

Shotgun stolen in 1992 returned to owner last week

By JAMES BARRINGTON
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When Randall County resident Myrl Goodwin recently received a phone call from the Bosque Farms, N.M. police department, it was good news. His stolen shotgun had been recovered and was going to be returned to him.

“I had totally forgotten it until (Sgt. Valdez) called and then I started remembering,” Goodwin said Friday morning with his wife, Pam, standing by his side. “I was in Grand Junction, Colo., at the time. I was selling real estate and I was showing a ranch in New Mexico. I had this guy with me and we were both skeet shooters. We had our guns and a case of shells and clay pigeons. We stopped in Albuquerque for the night on our way to Ft. Sumter. We pulled into the motel and we had all this stuff in the car so I went in and asked about security. They said, ‘We have 24-hour security. You don’t have to worry about a thing.’ Next morning I came out and the doors were open on my car and everything was gone. So we called the police.”

That theft occurred in April of 1992.

Sergeant John Valdez was visiting relatives in Pampa and Amarillo last week, so he decided to deliver the gun personally to Goodwin.

Relating the circumstances of recovering the shotgun, Valdez said, “I was doing a walk around at the flea market we have in Bosque Farms, which is a suburb of Albuquerque. I came across the shotgun. The guy wanted \$500 for it, and just looking at the shotgun. I said, ‘That’s too good to be true.’ I started questioning him about it and he told me he had only paid a couple of hundred dollars for it. So I ran the serial number and it came back stolen from Mr. Goodwin in 1992.

From there we went through the process and seized the shotgun from who it was currently being held by and I was able to track down Mr. Goodwin to his address here and his phone number and made contact with him and got his shotgun back to him after 20 years.”

Whoever had the shotgun for the past two decades had taken good care of it. “It looks brand new,” Goodwin said as he examined the gun he hadn’t seen for 20 years.

Valdez, who said that he was graduating from high school in Santa Fe when the theft occurred in 1992, said that the department has a renewed interest in finding the thief. “We’re still looking into that based on some leads we have from the people we recovered it from,” he said.

“Hopefully, someday we’ll be able to charge that person with the actual theft of it.”

Valdez took the opportunity to make a point about good record-keeping practices. “This is the importance of keeping those serial numbers or being able to get the serial numbers for your shotguns, rifles, handguns, firearms of any type, because 20 years later we’re able to get that firearm back to its rightful owner,” he said.

Goodwin handed the shotgun to his wife, Pam, saying “This is your shotgun now.”

Photo outline (either picture):

Bosque Farms, N.M., police detective John Valdez (left) looks on as Randall County resident Myrl Goodwin examines the shotgun that was stolen from his car 20 years ago.

Photo by JAMES BARRINGTON