

Back in 2006 we actually had an animal control officer as part of the Sheriff's Department. He had worked with Beth on many dog issues including picking up an injured Rottweiler at midnight in some undisclosed location but that story is for another time. He had recently seized two mares who were being starved by a man in Delta County. His wife had left him and they were in the middle of a divorce so he thought that starving her horses would be a great way to get back at her. After many calls from neighbors and the deterioration of the horses becoming more and more evident each day he finally was given the go ahead to seize the two mares. The problem though was when horses are seized by government agencies the horses then have to go through the sale. He called Beth and basically pleaded with her to go to the sale and buy these two mares, she called me and I said "absolutely, let's do this!!"

After checking on the puppies and leaving a small bowl of water in the car for them we marched our way to the office, registered and got our bid number. By the way, I have never bid on anything in my entire life!! We found our way to the lot and started looking for these two mares. Damn, I had never in my life seen so many horses all cooped up in stalls, some without any water, injured, dismal looking creatures standing there with blank stares. It was heartbreaking. I had taken some riding lessons while living in the UK, the horses were all so well fed and glossy, kind eyes that closed while being brushed and soft sighs coming from their nostrils. These horses at this sale barn were the complete opposite. The majority of them were sad, you could feel it, feel it in the energy flowing all around you, it emanated like a horror movie that you want to turn away from but can't because it is all just too overwhelming.

Now we had been informed that there would be kill buyers there but to be frank I had never even considered these types of people, in my 30 something years I never really paid much attention to horses being bought for slaughter, the truth is this type of industry had never even crossed my mind. My world was about to be shattered and little did I know where it was going to lead. We finally found the two mares that we had come to purchase, wrote the numbers down from the yellow stickers that had been stuck to their rump and then found our place on the bleachers, lots of people began sitting down and the auction started. The horses were being run in sometimes more than one at a time, the auctioneer was speaking so fast I could not for the life me understand a word he was saying, as quick as the horses were run in they were run out, bids were going up, people were yelling, it was complete bloody chaos. At one point Beth turns around to a rather rotund man behind us and blatantly asks him if he is a kill buyer, he looked at her and said yes without any hesitation. As I stared at the fiasco before me a little brown mare was run in, she had bowed legs, was horribly skinny but her eyes were just pleading, it was pathetic. Before I realized what I was doing my hand was going up as the auctioneer kept screaming garbled words and next thing I knew my bid number was taken down and for the first time in my life I was now the proud owner of a crippled mare!! It all just happened so fast it was like someone took a hold of my arm and kept lifting it up without my consent. At this point we now realize that the kill buyer behind us and our first introduction to the well-known Charles Carter had bought the two mares we had come to purchase. What a complete mess, we thought that they would be bringing the horses in numerically, little did we know it was random and a complete and utter fiasco.

Now Beth and I were somewhat screwed, we did not know how the hell we were going to get these two mares from this apparent kill buyer. At the end of the auction we both went up to him. I explained the situation with the request from the Sheriff's Department that we were to buy those two mares. I explained that we had never been to an auction before, I don't know if it my accent or the fact that Beth was glaring at him but he agreed to allow us to take the two horses. We went to the sale barn office with him and he changed the bid number for him to us.

And so we left the sale barn that afternoon with a crippled mare that I named Manzie and the two seized mares which we names Roxi and Tango. They finally arrived at one of our properties due to a kind neighbor who was there with her trailer and offered to give them a ride. Their ride to freedom, the day that changed our lives and those of all the horses that have found their way to our rescue. Some stay forever as they are unadoptable and others have found their forever people through our training program or as companion horses. But standing watching those horses in that pasture by the pond with the big old trees providing shade that afternoon we both decided that a horse rescue was necessary here in Delta County, allowing the option for unwanted horses to find a new beginning or a place to call home for the duration of their lives. All three of the original horses now gallop with our herd in the sky, but if not for them and not for that day Spirit Wind Horse Rescue would never have been.

*When God wanted to create the horse, he said to the South Wind, 'I want to make a creature of you. Condense.' And the Wind condensed.*

**– Emir Abd-el-Kader**