

# P E T - A B U S E . C O M

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May 15, 2003

The Honorable Richard Morelli, State Attorney  
State Attorney's Office  
101 Lafayette St.  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Morelli:

Pet-Abuse.Com is an international animal welfare organization focused on issues of criminal animal cruelty. This letter concerns a recent case that your office is handling, involving Roosevelt Rhodes of Winchester St., in Hartford. As you know, Rhodes faces charges stemming from an alleged incident occurring on May 6, 2003, during which he chained his dog, Socks, to the trailer hitch of his truck and dragged the dog six blocks through the city's North End. According to news sources, Rhodes later explained to officials that he was "angry with [the] 2-year-old Akita [for urinating] in the cab of his truck." For at least two blocks, police said the dog was unable to keep up with the truck and was dragged on its side.

A sign reportedly posted on Rhodes' property states, "Never mind the dog, beware of owner." We strongly feel that Rhodes is in fact someone to beware of, and that he also must be held accountable for his cruel and illegal actions. We are concerned by the fact that Rhodes chose to handle his frustration and anger by torturing a helpless animal that he claims to love. This type of pathology has been established as a precursor to interpersonal violence, and we urge you to take it seriously.

Mental health professionals and top law-enforcement officials consider cruelty to animals a red flag. The American Psychiatric Association identifies animal cruelty as one of the diagnostic criteria for conduct disorders, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) uses reports of animal cruelty in analyzing the threat potential of suspected and known criminals. When asked how many serial killers had a history of abusing animals, FBI supervisory special agent Alan Brantley, a psychologist who was formerly on staff at a maximum security prison, said, "The real question should be, how many have not?" Experts agree that it is the severity of the behavior-not the species of the victim-that matters. We feel that the sheer brutality of this grisly crime speaks volumes.

We understand that Rhodes has been offered a recommended sentence, and has until the continuation date of June 4, 2003 to contemplate the offer. We thoroughly support and applaud the stipulation to ban Rhodes from keeping animals for life; however we feel that due to the brutal nature of this crime, a period of incarceration and the requirement for him undergo a thorough psychological evaluation followed by mandatory counseling and anger-management classes at his own expense should also be imposed. As repeat crimes against animals are the rule rather than the exception among animal abusers, and given the violent and malicious nature of his alleged actions that day, we implore you to take every measure necessary to ensure that Rhodes be prohibited from all contact with animals, to determine whether he currently has animals in his custody, and to immediately seize any such animal or animals.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Alison Gianotto  
Director

CC: Glenn Kaas

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