

Kansan cop denied Constitutional & legal rights?

Imagine being a cop, dedicated to helping others and committed to the system, barely middle-class, but happy, with a loving family and tight rural community. Then within weeks your entire life unravels when you learn that the same system for which you were willing to endanger your life will turn like a viper upon its own if challenged by anything out of the ordinary

It all began with a frightened 13 year old girl and her loving pet who was as dedicated to her protection as her father was to protecting his town. The [REDACTED] family didn't have a large income, but they shared what they had with handicapped pets, including Long Tail, a three-legged ferret, and Short Tail. That night was dark and the men outside, devoid of any form of identification, terrified the teen, and the animals inside with her picked up her fear. The jitters were reduced once police verified that the men were, indeed, sent by the power company to make repairs. They were friendly individuals, but strangers who had frightened her never-the-less so she clung to Long Tail's comforting warmth. Perhaps the one who approached the animals did not recognize the scare they had given and maybe he simply wasn't used to pets, but instead of approaching slowly and letting the critters see that their mistress accepted his presence he rapidly thrust his hand to the ferret and the girl. Long Tail did not know how to judge this and according to the teen he grabbed the man's finger in his mouth without any sign of breaking skin or drawing blood, and apparently without causing discomfort since the man only joked about the incident.

The [REDACTED] weren't worried because there was no injury and the ferret had been vaccinated with a rabies vaccine which has been federally approved since 1990 for use in ferrets with results that are actually slightly better than in dogs, and because ferrets tend to be indoor animals which are often also caged except for play time so the chances of exposure to any disease are lower than they are for humans.

Unfortunately, the power company didn't know these things, nor did they know that one of the reasons it has taken so long to do rabies research in ferrets -- despite them having been kept as pets since Ancient Egypt, and having been such cuddly royal favorites of Elizabeth I of Britain that they were featured in portraits of her -- is because it is very difficult to give rabies to ferrets even when you are trying your hardest. They can't get it by ingesting tainted meat, or by a small injection. Instead, researchers must inject large amounts of infectious material to give it to even a tiny minority of their test subjects. In addition, the utility and the State of Kansas which was promptly notified were unaware that studies have been done in Europe on the behavior of two strains of rabies in

animals which have not been vaccinated (shedding period studies -- applicable also to rare individuals for whom the vaccine does not work). They found that when rabies is contracted ferrets do not become aggressive, that they die quite rapidly, and most interesting of all one found absolutely no trace of rabies in the salivary glands and the other found only one infected animal with barely detectable amounts in a gland. If rabies in an infected animal doesn't get into the saliva in the first place the picture changes markedly. Perhaps the utility, the physician, and the state would have been more sanguine had they understood that they need not be any more concerned with the incident than they would be with a kiss from the ferret, perhaps less than with a kiss from someone's dog or cat.

Without warning a Kansas official appeared at the [REDACTED] door. He presented **no identification and had no proof** that a bite had taken place instead of the painless grip reported to them by their daughter. Knowing the law, not knowing the man, and trusting their daughter, the adults told him that if he would produce identification and a photo showing that a bite had occurred they WOULD turn over the animal. As [REDACTED] the husband, said he had spent his adult life serving the law and providing community safety and was not about to turn his back on those ideals, **but he did not want illegalities perpetuated against his own family**, either. It appears that the wrong person's feathers were ruffled, because they were **ordered to appear in court with a prepared case in only 24 hours**, a clear infringement upon their (supposedly) nationally guaranteed rights. As a compromise, the family offered to have the animal placed in quarantine with a willing veterinarian while they gathered the materials and witnesses needed. **This request was refused, as was their request that they be told how to contact the utility employees who were present so that they could be witnesses, as was their request for ANY proof of a bite, as were the pet's medical records, as were the veterinary witnesses which they wanted to use. The State, on the other hand, was allowed to present everything and everyone it wanted.**

From there things just got worse for the family. What they had been after was justice. They didn't want to lose a loving member of their family, but knew that if they were legally ordered to do so they would turn Long Tail over to the state, despite the animal being loving and healthy. They just didn't want to be treated like dirt. In the United States **we all grow up being taught from grade school on that our nation does not place order before law**, but many countries which we have opposed do. Now the [REDACTED] found that at least in Kansas the Constitution meant nothing if someone powerful wanted your blood.

Then they became caught between the State of Kansas and animal rights activists who had called and warned them that they had to take their ferrets everywhere with them so the State would not get a warrant and break into their home. Being afraid of just this happening [REDACTED] the wife, took the pets along in the car with her while she picked up something from the hairdresser and

returned to find the two and their cage missing. She had no idea what had occurred and thought that the State had them at last, but that was not the situation. Activists had grabbed the animals and were transporting them through a modern day underground railroad to which the [REDACTED] had no access.. Because they could not produce an animal which was ordered to be surrendered they found themselves saddled with paying for the worker's injections, for attorney's fees they could only pay on installments, and were held up to public disgrace. [REDACTED] was dismissed from his job without a hearing despite state, local, and federal laws, and his employer publically maligned, insulted, black-balled, and laughed at him and his family's plight. So much for the gratitude a dedicate police officer can expect if he annoys politicians or bureaucrats. With so much against them the [REDACTED] lost their home, and now with [REDACTED] having recently had a leg injury they face **not being able to afford surgery** she needs since they have one minimum wage income and unemployment as their only sources of survival.

I am not part of this case, and what I repeat to you in the pages above I know only from having been told; this is not material I have verified. I can tell you that **I called the family, and [REDACTED] refused financial help from my husband and me.** He was well spoken, and seemed to be the same sort of salt-of-the-Earth, everyday Joe we all know now, and remember working so hard day to day in our childhoods. Should what I have been told be accurate this is a situation where the most basic Constitutional rights and plain old fashioned common sense have been grossly violated. **From what [REDACTED] told me all they really want is a shot at justice and a chance to earn an honest reasonable living again.** Is it possible that for your many listeners, viewers, and readers the bogey man outside their window in the future could also be a state government? Can't we try to nip this in the bud? Coming on the heels of a family being burned out of their home in Utah for religious differences it certainly makes one wonder how much longer the wake-up call can wait; in its purest form this is what our fore-fathers saw as the medias' most important way of preserving our nation. Now that the Cold War is over should we have to worry about the same behavior from our own states and power brokers that we were taught were hallmarks of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany?

I've attached a fact sheet with resources to ease your work load.

Should you see the story in this which I perceive the most recent address and telephone number which I have for the [REDACTED] are:

[REDACTED] Onaga, KS 66521; tel: [REDACTED]

Ferret data, 1, April 15, 1994

Rabies Shedding Studies of Interest, and Bite Statistics (in second part, with its own resources mentioned there)

1. NIH-92-26
Zbl Vet Med B
1979;26:26-38

translated from German by Ted Crump

U. Forster, State Veterinary Examination Office, Frankfurt/Main

Feb., 1978

The Adaptability of two Rabies Virus Strains Isolated in Central Europe to one Domesticated and two Wild-living Species. A Contribution to the Epidemiology of Rabies.
Part 4: Transmission Studies on Ferrets with a Rodent isolate

2. NIH 91-444
Rev Med Vet 1982;
133 (8-9): 553-557

NIH translation of Blancou, J. et. al. Rage experimentale du furet (Mustela (putorius) furo) Revue Med Vet 1982; 133:8-9, 553-557. (in French)

J. Blancou, M.F.A. Aubert, and M. Artois

Experimental Rabies in the Ferret (Mustela [putorius] furo)
Susceptibility - Symptoms - Excretion of the Virus

Ministry of Agriculture, Office of Quality Control, Veterinary Services, Centre National d'Etudes sur la Rage [National Center for Rabies Studies], B.P. No. 9, F-54220 Malzeville

May also be of interest: Bell and Moores' 1971 study on orally administration of rabies which found that they could not give rabies to ferrets orally (American Journal Of Epidemiology, Vol. 9, #3

I had already read that the current epizootics in the U.S. are of three main varieties with fox being the most common, raccoon increasing, and skunk being the least common of the three (though this was a few years ago and may have changed). I did not know that there are about 50 variations of the virus seen in the U.S.; I do not know how many of these will require their own separate studies, but an expert on the status of dogs and cats in question would. I also did not know that susceptibility of one animal to any strain can NOT be determined by how susceptible related animals are -- that ability to contract each skips around quite a bit in and between families and orders of mammals. Ex. Hares are much more susceptible to vulpine rabies than dogs are.

Please, remember that these animals must be sacrificed to examine brain tissue and other tissues so the diagnoses are firm. This can't be avoided and does ultimately save many ferret lives.

The nitty-gritty: In the Forster study: a vole strain of rabies was used with 36 ferrets. The original 6 were inoculated with the virus taken from mouse brain. Of these only one became ill. The other ferrets were injected with the virus from ferret brain (with a much higher rate of infection). The minimum lethal dose was quite high. No latency time was achieved and the longest incubation time was 5 days, with the mean disease duration being 3.4 days and no more

Ferret data, 2, April 15, 1994

than 6 days (i.e. 11 days total maximum). Symptoms began with slight confusion and incoordination. Later full body convulsions were seen. Seen more rarely were jaw spasms, excessive salivation and labored breathing. Of the 23 ferrets which they did manage to give rabies to only one (4%) showed any sign of it in the saliva and that was referred to as being a very small amount. NONE of the animals became aggressive.

In the Blancou study fox rabies was used on 40 ferrets with intra muscular injections of the thigh. 11 contracted it, another 3 showed significant antibodies but did not develop the illness so it was concluded that they may have contracted then successfully fought off the illness; they did not have rabies. Note that the majority of the animals did not contract rabies. All of the animals with rabies showed it in the hippocampus of the brain but none in this study had any rabies in their saliva. Of the 11 animals the longest death was after 7 days for the disease, with a maximum latency of 87 days. Symptoms included: restlessness of apathy, occasionally followed by some loss of control of the hindquarters, and NO aggressive behavior.

Meanwhile, here in the U.S. the nation's probable million plus ferret owners are still collecting to fund rabies shedding studies (the time during which even an inoculated animal of any species may shed some of the virus). through the Morris Animal Foundation, 45 Inverness Drive East, Englewood, CO 80112-5480 (or call 1-800-243-2345) The fund is very close to the amount needed to begin these studies. It hasn't been all that long since this information was finally known for cats; it's ironic that another species, our pet ferrets, which have also been domesticated for about 3,000 years are finally getting the studies they need. Of course, studies in the ferret had to wait for a federally approved vaccine (IMRAB -- approved for several years now) and that was delayed because it is so hard to give rabies to ferrets in the first place and because animals kept caged inside were generally considered safe (as they actually are) from infection until the recent epizootics caused wide spread public panic.

A recent article in the Ferret List, an Internet resource for ferret owners (address: ferret-request@ferret.ocunix.on.ca) which is also utilized by many ferret club leaders and several veterinarians with this specialty mentions interesting stats and data from several articles and sources:

JAVMA

"Rabies Surveillance in the United States During 1992"

Krebs, et al.

vol. 203, # 12, December 15, 1993, Special Report 1721

1992 data from American Ferret Association report, California Domestic Ferret Association Report, and from a piece in "FDA Veterinarian"

Pet dogs in the U.S.: about 50 million

Pet ferrets in the U.S. estimated to be between 3 and 10 million

JAVMA rabies statistics:

1992

cat	290
dog	182
cattle	184
horses and mules	49
sheep and goats	23
ferrets	2 (one was in S.C. , the other in VA)
swine	1
llamas	1

Ferret data, 3, April 15, 1994

If the higher estimate of pet ferrets is correct the dog is over 18x the threat of a ferret; if the lower number is correct then ferrets are still about 6x safer.

There were no ferret rabies cases listed in the report for the years 1988-1991. From 1950 to present (43 years+) there have been a total of 16 confirmed cases of rabies in ferrets, while Dr. Hoffman, in the FDA Veterinarian piece showed that for bites alone (with or without rabies) a dog is 200x more likely to cause a bite which requires medical care than a ferret is. There have WORLD-WIDE for ALL YEARS that such records have been kept COMBINED been only 4 deaths caused by ferrets. In the two of which I have read follow-ups both the ferrets and the infant victims were victims of abuse by the adults in the family and the infants were ALONE or left with an adult passed out from alcohol or drug abuse. Anyone who sees how small a ferret's mouth is readily understands that it would take many bites from a rare aberrant individual to do real damage, and that a crying infant would normally bring caring parents in to defend it with its cries long before serious injury could be done. The reason ferret bites have been treated as being so newsworthy and why they are so easy to remember is because they are the exception. With rare exception people are used to hearing of dog bites and ignore the reports because they are common, but we all recall the rabbit which bit off a child's finger, or the ferret which took off an ear because no matter how common rabbits and ferrets are stories about serious bites from them are so rare.

Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, 1994
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc.

now lists BOTH IMRAB-3 (Rhone Merieux, Inc.) and PRORAB 1 (Intervet, Inc.) as federally approved vaccines.

Other vets who are experts: Fox and his associates at MIT, the exotic division of the Animal Medical Center in N.Y. C., Bruce Williams (who can be reached at williamb@email.afip.osd.mil and is based near Washington D.C.), Susan Brown near Chicago who can be reached through the Greater Chicago Ferret Association or barbied14@aol.com, the vets used by Marshall Farms (a breeder) 1-315-587-2295, and many more

To find cuddly ferrets for your programing several people and groups will help or refer you to those who can: NYC Friends of Ferrets, P.O. Box 268, Gracie Station, NY. NY 10028; Nancy Hartmann 1-610-255-4436; Katie Fritz 1-610-642-8166, N.J. Ferret Assoc. 1-609-581-8627, 1-908-870-9511 and Garden state Ferret Club 1-609-586-9526; Diane Rogers 1-401-448-1281; Ann Davis of LIFE 1-703-503-7313, Pam Grant of STAR 1-703-354-5073, and the American Ferret Association 1-301-898-3228, and us.

sincerely, [REDACTED] Basking Ridge, N.J. 07920
[REDACTED]



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