

November 21, 2006

The Honorable Michael Moncrief  
Mayor of Fort Worth  
Fort Worth City Council  
Fort Worth City Hall  
1000 Throckmorton St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

3 pages via e-mail and fax: [Mike.Moncrief@fortworthgov.org](mailto:Mike.Moncrief@fortworthgov.org); 817-392-2409

Dear Mayor Moncrief and Councilors:

We hope that this finds you well. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is an international nonprofit organization with more than 1 million members and supporters dedicated to the humane treatment of animals. Our headquarters is being flooded with inquiries from Fort Worth-area citizens who are outraged over the city's failure to provide veterinary medical care for a dog who was fatally shot by a Fort Worth police officer in the early morning hours of November 14, 2006. According to television news reports and confirmation by city officials, the dying dog, named Bud, was left at the city's animal shelter without care for several hours, during which time he died slowly, most likely of blood loss, organ damage, and/or shock.

News video footage shows that Bud, *unable to walk*, was needlessly restrained on a control pole by animal control officer Barry Alexander and prodded to limp forward in obvious pain. At this time, Bud—who had reportedly been shot at least twice, in the head and chest—was not trying to bite or harm anyone and appears extremely weak and terrified. Alexander roughly carries Bud a few feet, at which point Bud gives a mouthing gesture that is—to anyone versed in animal behavior and body language—clearly a warning indicating pain. However, Alexander appears frightened of the dying dog and drops him.

The footage then shows that Alexander lifts Bud *by only the skin on his back and the noose around his neck* and places Bud into a compartment on an animal control truck. Please consider that at this time, Bud was immobile and severely injured. Professional animal handling technique and minimum standards require a dog in this condition to be muzzled and carried on a stretcher or flat board supported by appropriate bedding and **then transported directly to an emergency veterinary hospital in a manner that prevents movement as much as possible**. The rough handling documented in this case was uncalled for and unquestionably inhumane.

According to Fort Worth's own Web site (<http://www.fortworthgov.org/health/CH/AC/animalcruelty.asp>), failing to provide veterinary medical care is a violation of law and is something that law enforcement takes very seriously: "Our pets and other animals rely on us to take care or (sic) them and provide them with needed veterinary services, food, water and shelter. ... Animal cruelty or neglect is something the City of Fort Worth takes seriously. The Fort Worth Animal Care and Control Division and the Fort Worth Police Department are working together to ensure that animals are protected and violators are prosecuted" (emphasis ours). The Web site states that companion animal owners are required by law to provide animals in their care with "veterinary care as needed to prevent suffering." **If any other individual**

**allowed an animal in his or her custody to slowly bleed to death without seeking veterinary attention, these agencies would be taking action to prosecute the responsible individual. Because the responsible individual in this case is a law enforcement officer entrusted by the public to protect animals, the case is all the more disturbing.**

On November 14, I spoke with Lt. Sullivan and was told that Fort Worth city police officers are specifically trained to shoot to injure, not kill, attacking animals, human or not. We certainly understand such a policy where humans are concerned, but please consider that for animals—especially when the city animal control department does not have a veterinarian on staff and claims to lack the budget to provide animals with emergency veterinary care—such a policy causes suffering. If this policy is indeed in effect currently, **we urge you to immediately issue a directive to Fort Worth police officers not only allowing but requiring them to end the suffering of dangerous animals stopped with gunfire as well as other animals in the throes of death.**

Perhaps most troubling is the fact that Alexander is a trained euthanasia technician who had access to sodium pentobarbital at the shelter when Bud was admitted, according to animal control supervisors. He could have ended Bud's suffering quickly but instead reportedly decided to leave him in a cage to die from his wounds. There is also an emergency veterinary hospital (<http://www.aehnt.com/>) that's just 30 minutes away from the scene as well as from the shelter—and open all night every night and 24 hours on holidays—where Bud could have been taken for treatment.

**Immediate refresher training in the identification of illness and injury in animals and in professional animal handling techniques is needed to prevent another tragedy** and retain the public's trust in the city's animal control program. PETA can help by providing the following *free of charge*:

- ✓ Staff training in disease and injury recognition
- ✓ Staff training in the handling of severely injured animals
- ✓ Examples of animal control agencies' policies that address after-hours animal-related emergencies, veterinary care for ill and injured animals, and euthanasia

As the video footage shows, the incident involving Bud was gruesome and suggests that Alexander may lack the judgment, professionalism, and compassion that the public expects from shelter employees. It is crucial that the city publicly acknowledge that it failed Bud when it failed to provide him with the basic care required by law and expected of citizens when dealing with animals. City officials must take immediate steps to implement policies and procedures at the animal control shelter to prevent the suffering and rough handling of any other animal in the city's custody. **PETA stands ready to assist in any way needed.**

Meanwhile, I am attaching important materials that can be shared with armed field officers, including an article about a recent incident in which three police officers tried to shoot a dog and ended up suffering wounds from bullets and fragments that ricocheted. In another case that occurred just weeks ago, a police officer shot at a dog, and gunshot fragments injured the dog's *owner*, who was standing nearby. The use of gunshot is extremely dangerous to your officers and to the public and should be avoided.

Our members are anxiously awaiting an update from us about the actions that are being taken by Fort Worth city officials to address this incident and prevent another tragedy. We hope to be able to give them some encouraging news in a timely manner. **May we please hear from you soon?**

Thank you for your time and serious consideration and for all your hard work for the citizens of Fort Worth.

Sincerely yours,

Teresa Lynn Chagrin, Animal Care & Control Specialist  
Domestic Animal and Wildlife Rescue & Information Department

cc: Dr. James Agyemang, Animal Care and Control Division manager  
Cynthia Vega, WFAA Channel 8  
David Quinlan, NBC 5 reporter  
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