

The Amazing And True Story Of Bravo!



Bravo's story occurred many years ago but will always be a tale of amazing animal survival, courage and human compassion.

Here's a link which still exists on his incredible ordeal:

[PR Web "Stubbs the Cat"](#)

Years ago, a young woman started feeding a family of feral cats she discovered near her office in Gardena, California, outside Los Angeles. *Please note: If you know of or are feeding a group of feral cats, it's vitally important to trap, alter, and release them to keep the population from growing. See our [Resources](#) section for more information.*

On April 20, 2001, she pulled up to feed the cats, who, as usually, rushed to her, hungry and excited. As she watched them eat, she noticed something strange about one of them, a young black-and-white male with big gold eyes. His whiskers were gone. They looked like they'd been burned off. His fur looked a little strange, too. Then she saw his right rear leg...with a chunk missing, as if something had taken a big bite out of it.

The next morning, when the kitty showed up to eat, his left paw was missing. And then it became clear what was happening: he was gnawing off parts of his body that had been injured. With the help of Joanna Patrice of C.A.R.E., an urgent message went out, via phone and e-mail, to almost every member of the Los Angeles rescue community: Help us trap this cat! He is slowly dying!

Meanwhile, the little kitty, who everyone started calling "Stubbs", got worse and worse. He kept gnawing at his feet until he had chewed off his front left leg almost to the shoulder, and his right rear leg to the knee. And yet every day, he kept coming to breakfast, hobbling along to the food dish, with a survival instinct like nobody had never seen before. This cat wanted to live.

The Rescue

Christi Metropole, founder and President of the [Stray Cat Alliance](#) , gathered some fellow "trappers", including members of the rescue group [Purrfect Partners](#) , and they headed down to the site to catch Stubbs before infection from his injuries spread into his body and killed him. It wasn't easy, despite the fact that Christi and the other volunteers were equipped with traps, nets, and all the tricks their experience with feral cats has taught them over the years. Stubbs was frightened and in pain, and wasn't going for any of it. Meanwhile, he'd hobble along with his colony-mates to eat the food rescuers left for the cats.

His mother, Scarlet, a sleek black kitty with golden eyes just like Stubbs, tried to protect him by standing guard at his hiding place when he was sleeping or hiding-- and this is how everyone figured out where Stubbs disappeared to after he ate. When rescuers tried to catch him or trap him, Scarlet put herself in between him and everything else, and although she is actually tame and very sweet, would hiss and spit in an effort to keep anyone from hurting her kitten again. For three days, the trapping "team" didn't leave the site, sleeping in their cars and at times climbing 20-foot barbed wire fences to check the traps. Everyone was exhausted and frustrated, but the more Stubbs eluded them, and the more dire his condition was becoming, the more determined everyone got. Finally, on the night of May 7...success! (Thanks to KFC Original Recipe chicken used as bait.) They rushed Stubbs to an emergency animal hospital, where his injuries were treated for the short-term and he was given pain medication.

The Diagnosis

The next day, Stubbs was moved to another hospital for long-term assessment and treatment of his injuries. The diagnosis: somebody set this cat on fire. Animal Control told C.A.R.E. that it's not uncommon for people to throw lighter fluid on a stray animal, then toss a lit match at them. All four of Stubbs' feet and lower legs were badly burned. As days passed, the pain and dying tissue motivated him to gnaw off the parts of his own body that he knew were killing him. The final damage: one of Stubbs' back legs is gone, up to the knee. His left front leg is gone up to the elbow. His right front leg is missing a toe.

This behavior is pure, unfiltered survival instinct. Stubbs was fighting his infection the only way he knew how.



Bravo in Recovery

He has fortunately tested negative for Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, and is on medication for the gangrene infection that was taking over his system. The vets are sure that if Stubbs had gone one more day without medical attention, it would have been too late to save him.

In addition to antibiotics to fight his infection, Stubbs had surgery every 2 days for the first ten days of his treatment to remove the necrotic (dead) tissue and stimulate growth of new tissue. A prosthesis may be built for his missing front leg, and then he can get on with the 8 other lives he's got left!

Through all of this, Stubbs has remained a very, very good boy. He had never been touched by humans before his rescue, but he seemed to know that everyone was helping him and accepted their TLC with cooperation and grace.

June 18, 2001

Stubbs has recovered beautifully from his initial surgeries, but he is dragging his back leg. Our doctors have recommended an innovative surgery that will hinge his lower leg forward, thus creating a substitute for the foot he chewed off. These surgeries are 90% successful and result in a cat being able to use the injured leg again, and Stubbs is an excellent candidate with an excellent prognosis!

September 22, 2001

Stubbs has been living in a foster home the last 3 months with Mary Zupan of C.A.R.E. He's blossomed into the most delightful young cat man imaginable! His forearm has totally healed up and won't need a prosthetic device. A prosthetic boot was designed for his missing hind foot but that's going to take some getting used to and perhaps a bit of modification. The most wonderful news is that he's found his new home with Pam and Ritchie Geisel and their fur-daughter Eliza! Thanks to all of you who sent in suggestions for his new name. He is now going by "Bravo" - a tribute to his bravery and a name that aptly describes his indomitable character! Pam and Ritchie are going to be keeping us up on the new adventures of "Bravo" and his big sister Eliza.