



ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

PATRICK M. WILSON

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ann Montgomery, 972-825-5035 (ann.montgomery@co.ellis.tx.us)

ANIMAL HOARDER CONVICTED OF NINE COUNTS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

On Friday, August 16, 2013, an Ellis County jury sentenced Michelle Lorraine Lehman, 41, of Dallas, to one year in jail and a \$4,000 fine for each of the nine counts, a maximum sentence.

The day before she was sentenced, an Ellis County jury deliberated for two hours and reviewed the voluminous photographic evidence depicting the scene where 82 animals were seized by authorities, many of which were in extremely malnourished condition.

During the five-day trial, prosecutors presented evidence that Lehman leased an old barn on Ovilla Road in Ellis County, where she confined 48 dogs and 34 cats without adequate food, water, shelter or care. The investigation that ensued revealed that Lehman physically abused the animals, tethered dogs without access to water, enclosed an unadoptable feral cat population, and even isolated unruly animals by tethering them to a post without food or water until they died. She would then bury the dead animals behind the barn.

Experts who testified for the State told the jury that the animals were flea infested, had various forms of diseases, and were not maintained in a state of good health. Many of the animals had open wounds which were embedded with fleas and parasites, and all of the animals showed signs of malnourishment and lack of proper care.

During trial, Lehman testified that she would feed the dogs pizza she was given by a friend who worked at a local restaurant. The evidence showed, however, that the "pizza" was just leftover crusts mixed with plastic straws, napkins, and other trash that she would dump on the dirt floor of the barn among the urine and bloody stools of various animals.

Prosecutors asked the jury to find Lehman guilty of nine counts of animal cruelty and to sentence her to the maximum one year in jail. In closing argument, Assistant County & District Attorney Seth McCloskey reminded the jury that 67 of the 82 animals found in Lehman's care had to be euthanized due to the severity of their conditions, and he told the jury that they should consider what the life of each animal was worth and sentence her accordingly. After the trial McCloskey said, "Lehman was punished to the fullest extent of the law. My office is grateful for the jury's verdict and sentence, which shows they place tremendous importance on the lives of those animals. We also want to thank the Waxahachie Animal Control officers for their hard work in this case."



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NO. 1210762 CR

FILED FOR RECORD
CINDY POLLEY
ELLIS COUNTY CLERK

THE STATE OF TEXAS	§	IN THE COUNTY COURT
VS.	§	AT LAW NUMBER 2 OF
MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN	§	ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS

STATE'S SECOND MOTION TO AMEND INFORMATION

COMES NOW THE STATE OF TEXAS, by and through its Assistant District Attorney, and moves the Court, pursuant to Texas Code of Criminal Procedure article 28.10, to amend the information in the above entitled cause. The State respectfully requests that this Court amend the information to read as follows:

IN THE NAME AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

I, PATRICK M. WILSON, County and District Attorney for Ellis County, in said State, on the written affidavit of: BOB ALLWARDT, a competent and credible person herewith filed in the COUNTY COURT AT LAW 2, of Ellis County, Texas, do present unto said court that,

COUNT I

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: Schnauzer mix puppy in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT II

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: Shepherd mix dog in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT III

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly torture an animal, or fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: Labrador mix dog in the defendant's custody, by means, tethering the animal with a metal chain that restricted its movement and caused bodily injury and by failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT IV

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: white shorthair cat, in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT V

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: Pit Bull-Boxer mix in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT VI

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: Pit Bull-Boxer mix in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT VII

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: chocolate Labrador mix in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT VIII

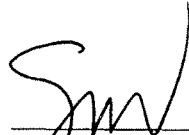
On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: forty-two dogs of various breeds, in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

COUNT IX

On or about the **29th day of July, 2011**, and before the making and filing of this complaint, in the County of Ellis and the State of Texas, one **MICHELLE LORRAINE LEHMAN**, did then and there intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fail unreasonably to provide necessary food or water or care or shelter for an animal, to-wit: thirty-three cats, in the defendant's custody, by means, failing to provide adequate food or water or care or shelter and the defendant's conduct was not a generally accepted and otherwise lawful form of conduct occurring solely for the purpose of or in support of fishing, hunting, or trapping; or wildlife management, wildlife or depredation control, or shooting preserve practices as regulated by state and federal law; or animal husbandry or agriculture practice involving livestock animals,

AGAINST THE PEACE AND DIGNITY OF THE STATE.

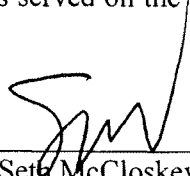
WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, the State of Texas respectfully moves the Court to amend the information in the above numbered and entitled cause so that justice may be done.



Seth McCloskey
Assistant County and District Attorney
Ellis County, Texas

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned Assistant District Attorney, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Motion to Amend Information was served on the attorney for the Defendant, Rodney Rasmey via email or fax on 8/1/13.



Seth McCloskey
Assistant County and District Attorney
Ellis County, Texas



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