

NEWS

Use Of Greyhounds In Super Bowl Ad Irks Dog Owners

January 28, 2012 5:28 PM

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Greyhound dog.

DETROIT (WWJ) - Some animal rights activists are upset that Skecher's plans to run a Super Bowl commercial that they say depicts Greyhound racing.

Theresa Boostrom is with Michigan Retired Greyhounds as Pets and says the dogs are treated inhumanely.

Boostrom owns two former racing dogs and says she wants Skechers to pull this commercial.

"It depicts greyhound racing, which we find unconscionable because of the way these dogs live at the track and they're confined in crates," said Boostrom. "They are notoriously injured. They end up with broken legs, lacerations. They die on the track of broken backs, broken necks, heat stroke."

The president of Skecher's Fitness Group, Leonard Armato, says protestors haven't seen the ad.

"None of the protestors have ever seen the commercial, so they're sort of protesting in the abstract and, you know, we're a sensitive company. We would never support, you know, cruelty to animals in



Reporting [Beth Fisher](#)

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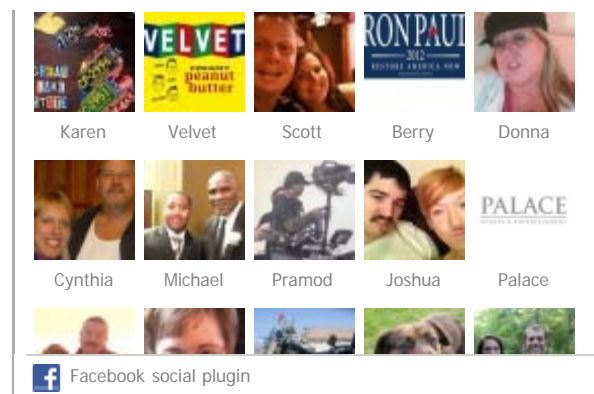
any way,” says Armato.

Armato says the commercial features a French Bulldog, an underdog that does something remarkable. The ad promotes Skecher’s GoRun running shoes.

He says that Skechers will not pull the ad: “Skechers is not involved in the debate of greyhound racing – there are a number of groups that like it – there are a number of groups that don’t like it, and all of them are dog lovers and greyhound lovers.”

“The American Humane Association was at the filming of the commercial and vouched for it. No dogs were harmed,” said Armato.”We think people are absolutely gonna love the commercial and by the way, dogs in the Super Bowl is like bread on butter ... I mean ... it’s something that happens all the time, so we believe once everybody sees the commercial, all of this will die down.”

Some members of the Michigan Retired Greyhounds as Pets planned a protest outside the Skecher’s store at Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi, but security was so tight they didn’t want to risk being arrested.



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29 COMMENTS

Eric Jackson

Leonard Armato just doesn't get it. By filming their commercial at Tucson Greyhound Park, and using racing greyhounds, Skechers has put themselves right in the middle of the greyhound racing debate. Skechers has aligned themselves directly with an industry that is responsible for the injury, maiming, and death of thousands of greyhounds every year. Shame on Skechers for not doing their homework before they filmed this commercial. There are over 117,000 signatures on a petition asking Skechers to pull this commercial.

January 28, 2012 at 6:43 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Nancy Weller

Wow. This Leonard Armato really has a bad research team. Really?

He states: "We think people are absolutely gonna love the commercial and by the way, dogs in the Super Bowl is like bread on butter ... I mean ... it's something that happens all the time, so we believe once everybody sees the commercial, all of this will die down."

Leonard Armato, while you were filming your fluff ad for ugly shoes with rescued greyhounds, not far behind the scene are greyhounds who do not see the light of day, the joyous run, the happy home. Those hounds, behind your frivolous set risk injury each time they run. They don't run in some flimsy ad. They run for their lives.

Shame on you, Skechers. Practice better research, because this will not "die down".

January 28, 2012 at 7:20 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Eric Jackson

Actually, Nancy, the greyhounds featured in the ad were active racers. When the filming was done, they went back to their cages. What is Skechers going to say when one of the "stars" of their commercial gets hurt or killed on that track?

January 28, 2012 at 7:26 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Nancy

My mistake and thank you Eric. Well, somehow that makes it much worse than what I was lead to believe. So, the star runs off and the real racers go back to the cages? To the kennels of one of the nation's worst tracks?

Leonard Armato and research team. So bad a move... You are living in an "advertising"

fog.

January 28, 2012 at 8:21 pm

Cindy Petrillo

I was in disbelief when I heard the interview between Beth Fisher and Theresa.

I was with Theresa in Novi today. We were unable to distribute pamphlets due to the tight security in the mall.

The comments by the president of skechers was appalling. He even chuckled and made the remark that people would enjoy it.

We were hoping to educate people to the plight of the greys. This ad needs to be pulled and replaced with something else.

Thank you Beth for airing our story and putting up a picture of my beautiful rescue grey Belle..

January 28, 2012 at 8:10 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

 Nancy

Thank you for being there, Cindy! Skechers has shown themselves to be callous and uncaring. Keep up the fight! I wish I could have been there with you all!

January 28, 2012 at 8:24 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Chris

Can someone tell the author that the word “Urks” in the title doesn’t exist....it’s “Irks”.

January 29, 2012 at 2:02 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Susan Scheide

While there have been cases IN THE PAST of mistreatment of Greyhounds, by in large, Greyhounds are treated with nothing but kindness and love. You CANNOT make a dog run. A sickly dog will not run. An abused dog will not run. And Grey2K is not an “animal rights” group; they are a political lobbying organization who is trying to end racing. They don’t care anything for dogs and do NOTHING to actually help the dogs.

January 29, 2012 at 5:42 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

 Eric Jackson

The problem, Susan, is that when you are done with greyhounds, when they can’t run fast enough to bring in prize money, they are either dumped onto adoption agencies or just killed. That’s why GREY2K USA and all its supporters are trying to end greyhound racing – the dogs deserve better.

January 29, 2012 at 6:21 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

 Robert Gross

Well Eric, there you go lying again. Greyhounds are never “dumped” into adoption agencies. Many Greyhound adoption groups are financially supported by race tracks, kennel operators, breeders and owners. 90% of all retired Greyhounds are adopted. The remaining dogs are returned to their owners or used for breeding. It should be noted nearly one-third of all donations to Grey2k are allotted toward the salaries and expenses of its husband and wife owners.

January 29, 2012 at 9:41 pm

 Eric Jackson

Many greyhound adoption groups get nothing from the tracks but greyhounds in need of homes. Again, do you have any evidence to support your claim that more than 90% of greyhounds are adopted? Please, back that up with some kind of evidence.

January 29, 2012 at 11:21 pm

Robert Gross

Greyhound Racing is a very safe sport. Injury reports obtained by Grey2k confirm that the rate of injury to racing Greyhounds is less than 0.03%. Most of these are minor injuries. Greyhounds are housed in clean, comfortable, large kennels and are exercised several times a day. Their care is second to none. People like Grey2k board member Eric Jackson, who have never been in a racing kennel or to a breeding farm, continue to repeat the lies and misinformation provided to him by his handlers in the Grey2k corporate office.

January 29, 2012 at 6:01 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Alicia Heiserer

Thank you Skechers for the great commercial.

In response to the people who are ignorant of the facts,

1. If the dogs were kept in cages that they could barely stand nor turn around, they could not walk or run.
2. If they were fed diseased and rotten meat, they could not run.
3. If they were abused, they would RUN, but in the opposite direction then the Lure.

I must be missing something because those animals are healthy, happy and loved. They live with 50+ of their own kind and actually enjoy each others company. Then when their racing career is over, they are petted out where they become spoiled pets, treated better then many people.

Does sound like too bad of a life to me.

Regarding their injuries while racing, we were all injured when we were playing when we were young and those of us who participate in sports today get injured too, some even die. But most of the injuries the dogs heal fine from as do we.

Thanks Skechers for a great commerical and I thank all the sponsors of Superbowls for the wonderful commercials they have put on over the years featuring; dogs, horses, frogs, lizards etc.

January 29, 2012 at 6:53 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

 Eric Jackson

Alicia, you're arguing points that nobody has made, and arguing facts with assumptions. First of all, the cage sizes have been posted. Do you have anything to dispute those facts as presented?

Greyhounds are commonly fed raw, 4D meat. That is meat from dead, down, diseased, and dying animals. It is considered unfit for human consumption. Plants often mix charcoal into the meat to prevent it being sold to human consumers.

Greyhounds are locked in individual cages. Their only interaction is during turnouts. Otherwise, they are locked inside on their own.

The difference between you and I being injured while playing, and a racing greyhound being injured while racing, should be obvious to anyone. Children who are injured are not killed as a result of their injuries. Greyhounds who suffer non-life threatening injuries are sometimes

euthanized rather than treated. It's a disgusting practice.

Children are seen as inherently valuable, but greyhounds are often valued only as long as they are profitable for their owners. When they cease being profitable, due to age or injury, they are no longer valued.

It is unfortunate that Skechers has chosen to align themselves with this cruel and inhumane industry. There are so many things they could have done, but they chose to glamorize greyhound racing. It's a shame.

January 29, 2012 at 9:09 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

 Robert Gross

Once again, more lies from the profit-based Grey2k board member. You state that 4D meat is unfit for human consumption. Well Eric, Greyhounds are not humans. 4D meat is perfectly safe for animal consumption. In fact, if you feed your dog canned food, you're feeding 4D meat. No Greyhound has been harmed by eating 4D meat. The crates that Greyhounds live in are more than large enough for them to comfortably stand, turn around and lay down. They are out of there crates 5 – 6 times a day for turnout and exercise. There are people in the kennel and around these animals for 8 – 12 hours per day. They are groomed daily, nails and clipped, teeth are cleaned. Greyhounds are sprinted and walked between their races. It should be noted that Eric Jackson has never been to a racing kennel or a breeding farm. He only knows what he has been told to disseminate from the owners of Grey2k.

January 29, 2012 at 9:48 pm

 Alicia Heiserer

Eric,

You may not have made them on this page and Thank you Robert.

Greyhounds are commonly fed raw meat, and also dry dog food too. Here is the additional description of raw meat.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has strict rules that regulate the source of meat approved for human consumption. Animals that do not meet those restrictions are designated 4D whether or not any of the above adjectives describe the reason for being considered unfit for humans. 4D meat is the primary ingredient in most pet foods, even premium brands. Pet food is cooked which kills the E. Coli bacteria, but also alters its nutritional composition. All attempts to replicate the diets of racing dogs with cooked food have resulted in failure. Racing greyhounds simply do not perform as well on a commercial diet as on one partially composed of raw meat. Many pet owners of a variety of breeds have converted to a B.A.R.F. (Bones and Raw Food) diet similar to typical racing greyhound fare.

Greyhounds are in their own cages with are right next to at least 2 other cages unless they are on the end. I do not have to touch someone to interact.

I have not seen one Greyhound euthanized at TGP in my time there instead of being treated for their injury. There is always one STATE HIRED Vet on site along with a Track Vet anytime there is racing going on.

It is sad that you think a dog is no longer of value once it has stopped racing, very sad.

January 29, 2012 at 10:07 pm

 Eric Jackson

Robert, information from the greyhound industry has been posted previously. Do you have evidence to dispute what has previously been posted?

January 29, 2012 at 10:20 pm

Eric Jackson

Alicia, it looks like you copied and pasted the information you posted. What was your source for that information?

January 29, 2012 at 10:21 pm

Robert Gross

The Greyhound industry has provided videos and photos. I have been in hundreds of racing kennels and breeding farms over the 30 years I have been involved with Greyhounds. Since I have experienced this first hand, I am able to make qualified statements as to the treatment and welfare of Racing Greyhounds. You, Eric Jackson, have not seen first hand a racing kennel or breeding farm. You are not qualified to speak on the subject. You have a right to, of course. But your comments are only hearsay, based on what you have been told from Grey2k. Incidentally, Eric Jackson has been invited several times to visit kennels and farms. He has refused.

January 29, 2012 at 10:31 pm

Eric Jackson

Robert, where are these photos and videos you speak of?

And speaking of lies, your assertion that I have been invited to visit greyhound sites is a complete fabrication. The exact opposite is true – when a greyhound industry insider asked trainers, farms, and kennels to let me visit, not a single person said yes.

Again, this is a common tactic with the pro-racing side. Because the industry is essentially indefensible, people like you make up lies and try to direct the conversation in different directions. Then they denigrate the opinions of people who don't follow their lies, making claims that only they can know the truth, only their opinions should be counted. At the end of the day, greyhounds are still locked in their too small cages. When their racing career is over, too many of them will be killed by owners/trainers/kennel workers.

January 29, 2012 at 11:18 pm

Robert Gross

Visit the Tucson Greyhound Park Facebook page, and there are videos of the racing kennels. The website [allaboutgreyhounds dot com](http://allaboutgreyhounds.com) has a lot of information and photos as well. You can see the size of the crates in the photos and videos. They can hardly be considered "too small cages". Of course Eric Jackson will respond that these are not acceptable because they are provided by the Greyhound Racing community. The bottom line is that Eric Jackson refuses to see it first hand. His group is in the same category as PETA – a radical animal rights group. I'm not trying to denigrate Eric Jackson, I'm just saying that his only 'evidence' is hearsay. The people feeding him information have a financial stake in lies and misrepresentations about the Greyhound industry.

January 29, 2012 at 11:49 pm

Claire Sommers

I adopted my first retired racer in 1998 and I am not irked by the Skechers commercial at all. I am thrilled that Skechers has included greyhounds in their Super Bowl ad. Personally I have been to the track to pick up greyhounds when their racing career is over. I have been to the puppy farms and watched the schooling races. I did not observe any neglect or abuse. The retired racing

greyhounds make excellent pets and have left pawprints on my heart.

January 29, 2012 at 8:14 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Nancy

Although I question the intent of the reviewing committee on comments, I will post again.

Alicia, the term ignorant is in the eye of the beholder. That is a tad brazen and a bit arrogant.

To address your points:

1. The dogs ARE kept in those cages. Since they have known nothing but that, they will adapt. Is that best for them? No. Sadly, dogs do learn to adapt to adverse conditions and ill treatment. And no. Those cages are smaller than the dog beds I have for my rescues. They run because they are that cramped for that long.
2. Read back at #1. They run because they've been cramped. It has nothing to do with food. I have had rescues with severe dental issues due to the grade D food fed them. The food is sustenance and nothing more at the track.
3. Really. Greyhounds are the most affectionate and loyal breeds ever. They will return their abuser and rely on them. Ebro ring a bell? Those dogs never ran away.

Finally, injuries as a child vs. injuries at the track? I don't see you put down. My friend has a tripod, result of a track injury.

Careful how you toss out the word ignorant.

January 29, 2012 at 9:05 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Robert Gross

I think the statement "They run because they are that cramped for that long" definitely qualifies as ignorant. I hear a lot of stupid things from Grey2k and their minions, but that must be the most ridiculous.

January 29, 2012 at 10:21 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Alicia Heiserer

Nancy,

You are so right, they each have their own personal space, somewhere they can call their own, their on cage. And animals learn to adapt, just as humans do. And they are not cramped at all.

2. BS, they do not chase the lure because they are cramped. Lets put you in a place that you can not stretch you legs and see how well you can run. I train human athletes and it just doesn't work with anyones muscles that way.

3. They are wonderful animals, but any vet will tell you that an abused dog does not stand strong and straight and run for joy like those Greyhounds.

Definition of Ignorant: resulting from or showing lack of knowledge. That is my point.

January 29, 2012 at 10:14 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Heather

"The dogs ARE kept in those cages. Since they have known nothing but that, they will adapt."

Another ill informed person.

For the first 12 months of a greyhound life they are not kept in "cages"

The reason they chase a lure, well umm because it's what a sight hound does. You can't teach a dog to chase, just like you can't teach a lab to retrieve. They do it because it's in their blood, it's part of who they are.

So all you who have "rescued" your hounds. You think they became perfect wonderful, loving pets all because of your love? Let me fill you in, don't break your arms patting yourselves on the back. They are wonderful, loving pets because of the care and upbringing they received before they ever stepped foot into your home.

January 29, 2012 at 10:36 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Raimondo Campana

My grandmother used to tell me I know it true I read it in the inquire!!! And she believed It all to be true. Unless you take the time to see for your self what goes on in the Greyhound racing industry, You might aswell be reading the Inquire!!!! Greyhounds are as Big a joy to work with as they are to have running around your house!!! And anyone that has a retired Racer as a pet Knows that they had been taken care of and are very trusting and would not be if we had abused them when they were ours.

January 30, 2012 at 12:05 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Cindy Petrillo

EBRO GREYHOUND DOG TRACK!

January 30, 2012 at 12:23 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Chiennoir

The Skechers ad will make a world of difference to greyhounds, but not in the way Grey2K warns us about. The nationwide exposure of the breed during one of the most-watched commercials of the year will bring the image of the greyhound into millions of homes. Some of those millions of people will decide to adopt a retired racing greyhound, and that WILL make a positive impact in the lives of these spectacular athletes once they retire.

January 30, 2012 at 1:43 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

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