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Dog Fighting in Georgia

Captured 1/6/11

About half of the dogs killed in shelters today are pit bulls or pit bull mixes.

It is a barbaric practice in which dogs are forced to fight to injury or death for the amusement and wagering of spectators. In 2004, [Newton County was the site of one of the largest dogfighting busts](#) in the nation. One hundred and twenty-three people were arrested, yet many failed to face any jail time. Why? Because [Georgia's old law](#) was very weak and very hard to enforce. After being ranked one of the worst laws in the country, the updated 2008 law put them in the top 5 for best dog fighting laws.

The aggressive behavior of the fighting animals is a grave public safety concern.

Dog Fighting breeds criminal activity; including:

- Organized Crime
- Drug Trafficking/Narcotics
- Money Laundering
- Gambling
- Child Endangerment
- Weapons
- Gang Bangers
- Rape/Homicide

The majority of dog fighters have a lengthy criminal history, do not value public safety and are involved with drugs. Most make more money fighting and selling animals than selling drugs.

For those who are unacquainted with dog fighting, it involves placing two dogs in a pit (usually an area enclosed by plywood walls) where they must fight before a crowd of cheering spectators until one dog becomes too injured or exhausted to continue. Dogs used in these brutal contests have been bred for maximum aggressiveness. The fights may last from several minutes to more than two hours, and the dogs usually suffer painful injuries including multiple puncture wounds, deep lacerations and broken bones. Dogs often die from dehydration, blood loss, infection, exhaustion or shock as a result of a fight and owners kill many of the losing dogs by gunshot or other method.

Dog fighters often use stolen pets and stray or un-owned animals as training fodder for their dogs. Dog fighters have also been known to obtain "bait" animals through "free to good home" advertisers.

Aside from the animal suffering involved, this so called sport has several other disturbing aspects which have been revealed by law enforcement raids. Gambling is the norm at dog fighting events. Thousands of dollars can change hands as spectators bet on their favorite dogs. The owner of the winning dog collects anywhere from several hundred to tens of thousands of dollars in presumably undeclared income. Because large amounts of cash are present, firearms and other weapons are common at dog fights. Violent crimes, even homicides have been connected to dog fighting in recent years. Furthermore, law enforcement officials have documented a strong connection between dog fighting and the distribution of illegal drugs.

The presence of young children at dog fights is especially disturbing. Exposure to such brutality can promote insensitivity to animal suffering and enthusiasm for violence. Anthropologist Margaret Mead suggested that acts of cruelty to animals committed in childhood may signify the development of an impulsive, assaultive character disorder. Psychiatrists at the Menninger Foundation revealed that a history of cruelty to animals can be symptomatic of seriously abnormal human aggression and that such aggression is significantly associated with aggressive behavior directed against other humans.

Animal fighting is a vicious and brutal activity that can breed violence.

Dog fighting is against the law in all 50 states and a felony in almost every state. If dog fighting is to be eradicated, it must become a felony in every state. Currently, promoters and trainers simply migrate from states where dog fighting is a felony to states where the penalties are lighter or the law is not aggressively enforced. We must encourage law enforcement officials and the courts to take this crime seriously if we are to stop this violent trend.

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