

Greyhound Racing -- The Truth.

A journey from anti-racing to pro-racing.

March 12, 2014 at 3:33pm
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Okay whoa. Hang on a second. You're anti-racing. I get it, but you're so full of smoke I can't see the ground in front of me. Being used by people? Suffering? Forced to race? Do you even know what you're talking about? Have you spent time with trainers, owner, operators etc? Have you watched how they interact with the dogs in their care? I have. I have never SEEN a greyhound suffer at the hands of their trainers. And I certainly have never SEEN a greyhound "forced" to race. You don't force a greyhound to do anything. You may encourage their natural instincts to chase by giving them the opportunity to chase, but you certainly don't force a greyhound to do anything he doesn't want to do.

Now don't go jumping down my throat without knowing a thing about me. But I will tell you this. I'm from Ohio (non-racing state) then we were stationed in Illinois (Another non-racing state.) And yes, I was involved in animal "rescue" and greyhound adoption. And yes, at that time, I was ANTI-Racing. I heard the stories, saw the pictures, and then we were stationed in Alabama and EVERYTHING CHANGED.

The first time I stepped onto the Victoryland compound eight years ago, I was scared to death someone would find out my anti-racing stance. What I discovered, what I SAW, changed my mind forever. And not only did it change my mind, my attitude, about greyhound racing, these trainers and kennel hands have become some of my most trusted friends. They are kind, gentle souls who care very deeply for these dogs.

The track crates, and yes they are crates, are nicely constructed and roomy. I can curl up in one of these crates and have room to spare. I'm no small woman either. I'm five foot nine and twice the weight of the average male greyhound. So trust me, if I'm comfortable in one of these crates, the greyhounds are too. Truth, these track crates are taller, deeper and wider than the ones you can buy at Petsmart. I know. I went away from pet store crates to track crates because track crates are bigger. Crate your dog? Rest well in the knowledge that the pet store crate you're using, the racing industry has deemed too small for professional racers.

The truth is when you "train" a greyhound to chase, all you are doing is

encouraging a natural instinct. You walk or give the greyhound a ride to the track, hold on to the dog's collar, and when the fast moving, white, fuzzy toy goes flying by, you let them go. The greyhound will either chase it, or he won't. The dogs that do chase it go on to race. The dog that doesn't is placed for adoption. It really is that simple. There's no abuse there.

Another farce, their diets. These dogs are athletes. Their diets are designed to give them the nutrients their bodies demand. There's nothing wrong with red meat, chicken, pasta, veggies, omega three, and vitamin supplements. Hell, that's what dog food is made of. It just doesn't come in kibble form. Why? Do a bit of research. When you cook food it loses its nutritional value, and these greyhounds, these athletes, need every ounce of nutrition to meet their body's demands. In truth, they eat better than most of us do. I'm sure everyone's heard that processed foods are bad for you. Well, you know what? Kibble is the same damned thing -- a processed food. If it's bad for humans, it's safe to say, it's also bad for dogs. So why does everyone condemn trainers for feeding real -- unprocessed -- food to their dogs when the dogs deserve, and get, so much better?

Track greyhounds also have nice beds, either luxury carpets cut to fit the crates or a mountain of fluffy newspaper strips, to sleep on. Their beds are cleaned, changed, washed and fluffed daily. Do you do that for your dogs? I don't. I do it once a week. The track's kennel buildings are climate controlled, heated and air conditioned just like a house.

If you crate and work, how many times does your dog go out to relieve himself? How much exercise does he or she get? Track dogs are turned out 4 to 5 times a day to relieve themselves. They are exercised every day either in the sprint pen or on the track. I guarantee you, these dogs are in better shape, physically, mentally, and emotionally, than your pet greyhound. A greyhound that is deprived of its ability to run is not happy. I know. I've seen hundreds of track greyhounds and pet greyhounds. Track greyhounds, bark, dance, play bow, wag their tails and act like goofs. Those are happy dogs. And sadly, I've seen pet greyhounds that just lay on the couch, head down, and eyes closed. Sorry folks, that dog, that pet, is depressed and he's moping.

The happiest pet greyhounds I've seen behave like track greyhounds. They

bark, prance, play bow, and wag their tails. In short, they are goofs. These pets are also the ones that belong to owners who understand that a happy greyhound is one who runs often. As such, these responsible owners tend to keep their greyhounds active and in "track" condition. Why? Because they understand what they have. They have a greyhound -- a hunting dog. One that's been bred to hunt by sight and gifted with the speed and athletic ability to do what the job requires. And that instinct, that gift from god that's been honed by man, will not stop just because the dog retires. Can you say you truly understand the dog's needs, what it requires, and not what you think it requires? Because, I'm here to tell you many people don't. Your dog, greyhound or otherwise, doesn't operate on human rules or have human needs. He is a dog, a greyhound, and his needs, wants and desires are very different from your own. Stop anthropomorphizing them. Your dog is not human, and you know what, he doesn't want to be.

Also do you have a vet on call? One that will drop everything and run to you when you need him for a medical emergency? No? The track does. The trainers do, and they have more than one. They have many. Heck Victoryland worked closely with a vet school. The top guys who taught the next generation to be vets were on call for them. Can you say that? Hell, can you even afford that type of expertise for your hound? My guess, is probably not. And yet, track dogs get the best medical care money can provide, as well as, routine medical procedures like vaccinations.

"But what about euthanasia?" Well, I hate to break it to you, dogs, cats, cattle etc. are not human. And despite your moral objections on the subject, euthanasia is --and always will be -- an appropriate medical treatment to end pain and/or suffering of an animal. And in some respects, they are luckier than we are. It's the reason for the whole "right to die" movement. And as my vet says, "Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should." My point? Is it right to euthanize a healthy animal without any sort of medical condition? Many of you will scream, "No." Yet, it happens every day in shelters across this nation and no one says a word, or passes legislation to stop that. But you cry foul, when a grey-

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hound-- through his own judgment -- has an accident, and the owner opts -- on rare occasion -- to end the dog's pain and suffering through a medically approved and humane measure such as euthanasia. What is wrong with you people? It's the owner's right. You wouldn't want someone telling you when it's time to euthanize your dog. Why do you do it to them? Why do you make a hard decision harder by judging them? I've seen trainers cry over the loss of one of one of their hounds, and what you're doing isn't right.

And when a track closes, where are you anti-racing folks? Where's Grey2K? The answer, nowhere. You abandon your cause when it comes time to put up or shut up. I know. I've handled two track closures at Victoryland. And you know who stepped up to help me place the hounds that needed to go somewhere? It wasn't the anti-racing folks at Grey2K, or the anti-racing adoption groups. It was me, and a small handful of people who were pro-racing.

If you're going to end racing. Fine. Stand up and put your money where your mouth is. HELP THE DOGS --the ones that you and your cause are putting in the line of fire -- instead of having someone else clean up the mess you've made. You want to talk about and stop unnecessary

euthanasia, then stop putting hundreds and thousands of dogs at risk.

Adoption people do all we can do. We take the dogs as they trickle off the tracks and find them homes. But when you close a track, you flood us and over flow the dam. Hundreds of dogs are in danger of euthanasia then, and you know what, you're the ones responsible. Not the Tracks, not the owners, YOU -- anti-racing folks are responsible. Your actions have a cascade effect that G2K uses in their marketing schemes. They put hundreds of dogs at risk every time they introduce legislation and close tracks. And you give them the money to do it. It's time you stop blaming trainers, kennel owners, and the racing industry. You have greyhound blood on your hands, and you can't wash it off. It's time for you to stand up and take responsibility for what you have done.

The greyhound industry punishes those who do atrocious things. They are banned and criminal charges are filed. But what about you? What happens to you when you commit atrocities against the hounds? Huh? In the world we live in now, not much. You claim you're heroes. You're NOT.

So in short, you're no different than the people you claim are the devil. Your

house is a heated kennel. You crate them when you're gone, you feed them the best food you can afford, you make sure they get all the appropriate vet care, see to their exercise needs just like a trainer. You make the hard decisions when required just like an owner. They are you-- people doing what they need to do to take care of their hounds. So stop drinking the Kool-Aid already.

You have been lied to and deceived. I know. I was too, but I woke up. It's time you do too. "But I've seen the pictures. I've read the stories." Yeah, well I did too, and for a while, I believed them. And then, I saw the truth -- the entire truth. Photoshop makes it so easy to crop a picture. So yeah, your eyes can deceive you -- especially online where you have no context of what is actually going on other than the description. And the best lies are the ones that include a morsle of truth. Those, my friends, are the facts. It's time you see Grey2K for what it is. A propaganda and money machine.

If you want to rescue something, help the local shelters, donate money to the people on the ground. The ones who actually place these dogs. Until you do, all you're doing is harming the breed you claim to love.