



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tammy S. Grimes • founder, Dogs Deserve Better
www.dogsdeservebetter.org • P.O. Box 23, Tipton, PA 16684 • 1.877.636.1408 • 814.941.7447

NON-PROFIT FOUNDER FOUND GUILTY OF THEFT IN CONTROVERSIAL PENNSYLVANIA DOG RESCUE CASE

Tammy Grimes of Dogs Deserve Better decries lack of enforcement of animal cruelty laws in Pennsylvania

December 17, 2007, Altoona, PA — Tammy Grimes, founder of the award-winning non-profit Dogs Deserve Better, was found guilty of theft and receiving stolen property on December 14, after a three-day trial in Blair County, Pennsylvania. The case, which pitted alleged private property concerns against animal welfare laws, made headlines nationally and was featured on Inside Edition and in a host of news publications and Internet blogs.

Dogs Deserve Better works on numerous fronts to end the suffering endured by dogs that are kept perpetually chained or caged. The group rescues and rehabilitates chained dogs, builds free fences, and works on education and legislative initiatives to end the practice of 24/7 chaining -- a practice that is widely accepted in many segments of U.S. society, but is being addressed legislatively in other areas with so-called anti-tethering laws.

Grimes was arrested September 11, 2006 after rescuing a dog that had lain on the ground in a yard in East Freedom, Pennsylvania for three days, unable to stand and pawing the air in desperation. A distraught neighbor had tried repeatedly to convince animal control to come help the dog, but no officer ever returned calls or showed up. Finally, the neighbor turned to Grimes.

Because the dog's caretakers were not home, because they had left the dog on the ground for three days -- presumably abandoning him to the elements -- because time was of the essence, and because it was the only compassionate thing to do, Grimes removed the dog from the chain and took him to a veterinarian.

Paradoxically, no cruelty charges were ever brought against the family that had chained the dog to a shabby dog house for years and then watched as the dog suffered in the mud. Grimes has since filed a private criminal complaint against the family, alleging that they violated Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws. District Attorney Richard Consiglio has not approved the criminal complaint to go forward, and has indicated in the past that he will not do so, despite his duty to uphold the law.

In addition, the Central Pennsylvania Humane Society Cruelty Officer who did not respond to the neighbor's repeated calls for help also refused Grimes' two offers to hand over the dog, which she had named Doogie, as part of a cruelty investigation that he should initiate. The officer failed to take any action.

Grimes states, "Had the officer done his job, I would not have been arrested or tried. It's that simple. He claimed he told me and the veterinary assistants not to remove the dog from the vet's premises after it received medical treatment. That is untrue. Had he instructed me to leave the dog with the veterinarian, I would have done so and the veterinarian would have ensured the same. I find the lack of enforcement of cruelty laws in Pennsylvania to be absolutely unacceptable."

Jurors were permitted to view photos of the dog's emaciated condition on the day of rescue; however video taken at the scene, photographs of the dog's much-improved condition post-rescue, and expert vet and investigation procedure testimony were barred from the courtroom.

For an open letter from Tammy Grimes, which explains the story in greater detail, please go here: <http://www.dogs-deservebetter.org/doogieletter.html>

Dogs Deserve Better, a 501c3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Tipton, Pennsylvania, is the 2003 First Place Winner of the ASPCA Pet Protector Award. The group has 150 area reps in 38 states as well as in Canada and France. Grimes was also a Top Ten Finalist for the 2006 Animal Planet Hero of the Year Contest.