

No bad dogs, only  
bad owners essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A house pet, such as a dog or cat, is one of the only living creatures capable of loving its owner, more than it loves itself.

As their owners and companions, it is the humans' job to protect and care for them. Yet, everyday millions of these innocent animals are abused and mistreated, and everyday millions of people are getting away with this cruelty because of the lenient laws against it. In 2013, there were a total of 1,880 animal cruelty cases reported in the state of Texas.

Of those animals 1,212 were dogs, 337 were cats, and 470 were other animals including livestock animals (Animal Cruelty Facts and Statistics). If a person can go to prison for child abuse, then why shouldn't he get the same penalty for animal cruelty.

The news outlets have made comments about how many of the usually peaceful dog breeds have become too dangerous to be around children. One reason for this is because most dog breeds have a low tolerance when it is being harmed. When in harm's way their instinct is to fight back their attackers, making them look like the bad guy, or in this case the bad dog.

Instead of these news outlets blaming the dogs, they should shed light on the fact that it is humans that are causing these animals to come mean. The author of *Marled and Me*, John Groan gives an accurate description of the situation when he says, "There's no such thing as a bad dog, just a bad owner" (Groan).

When it comes to determining what animal cruelty is and what it is not, the definition changes from state to state. In Texas, animal cruelty is when the owner neglects to take care of their animal, failing to give it food and shelter.

Then if the cruelty turns abusive, it is only punishable if the owner or another human being harms the animal for personal enjoyment or doing inhumane punishment to the point of torture. Sadly, by the time the law steps in, it is normally too late to help the said animal (Animal Abuse and Neglect). In the state of Texas, there are civil and criminal laws to try and help protect animals. In civil cases, a judge decides if the person(s) are guilty of harming animals, if found guilty, the pets are taken away and are given a \$500 fine.

This is the only punishment, a slap on the wrist and released.

When someone is prosecuted in a criminal case, they receive a larger fine, and could possibly see jail time, but the possibility of that is slim. In the last year only 98 cases went to the criminal level. Also, these laws are only for the domesticated animals, not the unclaimed animals, leaving them unprotected to the cruelty (Texas Animal Cruelty Laws).

May 5th, 2006, 27 year-old Scott Shafer was arrested for threatening his wife with a shotgun and then killing their ten week-old puppy. That night the Longevity police department received an anonymous tip saying a woman heard shouting and an animal yelping from the Shafer residence.

When they arrived, they were met with a large amount of blood on the walls. The blood belonged to the family pet. After the arrest, the investigators could not find the dog's body, so he was charged only with aggravated

assault family violence. However, even after they found the dog's body, they had no proof that Shafer killed the animal, so he was never sentenced with animal cruelty, but was found guilty for aggravated assault family violence with a parole.

Because the Texas law says there has to be solid evidence of animal cruelty in order to be charged, Scott Shafer got away with it.

(Top 5 Animal Cruelty Cases for 2006 in Texas) Another example happened during October 2013 in Dallas, Texas. The Dallas SPA had been investigating a disturbing case of animal cruelty in a North Dallas neighborhood. In the span of two weeks a total of five dead dogs turned up on the same street corner. There was a pit bull in a used garbage bag, a small mixed breed in a cooler, and three more mixed breeds in a pile. None had identification.

Then a couple of streets over, on October 13, 2013, while the police were in the neighborhood investigating a domestic disturbance call, they heard a desperate cry of help from two dogs in the basement of an abandoned home.

There they found a 3-year-old female pit bull, named Lexington and another dog named Hudson. They had been in horrible health, to the point that they could only walk a few steps before collapsing. Rebecca Glenn-Downside, DACCA, stated, " They didn't have any food or water and the basement was pretty much covered in feces. She was very, very weak.

She could barely walk, a couple steps then she had to be carried in" (BBC News). The people responsible for the deaths of these animals had not been

recovered yet, and the case has been considered cold due to the lack of evidence for any leads.

This means that these seven animals that had suffered so much, have yet to see Justice and most likely never will (Animal Cruelty in Dallas). Not only is there animal cruelty against household pets, but also against livestock. The animals that take the most heat are the cows on factory farms. These cows suffer mostly in the beef industries.

The life span of a cow can go up to 25 years; however the cows used for beef are killed between one to three years of age.

Also even though they start out their lives in open pastures, they spend their final months standing knee deep in cow waste. On the feedlots, they are fed unnatural grain to make them gain weight fast, causing them pain and sometimes death, from not being able to digest the grain. Everyone knows what happens on these farms because it is public record, yet nothing is done to protect these animals (Cows on Factory Farms).

In the spring of 2013, a Huston private school principal, Rosa Martinez, bought an 8 month old dog from a pet shelter.

Then in November, when the dog was fully grown, she took the dog back to the shelter to get put down. This is when the veterinarian realized that the dog had parts of bone exposed on all four of her legs, and that one is slowly rotting off her body. Martinez was arrested on November 8 for animal cruelty, and when she went to court she told the Jury that she had “ over-

omitted herself to work and non-profit organizations and had never expected the dog to get as big as she did” (Chem. BBC News).

Because of her neglect, the dog lost its leg and later had to be put down due to the extensive rot that had started to spread throughout her entire body.

Rosa Martinez, lost her Job and given a \$3, 000 fine, but never saw any Jail time (Chem. BBC News). With all of these cases and multiple others, there is evidence of animal cruelty that fits into the criteria that the Texas law gives, yet there was little to no Justice for these animals. The reason for this is because even though the law is there, no one is willing to step in when they encounter animal cruelty.

Most Just stand by and watch often too late.

In order for these animals to get the help and the Justice that they deserve, people have to step up and report the cruelty when it first starts to happen, or else nothing is going to happen to help these animals. There could be more than just 1, 880 cases reported in the next year and countless more unheard of because they have not been reported. That is why it is vital to report as many suspicious cases as possible.