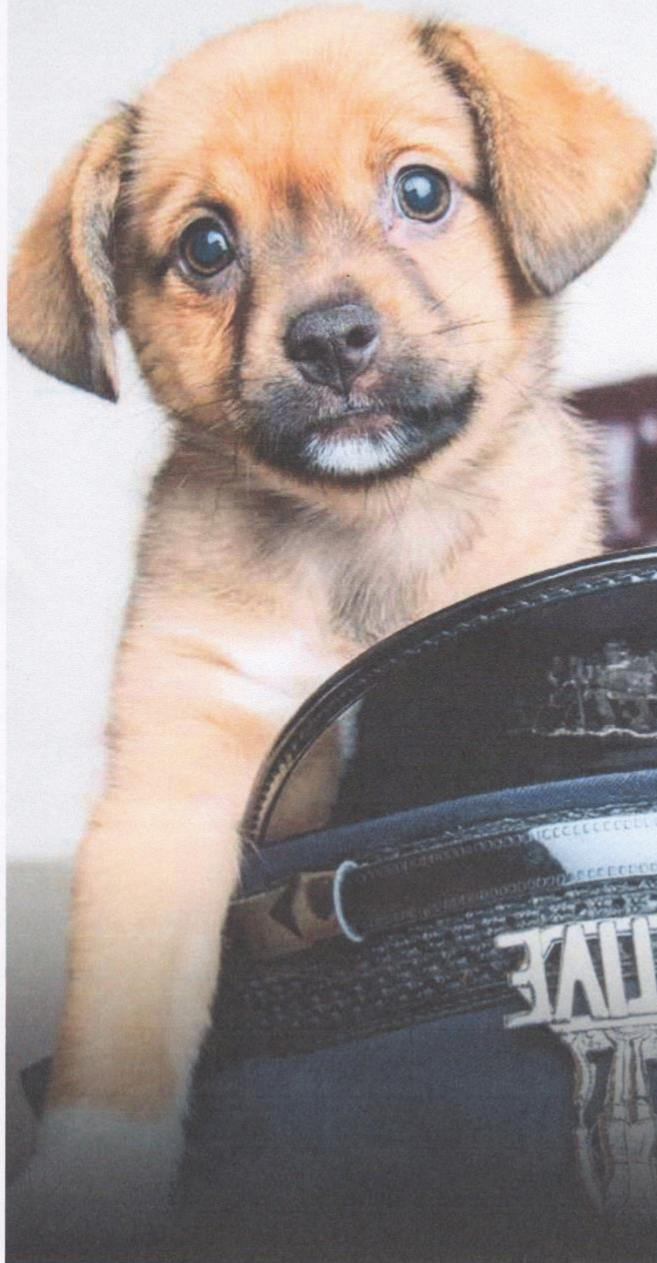


SHERIFF & DEPUTY

2019 Special Issue: Animal Cruelty



THE "LINK" AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

**CRIMES AGAINST ANIMALS
ARE CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE**

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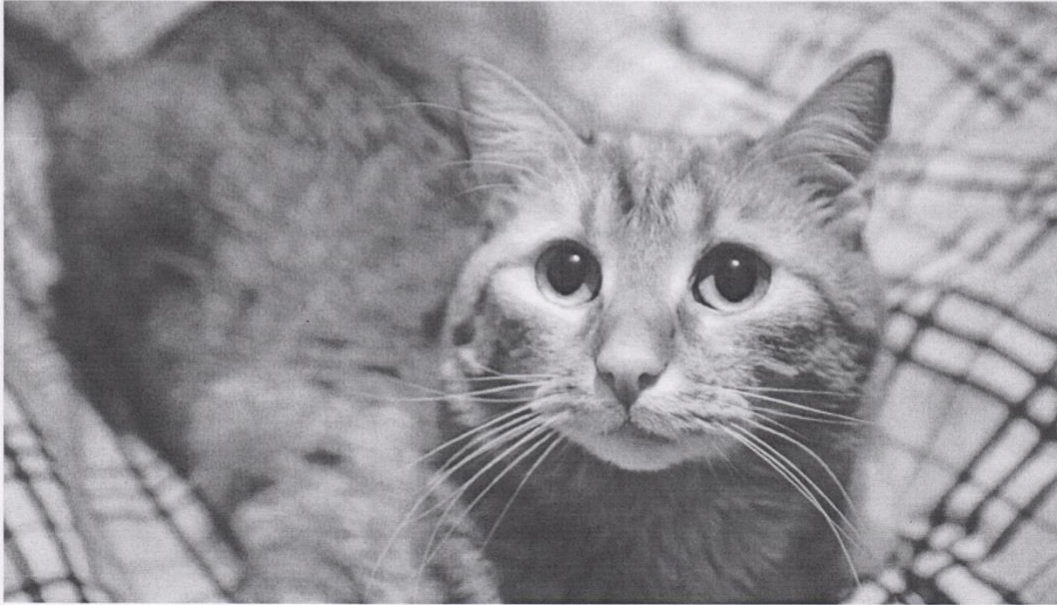
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THE LAW ENFORCEMENT GUIDE: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BESTIALITY

By M. Jenny Edwards



Animal sex abuse (most often called bestiality) is a tough topic. To most of us it's just plain gross. But as a law enforcement officer, there's a good chance at some point in your career you will run into an incident involving bestiality. And there are several reasons why you should be ready for that.

It's rare, but not as rare as you think

Although not a lot has been written about just how often people have sex with animals, research has estimated that as much as 5 percent of the United States population has either done it or would like to. That's over 16 million people! Studies of convicted sex offenders report even higher numbers—somewhere between 36 and 50 percent. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics,

there are currently 234,000 convicted sex offenders under the care, custody, or control of U.S. corrections and parole officers, which means between 70,000 and 117,000 of them have likely made sexy-time with a critter at some point. And since about 60 percent of these sex offenders are out on parole, that puts about 150,000 dogs, horses, and other animals at risk of being sexually victimized at any moment.

Bestiality has been linked to other forms of sexual abuse

Studies have shown that bestiality may be related to child sexual abuse or pedophilia. In fact, bestiality may be the single largest predictor of future risk to molest a child. In a recent study of about 500 bestiality-related arrests in the U.S., more than a third of the incidents involved not only the sexual abuse

of an animal, but of a child or adult. Children under the age of 12 were frequently solicited or manipulated into having sex with a family pet or forced to watch a parent or other guardian do so. Many of them were shown animal pornography as a way of grooming them to perform sexual acts.

Brittany Monk and her boyfriend were arrested for strangling and stabbing Monk's stepfather, and then stuffing him into a 55-gallon plastic drum. During the investigation, she told detectives the reason they murdered her stepfather was that he had made her watch animal porn and raped her repeatedly as a child—from the age of 4 until she was 15.

Angelina Tidwell was a teen alcoholic and drug user. She met her future husband Glenn, in jail, and when they got out, they moved in together. Glenn was overly strict

with Angelina's three kids as well as his own daughter, and by 2002 both Angelina and Glenn had been locked up for child abuse. In 2015, Angelina found an SD card containing child porn (including explicit images of their own daughters), which she turned over to local police. But during the investigation, officers discovered images of Angelina having sex with the family dog, as well as evidence that both Angelina and Glenn had been sexually abusing the infant daughter of Angelina's niece.

During an online investigation into child pornography, a male suspect told the undercover detective his first sexual experience was masturbating a horse. Next came oral sex with horses and intercourse with multiple dogs over a period of several years. Just six weeks before being arrested for bestiality, he had sex with a 14-year-old female.

Bestiality is often related to other criminal or antisocial behavior

About half of animal sex abusers have a criminal history involving human sexual offending (32 percent); animal cruelty or bestiality (26 percent); property offenses like breaking and entering, trespass, or theft (27 percent); drugs and alcohol (19 percent); interpersonal and domestic violence (15 percent); or illegal pornography (11 percent). About 30 percent of animal sex abusers reoffend.

Gerardo Martinez had a long history of DUI and minor assaults. One night he got high on meth and attempted to rape a cat. When he was unsuccessful, he threw the cat out a seventh floor window and then masturbated in front of the people below.

In 2009 Bryan Beal was sentenced to four years for possession and distribution of child porn. During a parole visit less than a year after he got out, the P.O. discovered Beal was having sex with his dog and once again collecting child porn.

Ronald Livermore was an avid deer hunter—but not for the usual reasons. He was first caught poaching deer in 2005 and served two days for hunting out of season. By 2008 game wardens had labeled him a "serial deer killer" after investigation revealed Livermore was using a night scope and a

sawed-off shotgun with a handmade silencer to hunt dozens of deer illegally. Many he killed were pregnant or had just given birth. In 2015 he was arrested once again, but this time, Livermore admitted he didn't eat the meat, but killed the deer so he could have sex with them.

Bestiality is often uncovered during an unrelated investigation

Most investigations into a crime don't start until the crime has been committed. But similar to sexual harassment, rape, and even child sexual abuse, bestiality often goes unreported for a long time before anyone gets turned in or caught. Many incidents, in fact, are discovered during investigation into a completely different matter.

After a routine traffic stop, Bryce Loftus and a friend were arrested for transporting 33 pounds of pot from Colorado with the intention of selling it in Iowa. During a search of Bryce Loftus' home, officers found evidence that his pot-smoking brother Nicholas regularly had sex with their dog and had solicited a female minor online.

Arizona authorities worked for months to break up a theft ring that had stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars of construction equipment across multiple states. At least three men had already been charged with grand theft auto, weapons possession, and burglary. During aerial surveillance of a fourth suspect pegged as the ringleader, Jacob Blatchford was seen driving to a horse ranch where he parked, hopped the fence, pulled down his pants, and had sex with a small pony for several minutes.

Sometimes it isn't criminal behavior that's being investigated, but something else altogether. Officers were dispatched to Michael Haimes' house to do a welfare check. On arrival, the smell of decomposition was strong. Haimes was alive but admitted he had sodomized a dog and when it started bleeding, he stabbed it, cut its throat, and tossed it in the bushes.

One offender often leads to another

We don't really know what causes someone to be sexually interested in animals. Some studies have shown that risky behavior often

involves association with peers who encourage risk taking. When it comes to deviant personalities, the internet makes it extremely easy for like-minded individuals to find each other whether they are seeking the perfect someone on Match dot com or a deviant partner on Beast Forum.

Craig Knox was in the process of being extradited from Virginia to Pennsylvania on charges of child sexual abuse when he admitted he struggled with a sexual attraction to dogs as well as young boys. During a search of Knox' home, officers found videos of his male roommate performing oral sex on one of their many dogs. Other images confirmed both Knox and his roommate—who he met online—regularly had sex with at least two dogs on the property, one of which had to be put down due to a severe infection in both the penis and rectum. Knox was successfully extradited, and the Pennsylvania investigation ultimately led to the arrest of five men and one woman who had been abusing the same young boy as Knox. Most of the offenders in the group met each other through beastforum.com and other chat rooms catering to deviant behavior.

After receiving a tip, officers arrested Mark Tooley, who had posted pictures of himself on Twitter performing a sex act with a 2-year-old child. Meanwhile, David Gors was also under investigation for production and distribution of child porn and soliciting female minors online. During an interview with Gors, he rolled on a woman he met in a chatroom who texted him pictures of herself having sex with a dog. Crystal Runyan not only shared the bestiality images, but allowed Gors to film her baby granddaughter nude, and shared images of her boyfriend having sex with the same child—the boyfriend turned out to be Mark Tooley.

Animal erotica and pornography play a role

Animal sex offenders often film themselves or others during sex acts and may also collect animal porn or images involving child sexual abuse or sadomasochism. Although the results are inconclusive, some studies indicate that animal porn may be a gateway to contact offending, or at the very least, viewers of animal porn also look at child porn. In one

U.S. study for example, researchers found that people who collect child porn were more likely to collect animal porn; people who collect animal porn were also likely to collect child porn; and in a review of 174 arrests in one British community, a whopping 93 percent of the men charged with possession of "extreme" porn (images that appear life-threatening or involve genital torture/mutilation) also collected animal porn.

A word about anime or drawn images: An unknown number of animal sex abusers collect erotic or pornographic anime. Anime is a style of Japanese film and television animation also found in story book form called manga. Anime depictions are frequently childlike or animallike characters in everyday or fantasy situations (for example, Pokémon or My Little Pony), but a pornographic form depicts child-like characters being raped. Although possession of pornographic anime is seldom prosecuted, at least two collections involving animal characters raping child characters have been adjudicated successfully under federal law 18 U.S.C. § 1466A(a)(1).

Bestiality laws may be confusing or have loopholes

If you've ever worked an animal case, you already know that there are specific laws relating to animal abuse or neglect, including who has the power to seize an animal or arrest an abuser. When it comes to animal sexual abuse as a form of cruelty, the laws are even more specialized, and you may not find them in the codes relating to animal law at all.

There is wide variability in how bestiality laws are written and enforced across the U.S., and not every state has one. Although attitudes are changing, animals have traditionally been thought of as property, and in sixteen U.S. states, laws prohibiting bestiality are housed in the animal cruelty codes. In the remaining states with laws, bestiality is considered a sexual assault or a crime against public morals. In 23 states, a violation of the law is a misdemeanor with penalties ranging from 30 days to 18 months. In the remaining states bestiality is a felony with penalties ranging from 5 months to 20 years. More problematic than how bestiality laws are codified is the definition of what bestiality entails. A law that is too general or too

specific can result in loopholes that affect the kind of charges that can be laid or successfully prosecuted.

In California, Willie Smith appealed a conviction for sodomy after having intercourse with a dog. The basis for appeal was that sodomy was generally taken to mean anal or oral sex between same-gender humans, and Smith's partner was a female dog that was penetrated vaginally.

In Michigan, Alexander Carrier and another man assaulted and tortured a third man who had befriended Carrier's former girlfriend. They beat him up, made him strip, attached battery cables to his penis and peed on him. Then they threatened to cut off his penis unless he fellated a German shepherd. Carrier appealed a bestiality conviction on the basis that the law required penetration of an animal by the offender, and it was the victim who fellated the dog.

In Wisconsin, Sterling Rachwal was repeatedly locked up or institutionalized for aggravated sexual assault of horses. In one incident he raped a pony then tied it over a fence and shoved a broom handle in its rectum. In another incident he raped two pregnant mares and cut the nipples off a third. Several horses over the years had to be euthanized after violent sexual assaults by Rachwal, yet none of the arrests resulted in felony convictions because Wisconsin law considers bestiality a misdemeanor. Adding insult to injury (and death), Rachwal successfully appealed at least one conviction because Wisconsin law defines bestiality as an act of sexual gratification involving the sex organ of a person with the mouth, genitals, or anus of an animal. Sterling had used his fist to rape the horse.

It's not your normal investigation

The goal of every criminal investigation is to study the facts and find the evidence that confirms whether a crime has been committed and by whom. Investigating and prosecuting animal sex abuse is more like working a child sexual abuse or rape case than it is like responding to suspected animal cruelty where an animal has been neglected, abandoned, or otherwise abused. When it comes to animal sex abuse cases, you'll be dealing with live evidence, a victim who can't talk, a completely

different group of experts, and a whole new set of laws.

Investigation of human sexual assaults generally follow a predictable pattern—the victim or a witness files a complaint; suspects are identified and interviewed; DNA and other evidence is collected; and the perp is charged with something related to unwanted sex with someone else. When an animal is the victim, the act is seldom witnessed by anyone; the victim can't tell you what happened; injury may not be apparent; there are no animal rape kits; and despite your personal feelings, depending on how your jurisdiction defines bestiality, you may have a lot of trouble proving a crime was even committed.

Detection and investigation

The first thing that needs to be said is this: If someone reports suspected bestiality, *take it seriously*. Bestiality is often reported by a relative, friend, or roommate of the suspect who may have witnessed the act but may not tell you that. Treat the report as an act of suspected sexual assault just as you would a report of rape or child sexual abuse. Some responsible persons have been told that the incident won't be investigated unless law enforcement can catch the suspect in the act, or until the animal has been significantly injured. In a few instances, the responsible person has been openly laughed at.

The second thing is this: Statistically, most bestiality arrests are the result of undercover investigations into child sexual abuse or pornography, or are the byproduct of another arrest (e.g. for drugs, domestic violence, or trespass). Next to a witness, your best evidence may be a digital image in a nondescript room where the only identifying mark is a partial tattoo.

Warrants and evidence collection

The single biggest difference in processing bestiality cases is that you may be collecting evidence that is live, injured, or dead. Something to consider is who or what is required to seize the animal. In most states, animal control officers have that authority, and you may or may not need a separate warrant to remove animals or other evidence. In any event, you should *always* remove *all* animals from the property. It's not unusual

for offenders to have sex with multiple animals or even multiple types of animals (e.g. horses as well as dogs).

Animal victims should be photographed and preferably examined at least briefly before being removed from the scene. Don't wait until you have a case to get to know your animal welfare and control counterpart or have on hand the names of one or more veterinarians. Note that most vets do not have a general practice; instead, they tend to specialize in small animals (e.g. dogs and cats), large animals (horses, cattle, farm animals), or specialty/exotics (e.g. birds or reptiles).

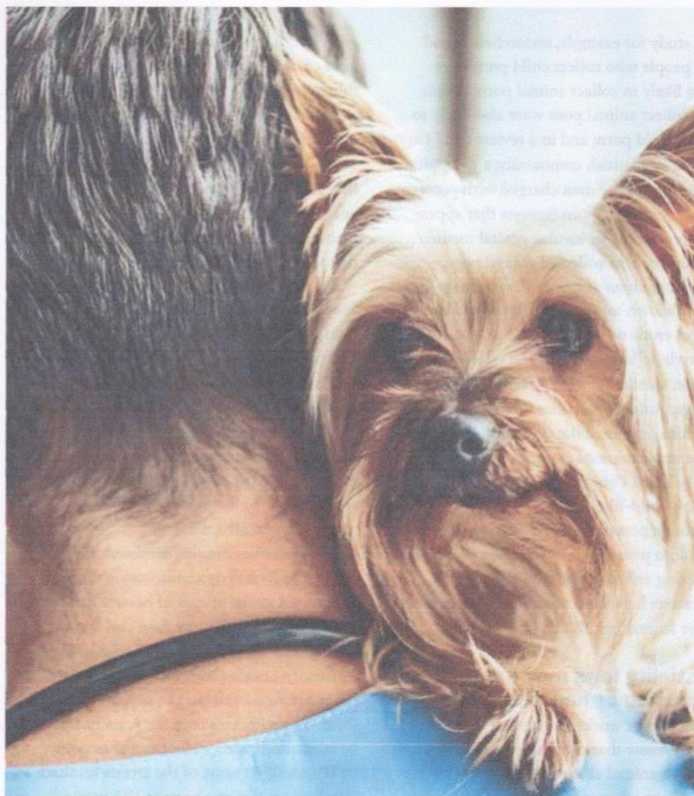
The main thing you are looking for is evidence of injury or semen—on the animal or the suspect. Regular rape kits can be used to collect DNA, although the processing laboratory may be different. Provide the vet with a rape kit and other evidence collection materials that may be important. If you do not have access to a rape kit, you can use sterile swabs sealed in a bag and labeled as you would any other crime scene evidence.

Some offenders provide medical treatment for their animals rather than risk exposure by a veterinarian or other service provider, so keep an eye out for drugs that seem out of place or are mislabeled—in particular Viagra, Tramadol, and Fish Mox (which can be used as an antibiotic for other animals). You might also observe "training" aids such as anal beads or butt plugs, or restraints such as unusual harnesses or breeding stands.

Other evidence that may be important is animal erotica or pornography. In addition to checking cellphones and computers, you'll want access to social media or other online sites. *Always* get a warrant to search computers, cellphones, cameras, and digital media and remember that some states have statutes of limitations on videos.

Expert witnesses and their reports

Seized animals typically go to an animal shelter or veterinarian where they are examined for evidence of physical injury. Once at the shelter, most states have laws relating to how long they can be held as evidence before they are euthanized or placed for adoption—be sure you know what those rules or



their protocols may be. If the animal is your primary source of evidence, be sure to go over chain of custody rules with any animal control officer, veterinarian, or shelter manager who may become important in your case.

Ask to preview the vet's report before it is finalized to understand any terms that may be confusing or unfamiliar. A classic example is NSF which has nothing to do with bank accounts and means "no significant findings" or DUDE which doesn't indicate the animal's gender and stands for defecating, urinating, drinking, and eating.

A final note about terminology—animal gender and body parts are not called the same thing as human gender or body parts. For example, a female horse may be a mare, but a female dog is a bitch. When in doubt, ask a veterinarian.

The bottom line

There is no single profile of an animal sex offender. They come in all shapes, sizes, genders, and races. They range in age from preteen to the surprisingly elderly. Some are really pedophiles in disguise; others have never had sex with a person. Some are substance abusers who commit an outrageous act at a party that they would never think of doing while sober.

The bottom line is that it happens more often in more places than most people realize, and it's something you should know about before it happens on your watch. ☆

M. Jenny Edwards is a criminologist and a subject matter expert on animal sexual abuse.