



Press Release

November 13, 2009

On November 9th, Investigators from the Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigative Division traveled to the 3700 block of Clements Road in Cottondale, Alabama to investigate an alleged case of child abuse. While at the residence, Investigators observed 12 American Pit Bull and Pit Bull mixed dogs in extremely poor health and further noted that the dogs were tethered by heavy chains.

A search warrant was obtained through District Court on November 12th and Sheriff's Deputies, accompanied by Dr. Jimmy Canant, a licensed Veterinarian in Tuscaloosa County, returned to the residence. After further investigation, 12 American Pit Bull and Pit Bull mixed dogs were removed from the property displaying various signs of starvation and cruelty. Some of the dogs showed apparent evidence of dog fighting. Others had injuries and infections, which need medical attention. All were extremely under weight. A chain weighing a total of 33 pounds was on a dog that weighed, as of yesterday, 27 pounds. A 31 pound chain was found on a 38 pound dog, and a 21 pound chain on a 39 pound dog. All dogs were transported to the Metro Animal Shelter.

Ruben Hedgemon, Jr. of 3701 Clements Road, Lot #4, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was arrested on the charge of Cruelty to Animals in the second degree. "A person commits the crime of cruelty to a dog or cat in the second degree if he or she, in a cruel manner, overloads, overdrives, deprives of necessary sustenance or shelter, unnecessarily or cruelly beats, injures, mutilates, or causes the same to be done. Cruelty to a dog or cat in the second degree is a Class A misdemeanor." Hedgemon's bond was set at \$12,000.00.

The disposition of the dogs will be pending a hearing in the District Court of Tuscaloosa, or if the owner voluntarily surrenders ownership of the dogs.