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LEADER FOUND GUILTY OF THEFT IN CONTROVERSIAL PENNSYLVANIA DOG RESCUE CASE

Video evidence and expert testimony barred from courtroom

December 17, 2007, Altoona, PA—Dogs Deserve Better founder Tammy Grimes was found guilty of theft and receiving stolen property December 14, 2007 after a three-day trial in a Blair County, PA courtroom. Although jurors were permitted to view photos of the dog's condition on the day of rescue, video taken at the scene, photos of the dog walking as early as the next week, and expert vet and investigation procedure testimony were barred from the courtroom.

Grimes was arrested September 11, 2006 after taking a dog—unable to stand for three days—for veterinary care; then protecting him from returning to the abusive situation when authorities refused to press animal cruelty charges.

Grimes maintains that there were Pennsylvania cruelty laws being broken for at least three days by the time she arrived on the scene, and her organization has filed a private criminal complaint against the Arnolds for this criminal neglect. 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.

Central Pennsylvania Humane Society Cruelty Officer Paul Gotschall had not responded to calls for help from neighbor Kim Eicher for three days. He was offered the dog by Grimes as part of what should have been a cruelty investigation 2X that day. He failed to act.

Grimes states, "Had Officer Gotshall done his job, I would not have been arrested or on trial. It's that simple. He made false statements on the witness stand, claiming he told both me and the vet assistants not to remove the dog from the premises after receiving care. That was not the case. Had he done so, I would not have removed the dog, and the vet's office would have ensured the same.

I find the lack of enforcement for cruelty laws in the state of Pennsylvania to be absolutely unacceptable, and Officer Gotshall allowing me to take the fall for his failures just as unacceptable. Doogie's life had value, and it was Gotshall's job to protect that life."

The organization has now released additional photos previously withheld for the protection of others.

The dog, who Grimes dubbed Doogie, had been kept safe and lived inside as part of a family until March 1, 2007, when he passed away due to age and a lifetime of neglect. Doogie's body was returned to Altoona, Pennsylvania, where an autopsy was performed. The DA subsequently ordered the body to be held at the vet and returned to the Arnolds.

The Grimes case has made national headlines, and has been featured on Inside Edition, the National Enquirer, Animal People, animal magazines, and on blogs all over the internet.

Dogs Deserve Better is a 501c3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Tipton, Pennsylvania, is the 2003 First Place Winner of the ASPCA Pet Protector Award, and currently 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.