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Three Defendants Sentenced to Prison in Multi-State Dog Fighting Conspiracy

Three defendants have been sentenced for their roles in an interstate dog fighting network across the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and New Jersey.

According to court documents, from at least 2013 to 2018, Chester A. Moody, Jr., 47, of Glenn Dale, Maryland; Emmanuel A. Powe, Sr., 46, of Frederick, Maryland; and Odell S. Anderson, Sr., 52, of the District of Columbia, sponsored and exhibited dogs,

as well as participated in almost every other aspect of dog fighting: selling, buying, possessing, training, transporting, delivering and receiving dogs so that those dogs could be used in dog fighting ventures. The defendants also possessed significant dog fighting equipment, such as dog treadmills, medical veterinary kits, breeding stands used to forcibly immobilize female fighting dogs, dog collars with embedded weights and chains weighing several pounds used to restrain the dogs.

“Dog fighting is a form of cruelty with no place in our society,” said Assistant Attorney General Todd Kim of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. “This cruelty will not be tolerated, nor will exposing a child to such horrific acts.”

“The violent and cruel act of dog fighting is a heinous form of animal abuse,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh for the Eastern District of Virginia. “These defendants served as leaders, breeders and trainers for a multi-year dog fighting operation and brazenly promoted this barbaric form of ‘entertainment’ for illegal personal gain. We must treat these animals — who are among society’s most vulnerable victims — with dignity and respect. As this prosecution demonstrates, those who engage in this intolerable and abhorrent conduct will be brought to justice in our courts.”

“The provisions of the Animal Welfare Act were designed to protect animals from being used in illegal fighting ventures, which often entail other forms of criminal activity,” said Special Agent in Charge Bethanne M. Dinkins of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Office of Inspector General (USDA-OIG). “Together with the Department of

Justice, animal fighting is an investigative priority for USDA-OIG, and we will work with our law enforcement partners to investigate and assist in the criminal prosecution of those who participate in animal fighting ventures.”

Throughout the conspiracy, the defendants participated in multiple dog fights, from “roll” or “play” fights used to test a dog’s willingness to fight, to full-blown dog fighting shows planned months in advance and limited to known attendees. One of these dog fight events occurred in King George, Virginia, in April 2016 where most of the participants were led to the fight’s secret location. The event involved two separate dog fights with dogs owned and sponsored by Anderson, Powe and Moody. The two losing dogs died following their injuries sustained in the fights. Both Anderson and Moody trained and fought dogs who attained Champion and/or Grand Champion status – terms used to indicate a dog who has won three and five contract matches respectively, with no losses.

Moody will serve one year and one day in prison to be followed by one year of supervised release and 120 hours of community service. Moody pleaded guilty on April 28 to one felony count of conspiracy to engage in dog fighting activities over several years.

Powe will serve 18 months in prison to be followed by 3 years supervised release. Powe pleaded guilty on May 10 to one felony count of conspiracy to engage in dog fighting activities over several years.

Anderson will serve 18 months in prison to be followed by three years supervised release. Anderson pleaded guilty on June 1 to the same felony count of conspiracy to engage in dog fighting activities as the other two defendants. Anderson also pleaded guilty to one count of causing a child under the age of 16 to attend an illegal animal fight venture.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Olivia L. Norman of the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Shennie Patel of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section prosecuted this case.

This case was prosecuted as part of Operation Grand Champion, a coordinated effort across numerous federal judicial districts to combat organized dog fighting. The Humane Society of the United States, along with other entities, assisted with the care of the dogs seized by federal law enforcement.

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