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The Animal Slave Trade: Brutality on the Road to Research

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THE ANIMAL SLAVE TRADE

Brutality on the Road to Research

November 1, 1984, 11:45 a.m.: Deputies, responding to neighbors' complaints of barking and stench, break into Henry Knudsen's Kennel in Lathrop, California—a holding facility for dogs and cats destined for research. What they uncover is gruesome. All in all, they turn up the decaying bodies of 37 dogs and cats that have starved to death. Another 87 emaciated animals, still alive, have apparently survived by consuming the flesh of their dead companions. A veterinarian's testimony will later reveal that some of the victims may have gone without food for over a month.

According to a deputy at the scene, kennel owner Knudsen couldn't understand what the commotion was about. They're "just animals," Knudsen reportedly said while surveying the carnage. Despite his 1983 arrest on charges of receiving stolen pets, despite an employee's allegations that unsaleable animals were brutally mauled to death or drowned, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) had permitted Henry Knudsen to conduct business as usual—supplying nearly every

research facility in California with animals. Only when the situation finally erupted in November...only when it was *too late*...did the USDA proceed to put this animal dealer out of business.

The tragedy at Knudsen's was not an isolated incident. In fact, Henry Knudsen was only one of hundreds of dealers licensed by the USDA to procure animals from pounds and other sources, and resell them for research purposes. These "animal brokers," some of whom boast annual earnings in the million-dollar range, have turned the merchandising of dogs and cats into a lucrative business—an animal slave trade, where dogs and cats, the majority of which were once pets, are considered nothing more than expendable commodities.

But who are these animals? How do *they* end up the subjects of experimentation? They're strays, pound and shelter animals, even lost or stolen pets. In fact, almost any well-behaved dog or cat is a candidate for research.



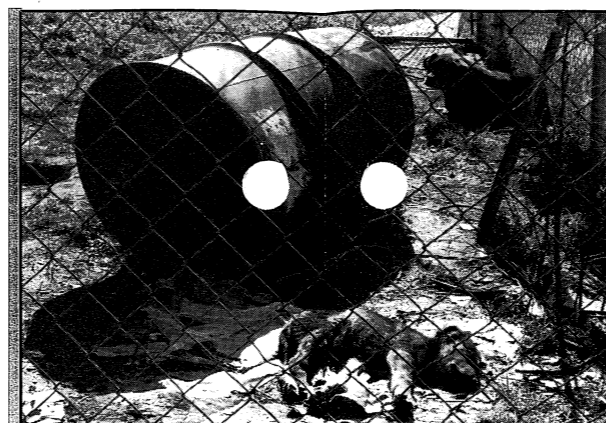
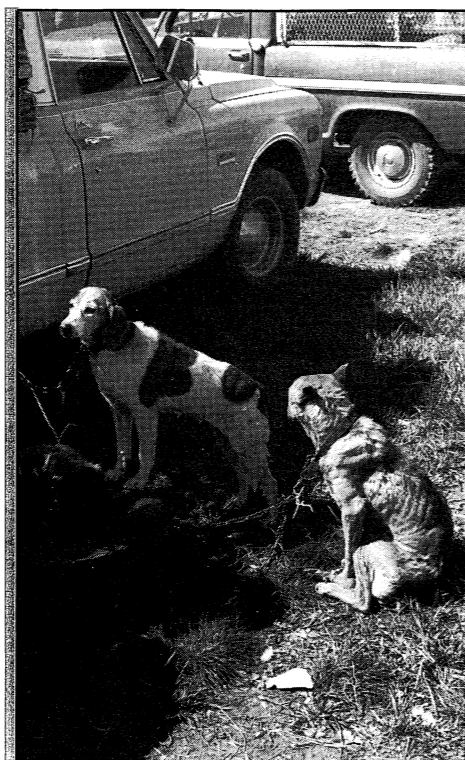
— HSUS/Baker



— HSUS/Paulhus

Doomed to die in research, these animals will first endure severe deprivation and abuse on the long, hard road leading to the laboratory.

Another source of dogs and cats is weekend auctions and flea markets. Here, animals are rarely given protection from the elements, and many die of exposure. Present at one such flea market in Ripley, Mississippi, were University of Mississippi animal buyers, who purchased a total of 80 animals, including the cats shown here. The dogs at right were just 2 of about 300 available for sale that weekend. —HSUS/Baker ▽▷



Most auctions and flea markets have “throw away pens” where unsaleable animals are discarded. In this pen, there was no food or water—the only shelter was a rusty barrel. Because this county has no pound, the animals left here will probably be shot. —HSUS/Baker △

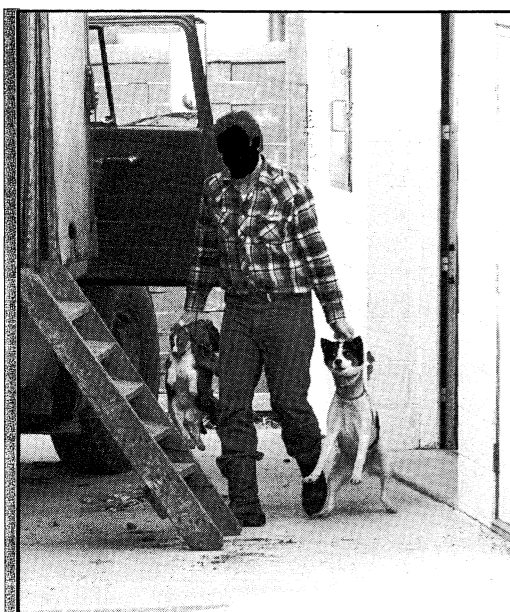
Pound or auction animals not purchased directly by research centers may be transported hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles to dealers’ facilities. Whether stacked in overcrowded tractor-trailers or caged in filthy pickup trucks, animals en route are seldom fed or watered.



While the dealer who operates this Tennessee facility does not have a license to sell dogs and cats to research, he has been known to supply at least one reputable laboratory with animals. On his property there was no evidence of food—with the exception of one steer carcass that had been picked clean. Most of the estimated 50 dogs on the premises were suffering from malnutrition. —HSUS/Baker △▷



EACH YEAR, ABOUT 450,000 DOGS AND CATS LOSE THEIR LIVES IN LABORATORY RESEARCH. WHO ARE THESE ANIMALS? HOW DO THEY END UP THE SUBJECTS OF EXPERIMENTATION?



The long, hard road may begin when a lost or abandoned animal is impounded. In some states, federally licensed dealers may purchase animals from the pound or shelter for resale to research facilities. —HSUS/Greyhavens ◁



Last stop on the long road: the research laboratory. For some animals—those used in nonrecovery experiments—the suffering will finally end. For others, the victims of long-term studies, the persecution will only continue. —HSUS ◁

And the roads they travel to research are as varied as the animals themselves. While some cats and dogs find themselves undergoing experimentation in a matter of days, others endure severe deprivation during a journey that may span weeks or months, taking them thousands of miles from home.

The long, hard road may begin when a dog or cat is picked up by an animal-control officer and impounded. In some states, research facilities buy animals directly from the municipal shelter. More often, however, laboratories contract animal dealers to do the job. Because researchers are willing to pay up to \$150 for healthy, obedient dogs, dealers go to great lengths to supply them with pet-like animals. When pound animals are not available, some dealers resort to steal-

ing pets and answering “free to good home” ads.

Flea markets and auctions provide dealers with another source of animals. During a recent visit to a flea market in Ripley, Mississippi, HSUS investigator Bob Baker described the scene as a “giant yard sale, where people bring the junk they don’t want.” Included among the “junk”...several hundred unwanted dogs and cats.

Chained to the ground for the three-day event, many dogs had no access to food, water, or shelter. Cats, huddled on top of one another in cramped cages, were selling for 50¢ a pound. “There were some very sick animals there,” said Baker. “Many were emaciated and dehydrated.” Despite this, not only were dealers procuring dogs and cats, but University of Mississippi animal buyers were also purchasing large quan-

ties of inexpensive, so-called “trash” animals, probably for use in practice surgery.

Once in the hands of a dealer, animals make the long haul—often hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles—to the dealer’s facility. There, housed inside tiny makeshift pens, animals may be subjected to severe deprivation and physical abuse. Because some dealers find it more economical to lose a few animals than to provide proper care, a lack of veterinary attention, food and water, and exposure to the elements take a toll long before some animals reach the laboratory.

After weeks or months at the dealer’s kennel, animals embark on the last leg of a journey to any one of hundreds of research facilities in hospitals, universities, and pharmaceutical labs nationwide. For inexpensive “trash” animals, the suffer-

ing will finally end. They will be used in nonrecovery procedures.

For other dogs and cats, however, the persecution will continue. They will become subjects of multiple-use experiments, long-term studies, and agonizing product-safety tests.

Each year, thousands of nameless pets travel this road—victims of a system which not only tolerates brutality and deprivation but, in fact, subsidizes them. Researchers, demanding a constant supply of dogs and cats, simply turn a blind eye to the suffering that ensues. When abused or emaciated animals are delivered, they are used as “trash.” And, when animals are suspected of being lost or stolen pets, researchers make little effort to verify their sources.

Irresponsible pet owners do their share as well. Last year,

by allowing pet animals to breed indiscriminately, thousands of unwanted dogs and cats became vulnerable to research.

The USDA, the agency charged with inspecting dealers' facilities and research laboratories, hasn't been pulling its weight. Lack of funding, coupled with apathy on the part of many inspectors or their superiors, have prevented any sort of crackdown on animal dealers. While dealers are "getting away with murder," the abuse goes on unchecked!

The HSUS is working on several fronts to stop the exploitation of our nation's pets. In January, we were instrumental in establishing a coalition to abolish pound seizure—the practice of relinquishing pound and shelter animals for research purposes. Consisting of 11 of the country's leading animal-welfare organizations, The National Coalition to Protect Our Pets will be working with local groups to outlaw pound

seizure on a state-by-state basis.

HSUS investigators will continue to trace the road to research, and we'll be taking legal action against both dealers and research centers whenever necessary. In our effort to reduce the incidence of pet theft, The HSUS is offering a reward of \$1,000 for information supplied to any humane society leading to the arrest and conviction of any animal dealer who knowingly buys stolen dogs and cats.

Can the animals pictured in these pages really be suitable models for supposedly crucial research? Scientists themselves are beginning to question the validity of findings obtained from such dogs and cats. Only by obstructing the avenues to the laboratory, however, will we force the research community to find alternatives to the helpless victims of the animal slave trade!

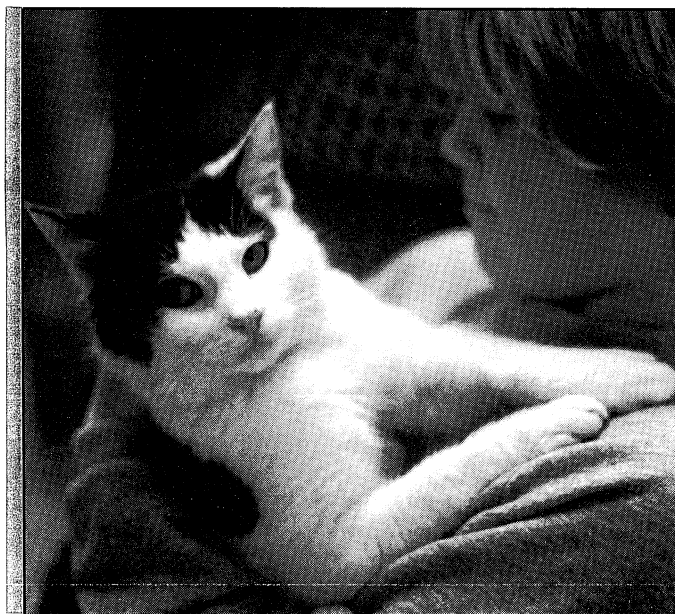
WHAT YOU CAN DO

■ Check the classified section of your newspaper for advertisements offering pets "free to good homes." Contact the individuals listed, explaining that they may be setting their pets up to become subjects of experimentation. You may also wish to place an ad alerting readers to the dangers of advertising pets in this fashion.

■ While some states actually mandate pound seizure, most municipal or county pounds and shelters are *not* required by law to relinquish unclaimed animals for research. If pound seizure is practiced in your community, work with local humane groups to outlaw it. For more information, send \$3.50 for the Protect Our Pets from Research Kit (The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037).

■ Post the enclosed card on the community bulletin board in your local supermarket, laundromat, or wherever you see a need to warn the public about the animal slave trade. Additional cards are available from The HSUS in quantities of 12 for 75¢ and 50 for \$1.50.

■ Spread the message of responsible pet ownership! Only by spaying and neutering pets will we be able to dry up the supply of animals available to researchers. Help distribute HSUS Responsible Pet Owner fliers, available in quantities of 100 for \$2.75 from The HSUS.



— Peninsula Humane Society/Susan Regan

■ This cat was near death when discovered at Knudsen's Kennel. Since its rescue, it has been nursed back to health and given a second chance at life.

■ Finally, help The HSUS eliminate the abuse and deprivation to which hundreds of thousands of dogs and cats en route to research are subjected. Your tax-deductible contribution will enable us to continue working to abolish pound seizure and taking legal action against those who perpetuate this brutal slave trade. With a contribution of \$30 or more, you will receive a copy of *Animals, Nature and Albert Schweitzer*.



The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202) 452-1100

Additional copies of this report are available upon request at 30 cents each. Payment must accompany order.

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6/85