On the fateful morning, [Robert] Mendheim had just finished schooling twenty-two pups when eleven police cars came tearing up the road. "You'd have thought they were after Bonnie and Clyde or John Dillinger," Mendheim said. In addition to the planted eyewitnesses, agents hiding in shrubbery with long distance lenses had taped the entire training exercise...—Greyhound USA, January 1989

No, it wasn't Bonnie and Clyde or John Dillinger Florida law-enforcement officers were after, but greyhound trainers suspected of breaking state law. On the morning of October 4, 1988, The HSUS, with assistance from state and local law-enforcement agents, converged on a Lee, Florida, greyhound training track to arrest dog trainers for using live rabbits as lures for their charges. In the first felony raid of its kind, the Lee, Florida, action followed the first successful infiltration of such a training operation in the United States.

Robert Mendheim—one of America's most prominent greyhound owners with many of the country's most successful dogs—was not the target of the sting operation. He was just one of several trainers charged with releasing dogs to chase a live domestic rabbit at the training track that morning. In all, a dozen people were arrested; four, including Mr. Mendheim and track owner/operator George Frost, were charged with third-degree felonies, another eight for misdemeanor offenses.

The HSUS's undercover investigation began in early 1988, after the HSUS Southeast Regional Office in Tallahassee received an anonymous tip that someone was dumping large numbers of jackrabbit carcasses in the Lee, Florida, area. A rural community, Lee is located sixty miles east of Tallahassee, near the Georgia state line. A large number of highly successful greyhound owners and trainers reside there.

Twelve-dollar Jacks Faster than domestic rabbits, jackrabbits are traditionally used in " coursing"—releasing two or more greyhounds in an enclosed field to chase, and ultimately savage, a jackrabbit. "Jacks," as they are called, are widely used for this purpose because they dart about quickly, giving greyhounds a good run for their $12 cost. The dogs eventually catch up with their quarry,
Live Rabbis Whirled Around Track

In response to the anonymous call, the HSUS dispatched an investigator to the Lee, Florida, area to assess the situation. Using a cover that gave the investigator wide acceptance among kennel owners, the HSUS investigator made numerous visits to the Florida kennels. There, in relation to housing and schooling dogs for owners, George Frost operated a training track where, four mornings a week, as many as one hundred greyhounds came to train on live lures.

Over the course of several months, our investigator spent a great deal of time with the suspects and gained extensive information, not only about the widespread use of jackrabbits throughout the state, but also about the use of domestic rabbits during the second phase of the greyhound's schooling. Once a young greyhound has had its share of jackrabbits, it graduates to the more sophisticated training track. Training tracks can range from small dirt rings operated "whirligigs" to elaborate quarter-mile set-ups with motorized mechanical arms; many facilities operate clandestinely throughout Florida. There, live animals—usually domestic rabbits, although guinea pigs, chickens, and even cats have been known to be used—are fastened to the track's mechanical arm and whisked around the track at speeds of up to thirty-five miles per hour. As the dogs are released from the start box, the bait is chased—and ultimately devoured—by the greyhounds when the track operator switches the mechanical arm. The dogs are then "tossed" back into the start box by being allowed to savage the bait.

The HSUS investigator reported:

"When the mechanical arm is at a distance of approximately fifteen feet from me, I observed that the domestic rabbit was still alive. It was missing its upper arm by a rope around its midsection, the rabbit struggled to free itself..." With each successive run around the track, the rabbit became increasingly dirty until it looked almost brown. It was not possible to determine at what point the rabbit was killed... the forelegs and body of the rabbit were left behind..."

The use of live lures remains a standard training practice. Greyhound trainers, steeped in tradition, consistently assert that live lures give the dogs the added edge they need at the track. Some trainers go so far as to "shackle their dogs up with a live jackrabbit or kitten immediately before a race," says HSUS investigator. "I have seen many who believe that legislation that specifically prohibits greyhound baiting," says Mr. Baker, "Florida is unique in this aspect of greyhound racing; breeding and training occur to any great extent where strong legislation exists."

In Texas, Kentucky, and other states, legislation prohibiting the use of live lures is either inadequate or nonexistent. In 1989, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission adopted a regulation prohibiting the importation of jackrabbits into the state. The regulation was intended to prevent the importation of jackrabbits into the state and having witnessed and reported on by the Florida Game Commission. It's highly effective..."

"Some believe that the dogs are used to make them work..." HSUS investigator. "And I was told that many of the people who came to the track had travelled a distance of approximately fifteen feet from the mechanical arm stopped at a handcart..."

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by the abdomen to the track's mechanical arm and whirled once around the track to ensure that the track was in good working order. Shortly thereafter, the first two greyhounds were released to pursue the pathetic creature as it whirled face down around the quarter-mile track. After the initial run, the dogs were teased back to the start box by battering the live rabbit. After eighteen greyhounds had raced around the track, and a number of additional trainers had pulled their dog trucks into the line of waiting vehicles, the game commission investigator gave the go-ahead to training greyhounds. One greyhound trainer was quoted by the Madison County Sheriff: "We were instantly invaded." A total of eight marked and unmarked vehicles converged by the abdomen to the track's mechanical arm after the raid, Florida has a strong state law prohibiting live lures for the purpose of baiting animals.

### Florida Game Commission officers remove a dead domestic rabbit from the training track's mechanical arm after the October raid. Florida has a strong state law prohibiting live lures for the purpose of baiting animals.

### THE HSUS POLICY ON GREYHOUND RACING

The Humane Society of the United States believes that greyhound racing is cruel and, specifically, the training events known as coursing, in which greyhounds are trained to chase and kill a hare or other animal, and all practices utilizing live hares or other animals as lures in training greyhounds is cruel and, specifically, the training events known as coursing, in which greyhounds are trained to chase and kill a hare or other animal, and all practices utilizing live hares or other animals as lures in training greyhounds. In accordance with this policy, the Humane Society has joined the coalition of humane organizations and animal welfare advocates that is urging state legislators to ban greyhound racing.

### PROGRESS IN PUERTO RICO

In December, The HSUS visited Puerto Rico when a contingent of our staff traveled there to work with Puerto Rico's Department of Agriculture and the Puerto Rico Department of the Environment to educate the public and encourage them to support the ban on greyhound racing. In Puerto Rico, greyhound racing is allowed, and the HSUS is working to educate the public and encourage them to support the ban on greyhound racing. In Puerto Rico, greyhound racing is allowed, and the HSUS is working to educate the public and encourage them to support the ban on greyhound racing.

### DOGFIGHTERS PLEAD GUILTY

In June 1988, a major dogfighting raid took place in Clermont and Clinton counties in Ohio as a result of an intensive investigation conducted by the Clermont County Sheriff's Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (see the Fall 1988 HSUS News). The Great Lakes Regional Office assisted in the investigation and raid. Two couples were arrested: Gregory (William) Lowe and Margaret Samantha Lowe of New Richmond, Ohio; and Kenneth Gaines and Cathy Bell Gaines of Blanchester, Ohio. Cathy Bell Gaines pleaded guilty to state felony charges of dogfighting in January 1989.

The HSUS' decision to stand trial, on February 21, 1987, resulted in a flood of requests from humane groups for more information on the subject. Mr. Paulhus has traveled throughout the region to give workshops on satanism and Santeria and the use of animals in their rituals. In North Carolina, almost two hundred law enforcement officers attended an all-day seminar to learn how to recognize and combat the practices in their own areas. Mr. Paulhus is scheduled to conduct seminars on the subject in Connecticut and California in upcoming months.

### WELCOME TO MISSISSIPPI

The Southeast Region has been expanded to include another state. As of the new year, Mississipi joined Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina to become the fifth state covered by the office. We welcome all our new members and look forward to working for and with you.

### REGION REVIEW

**Southeast Regional Director Marc Paulhus (left) and others search the site of a Santeria sacrifice in a Miami Park.**

Kenneth Gaines, however, did not plead guilty because he was hospitalized on the day of the hearing. As of the end of February, no new date had been set for a hearing on the dogfighting charges. On February 27, Mr. Gaines did plead guilty to federal felony drug charges which resulted from the dogfighting investigation.

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