



Los Angeles Police Department  
Los Angeles, California

# News Release

August 16, 2018

NR18223ne

## *Animal Cruelty Task Force Investigation Update on Pitbull Death*

**Los Angeles:** On August 7, 2018, Los Angeles Police Department's Animal Cruelty Task Force (ACTF) members began receiving calls from the public inquiring about a dog named "Cargo", that reportedly had been sexually assaulted and abandoned near 85<sup>th</sup> & Central. Public inquires and social media searches revealed a rescue group, Ghetto Rescue Foundation (GRFF), had located an injured dog on the evening of August 6<sup>th</sup> at the above listed location. GRFF's Facebook information, posted in real time and updated over the course of several days, indicated the dog had been thrown from a vehicle by two male Black suspects. GRFF had the dog treated at a local vet clinic and posted on social media the dog may have suffered "vaginal trauma". GRFF reported that "Cargo" later died as a result of an "aortic tear" caused by blunt force trauma. The public demanded an investigation and justice for "Cargo".

Los Angeles Police Department ACTF investigators contacted GRFF requesting further information believing a crime had occurred. GRFF stated they recovered a "sick dog only", and did not report these events to law enforcement as a criminal incident, nor did they ask ACTF to investigate.

While under intense public criticism and media scrutiny, the three assigned ACTF investigators have been solely focused on this case since August 7<sup>th</sup> and have continued to follow all leads. Investigators have canvassed the area multiple times, spoken to several witnesses, obtained search warrants, reviewed video, interviewed veterinary staff, and had a forensic veterinarian complete a second necropsy.

At this point in the investigation, it has been determined that the person who adopted the dog did not provide false information to OC Animal Center when adopted. Witness accounts do not support GRFF's Facebook posting that two male Blacks threw the dog from a car. Multiple witness accounts describe a female Hispanic dropping the dog off in front of a location, possibly several hours before the dog was recovered. This person has not been identified.

The statement posted on GRFF's Facebook page regarding the dog suffering "vaginal trauma" was discovered to be a Vet Technician's observation only. This observation was not supported by the treating veterinarian, nor the forensic veterinarian. It is the forensic veterinarian's expert opinion the dog was not sexually assaulted by a person or animal. The dog was recently spayed, possibly in heat, and had several litters, which may have accounted for the Vet Technician's



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observation. These observations were shared with GRFF before the dog was seen by a veterinarian.

The treating veterinarian saw the dog for the first time, the following morning, after it had passed away. The dog had briefly recovered, was up, barking and wagging her tail before she suddenly died. The treating vet did not identify death by aortic rupture caused by blunt force trauma. The forensic veterinarian concluded the same. The opinion of both the treating and forensic veterinarian is that the cause of death is unknown. Lab tests on varying tissue samples are pending to help possibly identify cause of death.

The Los Angeles Police Department's Animal Cruelty Task Force has concluded with certainty that "Cargo" was not adopted from OC Animal Care for malicious reasons; "Cargo" was not sexually assaulted and then thrown from a vehicle by two male Blacks. Due to events beyond the owner's control, the dog was placed in a home on a temporary basis. The owner intended on retrieving the dog when his situation was resolved. He was unaware his dog had died and is saddened by the loss.

Anyone with additional information is urged to call LAPD's Animal Cruelty Task Force at (213) 486-0450. During non-business hours or on weekends, calls should be directed to 1-877-LAPD-24-7 (877-527-3247). Anyone wishing to remain anonymous should call the LA Regional Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (800-222-8477) or go directly to [www.lacrimestoppers.org](http://www.lacrimestoppers.org). Tipsters may also visit [ww.lapdonline.org](http://ww.lapdonline.org), and click on "Anonymous Web Tips" under the "Get Involved-Crime Stoppers" menu to submit an onlinetip. Lastly, tipsters may also download the "P3 Tips" mobile application and select the LA Regional Crime Stoppers as their local program.

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