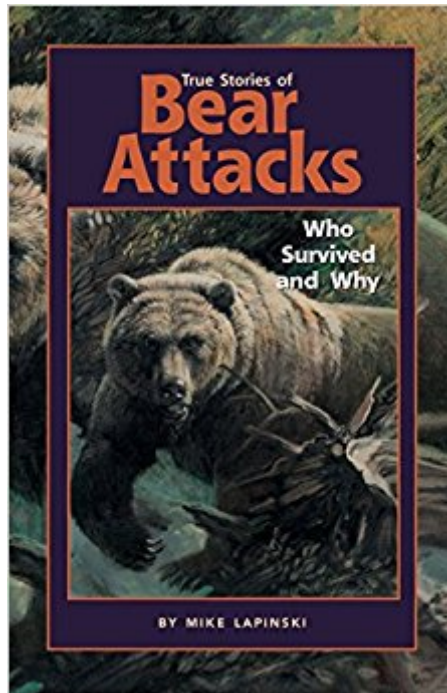




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True Stories Of Bear Attacks: Who Survived And Why



Synopsis

Author and wildlife expert Mike Lapinski compiled this collection of true bear-encounter stories from throughout the western United States, British Columbia, and Alaska. Some have happy endings, some fatal; all are thrilling. But there's more to this book than a heart-pounding read. Think of these as campfire stories with a higher purpose. Mike strongly advocates the use of bear pepper spray for backpackers, rangers, anglers, hunters, photographers, anybody who hikes through bear country. Repelling and reconditioning bears saves lives, both human and bruin, he asserts. In TRUE STORIES OF BEAR ATTACKS. Mike also shares insights into bear behavior, why they attack, how to protect yourself in bear country, and thoughts on the future of the great bear in the Lower 48. Organizations such as the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the Center for Wildlife Information, National Bear Conservation, in Missoula, Montana, have expressed support for Mike's work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It's like that in grizzly country. You can do a lot of things that, in retrospect, are mistakes. Like hiking along a brushy trail. No bear, no problem. Big bear, big problem. As a recognized self-defense expert who spends the majority of his time roaming large-predator habitat, I've come to realize that sooner or later it happens to everyone. Through no conscious fault of your own, you find yourself in a potentially dangerous situation. And when that happens all the cute statistics--like the one about how you are 380 times more likely to die from a bee sting than a bear bite--vaporize in the twenty yards that separate you from an animal twice as powerful pound-for-pound than any man and capable of tearing out huge chunks of your flesh with its powerful jaws."

Mike Lapinski is the author of eleven outdoor and nature books and hundreds of magazine articles. His photographs have appeared as inside and cover art in a variety of magazines and books. Mike is considered an expert on the use of bear pepper spray and often speaks on this subject, bears, and self-defense for nature lovers. He lives with his wife Aggie most of the year in Superior, Montana, close to grizzlies and grizzly country. While the bears are hibernating, Mike and Aggie live in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, where Mike writes about jaguars, ocelots, and other wilderness animals of the Southwest.

Good condition and informative.

I found this book thoughtful, analytic, and useful. Everyone who goes into bear country should read this book first. The author describes the main situations likely to trigger bear attacks, and stresses safety and avoidance of these. There are many books which emphasize the limitations of using a gun on a charging bear. The author does advocate the use of bear pepper spray for self defense, and describes personal, anecdotal, and experimental evidence for its effectiveness. The author is concerned about both saving human and bear lives. It is not true that he advocates only one brand of bear spray; those reviewers who said that should read more carefully. This book is a wonderful contrast to the many other books on bear attacks which glorify the heroism of those who battled bears with guns, knives, and sometimes with planes.

Much of this book felt like I was watching an infomercial for UDAP pepper spray, except I was not only wasting my time, but also my money, by paying for the commercial by buying this book. I was firmly convinced (prior to reading this book) of the value of pepper spray as a LAST RESORT defense against bear attack- after abiding by all the known SOPs for avoiding surprising or provoking bears. This book is an ad for a product produced by an admitted friend of the author, Mike Matheny of UDAP. I have nothing personal against Mr Matheny, but this method of stealth advertising will only cause me to continue to carry Counter Assault exclusively, which, with common sense and good luck, I have never had to use while travelling in bear country.

You may love bears and see them as majestic, but bears don't love you. In a bear's mind, you're just another animal, sometimes a threat and perhaps a tasty meal. Mike Lapinski, who lives in Montana, explains what being wise and cautious means when hiking, hunting, fishing, and camping

in bear country. He believes EPA registered, bear-strength pepper spray works and that anyone walking in bear country should carry it. Bells, he says, seem to be ineffective as a way to avoid startling a bear. Barking like a dog, however, has some deterrent effect. Nothing, though, is a sure thing. Being watchful for evidence of a bear presence is the first step in avoiding a bear attack. There is a chapter on incidents where bear-strength pepper spray was not enough to repel an attack. The chapter after that touches on the use of firearms as a way to stop an attack, and that this does not always work. Curiously, Lapinski gives no advice on how to best use a firearm against an attack if, for example, pepper spray is ineffective (as he admits it can be), and your second desperate choice is lethal self-defense. Although Lapinski himself is a hunter (he has written a book on elk hunting and has a video on trapping) there is a strong bias in this book against firearms as a defense against bear attacks. The unstated principle seems to be that bears are only being true to their nature in attacking humans and so lethal self-defense against bears is somehow unjust to the attacking bear. At the same time, any bear that has killed a human is, after the fact, itself killed by law. A disparity, to say the least. Only if someone dies, at times not even then, is a bear considered too dangerous to live. A bear that attacks to kill (any animal attack should be considered of lethal intent, in my view) but is repulsed by pepper-spray is allowed to roam free, possibly to kill someone later who was not so lucky in repelling the bear. Bears apparently count for more than humans. It's their home, not ours, seems to be the premise. Lapinski is up front about his moral values. In the preface he writes: "The purpose of this book is to encourage travelers in bear country to carry bear spray - not only for their own welfare but also for the welfare of the bear, because it's the bruin that usually ends up dead if there's trouble." (10) This is nature conservation taken towards an extreme. If there's trouble, surely the trouble is a bear attack against a human, not the other way around. Lapinski apparently hopes a growing use of pepper spray against attacking bears will act as aversion therapy, creating an avoidance reaction in bears upon sight of humans. This fanciful idea occurs more than once in the book. The moral imperative seems to be to, above all, avoid killing the bear and, unless you can escape or avert its attack benignly with pepper spray, to have the bear kill you. After all (repeating the premise), it's their home, not ours. We're the intruders. Ultimately, your death is your own fault. You should have been somewhere else. If it's between a bear and a human, Lapinski would rather it be the human, it seems. If he thought otherwise he would not preach absolute non-violence in human defense against violent bear attacks. There is a ridiculous argument given against firearms as defense against bears, that when under bear attack there is not enough time to present and discharge a firearm - yet there is apparently enough time to present and discharge a can of pepper spray. That being said, I would certainly carry EPA registered

bear-strength pepper spray, along with a firearm (if legal: and it ought to be), if I were in bear country. Pepper spray does seem to be normally effective in repelling an attack. The use of firearms depends upon shot placement under extreme stress and upon the vigor, determination and rage of the bear. Lapinski wants us to believe a firearm is likely to be ineffective against a charging grizzly. He reports an incident where during a bear hunt it took six impacting rounds of .416 Remington Magnum, launching a 400-grain bullet, to stop a grizzly. Before the final killing shot, the bear was knocked to the ground three times and three times it rose to continue its charge. Although this incident occurred during a bear hunt, the book does not discuss legal hunting of bears or what cartridges would be most effective for a clean kill. Lapinski's point about the .416 Remington Magnum is, of course, for the reader not to assume killing a grizzly is going to be a simple matter of one or two well placed shots, even with a high powered cartridge. Unless there is an instant kill, the bear will continue its attack. He reports another incident where a .375 H&H Magnum with a 200-grain bullet didn't stop a charge. He says, without qualification, that "against a charging grizzly, it's not enough." (94) The impression he leaves, without saying as much, is that it is impossible to hunt grizzlies with firearm or bow without getting mauled, mutilated or killed. Lapinski lists six brands (as of 2004) of EPA registered bear-strength pepper spray: Counter Assault, UDAP Pepper Power, Bear Guard, Bear Peppermace, Frontiersman, and Guard Alaska. If it is not EPA registered, avoid it. EPA registration guarantees potency. Without EPA registration the spray may be too weak to be effective. Overall, the book is light reading, and Lapinski has a low key style. This is not a book of horror stories, with graphic details told with wide-eyed fixation. There are reports of death and disfigurement, but Lapinski's purpose is in teaching caution, not instilling fear. What the book lacks is deep thought and an honest discussion of the underlying vision of nature conservation that informs the book. Whether or not Lapinski wants to talk about it, he could have mentioned it and given references to the topic elsewhere.

Good lessons for all who trek in the American wild or wherever bears roam around the bush. Read the stories of bear-encounters and try to escape the same situations! But how when most casualties result from unsuspected meetings! As the author puts it: "You can do a lot of things (in bear country) that, in retrospect, are mistakes. Like hiking along a bushy trail. No bear, no problem. Big bear, big problems." Yes, sometimes things are easy to explain! He teaches people how to defend against bear attack and spends much time roaming the habitat of large predators. "And I have come to realize that sooner or later it happens to everyone: through no conscious fault of your own, you find yourself in a potentially dangerous situation." The author advocates strongly the carriage and use of

bear-pepper spray. I wonder how much the author participates in the sale. I admit that I cancelled the purchase when I saw the price of the bulky apparatus. This cannot be the last word of development! Hiking through bear country is best performed by making noise, although it is rather disturbing when you are not the only one on the proceedings. And, maybe it is the best as with the snakes of Arizona. It is claimed that they bite with priority those who are evil minded towards wild beasts. Think bear-friendly! Hopefully the bear gets the message!

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