The Connection Between
ANIMAL ABUSE
and
HUMAN VIOLENCE

Dr. Harold Hovel
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Four Boys Are Charged In
Assault of 7-Year-Old

The Abuse of Animals and Domestic
Violence: A National Survey of
Shelters for Women who are Battered

‘Kip Is Out of Control’

4 Girls and Teacher Shot to Death

Children now account
for most arson arrests

7th Body Identified
at Poughkeepsie House
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Animal cruelty is linked directly or indirectly with every type of violent crime and even with most non-violent crime.

Human beings would benefit enormously if fighting animal cruelty (investigating, prosecuting) were taken seriously. Many human lives would be saved and much human suffering would be prevented.

Violent individuals are “made” and not born. Children are born with a love of animals, but the home environment plays a major role in determining a child’s prosocial or antisocial personality and behavior. Child abuse, neglect, abandonment, and witnessing domestic violence are major factors in creating violent individuals.

Enuresis, arson, and animal cruelty in children are early identifying factors related to future violence. Early intervention may be effective in changing the pathological path a child is taking.

The majority of juvenile crime offenders and school shooters were involved in animal cruelty. Most violent crimes are committed by young people under the age of 30. A majority of prison inmates were involved in animal cruelty at some time in their early lives.

Dog fighting involves crimes such as drugs, guns, illegal gambling, pet theft, murder, and gang violence. 30 – 35 fatal dog attacks take place annually by dogs trained for fighting.

Serial killers are closely linked to animal cruelty, so much so that it is exceedingly rare to find one who did not begin his or her career with animal abuse.

Domestic violence (child abuse, spouse battering, and elder abuse) is closely associated with animal cruelty. Perpetrators use animal cruelty to control women and children in abusive situations. Battered women often remain in abusive situations out of fear for their pet. Animal cruelty is 11x more likely in domestic violence households than in non d.v. households.

Stopping domestic violence is a key to reducing our violent culture. Nearly all violent criminals and violent psychiatric patients were abused as children, and nearly all started committing animal cruelty at an early age.
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Reasons to Care About Animal Cruelty

For people who care about animals, the question never arises. Animals are living, breathing, sentient beings that cohabit the Earth, that feel joy, love, and happiness, but also suffer and feel pain just as human beings do. Cruelty is incompatible with a caring, moral society where empathy is a venerable quality.

For those who don’t care about animals, there are still many reasons to be concerned, reasons in their own self-interest. There is a close connection between animal cruelty and most forms of violent and non-violent crime. Those who are committing or have committed animal abuse are far more likely to be associated with assault, rape, murder and serial murder, arson, domestic violence, and pedophilia, than are non-animal abusers. Children who begin their young years abusing other living beings are at higher risk of future criminal behavior.

None of this is conjecture; it is borne out by countless studies and statistics. So why should we care about cruelty?

Fighting animal cruelty would:

• save many human lives
• prevent much human suffering
• prevent much animal suffering
• help to protect children
• help to protect women, children, and elders from domestic violence
• lead to far less human violence overall

Studies done by the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Association of Chiefs of Police, and many commissioned university professors under contract to these organizations show that animal cruelty is: - a predictor of future human violence; - an identifier of likely suspects; - an indicator of on-going child, spouse, or elder abuse; - and a felony for the most egregious cruelty incidences in all 50 states.
Violent Offenders Are Made, Not Born

Some psychologists and geneticists might contend that there are “bad genes” that predispose a newborn to a life of violence. While genetics may certainly play some role, “nature versus nurture” is a far more powerful influence. A child’s parents are the biggest influences and role models in his or her life. Children brought up with love and understanding, respect, and pro-social values taught at home and elsewhere are on a path to becoming valued and responsible adults that will repeat such a positive upbringing with their own children.

In contrast, a child brought up in an abusive home, undergoing neglect, abandonment, sexual, or physical abuse, or witnessing abuse of his or her mother, learns that violence is a normal way of life, and will very likely repeat that cycle when (and if) they become an adult. Along the way, the child may take out his or her anger and frustration on others weaker than they are, likely starting with animals and often becoming a school bully and a future child or spouse abuser. They may also become involved in violent or non-violent crime.

As statistics from federal and state prisons and criminal psychiatric facilities show: Nearly all violent individuals were abused as children, and over 70% of them began their violent careers with animal cruelty.

*If violent offenders are made and not born, why can’t we figure out what makes them and break the cycle?*

Decades of study by learned institutions, journals, national science associations, psychology and psychiatric organizations, university professors, and other professional associations all lead to one conclusion:

*Domestic violence is the single most important factor that creates violent individuals and perpetuates the cycle of violence.*

Combatting domestic violence much more aggressively than society has done in the past would be of enormous benefit to society, *and animal cruelty is the way most violent individuals begin.*
Information comes from books, journal articles, magazine and newspaper reports, scholarly studies and investigations, medical, prison, and psychiatric reports, law enforcement (UCR and NCVS), police reports, and social worker reports. Many references for this information are listed near the end of this booklet.
The degree of violence each year is staggering. The Table below shows yearly averages for several types of violent crimes in the US, averaged over about a 20-year period. Fortunately, violent crime has decreased somewhat after the start of the new century, but remains hugely costly in both human terms and societal terms, representing lost lives, lost productivity, and an enormous drain on resources. The estimated cost of child abuse alone is $124 billion per year [1] while the cost of all violent crime exceeds $450 billion [2]. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Crime Statistics, Yearly Averages [3]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape Victims: 450,000 (1 in 5 is reported)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Battered and Abused Women: 4.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abused Children: 2.7 million with 160,000 serious injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidnapped Children: 58,000 (125 “bad outcome”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers: 5,000 assaulted in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Victims: 15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serial Killer Victims: 300+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault: 893,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Suicides: 4,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Officers: 57,000 assaulted in the line of duty; 50-60 killed</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Children: 25 - 35 killed in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toddlers and Infants: 18 killed by dogs trained for fighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3 million juvenile arrests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 million violent crimes overall</td>
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* Numbers in brackets represent reference sources.
Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) are injured and killed in the line of duty investigating violent crime. As many as 60,000 assaults and 80 deaths have taken place in specific years as shown in these two charts. Source – FBI: UCR.
Most violent crimes are committed by young people, under the age of 30.
Historical Opinions

The link between animal cruelty and human violence is not a new phenomenon. The connection has been known for thousands of years, yet society seems unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to break the cycle.

As long as man continues to be the ruthless destroyer of lower living beings, he will never know peace. For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Pythagoras of Samos, 500 B.C.

If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men. St. Francis of Assissi, 1170 A.D.

Tormenting and killing animals will harden the minds of men toward their fellow men, and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of the lower creatures will not be very apt to be compassionate toward their own kind. John Locke, 1720 A.D.

He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals. Immanuel Kant, 1760 A.D.

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. Mohandas Ghandi, 1900 A.D.

Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace. Albert Schweitzer, 1950 A.D.

Data from the UCR* and NCVS*, Bureau of Justice, shows that most violent crime is committed by young people as the previous two charts show. Interventions which alter the path that young people are on could make a considerable difference in crimes and societal victimizations. * See Information Sources, page 6
Definitions of Animal Cruelty

Legally, animal cruelty is defined as “Socially Unacceptable Behavior That Intentionally Causes Unnecessary Pain, Suffering, or Distress To and / or Death of an Animal.”

Most Common Forms of Abuse: Excessive punishment; Chaining; Abandonment; Failure to provide sustenance.

Pathological Cruelty To Animals: Beating; Torturing; Burning; Scalding; Freezing, Skinning; Bone Breaking; Whipping; Amputation; Electric Prodding; Mutilation; Freezing; Killing; Crushing; Fighting.

Some crimes: misdemeanor in 50 states, other crimes now a felony in all 50 states as of 2014.

Most states have some version of this definition, carefully worded as shown in underline to not interfere with medical experimentation, agricultural practice, or societal activities such as hunting and trapping. Unfortunately the victims of these practices don’t understand the distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable or necessary versus unnecessary pain and suffering. In some cases, cruelty may occur out of ignorance or cultural practice, such as chaining dogs outside regardless of the weather. When pointed out to the dog owner what real distress the animal may be going through and that dogs are pack animals that need companionship, occasionally their sensitivities may be awakened and they bring the dog inside.

The kind of cruelty that is closely connected to human violence is the pathological kind where the intent is to cause as much pain and suffering as possible. An individual willing to cause such suffering to animals is not likely to be sympathetic and empathetic to humans.
Children are born with a love and fascination of animals. Babies are comforted by Teddy-Bears in all their forms. When a bit older, a hug for a kitten, rabbit, or dog is as second nature as a hug from Mom and Dad. Yet a few years later, some children turn into killers, as did the three school shooters shown in the bottom 3 pictures. What could have happened to turn the ones above into the ones below? There are multiple books written just about juvenile crime and juvenile killers.
Each year 4000-5000 kids under age 18 murder others, and another 4000-5000 commit suicide. Juvenile crimes by year are shown below:
The charts on page 13 show data from the UCR about violent crimes committed by juveniles from ages 10 to 17 over the past 34 years, and as the charts on page 9 showed, perpetrators of violent crime peak before the age of 30.

What a benefit to society it would be to understand what causes this surge in the young years and break the cycle! And this doesn’t even include non-violent crimes such as theft or illegal drug activities.

In fact, we do know what causes this pathology in young people. It is the exposure (witnessing) or personal victimization of young people to domestic violence: physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

And animal cruelty is one of the first reactions children have to the abuse they are undergoing. It is an easy way of “getting back at the world.”

\[ FBI: \text{ There is a very high correlation of violent children with 3 specific behaviors:} \]
\[ \text{Enuresis} \]
\[ \text{Fire-setting} \]
\[ \text{Cruelty to animals} \]

Enuresis, or bed-wetting, is the body’s involuntary reaction to the stress and powerlessness of the abuse a child is suffering or witnessing. Arson is one of the first ways they can enact revenge and demonstrate power; the use of a single match can bring police, fire trucks, newspapers, and television cameras. Soon, animal cruelty is their response and entry into the world of violence, a mirror of their own life.

\[ Children \text{ raised in an abusive environment learn that violence is the way to solve problems, and they grow up to perpetuate the cycle of violence.} \quad \text{M. Trollinger} \]

\[ “One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it.” \]

\[ Margaret \text{ Mead, Anthropologist, Cultural Factors in the Cause and Prevention of Pathological Homicide.} \]
Violence in Schools

Andrew Golden, age 11, ambushed kindergarten kids, killed 3 + 2 adults. Trained by shooting dogs.

Kip Kinkle, age 15, killed both parents, shot 24 kids at his school, killing 2. Tortured animals as a hobby, 3 per day. Violent bully in school.

Michael Carneal, age 14, killed 3 girls at a prayer meeting, shot 5 others. Threw cats into bonfires.

Luke Woodham, age 16, killed his mother and 3 kids, shot 7 more. Tortured his own dog to death.
While school shootings grab the most attention, school violence is more widespread and encompasses more types of crimes. For instance, in 2012 there were over 749,000 non-fatal violent victimizations among students ages 12-18 [4]. At the same time, 9% of teachers reported being threatened by a student and 5% reported being physically attacked. An average of 25 student deaths take place in schools every year, as shown in the chart below. Teachers, principals, and other school staff are also victims. Most school homicides are carried out with guns, others with knives and clubs. In 2013, nearly 18% of high school students carried a weapon to school [4].

43 - 50% of school shooters started out by torturing animals [5].

Brenda Spencer (shot 12, killed 2). Set cats on fire.

Kip Kinkle (shot 24, killed 2). Tortured 3 animals per day.

Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold (shot 36, killed 13). Boasted of mutilating animals for fun.

Evan Ramsey (shot 4, killed 2). Stoned dogs.
It is hard to understand why society - parents, and school staff - are complacent about allowing bullying to continue year after year. For children, school and home together constitute nearly all their time. Psychological and/or physical harm at school is no different from psychological and/or physical harm at home.

Bullying causes many young people, by some estimates 1/3 of the school population, to live in fear every day. It is a major cause of child suicide. It causes many to skip school, undermines the education process, and breeds future criminals, including violent criminals. School officials often turn “a blind eye” to bullying they know is going on with the attitude that it’s a “rite of passage” for children and “adults can’t prevent it anyway.” Some claim that preventing bullying is not in their job description.

40-60% of children are bullied at some time. 160,000 children skip school each day out of fear.

4 million serious (physical harm) incidents take place every year.

Many bullies continue violent behavior as adults, including child abuse and domestic violence. 6 out of 10 go on to become criminals. 40% are convicted of 3 or more crimes by age 30.

Bullies are more likely than non-bullies to have been victims or witnesses of domestic violence.

**Bullying and Suicide** [6]

The tragedy of child suicide is very much connected with bullying.

- 4400 suicides of young people take place per year. For every suicide that takes place, there are at least 100 suicide attempts.
- Over 14% of high school students have considered suicide and nearly 7% have attempted it.
- A European study found that at least half of child suicides are related to bullying.
Bullying and Animal Cruelty

Cruelty to animals is often an indicator of either a bully or a victim displaying anger against the bullying. Bullies are often associated with animal cruelty.

75% of school shooters were either bullies (Kinkle, Johnson) or victims of bullies (Carneal, Woodham, Harris and Klebold). Half the school shooters were torturing animals and bragged about it.
A wealth of information about violent individuals and their early lives is available from the perpetrators or their victims themselves. Sources of information include:

Psychiatric Hospitals and Psychiatric Clinics.
Battered Women’s Shelters. Abused Child Clinics.
Social Services; Domestic Violence Organizations.
Interviews with Murderers, especially Serial Killers.
Studies of Satanic Groups and Cults.

(See Lockwood and Ascione [7])

### Prison Inmates Who Started by Torturing Animals

Rapists - - - - - - - 48%
Sexual Murderers - >46%
Aggravated Assault - 52%
Pedophiles - - - - - 30%
Serial Killers - - - - 90%

70% - 90% of all violent criminals were abused as children.
It’s clear that a large portion of violent criminals began their careers with animal cruelty. In fact, one study showed that 75% of prison inmates charged with violent crimes had an early record of animal cruelty, arson, and enuresis [7, pg 80]. It’s also clear that a large majority suffered domestic violence in their youth: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or combinations of these. What is crucial is the treatment, good or bad, that very young children undergo before the age of three [8]. Domestic violence is the breeding ground for future violent and non-violent crimes.

The same correlation of violent individuals and animal cruelty is seen around the world, literally in every country. A few examples:

- **Canada**: 70% began with animal cruelty
- **South Africa**: 63% began with animal cruelty
- **Australia**: 95% for combined murder, rape, assault, theft, and drugs.
- **South Pacific**: 62% for assaults, 90% for violence, property, and drug crimes, 100% for sexual homicides.
- **United States**: 63% for violent crimes overall, 70% for combined violence, theft, drugs, and disorderly conduct.

Statistics on the link between animal abuse and the crimes of 1st and 2nd degree homicide and manslaughter are much harder to find than statistics on serial killers, but since the overall correlation with all violence is close to 70%, it seems likely that a close link would be found for these crimes as well.
If a skeptic needs proof that animal cruelty can cause human suffering and death, they need look no further than dog fighting. Animal fighting, both cock fighting and dog fighting, have become epidemic in the USA and indeed many parts of the world. They are holdovers from ancient animal bloodsports indulged in by many European and other countries, suggesting to some that humans haven’t evolved very far as of yet in compassion and empathy.

### Psychiatric Studies

Studies were carried out of 346 psychiatric clinic patients. 80% had a childhood history of brutal punishments by the mother, father, or both. One group of patients had repeatedly tortured dogs and cats—100% of them were also violent to people, including arson and homicide [9].

In a study of boys under treatment for severe cruelty to animals, all showed a violent history including bullying, theft, and arson. Seven years later, more than half were still involved in animal abuse. Most of the boys had a background of parental neglect, brutality, or rejection. The animal abuse ended only when the boys were removed from these abusive home situations [10].

More than a dozen studies of violent criminals and psychiatric patients have established a firm relationship between cruelty to animals during childhood and later recurring violence to humans. In all cases, the perpetrators suffered an abusive childhood: neglect, brutality, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.

### Dog Fighting: Direct Link Between Crime, Human Violence, and Cruelty

If a skeptic needs proof that animal cruelty can cause human suffering and death, they need look no further than dog fighting. Animal fighting, both cock fighting and dog fighting, have become epidemic in the USA and indeed many parts of the world. They are holdovers from ancient animal bloodsports indulged in by many European and other countries, suggesting to some that humans haven’t evolved very far as of yet in compassion and empathy.
Dog Fighting

Crimes Involved in Dog Fighting:

- Illegal (felony) in all 50 states.
- Gambling, drugs, guns, murder, human violence, pet theft, gang violence.
- Of particular worry is child endangerment; children who witness or participate in dog and cock fighting are desensitized to the pain and suffering of living beings, and may become desensitized to human violence as well.

Animal Cruelty:

- Severe injuries, often fatal, blood loss, shock, dehydration, infection, broken bones, gouged eyes.
- Small animals: dogs, cats, rabbits, birds are terrorized and torn apart while being used as “bait” during fight and blood lust training.
- Pet theft epidemic: pets are stolen to use as bait.

People and animals are at greatly increased risk where fighting dogs and trained attack dogs live. Children and pets are especially at risk due to their small size.

350,000 hospitalizations take place per year from non-fatal dog attacks, dogs specifically trained to be aggressive.

30 – 35 fatal dog attacks take place per year on average from dogs trained to be aggressive.

In 2012, for example, there were 38 deaths:

- 50% were children less than 8 years old.
- 35% were toddlers and babies less than 2 years old.
Fatalities Due To Dogs Trained For Fighting, 2012

Mabel, 84  Clifford, 74  Eugene, 65  Nellie, 61
Diane, 59  Dawn, 44  Esteban, 34  Rebecca, 23
Thomas, 8  Bryton, 4  Kylar, 4  Savannah, 2
Ja’Marr, 2  Jack, 2  Jace, 16 mo  Jazilyn, 15 mo
Jere, 12 mo  Tyzhel, 8 mo  Alden, 2 mo  Tarilyn, 3 wks
It is an astonishing fact that prior to 1962, there was no officially-recognized notion of child abuse (or spouse or elder abuse either for that matter). The medical establishment refused to believe that parents would harm their children. Children entering clinics or hospitals with broken bones, black eyes, bruises covering their bodies were simply accident-prone. One doctor, C. Henry Kempe, refused to believe that all those injuries could be accidents and sent a questionnaire to hospitals around the country, summarizing the findings in the first-ever study of battered children. His work

J. Am. Med Assoc. 181, July 1, 1962; pg 105

The Battered-Child Syndrome

C. Henry Kempe, M.D., Denver, Frederic N. Silverman, M.D., Cincinnati, Brandt F. Steele, M.D.,
William Droegemueller, M.D., and Henry K. Silver, M.D., Denver

The battered-child syndrome, a clinical condition in young children who have received serious physical abuse, is a frequent cause of permanent injury or death. The syndrome should be considered in any child exhibiting evidence of fracture of any bone, subdural hematoma, failure to thrive, soft tissue swellings or skin bruising, in any child who dies suddenly, or where the degree and type of injury is at variance with the history given regarding the occurrence of the trauma. Psychiatric factors are probably of prime importance in the pathogenesis of the disorder, but knowledge of these factors is limited. Physicians have a duty and responsibility to the child to require a full evaluation of the problem and to guarantee that no expected repetition of trauma will be permitted to occur.

The BATTERED-CHILD SYNDROME is a term used by us to characterize a clinical condition in young children who have received serious incidence of this syndrome in a one-year period. Among 71 hospitals replying, 302 such cases were reported to have occurred; 33 of the children died; and 85 suffered permanent brain injury. In one-third of the cases proper medical diagnosis was followed by some type of legal action. We also surveyed 77 District Attorneys who reported that they had knowledge of 447 cases in a similar one-year period. Of these, 45 died, and 29 suffered permanent brain damage; court action was initiated in 48% of this group. This condition has been a particularly common problem in our hospitals; on a single day, in November, 1961, the Pediatric Service of the Colorado General Hospital was caring for 4 infants suffering from the parent-inflicted battered-child syndrome. Two of the 4 died of their central nervous system trauma; 1 subsequently died suddenly in an unexplained manner 4 weeks after discharge from the hospital while under the care of its parents, while the fourth is still enjoying good health.

Clinical Manifestations

The clinical manifestations of the battered-child syndrome vary widely from those cases in which the trauma is very mild and is often unreported.
literally sparked a revolution, a long overdue awakening that child abuse was not only taking place but was widespread. Abuse took several forms: physical, sexual, psychological, abandonment, neglect. (Sexual abuse wasn’t “recognized” until the 1980’s.)

**Home: A Criminal Training Ground.** Exhaustive studies show the connection between child abuse and criminal behavior. “Parental conflict and harsh, erratic discipline have been shown to contribute to juvenile crime. Abused children are at high risk of becoming involved in crime. Households that provide safety, emotional warmth, and guidance foster the development of noncriminal young people even in neighborhoods at high risk for crime” [11].

There are over 2.7 million cases of child abuse per year with 160,000 serious injuries and 2000 deaths [12]. Many of the children killed in their homes are under the age of 3; 80% are under the age of 4. Every 5 hours a child is abused to death, and the number is growing.

![Child Abuse Deaths per Day](chart.png)

Families involved in child abuse are generally involved in other types of domestic violence including spouse abuse and often in criminal activities including assaults as well [12].

**Child Abuse and Animal Abuse.** It doesn’t take much of a leap of imagination that parents brutalizing children wouldn’t hesitate to do the same to the household pets. In fact, abuse of the family pet is a
major way that brutal parents control the child (or the spouse) to enact silence (about the abuse), create desired behavior, and create a household atmosphere of fear.

**The connection between child abuse and animal abuse is 70-80%.**

In one study, 23 families were studied where animal abuse was known to be going on. 83% also had children in the household in danger of abuse or neglect [13].

In another study, 53 families were investigated where child abuse was known to be going on (physical, sexual, or neglect). Animal cruelty was also occurring in 60% of these families, and in 88% of the families where the child abuse was specifically *physical* abuse. To make it worse, in 1/3 of these families, the children were participating in the animal cruelty, following the example of the parents [14].

The chart above demonstrates the never-ending cycle of abuse. Abused boys and girls are 7 to 9 times more likely to become animal abusers themselves and are statistically likely to abuse their own children in the future.

The connection between child and animal abuse is so strong that the FBI officially considers animal cruelty by a child as a likely indicator of ongoing domestic violence to the child and/or the spouse. In 1987, cruelty to animals was outlined as a separate of category of
Conduct Disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* by the American Psychiatric Association. It is a symptom of a disturbed family and a child at risk of a future life of crime. Ironically, it is the family pet, demonstrating loyalty and unconditional love, that could save the children from that antisocial future.

**Domestic Violence – Abuse of Women**

Just as child abuse wasn’t recognized until the 1960s, the abuse of women wasn’t recognized until the 1970s [16]. Until then:

- Spousal abuse was not investigated
- The medical profession treating injured women would not report the incident to law enforcement
- Police would not arrest women batterers (“a man’s home is his castle”)
- Prosecutors and judges would not take woman battering seriously (which continues to this day to some degree)

In 1975, Dr. Lenore Walker began publishing the 1st of 13 books on battered women, and eventually became known as the Mother of the Battered Woman Syndrome. By focusing attention on the issue, she was able to spark a revolution much like Kempe’s over child abuse.

According to the National Family Violence Survey for 1990, there were 11.6 million victims of violent acts by a partner and 3.4 million cases of severe violence. 31% of female homicides in 1993 were attributed to intimate partners. Only 6.7% of assaults by an intimate partner are reported [18]. Also, as many as 710,000
women are stalked every year by a present or former intimate partner, a crime which terrorizes the victim [19].

The link between domestic violence and animal abuse is as strong as it is with child abuse. For women seeking shelter in safe houses, 71% reported that their partner had threatened, abused, or killed their pet [20-21]. Nationally, 70 to 83% of battered women reported that their partner had abused or killed the family pet [20].

More than 50% of battered women stay in abusive situations out of fear for their pets. Batterers nearly always threaten, harm, or kill pets as a fear-based control of the woman.

Animal cruelty is 11x more likely in domestic violence households than non-DV households. Therefore, animal cruelty is a strong indicator of ongoing domestic violence, both women and children. Child abuse, spouse abuse, and animal abuse are interlinked. Existence of any one of them can be a strong indicator of the others.

Batterers are overwhelmingly likely to have been abused themselves as children. The cycle repeats endlessly unless there is intervention.

A majority of violent individuals generally share a common history of brutal parental treatment and cruelty to animals.

44% of women in shelters reported being forced to participate in illegal acts upon threats to their pets. Threatening the pet is an act of psychological terror to the woman. Only in recent years have DV professionals recognized that by not allowing the woman’s pets along with them into safety, they were turning away many potential victims seeking shelter [22-23].
Domestic Violence - Elder Abuse

There is much less information available about elder abuse than the other forms of domestic violence, but what there is continues the trend seen with child and woman abuse. About 1 in 20 elders is abused in some way, amounting to between 1 and 2 million annually. Like child sexual abuse, elder abuse wasn’t recognized as a significant problem until the 1980s [16].

Animal abuse is a strong indicator of elder abuse in homes with elder citizens.

The reverse is also true: elder abuse is a strong predictor of animal abuse.

Elders often remain silent in spite of personal abuse for fear of retaliation against their pet, often their only friend and companion.

Gangs and Animal Cruelty

According to the FBI, there are at least 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs with 1.4 million members. Gangs are responsible for a majority of violent crimes in many jurisdictions.

Cruelty: attending and sponsoring animal fighting has become closely associated with gangs. Such fights, like all dog fighting, can be associated with drugs, gambling, weapons, and murder.

Fights are also a desensitization training ground for children, teaching them violence and cruelty and a lack of compassion at a very impressionable age. In Chicago, 20% of 2nd to 8th grade children reported attending a dog fight [24].
Serial killers are the monsters in our midst. While 20,000+ homicides are committed every year, most have motives and clues which leads to their investigation and possible solution.

Serial killers have no motive other than the pleasure of the terror and torture they inflict and the pleasure of the eventual kill. They almost never know the victim beforehand and may kill over months or decades. Estimates are that 1 in 5 homicides may be due to serial killers, and the FBI estimates there are at least 30-50 and possibly up to 500 operating at any one time [25].

**Indicators / Predictors of Serial Killers**

- Brutal Treatment or Neglect by Parents or Caregiver
- Head Injuries, especially when young
- Violent to Peers, Siblings
- Arson
- Early Cruelty to Animals

While not all serial killers started out with animal abuse, a large majority did, just as a large majority were abused or neglected as young children. In fact, it’s unusual to find a serial killer who didn’t start out life with these patterns, though the early life of many of them hasn’t been explored in such detail. Animal cruelty as a trait is often ignored by official law enforcement, even though some form of animal abuse is now a felony in all 50 states and animal cruelty has been elevated to a major category in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report [27].
The United States, with 5% of the world’s population, produces 75% of the world’s serial killers [25]. As already mentioned, the FBI estimates there may be 500 serial killers at large. Law enforcement (society) spends hundreds of millions of dollars trying to apprehend them and almost nothing on prevention.

**Richard Ramirez:** 14 murders, > 24 rapes. Stabbed, gutted animals.

**Ted Bundy:** > 36 murders of young women. Tortured animals as a youth.

**Jeffrey Dahmer:** 17 murders, mutilations. Killed animals and mounted their heads on stakes.

**Edward Cole:** 16+ murders. Strangled puppies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Childhood</th>
<th>Animal Treatment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Berkowitz, 6 murders, 1400 fires</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Tortured as young child</td>
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<td>Ian Duncan Brady, 5 torture murders</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Started animal torture at age 9</td>
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<td>Ted Bundy, 36-50 murders, Co-eds</td>
<td>Violent grandfather</td>
<td>As adolescent, taught by grandfather</td>
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<td>David Carpenter, 10 murders, children</td>
<td>Beaten by father</td>
<td>Starting as teenager</td>
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<td>Jeffrey Dahmer, 17 murders, boys</td>
<td>Violent household</td>
<td>Impaled animals on stakes</td>
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<td>Dennis Rader, 10 torture/murders</td>
<td>Strict parents</td>
<td>Hung dogs and cats</td>
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<td>Albert Fish, 15 murders, 100 rapes</td>
<td>Abandonment, abusive parents</td>
<td>Set horse on fire</td>
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<td>Edmund Kemper, 10 murders of women</td>
<td>Abandoned, abusive parents</td>
<td>Killed cats with machete</td>
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<td>Richard Chase, 6 murders, cannibalism</td>
<td>Abused as child</td>
<td>Slaughtered neighborhood dogs and cats</td>
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<td>Leonard Lake, 8 murders, torture pit</td>
<td>Constant beatings</td>
<td>Severe animal torture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Lee Lucas, 100 murders</td>
<td>Abused by father</td>
<td>Tortured his own pets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Mackay, 11 torture murders</td>
<td>Abused as child</td>
<td>Started torturing animals by age 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Shawcross, 13 murders, arson</td>
<td>Abused as child</td>
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Childhood abuse and animal cruelty are major identifying factors of serial killers.

If police, prosecutors, judges, social services, teachers, child welfare, and guidance counselors paid attention to the predictive factors, many lives could be saved and many killers / rapists stopped before they start.

Summarizing the Evidence: There’s a strong correlation between animal cruelty and:

- Juvenile Violence
- Child Abusers
- Rapists
- Aggravated Assault
- Gang Violence
- Sexual Murderers
- Violent Psychiatric Patients
- Violence in Schools
- Domestic Violence
- Pedophiles
- Bullies
- Elder Abuse
- Serial Killers

Nearly all violent individuals were abused as children.
Multiple studies have shown that the biggest factors in continuing the never-ending cycle of violence in society are: domestic violence including child abuse, poverty, and absent fathers. Of these, the one with the greatest impact is child abuse, and animal cruelty accompanies it every step of the way.

“Child abuse, spouse abuse, and animal abuse are three fields which are linked; existence of one can be a strong indicator of the others…. Many violent criminals share a common history of brutal parental treatment and cruelty to animals” [20]. We saw earlier the statistic that 88% of families in one study in which physical abuse was going on had animal abuse as well [14]; other studies put the number as at least 60-75%. Children who witness domestic violence and /or animal abuse are at risk of becoming violent and abusers themselves. “Cruelty to animals allows children to become desensitized to heartless violence or to learn to enjoy the administration of pain and suffering” [28].
It would be impossible to overemphasize this point: child abuse is the single biggest reason that violence continues year after year, decade after decade, and animal abuse goes hand in hand with it. Every 5 hours a child is killed by abuse or neglect, and 80% of them are under the age of 4 [8]. In *Ghosts From The Nursery*, the authors point out that during gestation and the first 3 years of life, the brain is undergoing dramatic growth and transformation. Abuse of babies and toddlers alters their brain chemistry, and it can create irreparable emotional damage. “Prenatal development and the first 2-3 years of life are the times when the genetic, organic, and neurochemical foundations for impulse control are being created. It is also the time when the capacities for rational thinking and sensitivity to other people are being rooted—or not—in the child’s personality” [8, pg 66]. Portions of the brain such as the prefrontal cortex connected to empathy and compassion are stunted in development by early child abuse.

And all this before they learn to talk.

“What happens to turn children into vicious killers? How can a child grow into an adult who enjoys torture and killing? It is the brain that mediates this metamorphosis from baby to killer, and it is the environment that shapes the entire process” [8, pg 165]. By the age of 5, the game is all over – the seeds of future violence have already been planted. It is society’s good fortune that not all abused children become violent criminals, but many of them do. The fraction of non-abused children who become violent adults is far smaller.

Programs which intervene at an early stage, which teach good parenting practices, which give help to overwhelmed new parents with advice and support, which ensure good care and nurturing to babies and toddlers, have a good chance of preventing this paradigm, but as the *Ghosts..* authors point out, programs aimed at prevention are chronically underfunded and don’t last long. Like it or not, society would rather incarcerate offending individuals and in effect perpetuate the violence phenomenon than prevent it from happening in the first place. “Garnering the committed political support necessary to turn the tide for even one generation of our children continues to elude us” [8, pg 285].
SUMMARY

PREVENTION.

Taking animal cruelty seriously can prevent future assaults, rapes, murders, and spouse, child, and elder abuse.

INTERVENTION.

Juveniles, adolescents, and adults who are abusing animals are on a path toward human violence. Identifying them early can save many human lives and much suffering.

INTERDICTION.

Animal cruelty is an identifier of those who may have committed violent crimes. On average, as much as 70% of those guilty of violence have been involved in animal abuse.

References


[3] Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); FBI Uniform Crime Reports; CNN Reports 1/15/2007; US Dept. of Justice; onlinelawyersource.com


About the Author:

Harold Hovel, Ph.D., has been a research scientist for over 45 years, specializing in semiconductor physics including high speed computer chips and solar energy. He developed over 100 patents or patent equivalents, wrote more than 100 scientific papers, and delivered over 500 conference presentations in 14 countries. He was awarded the Outstanding Young Electrical Engineer in the United States by the Eta Kappa Nu Society in 1973 and received several Outstanding Innovation and Invention Awards from IBM. He served as Chairman of the Physics Panel of the National Research Council Associateship Programs and is a National Associate of the National Academy of Sciences. He is the author of 2 books: one scientific (a text book on solar energy) and one fictional (Combat With Pirates).

Dr. Hovel has been a board member of the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA) for 20 years and a board member of the Albert Schweitzer Fund for 10 years. He is a co-founder and past President of the Putnam Valley Conservation Council, the New York State Coalition for Animals, and the Animal Welfare Alliance. As part of NYSHA’s outreach workshops given to law enforcement in combatting animal cruelty, he has been presenting the Connection Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence for over 15 years. This booklet is based on these presentations. He has also presented humane education programs in elementary, secondary, and high schools, and in colleges, for more than 25 years. Combining studies and presentations about animal cruelty linked to human violence is a way he is able to help both animals and people at the same time.
Making a Difference: Breaking the Cycle

If you see or hear of an act of cruelty, don’t ignore it, don’t say it’s not your business. The life you save may be your own or that of someone you love. Take a stand against cruelty.

Social workers, teachers, guidance counselors, humane society officers, medical professionals, veterinarians, church officials, parents: if you become aware of either animal abuse or domestic violence, report it to proper authority: the police and/or the local humane society.

Teachers: sponsor humane education programs in schools; incorporate humane principles in your classes.

Teachers, Principals: have zero tolerance for bullying.

Parents: teach your children kindness and compassion; don’t tolerate bullying against your child.

Law enforcement, prosecutors, judges: recognize the seriousness of animal cruelty and the need for corrective action. Animal cruelty is an indicator and predictor of possible human violence and prosecuting it can prevent future crimes and suffering.

Young people: many choices lay ahead of you. You can choose to be a bully or not, cruel to animals or other people or not, compassionate and caring or not. For your own sake and that of your fellow travelers of the earth, we hope you choose kindness and pro-social values in general, and not contribute to the violence, cruelty, domestic abuse, and other problems that are all too common in our world.