



WOUNDED PAW
PROJECT®

“Saving a Paw, to Save a Life”™



Dear Ernesto,

You've been supporting Wounded Paw Project and our mission to End Dog Fighting since March of this year, and for that, I am truly grateful.

You have been a huge blessing, not only to me, but to all of the dogs we've helped get out of the deadly Dog Fighting arena.

Because you've been a caring supporter for so long, I wanted to share with you a special story about not only why Ending Dog Fighting is so important to me, but how a victim of Dog Fighting saved my life when nothing else could.

Ernesto, forgive me if I've already told you this story before, but it helps me to retell it and it is a good reminder of why our work is so important.

The Attack...

On March 26th, 2008, I was stationed in Iraq supporting the War on Terror when the outpost where I was working came under attack from accurately fired mortars.

Indirect fire is always nerve-racking because the attacks almost always come from beyond line-of-sight, making it difficult to return fire or send guys to go take care of it.

There were so many wounded, Ernesto, but we got as many people as we could to a nearby bunker.

This bunker was the closest hard-sided structure we could get people to in time, but it was only enclosed on three sides, which meant we were still exposed to shrapnel from the uncovered side.

There was nothing to block the attack, so I stood in the door, protecting my fellow

soldiers. Unfortunately, I took shrapnel all over my back, but I know that had I not stood in the door, more people would've been injured... or worse.

I knew I should have sought medical help right then and there, but I wasn't going to leave those guys out there, so I just had the medic patch me up quick and told him not to say a word.

The Realization...

Later I realized that wasn't the right move. No matter how hard I tried to self-medicate, my wounds, both invisible and visible, just wouldn't heal.

In 2012, it all caught up to me and, as tough as I am, I couldn't hide them any longer. I started noticing the holes I was punching through my walls and the emotional damage I was causing my family.

The empty alcohol bottles started piling up and I couldn't deal with my anger and aggression any longer, and eventually my back gave out and I couldn't move, Ernesto.

I couldn't get help because I was too ashamed that a big tough guy like me, an Air Force Academy Grad, wasn't mentally strong enough to fight PTSD alone.

Thankfully, someone stepped in to save my life and get my life back on the right track before it was too late by helping me get my first service dog, Daisy.

The Recovery...

No doctor was able to help me the way that Daisy could. She could sense the panic attacks and the anger building and would hover over me like a mama dog taking care of her babies.

Eventually, I started getting better with Daisy's help and together, we founded the Wounded Paw Project, at that time, dedicated to rescuing animals from kill shelters and training them to be service dogs for veterans for half the cost of programs that breed their animals.

Warning: Graphic Images On Next Pages

Shortly after that, I met Rosie, a dog that changed my life by opening my eyes to the cruel world of Dog Fighting.

Rosie was used as a bait dog for a Dog Fighting operation. She was one of the lucky ones and was picked up by a shelter instead of being euthanized like bait dogs normally are.

When I adopted her, she was heartworm positive and very scared of humans, Ernesto.

A Bait Dog Saved My Life...

For three months, Rosie received shots to kill the worms, and I cared for her as we healed together. We trained her as a service dog, and she has now taken over for Daisy as my primary care dog. She has literally saved my life.

Like I said before, Rosie was used as a bait dog and would have just been thrown out when she was no longer needed. I can't imagine the cruel things that were done to her, but today, I'm hoping you can help me put an end to it.

When I started researching Dog Fighting, I realized this is a much larger problem than we think.

When most people think about Dog Fighting, which already is a taboo subject in most circles, people just think some street goons are taking aggressive dogs and making them fight for spectators, and that Dog Fighting is a crime that doesn't affect them. So they turn their eyes away and ignore it.

But it's worse than that, Ernesto, much worse.

Dog Fighting affects our families and our pets, it affects innocent puppies because they're forced to live in disgusting and horrible conditions, and most of all, it affects you because now your local animal shelter is filled with 'aggressive' and 'unadoptable' dogs, which is a problem of its own.

The only way we have any chance of ever putting an end to this is if we start holding Dog Fighters accountable for their heinous crimes.

But to do that, Ernesto, I need your help...

Will you help me make sure that Dog Fighters get the punishment they deserve by signing and returning the two enclosed **End Dog Fighting** petitions right away?

If you just sign your End Dog Fighting petitions and mail them back to me as fast as possible, we can tell your State Senators that we demand harsher mandatory sentences for Dog Fighters.

Dog Fighting is already a felony in all 50 states, but most times these criminals are let off the hook with a slap on the wrist and just a fine and then go right back to terrorizing innocent dogs, Ernesto!

If you're not convinced to sign your Notice of Outrage yet, then keep reading. But first let me apologize for the graphic nature of some of these pictures. I know they are painful to see, but if we don't see what these animals go through, it's too easy to ignore it.

Innocent animals are being taken from their loving homes and are being used as bait!

Every year people's family pets are stolen from their homes and are being used against their will as bait to train fighting dogs.

These cruel men tie stolen dogs up to trees or swinging ropes and force other dogs to attack them while they can't fight back.

Then, when the bait dog is on the brink of death and can't be used any more for training, they will savagely feed them to the fighting dog or just abandon them, like Rosie.

How do you think these family members feel when they never find their beloved family member again, or worse, if they find out their pet was used as a bait dog?

Imagine your pet being stolen and chained to a fence post and strung up for another dog to attack and kill. What did our innocent pets do to deserve that?

But that's not all. I know you are probably asking how anything can be worse than your pet being stolen and strung up for bait, but let me tell you, there is worse, much worse.



This picture shows a bait dog swinging from a rope for other dogs to bite on to. Dog Fighters use this cruel technique to strengthen their fighting dog's jaws. It is especially inhumane because they see it as a game. The animal on the rope has no way to get away and can only take the torture.



This picture shows the cruel reality of what happens to dogs that show no aggression toward other dogs. Dog Fighters tie them up to trees and allow other dogs to rip them to shreds while they slowly suffocate.

Dog Fighting Affects all 50 States.

Each and every one, Ernesto, and it's only growing more popular.

Every single year police officers arrest people involved in this blood sport. And the worst part is, almost none of them receive the sentences they deserve.

We already have a law in place requiring harsher punishments for criminals convicted of hate crimes. This is no different. These are hate crimes against dogs!

I'm sure you remember when NFL quarterback Micheal Vick was found guilty of participating in and sponsoring dog fights, as well as criminally abusing more than 50 dogs and executing them by drowning or hanging the less aggressive ones.

Truly **heinous accusations** that he **PLEAD GUILTY** to, and what did he get?

Just a slap on the wrist and a sentence of 23 months with probation.

That is **unacceptable**, Ernesto!

That's why I need you to sign and return your **End Dog Fighting** petitions right now, so these monsters do hard time. It just isn't right, and it isn't justice that time after time the long arm of the law turns a blind eye to such a vicious crime. But it doesn't end there.



This poor dog was rescued from a Dog Fighting operation. You can see the bite marks on his face and the trauma to his mouth from repeated attacks and beatings from his handler. Even through all that torture, he still has kind, loving eyes.



For many dogs in fighting rings, this is a daily occurrence. Dog Fighters will force puppies to wear heavy chains to strengthen their neck muscles. A dog with a stronger neck is a better fighting dog because he won't go down as easily and can rip violently from side to side stronger.

Dog Fighting is a Gateway to other Crimes.

In almost every case related Dog Fighting, the authorities have uncovered other crimes as well. It's common to find illegal drugs, un-serialized firearms, illegal gambling, and even human trafficking at fighting rings.

It's truly an event that brings out the worst in humanity. That's because these animal abusers aren't human, they're monsters who are breaking the law at every turn and abusing innocent and defenseless animals just so they can make a quick buck by betting on the outcome of these events.

Once again, no dog, or any animal for that matter, deserves to be forced to fight for his life so he can entertain his master. His master should look his caring companion in the eye and see what I know you and I see: An intelligent being looking right back who will do anything to see us happy.

But unfortunately, it just keeps going.

Dog Fighting Affects other Dogs too.

It's common knowledge that the dog of choice for Dog Fighting in the United States is the Pit Bull Terrier.

These animals are picked for their short, muscular builds, and strong jaws. Owners will crop their ears close to their heads so there's less for another dog to bite on to with their jaws.

And unfortunately, because of this, Pit Bulls have a terrible reputation of aggressiveness and people believe that they are unsafe animals. Many landlords won't even allow their tenants to keep them.

This has led to thousands of abandoned Pit Bulls that are labeled as not adoptable since they're an 'aggressive dog breed' and ultimately put down at shelters all across the country.

Or worse, people who plan to use them as bait dogs and train other fighting dogs on them adopt them.

A Pit Bull's only flaw is that they **love and trust us so much** that they'll do anything we ask of them, even **fighting to the death** in a ring against another dog and then turn around and **forgive us** for abusing them.



This poor dog was covered in deep bite wounds when he was rescued. You can see that many of these injuries aren't new as his face is covered in scars from previous attacks. If you look into his eyes you can see the pain and despair humans have caused him, but you can also see the forgiveness in his eyes. It is heartbreaking.



Due to their gentle demeanor, Pit Bulls almost never retaliate against their handlers and their loyal disposition makes them fight to the death without second thought. They just want to make their master happy.

So, not only does Dog Fighting hurt the dogs being used for Dog Fighting, it also hurts pit bulls who are not even involved in the terrible bloodsport.

A Pit Bull's only crime was being born a Pit Bull.

This Has to Stop.

So please, pick up a pen and sign your name on your **End Dog Fighting** petitions and send them back right away in the pre-addressed envelope.

When I receive them, I will make sure it gets hand-delivered to your two Senators along with thousands of other-signed notices from caring animal lovers across the nation.

And I hope that when you sign your **End Dog Fighting** petitions you'll also consider sending a tax-deductible gift of at least \$25 to help The Wounded Paw Project continue fighting for our innocent four legged best friends.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and our track record speaks for itself using our unique, three tiered system...

Protect

Be the Voice for the Voiceless – animal abuse is a precursor of crime – notably the mass shootings which have become more prevalent.

Advocate

Ending Dog Fighting – the gateway to Thugs, Drugs, Prostitution, and Human Trafficking in the United States with an average age of 13.

Wagployment

Providing training for service, emotional support, therapy animals, comfort, mobility etc. – Emptying out shelters. *

**We are not a rescue; however, our focus is on saving dogs from high-kill shelters so they can be given a second chance at life. In addition, we take the hard cases such as bait, tortured, and abused dogs, that most likely would be euthanized at a kill-shelter. Focusing to end Dog Fighting and its criminal elements and ending Breed Specific Legislation nationally.*

So please, if you think that Dog Fighting is cruel and it punishes the only innocent party involved, you must consider helping us apply pressure to lawmakers to impose harsher



Who could look into those eyes and abuse her? Even though she has made a full recovery, she still bears the physical wounds of the Dog Fighting ring. You can see the scars on her nose. Her new owners will have to battle not only taking care of her long time physical wounds, but also use a gentle hand when helping her heal from her emotional trauma.

mandatory sentences for the dog fighter, organizers, or attendees with a tax-deductible gift.

In addition, your generous gift of \$25 will help us rescue more shelter dogs so they don't end up in the Dog Fighting ring fighting for their lives or worse, strung up and used for bait.

If you are able, an even more generous gift of \$35 will help us train an "aggressive" shelter dog to become a service dog for a veteran with PTSD or TBI.

Just because most of them aren't Labradors or Golden Retrievers doesn't mean they're worthless...

Ernesto, too many people believe the stereotype that only purebred Labradors and Golden Retrievers can be good service animals. Well, I'm here to tell you that it just isn't true.

Dogs, like all animals, are products of their environment. It isn't ethical to breed expensive animals to be service dogs and add to the overpopulation we already face, especially when thousands of capable and willing dogs are put to death at shelters all across the country.

With the proper training, love, and care, many breeds rescued from shelters, even Pit Bulls can become great service dogs for veterans.

Just like Rosie.

Pit Bulls are the perfect companion for veterans with PTSD or TBI, their protective and caring nature helps veterans feel safe.

So if you want to help even more, \$50 will help us pay for a rescued dog's veterinarian care.

Larger gifts of \$75, \$100, or even \$150 or more will go even farther toward protecting our innocent friends.

But no matter what amount you send, I just want to give you my thanks and let you know that any amount will be a real blessing.

I truly hope that I can count on your support in sending a message that we won't settle for less than **hard time** for Dog Fighters.

Very Sincerely,



Ernesto Hernandez
Founder, Wounded Paw Project
Purple Heart Recipient

P.S. I know you find the images of these hurt animals heartbreaking like I do, but the only way we're going to put an end to it is by sending a clear message to our legislators that we are sick and tired of Dog Fighters getting off easy. How would they like it if this negatively affected them the way it does these dogs?

Please, from the bottom of my heart, sign your **Notice of Outrage** today so we can help deter more people from conducting dog fights by imposing harsher, mandatory sentences for these monsters. Then, if you truly care about helping victimized dogs in need, will you also send a tax-deductible gift of at least \$25 so I can make sure that the Wounded Paw Project can save as many of these dogs as possible?

Thank you, and God Bless.



None of the animals in this letter deserved the evil treatment they received from the hands of cruel men. It's time to put an end to this cruel abuse. Will you do the right thing?

