In cooperation with the FBI and the Clermont County (Ohio) Sheriff's Department, The HSUS helped crack the nation's largest dogfighting ring in June 1988, after months of undercover investigation (photo, above). Six ring leaders were arrested and indicted by a grand jury on state felony charges; federal charges are pending. Nearly 150 fighting dogs were seized. Evidence revealed an elaborate underground dogfighting network involving organizers from nearly every state and seven foreign countries. In Colorado, in February 1988, an investigation by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and The HSUS led to the first conviction under that state's felony dogfighting law (photo, left). Thirty-four dogs were seized. Though illegal in all states, dogfighting, a brutal "sport" in which dogs are trained to fight to the death as crowds of bettors cheer them on, continues.
GREYHOUND TRAINERS

In October 1988, following an HSUS undercover investigation, state and local law-enforcement officials raided the Frost/Brown Kennels near Tallahassee, Florida, where hundreds of greyhounds annually were trained to race by chasing, and eventually killing, live rabbit lures. Four people were the first in the state to be arrested under Florida's felony law, which bans the use of live animals for baiting purposes. Eight others were arrested on misdemeanor charges. The raid sent shock waves through the huge greyhound racing industry, which has lied for years about the pervasive use of small live animals to bait racing dogs. An HSUS Investigator photographed trainers tying live rabbits to a mechanical arm, which then whirled the creatures around the racing track at speeds up to 35 m.p.h. while greyhounds chased them (photos, above/right). Even racing track at speeds up to 35 m.p.h. while greyhounds chased live animals to bait racing dogs.

"Imagine investigating the deplorable conditions at puppy mills, or, even worse, the establishments of dealers who collect and sell dogs—former pets—to laboratories. You walk away from those pitiful faces and broken bodies knowing it might be six months before results can be made— or one or two years or longer before you can get legislation passed to alleviate the situation. It's the hardest thing I've ever done." It's hard to describe how it feels to have to sit through a night of dog or cockfighting—to sit and just watch one animal after another die an agonizing death. To fit in with the crowd—to keep from blowing our covers—we even have to fake enjoyment, fake laughter. Unfortunately, to attend these events is the only way we can obtain evidence that will be accepted and used in court to convict animal abusers. Collecting photographs, videotapes, and other on-site evidence that can be presented to legislators is the only way we can convince them that a problem exists and that a new law needs to be created." HSUS agents have also been working during the past year to uncover cruelty on fur ranches and factory farms; at animal dealers’ establishments, exotic animals auctions, zoos, and circuses; and in pet sections of variety stores.

In September 1988, an HSUS investigation into organized cockfighting in Hialeah, Florida, resulted in the conviction and state laws—that will prevent cruelty from occurring in the future.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE CHALLENGED

HSUS investigators are unsung heroes. Often working undercover, they become faceless, nameless. They rarely get the credit they deserve. And when HSUS cases are closed, their identities must often remain secret, ready for the next assignment.

HSUS investigators sometimes risk their lives investigating cruelty to animals. They have been threatened, beaten, and shot at. They confront cruelty up close, in person, on a constant basis. Often, they must resist the overwhelming urge to intervene and rescue an animal when to do so would ruin an investigation and doom countless others.

"It's ironic that we who care so much about animals put ourselves in situations in which we can't do anything about the cruelty we see—at least not immediately," said an HSUS investigator who has been working undercover for eight years.

"Imagine investigating the deplorable conditions at puppy mills, or, even worse, the establishments of dealers who collect and sell dogs—former pets—to laboratories. You walk away from those pitiful faces and broken bodies knowing it might be six months before results can be made—or one or two years or longer before you can get legislation passed to alleviate the situation. It's the hardest thing I've ever done." It's hard to describe how it feels to have to sit through a night of dog or cockfighting—to sit and just watch one animal after another die an agonizing death. To fit in with the crowd—to keep from blowing our covers—we even have to fake enjoyment, fake laughter. Unfortunately, to attend these events is the only way we can obtain evidence that will be accepted and used in court to convict animal abusers. Collecting photographs, videotapes, and other on-site evidence that can be presented to legislators is the only way we can convince them that a problem exists and that a new law needs to be created." HSUS agents have also been working during the past year to uncover cruelty on fur ranches and factory farms; at animal dealers’ establishments, exotic animals auctions, zoos, and circuses; and in pet sections of variety stores.

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HSUS CLEANS UP PUPPY MILLS

Ongoing HSUS investigations of puppy mills throughout the Midwest have resulted in dramatic changes in many dog-breeding establishments, particularly in Kansas, which holds within its borders the most—and the worst—puppy mills in the nation (photos, right and below). HSUS investigators have repeatedly exposed abominable conditions, including starvation, exposure to extreme weather, outright abuse, and lack of veterinary care, in dozens of USDA-licensed breeding facilities. Raised as a “cash crop,” Kansas’s sick puppies, born of long-suffering mothers, ended up in pet stores across the nation. HSUS exposés aroused tremendous public outrage, and the state was forced to adopt one of the nation’s most comprehensive laws to protect dogs in puppy mills, effective January 1989.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

• Help prevent cruelty to animals by keeping your eyes open for cruelty in your own community. You don’t have to be a professional investigator to find animals in distress; cruelty may be found as close as your local pet shop, or neighbor’s yard.
• Report instances of cruelty in your area to the humane society or animal-control agency that has police powers to enforce state anti-cruelty laws. Expose chronic cruelty problems by writing letters to the editor and op-ed pieces for your local media. Contact your local legislators and demand that something be done.
• HSUS investigators welcome any information you may have on organized or institutionalized cruelty to animals including: dogfighting, cockfighting, Santeria, greyhound and horse racing, the sale of pets in pet stores and variety stores, puppy mills, animal auctions and dealers, abuse of farm, laboratory and zoo animals, and illegal practices concerning wildlife. Contact our investigators at HSUS headquarters in Washington, D.C.—(202) 452-1100—or at one of our eight regional offices: Great Lakes Regional Office, (419) 352-5414; Gulf States Regional Office, (512) 854-3442; Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, (201) 927-5611; Midwest Regional Office, (816) 474-0888; New England Regional Office, (203) 434-8940; North Central Regional Office, (312) 474-0906; Southeast Regional Office, (904) 386-3435; West Coast Regional Office, (916) 447-3295.
• Finally, help The HSUS obtain more arrests and convictions of animal abusers. Your tax-deductible contribution will keep cruelty investigations going throughout the country. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.