

Investigative photography

by Frantz Dantzler

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In many cases, a good photograph can make the difference between a successful animal cruelty case and one that ends in favor of the defendant. Perhaps it is time to believe the phrase that "a picture is worth a thousand words" and look at some of the ways you can make this powerful medium help you in the courtroom.

While almost any type of camera can be used effectively in cruelty cases, there are two types preferred for most applications. One of the most common cameras in use today by investigators is the "instant picture" type made by Polaroid and Eastman Kodak Co. These, like all systems, have both advantages and disadvantages in field operations.

The advantages are obvious; a finished print within a few seconds can be a tremendous asset to you when you attempt to convince a judge that probable cause exists for a search warrant, or when you are presenting the facts of the case to the district attorney to get a complaint issued.

The major disadvantage is not having a negative for the instant print. You can send the print to a photofinisher for extra copies, but you may find the quality of the print has been reduced or that enlargements lack the sharpness other systems can offer.

The 35mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera is perhaps best suited for investigative photography. Not only is it possible to change lenses from a wide-angle to perhaps a telephoto to bring subjects closer, but you also have a wide range of film types to work with and the photos can be enlarged to show more detail.



By using the camera's normal lens (50mm) and by getting close to the subject, this item of evidence was recorded on film during a recent cockfighting raid. The author uses high-speed B&W film (Kodak Tri-X) to cope with a wide range of lighting conditions.

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The Kodak Guidebook "Using Photography to Preserve Evidence" is available for \$2.50 from Advertising Distribution Dept., Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, NY 14650.

There was a time when many potential users would avoid a camera with adjustments to set, since they believed it would be too technical. With the past few years, however, camera equipment has changed considerably, and it is now possible for anyone to get excellent results by simply following the instruction manual included with the camera. Most SLR cameras have built-in light meters and other features that eliminate the guesswork.

Equipment does not have to be expensive, either, to produce good results for the investigative photographer. If the cameras mentioned above are not within your price range, talk to your camera dealer about your photographic needs and finances to select the most appropriate equipment.



The use of a wide angle lens (24mm) helped to include all the area in a single frame. Also the use of B&W film more accurately conveyed the grim mood of this photo of wild horses that were killed or died under government's supervision.

What about films? Color prints, slides or black and white prints? There are occasions when color prints are better than black and white prints. This particularly is true if you are trying to show cuts and wounds that only color would properly illustrate to the viewer. Remember that dark reds, blues and greens will normally appear as black or dark grey in a black and white photo.

Color also has its disadvantages. Frequently, it has the tendency to give the viewer the impression that things are not as bad as you had described. Take a photo outside on a dark, dismal, cloudy day and after having it processed, look at the result. You may be surprised to see what appears to be a much brighter, more colorful scene than you had remembered.

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Black and white prints, however, do not have this disadvantage. Frequently, you will find that black and white will render the subject matter in a mood that more accurately reflects the seriousness of the situation. In addition, the processing charges for black and white are less, and you will find that they reproduce far easier in your newsletter than converting a color print to black and white for reproduction purposes.

Color slides are still another option you can consider. While slides are well suited for presentations and other applications, they are difficult to use effectively in court. Arrangements must be made for a screen and projector, making the case more difficult and complicated for you.

In the next issue of SHELTER SENSE, I will discuss techniques for good investigative photography, and how to learn to see as the camera "sees" to get the best results with your equipment. ■

SHELTER SENSE has available samples of pet care literature from major pet product manufacturers, along with details on how quantities of the booklets can be obtained.

The booklets include "How to Bathe Your Dog" from Beecham, Inc., "The Borden Guide to the Care and Feeding of Orphan and Rejected Kittens," and "How to Care for, Train, and Feed Your Dog" from The Quaker Oats Company.

Request your free sample packet from SHELTER SENSE, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

(Please note that The HSUS does not endorse commercial products; these pamphlets are provided solely as an information resource for SHELTER SENSE readers, and should not be construed in any way as an approval or endorsement of any of the manufacturers' products.) ■

Bowling Green-Warren County Humane Society (Bowling Green, KY) has had a successful spaying program for 10 years, which includes these provisions:

- six veterinarians in the area are cooperating in a low-cost surgery program.
- a time payment plan is available to pet owners for the cost of the surgery.
- no puppy or dog leaves the shelter unless neutered.
- when female dogs are picked up for licensing infringement, the impoundment fee is waived if the owner will have the dog spayed.
- the society receives the names of persons who purchase dog licenses in the city and county, and these pet owners are telephoned and encouraged to have their pets neutered.
- persons placing advertisements for 'free puppies' are telephoned and encouraged to bring the puppies to the shelter and to have the mother dog spayed.

(Bowling Green-Warren Co. Humane Society, 902 W. Main St., Bowling Green, KY 42101) ■



Pet care literature samples available

Successful spay program