



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on February 14, 2011

Youth Faces Jail for Dog Killing Raccoon

Serious belief in God precludes an embrace of cruelty. If creation is “blessed,” then its creatures, in some way or another, are too. This of course does not mean that using antibiotics to murder tens of billions of microbes is wrong. One cannot be cruel to organisms with no awareness or sensation of pain. Moreover, life, above a very primitive level, either subsists on life or it starves. Even vegans must “kill” plants to survive, as a delightfully iconoclastic musical group in Canada, “The Arrogant Worms,” reprised in their song, “Carrot Juice Constitutes Murder.”



The method by which “nature” executes its victims is very different from how God-fearing people behave. People who have lived on farms know what the “pecking order” means, and from a human perspective it is a form of killing as bad as the MKVD or Gestapo would inflict on prisoners in a torture chamber. Game wardens learn quickly that the fate of life outside the ken and power of man is ruthless to the young, the pregnant, the old, and the sick. As Alfred, Lord Tennyson observed, Nature is “red in tooth and claw.”

When men turn to the God of the Bible, in spite of themselves, they embrace a different standard of behavior from that of raw, cold nature. Orthodox Jews, for example, eat meat that is slaughtered in a kosher fashion (which means simply “clean.”) Kosher butchers may or may not embrace kindness to animals, but the livestock they kill suffer much less than any other animals not euthanized by a veterinarian. It is for a reason that the Psalmist says: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,” and that Christ speaks of Himself as the loving “Good Shepherd.”

The faith of Christians and Jews also sees man as a hunter and a fisherman, a slayer of wild beasts, like David, or a “fisher of men,” like Peter. Part of this, as well, may be men acting as unwitting tools of the Lord when they show compassion among His creatures. Hunters all over America participate in programs such as [“Hunters Against Hunger.”](#) in which the very healthy venison and other game are given to shelters or directly to the poor. Beyond this compassion toward their fellow man, hunters also mercifully cull populations of game animals whose young would die of starvation if men did not hunt.

What happens when man with his regulations tries to usurp the nobility of the Torah, the Psalmist, or the Gospel? History, horrifically, tells us: men become devils. Even as well-meaning monsters men cannot do good without God. And when frail creatures attempt to replace the divine goodness of God with their own invented morality, the result is either absurd or awful or both.

Just ask Seth Foster, a 23-year-old young man facing charges of cruelty to animals in Jackson County Court in Michigan.

His father, Mike, who owns Foster’s Wildlife Control Services, knows all about wildlife and hunting. For the last 30 years his company has been removing nuisance wildlife just like the raccoon that recently wandered into their family garage. According to Mike and Seth, this creature put a hole in the garage,



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damaged a door, ate stored bird feed, and knocked tools off a work bench. Foster observed that it was “raising hell.”

When Seth discovered the raccoon, he [sent “Grizz,” a Blue Heeler hunting dog](#), into the garage to get the intruder. Raccoons had been destroying property for a long time, and dogs have been tracking and killing them for even longer. Seth and his friends allowed Grizz to kill the wild raccoon. Now the young man may face up to 90 days in jail for not trapping and releasing the raccoon or killing it in a more “humane” way.

Mark Blumer, the chief assistant prosecutor, likened the killing of the raccoon to cockfighting: “There is legitimate sport, and then there’s cruel sport. Because you have a license to kill a deer, doesn’t mean you can break all its legs and watch it die slowly.” Blumer acknowledged that Seth and his father used Grizz to hunt nuisance animals, but suggested that although smaller animals such as mice might have been appropriately killed by the dog, it took an inordinately long time — a couple of minutes or more — for the dog to kill the raccoon, and the death was recorded by cell phones.

There are also seasons for trapping and hunting raccoons, and one must obtain a license to hunt the animals. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, dogs cannot be used to kill any game, although they may be used to track game. Whether one has a license or not, and whether the animal is in season or not, a property owner may kill a raccoon without a permit if the animal is damaging (or threatens to damage) private property. The use of the dog to kill the raccoon, apparently, influenced Mr Blumer’s prosecutorial decision.

Seth’s father disagrees: “To me, it’s no different than if you buy a cat to kill mice.”

The obvious question for a state such as Michigan, which is facing a financial meltdown, is: Are there better ways to deal with the situation than by spending tax dollars to send police out to apprehend young Seth, having him charged, and brought to trial?

The voters and taxpayers, perhaps, may have the final say in this case.



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