

# The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence

Presentation to  
Courts Corrections and Justice  
Committee

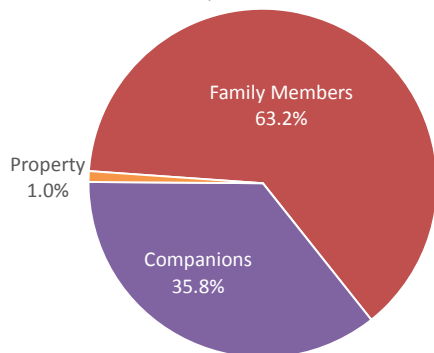
September 12, 2016

by  
Tammy Fiebelkorn  
Board President  
Positive Links



## Importance of Animals in Society

2012: Roles of Companion Animals in U.S. Households



- ❖ Record number of U.S. homes with at least one companion animal: 56-68%
- ❖ Those animals are now considered part of the family by a large majority of people in the U.S.

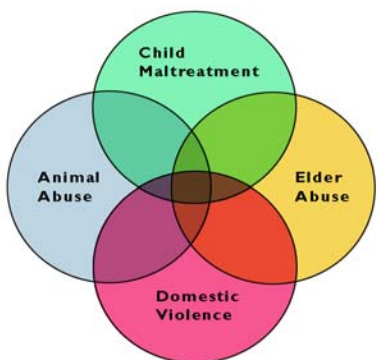
Sources:

\* American Pet Products Association, APPA National Pet Owners Survey. 2013-2014.

\* AVMA: U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook. 2012



## The Link



- ❖ *When animals are abused - people are at risk.*
- ❖ *When people are abused - animals are at risk.*
- ❖ *When one form of family violence is present, all members of the family are at risk!*



## Animal Abuse


In all 50 states,  
**ANIMAL CRUELTY** is now  
 treated as a



**FBI to start tracking animal cruelty in 2016**

*The Baltimore Sun*

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
 Cases can be early indicator for violence toward humans  
 Some serial killers abused animals when they were young  
 Some police departments dedicate resources to crime



BALTIMORE — The FBI will begin tracking cases of animal cruelty nationally in 2016, a move advocates hope will bring more attention to the crime among law enforcement agencies and underscore the link between animal abuse and other violent crimes.

Until now, animal-related crimes have been reported into a catch-all category in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. The database collects crime reports from police departments across the country.

"There was no way to find out how often it occurs, where it occurs, and whether it was on the increase," said Mary Lou Randour, senior adviser for animal cruelty programs and training at the nonprofit Animal Welfare Institute. "Empirical data is important. It's going to give us information about animal cruelty crime so we can plan better about intervention and prevention."

Randour and others say tracking animal cruelty cases is especially important because research has shown that violence against animals can be an early indicator that a person will be violent toward humans, and that animal abuse often occurs alongside other crimes such as domestic violence.

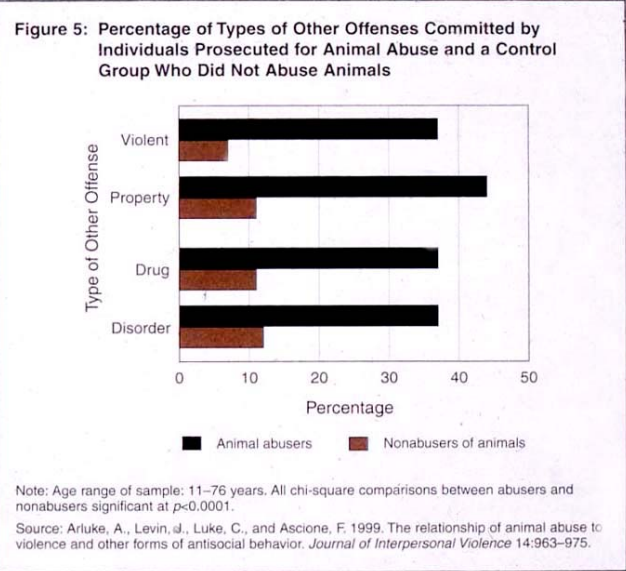
"In animal abuse, you have total power over the animal," said Baltimore County prosecutor Adam Lippe, who handles cruelty cases. "If you're willing to exert that in a cruel, malicious and vicious way, then you're likely to do that to people too, who don't have power, like children and vulnerable adults. It's an issue of a lack of empathy."

The National Link Coalition, which promotes understanding of the connection between animal abuse and other crimes, says witnessing animal abuse and neglect can desensitize a child to violence and impede the development of empathy.

Randour, who advocated for the FBI change for years, says a spouse may use violence and threats against pets as part of a pattern of abuse.

## Animal Abuse


**Figure 5: Percentage of Types of Other Offenses Committed by Individuals Prosecuted for Animal Abuse and a Control Group Who Did Not Abuse Animals**




Type of Other Offense	Animal abusers (%)	Nonabusers of animals (%)
Violent	~38	~10
Property	~45	~12
Drug	~38	~12
Disorder	~38	~12

Note: Age range of sample: 11–76 years. All chi-square comparisons between abusers and nonabusers significant at  $p < 0.0001$ .


Source: Arluke, A., Levin, J., Luke, C., and Ascione, F. 1999. The relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behavior. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 14:963–975.




David Berkowitz  
"Son of Sam"




Albert DeSalvo  
"Boston Strangler"

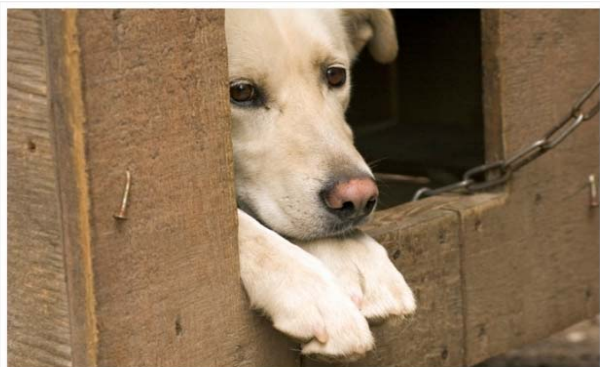


Jeffrey Dahmer...



and his dog Frisky





The PAWS Act would establish a grant program so that domestic violence shelters can make accommodations for victims' pets, so a victim is not manipulated into returning home for fear of harm to a beloved family pet. Photo by iStockphoto

### Colorado Shooter's Profile Reinforces Link Between Animal Cruelty, Human Violence

November 30, 2015 1 Comment

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A familiar pattern is emerging in the profile of the Colorado gunman, Robert Lewis Dear, who allegedly killed three people and wounded nine others at a Planned Parenthood facility in Colorado Springs last week – the latest in our national epidemic of mass shootings at schools, malls, and other public venues. It has been reported that Dear had a history of run-ins with the law, including accusations of animal abuse.

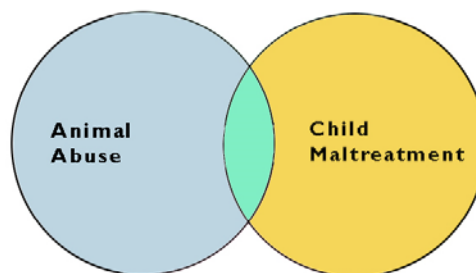
- ❖ 76% of animal abusers also abuse another family member
- ❖ Animal Abuse alone is a serious crime... but, it can also be an indicator of other violence in the family

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys



## The Link to Child Abuse

- HSUS study (2001): 1,677 reports of intentional cruelty to animals had 67% co-existing child abuse
- A Canadian national survey found that 2/3 of homes that reported child abuse also reported instances of animal cruelty



## The Link to Child Abuse

### ❖ Cruelty to Animals in 6-12 Year Old Children

- More frequent among children who experienced **violence and abuse**
- **Sexual + physical abuse** increases animal cruelty in boys
- **Sexual abuse + domestic violence** exposure increases animal cruelty among girls

Ascione, F.R, Friedrich, W.N., Heath, J., & Hayashi, K. (2003). *Anthrozoos*, 194-212.



### APD: Baby has shoeprint-shaped bruise on chest

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By Scott Sandlin And Katy Barnitz / Journal Staff Writer

Published: Monday, December 7th, 2015 at 12:05am

Updated: Tuesday, December 8th, 2015 at 10:55pm

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A man accused by Las Cruces police of slamming a puppy so hard its leg had to be cut off is now accused of causing multiple injuries to his 7-month-old son, including leaving a shoeprint-shaped bruise on the child's chest.

According to a criminal complaint filed Saturday in Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court against Cody Carmack, 24, paramedics rushed the child from his Albuquerque home to the University of New Mexico

Carmack was arrested in August 2011 on a charge of extreme cruelty to animals. According to police, during an argument with his roommate on July 23, 2011, he kicked the puppy before picking it up and slamming it against a metal bed frame.

The dog, a 5-month-old wirehair terrier, suffered a broken tibia and fibula. A few days later, after the roommate moved to a new apartment, a neighbor noticed the puppy was dragging its right rear leg and took it to a veterinarian's office where the dog underwent surgery.

In an appearance Sunday in Metropolitan Court, Carmack's bond was set at \$50,000 cash or surety.

Online court records show that the Las Cruces animal abuse case was dismissed by Judge Fernando Macias in June 2013.

Carmack's criminal history also includes a July 2013 conviction on a delivery or manufacture of drug paraphernalia charge. He was charged with assault and battery against a household member and interference with communications in June 2014 in Metropolitan Court, but the case was dismissed,

to his left ear, bruising on his chest that a footprint, bruising to his shoulder, thigh ribs and internal injuries.

Department detective with the Crimes ys in the criminal complaint that he met it the hospital. The mother told him that shares with Carmack for a little over half with her aunt, leaving the baby with

child was crying continuously, and when opened, Carmack told her he'd given the n she confronted him about the infant's "My bad," the complaint states.

ak with two APD detectives about the interview he admitted "using nt of his strength" and a "crushing oimately five-second "bear hug," according to the complaint.

e complaint that Carmack reported that the child began screaming "in apparent t he thought he had "squeezed the 'poop' out" of the child.

xuse specialist told detectives that a "bear hug" would not explain the injuries.

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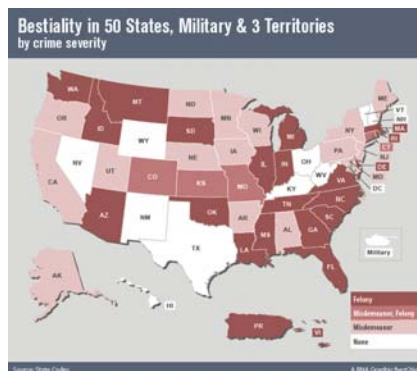
CARMACK

## The Link to Child Abuse

### ❖ Bestiality

***Bestiality “is the single greatest predictor of people who will molest children,”***

Detective Jeremy Hoffman, of the Fairfax County, Va., Sheriff's Office



Source: *Bestiality Laws Matter in Preventing, Prosecuting Sex Crimes*, Four Part Series. Jessica Desilva. Bloomberg BNA. 2016



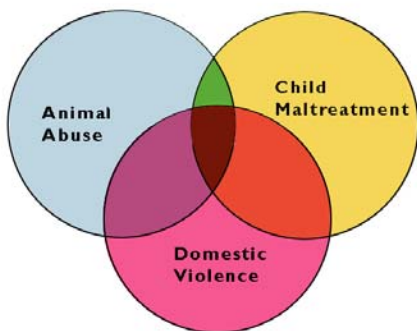
## Child Abuse – What Can We Do?

### ❖ Therapy Options for Animal Abusers

- Usually means empathy has been lost
  - ✓ Sources: Abuse, trauma, learned behavior
- Re-teaching empathy becomes the purpose for therapy
  - ✓ Also important to children who witness, not participate in, animal abuse



## The Link to Domestic Violence



**“Batterers who also abuse their pets are both **more controlling** and use **more dangerous forms of violence** than batterers who do not.”**

Simmons & Lehmann (2007) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 22, No. 9, p. 1211-1222 (2007)



## The Link to Domestic Violence

- ❖ In domestic violence situations, harming animals:
  - perpetuates context of terror
  - demonstrates power
  - warns "you may be next"
  - eliminates source of support or comfort
  - provides incentive for woman to stay
  - reinforces that there is no safe place



## The Link to Domestic Violence

### ❖ Lethality Assessment

- 3 top indicators that a woman will be killed by her batterer
  - ✓ Homicide or suicide gestures / threats
  - ✓ Access to weapons
  - ✓ Threat to mutilate or kill companion animals

Source: Latham Foundation

### ❖ Yet, people don't leave DV situations out of fear for their animals

- 1 in 3 won't leave because they can't take animals with them
- 25% return to abuser because of concern for their animals

Source: Humane Society of the United States



## Domestic Violence – What Can We Do?

### ❖ Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE)

- NM legislature set aside funds to provide short-term housing for companion animals in domestic violence situations.
- NMCADV and APNM
- Since July 2014, 129 animals have received assistance!

### ❖ On-Site Sheltering of Animals at DV Shelters

- Positive Links currently working with 2 shelters to open their doors to entire families, including companion animals
- Working with others in the community to provide needed supplies
- Funding for inside and/or outside accommodations





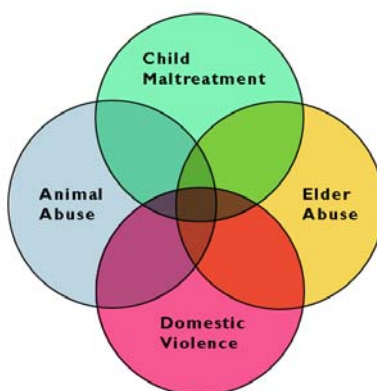
## Domestic Violence – What Can We Do?

### ❖ Protective Orders

- Some states allow companion animals in protective orders
  - ✓ NM law does not mention animals in the authorizing statutes
    - Efforts to explicitly allow animals in protective orders have failed numerous times



## The Link to Elder Abuse



## The Link to Elder Abuse

- ❖ Elders benefit greatly from companion animals:
  - Increase levels of activity
  - Provide companionship and support
  - Ease loss in natural disasters, bereavement
  - When moving to residential care, there are significant benefits when elderly persons keep their companion animal(s)
- ❖ Puts the elderly and their animals at risk of
  - Coercion
  - Abuse
- ❖ Numerous cases of abuse of elderly person and companion animal in an attempt to gain power
  - Family members
  - Caregivers



## The Link – Policy Needs

- ❖ Animals in protective orders
- ❖ Additional funding for CARE and on-site programs
- ❖ Cross reporting allowances and/or requirements
- ❖ Inclusion of felony for animal abuse in presence of children
- ❖ Bestiality laws
- ❖ Training for more professions



## Positive Links, Inc.

### ❖ Bi-annual NM Conference on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence

- 12th year of the conference!



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Forming Positive Links

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