

'CSI' Probes the Devastating World of Dogfighting

Intense dogfighting scenes were filmed using “acting and special effects,” according to the animal welfare group that monitored the production.

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Viewers of Thursday's "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" saw what the American Humane Association describes as one of the most "accurate and graphic" portrayals of dogfighting ever seen on TV.

AHA says no animals were harmed during filming of the intense episode, which took the CSI team to the underground world of dogfighting as they investigated the murder of a wealthy socialite.

Gina Johnson, an AHA animal safety representative who was on the "CSI" set during safety planning sessions and filming, says the scenes were created using acting and special effects. "In terms of perception of harm to animals, this 'CSI' episode was the most intensely graphic content I have monitored in my seven years as an American Humane safety rep," she said.

AHA applauded CBS and "CSI" producers for ensuring no animals were put at risk during filming. Fifteen dogs, including pit bulls and a Poodle, were used to depict scenes of dogfighting, euthanasia, dog baiting, and death.

"We are hopeful that the level of cooperation and concern for animal safety shown by CBS and 'CSI' will encourage all productions to place a likewise high priority on animal welfare," says Marie Belew Wheatley, president and CEO of American Humane.

AHA monitors film and TV productions to ensure animal actors' safety. The organization issues the "No Animals Were Harmed" end-credit disclaimer to productions that meet safety guidelines.

Wheatley says she hopes the "groundbreaking" episode, which concluded with a public service announcement about dogfighting, will increase awareness of the gruesome practice.