

**DOG**

**THE BOUNTY HUNTER**



When he was sitting in a jail cell in Texas in that late 1970's, Duane (Dog) Chapman never thought he would one day be working on the other side of the law.

Dog was born in Colorado in the 1950's. His father was a former soldier, and his mother was a member of the Chiracahua tribe. Both of his parents worked hard to instil a strong sense of values and ethics in Dog, but he still found himself drawn to the wild side.

## IN DOG WE TRUST

Dog joined an outlaw motorcycle gang named the Devil's Disciples when he was sixteen. Despite the fact that he was a gang member, he still considered himself a Christian thanks to the upbringing offered by his mother. When other members of the gang would try to hang a crucifix upside down, or talk about desecrating or robbing a church, Dog immediately let them know

he wouldn't stand for it. The other's teased him about his Christianity, but they also respected his conviction. They wanted to give him a nickname that reflected his religious beliefs, but the name "preacher" was already taken by another member. Then one of the members of the gang came up with an idea. He said '*you are always talking about God. God spelled backwards is Dog, so from now on we are going to call you Dog.*' The nickname has stuck with him for over thirty-five years now.

Dog admits that he carried out a lot of crimes as he rose through the ranks of the Devil's Disciples. He had plenty of money, drugs and girlfriends - and he lived this lifestyle until he was in his early twenties. Then he decided to





settle down somewhat. He got married and had a couple of kids, and his outlook on life changed. He wanted to be around to see his sons grow up, and he knew he couldn't do that from a jail cell. He had enough seniority in the gang that he could get away with simply "supervising" the felonies committed by other members. He thought this would protect him from arrest.



But one day in 1976, Dog went to purchase some drugs with his brother and a few other people. A conflict broke out between the dealer and one of Dog's accomplices, and the dealer was shot. The police had Dog in custody while the dealer was being questioned. They asked him if Dog was the guy who shot him. The dealer clearly told them Dog was not the guy. Dog was actually waiting out in the car when the shooting happened, and had no idea what was going on. The police let Dog go - but the dealer who had been shot that evening, later died from his wounds!

**IN DOG WE TRUST**

Under Texas law, Dog was considered an accomplice because he was with the shooter. As a result, he ended up being charged with murder. Dog jokes that "when the police came to arrest me, I tried to run. I was a fugitive for all of fifteen minutes until they got me. I'm obviously much better as a bounty hunter than I was as a fugitive."

Dog ended up being sentenced to five years as an accomplice to murder, and he had mixed feelings about his sentence. He didn't kill anybody himself, and he didn't plot to kill anybody, so he felt being imprisoned for murder was unfair. But, on the other hand, he realized that he **had** committed a lot of crimes over the years. He felt that his jail sentence was God's way of making him pay the piper for all the wrong he had done. Dog was having a tough time trying to figure out what God had in store for him, so one day he opened the Bible at random and pointed to a spot in the Bible to see what "message" God had for him. The quote he was pointing to was where Jesus told Peter that '*if you love me, feed my sheep.*' Dog felt that God was telling him that his calling in life was to look after other people.



Dog managed to fluke off a job as a prison barber - a position that is usually pretty safe. He explains that "the guards wanted to look good for their wives and girlfriends - and the barber was the one who made sure they looked good. If another inmate beat up the barber so bad that he was unable to cut hair, the guards would lay a beating on that inmate." It was a fairly easy job that kept Dog protected from the groups (Black power, Hispanic, White supremacist) in prison.



Whenever a family member of a prisoner dies, that prisoner is said to have "rabbit" in his blood. He wants to escape to be with his family, and to prevent that from happening, the guards will put that prisoner in solitary confinement until he gets over the emotional turmoil. Dog was in the yard one day when the guards came up to tell a prisoner nicknamed "Bigfoot" that his mother had died and that as a result they would temporarily be putting him in solitary confinement. Bigfoot immediately made a run for it and started to head towards the fence. One of the guards reached to his holster to pull out his pistol and shoot the escaping prisoner. Dog was very close by when this drama was unfolding, and he felt he simply couldn't stand by and watch the man get shot. He threw his own body between the guard and the escaping prisoner and shouted "*Please Boss, don't shoot - let me catch him.*"

As he was running after the escaping prisoner, Dog wondered if the guard had heard him, and if the guard had **believed** him. He was afraid the guard would shoot both of them for trying to escape. But the guard gave him the benefit of the doubt, and Dog managed to tackle Bigfoot well before he reached the fence, holding the other man down until the guards could take him away.

After they took Bigfoot away, the head guard came up to Dog and said "you just stopped another prisoner from escaping. Your life won't be worth very much now. We are going to need to put you in protective custody to keep you safe from reprisals."

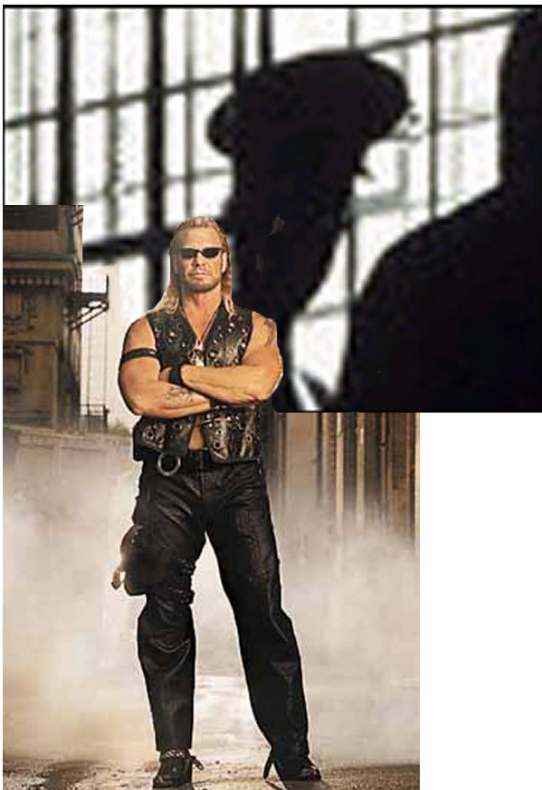




Dog told the guard that he was willing to take his chances in general population, and that he didn't want to go to protective custody unless it was absolutely necessary. He went to bed that night wondering how much longer he had to live! To his surprise, though, he woke up in the morning to see the floor outside of his cell covered with cigarettes, candy bars and letters thanking him for what he had done. The other prisoners had seen what had happened. They knew that Dog wasn't trying to stop an escaping prisoner - he was actually saving Bigfoot's life and keeping him from being shot. One of the letters said '*In Dog We Trust,*' and he was able to maintain that trust and respect for the remainder of his stretch in prison. He was so well respected that he was given the job of inmate counsellor, helping other prisoners deal with rough patches in their life.



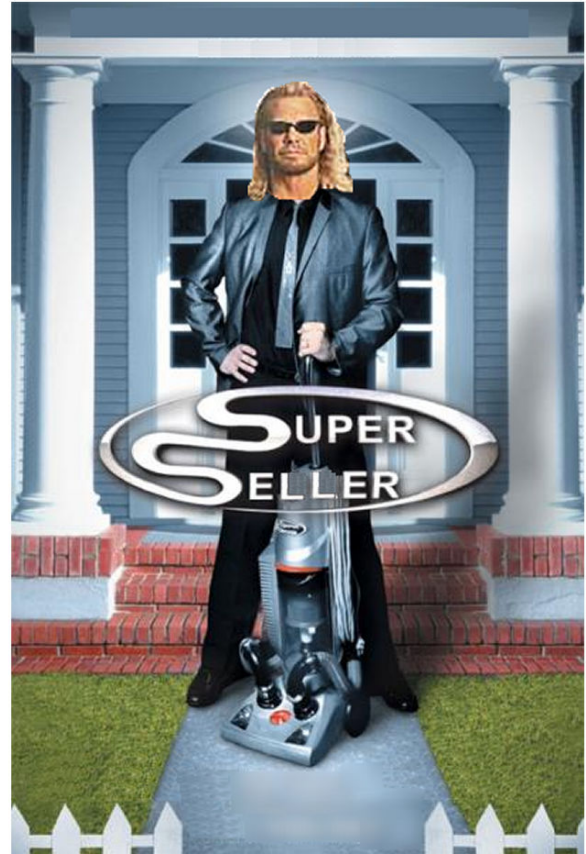
On February 6, 1979, Dog was granted early parole, given \$200.00 in spending money, and allowed to go back to his family in Colorado. He hoped to meet up with his wife again, but to his dismay he found out that his wife had divorced him and married another man while he was in prison. To add insult to injury, she told their children that their father was dead. Dog was distressed when he heard this, and he even went so far as to use \$60.00 of his spending money on a handgun, determined he was going to get even with her. But Dog met up with his parents before seeing his ex-wife, and his father felt the pistol in his pocket when he gave him a welcome-home hug. He took the gun away from Dog and convinced him that this was not the way to solve his problems.



Dog got over his anger, but he was still quite depressed and confused. He couldn't find a job because nobody was willing to hire an ex-con, and he started getting more and more despondent. But his mother kept boosting his spirits by telling him that something would come up, and that "God is not willing to let you go."

Dog finally did get a job selling vacuums door-to-door after lying on the application form. Where it asked if he had ever been convicted of a felony offence, he checked off "no." He was enormously successful in this endeavour, and quickly became one of the company's top salesman in the nation. One day Dog was at an awards dinner where he was being recognized for his outstanding sales. He brought his mother along with him so that she could see the success her son had become, but just before they were supposed to give him the award, one of the company executives came up to him and said "we just found out that you have a criminal record. We can't have a dangerous ex-con going door-to-door where women and children live and selling our product - you're fired!"

Once again, Dog was devastated by this setback, and once again, his mother helped him through the ordeal by telling him that God must have another career in mind for him. Dog had been making child support payments to his ex-wife when he sold vacuums, but now that he was unemployed he couldn't make these payments. He went in front of a judge to explain his situation. The judge took a few minutes to look at Dog's paperwork - including his prison record. He said to Dog "I see when you were in prison you helped to chase



down a prisoner that was trying to escape. I have a fugitive who skipped bail and is in hiding, do you think you can locate him? If you can find me that prisoner, I will pay the first month of your child support."

Dog's reply was "I've got Indian in my blood, you better believe I can track him down." It took a couple of weeks, but Dog eventually found the man. Rather than take him directly to the police, he dragged him into the courthouse to show the judge. Court was in session when Dog got there, but he peeked his head inside the courtroom and said to the judge, "I've got somebody here I think you want to see." He dragged the fugitive into the courtroom, and when the judge saw who it was a big smile crossed his face, and he banged his gavel, and said "court is in recess."





Just like that, Dog had a new profession. He became a bounty hunter - possibly the most successful one in the world. He's hunted down some of the toughest and meanest guys around - including Hell's Angels and guys with mob connections - and was never afraid to take on a new client. He spent 166 days hunting down Andrew Luster - a millionaire playboy who committed dozens of counts of rape before he finally caught up to him in Mexico. Dog estimates that over the last twenty-five years, he has helped bring almost 7000 fugitives to justice.



## HUNT YOU DOWN

What is it that makes Dog such a great bounty hunter? Part of it lies in the fact that he knows these fugitives so well. He knows what they think, and he knows how they live, because he used to have that kind of life himself. But another important part of his success revolves around the fact that Dog honestly cares about these people. He isn't just bringing them in for the bounty - he wants to give them a chance to turn their lives around and go straight. He wants them to have the same shot at redemption that he had. "Most of the fugitives would tell me their life stories when I arrested them," says Dog, "they would talk about how hopeless things were and how they would never be able to make anything of their lives. Then I would tell **them** a story about an ex-con who had been in exactly the same circumstances as them and managed to turn his life around. I concluded my story by letting them know that ex-con was me! I was a living example that there was such a thing as a second chance." Dog's motto has become "***with a tear in one eye and blood in the other, he'll hunt you down and call you brother.***"

Dog was bringing a fugitive in to the police station when one of the officers started hitting the man. Dog got between the cop and the fugitive, and said "stop beating him - this is **my guy**." At that moment, Dog had something of an epiphany. He remembered the passage from the Bible where Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep." It dawned on him that the fugitives he was catching were his sheep - his flock. Dog says that "I knew that these people still had hearts - that what they needed was somebody to give them a second chance." Dog wasn't about to let them go, but he did everything he could to inspire and motivate them and let them know they had it in themselves to change. He has probably chased down more fugitives than almost any bounty hunter in America, but the one statistic he is most proud of is the fact that 40% of the people he brings in never re-offend! That's pretty amazing when you stop to consider that the repeat rates for criminals is usually a lot higher.



# IN DOG WE TRUST



Dog's biggest influence on his life was his mother. She was the one who convinced him he could turn his life around when he got out of prison, and she was the one he turned to for help whenever

he hit a rough patch. His mother died in her sleep in the early 1990's, and Dog's life quickly fell apart. He turned to using drugs to cope with the depression - and he says he can barely remember anything about the next year. His current wife, Beth, helped him get away from the drugs - and Dog has worked hard to offer the same kind of help to anybody he encounters who has an addiction problem.

Sadly, Dog's own daughter, Barbara, began using drugs. In May of 2006, she died in a car crash where both her and the driver of the car she was in had been using crystal meth. The accident happened the day before Dog and Beth were married in Hawaii - and cast a pall of mourning over what should have been a day of celebration. Dog was devastated by this tragedy, and he has made it his crusade to stop the spread of meth. He says that "Barbara was an 'A' student

all her life - she never got a 'B.' If a

person as smart as her can get hooked on drugs, anybody can get hooked on drugs. We've got to stop this now."

Dog feels that meth has become the single greatest threat to the lives, the health and the justice system of people across North America. He wants to see pseudo-ephedrine and the other ingredients that go into creating crystal meth taken right off the market. He cautions young people that "you wouldn't drink battery acid, so why would you want to touch this crap. There isn't a successful tweak (person using crystal meth) in North America."

Dog once again uses his own example and his own struggle with addictions to inspire others. He notes that "Dog made it, Dog ran from the drug - you can make it too!"