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Criminal District Attorney David P. Weeks and Officials of Walker County, Texas:

The murder of war hero Marcus Luttrell's 4-year-old yellow Labrador Dasy resonates worldwide. Like Luttrell, most people treat companion animals as family members who happen to have fur. Like Luttrell, we'd want their killers prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

But for Luttrell — the sole survivor of a Navy SEAL team ambushed by Taliban fighters in Afghanistan in 2005 — the loss is unbearable. Dasy, a therapy dog, was Luttrell's link back to the living world.

Please seek maximum penalties under Texas law for Michael John Edmonds II, 21, and Alfonzo Hernandez, 24, both charged with felony cruelty to nonlivestock animals in Dasy's shooting on 4/1/09.

As you know, Luttrell responded to gunshots at his Walker County home. Finding nothing amiss, he raced outside to find bloody paw prints and Dasy's body in a ditch. "I could tell she tried to get away," Luttrell told interviewers. He pursued Dasy's killers in his pickup for 40 miles, across three counties. He alerted a 911 operator and finally made a citizen's arrest near Onalaska.

Texas animal cruelty law allows for up to 2 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. It also permits mandatory counseling. Please advocate extensive incarceration and rehabilitation for Edmonds and Hernandez. The men should also be barred from possessing, working or living with animals.

In fact, five other area dog killings may lead back to Edmonds and Hernandez, according to Texas Ranger Steven Jeter. Repeat animal attacks suggest a predatory style that is indicative of "organized and premeditated violence against others," says Dr. Randall Lockwood, an ASPCA animal behaviorist who frequently consults with cruelty investigators, law enforcers and mental health professionals.

Criminologists view the intensity of vicious behavior — regardless of the victim's identity — as a precursor to future violence. The FBI identifies animal abuse as an early stage along the violence continuum. Indeed, men prosecuted for animal cruelty are five times as likely to be arrested for other violent crimes, as published in Utah State University professor Frank Ascione's extensive research.

Please punish these unrepentant killers to the fullest degree. That is the only real justice for Marcus Luttrell and his beloved Dasy.

Thank you,