

In May 2013, Jamie and Marian Harris (“the Harrises”) took their dog, a 170-pound Leonberger named Sid, to see Dr. Lou Tierce (“Dr. Tierce”) at Camp Bowie Animal Clinic (“the Clinic”) for what appeared to be a minor anal gland issue. Dr. Tierce told the Harrises that surgery was not the preferred method anymore and that he would like to try a new, less invasive treatment option that included a cold laser he had recently acquired. He said this would take longer but was better long term for the dog. Accordingly, the Harrises agreed and allowed Dr. Tierce to use the less invasive approach.

The Harrises called the Clinic regularly and were consistently told that Sid was improving but that it would take more time. In September, Mr. Harris visited the Clinic and asked for them to bring Sid out. The Clinic staff was reluctant but eventually obliged. When Sid came out, he could not lift his hind quarters at all and simply slid himself across the floor to get to Mr. Harris.

Mr. Harris was, of course, shocked to see his dog in this state, when he had only been brought in with a minor anal gland problem. Now, Sid could not even walk! Mr. Harris asked what had happened to Sid and was told that Dr. Tierce believed it was likely just a reaction to the medication “cocktail” Sid had been given, which can cause a drop in blood pressure resulting in weakness to the hindquarters, and was not of great concern. The Harrises accepted this explanation.

In early October 2013, when the Harrises’ other dog Bob needed to have an x-ray taken, Dr. Tierce suggested that they use Sid to “calibrate” his portable x-ray machine. The goal, in part, was to minimize the time in which the Clinic would have Bob in their possession because Bob had previously exhibited a complete unwillingness to subject himself to Dr. Tierce’s care. When Sid was serving in this capacity, Dr. Tierce allegedly discovered a congenital birth defect on Sid’s upper spine. Dr. Tierce told the Harrises that it was irreparable and degenerative and that the treatments he had been administering to Sid had exacerbated the back issues and accelerated the decline. Mr. Harris asked whether there was anything that could be done to cure this condition, and Dr. Tierce restated that nothing could be done. After discussing this further with Dr. Tierce and being confronted with the idea of Sid remaining in this state of constant pain with no chance of recovery, the Harrises decided to allow the Clinic to put him down.

Mrs. Harris left and picked up her son and brought him to the Clinic so they could say their goodbyes. She again asked Dr. Tierce if there was anything they could do. Dr. Tierce replied that there was not and that he needed to be put down. They discussed cremation and burial. Linda Tierce, Dr. Tierce’s wife and the manager of the Clinic, offered to look into taking them out to the Tierce’s farm for burial. The Harrises decided to have Sid buried, to say their final goodbyes, and to entrust Sid with the Clinic for burial.

In April, 2014 (six months later), the Harrises received a call from a veterinary technician at the Clinic who informed the Harrises and will testify to the following:

- That Sid was still alive (as were/are many others that people were told had been put down), that he was locked in his cage 23.5 hours a day in his own feces and urine, and that he was rarely bathed or walked;
- That Sid’s walking problem came from another technician who had injured Sid trying to get him onto a table;
- That the Clinic was using Sid (and other dogs) for blood transfusions and other experimental treatments;

- That she loved Sid and tried to bathe him but was disciplined for doing so, and was told that she was not paid to bathe him or walk him;
- That Sid could walk, though he still has some issues, but that those issues were primarily due to atrophy caused from being tortuously caged;
- That she was threatened and even punched in the face at the Clinic and told to say nothing;
- That she was quitting her job at the Clinic because she could no longer live with what Dr. Tierce was doing to animals at the Clinic, including Sid; and
- That the final straw for her was watching Dr. Tierce hit a dog in the head when the anesthesia was not adequately sedating the animal during surgery.

The veterinary technician told the Harrises that if they called or did anything other than going to the Clinic immediately, the Clinic would hide Sid and dispose of him after the Harrises left. Mr. Harris tried to get the police or animal control to accompany them but was told it was a civil matter at that point. Accordingly, the Harrises hurried to the Clinic to get Sid. Upon arrival, they walked into the Clinic, with Mr. Harris staying at the desk to distract and talk to the receptionist, while a friend guarded the back door. Mrs. Harris went back into the ward, found Sid, and successfully freed him from his captivity. As the Harrises and friend were in the parking trying to leave the Clinic, Dr. Tierce came out behind them and unconvincingly tried to explain that he had not put Sid down because some of his employees had threatened to quit if he did. While his explanation definitively rang hollow (as he is known to be mean and a strict, if not extreme, boss for whom to work, and who would never tolerate an ultimatum being given to him by one or more of his own employees), it also clearly revealed that he recognized he had intentionally violated the Harrises by keeping Sid alive while misrepresenting to them that Sid was to be put to sleep.

Sid lives, and is currently being assessed by a variety of doctors. Yesterday, a reputable veterinarian in another community examined Sid and determined that, among other things, he has mange and shows definite signs of having been used for blood transfusions. Evidence also abounds that he was abusively kenneled. Sid is going to be seen by a veterinary neurologist and will soon have an MRI to determine the state of his health and his spine/hind quarter mobility issues. Again, he had nothing wrong with him a year ago when the Harrises first took him in for a minor anal gland issue, which persists, by the way.

. . . Meanwhile, though, the little shop of horrors remains.