

Schedule 2

History

On a Saturday afternoon in mid-June of 2015, I was asked for help with several groups of donkeys in the Kaufman and Bowie, TX feedlots. Most were either very pregnant jennies or jennies with foals at their sides. The jennies were in danger of being shipped to slaughter, their foals left to die in the feedlots.

Now that the donkeys were on my radar, I kept an eye on the two groups, watching to see if other local rescues or private individuals might come forward and adopt them. Their ship date was the morning Monday, June 15th.

I decided to go ahead and put a plan in place, in case all of the burros were not spoken for by the deadline. I contacted a colleague, Katie Chatman, who lived within an hour's drive of the two feedlots. Katie is one of the founders of a successful draft horse rescue. She had recently stepped away from her duties with the rescue to spend more time caring for her two young boys and herself while she awaited the birth her third child. I asked Katie if she would be willing to take the donkeys into her ranch for a short stay until I could determine their health and suitability for travel. Most of the burros that had been coming out of the two feedlots were either sick, or about to get sick, and many had died. Katie generously agreed to let the donkeys come for a time. She also offered her hauling services to pick them up and bring them back to her facility. With a plan in place, I watched and waited.

Over the course of the preceding eight weeks, through the Ark Watch Foundation had purchased more than 180 burros from several feedlots in TX and LA. Most had come from the Kaufman, TX lot. I feared that she had actually created a market for the kill buyers to go out and find donkeys that they could pick up for free or a nominal charge and sell back to me at grossly inflated prices. In an effort to hide the fact that the Ark Watch Foundation was the buyer, I had made arrangements with a local TX rescue to provide them with a grant to purchase the donkeys.

By Monday morning, only two of the thirteen donkeys had been spoken for. Both of the jennies with young foals were still at the feedlot. I sent the grant to the local rescue to purchase the twelve remaining donkeys and Katie Chatman and her husband set out for the two feedlots to pick up the donkeys and haul them back to the safety of their ranch.

Once the donkeys were safely offloaded at the Chatman Ranch, Katie became aware that one of jennies who had a young foal at her side was not doing well. The jenny was having difficulty walking and it was clear she was in some pain. Katie separated the jenny and her foal from the rest of the group to ease the jenny's stress. Once she was in an area of her own, the jenny relaxed and preferred to lie down.

The following day, the foal seemed to be declining and the jenny was spending most of her time lying down. I suspected the foal was dehydrated and not nursing as much as she should because the jenny wasn't standing. When the jenny did stand, she could now only hop, trying desperately not to put any weight at all on her back left foot. I knew I needed to get the jenny and her foal to

a vet hospital as soon as possible. I asked Katie for a recommendation to a local vet and the Chatman's agreed to haul the jenny and her foal to the clinic. Katie had worked as a vet tech at the clinic for a time and was now a client. She had a good working relationship with the vets there and I knew that would be helpful. When it came time to load, Katie's husband had to carry the jenny onto the trailer. By now she was obviously in a great deal of pain.

While the group was enroute to the vet clinic, Celine realized they needed names. She named the jenny Rosie and the baby, Bunny. After Rosie's initial exam, the vet reported the following to me: Rosie had Laminitis in three legs, she had White Line Disease in three hooves and she had multiple abscesses in three hooves. Rosie only had one decent hoof, her back right. He also told me that Rosie had to be in excruciating pain. Whenever I hear the words "excruciating pain," it is a game changer for me and I feel there is only one question to ask at that point - Should I let her go?

So I asked that question, and to my surprise, I didn't get the answer I thought I would. The vet told me, "Where there is life, there is hope. I think we should give it a try. It will be a steep mountain to climb but I think we should try to save her." I asked him whether he thought he could control her pain and he told me he did. That reply, coupled with the fact that Rosie had a tiny baby at her side who could continue to nurse as long as Rosie was alive, tipped the scale for me in favor of trying to save Rosie's life. Thus began the process of treating Rosie's three horribly diseased feet, all the while hoping that her one good foot would hold up and not become laminitic. The other concern was whether Rosie's body could endure the high dose of Bute required to control her pain.

In 2012, the Ark Watch Foundation orchestrated the rescue of a little pony named Herbie who now lives at the Duchess Sanctuary. His feet were the most horrific I had seen and dealt with to that point in my rescue career. On Herbie's first hoof trim, nearly 30 inches were removed from all four of his feet. But even Herbie's feet paled in comparison to all that we would uncover with Rosie's condition.

As an animal rescuer, we see horrific cases of abuse and neglect. I often say that my "Emotional EKG" is a bit "flat-lined." Were it not the case, I probably could not do what I do. But every once in awhile, I see something that just seems unfathomable. Rosie and little Bunny fell into that category for me. Whoever bred Rosie, or allowed her to be bred, was also the same person who neglected her to the point that her feet were so diseased, she was unable to stand or walk. This was not something that happened to Rosie in a short period of time. This person then took Rosie, who was unable to walk, and could barely even stand, along with her tiny baby, and dumped them both in a feedlot. They must have known that Rosie would be shipped to her death in Mexico and Bunny would be left to die in the feedlot, or very shortly thereafter, if someone had tried to rescue her. Who amongst us is capable of such despicable acts? I find I have asked this question of myself repeatedly throughout the rescue of this little burro group, more than any other.

Little Bunny, Rosie's foal, was not ill when we first brought Rosie to the hospital. Bunny would remain a bouncy, healthy baby burro for some eight days. On the ninth day, Bunny's temperature went from normal at the morning reading, to 105 degrees at the afternoon reading. Three days

later, we were all heartbroken to lose Bunny to a pericardial effusion that resulted from complications from pneumonia.

As part of Rosie's treatment, the vet proposed we use Maggot Therapy. He felt that packing live, medical-grade maggots into Rosie's hooves would be the safest way to remove all of the necrotic tissue. He also explained that the maggot's saliva has an antiseptic, healing effect. Who knew! After three days of the treatment, the results proved more than satisfactory.

Two weeks after Rosie had arrived at the vet clinic, the vet found one more hidden abscess in Rosie's left hind foot. When he drained the abscess, he called me to say that the abscess had filled the nearly the entire hoof cavity, or what remained of it. He said that at this point, there was very little holding Rosie's hoof capsule to her leg and he was concerned that if Rosie put any weight at all on that back hind leg, her hoof capsule would simply pop off. If that happened, I would have to make the decision to have Rosie euthanized.

For the next several weeks, we just held our collective breaths. Rosie had been bearing nearly all of her weight on her back right foot for two weeks and she'd need to continue to do so. Would it hold up and remain Laminitis-free? Even Barbaro wasn't able to pull off that feat. Would Rosie have secondary complications from the high daily dose of Bute she was receiving? And most frightening of all, would her back left hoof capsule just simply pop off?

By the end of June, Rosie started putting some weight on that back left foot. The vet slowly began to reduce the amount of Bute he was giving her. There was a very delicate balance to be maintained here. Things were still touch and go as to whether the hoof capsule would remain attached.

As mid-July approached, Rosie was completely off of the Bute. She was putting weight on her back left foot and the hoof was holding together. On July 17th, I finally got the call that the vet thought Rosie was going to make it.

It would be more than four weeks into Rosie's treatment at the vet clinic before I received word that she was going to make it. Ever the optimist, I decided I would make a long term plan for Rosie in case she did pull through. I contacted Karen Harkson of Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary in Amado, AZ and asked Karen if she would be willing to give Rosie permanent sanctuary, should Rosie pull through. I felt the warm, dry climate of the AZ desert, the environment that donkeys thrive in, would be just the right spot for Rosie. I also knew Karen would do a great job of caring for Rosie by seeing to the regular hoof trims that will be the key to Rosie's continued recovery. After hearing Rosie's story, Karen generously agreed to take her into Equine Voices.

On August 4, 2015, Dr. Kevin Claunch, led Rosie out of her stall at the vet clinic, the place that had been Rosie's home for seven weeks, her back left foot still bandaged, and loaded her onto an Equine Express trailer. Rosie travelled to AZ, in her own box stall, wearing her new blue breakaway halter, with her two bright yellow water buckets, for the first leg of her journey. This was the first time Rosie has stepped out of her stall since June 15th. She did not seem to like the disrupt in her schedule, as evidenced by the fact that she ate and drank very little during the course of the 16 hour trip.

Rosie and another jenny/foal pair, rescued from the Bowie, TX feedlot by Ark Watch a few weeks after Rosie's group, arrived at their destination, Equine Well Being Rescue in Snowflake, AZ, in the middle of the night after a long day's journey. Christine Griffin, the founder of the rescue, agreed to take the jenny/foal pair and find them the perfect adoptive home. Christine also generously allowed me to use her rescue as a layover spot for Rosie. This would give Rosie a few days to recover from the trip before I sent her on the second leg of her journey.

As of this writing, Rosie is awaiting transport to Equine Voices. She has been enjoying her stay in northern AZ. Christine reports that Rosie is eating and drinking well and has especially enjoyed rolling in the dirt, something Rosie has not been able to do for many months. It's those little moments, when I hear a simple thing like the fact that Rosie is able to enjoy a good roll again, that make all the effort worthwhile and bring a smile to this rescuer's face.

As is often the case, it takes a village to make a successful rescue happen and this one is no different. There are many people who played a part in Rosie's rescue and rehabilitation. Many thanks to Katie and Chance Chatman for their generosity in helping me to rescue the entire group that would eventually consist of thirteen donkeys and two mules. I would not have been able to save Rosie, Bunny and the rest of the group from a trip to a Mexican slaughterhouse had it not been for their efforts. I am grateful to Dr. Kevin Claunch of Weems & Stephens Vet Clinic in Aubrey, TX. Dr. Claunch has been Rosie's vet from start to finish. He has done a great job with what initially seemed like an insurmountable task. Thank you to Christine Griffin of Equine Well Being Rescue for allowing Rosie to layover at her facility for a week in between transports. And last but not least, many thanks to Karen Harkson of Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary for agreeing to take my very special girl, Rosie, in and provide her with permanent sanctuary. I look forward to following Rosie's progress!