
Timothy Treadwell's Mentality As Depicted in Grizzly Man

The Mentality of Grizzly Man

There is a lot to be said about a man who willingly travels out alone into the Alaskan wilderness for grizzly bears, whether or not people find him brave or stupid. Inside the mind of someone so willing to go would present a different picture to the outside world compared to what Treadwell may see inside his own head. Treadwell's psychology throughout the documentary is established enough to label him as being sick, of what mental illness there are no assurances. He anthropomorphized the bears around him and tried to become a bear himself, made himself into the sovereign figure of a hero for the bears, and displayed symptoms of mental illnesses. Treadwell had done what in his mind had been right, but the right thing isn't always the same for everyone.

In some of the first views of footage Treadwell shot he is seen talking to the bears as if they were small children, telling them 'no', or 'stop, bad.' We can see in the film that he talks with them, conversing like one would to any passing acquaintance. Then it's revealed that he has named the bears, inserting a familiarity between him and the bears. But Treadwell was not a bear, and the bears were not human, yet he referred to the bears with human traits, anthropomorphizing them while at the same time displaying bear-like characteristics when he was back in human civilization. Even there, Treadwell was his own fictional hero of the bears, their sovereign that would save them from humankind.

Where Treadwell lived July-September it is illegal to camp in the same space for more than a week. But he insisted that in moving all the time he would not be able to protect the bears, so he hid from authorities and would on-camera scream at them and say that he was the bears' only protection. Treadwell thought of himself as Prince Valiant for the bears, and abandoned any proper way of conducting research that would actually contribute towards their conservation. He wanted his message to be spread worldwide, arguably wanting to be famous at one point set him on his path, leading to Treadwell's admission that he would die for the bears if it spread his message. His ideas about the outside world were filled with respect only for bears and paranoia about humans.

Displayed in the documentary is the obvious psychology of Treadwell, he is documented as having mood swings and being prescribed anti-depressants which he subsequently stopped taking, and voiced a serious paranoia of the park rangers or any humans that approached the grizzly bear sanctuaries. Treadwell had lied to his friends where he was from and who he was, changing his name to Treadwell when he moved to California and saying he was from Australia. People he knew didn't even know the truth until after his death, and in the documentary we see him constantly re-filming his shots. Treadwell was methodical in his instability, and in his love for bears. There's an obvious sickness in Treadwell, he tried to become a bear, made himself a hero to the bears, and displayed various symptoms of mental illnesses. Doing what he thought was right, he sacrificed himself to preserve bears, and suffered in both life and death.