[MUSIC IN]

Taylor Quimby, narrating: Previously on *Operation Night Cat*…

Ron Arsenault: So, we called them up and said, "Hey, we got some bobcats gettin' cranked in New Hampshire at night, and they're taggin' them illegally going across state lines."

Kevin Bronson: It's like they're playin' Grand Theft Auto up behind their house, except with animals.

Dean Williams, on the phone: If you start down the road and say, "Well, look, this is going to make us look bad, this is gonna cost us some money," it perpetuates and reinforces, "This is the way we do business."

Arsenault: It just makes you wonder, like, is this happening somewhere else, too? Like, if you're abusing animals like this, are you abusin' humans?

Quimby, narrating: A heads up, this episode contains a graphic description of sexual assault.

[MUSIC UP AND OUT]

Jason Moon: Hey, Nate. How you doin'?

Nate Hegyi: Good! It's good to see you.

Moon, in studio: Yeah, likewise. Are you– you're moving… not back to New Hampshire, right?

Hegyi: No, I'm moving down to Montana. I'm in Alaska right now.

Moon: The idea that you're moving down to Montana. I just want to, I just want to point out how [NATE LAUGHS] unusual that sounds. [LAUGHS]

Hegyi: Yeah, I'm moving back down to one of the northernmost states.

Moon, narrating: This is *Operation Night Cat*. I'm Jason Moon, one of the producers of this series. We're back because since we brought you this story in November 2025,

there've been two big developments we think you'll want to know about. Host Nate Hegyi and I recently sat down to talk about them.

Moon, to Hegyi: Alright, so, Nate, can you please, uh, recap us on this very complicated case?

Nate: Yeah. So, Operation Night Cat was, like, one of the largest poaching cases in New Hampshire state history. Uh, New Hampshire Fish and Game found that five men had killed dozens of animals out of season, at night, through illegal baiting. All of these are violations of the state's hunting laws and, in some cases, federal laws. And then, it turned out that four of these guys were current or former corrections officers in the New Hampshire men's prison and they were allegedly doing some shady stuff inside the prison.

But at the end of the day, most of the accountability was handled at the state level through hunting violations, so fines, losing their hunting or trapping privileges for a period of time. And the feds, they were supposed to be handling the bigger charges. But if you remember, as of last fall, those indictments had yet to come down. And this was a big thing for Ron Arsenault, the lead investigator on the case, who, by the end of our story, had essentially lost hope that anything would happen and also kind of lost faith in the system altogether.

Arsenault, from episode 3: And after goin' through all of it? You know, at the end of the day, I don't know if I'd do it again because of all the stuff that just happens. It's like, you just did all that work… for what?

Moon: Yeah, Ron was so disappointed that these guys got off, basically, with, with some fines and loss of hunting privileges.

Hegyi: Right.

Moon: And he had, as you said, given up hope there was gonna be federal charges on the poaching stuff. But… now, there's been some movement on that, right? So, what happened?

[MUSIC IN]

Hegyi: Yeah, so, um, on Friday, October 2nd, 2026, two of the five men originally charged in Operation Night Cat pled guilty to federal charges of illegally killing at least

41 bobcats in New Hampshire and then, shipping their pelts to Canada. So, their names were Sherwood Dubrey Jr. and–

Moon: Wait, can we go back to f–? Sorry. Forty-one bobcats?!

Hegyi: Yeah, isn't that wild? Forty-one bobcats.

Moon: Oof.

Hegyi: And these guys that were named in these federal charges, uh, it's Sherwood Dubrey Jr. and Randy Inman. Now, you might remember Randy. He was one of the guys who was allegedly doing some illegal stuff inside the prison like, um, selling pills in the prison parking lot, uh, falsifying records to cover up an assault on an inmate.

And in this case, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says Randy and Sherwood were using bait to lure bobcats onto their property and onto state land. Now, of course, if you remember, bobcats are a protected species in New Hampshire, so hunting them is illegal. But what made this a federal crime is what these guys did next.

[MUSIC OUT]

Hegyi: They handed the bobcat pelts to Sherwood's father, Sherwood Dubrey Sr., in New York State, and then, Sherwood Sr. used false tags showing the animals were actually killed in New York, where bobcat hunting is legal. And then, he shipped them to Canada for sale at a fur auction.

Moon: Wow. It's kinda like money laundering, but with animal furs.

Hegyi: Yeah! It's like, uh, pelt laundering, cat laundering.

Moon: Yeah, yeah. So, how did they find out this was happening? What, what sort of evidence do federal prosecutors have?

Hegyi: Man, uh, this is gonna sound super familiar, but the feds said they reviewed text messages, uh, where they admitted that killing bobcats is illegal in New Hampshire. And in one–

Moon: They admit it in the text messages.

Hegyi: They admit it in the– yes, exactly. There's a certain almost sense of pride in, uh, in some of these text messages, in, in breaking the law. In one message, Sherwood Jr. told his dad, Sherwood Sr., he didn't want a legal bobcat hunting season in New Hampshire because of the "competition."

Moon: Hmm.

Hegyi: They also sent videos and pictures of their kills to other people. And then, there's this one message where Randy, he told Sherwood Jr. that he "shot or choked out" an illegally trapped bobcat.

Moon: What? Choked out a bobcat?!

Hegyi: Yeah, I don't even– Like, that is not how… normally… hunters kill animals is by choking them out, but, ya know…

Moon: I'm having some logis– like, imagining what that even would look like…

[MUSIC IN]

Hegyi: Yeah, I mean, it is, is, I think kind of a harrowing image, but it also kinda tracks if you think about how they treated animals, uh, in Operation Night Cat.

[MUSIC UP]

Moon: So, how did Ron take all this? Ro–Ron was kinda the driving force behind all this in the beginning. Uh, how, how has he reacted to these guilty pleas?

Hegyi: Yeah, I mean, I can’t tell you, Jason, how many times I have texted and talked to Ron about these pending federal charges. Ya know, he’d tell me they were coming… and then, it would never come. It almost felt like crying wolf. So, I almost didn’t believe it when I saw the feds actually announce these pleas. And I called Ron as soon as I could.

Hegyi, to Ron Arsenault: How are you feelin'?

Arsenault, on the phone: Good!

Hegyi, to Arsenault: Good?

Arsenault, on the phone: Good, yeah.

Hegyi, to Arsenault: Just good?

Arsenault: Yeah. [LAUGHS] Yup, it's not done yet, so yeah. We're good.

Hegyi, to Moon: So, I asked him to elaborate and he said until they're actually sentenced in January, he's not gonna feel like the case has really been put to bed.

Arsenault, to Hegyi on the phone: But… I do see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Hegyi, to Arsenault: Do you think that these guys have gotten their comeuppance, like justice has been served or is gonna be served?

Arsenault, to Hegyi on the phone: I, I think with everything that's been done and all the things that they've had to go through, I'm, I'm comfortable feeling that something was done, so I'm happy, you know? Um, that, that's all I can ask for is, you know, they, they did their job at the end of the day and, um, ya know, they said they would do it. They did. And I-I'm happy with that really. Some pe– some people think they should have got more. Some people think that's too much, you know. But, you know, at the end of the day, I can only, ya know, be happy with somebody did their job, so, I am good with that.

[MUSIC IN]

Moon, to Hegyi: So, what kinda sentences are these guys looking at for these, these bobcat charges? Keeping in mind that before, there was no time served for any of these hunting violations.

Hegyi: Yeah.

Moon: It was just fines and suspensions of hunting licenses and that kinda thing.

Hegyi, to Moon: Yeah, uh, in this case, both these guys are facing some pretty steep fines and prison time, so, a max of $250,000 in penalties and five years for Randy and Sherwood Jr. Plus, they have to pay the state of New Hampshire $500 per bobcat. And then, Sherwood Sr. is facing a max of one year in prison and $10,000 in fines.

Moon: Wow, so that's, that's so–, that's some serious money–

Hegyi: Yeah.

Moon: –and some serious time behind bars.

Hegyi: Yeah, I mean, $250,000 is like a mortgage. It's a lotta money.

[MUSIC UP AND OUT]

Moon: Okay, um, we also have other news. Um, this is about a guy named Tom Kelley. He might be the most memorable character from this series. This was the guy who liked to post videos of his kills on TikTok.

Tom Kelley, on TikTok video: [PANTING] I just smoked an absolute stud… in Illinois. [PANTING, FADES OUT]

Moon: What's the news with him? What's goin' on with him?

Hegyi: Um, right now, Tom Kelly is in jail, but it's not for anything related to Operation Night Cat. He's actually awaiting trial on rape charges.

Now, according to police reports, on a Saturday night in early June of 2026, Tom was at a nightclub in Laconia, New Hampshire called The Big House. And around 2 a.m., the bar was closing and Tom asked a woman he'd been drinking with if she wanted a ride on his motorcycle. The woman told police she said "yes," but she was surprised when Tom took her to his house. And these next details are, are really hard to hear.

According to police reports, the woman was on Tom's couch when he picked her up and brought her to his bedroom, where he forced her to have sex. She told police she didn't wanna have sex with Tom, but she didn't say "no" because he's bigger and stronger than she is, and she was so scared she was shaking. She told police Tom was, quote, "really aggressive." And then, according to the police, Tom started sodomizing her. The woman says she told Tom to stop by saying "no." But he continued anyway, being, quote, "really rough with her."

[LOW TONES IN]

Hegyi: Afterwards, the woman told police Tom made her beg him to bring her back to the bar where her car was still parked. And after she got to her car, the woman says she drove to the police station. And now, Tom is charged with two counts of aggravated felonious sexual assault.

[LOW TONES UP AND OUT]

Moon: Oof, yeah, that, uh… that is really hard to hear. Um… So, you said, uh, Tom is in jail now, right? Awaiting trial. I gotta say, it's, it's hard not to see the irony for someone who's a former corrections officer now to be on the other side of the bars.

Hegyi: Yeah, I mean, that's kinda what we're seeing here a lot with this case right now, whether it's Tom or, or Randy and Sherwood potentially having to go to jail as well. But one reason he's in jail and not out on bail right now is actually because of this other weird thing that we never really talked about in the series.

But uh, during all these state court cases about the poaching, Tom was accused of perjury. And he was out on bail on the condition that he not commit any new crimes. Uh, and the judge in the rape case said these new charges violated that condition. Now, the perjury trial isn't scheduled until March 2027 and there is no trial date set in the rape case.

Uh, when we reached out to Tom's lawyer, Mark Sisti, for comment on the rape and perjury charges, he said, quote, "The charges against Mr. Kelly in Belknap County are completely bogus. We look forward to a trial on this. In fact, we can't wait to have a trial on this."

Moon: Wow, okay, so… I don't even– Nate, what do you make of all of this? I mean, there's so much swirling around this. We've got a group of guys committing these hunting violations. Then, there's the evidence of maybe committing some crimes while on the job at the state prison, although… no agency decided to charge them for that. And then, you've got this situation with Tom being accused of a really brutal sexual assault. Are, are these… Is there a throughline here?

Hegyi: Yeah, I think, I think there is a throughline. Um, when I first went to talk to Ron Arsenault about all of this, he asked a question that I think this whole series ended up turning on. He asked, "If you're abusing animals like this, are you abusing humans?" And now, we've got evidence, both in the prisons and with women, that some of these guys were abusing humans. And it reminds me of that phone call I got from Randy Inman's ex-wife, Shannon Labella, where she talked about his penchant for violence. And I actually wanna play that part again.

Hegyi, to Labella, from episode 3: Why do you think he liked… killing so much?

Labella, on the phone, from episode 3: Control. Power. Dominance.

[MUSIC IN]

Moon: Alright, Nate, thank you.

Hegyi: Absolutely.

[MUSIC UP]

Moon, narrating: This episode was reported and produced by Nate Hegyi with help from Lauren Chooljian and me, Jason Moon. It was edited by Taylor Quimby and Katie Colaneri.

Operation Night Cat is a special series from Outside/In and Document and a production of New Hampshire Public Radio.

[MUSIC UP AND OUT]