

## Animals' Angels Investigation at Mize Horse Sale and the Rowan Feedlot in Mississippi External report

### **1. Mize Horse Sale**

#### **General Information:**

The auction is located on Highway 28, approximately two miles East of Mize. The auction holds a horse sale every 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month. The tack sale starts at 10:00am and the horse sale at 12:00pm.

#### **Auction contact information:**

601-847-3412  
601-733-2231 fax

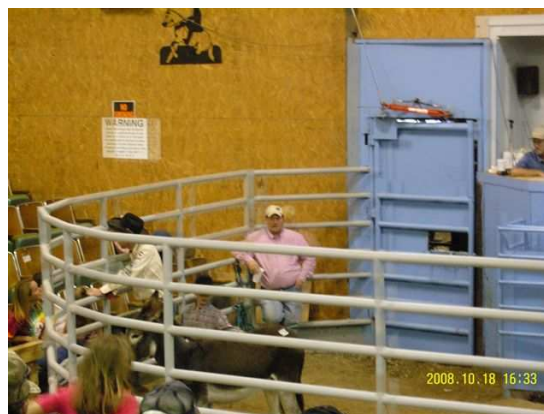
#### **Veterinarian:**

Sullivans Hallow Veterinary Services  
Dr. Anna  
601-603-0202

#### **Observations:**

##### **Saturday 10/18/08**

We arrived at the auction at 9.30am. There were many cars and trailers parked in the parking lot. Inside the pen area were approx. 150 horses. The pens were clean and the horses had adequate room to move around with the exception of some donkeys in one of the pens. Some horses had access to water troughs in the pens and others to water buckets. The barn is open on both sides and has good air circulation. A catwalk overlooks the pen area.



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In the office we are informed that the auction does not have a laboratory on site for Coggins testing. All blood samples are sent out and the results are mailed back to the auction during the following week.

The sale started at 12.05pm. The handling of the horses was good, the horses were haltered and hand walked into the auction ring. Both auctioneer and handlers were very patient with the horses. The majority of the horses were in good to excellent condition.

Tim Rowan, slaughter horse buyer, maintained a presence inside the auction ring and was buying. After the sale was over, he and his family left and checked into a hotel.

### Sunday 10/19/2008

Rowan returned to the auction at 12:05 pm. His green pick-up truck with a large three axle, black cattle trailer pulled around to the side of auction and he started loading his horses. There were no license plates on either the truck or trailer, nor was there a DOT# on the truck. A truck engaged in interstate commerce is required by law to have a DOT # and the name of company on both side of the truck.

#### 390.21 Marking of CMVs.

- (a) General. Every self-propelled CMV, as defined in [§390.5](#), subject to subchapter B of this chapter must be marked as specified in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.
- (b) Nature of marking. The marking must display the following information:
  - (b)(1) The legal name or a single trade name of the motor carrier operating the self-propelled CMV, as listed on the motor carrier identification report (Form MCS-150) and submitted in accordance with §390.19.
  - (b)(2) The motor carrier identification number issued by the FMCSA, preceded by the letters "USDOT".

2.40pm: Rowan left the auction with a full load of horses. We followed him north on Hwy 35 to Hwy 25 until we could be certain that he was returning to his home in New Albany.





## 2. The Rowan Premises

**10/20/2008-10/22/2008**

### **Locations:**

Billy Rowan  
1397 Hwy 178 East  
New Albany, MS 38652

Tim Rowan  
102 Murrah Rd.  
New Albany, MS 38652

The Rowans also maintain a large horse feedlot off Rt. 348

### **Additional information:**

Tim Rowan is the son of Billy Rowan. Billy Rowan used to transport slaughter horses to the plants in Texas. Now they are suspected to ship to the Morton feedlot. On August 24, 2008 Rowan had an accident with his tractor/trailer after leaving the auction in Carthage, MS. Since then, he switched to using pick-up trucks and large stock trailers.

**Public records reveal that the Rowans violated the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter regulations already three times. (USDA case numbers: TX 03176, TX 04066, TX04211**

In all of these cases, 9 CFR 88 4a 3vii was violated, which means horses unfit for travel (blind on both eyes, likely to give birth during the trip, not able to put weight on all four limbs, not able to walk unassisted, not older than six month) were transported.

**On September 11, 2008 Billy Rowan was sentenced by Judge Jill S. Clifton to pay a fine of \$12,650.00 (A.Q. Docket No. 06-0006) for these violations.**

**DOT information:**

DOT: 1551589

His SafeStat record shows several severe violations of FMCSA regulations, such as failure to maintain a log book and a driver using or in possession of drugs.

Driver OOS Violation Summary (within 30 months)			<a href="#">Download Data</a>
<u>Violation Number</u>	Description	<u>Number of OOS Violations</u>	Number of Inspections
383.51(A)	Driving a CMV (CDL) while disqualified	1	<u>1</u>
392.4(A)	Driver uses or is in possession of drugs	1	<u>1</u>
395.3(A)(1)	11 hour rule violation (Property)	1	<u>1</u>
395.8(A)	No drivers record of duty status	1	<u>1</u>

**Observations:**

**A. The Feedlot**

We went to the feedlot on Rt. 348. The large feedlot looks like an old dairy farm with several barns and a loading ramp. There were more than 100 horses on the premises. They had access to food, water and shelter. Many horses still had auction tags attached to their hips. We were approached by a neighbor who told us that he often observes trucks and trailer coming in during the night to load horses. He said that Rowan would paint a circle on the horses that he selects for slaughter.





### **B. Billy Rowans House.**

On Billy Rowans property there were two pick-up trucks, a white van and two large cattle stock trailer. The truck that was involved in the accident on August 24, 2008 was parked in the driveway. The property includes a house, a barns and approximately 50 acres of pasture located across the street from the house. Inside the pasture were six horses and one foal. Several of the horses were extremely emaciated.



There was water, but no hay or grain available for these starving animals.

#### **Miss. Code Ann. § 97-41-7 Confinement depriving creature of food or water**

If any person shall confine, or cause to be confined, in any stable, lot, or other place, any living creature, without supplying the same during such confinement with a sufficient quantity of good and wholesome food and water, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

12.30pm: We were approached by a neighbor who confirmed that the horses inside the pasture belonged to the Rowan family. He stated that they didn't seem to take care of the animals in the pasture and that “they would come and go”

1.30pm: We observed Tim Rowan and one of his teenage sons loading horses on the trailer parked in his driveway. There were also saddles in the back of the truck and it appeared he was taking them to an auction. We followed Rowan to Hwy 15 N to 30 E to 45, which indicated that he was heading towards Tennessee or Alabama. We called Tim Rowan on his cell phone and asked if he had any riding horses that we could buy. He replied that he was out of town and on his way to an auction 375 miles away. He bragged that he “goes through 300 horses a week”



5.03pm One of the horses in the pastures was down and not moving at all. We decided to contact the Union County Sheriff's Office to make a complaint about the condition of the horses. A dispatcher promised she would dispatch an officer.

5.23pm Two police cars arrived and parked across from Billy Rowans property. We explained our observations and discussed the condition of the horses with the Deputies. Meanwhile, one of the neighbors approached the horse and was able to get it up again. Then Billy Rowan arrived and made the following statements:

- “People give me horses and if i don't take them, they die.”
- “ The horses in the pasture are just old.”

We responded that this does not justify not feeding them. Rowan replied that he would be happy to give the horses to us.



6.30pm: We made a few phone calls and were able to locate a local rescue (*Have a Heart Horse Rescue out of Baldwyn, MS*) that agreed to take the horses Rowan offered to us. We informed B. Wicker, one of the Deputies, about this development. We were told to call back the next morning at 6.00am. Officer Wicker said that he would contact Mr. Rowan about our plans.

**Tuesday 10/21/2008**

6.00am: We called the Sheriff's Office and were told that the officers from the day before were not in yet. We then called Sheila from the "*Have a Heart rescue*" to schedule the pick-up of the horses with her.

7.45am: Sheila arrived with a horse trailer at the Sheriff's Office. Officer Wicker was still not there. One and a half hours later he arrived, called Billy Rowan and informed him that we were ready to pick up the horses. Rowan told the officer that he "met" a "man from Alabama", who "had a lot of hay" and took the emaciated horses. Rowan stated further that the man from Alabama could not load all of the horses in the pasture, but that he would return to get them. Meanwhile, he would have a feed truck come in for the remaining horses and would take good care of them.

We expressed our disbelief about this story. The officer agreed, but said all we could do is sign a complaint and take Rowan to court. We told him that we wanted a police report filed, which he did.

10.00am: We returned to the Rowan property. Rowan's truck and trailer were there. Most of the horses inside the pasture were gone. It remains unclear what happened to them.

**Conclusion:**

The investigation showed that:

- The Rowan family is still active in the slaughter horse business and sells large numbers of horses.
- Mississippi animal protection laws are ignored and not enforced.