

**DAVID SOUL RELEASES ORPHANED**

# Day Hutch put Huggy Bear back on the road to recovery

**FROM JOHN INGHAM**

ENVIRONMENT EDITOR, IN IDAHO

**H**E looks for all the world like a Big Game hunter as he holds a bear slung over his shoulders high in America's Rocky Mountains. But this is the moment that Starsky and Hutch star David Soul met his real Huggy Bear.

He helped release orphaned bear cub Pele back into the wild two months after she was rescued from some of America's worst forest fires in a generation. Her mother had been killed in October when a giant pine exploded in a blaze in the Salmon River Mountains north of Boise, Idaho.

But little Pele - whose name is Hawaiian for Fire God rather than a reference to the world's

such a beautiful voice. He is so relaxing. It even worked on my animals," she said.

"I had an injured coyote that was so skittish, particularly when I went in to give it medicine. But when I played David's music, the coyote soon relaxed and lay down with its head on its paws."

When David arrived unannounced Sally could barely contain her emotions. "Your music is what kept me out here when it was ten below," she said, hugging him. "In my mind, you are the voice of the bear programme."

David, who has lived in London for the past five years with his actress partner Alexa Hamilton, came with the British charity the World Society for the Protection of Animals, which is bankrolling the £550-a-bear cost of the centre. He played with the cubs in the compound as they darted in and out of their dens, climbed trees

most famous footballer – was in luck. She was found distraught beside her mother's singed corpse and taken to Boise's "Bear Lady", Sally Maughan.

For the past 12 years, this softly-spoken travel agent has devoted all her spare time to rehabilitating orphaned black bear cubs. This year has been her busiest ever. The fires which have ravaged millions of acres across America's Wild West have dumped 22 cubs on her doorstep – three times the norm. And David came to her refuge, a series of purpose-built compounds behind her bungalow in Boise's suburbs, because she says his music kept her going.

As we stood in sub-zero temperatures inside a compound housing nine 3ft-tall bears sporting shaggy winter coats, Sally, 54, was unaware of David's impending arrival.

"For the first five years of this project I had to study the bears day and night. Building up this knowledge was crucial to the credibility of the programme," she explained.

"But if it is snowing or raining or it's 100C in the shade, the last thing you want to do is sit out here for hours on end. I love David's music and I just kept playing it to keep me company."

She also used his hit songs like Silver Lady and Don't Give Up On Us to calm one of her most troublesome charges – a hyperactive coyote. "David has got

## 'David's voice is so relaxing it even works on my animals'

and play-fought him. He has now agreed to do the voice-over for Sally's next project, a training video for other wildlife workers.

He said: "Sally shows incredible personal devotion. She has built this project up from something very small and it has developed into a size which is too big for her to cope with on her own, which is why WSPA came in to help." Four-times married David, 57, was joined in Boise by

one of his three sons by his third wife, Jimi Hendrix's former girlfriend Patti Carmel. Their marriage ended in divorce in the 1980s, but they remain firm friends.

Together with son Brendan, a 19-year-old student, David headed into the mountains for the final stage of Pele's return from the brink of death.

Rangers from Idaho's Fish and Game Department and America's Wildlife Conservation Society anaesthetised Pele and another 11-month-old female, Whispa, put them in a special crate and drove them three hours north of Boise.

Then they were loaded on to a trailer and towed for nearly an hour by skidoo into the heart of the 3.2 million-acre Payette National Forest, reaching a remote spot about 7,000ft up with the endless ranges of the Rockies stretching out ahead. A golden eagle soared on

the thermals as we carried first Whispa and then Pele in a blue tarpaulin up a steep slope through 3ft of snow to their home for the winter – a hibernation den. The sedated bears weighed in at about 80lbs each – more than double the weight needed to survive hibernation – and at that altitude the exertion took its toll.

But then came the time to carry them into the den, a tiny natural cave which at first sight was barely big enough for a man to get into.

**D**AVID carried Pele over his shoulder then helped slide her on the snow into the den, where she joined Whispa for her long winter's sleep. It was an emotional moment. "The den didn't look like much but never was a better bed made by man," said David. "When I looked in, I wanted to weep. They came to Sally as tiny orphaned cubs and here they are today, back where they belong. It was done so simply.

"We turned it into a big deal with all our skidoos but when we put these two little bears into their den for the winter, everything just got quiet."

He dismissed critics who say that black bears are not endangered and are therefore not worth protecting.

"These cubs are back where they belong. It is right. It is good," he said. "If you could capture that moment you

could go a long way to educating people about what Sally does and what is important in life. "It is important not just to deal with endangered species but to use this as an example for working with all animals.

"Sally's work is important precisely because these animals are not endangered. The key to dealing with rare species is that you take steps to protect them before they become endangered."

He added: "There is also a lesson of real humility to be learned from the way she does not try to make these animals her own. She does not train them or humanise them. She just lets them be what they are – wild bears – and returns them to the wild."

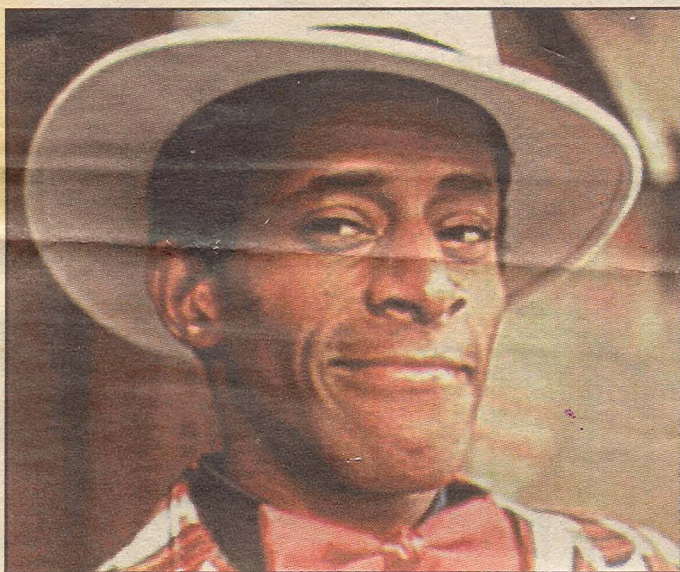
● To help fund Sally's year-round rescue programme, Express readers can adopt one of these orphan cubs for Christmas for £25.

They will receive an adoption certificate, detailed fact sheet on Whispa, two colour photographs and a specially filmed video, narrated by actor Brian Blessed. It features Whispa and shows how orphan cubs are rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

Adopters also receive two updates over the year, as WSPA follows the progress of the cubs on their journey back to the wild.

Contact WSPA at Dept. PL56, Freepost, Melksham SN12 6GZ or call Freephone no 0800 316 9966, or access [www.wspa.org.uk/adopt-a-cub](http://www.wspa.org.uk/adopt-a-cub)

# CUB INTO THE WILDERNESS AND MEE



**SOUL MATES:** David greets 'Bear Woman' Sally Maughan and, right, takes cub Pele to her winter den. Left: The real Huggy Bear from the TV series

Pictures: TIM CLARKE

S THE WOMAN WHO MAKES IT ALL POSSIBLE

