

Dugard kidnapping's ripple effect

By Kathryn Reed

“Carl (Probyn) showed up at my door that morning. He came running up the steps, busting through the door, not even knocking. He was in a flipping state of panic. He said, “Someone grabbed my daughter.’”

Soon thereafter law enforcement questioned Peggy Lynn about that fateful day that changed the lives of so many on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.

Lynn was running a small day care out of her home at the time. Shayna, Carl and Terry Probyn’s 18-month-old daughter, was one of her charges.

“The FBI came and interviewed me because (Carl) was apparently a suspect. I said you don’t have that look upon your face when you are a suspect. It was indescribable how much he was upset,” Lynn said.

For one interview with FBI agents the Meyers resident was hypnotized. She helped create a composite sketch of the suspects. She could do this because she had seen them days before Jaycee Lee Dugard, then 11, was kidnapped on June 10, 1991.

Lynn says the people she remembers look like Phillip and Nancy Garrido – the couple charged in the Dugard kidnapping.

She said the vehicle was out of place for her quiet neighborhood because only cars that belong there or people who are lost come down the street.

“They swung over to my side and slowed way down. This creepy guy in the driver’s seat stared at me and my (18-month-old)

daughter. It was very unnerving to me,” Lynn said. “The person in the passenger side I didn’t get a look at the face, but (she) had long straight black hair.”

Lynn watched Shayna for just a little while longer before the Probyns wanted their daughter with them at all times – especially since they were not working.

Leave of absence

Terry Probyn interviewed for a job at the South Lake Tahoe office of the El Dorado County Public Health Department on one week, her daughter was kidnapped the next.

“We didn’t see Terry for six months. I just held the position open,” said Valerie Rudd, who was running the office at the time.

Probyn had been hired to be a medical office assistant. When she did begin work, a bit of awkwardness ensued as colleagues didn’t know quite what to say or how to act.

“Everyone learned to respect her and be supportive in their own way,” Rudd said.

Rudd describes Probyn as smart, composed and able to handle stress.

“I wasn’t surprised to hear Jaycee was running (Garrido’s printing) business because her mom was like that – if someone needed something, Terry would do it,” Rudd said.

Working in captivity

Mary Schwaab never met Allissa, as Jaycee Lee Dugard was called by the people she lived with for the last 18 years, but she did have interactions with the Garridos.

“He was always a wacko. We just thought he was a religious freak. He talked about starting his own church,” Schwaab said.

Schwaab, who lives in the East Bay of San Francisco, said for six years Garrido printed business cards and flyers for her office.

Sometimes Garrido delivered the paper products to the office, other times Schwaab went to his house. She never went inside.

“From the outside of the house it was hard to know what was going on,” Schwaab said.

She said she was shocked like everyone else to find out about the reported horrors that had been going on in the backyard of the Antioch house for nearly two decades.

Flyers posted in Bay Area

Kirsten Rankins had just moved to Lake Tahoe from Concord when the Dugard kidnapping occurred. She was making regular trips between the two cities because of her son.

She took flyers all over the area – which is right next to Antioch, the town where the Garridos reportedly held Dugard captive for 18 years.

“I had flyers of her in the back of my Bronco in my windows as I drove around Concord,” Rankins said. “People up here said if you are leaving the basin, please take flyers with you and take them wherever you go.”

The flyers had sketches of the suspects.

“I can’t believe she was found right there. There were pictures of her in that area,” Rankins said.

Questions about Carl

Carl Probyn has been the loudest, most prolific speaker on the media circuit since his stepdaughter’s release from captivity on Aug. 26.

“I don’t think he is the best spokesperson because (the

Probyns) have been separated so long,” said Anna Richter, development director with the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center. “I think there may be a little bit of capitalization on this.”

The Probyns live in Southern California, but have not done so as a couple for years even though they are not formally divorced.

Carl Probyn on Sept. 5 returned to the street where Jaycee Lee was last seen so a foreign television crew could interview him. He’s made the rounds to the New York studios. He showed up at the end of the Sept. 6 ceremony at South Tahoe Middle School that was for the South Shore community to come together to celebrate the release of Jaycee Lee.

Probyn was initially a suspect, which is common in cases like this. Plus, he witnessed the abduction and was the one to dial 911.

Even though no one is pointing fingers his way anymore, some say his actions indicate he has lost the focus – which they say is Jaycee Lee is alive, not that he has been vindicated.

Others are just as adamant that his behavior is normal for a man who has figuratively lived with a scarlet letter upon his lapel. They say he was wronged.

Tina Dugard, Terry Probyn’s sister, started speaking out on behalf of the family so another voice would be heard.

“We spent time sharing memories and stories and getting to know each other again. Jaycee remembers all of us,” Tina Dugard said during a televised press conference at the FBI office in Los Angeles on Sept. 3.

Time to heal

Richter, with the Women’s Center, said the family has a long road to recovery.

Trust is likely to be a big issue for Jaycee Lee, who is now 29, and her daughters. Reports are that the 11- and 15-year-old didn't know Jaycee Lee was their mother. This means both parents have not been truthful with them.

"I think Jaycee's daughters have the most challenges. They have limited experience to the real world," Richter said. "They essentially have been lied to by the person who held them captive and Jaycee had to go along with it for survival."

Anxiety, guilt, self-blame and depression are emotions the entire Probyn-Dugard clan is likely to experience now and for years to come.

"I do think it's natural and normal for any parent to wonder what they could have done differently," Richter said.

The family has been getting professional help to aid in coping with the last 18 years, and with what the future may hold. Jaycee Lee and her daughters did not go to school nor did they see a doctor while being stashed away in squalor.

"We need to look at (Jaycee Lee) as a hero of strength and courage. She will make the transition from victim to survivor," Richter said.