



For Immediate Release:  
June 14, 2012

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## RESCUERS STRUGGLE TO SAVE ABUSED GREYHOUND

### The Greyhound Protection League Offers \$5000 Reward for Information Leading to the Identity, Prosecution and Conviction of the Abuser

Austin, Texas - The call came into Greyhound Rescue Austin from a police officer on Sunday evening: a starved unneutered greyhound had been found in a "coyote trap" on private property Northwest of Austin. Authorities were shocked at the dog's condition. He was severely dehydrated and starved; equally alarming, was the fact that his left ear had been crudely cut off.

Greyhound Rescue Austin volunteer, Marnie Reeder immediately got veterinary treatment for the debilitated dog and took over responsibility for his care. He is now in an Austin foster home where he is under veterinary supervision. "When he came in to us, I really wasn't sure that he would survive," said Reeder. "He was so depressed and he didn't even have the strength to stand. After several days of intense care, his vitality is returning and we are cautiously hopeful. There are a lot of people pulling for him and that helps all of us." The greyhound has been named "Spirit of Texas" — a tribute to his great resilience.

Now that Spirit of Texas' condition is beginning to stabilize, greyhound advocates are turning their attention to the mystery behind his abuse. And the Greyhound Protection League (GPL) a national greyhound advocacy organization is offering a \$5000 reward for the identity, prosecution and conviction of the abuser.

GPL President, Susan Netboy explains the significance of the severed left ear: "Racing greyhounds are tattooed in both ears during the first months of life. Tattooing is mandatory for racing purposes and is the only reliable means of identification throughout the dog's life. The right ear indicates the month, year and birth order. The tattoo in Spirit of Texas' right ear indicates that he is two years old. If the left ear flap were present, it would identify the five-digit litter registration number issued by the National Greyhound Association, the organization that maintains the U.S. registry for racing greyhounds."

Both Netboy and Reeder have been rescuing greyhounds, following and investigating abuses in dog racing for several decades. So their thoughts about this abuse case lead them to remember the kill-truck runs and dog-farm shootings that were known to be a common way of disposing of unprofitable greyhounds in the past. Most notably, the 143 greyhound bodies found in the Phoenix area with their left ears cut off in 1992; the 60 greyhounds transported from a Florida dog track and abandoned in East Texas in 1996; the greyhound tied to a tree and bludgeoned on a Texas dog farm in 2000 and the hundreds of greyhounds shot in the head in rural Alabama in 2002.

"Was Spirit of Texas a victim of greyhound killing operation gone wrong; a victim of the Texas coyote-hunting culture where greyhounds' ears are commonly cut off to avoid identification," questions Netboy. "We don't know yet, but what is clear is that someone went out of his way to ensure that this dog could not be identified. We are offering the reward money in hope of getting some answers and some justice for Spirit of Texas, but also because we are very concerned that there may be other greyhounds in peril. That's why public awareness is so critical." Netboy says that reward flyers will be available for posting and distribution in the near future.

Reeder says the case is under review by authorities. "We are counting on a rigorous and thorough investigation," she said.