



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

**The LINK-Letter**

**Vol. 4, No. 12**

**December 2011**

A monthly report of news about the connections between animal abuse and other forms of violence from the National Link Coalition -- [www.nationallinkcoalition.org](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor



## The Link: Animal Cruelty as a Warning of Human Violence...



**Christopher Valdez and his mother Crystal, last Christmas**

A Chicago man has been charged with homicide, and his girlfriend charged with covering up the crime, for allegedly brutally beating her four-year-old son, Christopher, to death on his birthday. Cesar Ruiz, 34, and Crystal Valdez, 28, were charged after horrified relatives discovered the toddler's body wrapped in a comforter, his bruises disguised with makeup concealer. Crystal Valdez had been convicted of battering Christopher in July and sentenced to parenting classes and given a conditional discharge. Free to celebrate little Christopher's fourth birthday on the day after Thanksgiving, Valdez covered up his murder instead, prosecutors alleged. Family members do not know why Christopher was singled out for abuse, and question why Christopher was allowed to stay with his mother, said to be an unemployed single mother under a lot of stress, and Ruiz, said to be antisocial and violent, following her conviction. According to media accounts, Ruiz also severely beat a dog two weeks prior to Christopher's murder after it had relieved itself in his home.



**Cesar Ruiz**

## The Link: Sometimes Human Violence Precedes Animal Cruelty...



**Bryan Byrd pled guilty to the murder. Chain-saw mutilations of pit bulls led to arrests.**

Police in Chester County, Penna. inadvertently uncovered an incident of human violence preceding acts of animal abuse in a grisly homicide case. Bryan Byrd, 22, pleaded guilty on Nov. 18 to third-degree murder, conspiracy and abuse of a corpse in conjunction with the death of Aaron Turner, 16, in 2008. According to prosecutors, Byrd and an unidentified co-conspirator shot Turner over an apparent drug dispute and then used a chain saw to dismember the teenager's body so it could be stuffed into trash bags and carried outside.

Byrd and another defendant, Laquanita Chapman, were linked to the murder after a 2009 drug raid led to the discovery of mutilated pit bulls at Chapman's home. Authorities believe Chapman used the chain saw on the dogs in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent investigators from finding Turner's DNA on it. The investigation is continuing.

## Another Case Linking Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse

The investigation of a domestic violence fight in Anderson, S.C. led to the arrest of a man following the discovery of several dead animals. Kameron Lashun Morris, 20, was charged with criminal domestic violence (second offense), malicious injury to personal property and seven counts of felony animal cruelty after police found the remains of three adult dogs and four puppies who apparently were allowed to starve to death. Police investigated after Karneshia Norris, 20, alleged that Morris, her ex-boyfriend and father of her child, hit her eight times and threw a newspaper box at her car's windshield before she could escape. Morris has been arrested at least 10 times on multiple criminal charges since 2008, according to court records. Police described the dogs' deaths as one of the worst recent cases of animal neglect in Anderson.



Kameron Morris

## British Police Launch Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Campaign



Police in the Devon and Cornwall areas of England, working with the RSPCA and Against Domestic Violence and Abuse Devon, have begun a campaign encouraging people to recognize acts of animal abuse as an early warning sign to help stop domestic violence from escalating.

According to the [BBC](#), police have found cruelty to animals in 20% of high-risk domestic violence assessments. Detective Chief Inspector

Steve Parker said pets were often hurt or threatened as a way of controlling the abuse victim. "If people see animal cruelty taking place it is important to report these incidents as it could be a sign of something much worse," he said.

A domestic abuse victim from Devon said her pet dog was kicked, punched and finally killed by her former partner. "One day I returned home from work, to find my dog strangled in the garden shed. This was the moment I found the strength to leave, as I knew that now my dog was dead he might switch the violence to my child."

The RSPCA said if abuse victims had to go into a refuge, it could offer help with pets until they could be reunited. "The RSPCA understands the difficulty victims of domestic abuse face. They are often fearful of what could happen to their pet if they leave them behind, especially as refuges are unable to accommodate pets," said pet retreat manager Carolyn Southwell.

## The Link In the Literature

### *Is There a Link between Childhood Adversity, Bullying, and Animal Cruelty?*

This study examined the cumulative effects of childhood adversities on bullying and acts of animal cruelty. Several adversities were significant: children who were threatened, pushed, shoved, slapped, or hit, or who were made to do chores that were too difficult or dangerous, were more likely to develop bullying behaviors. Hearing swearing or hurtful things, or having an adult in the home sent to prison, or being touched or fondled in a sexual way were significant indicators of animal cruelty. The cumulative burden of childhood adversities had strong effects on the increased likelihood of bullying behaviors but not on cruelty to animals. Persons reporting a lifetime history of animal cruelty and bullying were significantly more likely to be men, single, have less education, and have lower income levels. No significant racial or ethnic differences were found. The authors speculate that individuals who are cruel

to animals are more likely to possess a liability toward callous, unemotional traits that are highly inheritable and less likely to be modified by environmental input than are bullying behaviors. “This is not to suggest that empathy-building interventions would have no effect on reducing cruelty to animals but only that the developmental origins of cruelty to animals may have a stronger biological basis than bullying behavior,” they write.

Vaughn, M.G., Fu, Q., Beaver, K.M., DeLisi, M., Perron, B.E., & Howard, M.O. (2011). Effects of childhood adversity on bullying and cruelty to animals in the United States: Findings from a national sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(17), 3509-3525.

### Sex with Animals Linked to Cancer

Brazilian researchers report that having sex with animals (SWA) significantly increases the risk of penile cancer. Of 492 men from rural Brazil surveyed, 34.8% had had SWA. 44.9% of 118 penile cancer patients reported having SWA, compared with 32% of healthy men. The mean ages at first and last SWA episode were 13.5 years and 17.1 years respectively. Frequency of SWA ranged from monthly to daily. Subjects who reported SWA also reported more venereal diseases, more sex with prostitutes, and were more likely to have had more than 10 lifetime sexual partners. Several animals (including mares, chickens, cows and pigs) were used by 62% of subjects, while 38% always used the same animal. More than 30% practiced SWA in groups. Researchers studied a rural population because both penile cancer and bestiality appear to be more common in these regions.

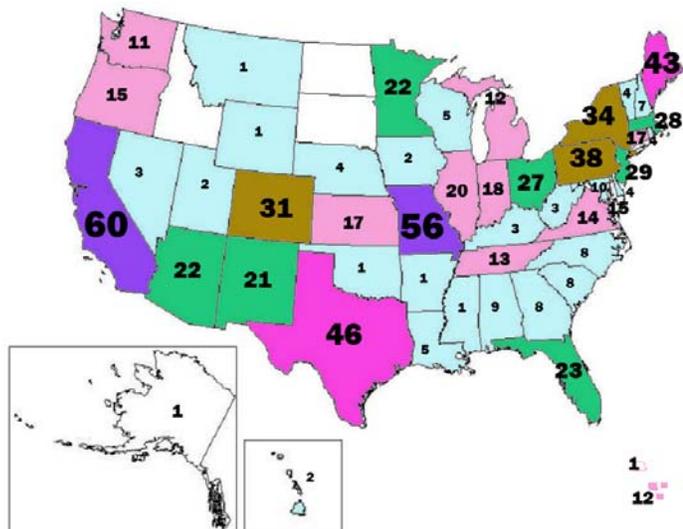
Zequi, S. d. C., Guimarães, G. C., da Fonseca, F. P., Ferreira, U., de Matheus, W. E., et al. (2011). Sex with animals (SWA): Behavioral characteristics and possible association with penile cancer: A multicenter study. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*. doi: 10.1111/j.1743-6109.2011.02512.x

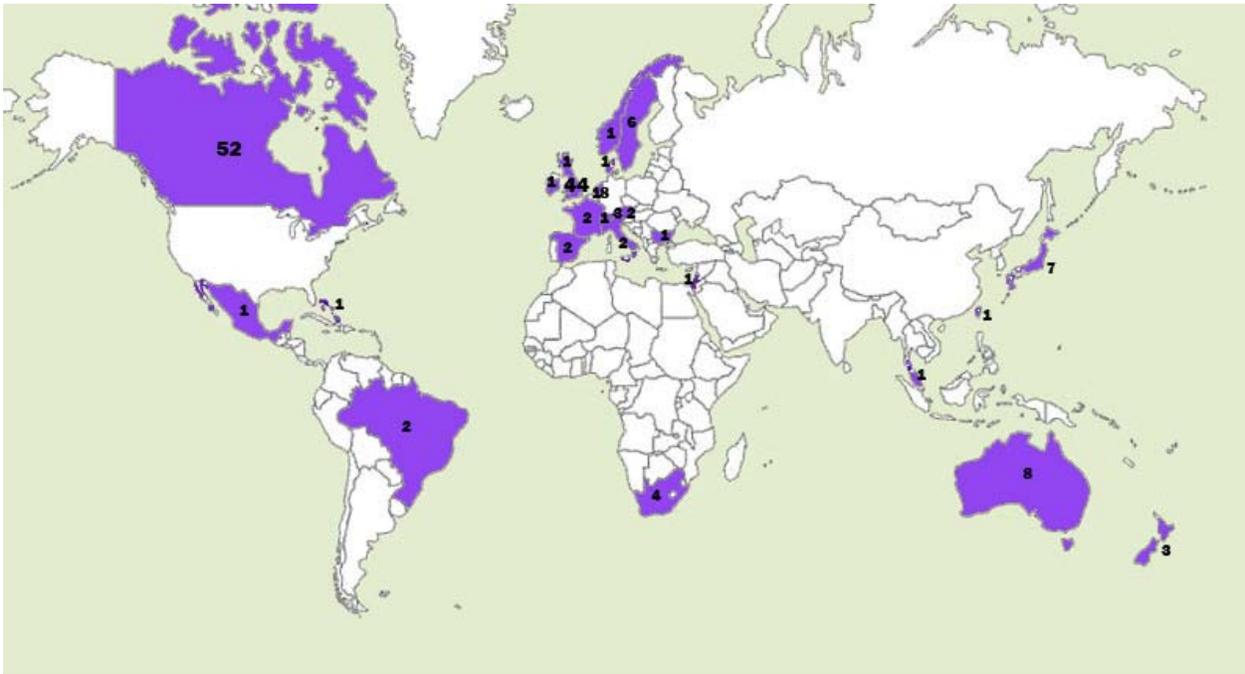
## Who Are Your Link Colleagues?

### Survey describes LINK-Letter readership

Recently, the National Link Coalition was curious as to who the LINK-Letter’s readers are. We are rapidly approaching a circulation of nearly 1,000 individuals around the world who care about the intersections of animal abuse, child maltreatment, domestic violence and elder abuse. An analysis of our readership shows intriguing patterns about the growth of interest, and the multi-disciplinary nature, of The Link:

**1. GEOGRAPHY:** Our readers are located in 47 states: only Idaho, North Dakota and South Dakota are not represented yet. Map 1 (right) shows the readership by state and territory. High or low concentrations in any particular state should not be taken as a sign of Link interest; rather, these numbers are predominantly a factor of where Link trainings have been conducted. The more our members actively encourage their colleagues to sign-up for the LINK-Letter, the greater our influence will be in these areas:

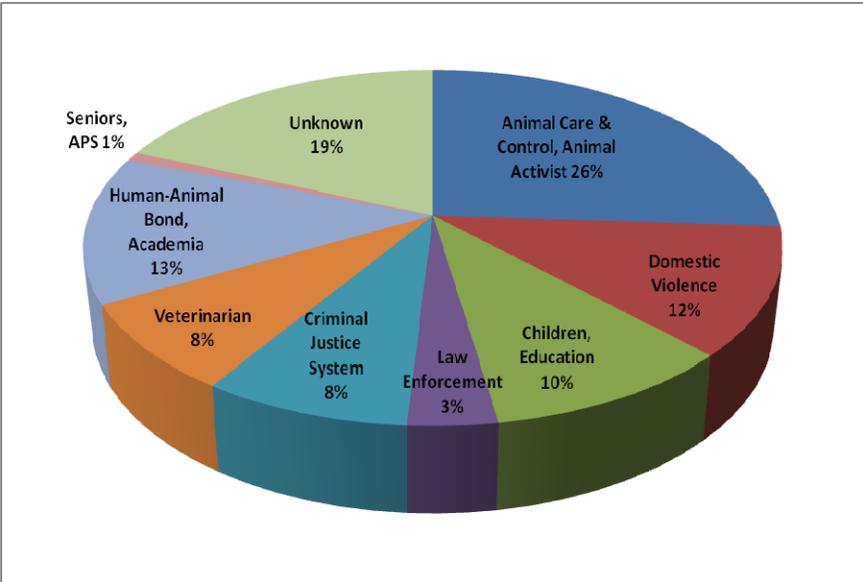




Internationally, there are high levels of interest in Canada, the U.K. and the Netherlands, and nascent interest across Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. All told, we have readers in 25 nations.

**2. PROFESSIONAL**

**INTERESTS.** The Link is founded upon a multi-disciplinary approach, and trying to arbitrarily assign readers to only one category of interest is challenging and highly subjective. Admittedly, some designations are quite arbitrary and subject to endless debate. As a whole, however, they provide an interesting look at who is interested in The Link:



The large segment labeled as “Unknown” includes both private individuals with no known institutional affiliation, and individuals whose interest was not captured during the registration process. As we capture this information going forward, the relative proportion of Unknowns can be expected to decrease.

## THE LINK IN THE LEGISLATURES:

### Link Bills We're Watching

#### PET PROTECTION ORDERS:



**NEW JERSEY – A1633/S540**, which would allow judges to include pets in domestic violence protection orders, has passed both the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees and has passed the Assembly with amendments.



**MASSACHUSETTS - S682**, which would include pets in protection orders, has been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. State Rep. Cory Atkins has also introduced **Budget Amendment 753** into debate. The measures would enable judges to order an alleged abuser to “refrain from abusing, threatening, taking, interfering with, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or otherwise disposing of the animal.”



**OHIO - H25**, which would include animals in domestic violence and anti-stalking protection orders, passed the House on June 21 and has gone to the Senate Judiciary/Criminal Justice Committee. The bill would also increase penalties for animal cruelty, and include provisions for psychological assessment and counseling for animal abusers.

**OFFENDER REGISTRIES:** *Several bills have been introduced that would include individuals convicted of animal cruelty in registries or databases:*



**PENNSYLVANIA** - Two bills address animal abuse offender registries. **H354** would require felony offenders to register with the county sheriff within 10 days of residence and annually thereafter for 15 years. Failure to register would be a Class 3 felony. The sheriff would be responsible for notifying every residence, business, school and animal shelter within a half-mile radius. The State Police would maintain a central registry. **S921** is more comprehensive and also addresses illegal use of registry database information; registration would be required for misdemeanor as well as felony offenders, and be required for 10 years. Registrants would pay a \$50 fee.



**NEW YORK - A1766** would create a database of all animal cruelty and fighting crimes to be maintained in “a manner that facilitates analysis.” It would record names of all offenders convicted of cruelty or fighting, who pled guilty to another charge in satisfaction of the animal charge, or whose cruelty or fighting charges were not dismissed on the merits. The database would be available to law enforcement, prosecution, and humane officials. Two other bills – **A299** and **S2015** – would create an animal abuser registry of adults convicted of felony abuse in New York or other states. Abusers would register with county sheriffs within 10 days of residence and annually for 15 years thereafter. Failure to comply would be a Class E felony. Sheriffs would be responsible for notifying every residence, business, school and animal shelter within a half-mile radius. The state Division of Criminal Justice Services would maintain the central registry.

## Link Training Opportunities

### Coming Soon to a City Near You...

**(Online) – Jan. 17, 2012:** Ken Shapiro and Bea Friedlander will present a free webinar on “The AniCare Model of Assessment and Treatment of Juvenile and Adult Animal Cruelty Offenders” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, a program of the National District Attorneys Association, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

**Phoenix, AZ – Jan. 20, 2012:** Allie Phillips will present on “The Linkages between Violence to People and Animals” at the [Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys’ Advisory Council](#) winter conference.

**Washington, DC – Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 2012:** Allie Phillips will train on “Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)” at the [2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on Women’s Shelters](#).

**Blackwood, NJ – Mar. 11, 2012:** Phil Arkow will train volunteers of the Center for Family Services’ [Services Empowering Rights of Victims](#) program on The Link.

**Lake Ozark, MO – Mar. 16, 2012:** Phil Arkow will train the [Missouri Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers](#) on “Women’s Best Friend: Social Work and the Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Link.”

**Harford County, MD – Apr. 27, 2012:** Allie Phillips will present on “Caught in the Cross-Fire: When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Family Violence.”

**Calgary, AB, Canada – May 6-9, 2012:** Phil Arkow will present a workshop on “Kids, Critters and Sexual Abuse” at the [Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse](#) biennial conference.

**(Online) – May 9:** Allie Phillips will conduct a webinar on “Children Exposed to Animal Abuse” for the [National Children’s Alliance](#).

## About the National Link Coalition

The [National Link Coalition](#) is an informal network of individuals and organizations addressing the intersections between animal abuse and other forms of violence through research, legislation, program implementation, and public awareness. Organized in 2008 at a historic summit in Portland, ME, the National Link Coalition’s vision is:

*The Link between violence against humans and violence against animals is widely known and understood. We believe that through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, humans and animals will be measurably safer.*

## **Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee:**

### **Phil Arkow**

Consultant, ASPCA; Animals and Society Institute;  
Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project, The Latham Foundation  
Stratford, N.J.

### **Lesley Ashworth**

Consultant, The Link, Worthington, Ohio

### **Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine  
Executive Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital

### **Maya Gupta, Ph.D.**

Executive Director, Ahimsa House, Inc., Atlanta, Ga.

### **Jane A. Hunt**

Violence Prevention Specialist, St Paul, Minn.

### **Mark Kumpf, CAWA**

Past President, National Animal Control Association, Dayton, Ohio

### **Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.**

Senior Vice President, Forensic Sciences and Anti-Cruelty Projects, ASPCA, Falls Church, Va.

### **Anna Melbin**

Former Housing Director, National Network to End Domestic Violence  
Founder, Catalyst Consulting & Training, Yarmouth, Maine

### **Emilie Meyer, J.D.**

Associate Attorney, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Reno, Nev.

### **Maria Luisa O'Neill**

Program Services Coordinator, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Denver, Colo.

### **Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.**

Animal Welfare Scientist, Animal Welfare Division,  
American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, Ill.

### **Allie Phillips, J.D.**

Director, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse  
Deputy Director, National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse  
National District Attorneys Association, Alexandria, Va.

### **Christina Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor and Animal-Human Interactions Coordinator,  
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### **Barbara Shaffer, MSW, LCSW**

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### **Kathleen Schoen**

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### **Hugh Tebault III**

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