

ANIMAL CRUELTY SEMINAR
TOOLS FOR SUCCESSFUL INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OF CRIMES AGAINST ANIMALS

Proposed Agenda (subject to change)

9 am – Noon (with breaks)

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Why animal crimes need to be taken seriously: The correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence, a look into the mind of an animal abuser, when the abuser is a child

What Constitutes Animal Abuse and Neglect & The Law

The Crime Scene: Securing the scene, collecting evidence, photographing the scene, and documentation

Noon – 1 pm – Working lunch

Animal Forensics: Bones, how bugs play a role. etc

Clues on an Animals Body & Animal Emergency First Aid: Identifying types of abuse on animals, animal behavior

What the Prosecutors you to know – "Investigatory and Trial techniques in Animal Abuse Cases."

Case Studies

5 PM – Dismiss

Speakers Include (in alphabetical order):

Jason H. Byrd, Ph.D., D-ABFE, Associate Director
William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine
University of Florida College of Medicine

Dr. Byrd is a Board Certified Forensic Entomologist and Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Entomology. He is the current Vice-President of the American Board of Forensic Entomology, and the Immediate Past-President of the North American Forensic Entomology Association. He is the first person to be elected President of both professional North American Forensic Entomology Associations. Dr. Byrd is the Associate Director of the William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine at the University of Florida's College of Medicine. At the University of Florida, he instructs courses in forensic science at the University of Florida's nationally recognized Hume Honors College. He served for over a decade as a faculty member of the Virginia Institute of Forensic Science and Medicine.

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Outside of academics Dr. Byrd serves as an Administrative Officer within the National Disaster Medical System, Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team, Region IV. He also serves as the Logistics Chief for the Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System. Currently he serves as a subject editor for the Journal of Medical Entomology. He has published numerous scientific articles on the use and application of entomological evidence in legal investigations. Dr. Byrd has combined his formal academic training in Entomology and Forensic Science to serve as a consultant and educator in both criminal and civil legal investigations throughout the United States and Internationally. Dr. Byrd specializes in the education of law enforcement officials, medical examiners, coroners, attorneys, and other death investigators on the use and applicability of arthropods in legal investigations. His research efforts have focused on the development and behavior of insects that have forensic importance, and he has over 15 years experience in the collection and analysis of entomological evidence. Dr. Byrd is a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

Geoff Fleck, Animal Legal Defense Fund

Mr. Fleck is an Assistant State Attorney for the State Attorney's Office, 8th Judicial Circuit, Gainesville, Florida, where he has been employed since May of 1997. His current assignment is to the office's Special Prosecutions Unit, where he has trial responsibility for complex white collar crimes as well as felony cases including homicides and other violent crimes and offenders. He also serves as the office's Training Supervisor and co-ordinates internal training in trial preparation and practice for the attorney staff. His passion, however, is the prosecution of animal cruelty and fighting cases.

Prior to joining the State Attorney's Office, Mr. Fleck practiced in the Miami-Dade County area of the state as a partner in the law firm of Friend & Fleck, P.A. and as a sole practitioner where he specialized in criminal defense and post-conviction litigation. Mr. Fleck is a 1972 graduate of Emory University (B.A.) and a 1975 graduate of the University of Miami Law School. He is admitted to and a member in good standing of the Florida Bar and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and while in private practice was admitted to the federal Southern and Northern District of Florida bars as well as the 2d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 11th Circuit Court of Appeals Bars and the United States Supreme Court.

In the past year, Mr. Fleck has prosecuted upwards of 50 felony animal cruelty cases, many through verdict after jury trials. Every trial has resulted in conviction, and every conviction, barring extraordinary circumstances, has resulted in a jail or prison sentence. A recent guilty cruelty verdict resulted in a sentence of 5 years prison followed by 10 years probation.

Dr. Melinda Merck, D.V.M.

Dr. Melinda Merck is a forensic veterinarian consulting on cases involving animals. Dr. Merck assists investigators of animal cruelty with crime scene investigation as well as the examination of live and deceased victims. She helps with large scale operations including exhumations of burial sites and examination of skeletal animal remains. She frequently testifies as a veterinary

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forensic expert for animal cruelty cases around the country, including cases involving animal fighting, neglect and trauma.

Dr. Merck is a member of the Board of Directors for North American Veterinary Conference and is Program Chair of the Veterinary Forensic Science track. Dr. Merck is a member of the Board of Directors for the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association. She is the co-author of the book "**Veterinary Forensic Investigation of Animal Cruelty: A Guide for Veterinarians and Law Enforcement**." She is the author of the first textbook, "Veterinary Forensics: Animal Cruelty Investigation," by Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

Her follow-up textbook, "Veterinary Forensics Second Edition: Animal Cruelty Investigations," also by Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, will be out later this year.

Dr. Merck frequently provides training for veterinary, attorney and law enforcement professionals internationally on the use of veterinary medical knowledge in the investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases. She developed the first Veterinary Forensics course for University of Florida veterinary school and frequently lectures at other veterinary colleges. She teaches workshops on animal crime scenes and the processing of burial and surface remains. She is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Science and the International Association of Blood Stain Analysts. In addition, Dr.

Merck applies her expertise to animal disaster responses by providing training in Disaster Sheltering and Basic Animal Emergency Response for American Humane Association. She is a member of their Red Star Emergency Services disaster team.

Sherry Ramsey

Director of Animal Cruelty Prosecutions

Sherry Ramsey, Esq., is The HSUS' director of animal cruelty prosecutions. She spent three years as an animal law attorney in The HSUS' Animal Protection Litigation department before she began focusing exclusively on animal cruelty prosecutions in 2009.

A former assistant district attorney and a current adjunct professor of animal law at New York Law School, Ramsey specializes in helping prosecutors build effective animal cruelty cases. Her prosecutor and judicial training seminars provide lawyers with tools to investigate, charge, and prosecute animal cruelty cases.

In early 2009, Ramsey expanded her legal training seminars to include Judge Advocate Generals (JAG) attorneys and prosecutors on military bases. The seminars launched at Fort Bliss, which is the nation's second-largest military installation. As a result of attention to this area, the Joint Service Committee on Military Justice proposed including a paragraph on animal cruelty and abandonment in the Uniform Code of Military Justice to provide stronger penalties and more consistent enforcement of animal cruelty within the military.

As a licensed attorney in New York and New Jersey, Ramsey runs an online group for prosecutors and attorneys general to exchange ideas and information on animal cruelty cases.

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Ramsey co-authored an article in "Juvenile and Family Justice Today" called "Protecting Domestic Violence Victims by Protecting Their Pets." Ramsey has also published two articles on prosecuting animal cruelty cases for the quarterly newsletter of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

In 2010, Ramsey conducted seminars or spoke on animal cruelty issues (including domestic violence and juvenile crime) at:

- 1 the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges meeting in Las Vegas;
- 2 the District Attorney's office Rockland County, N.Y.;
- 3 the New Jersey State Bar Association;
- 4 the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School in Virginia;
- 5 the National Association of Prosecuting Attorneys conference; and
- 6 the Oregon Department of Justice.

In 2011, Ramsey conducted judicial trainings at:

- 1 the Criminal Justice Institute in St. Paul
- 2 the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges annual conference in New York City;
- 3 the New Jersey State Bar Association's annual meeting;
- 4 the Maryland Bar Association conference in Baltimore; and
- 5 the "Investigating and Prosecuting Animal Cruelty Cases" conference for prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and animal control officers in Florida