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FIGHTING DOGS EUTHANIZED

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90-100 Dogs Killed At Local Animal Sanctuary  
SAL Political Snitch

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## Were Bexar County Pit Bulls Buried Alive?

90-100 Dogs Killed At Local Animal Sanctuary

SAL Political Snitch

Almost daily, headlines scream of dog attacks, sport fighting rings, cat maimings and cruelty to animals in general.

Case in point.

The debate over the fate of the many times vicious, sometimes killer dogs -- pit bulls -- is far from over, and likely won't be settled soon; but the animals continue to generate strong feelings on all sides of the issue.

Now, there are new facets to the story that are not known.

Disturbing news.

\* \* \*

On Monday, popular WAOI AM talk show host Joe "Pags" Pagliarulo suggested the extermination of pit bulls, following yet another attack last Friday that injured two little girls.

Those dogs will be euthanized, and their owner has been arrested.  
([Click for NEWS 12 report.](#))

The San Antonio animal sanctuary [Wild Animal Orphanage](#) (WAO) here in Bexar County, agrees that many pit bulls should be "put down" for public safety purposes, "especially when children are injured," says Carol Asvestats, president of the organization.

In January 2005, the facility located at Leslie and Talley Road, with the help of the SPCA, quietly killed as many as 90-100 pit bulls housed on the charity's property.

Kathryn Bice, executive director of the Humane Society/SPCA in Bexar County was quoted in the Express-News as saying "older, vicious dogs likely will be euthanized."

But there is a problem.

Accountability.

\* \* \*

The following is based on insider information obtained by the Lightning.

The killings were done in secret, with the aid and finances of the SPCA. It was common knowledge to the WAO's friends and employees that the pit bulls were housed at the Talley Road property, and buried there.

At one point, according to eyewitnesses, husband Ron Asvestas (in charge of back-up animal care) became highly concerned of helicopter traffic flying over the property -- fearing either the media or the previous owners had received word of the dogs' location.

The choppers were actually photographing an unrelated story.

Carol and Ron had reason to worry, sources tell the Lightning, because while some WAO workers say they were "bullied" into secrecy, it didn't stop the couple from telling friends and others the location of the pit bull remains.

On "Killing Day," one witness reported, the workers responsible for injecting the animals with lethal poison were very upset and depressed by the end of the day.

Barely before the animals' bodies were cold, they were thrown into a pit located on the Talley Road property, the sources say.

In fact, so quickly were they disposed of that several employees whispered that at least some of the animals may have been buried alive.

Asvestas denied that ugly thought in an interview with the Lightning, but then said she wasn't present.

\* \* \*

What were the animals' lives worth?

According to the WAO's 2005 board meeting minutes, the charity put in a request for \$1400 from the SPCA, for the care of these animals while they were temporarily housed at the WAO's property. Carol Asvestas now admits it "may have been" \$5,000.

There are other discrepancies in the financials of the institution.

This is the same property the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality is currently investigating for other animal burial pits.

Oddly, the WAO refuses to provide a list of euthenized animals over the last seven years.

Other problems with the operation have been disclosed to the Lightning.

\* \* \*

It comes down to accountability.

Whether an irresponsible pet owner, or trusted animal protectorate, accountability is required. We will pursue that goal in this series.

All persons and organizations mentioned in this story are offered free space to respond.

\* \* \*

More to follow.

- Developing -