

Protectors

Rescuers

Aquatic animals, such as arowana and dolphins, have served as first responders and companions for humans (Glover & Landau, 2012; IOL, 2000; Voigt, 2016). Cuban *balseros* (i.e., “rafters”), such as Elián González, have repeatedly documented heroism of marine mammals, seabirds, fish, and other life (Bert, 2011; González, 2012; González, 2012; Hernandez, 2012; Salanueva, 2012; Waranius, 2009). González, treated as a hero in Cuba, credited dolphins with his survival, which launched him into the center of an international debate about parents’ rights (Avila & Marshall, 2015; Hemmingway, 2015). The boy exited Cuba on a 16-foot fishing boat affixed to innertubes, a makeshift vessel known as a *balsa*, with his mother and stepfather, who administered sleeping pills to him before the trip (Avila & Marshall, 2015; Cusack, 2010; Cusack, 2012; Cusack, 2012; Diaz, 2009). Like many immigrants crossing the heavily shark-guarded Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, his vessel could not make the trip; and the other passengers died.

While clinging to an innertube, a pod of dolphins assisted him to maintain afloat. González remembers one dolphin propping him. He was found by fishermen 60 miles off-shore. The two fishermen ignored a small craft advisory while on their 25-foot vessel. They emphasized that they were “in the middle of the ocean” on a small fishing vessel, not “a big fishing boat[; a]nd there was nobody out there, completely nobody” (Avila & Marshall, 2015). One fisherman, Donato Dalrymple, “said a school of dolphins swimming close by drew their attention to the small boy” (Avila & Marshall, 2015). Finding the dolphins, he “believe[s]” “was [his] destiny” (Avila & Marshall, 2015). “My journey that day, as a missionary, [was as] a person of faith, just persisting with my cousin. ... [W]e ran right into that inner tube. We went directly to it” (Avila & Marshall, 2015).

When González arrived in the United States, his mother’s family in Miami, Florida was asked by U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to serve as temporary guardians (Avila & Marshall, 2015). Despite an order by the 11th Circuit Court, his relatives attempted to retain custody of him rather than allow him to be repatriated to Cuba where his biological father had claimed him and refused to file on his behalf for asylum in the United States. His father

had not granted consent for González to leave the country or live with relatives in Florida; but, his Miami family kept González even though his father travelled to the United States to take custody. Attorney General Janet Reno ordered U.S. Border Protection to remove González.

A famous photo shows the moment during which he was forcibly removed from his relatives' home. An armed Border Patrol officer took him from the arms of Dalrymple, who had helped to rescue him. The fisherman had become a family friend following the rescue. However, human and drug traffickers posing as fishermen and rescue pilots are not uncommon in South Florida; and they transport passengers, who appear to be rescued (UN, 1996; UN, 2011). They also tow passengers to shore. The photo taken in the "Little Havana home became a symbol of Cuban exile resistance" (Whitefield, 2015). The Cuban child was repatriated, and gained international fame as well as prominence in Cuba. He maintained his story, which brought to light the veracity and regularity of similar acts of heroism by animals, such as the dolphins, who helped Dick Van Dyke to survive while surfing (Van Dyke, 2010). At 21 years-old, he also expressed the indelible "mark" that the fishermen left by rescuing him (Avila & Marshall, 2015; Diaz, 2009). Protection provided by dolphins and the fishermen was memorialized when the home was converted into a museum. For example, a leaping dolphin was depicted next to a model of his boat (Whitefield, 2015).

Participation in boating culture may demand that fishermen rescue marooned boaters, kayakers, and other seafarers, or alert authorities to their presence. One competitive angler recounted a story (Barnard, 2016).

A few weeks back, one of my tournament partners and I were meeting up with the other half of our team between a couple islands to discuss our day. Once we saw them from about 500 yards away, Bob and I wove our way through some storm debris recently deposited in our bays. As we dropped down off plane and putted up, Russell pointed back behind us and asked, 'Is that a person floating back there?' Our immediate response was that there was not a chance we missed a person in the water. But as Bob and I turned to look back, we saw an arm within the debris leisurely waving at us. Bob spun the wheel ... to render aid. A portion of that debris we had seen was a full-grown adult man resting on his Do-net, which is a buoyant net for your catch. What we thought were branches and roots were his rods and his upper torso. We pulled in to help the man, and although he was in relative trouble[,] he was very calm and relaxed all things considered. 'Jim' had set the hook into a decent trout and in doing so stepped off a subtle ledge created between the two islands spread