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Mertzson: This article was delayed until the weekly edition came this morning of the *South Texas Jetty News*, published in Port Aransas, Texas. The scheme was to lift some of their copy to confirm a tip that coyotes were dying from eating the poisoned guts of fish killed by the red tide algae.

This crime was avoided. There wasn't a report on coyotes. The newspaper ran one article about red tide, on people coughing and the meat from fish being safe to eat.

So shoot this by: my son Ben said that over the weekend in Port Aransas he was told coyotes were sick and dead up the Coast from eating the red tide victims. He added that he heard the news was too sad to publish. It wasn't going to be in the newspaper.

Now this Ben hombre might want to keep this pretty quiet. He has just bought a house down at Port A. He came from a ranch heritage. He has worked in the city ever since he left college, but he may want to make a new start down on the Coast.

You may have noticed, too, how hard his father (me) tries to go incognito on plane trips. He wears tailored slacks, white oxford shirts and striped bow ties with wool English caps, slide buckle belts and shined loafer shoes.

Around airports, if he doesn't talk, folks may think he comes from civilization, not off a ranch.

Nobody who knows him, (still "me") is going to be surprised that he jumped the pistol to report coyote deaths firsthand all along the Gulf Coast from up at Mertzon, 335 miles from the ferry crossing the bay to Mustang Island, once they recall his (only) best qualification is telling stories.

Ones who have been along a good spell know how hard he tries to convince folks that the truth is not for amateurs. How he lectures over and over that the truth has its place.

Blatant example of the fallacy of telling the truth occurred in Austin a few weeks ago. A Mr. Aguirre was asked by the police why he stole a goat from his boss's yard. Mr. Aguirre replied from jail, "Because he was gentle as a dog, also we planned to barbeque on the lake."

In the opening, and the end location - jail - you see where the amateur's use of the truth put Mr. Aguirre. Professional guidance could have changed the testimony to state that the Aguirre family needed the goat to celebrate a late Mother's Day down on the lake shores. The two kegs were to show Mexican hospitality.

But this coyote business becomes pretty far-fetched when reduced to one absentee bitterweed rancher of a scribe

reporting on a successful method to kill coyotes. After a lifetime of failing to protect his livestock, all you need is fish killed by red tide algae.

We will have to figure out how to move the red tide algae and the fish to the shortgrass country. The only salt water is in the fossil fuel miners' pits, or trickling down a cow trail from a leak in a pipeline.

Ector County up at Odessa would make a good place to experiment. Coyotes abound there; wells are drilled on 40, maybe 20-acre spacing. Dry earth will be a problem, but once dampened, it should be salty enough to match the Coast.

We will need to hurry once we set up to spread fish guts for the coyotes. Reports are in of a bear being photographed at a deer feeder in the Ketchum hills 12 miles from Mertzon, to add to wild hawgs, coyotes and bobcats pictured at the same site. All those varmints will at least want to taste the fish guts. As strongly as public opinion supports nature over, say, famine, it might be better to back off a notch and put out a few test baits.

The bear report sure catches my attention. After the neighbor up the street complained she heard gunfire in my backyard one evening under the buzzards' roost, the sheriff made me swear that firearms wouldn't be discharged on the

premises. Thus, I can't wield anything more than a broom if a bear charges.

Ben did confirm that the red tide-related fish kill was killing coyotes. In a report he forwarded dated November 3, 2011, staff of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department continued to report coyotes sick or dying from eating dead fish guts on the beach. Staff cautioned people to keep dogs on a short leash.

Son Ben pitched in one more thing at the end. He said, "Dad, I was relieved to learn the red tide was to blame. I sure was uncomfortable thinking about you walking on the beaches alone with me barely acquainted down here"...