

No Kill Sheltering

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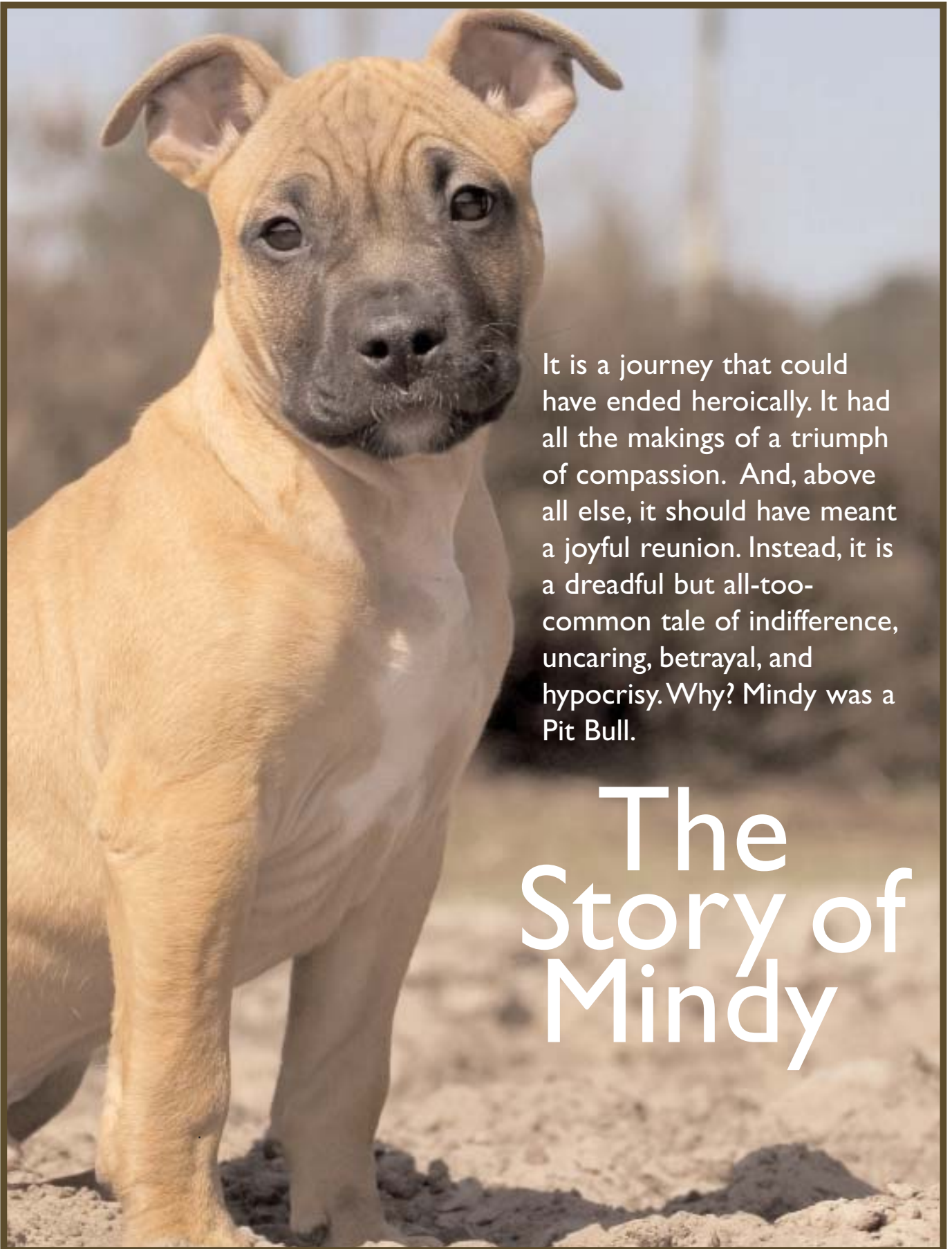
SPECIAL PIT BULL ISSUE:

Stoking the Fires of Hate: How the Animal Protection Movement is Failing Pit Bulls

Pit Bulls: The Other Side of the Story

Saving Pit Bulls in Shelters

The Story of Mindy



It is a journey that could have ended heroically. It had all the makings of a triumph of compassion. And, above all else, it should have meant a joyful reunion. Instead, it is a dreadful but all-too-common tale of indifference, uncaring, betrayal, and hypocrisy. Why? Mindy was a Pit Bull.

The Story of Mindy

Mindy was born, like others before her, as part of a litter of puppies to a homeless stray. She was light brown in color, with a dark muzzle. She was taken in by a local family who found the mother and puppies near a local park. She was a friendly dog, the most outgoing of them all and quickly became a favorite of the neighborhood. One by one all the puppies were given away except Mindy. While the others looked like their mother, a Labrador Retriever, and therefore had no trouble finding homes, Mindy looked like the supposed father, the “dreaded” American Pit Bull Terrier. No one wanted her because they were afraid of Pit Bulls. In fact, an article in the local paper even quoted a staff member of the SPCA as saying Pit Bulls were a dangerous breed of dog. The family thought of taking Mindy to the shelter, but they knew she would be killed because of a “no adoption” rule for Pit Bulls. They decided to keep her.

But one day, the back door was accidentally left open by the youngest child and Mindy was gone when the family came home. They put up signs but could not find her. The family would later learn that a kindly and elderly neighbor three blocks away fed her. Every day Mindy would come and eat the scraps of food left out for her on the porch. Later when asked why she did not call the local shelter, the neighbor replied that she was afraid to call because Mindy was a Pit Bull and the shelter banned the breed. She thought Mindy would at least have a chance on the street. But one day Mindy did not come back for the scraps of food. She had been taken by some local thugs who used her as bait for dog fighting.

Ultimately, someone did call the shelter, because of a whining that sounded they said “like blood gurgling in a dog’s mouth.” In fact, that was exactly what it was. When the officers came, they found Mindy tied to a fence, covered in bite wounds. Afraid of Mindy, even though she had never so much as growled at anyone, they put a long pole with a metal noose on the end, the “catch-pole,” around her neck and tightened it. When she would not walk, they dragged her. In the process, she defecated on herself out of fear.

There was one witness to her abuse, but the officers did not follow-up. It was one more of over 300 “open” files that begged for attention. The abusers were never sought. After a time, the file was marked “unresolved” and closed.

At the shelter, Mindy was not seen by the staff veterinarian. Her wounds were not dressed and healed. She was not treated kindly. They did not try to find her a loving home. No one searched the lost pet database because of the Pit Bull ban.

Instead, she was taken to a rear compound behind a door marked “staff only” where the glass window was covered in dark paper. To get there, officers took her past the children’s drawings of happy families with dogs and cats, through the overhang with large blue letters that read “Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” and into a room adjacent to a plaque commemorating the completion of the shelter with the inscription: “All Life is Precious.”

Mindy lay there for 72 hours while dogs came and went. All of them were Pit Bulls. Most of them were friendly, but that did not matter. This was the “Dangerous Dog” ward at the local SPCA and there were no beds, blankets, toys or treats. In here, volunteers did not walk the dogs like they did in the adoption kennels. Here no one got Kong toys, or rope tugs, an occasional brushing, a treat, or even a pat on the head. Once a day she was given a bowl of dry kibble and her water dish was refilled, but she did not have the strength to eat and she was in pain.

The end probably came like it did to countless others like her:

After three days, she was “catch-poled” again. As one employee held her down by the neck, another came in with a needle. She felt a pin prick. She tried to free herself, but the pole tightened around her neck. She tried to stand up, but her legs felt wobbly and she fell back down. Out of fear, she once again defecated on herself. Suddenly she felt nauseous and vomited. Then another person came in. She crawled into the corner and cowered, the pole still tight around her neck. They stood over her. She wanted to get away but she was too weak to move. Mindy was given poison from a bottle marked “Fatal-plus.” She went limp and let out a last breath. Urine spilled onto the kennel floor. Some time later, her body was thrown in an incinerator.