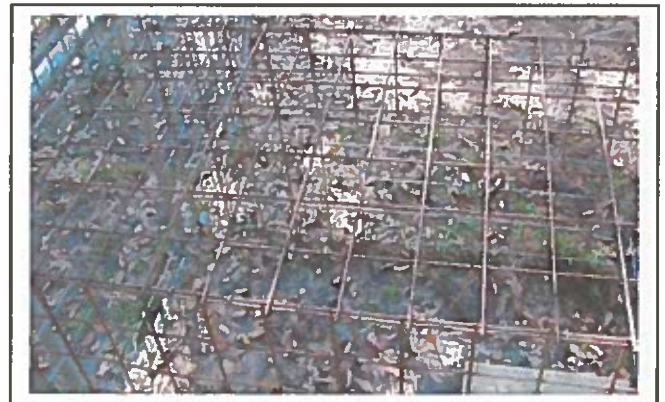


#### Enclosure 49

1. Replace top panel on water area due to corrosion.
2. Multiple rusted welds on panels. Clean and treat
3. Replace water box doesn't meet 11.5 gauge wire requirement.



(3)



(1)

#### Enclosure 51

1. Clean and treat or replace panels due to corrosion.

#### Enclosure 68

1. Clean and treat or replace water lockdown area due to corrosion.

#### Enclosure 69

1. Clean and treat or replace wire panels due to corrosion.
2. Remove dead debris off roof.

#### Enclosure 71

1. Remove grass along enclosure.

#### Enclosure 74

1. Remove dead debris off roof.
2. Remove dead limb off tree through wire panel and repair.
3. Replace water dish outside panel.



(2)



(3)

#### Enclosure 73

1. Clean and treat or replace feed and water box due to corrosion.

#### Enclosure 75

1. Clean and treat support pole.

#### Enclosure 76

1. Remove roof debris.
2. Clean and treat wire on safety entrance
3. Remove bamboo growing through roof wire or exclude from the enclosure.
4. Cut vegetation encroaching on the enclosure wire.
5. Clean and treat or replace rusted roof wire.
6. Use 9 gauge wire to attach panels to post.
7. Replace rusted panels on roofed back area next to open top.





**Enclosure 84**

1. Replace roof trusses/corner.
2. Replace rusted hog rings and ruptured roof panel near den.
3. Remove vegetation adjacent to the wire.

**Enclosure 87**

1. Replace hog rings on safety entrance roof.
2. Replace wire inside of the external den.
3. The wire attaching to the support poles have to be 9 gauge or equivalent.

**Enclosure 95**

1. Replace rusted panels on covered cage housing den.
2. The wire attaching to the support poles have to be 9 gauge or equivalent.

**Enclosure 99**

1. Clean and treat or replace rusted wire.

**Enclosure 97**

1. Replace rusted roof panels.

**Enclosure 94**

1. Replace rusted panel next to pool area.
2. The wire attaching to the support poles have to be 9 gauge or equivalent.

**Enclosure 93**

1. Clean and treat or replace rusted roof panels.

**Enclosure 92**

1. Replace rusted panels covering old chute access.

**Enclosure 96**

1. The wire attaching to the support poles have to be 9 gauge or equivalent.

#### Enclosure 1

1. Multiple areas the wire needs to be reattached to the support.
2. Multiple trees that are being used to support wire are rotted and have to be removed. New poles have to be added to support wire.
3. The wire attaching to the support poles have to be 9 gauge or equivalent.
4. U nails that are attaching wire to poles/trees have to be resecured to support wire.



#### Enclosure 72

1. Replace rusted ties on water lock out area.
2. Replace water box due not being at least 11.5 chain link/equivalent.



Enclosure 57 (Serval)

1. Open top enclosure. A deviation is needed to house without a top. 68A-6.004(3)-No provision for open top.

Enclosure 53

1. Clean and treat or replace panels due to rust.

Enclosure 29

1. It is evident that a water line was in the den area. This area must be able to drain around the enclosure and have no impact on the animal. 68A-6.0023(5)(b) see below

Enclosure 28

1. Clean and treat or replace door area at ground level at water bowl due to corrosion.

Enclosure 6

1. The wire in the water box areas (3) doesn't meet the required strength for the species contained.

Mrs. Baskins needs to be aware of the following but not limited to:

When animals are placed in temporary caging due to veterinarian needs the caging or housing shall be permanently marked and traceable written records indicating the date the wildlife was placed in temporary holding. 68A-6.0041

*(2) Wildlife being held for sale by those persons properly licensed pursuant to Section 379.3761 or 379.3711, F.S., or for veterinary care, or quarantine may be temporarily housed or caged in smaller cages or enclosures for a period not to exceed 60 days. With written notification to the Commission, this period may be extended in circumstances where a licensed veterinarian has certified that a longer holding period is medically necessary in the interests of the health, safety and welfare of the subject animals or the public. Medical records concerning all animals for which an extension of the 60-day period is obtained shall be maintained at the facility and shall be made available for inspection, upon request, by Commission personnel. The caging or enclosure of all wildlife temporarily held under this section shall not be smaller than that required for the caged animal to stand up, lie down, and turn around without touching the sides of the enclosure or another animal. All wildlife thus caged or housed shall be permanently marked or their enclosures shall be permanently marked, so as to be traceable to written records indicating the date the wildlife was placed in temporary holding. Such records shall be maintained and made available for inspection by Commission personnel. Commission personnel shall direct dealers to mark wildlife temporarily if, upon inspection, there is no record indicating the date the wildlife was placed in temporary holding.*

All cages with dirt floors shall be raked a minimum of once every three days. 68A-6.0023(5) (e)

*(5) Sanitation and Nutritional Requirements:*

*(a) Sanitation, water disposal, and waste disposal shall be in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.*

*(b) Water: Clean drinking water shall be provided daily. Any water containers used shall be clean. Reptiles and amphibians that do not drink water from containers and those in an inactive season or period shall be provided water in a manner and at such intervals as to ensure their health and welfare. All pools, tanks, water areas and water containers provided for swimming, wading or drinking shall be clean. Enclosures shall provide drainage for surface water and runoff.*

(c) *Food:* Food shall be of a type and quantity that meets the nutritional requirements for the particular species, and shall be provided in an unspoiled and uncontaminated condition. Clean containers shall be used for feeding.

(d) *Waste:* Fecal and food waste shall be removed daily from inside, under, and around cages and stored or disposed of in a manner which prevents noxious odors or pests. Cages and enclosures shall be ventilated to prevent noxious odors.

(e) *Cleaning and maintenance:* Hard floors within cages or enclosures shall be cleaned a minimum of once weekly. Walls of cages and enclosures shall be spot cleaned daily. The surfaces of housing facilities, including perches, shelves and any furniture-type fixtures within the facility, shall be cleaned weekly, and shall be constructed in a manner and made of materials that permits thorough cleaning. Cages or enclosures with dirt floors shall be raked a minimum of once every three days and all waste material shall be removed. Any surface of cages or enclosures that may come into contact with animal(s) shall be free of excessive rust that prevents the required cleaning or that affects the structural strength. Any painted surface that may come into contact with wildlife shall be free of peeling or flaking paint.

## **68A-6.004 Standard Caging Requirements for Captive Wildlife.**

### **(4) Carnivores and Certain Omnivores with Similar Requirements:**

#### **(a) Wild felines.**

In addition to requirements of this section, each cage or enclosure shall be equipped with a shelter(s)/nest box(es) large enough to accommodate all the animals in the enclosure simultaneously. Each enclosure shall have an accessible device to provide physical stimulation or manipulation compatible with the species. Such device shall be noninjurious, and may include, but is not limited to, boxes, balls, bones, barrels, drums, rawhide, pools, etc.

#### **1. African and Asian lions; tigers.**

a. For one or two animals, a cage 24 feet by 10 feet, 8 feet high. For each additional animal, increase cage size by 25 percent of original floor area.

b. Each cage shall have an elevated platform(s) that shall accommodate all animal(s) simultaneously. Each cage shall have a claw log, unless the animal(s) front claws have been removed.

c. Outdoor cages over 1,000 square feet (uncovered) shall have vertical jump walls at least 10 feet high, with a 2-foot, 45 degree, inward angle overhang, or jump walls at least 12 feet high, without an overhang. The inward angle fencing shall be made of the same material as the vertical fencing. Wet or dry moats may be substituted for the required fencing provided prior Commission written approval has been obtained.

#### **2. Jaguars, leopards, and cougars**

a. For one or two animals, a cage 20 feet by 10 feet, 8 feet high. For each additional animal, increase cage size by 25 percent of original floor area.

b. Each cage shall have an elevated platform(s) that shall accommodate all animals in the enclosure simultaneously. Each cage shall have a claw log, unless the animal(s) front claws have been removed.

c. Outdoor cages over 1,000 square feet (uncovered) for cougars shall have vertical jump walls at least 10 feet high, with a 4-foot, 45 degree, inward angle overhang. Leopards and jaguars shall not be kept in uncovered enclosures except in facilities with wet or dry moats, which have been previously approved in writing by the Commission.

#### **3. Lesser cats (e.g., bobcats, lynx, ocelots, caracal, serval, margay, fishing cats, jungle cats, Teminick's cats, golden cats)**

a. For one or two animals, a cage 12 feet by 6 feet, 6 feet high. For each additional animal, increase cage size by 25 percent of original floor area.

b. Each cage shall have an elevated platform(s) that shall accommodate all animals in the enclosure simultaneously. Each cage shall have a claw log, unless the animal(s) front claws have been removed.



4. Small cats (e.g., Geoffroy's cats, jaguarundis, leopard cats, wildcats (*Felis silvestris*), mountain cats, pampas cats, marbled cats, pallas' cats, sand cats, oncilla/tiger cats, black-footed cats, flat-headed cats, kodkods, rusty-spotted cats)

a. For one or two animals, a cage 6 feet by 6 feet, 6 feet high. For each additional animal, increase cage size by 25 percent of original floor area.

b. Each cage shall have an elevated platform(s) that shall accommodate all animals in the enclosure simultaneously. Each cage shall have a claw log, unless the animal(s) front claws have been removed.

5. Cheetahs

a. For one or two animals, a cage 40 feet by 20 feet, 8 feet high. For each additional animal, increase cage size by 25 percent of original floor area.

b. Each cage shall have an elevated platform(s) that shall accommodate all animals in the enclosure simultaneously.

### **68A-6.0023 General Regulations Governing Possession of Captive Wildlife; Public Contact; Transfer of Wildlife and Record Keeping Requirements.**

(1) No person shall maintain captive wildlife in any unsafe or unsanitary condition, or in a manner which results in threats to the public safety, or the maltreatment or neglect of such wildlife.

(2) Caging Requirements:

(a) All wildlife possessed in captivity shall, except when supervised and controlled in accordance with subsection (3) hereof, be maintained in cages or enclosures constructed and maintained in compliance with the provisions of Rules 68A-6.003, 68A-6.004 and 68A-6.007, F.A.C.

(b) Cages or enclosures housing captive wildlife shall be sufficiently strong to prevent escape and to protect the caged animal from injury, and shall be equipped with structural safety barriers to prevent any physical contact with the caged animal by the public, except for contacts as authorized under subsection (3) of this rule. Structural barriers may be constructed from materials such as fencing, moats, landscaping, or close-mesh wire, provided that materials used are safe and effective in preventing public contact.

(c) All cages or enclosures less than 1,000 square feet shall be covered at the top to prevent escape (except paddocks, reptile enclosures and habitats specified below). Class I or Class II wildlife shall not be kept in uncovered enclosures that are less than 1,000 square feet, except as specified in Rule 68A-6.004, F.A.C. All outdoor enclosures for non-native venomous reptile species and reptiles of concern shall be topped with close-meshed wire or an equivalent barrier to provide additional security as specified in Rule 68A-6.007, F.A.C. For the purpose of this section, the following definitions apply:

1. Paddocks: Areas enclosed by fencing, railing or other Commission-approved structures which allow animals to graze or browse.

2. Reptile enclosures: Areas encompassed by smooth walls or other Commission-approved materials which provide safe keeping of venomous and non-venomous snakes, crocodilians and other reptiles.

3. Open air habitats or moated areas: Areas enclosed by Commission-approved fences, walls, or moats which provide safe keeping of species specified in Rule 68A-6.004, F.A.C.

(d) Caging considered unsafe or otherwise not in compliance herewith shall be reconstructed or repaired within 30 days after notification of such condition. In the event such condition results in a threat to human safety or the safety of the wildlife maintained therein, the wildlife maintained therein shall, at the direction of the Commission, be immediately placed in an approved facility, at the expense of the permittee, owner, or possessor, until such time as the unsafe condition is remedied. In instances where wildlife is seized or taken into custody by the Commission, said permittee, owner, or possessor of such wildlife shall be responsible for payment of all expenses relative to the animal's capture, transport, boarding, veterinary care, or other costs associated with or incurred due to such seizures or custody. Such expenses shall be paid by said permittee, owner, or possessor upon any conviction or finding of guilt of a criminal or noncriminal violation, regardless of adjudication or plea entered, of any provision of Chapter 379 or 828, F.S., or rules of the Commission, or if such violation is disposed of under Section 921.187, F.S. Failure to pay such expenses shall be grounds for revocation or denial of permits to such individuals to possess wildlife.

### 68A-6.003 Facility and Structural Caging Requirement for Class I, II and III Wildlife.

(1) In addition to the standard caging requirements set forth in Rule 68A-6.004, F.A.C., Class I and Class II animals shall be caged in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) All cages or enclosures of Class I and Class II wildlife, and Class III capuchin, spider and woolly monkeys, except paddocks, approved open air habitats, or outdoor reptile enclosures shall be equipped with a safety entrance. A safety entrance is defined as a protected, secure area that can be entered by a keeper that prevents animal escape and safeguards the keeper, or a device that can be activated by a keeper that prevents animal escape and safeguards entry. Such entrances shall include: A double-door mechanism, interconnecting cages, a lock-down area, or other comparable devices, subject to Commission approval, that will prevent escape and safeguard the keeper. Safety entrances shall be constructed of materials that are of equivalent strength as that prescribed for cage construction for that particular species.

(b) All cages or enclosures constructed of chain link or other approved materials shall be well braced and securely anchored at ground level to prevent escape by digging or erosion. Cages shall be constructed using metal clamps, ties or braces of equivalent strength as the material required for cage construction for the particular species. Cages or enclosures using the ground as flooring must meet the following requirements:

1. For enclosures housing wildlife that exhibits a behavior of digging or burrowing:

Enclosures shall have a footer or bottom apron constructed of concrete, chainlink or equivalent strength material as specified in this rule for the housing of such wildlife. The footer must be a depth of 3 feet. In the instance of a bottom apron, the bottom apron must be securely attached to the bottom of the enclosure fencing or wall and extend inward into the enclosure a minimum of 3 feet. The bottom apron must be buried to prevent injury to the captive wildlife in the enclosure.

2. For enclosures affected by erosion:

Measures must be taken to stop the erosion. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, a footer or bottom apron as described above or other measures capable of ensuring the structural integrity of the enclosure and preventing the escape of the captive wildlife.

Emailed  
Recipient

All Discrepancies Explained to Recipient ☒

Permit Holder  
Recipient Title

Appropriate Copies of Regs Given or Possessed ☒

Inv. William King L910  
Inspecting Officer





## Inspection Report

BIG CAT RESCUE CORP

Customer ID: 3137

Certificate: 58-C-0814

Site: 001

BIG CAT RESCUE CORP

12802 EASY ST

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

TAMPA, FL 33625

Date: Mar-03-2011

3.127 (d)

REPEAT

### FACILITIES, OUTDOOR

#### Sec. 3.127 Facilities, outdoor.

(d) Perimeter fence. The fence must be constructed so that it protects the animals in the facility by restricting animals and unauthorized persons from going through it or under it and having contact with the animals in the facility, and so that it can function as a secondary containment system for the animals in the facility. It must be of sufficient distance from the outside of the primary enclosure to prevent physical contact between animals inside the enclosure and animals or persons outside the perimeter fence.

\*\*\*\*\*The top part of the perimeter fence containing two hot wires was disconnected from the electrical supply box and the pole holding it was tilted to the side. The perimeter fence was not functional at the time because it did not have electrical current passing through the hot wires.

\*\*\*\*\*There were areas of the fence that had excess vegetation pulling down on the hot wires.

\*\*\*\*\*There was construction material stored against the perimeter fence which makes it easy for an animal to climb and jump over the perimeter fence.

\*\*\*\*\*The perimeter fence must be kept in good repair in order to prevent unauthorized animals or persons from having contact with the animals in the facility and to function as a secondary containment system for the animals in the facility.

\*\*\*\*\*Correction by 3-30-2011, items identified were in the process of correction while I was in site. Licensee stated that a new fence was going to be constructed.

\*\*\*\*\*An exit interview was conducted with the licensee on 3-3-2011.

#### Prepared By:

LUIS A NAVARRO, DVM USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER Inspector 6025

Mar-03-2011

#### Received By:

(b)(5), (b)(7)(c)

Date:

Title:

Mar-03-2011

Page 1 of 1

Inspection Report Explanation: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/IR\\_Explanation.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/IR_Explanation.pdf)

ENCLOSURE COMMENT ITEM FOR:  
Docket : FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0166  
Big Cat Rescue Corp, PRT-75301B



## Inspection Report

BIG CAT RESCUE CORP

Customer ID: 3137

Certificate: 58-C-0814

Site: 001

BIG CAT RESCUE CORP

12802 EASY ST

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

TAMPA, FL 33625

Date: Jun-07-2010

3.127 (d)

### FACILITIES, OUTDOOR.

(d) Perimeter fence. On or after May 17, 2000, all outdoor housing facilities (i.e., facilities not entirely indoors) must be enclosed by a perimeter fence that is of sufficient height to keep animals and unauthorized persons out. Fences less than 8 feet high for potentially dangerous animals, such as, but not limited to, large felines (e.g., lions, tigers, leopards, cougars, etc.), bears, wolves, rhinoceros, and elephants, or less than 6 feet high for other animals must be approved in writing by the Administrator. The fence must be constructed so that it protects the animals in the facility by restricting animals and unauthorized persons from going through it or under it and having contact with the animals in the facility, and so that it can function as a secondary containment system for the animals in the facility.

\*\*\*At the back of the facility there is a section of 6 foot chain link with strands of barbed wire above the chain link that have become damaged and pulled down because of cut limbs and vines on the wire. Although the facility has a variance for their chain link fencing, the fencing was not in good repair at the time of the inspection and does not function as a secure perimeter fence. This fencing must be repaired or modified and maintained in good repair to protect the animals by restricting entry of unauthorized persons and to function as a secondary containment system for the animals at the facility.

To be corrected by June 15, 2010.

\*\*\*There is newer white perimeter fencing at the main entrance and parking lot which measures 93 inches at its lowest point and has posts that measure 96 inches. Although the posts are 8 feet in height, the remainder of the fencing is just under 8 feet. All perimeter fencing less than 8 feet must be approved in writing by the Administrator. The previously approved variance for the chain link fencing does not cover any newer fencing such as the white fencing at the entrance of the facility. This fencing and any other fencing not currently 8 feet in height must be modified so that it is 8 feet or the fencing must be covered under a written and approved variance.

To be corrected by August 8, 2010

This was a focused inspection of the perimeter fencing and select big cat enclosures.

An exit interview was conducted on June 8, 2010

### Prepared By:

GREGORY S GAJ, DVM

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

Title:

SUPERVISORY ANIMAL CARE

Inspector 4007

Jun-08-2010

### Received By:

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Date:

Title:

Jun-08-2010

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Inspection Report Explanation: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/IR\\_Explanation.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/IR_Explanation.pdf)





## Inspection Report

BIG CAT RESCUE CORP

Customer ID: 3137

Certificate: 58-C-0814

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12802 EASY ST

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

TAMPA, FL 33625

Date: Sep-29-2010

### 3.125

#### FACILITIES, GENERAL

(a) Structural strength. The facility must be constructed of such material and of such strength as appropriate for the animals involved. The indoor and outdoor housing facilities shall be structurally sound and shall be maintained in good repair to protect the animals from injury and to contain the animals.

\*\*\*The enclosure for the white tiger "Zabu" and the lion "Cameron" was under review on the last inspection. The review has been completed. It was determined that this enclosure requires an additional method(s) to contain the animals. Options were discussed with the staff and Founder.

Correct by: 10-29-10.

\*\*\*This same enclosure has a pine tree in the rear section where three limbs are growing towards the back enclosure fence. These limbs could provide an escape route. These limbs need to be removed to keep the animals contained and to protect them from possible injury.

Correct by: 10-13-10.

An exit briefing was conducted with the Founder.

#### Prepared By:

MEGAN E ADAMS, A C I

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

Title:

ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR

Inspector 1027

Sep-29-2010

#### Received By:

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Date:

Title:

Sep-29-2010

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Inspection Report Explanation: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/IR\\_Explanation.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/IR_Explanation.pdf)



(<http://www.youtube.com/user/Myfamily0309?feature=mhee>)



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(<https://twitter.com/TomLemonsRNRF>)

Dec(17, 2015 12:15 pm

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## Still No Word From Officials, As Massive Search Continues

By Tom Lemons

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Posted by: Tom Lemons

[tomlemons@realnewsrealfast.com](mailto:tomlemons@realnewsrealfast.com)

Date: Jan 27 2015 2:49 PM

BROOKSVILLE – One day after authorities began searching several acres of land along B W

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Stevenson Road, officials are still not providing details regarding the investigation.

Early yesterday morning, RNRF received a tip that excavation equipment was being used on the property, but there are no details on what, if anything has been unearthed.

Search and Rescue teams from the Miramar Police Department and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue are assisting in the search, but it is not known if this case involves those agencies directly. Officials with Miami-Dade say they are not aware of any Detectives from their agency working in Hernando County at this time.

There are three previous owners listed on the Hernando County Property Appraisers website; Mary Reinke, 1990-1995, J D and Carole Lewis, 1995 and Robert Bunnell is listed as the current owner.

Big Cat Rescue owner, Carole Baskins Lewis, made headlines in 2007, after her husband, Don Lewis, disappeared and was never heard from again. There is no information at this time that would suggest the investigation is related to the disappearance of Don Lewis.

We will bring more on this story as it develops.

**ORIGINAL STORY: Officials Tight Lipped on Search, M.E., Cadaver Dogs, Sonar Device on Scene** ([../article.php/officials-tight-lipped-on-search-me-cadaver-dogs-sonar-device-on-scene-20604](http://article.php/officials-tight-lipped-on-search-me-cadaver-dogs-sonar-device-on-scene-20604))

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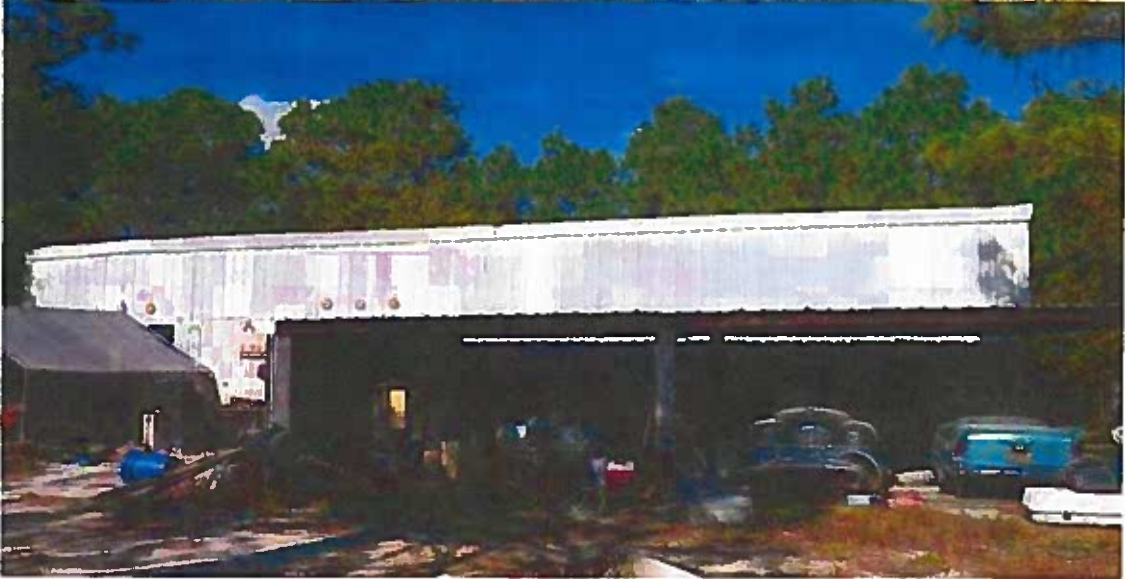


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tiredoftweekers - Jan 27 2015 12: AM 20:47



It is interesting, because it seems like Carole Lewis Baskins is still talking about her missing husband after all this time. She writes a lot on her Big Cat Rescue website. <http://bigcatrescue.org/carole-baskin-takes-on-big-cat-fight-with-exotic-pet-owners/>

Koonan - Jan 27 2015 12: AM 20:02

Multimillionaire Don Lewis disappeared in 1997, 2 months after filing for an order of protection against his wife Carole Lewis (Baskin). Baskin, CEO of Big Cat Rescue, refused a lie detector test. I sure hope they finally find Don, but I have to wonder, if it's Don they are searching for, why are police and fire Miramar and Miami part of the search? Hmmmmmm

Croom - Jan 27 2015 12: AM 15:05

How interesting! I was thinking Don Lewis was probably buried somewhere on their property in Costa Rica.



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Mar 05 2015 5:53 PM By Tom Lemons

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20699)

Mar 05 2015 4:02 PM By Tom Lemons

SPRING HILL – On Tuesday, deputies responded to the Sunoco Gas Station, located at 6026 Spring Hill Drive, ...

Docket : FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0166  
Big Cat Rescue Corp, RPT-75301B  
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26  
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**CAROLE BASKIN a/k/a CAROLE LEWIS  
WILDLIFE ON EASY STREET a/k/a  
BIG CAT RESCUE CORP.**

"We did everything together," says Carole Lewis (playing with leopard Armani) of missing husband Don. "To not have him here, it hurts."

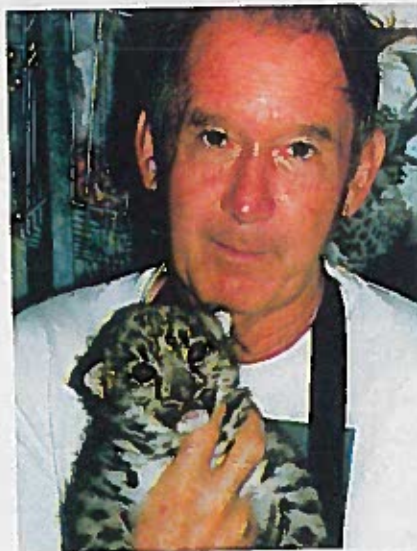
# Too Purrfect

The vanishing of millionaire cat lover Don Lewis has cops wondering: Was he killed, or did he fake his own death?

Following a trail beneath the cypresses and water oaks shading her Florida wildlife refuge, Carole Lewis stops to coo over one of her babies—a 300-pound Siberian Bengal tiger named Auroara. Looking more than passably feline herself in a leopard-print blouse, Lewis mimics a throaty purr. The tiger playfully prances close to the 12-foot fence. It paws at her long

blond locks. "Mommy loves you," murmurs Lewis, 37. "Yes, I do."

Indeed, in the six years since Lewis and her husband, Don, a self-made multimillionaire, turned 40 acres of prime Tampa real estate into Wildlife on Easy Street, a sanctuary for exotic cats, no one has questioned her fierce passion for her pets. When it comes to her feelings toward her spouse, however, that's another story. On a



COURTESY CAROLE LEWIS

"Don was not always an easy man," says Anne McQueen of her boss (last year).



## ● mystery

humid August morning last year, Don Lewis, then 60, disappeared without a trace, and some people—including his grown children from a previous marriage and his longtime secretary—suspect his wife of foul play. His daughters even speculate she may have fed him to the tigers.

"It's a perfect scenario to dispose of someone," says the oldest of his four children, Donna Pettis, 42. "We were upset that the cops didn't test the DNA on the meat grinder." For her part, Carole Lewis, who harbors suspicions of her own—among them the notion that Don may have staged his disappearance—finds the *Sweeney Todd* theory grimly humorous. "My tigers eat meat; they don't eat people," she says. "There would be bones and remains of my husband out there. I'm amazed that people would even think such a thing."

If Don Lewis's disappearance sounds as though it might have been scripted by Elmore Leonard, so could much of the six decades of wheeling and dealing that preceded it. "He had the Midas touch," says daughter Pettis, a Tampa-area manicurist.



For her and Don, "it was love at first sight," says Carole (with him in 1993).

"He could walk through cow droppings and come out smelling like a rose." The Dade City, Fla., native could mentally compute interest rates in less time than it took most people to use a calculator. He had already amassed a small fortune through trucking, used cars and real estate—



"Don Lewis would never leave without his money," says McQueen, his secretary.

as well as acquired a wife, Gladys, three daughters, and an adopted son—by 1981, when he spotted Carole walking barefoot down a Tampa street after a fight with her husband. The very next day, Carole, whose daughter Jamie was 6 months old at the time, became the latest



information



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Don's daughters (from left)—Donna Pettis, Gale Rathbone and Lynda Sanchez—suspect Carole. The photo on the piano is of Don with their mother, Gladys, his first wife.

in a long line of Lewis girlfriends.

"I'm probably the only woman he never fooled around with," observes Anne McQueen, 44, his secretary of 18 years and a partial beneficiary in his \$1.25 million life insurance policy. "I used to say it was the only time in my life that I was glad I was short and fat."

Despite his wealth, which grew substantially after Carole began helping him buy and sell real estate in 1984—much of it tax-delinquent properties he acquired at auction—Lewis had a split personality concerning money. The trained (though not licensed) pilot always carried enough cash to purchase an airplane, but he shopped for his clothes at garage sales. "I used to tell him," says McQueen, "that he put the 'chirp' in 'cheap, cheap, cheap.'" When Don and Carole finally married in 1991, the year after his divorce, he gave her a \$14 wedding ring during a courthouse ceremony.

But soon after, Don sprang for something Carole would love better than any bauble—a 6-month-old bobcat she named Windsong. Within

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## ● mystery

a few months, both Lewises were sufficiently smitten that they and Jamie (who's now 18) drove to Minnesota to buy another six bobcat kittens. "When we got there, it turned out to be a fur farm. The guy had 56 kittens," Carole recalls. "We couldn't just pick out six and leave 50 to die. So we bought every one."

Back at the Tampa home where the Lewises lived before moving to an equally modest residence on the refuge grounds, family and friends scrambled to bottle-feed the babies every two hours. As the couple began educating themselves on how to care for the animals, Carole says they also started to learn about the horrors the exotic creatures faced. Soon Don was going to auctions across the U.S. and bringing home every "abused, dying, maimed cat he could find," says Carole.

Eventually their collection expanded to include 200 cats of 17 species, housed in a nonprofit sanctuary staffed by five full-time employees and more than 100 volunteers. To help offset the costs, they turned four cabins into a unique B&B—for

\$75 a night, guests get their choice of tamed bobcats, cougars or servals as bedmates. "You'd pay that much at Holiday Inn," says Carole, "with no entertainment."

These days the solidly booked cabins are attracting their share of crime buffs, tantalized by the mystery of just what happened to Don Lewis on Aug. 18, 1997. There is currently a wealth of suspects and scenarios, but precious little evidence. Although Don's 1989 Dodge van was found at an airport 40 miles from the refuge two days after his wife reported him missing, none of his credit cards was subsequently used. Neither the private eye Carole hired, nor an extensive police investigation—including searches of property Don Lewis owned in Costa Rica, where he'd told some family and friends he was planning to move—uncovered anything more sinister than indications that he may have been involved in extramarital affairs and questionable business practices.

Police did learn that two months before he vanished, Don Lewis had filed court documents seeking a



"I think not knowing is the hardest," says Carole (with daughter Jamie and black leopard Jammie).

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domestic-violence injunction against Carole, accusing her of threatening to shoot him. But after a judge failed to find grounds for an injunction, Don apparently didn't fear for his life very much since he continued to live with her. (Carole Lewis maintains she never threatened her husband and had no knowledge of a planned injunction. "The worst thing I ever did," she says, "was threaten to report him to the IRS.") Admits John Marsicano, one of the lead detectives on the case: "We don't have a good idea of what really happened to him."

Don's disappearance has left Carole Lewis ensnarled in a nasty legal catfight with his children over control of his business affairs and holdings estimated at more than \$5 million. Accusing Carole of forging their father's will and power of attorney, his daughters want to prevent her from draining the coffers to care for the animals. Carole maintains that the children are entitled only to about \$1 million in properties that belonged to their father before he married her.

Under a temporary court order, Carole can use just \$152,000 from

the real estate operations to run the refuge—when the current annual budget is expected to exceed \$225,000. (Last year the sanctuary spent \$22,000 on veterinary bills alone.) As a result, Carole is trying to negotiate settlements that would give her stepdaughters a total of about \$1 million in properties and allow her to manage the bulk of the estate until Don can be declared legally dead in 2004. "The cats are her life," says Carole's mother, Barbara Stairs, 57, who has been helping run the real estate business. "She doesn't care what she lives in as long as the cats are taken care of."

A truce with Don's daughters would ease the financial crunch, but the cloud of suspicion hovering over Carole Lewis—and her beloved cats—may remain. "Can you imagine having people think you killed your husband or wife and not being able to prove otherwise?" she asks. "Without a body, there is nothing I can do to clear my name."

- Pam Lambert
- Tim Roche in Tampa

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