

On-Scene Evidence Collection 301



**TEXAS CERTIFIED
ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATOR**



Please silence
cell phones,
beepers, etc.

Many thanks to The Humane Society of the United States and Dr. Randall Lockwood for much of the source material used in this presentation.

CI 101

TEXAS CERTIFIED ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR



- This course is one of three courses you must successfully complete to be approved by the Texas Animal Control Association as a “Certified Cruelty Investigator”
- Introduction into the correlation between animal abuse and violence against persons
- Short primer on cruelty investigation, animal fighting, and Texas cruelty laws
- Intensive training in the husbandry of various animals usually encountered in cruelty investigations
- This course is taught by a licensed veterinarian and an animal cruelty expert

CI 201

**TEXAS CERTIFIED
ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATOR**



- Basic investigation techniques
- Legal aspects of cruelty investigation
- Search warrants
- Writing reports, warrants, and affidavits
- Participation in a mock trial
- Part of this course are taught by a licensed attorney who is an expert in Texas animal laws
- Certified peace officers need not take this course

Next 201 course
is June 16-17 at
the SPCA of
Texas in Dallas
\$150 for TACA
members

CI 301

TEXAS CERTIFIED
ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATOR



- Update on Texas cruelty laws
- On-scene evidence collection
- Processing evidence at the shelter
- Puppy mills (new regulations)
- Animal hoarders

Next 301 course is tentatively scheduled for November 11th at the annual conference in Clear Lake (Houston)
\$75 for TACA members

Renewal

**TEXAS CERTIFIED
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INVESTIGATOR**



- Once certified, the investigator must attend a short renewal update class every three years to maintain their certification
- The first renewal class will be at the 2013 annual conference
- The investigator must maintain active membership (Certified Member) in TACA to be a Certified Texas Cruelty Investigator
- If membership lapses, the investigator may be reinstated by simply paying back dues

Credit Hours

**TEXAS CERTIFIED
ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATOR**



- This certification is through the Texas Animal Control Association
- It is not a certification through the Texas Department of State Health Services
- DSHS does no certifications, although you will receive DSHS-approved credit hours towards your Basic training renewal for attending these courses
- This certification is designed and sponsored by your state trade association (TACA) to provide you with in-depth cruelty investigation training so that you will be a knowledgeable investigator and credible courtroom witness

Questions?

TEXAS CERTIFIED
ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATOR



Email: tacacruelty@att.net

Or call Jay Sabatucci at 817-319-5697 cell

WWW.TACA.ORG





On-Scene Evidence Collection

Classifications of Cruelty

- **Passive Cruelty**

- Born of ignorance, neglect or economic hardship

- Failure to provide sufficient sustenance
 - Lack of veterinary attention
 - Inadequate shelter

- **Active Cruelty**

- Intentional and often premeditated

- Animal Fighting
 - Deliberate infliction of pain
 - Torture





Evidence

What is Evidence?



- It is the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid
- It is the totality of what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell
- Look closely at the environment, at objects, and at the animals themselves
- The primary evidence is the individual animal

What is Evidence?



- Animals cannot testify against their abuser
- As time passes, the animal loses its value as evidence...Why?
- Documentation at the scene is hugely important
- Photographs and video are perhaps the most persuasive evidentiary tools

Documentation of Animals



- Conditions at the scene must be carefully noted in reports
- Photographs should be taken of each animal especially if further action is likely or the animals will be confiscated as evidence
- Obtain expert opinions in cases regarding injury, illness, or malnutrition and include any related records in the case file

What to Look for...



- Multiple dogs chained within a circle of bare earth
- Multiple fighting-type roosters staked out under small A-frame shelters or in individual coops
- Training equipment
- Check local animal services records
 - Good chance of prior violations or complaints
- These are indicative of possible animal fighting

What to Look for...



Dogfighting Equipment



- Treadmill: Dogs are run on the treadmills to increase cardiovascular fitness and endurance
- Catmill/Jenny: Apparatus that looks like a carnival horse walker with several beams jetting out from a central rotating pole. The dogs are chained to one beam and another small animal like a cat, small dog, or rabbit, is harnessed to or hung from another beam. The dogs run in circles, chasing the bait. Once the exercise sessions are over, the dogs are usually rewarded with the bait they had been pursuing

Courtesy Michigan State School of Law



Dogfighting Equipment



- Springpole/Jumppole: A large pole with a spring hanging down to which a rope, tire, or animal hide is affixed that the dogs jump to and dangle from for extended periods of time. This strengthens the jaw muscles and back legs. The same effect is achieved with a simpler spring loaded apparatus hanging from tree limbs. A variation of the springpole is a hanging cage, into which bait animals are placed. The dogs repeatedly lunge up toward the cage
- Flirtpole: A handheld pole with a lure attached. The dogs chase the lure along the ground

Courtesy Michigan State School of Law



Dogfighting Equipment



- Chains: Dogs have very heavy chains wrapped around their necks, generally in lieu of collars; they build neck and upper body strength by constantly bearing the immense weight of the chains
- Weights: Weights are often affixed to chains and dangled from the dogs' necks. This builds neck and upper body strength. Generally, dogs are permanently chained this way. However, sometimes the trainers run them with their weights attached

Courtesy Michigan State School of Law



Dogfighting Equipment



- Bait Dogs (Other Animals): Animals are tied up while the dogs tear them apart or sometimes they are confined in an area to be chased and mauled by the dogs
- Drugs/Vitamins/Supplements: Dogs are given vitamins, supplements and drugs to condition them for or to incite them to fight. Commonly utilized vitamins, supplements, and drugs include: iron/liver extract; vitamin B-12; Provim; Magnum supplement; hormones (testosterone, Propionate, Repotest, Probolic Oil); weight-gain supplements; creatine monohydrate; speed; steroids (Winstrol V, Dinabol, Equipose); and cocaine

Courtesy Michigan State School of Law



Dogfighting Equipment



Cockfighting Equipment



- **Bridle:** a leather device designed to fit over the head and beak of a cock to prevent the cock from injuring another cock
- **Gaff:** an artificial steel spur designed to attach to the leg of a cock to replace or supplement the cock's natural spur
- **Slasher:** a steel weapon resembling a curved knife blade designed to attach to the foot of a cock
- **Moleskin and waxed string:** Used to attach the gaff

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Botana (Mounting Block): A wooden block, sometimes wrapped in leather, with a socket designed to fit over the natural spur of a gamecock.
 - Necessary for fixing a Mexican slasher or short knife to the left leg of a rooster
- Call Sheet : A tally form used by pit officials to record the band numbers, entry numbers, and weights of cocks entered in a derby

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Cockhouse: A building or shed equipped with coops or stalls for keeping cocks.
 - The stalls, which are usually in tiers at one side of the room, each measure approximately 2 1/2 feet square and are equipped with a door
 - When cocks are to be fought, a cocker keeps them in the cockhouse while preparing them for battle
- Dubbing Shears: Scissors used by cockers for dubbing
- Gaff Case A carrying case, such as a tackle box, or shaving kit, used for storing gaffs and other items a cockfighter will need for a cockfight
 - A typical gaff case may contain several types of gaffs, moleskin strips, waxed string, scissors, a file and sharpening stone, a suture kit, and a rule book

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Leg Band: A small plastic or metal band placed around a cock's leg in order to identify him
 - At a derby or other major fight, a bird will have a band placed on his leg by the pit operator after he has been weighed
 - A number on the band will be checked before the fight begins to ensure that another bird has not been substituted by a dishonest cocker
- Muffs (Sparring or Breeders Muffs): Padded muffs designed to be placed over a cock's natural spurs to prevent serious injuries from occurring during sparring matches

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Pit (Arena): The pit is generally an enclosed area in which cockfights are staged
 - The pit can range from 15 to 20 feet in diameter
 - In some cases, an enclosure is not necessary. ..A space on the ground need only be cleared of rocks and debris so that the boundaries and score lines can be drawn in the dirt
- Postiza: An artificial spur made of aluminum, plastic, or turtle shell that is attached to the stumps of a gamecock's natural spur with glue and tape
 - Cockfights using such implements are popular in Puerto Rico, Central and South America, and parts of the United States

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Spur Saw: A small saw used to trim a cock's natural spurs
- Sun Coop: A portable pen that is set on the ground outside the cockhouse for a cock being conditioned so he is not confined in a stall all of the time
- Texas Twister : A type of gaff that features a twisting spike
- Tie-out Cord A cord fastened to a leg of a cock and secured to a stake or pen in a yard. Tie-out cords prevent cocks from coming into contact with other cocks in a yard while allowing them to scratch freely and exercise

Source material courtesy The HSUS

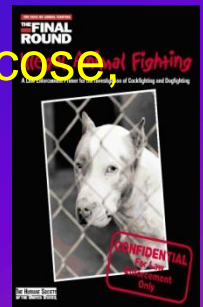


Cockfighting Equipment



- Vitamins and Supplements:
 - Cock Booster, Rooster Charge, Red Rooster Booster (vitamin and mineral supplements)
 - Amino Plex (amino acid supplement)
 - Testrone Forte, Liquid Lightning (herbal supplements)
 - Vitamin B-12 (injectable or in tablets and drops)
 - Vitamin B-15 (decreases lactic acid in muscles to relieve fatigue and increase stamina)
 - Vitamin K (injectable or in drops to aid blood clotting and reduce hemorrhaging)
 - Blitz Energy Fuel (Contains predigested animal protein, glucose, and anise. Used during training and in advance of fights.)

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- Drugs:
 - Antibiotics—amoxicillin, ampicillin, erythromycin, metronidazole, penicillin, tetracycline
 - Blue Magic (for blood clotting)
 - Caffeine (to combat fatigue)
 - Dextrose capsules (for energy)
 - Formulas of Nux Vomica (a homeopathic preparation of strychnine used as a stimulant)
 - Testosterone capsules (to increase aggression and muscle mass)
 - Methamphetamines (stimulants)

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Cockfighting Equipment



- **Veterinary Supplies**

- IV kit, syringes, and needles in various sizes
- Sutures, suture needles, and needle holders
- Iodine (to treat wounds)
- Witch hazel (reduces soreness)
- Stop-Bleed (styptic)

Source material courtesy The HSUS



Evidence



- Anything remotely connected with animal fighting or cruelty should be seized
- Amount of evidence may be overwhelming
- Bring an expert to help identify evidence.
- The animals are also evidence
- Animals should be evaluated by a veterinarian who will later testify in court

Evidence



- Veterinarian on-scene:
 - Evaluates each animal's health and condition
 - Can help identify illegal narcotics
- Crime scene
 - May have to sign in and out
 - Restricted access
- Have sufficient bags, markers, etc. to collect physical evidence

Evidence



- Chain of custody:
 - An identifiable person must always have the physical custody of a piece of evidence
 - A police officer or detective will take charge of a piece of evidence, document its collection, and hand it over to an evidence clerk for storage in a secure place
 - These transactions, and every succeeding transaction between the collection of the evidence and its appearance in court, should be completely documented chronologically in order to withstand legal challenges to the authenticity of the evidence

Evidence



- Make sure that you are cleared for the crime scene
- Be accompanied by law-enforcement while searching and don't touch anything without permission (chain of custody)
- Look around! Think! Where would you hide things?
- Pictures...pictures...pictures!

Evidence



- Video:
 - Have fully charged primary and backup batteries
 - Plan your moves in advance
 - Pan entire scene and zoom slowly onto each individual subject or article of evidence
 - Do not stop and start the video...one continuous video!
 - Do not make jokes, inflammatory remarks or any other unnecessary comments during recording
 - Disabling sound is usually recommended, but check with your DA first, as they may want the sound
 - Backup!

Evidence



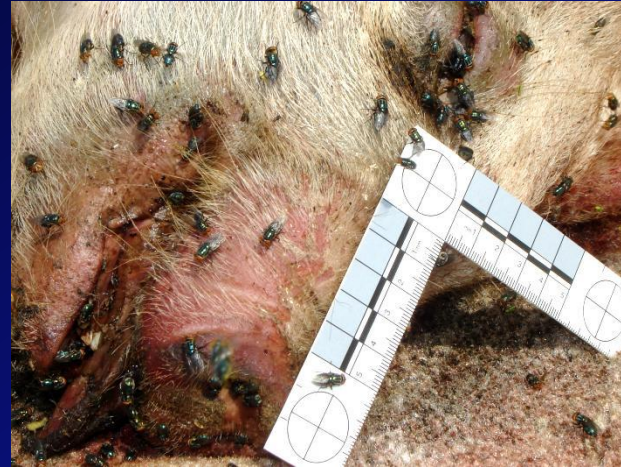
- Digital Photography
 - Use a good quality digital camera
 - Bring camera instructions
 - Bring a good laptop and mobile power source
 - Make sure you have a universal digital media reader to download photos into your laptop
 - An identifying number should be placed in the field of view for each seized animal
 - Use that ID number to label the animals' photo files on the hard drive, or just name the file appropriately

Evidence



- Digital Photography
 - Bring lots of spare batteries
 - Power will be your main concern.
 - Rechargeable batteries deplete quickly
 - Don't use your highest or lowest resolution setting
 - Photos will usually be fine at 600 KB – 1 MEG
 - If photos are to be greatly enlarged, adjust resolution accordingly, or use a 35 mm
 - Extremely large file sizes are slow to download and take a lot of hard drive to store

Markers



- Show relative size and perspective
- Used for documentation of physical evidence



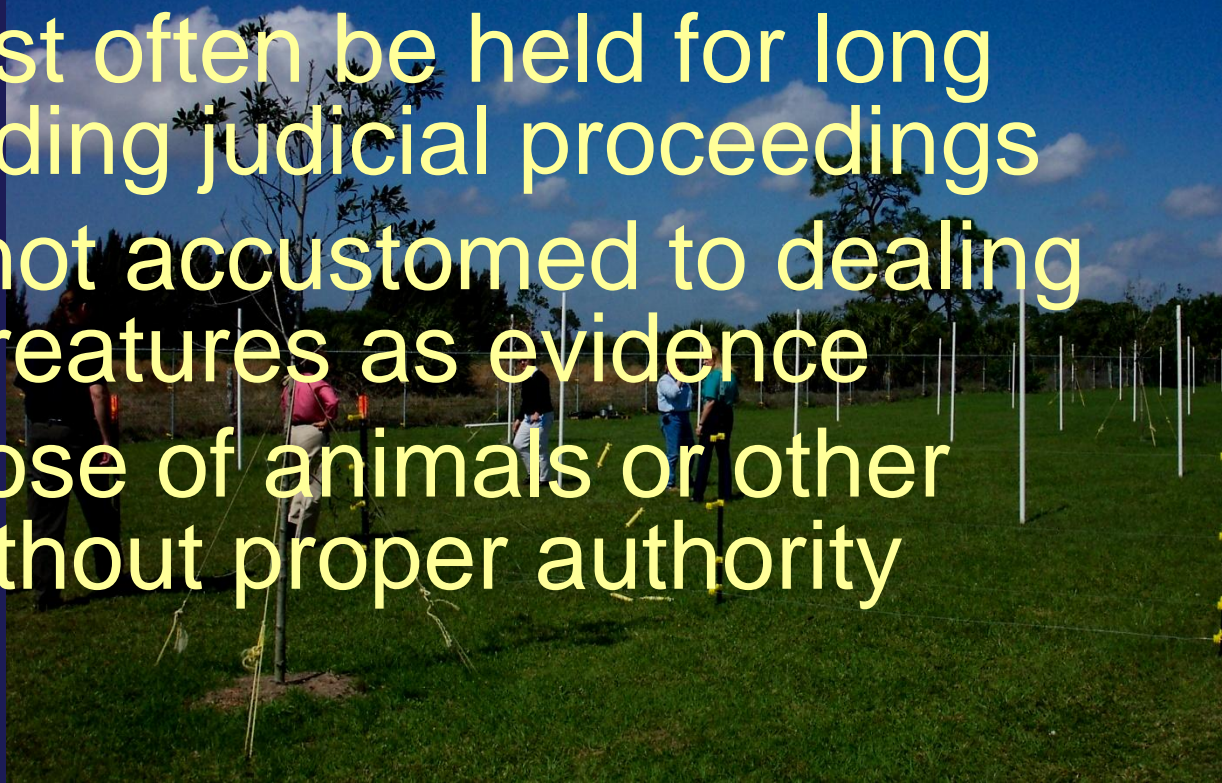


Seized in Oklahoma Dogfighting Raid 2004 (location #1 of 4)



Animals as Evidence

- Know the law
- Evidentiary value of animals is very low after conditions are documented
- Animals must often be held for long periods pending judicial proceedings
- Courts are not accustomed to dealing with living creatures as evidence
- Do not dispose of animals or other evidence without proper authority



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That's all Folks!

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