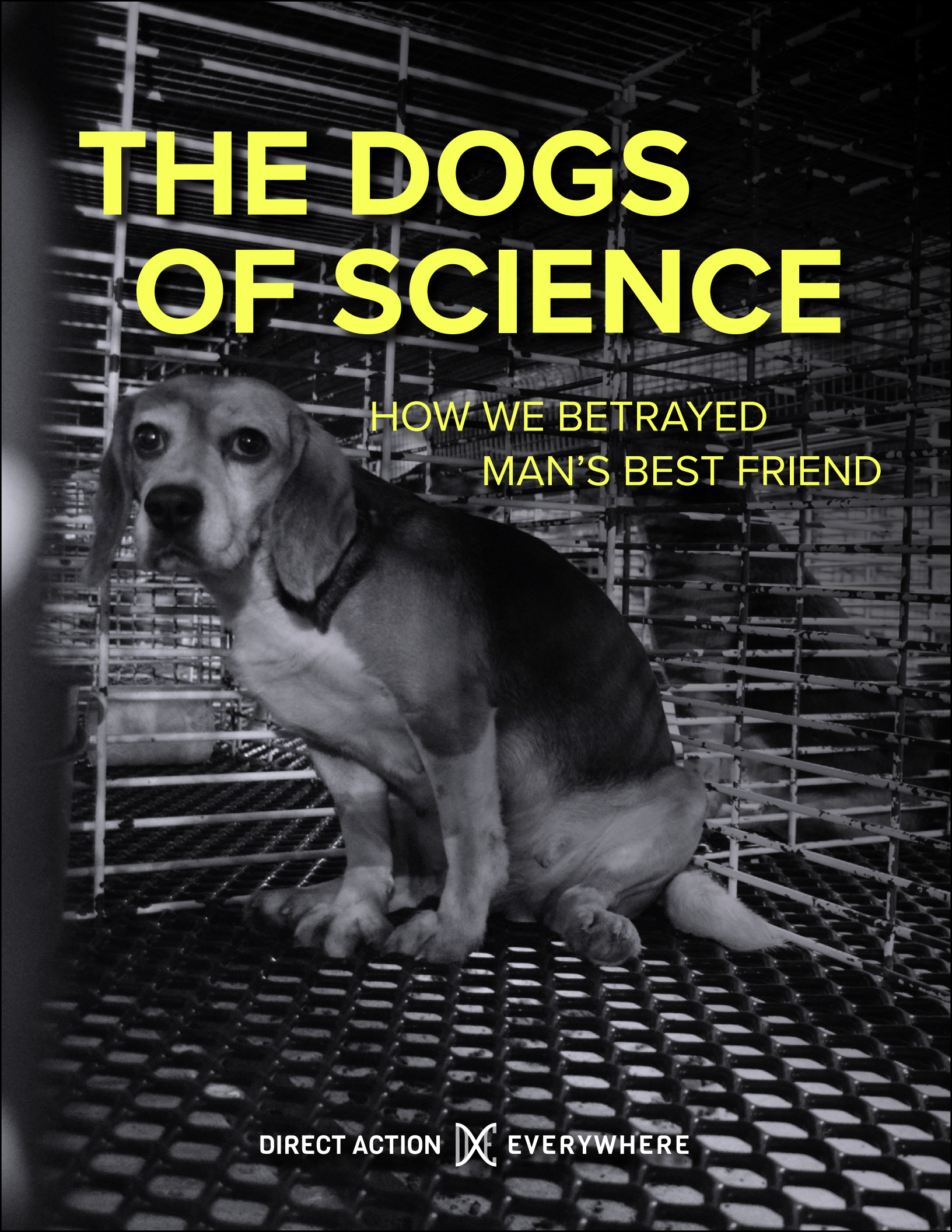

THE DOGS OF SCIENCE
HOW WE BETRAYED MAN'S BEST FRIEND
DIRECT ACTION EVERYWHERE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than a millennia, most people have thought of the dog as man's best friend. But based on an investigation of Ridglan Farms in Dane County, Wisconsin by the grassroots animal rights network Direct Action Everywhere (DxE), one might conclude that ***man*** is the dog's worst enemy.

Ridglan Farms is one of three top breeders in the United States which provides beagles for research facilities including the University of Wisconsin, Oklahoma State University, Texas A&M University, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina, and the University of California. On its website, the company claims that "[Ridglan] has provided the highest quality beagles for biomedical research. The Ridglan colony has adhered to the strictest standards of quality in breeding, socialization, health care and colony management."

DxE found the actual conditions contrary to the company's claims. Documentation reviewed by DxE shows numerous abusive experiments performed on Ridglan dogs for more than 40 years. In the spring of 2017, three DxE investigators entered several Ridglan barns at night to document the housing for the hundreds of dogs living there. What they saw were animals in psychological torment, turning around and around in their small cages, as well as:

- Filth.
- Noxious air.
- Many dogs housed alone in cages made of plastic-coated wire.
- Dogs' feet red and swollen from standing on the wire cage floor.
- Continuous 24-hour lighting.
- No access to the outdoors.

The investigators rescued three dogs from the facility, including one in extreme psychological distress who, nearly a year after being rescued from the facility, continues to walk in circles, apparently compulsively, and is blind.

The psychological and physical abuse that dogs typically suffer in breeding farms such as Ridglan is only the beginning of their misery. Ridglan dogs have been sold off to laboratories that, among other things:

- Infect dogs with deadly pathogens such as rabies and salmonella.
- Use dogs for toxicology tests of various types, where dogs are exposed to increasing amounts of drugs, pesticides or other chemicals including forcing them to ingest commercial laundry detergent to the point that they vomited blood and died.
- Fill their legs with fluid to induce swelling and a deadly condition called "compartment syndrome."
- Cut around one dog's shoulder joint, mimicking a rotator cuff tear, then examined the dog for weeks before finally killing her.

"What we do isn't accepted by the general public as a positive thing," Jim Burns, president and co-owner of Ridglan, told *Isthmus* writer Noah Phillips. "But we're completely legal and we do everything we can to take care of the animals."

A 2015 Gallup poll showed the vast majority of Americans believe that animals deserve protection, with almost a third claiming animals warrant as much protection as humans. Yet conservatives in Congress are striving to give animals used for research even fewer protections, saying the "political climate is right." In 2016 Congress launched the debate by passing the 21st Century Cures Act, which aims to accelerate biomedical research. One provision demands that the federal government "find ways to reduce the administrative burden on U.S. researchers and institutions that use animals."

Still, possibly in response to public concern, last summer the House of Representatives quietly cut off funding to the Veterans Administration for tests which caused great harm to dogs.



THE INVESTIGATION

Anyone who has ever had a dog knows they like to lounge in the sun, roll in the grass, run, nuzzle a friend, go for a walk, sniff everything, sleep in a soft bed with a companion and play with a toy. They usually enjoy human companionship and attention. Dogs at Ridglan experience none of those simple pleasures from the time they are born until the day they die, unless they are miraculously rescued or are adopted out at the end of the experimentation.

DxE investigators wearing biosecurity gear entered a massive barn at Ridglan through an unlocked door. They found many dogs wailing, howling and barking, while others were lethargic and utterly passive. Some dogs were housed alone in wire cages; others shared a cage with one or more dogs. The harsh fluorescent light appeared to be continuous. There were no soft beds, no toys, no access to sunlight, no human companionship. Cages were stacked two high.

The president of Ridglan told *Isthmus* that the company, which also conducts some research on dogs itself, housed 3,733 beagles in 2014 and has 15 employees. The dogs relieve themselves in the cages and waste is supposed to drop through holes in the plastic-covered wire floors.

"The thing that struck me immediately was how it smelled exactly like dog meat markets in China," said lead investigator and DxE co-founder Wayne Hsiung. "It was filthy. There were feces everywhere."

According to 2006 USDA inspection reports obtained by Animalearn (the educational division of the American Anti-Vivisection Society), the USDA investigated a complaint of overcrowding, unsanitary dog cages and the smell of burning animals at Ridglan. While the USDA did not take action on the



(ABOVE) A beagle looks nervous as investigators peer into her small cage.

(BELOW) Being tightly enclosed her entire life, Julie still feels more at ease in darker, tighter spaces like corners.



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plaint, the inspectors did indicate they found "dirty and potentially dangerous housing conditions at Ridglan."

The dogs in breeding laboratories rarely touch solid ground and never touch grass. One of the dogs who was rescued from Ridglan was placed on grass. "She didn't know what to do," the dog's current guardian said. "She just froze."

PSYCHLOGICAL DAMAGE

For all the experiments that have been forced on dogs, very little research has been done as to the effect the experiments have on the dogs' mental state. At Ridglan, investigators found several dogs engaged in what is called stereotypic behavior – they were turning in circles in their cages.

"The existence of a compulsive disorder suggests that the environment in which the dog lived was inadequate and that its welfare was compromised at some time," wrote veterinarian Kevin Stafford of Massey University in New Zealand. "The proportion of dogs with compulsive disorder is unknown and difficult to estimate..."

One of those spinning dogs was rescued by DxE. She was later named Julie, and was found to be blind. Investigators don't know what, if any, experiments were done on Julie, but her new caretaker thinks it must have been something awful. "She was terrified of being restrained," Julie's caretaker said. "If we tried to put a collar on her, she went running through the house, crying, barking, making this horrible pathetic crying sound."

It was nearly as bad when a dog trainer placed Julie in a harness for 10 minutes. "She started shaking and shook for hours after that," she said.

Usually at the end of experiments dogs are euthanized, even if they are relatively healthy. The Beagle Freedom Project attempts to find homes for dogs retired from research facilities. They call these dogs "special needs" and they counsel prospective owners that "while [caring for such a dog] may be challenging at times, it will be one of the most rewarding things you will ever do."

The walking in circles behavior, after 11 months, hasn't left Julie. "When she first got to my house, she explored the house in ever widening circles," said Julie's caretaker. "But Julie wouldn't actually walk; she crawled on her belly."

These days, with loving care, Julie is doing better; has put on

some much-needed weight, and is generally less anxious. “She is the sweetest, softest dog,” she said.

RESEARCH ON DOGS IN THE UNITED STATES

The agency responsible for overseeing breeders and research facilities is the animal care unit of the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. According to a 2014 USDA report, 288 research facilities – more than 25% of all research facilities that use animals - had violations which included: “inadequate searches for alternatives to painful procedures; no descriptions of euthanasia method to be used in the experiment; and no descriptions to assure that pain to animals would be limited to that which is unavoidable.” Auditors stated that “...animals are not always receiving basic humane care and treatment. In some cases, pain and distress are not minimized during and after experimental procedures.” All tolled, there were 566 violations between 2009 and 2011.

Beagles, because they are typically docile, eager-to-please, quick-to-forgive and are of a manageable size, are the dog breed of choice for researchers. They make up 96 percent of the dogs used in 383 different laboratories in the U.S. In 2016 nearly 61,000 dogs were used in experiments, according to the USDA. They estimated that over 20,000 dogs were used in research that caused the dogs pain.

While the federal government says rates of non-rodent animal testing has steadily declined since the early ’90s, millions of animals are still used for research in the United States. Since no records are kept on the numbers of rodents, estimates range from 12 million to as high as 27 million total animals.

Dogs are used for all sorts of experiments. Industrial chemicals, household products and pesticides are tested on them as well as human and veterinary drugs.

Dogs are also used in “biomedical research.” Currently, over the protests of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), a researcher at Ohio State University, George Billman, is surgically compromising dogs’ hearts; forcing them to run on treadmills until they have heart attacks; killing them and studying the damaged heart tissue. It’s been reported that Billman has killed over 700 dogs over the course of his career.

In September 2017, *USA Today* reported that the VA in Cleveland was studying ways to restore cough function after spinal cord injury: “The experiments involve placing dogs under anesthesia and then using electrodes for high-frequency stimulation at various places on their spinal chords to induce coughing. Researchers perform the tests before and after severing the spinal cords to mimic injuries suffered by humans.”



(ABOVE) A beagle in the animal testing industry spends almost the entirety of their life looking through a steel wire cage.

AT RIDGLAN

Ridglan says on their website, “We do not conduct toxicology studies or studies which require euthanasia at the conclusion of the study.” What the company fails to say is that it sells dogs to universities and other researchers who do use them for toxicology studies and kill them when the study is concluded. Indeed, over nearly five decades, Ridglan has sent thousands of dogs to a brutal end. Some experiments:

- **Force fed commercial laundry detergent**. In a 1974 study by the Lovelace Foundation, Ridglan dogs were forced to ingest large amounts of commercial laundry detergent. Some vomited blood and died.

- **Convulsions from synthetic cannabis.** In a 1987 study at pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, Ridglan dogs were forced to ingest nabilone, a synthetic cannabinoid, until some experienced convulsions and died.
- **Poisoned with artificial sweeteners**. In a 2015 study by food giant Cargill, Ridglan dogs were given large doses of a new artificial sweetener, which caused the male dogs' testicles to shrink. All dogs were killed at the end of the study.
- **Infected with heartworm**. In a 2016 study at Auburn University, Ridglan dogs were infected with heartworm larvae to test the relative efficacy of commercial heartworm treatments. Five months after the infection, the dogs were killed.

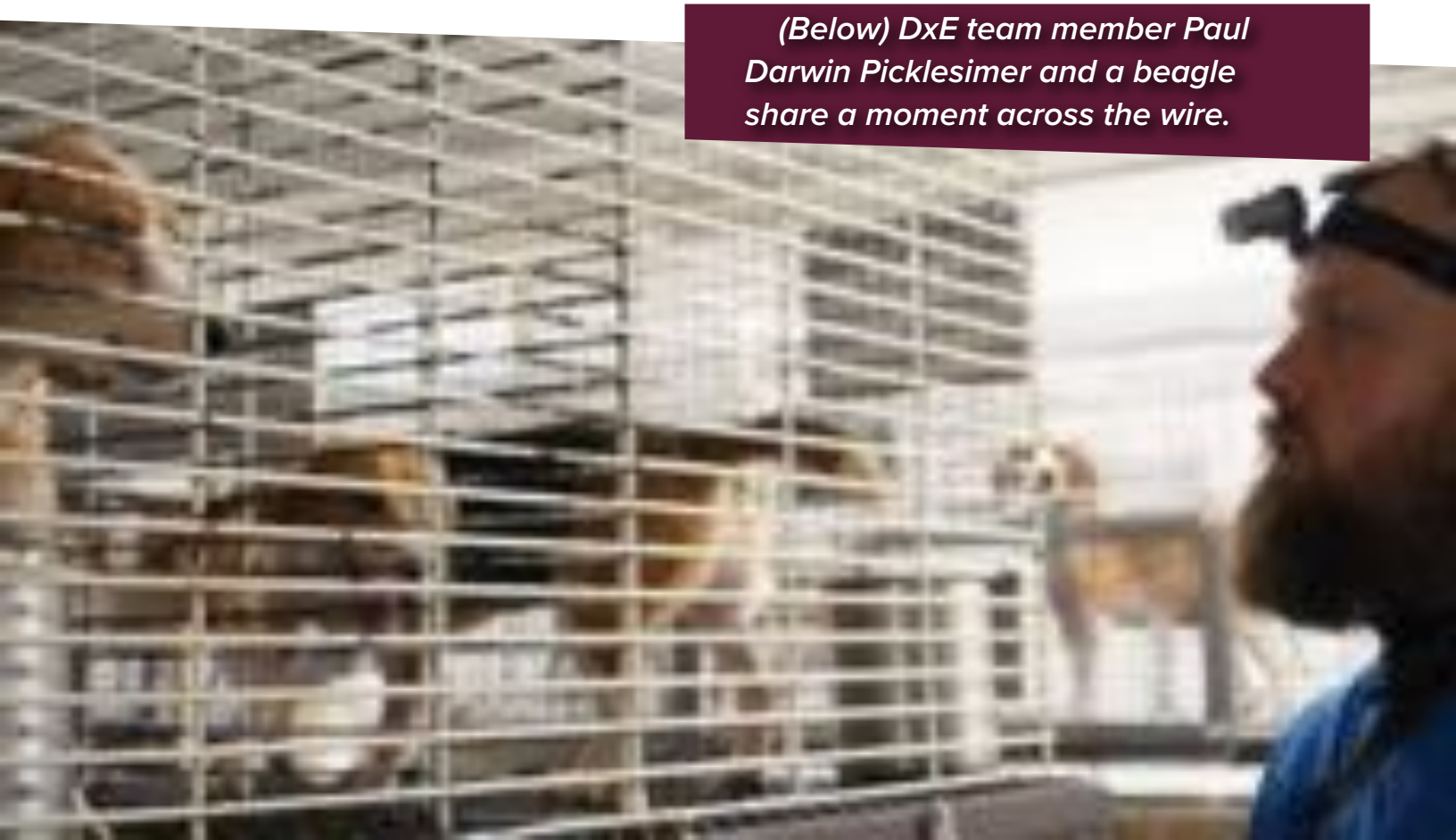
ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION AND THE LAW

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which was initially passed in 1966, only minimally protects dogs, cats, non-human primate mammals, guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits. Rats, mice and birds are not covered, nor are horses not used for research purposes, and neither are farmed animals intended for use as food. The AWA stipulates that "the animals' living conditions will be appropriate for their species...and will contribute to their health and comfort." The AWA mandates that temperatures in research facilities not drop below 50 degrees.

Legally, any experiment can be performed on a dog in the U.S. except in three states. In those states, including California, product testing on animals has been banned if an alternative means can be used. At the federal level, the AWA says that each institution using animals covered by the act must submit to the government a written description of each procedure that may cause more than momentary pain or distress to the animals.

"These industries don't even see dogs as living things."

According to the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the USDA has 120 inspectors to oversee more than 12,000 facilities that test, exhibit or breed animals. The USDA accepts self-reporting from research facilities. If violations happen to be found at research facilities, fines are



(Below) DxE team member Paul Darwin Picklesimer and a beagle share a moment across the wire.

not mandatory, but may be levied as high as $10,000 per violation.

While the AWA says that research facilities must "develop, document and follow an appropriate plan to provide dogs with the opportunity to exercise," the agency will exempt a facility if the dogs are

'Legally, any experiment can be performed on a dog in the U.S.'

housed in larger cages. The standard cage size is essentially the length of the dog times the length of the dog. If a dog gets twice that much cage space, research facilities aren't required to give the dogs any exercise at all.

According to DxE investigator Paul Darwin Picklesimer there was no indication that the dogs at Ridglan had ever been outside or received an opportunity to exercise.

THE EFFICACY OF TESTING HUMAN MEDICATIONS ON DOGS

Over and over again researchers have learned that just because a drug works on animals, it doesn't mean it will be effective or even safe for humans. According to a 2004 Food and Drug Administration study, 92 percent of drugs used successfully on animals fail to receive approval for human use. Research scientists Kathy Archibald and Robert Coleman noted in an article in the *New Scientist Magazine*, that adverse drug reactions in the U.S. kill more than 100,000 people a year.

While many people object to using animals to test products such as cosmetics, new cleaning solutions, and pesticides, they still support using animals for medical research. A 2014 survey of a thousand people taken in England by the market research firm Ipsos MORI showed that 68 percent approved of animal research to find a cure for a disease, but only 35 percent of those interviewed approved of using animals for "all types of research." In their efforts to promote animal testing, groups such as Understanding Animal Research point to animal testing's contribution to advances in medicine such as blood transfusions, penicillin, insulin, cervical cancer vaccine, anesthetics and more.

ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL RESEARCH

The National Institutes of Health acknowledges that there is general public agreement that as few animals as possible be used in research and that animals should be protected from unnecessary pain.

In response to public concern over the use of animals in research, scientists have come up with an ethics guideline for testing on animals: "Reduction, Replacement and Refinement." This guideline, described in William Russell and Rex Burch's 1959 book, "Principles of Humane Experimental Techniques," recommends that researchers look diligently for other ways to conduct their experiments without using animals. If researchers must use animals, it should be the smallest number possible, wrote Russell and Burch. According to the principles of the 3Rs, scientists should try to use computer models or invertebrates, which biologists have noted have fewer nerve receptors.

Even though the end of animal testing would mean the end of Ridglan Farms, co-owner Jim Burns, who owns a companion dog himself, said he expects the "need" for animal testing to diminish. "Looking forward, when stem cell testing is approved by the FDA, I think it will eliminate the use of a lot of beagles," Burns told *Isthmus*. "Supercomputers, too, will have an impact on the use of animals in research."

Another method under development for toxicology testing is called the "Tissue Chip for Drug Screening." The NIH, the FDA and the Defense of Advanced Research Projects Agency are collaborating on creating 3-D "human tissue chips" modeled on human organs, to predict the safety or toxicity of specific drugs.

However, many research organizations are fighting for the right to continue to use animals, arguing that in vitro experiments or computers still cannot replicate the incredibly complex reactions in a living animal. They also point out that even with this type of research, animals are still used to generate the cell cultures; and computer models are developed based on results from previous in vivo tests.



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

"What matters morally…is the other's distress and pain, regardless of species. If nonhuman animals are sufficiently similar to humans for them to be used as scientific models in research, then they are sufficiently similar to be accorded a similar moral status." – Richard D. Ryder, writer, psychologist and animal rights advocate

Of all the species of animals, dogs are, perhaps, the most loved. In many American homes they are regarded as treasured members of the family. Who would allow their beloved companion to be subjected to solitary confinement and horrific experiments?

Yet institutions such as Ridglan do exactly that to thousands of beagles, unbeknownst to the public at large. Shortly after the Institute for Medicine released a report on chimpanzees in research – finding both moral and scientific quandaries with the practice – the National Institutes of Health ended all federal funding on research involving chimps. The result has been an effective end to the use of chimps in laboratory experiments. Given the abuses outlined at Ridglan and other facilities experimenting on dogs, an **immediate moratorium on federal funding for research on dogs** should be established, and a similar report should be commissioned for dogs.

In the long term, more dramatic legal action is necessary, however, to ensure that animals are protected from abuse. While most Americans see animals as living creatures deserving of rights, animals used in research (or for food or entertainment), including dogs, are still deemed legal "things" who are largely invisible to the law. The result is that even tremendous cruelty inflicted upon these animals is difficult or impossible to stop.

Granting animals enforceable legal rights is therefore a necessary step to addressing cruelty that is opposed by the vast majority of Americans. If animals had the right to their day in court – represented by a court-appointed guardian ad litem – then the abuses exposed at places like Ridglan could be effectively addressed. Even more importantly, however, such legislation would rapidly move our society toward a new paradigm in which we would not treat animals such as the Ridglan dogs as mere commodities.



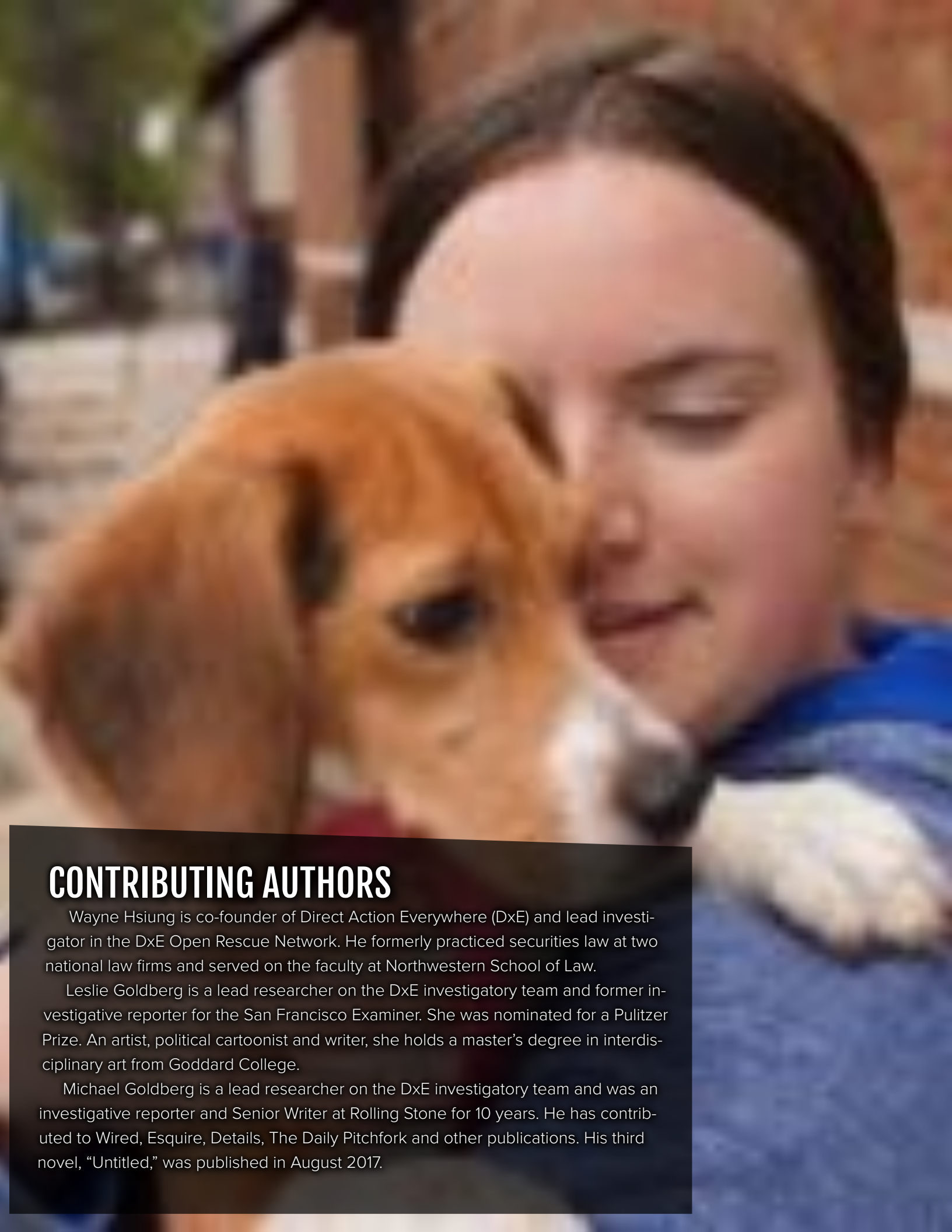
ABOUT DIRECT ACTION EVERYWHERE (DXE)

DxE is a grassroots network of animal rights activists. Started in 2013 in the San Francisco Bay Area, DxE protests have taken place in 207 cities in 41 countries. The group uses nonviolent direct action to challenge speciesism throughout society.

DxE's numerous investigations into animal abusing facilities including many touted as "organic" and "humane" have received widespread media coverage, including from the New York Times, the Washington Post, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal and many more.



(LEFT) Julie's first time playing on grass.



CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

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Michael Goldberg is a lead researcher on the DxE investigatory team and was an investigative reporter and Senior Writer at Rolling Stone for 10 years. He has contributed to Wired, Esquire, Details, The Daily Pitchfork and other publications. His third novel, "Untitled," was published in August 2017.