

# From **PERISH** to *Partnership*

by Emily Johnson

## 2006

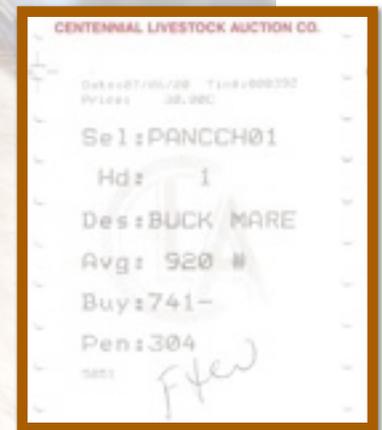
It is not known how or why Cheyenne ended up at the Centennial Livestock Auction in the summer of 2006, but on this blistering hot day, things were about to go from bad to worse for this gentle and kind spirited horse.

One can only imagine what was running through her mind, besides the terrible chill of adrenaline, as she was paraded around the livestock yard with a listing price of 30¢ per pound. Suffice it to say, horse owners who prefer their equine companions with breath in their lungs don't consider the price of a horse *per pound*.

That is the language of one kind alone - - the killer buyer.

Alesha Matchett purchased all 920 lbs of dappled buckskin horse flesh that day at 30¢ per pound, promising Cheyenne a better life at her Animal Angels Horse Rescue.

It seemed like such luck that Cheyenne would be purchased by a horse rescue. "A rescue!" she must have thought. "I will be okay after all." Little could her hopeful spirit know that day that her close encounter with death was far from over.



## 2007



Reports began rolling in about questionable care at the Animal Angels Horse Rescue. The investigation into Matchett and the horse rescue was launched after the Sheriff's Office received numerous complaints about malnourished animals. Animal control officers frequently made visits to the rescue to check in on the well-being of Matchett's collection of animals.

Summer Lyndsey, animal control officer, said that no matter what time of the day the officers went to the rescue, they never saw any food. She said other issues included horses in need of shoeing and teeth in need of filing as well as severe lice infestations.

Despite the officers persuasion, Matchett remained disillusioned about the reality of the rapidly declining animals under her care.

Matchett said she had rescued some of the animals from slaughterhouses and that their conditions were improving under her care. She said she has always cared for the animals well providing shelter, veterinary care, and plenty of food and water.



"Animals that may have been underweight were in that condition when they came in or suffered from parasites that required medication. That's the thing about this rescue, it's a work in progress," Matchett said.

But Matchett hit up against the reality of her neglect when on Dec. 29, 2007, Larimer County Sheriff Jim Alderden [ordered the removal of 27 animals](#), including 16 emaciated or malnourished horses, from the Animal Angels Horse Rescue. Matchett had more than 70 animals on her property at the time of the raid. Larimer County sheriff's investigators said animals were malnourished and improperly cared for.



Cheyenne arrived at Colorado Horse Rescue on Christmas Eve of 2007, a feeble image of flesh hanging from her jutting bones - - barely alive.



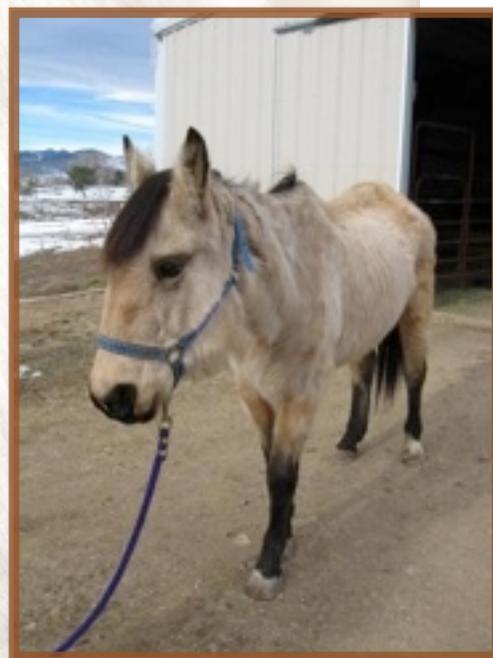
"It was my impression that Cheyenne was probably not even halter broke and had a really rough life before we found her. She was petrified of people and loading her was tough, but, it was something we had to do to save her life." reported one of the woman who aided in getting Cheyenne to CHR's doorstep. "Jenny at CHR did some amazing work with Cheyenne, and really taught her to trust people."

## 2008

Matchett was charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty covering 22 horses, seven goats, seven llamas, a pig and a sheep. In August of 2008, Matchett pleaded guilty to one count of animal cruelty (for the extreme condition of Cheyenne) after having her property raided three times by the Larimer County Sheriff's Office.

She also agreed to four years of probation and mental health evaluations. Under the agreement, she will still be able to care for at least 10 animals.

Larimer County Sheriff Jim Alderden said more than 20 animals seized from Matchett were given up for adoption through his office and several other animals were adopted through the Humane Society.





Three horses were taken to Colorado Horse Rescue: Jeselle, Ginger and Cheyenne, who is the horse connected to Matchett's guilty plea, to be rehabilitated. Dr. Bluhm said Jeselle was actually the healthiest of the three horses when they arrived.

Veterinarians use a scale of 1 through 9 to rate the health of horses, with one being low. Bluhm said Cheyenne and Ginger had a rating of 1 and Giselle was closer to a 3.

“Those two (Cheyenne and Ginger) were the worst

that I've ever seen,” Bluhm said. “I'm a little bit surprised they were able to recover without any problems and how quickly they recovered. They recovered in four months' time.”

Colorado Horse Rescue Executive Director Hildy Armour said both Cheyenne and Ginger gained back about a third of their body weight.

“Bottom line is they're doing well, they're very happy and we hope we can put them up for adoption soon,” Armour said.



Cheyenne has finally found her way into the loving partnership that she deserved all along. She now enjoys her days well loved and properly cared for at [Mountain Rose Horsemanship Training](#), located in Longmont, CO, as a valuable equine teacher in the [Wholeness Through Horsemanship](#) program.

It is only because of the devoted work of credible rescue organizations, such as Colorado Horse Rescue, that the story of Cheyenne and countless horses like her, was able to have a joyous ending. Please consider being a hero to these horses by making a financial donation to [Colorado Horse Rescue](#) so that this noble and life saving work may continue.



# 2010 - Cheyenne Gets a Home at MRHT!



Emily and Cheyenne on their first trail excursion together.



Cheyenne and Emily working together to increase Cheyenne's confidence with obstacles.



Cheyenne and Sue after their first groundwork lesson together.

Cheyenne graciously takes Brittany, her first student, out on a trail ride.

