



Department of Justice

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Eleven Kentuckians Sentenced to Federal Prison for Animal Fighting Offenses

LEXINGTON, Ky. - Two additional individuals, Jerrard McVey, 48, and Linda McVey, 42, both of Carlisle, Ky, were sentenced on Tuesday to 12 months and a day in federal prison, by U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell, for conspiracy to knowingly sponsor and exhibit animals in an animal fighting venture, in connection with the Valley, a chicken pit on the border of Nicholas and Fleming Counties.

According to their plea agreements, the McVeys, conspired with others, including Walter Mitchell, 48, of Ewing, Ky., to organize multiple animal fighting ventures in the form of cockfights at The Valley, located on the border of Nicholas and Fleming Counties. Specifically, on July 30, 2021, the McVeys and others organized and managed an animal fight that included at least a dozen entries in a 5-cock fight, and approximately 100 attendees.

Jerrard McVey pleaded guilty in December 2022. Linda McVey pleaded guilty in November 2022. Mitchell was sentenced in March 2023, and he received six months in prison and one year of supervised release.

In total, eleven individuals have now been sentenced to federal prison for their participation in animal fighting offenses in the Eastern District of Kentucky. Four other individuals were sentenced to home detention or federal probation.

In March 2023, Cruz Alejandro Mercado-Vazquez, 43, of Maysville, Ky, was sentenced to 15 months incarceration, 3 years supervised release, and a \$10,000 fine, for attempting to bribe the Mason County Sheriff to influence the Sheriff in connection with a planned animal fighting venture.

Timothy Sizemore, 43, of Manchester, Ky, was sentenced to 26 months incarceration, 2 years supervised release, and a \$1,000 fine, for his role in running an animal fighting venture in Manchester, Ky, called Riverside, and an animal fighting venture in Pike County, Ky, called Blackberry. His co-defendant in running Riverside, Millard Oscar Hubbard, 73, of Manchester, Ky, was sentenced to 12 months and one day incarceration, 2 years supervised release, and a \$95,000 fine. A referee at Riverside, Justin Smith, 34, of Manchester, Ky, was sentenced to 1 month incarceration, 18 months supervised release, and a fine of \$250. The owner of the property on which Blackberry operated, Perry Hatfield, 58, was sentenced to 8 months home detention and 2 years supervised release. Individuals who worked at Riverside, Beachel Collett,

30, of Oneida, KY, and Lester Collett, 26, of Manchester, Ky, were sentenced to 4 months home detention and 18 months supervised release.

In another case involving an animal fighting operation in London, Kentucky, called Bald Rock, Rickie Johnson, 56, of London, Ky, was sentenced to 2 months in prison, followed by 8 months home incarceration, 2 years of supervised release, and a \$1,000 fine, for his role in running Bald Rock. Several individuals who fought roosters at Bald Rock were also sentenced. Joshua Westerfield, 36, of London, Ky, was sentenced to 3 months in prison, 6 months home detention, and 2 years supervised release. Dallas Cope, 35, of Livingston, Ky, and Bradley Cye Rose, 43, of Parkers Lake, Ky, were each sentenced to 14 days in prison, 9 months home detention, and 18 months supervised release. Hiram B. Creech, Jr., 47, of East Bernstadt, Ky, was sentenced to a year of probation and a \$2,000 fine for causing a minor to attend the animal fighting venture at Bald Rock.

“Animal fighting ventures are cruel and illegal,” said Carlton S. Shier, IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. “We will continue to enforce federal animal cruelty laws and we commend the valuable assistance of all our law enforcement partners, whose dedicated work made these important convictions possible.”

United States Attorney Shier; Salina Walker, Acting Special Agent in Charge, United States Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Louisville Office; Colonel Phillip Burnett, Jr., Commissioner, Kentucky State Police; and Superintendent Rob Townsend, Indiana Gaming Commission, jointly announced the sentencing.

The investigation was conducted by USDA, FBI, KSP, and the Indiana Gaming Commission. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kate Smith and Andrea Mattingly-Williams.

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