

# Ending Animal Cruelty & Fighting

It's their faces that prove most haunting—the faces of pit bulls once healthy, full of life, and ready to become loving companions. Even after all they've been through, many still “smile” in that doggish way. But the smiles come through a web of scars. And the wiggling behinds are often pocked with the nicks and tears of a lifetime of battle.

We can't take the scars away, but we're working to make sure more of these vulnerable dogs remain unscathed.

Ending animal fighting and other egregious forms of cruelty is among The HSUS's top priorities. In 2009, we partnered with state and federal law enforcement on 15 raids of fighting operations, assisted in hundreds more cases, launched a national tip line, gave our 50th cash reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of an animal fighter, and ended the shipment of fighting animals and paraphernalia through the U.S. Postal Service. We also joined forces with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and other organizations to train prosecutors and judges in animal cruelty and fighting cases.

Our street outreach exposed more than 3,000 at-risk youth to our End Dogfighting program in Chicago and Atlanta, and we put NFL player and former dogfighter Michael Vick to work, using his status as a disgraced star to tell children in urban communities about the cruelty and dead-end path of his former pastime.

In July, we joined forces with other organizations and law enforcement to execute the largest dogfighting raid in history, shutting down a vast network operating in eight different states and sending a

clear message to animal fighters around the country: Get out of the business or else.

We continued to secure passage of stronger animal cruelty laws in multiple states. The possession and training of animals for fighting was banned in Nevada, and Arkansas became the 46th state to pass a felony animal cruelty law and the 38th to make cockfighting a felony offense.

Our successful push to make cockfighting a felony in Kansas paid off quickly, with a bust we helped execute in Douglas County in November. Inspired by the success, Sherman County officials immediately enlisted HSUS help in another bust—making for the takedown of two cockfighting operations in two weeks, the first under the provisions of the new state law.

The impact of the work can't be understated: sales of fighting dogs have decreased, most underground dogfighting magazines have folded, and many people are quitting the business. Those still involved are “lying low, trying to figure out when the raids will bottom out,” says HSUS manager of animal fighting issues John Goodwin. “It's our mission to make sure that these efforts don't bottom out until this practice is completely eradicated.”





An HSUS training class helped change Raymond Greenleaf's pit bull into a model pet; previously, Rocky would chew everything from speakers to motorcycle seats. The transformation sends a message to others in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, described by trainer Jeff Jenkins as "Ground Zero for dogfighting." Anyone who sees the pair—whether a hardcore dogfighter or a young kid—will "see the possibilities for what a dog can be," Jenkins says.

“Georgia would still have one of the weakest dogfighting laws in the nation if it was not for the hard work of The HSUS. They have provided training at a very low cost to law enforcement and animal control to help recognize and prosecute dogfighting. The same is true for the disaster response training. Without The HSUS, many of the animal welfare laws—both state and federal—would still be on a wish list.”

—Cindy Wiemann, secretary/treasurer, Georgia Animal Control Association

## Taking It to the Streets

The streets of Chicago hold the ghosts of Sean Moore's younger days: Alleys remind him of people gathering to watch dogs tear each other apart. People strolling with their pets stir memories of pit bulls put down because of injuries they'd suffered. Young neighbors summon visions of Moore's former self, when he didn't know it was wrong to train his dogs to fight.

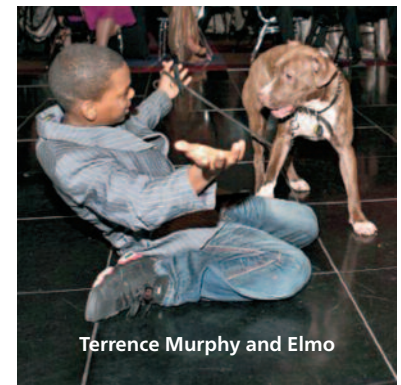
Now in his late 30s, Moore has escaped his past. But he makes a point of not forgetting it. As an anti-dogfighting advocate for The HSUS, he returns to the same hidden corners of the city in search of animals and children in need of help.

"I could bring you into the 'hood right now, and we could get a 7- or 8- or 9-year-old boy or girl and ask them what these dogs are bred for—and they'll tell you these dogs are meant to fight," he says. "That's what I'm trying to change in my community."

In 2009, when Moore spotted 12-year-old Terrence Murphy and his dog Elmo in an alley of the violence-wracked Austin neighborhood, he soon discovered he'd arrived just in time. About to engage Elmo in a fight, Terrence was intrigued by Moore's offer to attend The HSUS's Pit Bull Training Team classes, which provide constructive alternatives to the street fights that brutalize thousands of pit bulls around the country each year.

Terrence and Elmo became star students in the weekly agility and obedience classes, eventually passing a series of difficult tests to earn their Canine Good Citizen certificate. "I taught him how to sit down on command and stay and be a well-behaved dog," Terrence says proudly, hugging and petting Elmo as the dog returns the affection with wags and adoring glances. "Instead of teaching him the wrong thing—to go out there and kill another dog—I was teaching him the right thing, to encourage him how to be a good dog."

It's an attitude children aren't exposed to often enough in Moore's hometown. "No one was showing them all the positives that a pit bull has," he says. "My whole goal is to educate the brothers and sisters that pit bulls are not bred to fight."



Terrence Murphy and Elmo



## Calling in the HSUS Experts

It's not all pre-dawn raids, seizures of fighting animals, and evidence collection for The HSUS's Animal Cruelty and Fighting team. Much of their work happens far behind the scenes and well before the rescues, as they advise law enforcement and government officials on successful prosecution of animal cruelty cases.

Many people in power care about animals but have competing priorities and scarce resources. But HSUS staff pass on the word to lawmakers and police that animal abusers often abuse people as well. And since people who fight dogs are typically immersed in other criminal activities—such as drug trafficking, prostitution, illegal firearm sales, or in the case of three consecutive raids last year, child pornography or molestation—local officials often have broad interest in pursuing the cases.

What they don't always have is the background and expertise to recognize violations of local ordinances. When is a skinny horse so skinny that his condition meets the legal definition of cruelty? What evidence should officers look for when checking out a suspected cockfighting site? By consulting or training with The HSUS, hundreds of officials have learned how to build stronger cases and get justice for abused animals.

The legal experts at The HSUS “have been so helpful to me,” says Barbara Paul, an assistant district attorney in Philadelphia. “They’ve done presentations to the D.A.’s office on animal cruelty prosecution, and ... to the judges of Philadelphia on animal cruelty law, laws in Pennsylvania, and the correlation between animal cruelty cases and other crimes.”

They’ve also helped Paul counter specious arguments by abusers, such as the one in a recent case involving neglected basset hounds who were being “kept in a place with no drainage so they were kind of living in their own waste, they were filthy, their nails were hideously overgrown,” says Paul. Their owner was trying to argue that the conditions were appropriate for working dogs, “and therefore it was OK to treat them this way, and HSUS staff provided me with facts that helped me argue against that idea.”

Across the country in Arizona, HSUS support has been instrumental to the successful investigation and prosecution of animal crimes, says animal cruelty investigator Michael Duffey of the Humane Society of Southern Arizona, who co-chairs the Animal Cruelty Taskforce of Southern Arizona. And for the first time, in 2009 The HSUS trained attorneys in the armed forces, holding seminars on prosecuting animal cruelty cases for Army officers in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

John Goodwin, manager of animal fighting issues for The HSUS, helps rescue one of 200 birds during a May 2009 breakup of a cockfight in Lewis County, Tenn. Roosters at the Shiloh Game Club had been fighting with 3-inch knives tied to their heels; these razor-sharp blades can puncture lungs, break bones, and pierce eyes. One bird was even found still alive, but with his intestines hanging out from a knife wound. More than 250 people were detained during the raid, including nearly 40 people charged with narcotics-related offenses. The HSUS's support was invaluable, says Kim Helper, district attorney for the state's 21st Judicial District: “The HSUS provided medical assistance in evaluating the birds, helped catalogue the birds, and was available to handle any task necessary to assure we put an end to this operation.”

**2009 Impact:** 15 animal fighting raids led by The HSUS and other agencies / 250 animal fighting cases involving HSUS expertise / 5,700 fighting dogs, roosters, and hens from gamefowl operations rescued by The HSUS and partnering agencies / 1,500 law enforcement officials trained in animal fighting investigations / 300 prosecutors and 100 judges trained in the complexities of animal fighting and cruelty cases / 400+ middle school participants in End Dogfighting in Chicago's eight-week humane education classes / 3,000 at-risk youth exposed to End Dogfighting through our street outreach