

‘A Guardian Angel with Fur’: Loyal Ranch Dog Rescues Missing Toddler in Arizona Wilderness

In a story that can only be described as miraculous, a 2-year-old Arizona boy who went missing from his home was found safe—thanks to an unlikely but heroic guardian: a loyal ranch dog named Buford.

The toddler wandered away from his home in Seligman sometime before 5 p.m. on Monday, Apr. 14, prompting an extensive overnight search by more than 40 rescue team members, deputies, and rangers.

After 16 long hours, Yavapai County Sheriff’s deputies received a call that changed everything.

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“After 16 hours of searching, a rancher approximately seven miles away reported that a young child had walked onto his property,” the department said in a post on Facebook. “Upon arrival at the ranch, deputies confirmed this was indeed the missing boy.”

The rancher, who had been heading into town, said he found his dog, Buford, sitting near the entrance—“and the little kid’s standing there with my dog,” he recalled in a video shared by the sheriff’s office.

Buford, an Anatolian Pyrenees bred for protection, had seemingly guided the child through seven miles of dangerous, rugged terrain. His owner suspects Buford discovered the boy

in the pasture and brought him home.

"He's an Anatolian Pyrenees so he's a guardian dog, so he just kind of patrols within a half mile of the house all night and keeps coyotes away and stuff like that," the rancher explained. "I'm guessing he found him over here in the horse pasture somewhere under a tree and just brought him home. So that's what he does. He loves kids so I can imagine he wouldn't leave him when he found him."

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Considering the landscape and known wildlife in the region, the rescue is nothing short of incredible. During the search, a ranger reported seeing two mountain lions in the area—a chilling reminder of the potential dangers that loomed.

The rancher brought the boy inside, gave him food and water, and tried to piece together what happened.

"I said 'did you walk all night?' and he said no," the rancher recounted. "He said 'I laid up under a tree' and I said 'well, did my dog find you?' and he goes 'yep.'"

It was a moment of profound relief.

"So I was, you know, ecstatic that he was okay and my dog found him," the rancher said. "I can't believe that kid made it that far. It's seven miles, and it's just, that's if he walked in a straight line."

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The terrain includes "three big mountain ranges" and "big valleys," the rancher said, adding, "For a 2-year-old to do that, it's insane."

Social media lit up with praise for Buford, calling him

everything from a hero to a furry angel.

“I hope he gets a really big huge bone,” one commenter said. The rancher delivered—Buford was treated to a well-earned steak dinner, he told AZFamily.

Let’s give glory to God for His divine protection and for creating animals with instincts so profound they reflect His own care for His children. Buford didn’t just protect a boy—he became a vessel of hope, and maybe even a furry answer to desperate prayers.

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