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Wyoming Ranchers Accused Of Bleaching Penis Shapes Onto Neighbor's Cows

A feud between Wyoming ranchers boiled over when a father and son allegedly marked a neighbor's errant cows with bleach, including drawing penis shapes on some of them.



Clair McFarland

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Accused of bleaching images of male genitalia and other markings onto their neighbor's cows, a Crook County father and son are now facing felony-level property destruction charges.

Two criminal complaints filed last month in the Sundance Circuit Court allege that Patrick Sean Carroll, who is 66 this year, and his son Tucker Kye Carroll, who is 34 this year, funneled 189 heifers and six bulls into a chute and bleach-dyed them to get a neighbor's attention after three years of having the cattle cross onto their land.

Some of the heifers had penis shapes bleached onto their bodies, according to an evidentiary affidavit written by Crook County Sheriff's Deputy Alex Jessen.

Coming On For Three Years

The Crook County Sheriff's Office received a complaint June 21 from the cattle's owner, Philip Habeck, saying his neighbor had "bleached" some of his yearling heifers.

The day before, Habeck's ranch hand had noticed that some cattle got out of their pasture and went over to Sean Carroll's land. Another hand came to help her get them back in, but they couldn't find them, the affidavit says.

Later that evening the ranch hand and her dad went to Carroll's corrals, and there they found Habeck's cattle in the corral. Sean Carroll was "marking" the cows with bleach while two other men helped push the cattle through the alley and into a chute, the document claims, adding that the bleach is a common peroxide mixture used to mark cattle for "various reasons."

The ranch hand's father witnessed the bleaching, the affidavit says.

"This has been coming for three years," Sean Carroll reportedly told the man. Carroll then told the man to leave so he wasn't a part of the feud, the affidavit says.

So, the man told his daughter to get in the pickup and they soon left. But first, she snapped some photographs of the bleached cows.

The photographs show heifers that had been bleached all along their backs. Some had bleach marks around their faces. One photo displayed "an attempt at drawing a penis" on a cow's ribs, says the affidavit.

Habeck asked sheriff's personnel if there could be some criminal charges to make up for his financial losses.

Jessen said he'd need to look into that.

He returned to Habeck's ranch July 3 with Dr. Wade Crawford of Crook County Veterinarian Services, Wyoming Livestock investigator Chris Strang and Wyoming Brand Inspectors Glen Gordon and Toni Gipson, says the document.

The brand inspectors verified that all the bleached cows were Habeck's.

The affidavit says Crawford inspected them for injuries from the bleach since the photos showed a pasty concoction that may have been thicker than ranchers typically use.

Crawford noted very few instances of skin irritation or damage, but no damage to any of the animals' eyes. The bleach marks ranged from a football-sized spot on a cow's back to spine-length markings to genitalia drawings, the affidavit says.

The deputy took drone photos of several heifers sorted off in another pen, that had not been marked, for comparison.

Down \$140,000

Rusty Williamson of Williamson Land and Livestock also came to the corrals, says the affidavit.

Williamson has experience selling between 30,000 and 40,000 head of bred heifers every year, including this same type of heifers from Habeck's breeding program, says the affidavit.

He estimated each bleached animal now was worth \$500 to \$700 less per head, but said he'd consult with some buyers.

And he did. The buyers reportedly told Williamson that the heifers, unmarked, would have been worth about \$2,600 per head, but now they were worth about \$1,850.

Buyers may think the cows were marked to signal something wrong with them, says the affidavit.

The loss among 189 heifers would be \$141,750, says the affidavit. This figure doesn't account for any losses among the marked bulls.

Crook County Attorney Joseph Baron charged Tucker and Sean Carroll each with two counts of property destruction. Each count is punishable by up to 10 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines.

Marking Them Up

Jessen interviewed Carroll July 10, the affidavit says, adding that Carroll said he'd love to talk about the incident.

Habeck has leased the ranch neighboring Carroll's since 2014. But over the past three years, the number of cows that get through the fence onto Carroll's property has increased to the point that hundreds cross over at any given time, Carroll said, according to the affidavit.

Carroll grew frustrated. When he would call Habeck to let him know, Habeck would be "laid back like it's not a big deal," says the document.

"It sometimes takes Philip (Habeck) a few days to move his cows back," the affidavit relates from the interview.

Carroll reportedly "admitted" the fence is old and in poor condition, but said when they see a problem they try to fix it.

Then Habeck's cattle crossed over about June 20. The Carrolls were branding that day and decided it was time "to get Philip's attention," says the affidavit.

The document claims Sean and Tucker Carroll – and another man whom Sean Carroll would not name – pushed the cattle up the alley, into the chute and "marked them up pretty good."

Jessen asked about the penises.

That maneuver was to mock Habeck for thinking the fence issue was a "game" and "never (doing) anything to fix the problem," the affidavit says.

Nothing To Do With That

Jessen spoke with Tucker Carroll by phone Aug. 11. Tucker gave the same story and insisted that the third man didn't know what was going on and had nothing to do with the Carrolls' feud with Habeck,

The third man echoed that in his own phone call with Jessen, saying he just liked to help out when he could.

About This Fence

Habeck described the problems with the fence differently, giving a shorter timeline.

He said the boundary fence crosses a creek, and several times “with all the recent rain,” the water gaps in the fence would get washed out. And when the water went down, the cows could move right through the fence, the affidavit relates.

Habeck noted there was an arrangement in the works, with money being allocated from one of the ranches he leases to repair that fence. The affidavit doesn’t explain how Carroll might be involved in that arrangement, but it relates from Habeck’s interview: “After this incident, he said any deal with Carroll is off.”

Habeck also said that his ranch hand had rebuilt several of the water gaps in the fence, and that Carroll would sit on his porch “just watching them” as they fixed it.

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