

Divine Intervention

Rescuing Angel was not a laughing matter for comedian Rebecca Corry.

By Susan Sims, Publisher
PHOTOGRAPHY VINCE MILLER

Comedian, Rebecca Corry, of *Last Comic Standing* fame along with *Gossip Queens*, numerous other TV shows and most recently the new face of Hertz*, alongside Owen Wilson as the voice, has a soft spot for dogs, Pit Bulls especially.

When her Dogo Argentino, Walter, passed away from kidney failure at four years old, Rebecca was devastated. Rebecca remembers, "After a few weeks, I started looking online and came across a rescue site where I saw this blue Pit Bull. I didn't know anything about the breed, whether they were good or bad. I didn't really know anything, I had heard stories, but I had always had dogs that were known as being mean, a German shepherd before and a Dogo Argentino. I saw the blue Pit Bull named Angel and called on him but he was already adopted. They told me that they had another dog named Angel who just had surgery. They actually needed her to go somewhere to recover with no kids or dogs. She was currently being fostered with another dog named Cleus, and all she wanted to do was play."

Corry agreed to foster but made it clear that she would not be adopting Angel, just fostering, as she did not want to go through taking care of a dog with medical needs so soon after Walter had died. She had taken Walter to the vet every day for two months. "I spent over \$10,000 and hired a nurse to administer fluids," said Corry.

The two did not bond right away. "She was really weird," said Rebecca. "She just laid on her bed by the front door and didn't really look at me, and I didn't really look at her, and I was just



Rebecca Corry playing a dog board with pitbull Angel spoof the familiar Dogs Playing Poker paintings with fellow canine pals.

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October 2011 67

66 October 2011



Rebecca Corry chillin' with her home girl Angel.

kind of like, 'Ok, well you get better.' It wasn't an instant connection. She was kind of leery of me, and I was sad...and then three weeks later I thought, she is really amazing."

Flashback to the day Angel was found: Angel had been found running down a street in south central LA with a male dog who had half of his face and side missing. Animal control picked him up and she was by his side. Someone had dumped acid on her back and cut her ears off with scissors. Animal Control picked both of them up, the male passed away in surgery, and Angel survived. Corry said, "She was at the highest kill shelter in the US, south central LA, overrun with Pit Bulls because the dog population here is out of control. They kill about 900 a day. And so you don't get much time there, especially Pits who are mutilated or abused in any way. They are called 'leave alones.' So they put her in a cage she is really tiny, and she looks like the donkey from Shrek. I always tell people that she is so cute, her legs are so tiny to the ground, and she is so round like a big keg of beer."

The road for Angel to Corry was a long and arduous journey. A few early angels like Tameka Johnson from the shelter played a large part in saving Angel. Johnson had been chosen to be on *Oprah* as part of Lisa Ling's report on backyard breeding. Johnson could tell that Angel had no aggression issues and was just broken down from abuse and from having several litters of puppies. "The poor dog would not lift her head up," said Corry, "she was that broken down." Johnson would hand-feed Angel, and cleaned her back every day while also posting about her (Angel was called Gina at the time) every night, pleading for someone to adopt her, that she should not have to die this way after all the suffering she had endured.

Two months had passed when as fate would have it, a woman from another rescue, whose name coincidentally was Gina, had been following the posts about Angel and saw that the last day had arrived for the Pit Bull. Angel had been red listed. She knew they had no room, no one had shown any interest, and the shelter would have to let her go.

TIPBIT Rebecca's half-hour Comedy Central Presents special can be seen on Comedy Central and her first one-hour special Thanks, God, is available now on DVD. rebeccacorry.com

Corry says, "Gina got in her car and pulled her. She had a friend who said she would foster Angel before she went away to college for a little while. The girl had a dog, and Angel loved him, and they

were fine; a month later, she blew her knee out, so she went in to have a cpl surgery, and at the same time that was happening (they renamed her Angel at that time) June 12th, my Dogo Argentino suddenly died with kidney failure."

Today is a whole new story for the Pit Bull who had been so terribly abused. "Now she is a therapy dog," said Corry. "She travels all over the country with me when I tour. She literally changes people's lives by just being alive. By the time we get off planes, people are wanting to take pictures of her, they all want to know her story, they all are stunned after learning her history and that her breed is so filled with love and kindness. People say she is very Zen like. We could have a rough landing, and she will just lift her head up as if to say, ok, well we are here."

Angel has had a few more surgeries since coming to live with Corry. "I had a fundraiser for her," said Corry. She has also had cancer three times, and she has it again. Treatment has cost \$17,000 so far. The very first fundraiser, a bunch of comics did stand-up. Christine J. Head, an amazing artist, painted Angel. "Head paints pictures of different breeds and gives a portion of all her proceeds to that breed rescue. She painted a picture of Angel on a wine label, and

PHOTOGRAPHY VINCE MILLER, MILLERSTUDIO.NET



Angel is making a full recovery in the lap of luxury, and knows it good bad when she finds one.

HEAD SHOTS

Christine J. Head's sought-after, limited-edition prints and posters have helped numerous rescues raise much-needed funds. Head started the Puppy Sketches in 1999 and has been contributing to rescue organizations ever since by creating original and limited-edition posters. Originally, her beautiful portraits of dogs in need of urgent medical care and adoption accompanied by the dogs' poignant stories, raised thousands of dollars for individual rescues. Currently, Christine's focus is on highly-stylized vintage/Art Nouveau-style posters that raise money for multiple breed rescues. These posters are sold almost exclusively through rescue organizations. Some notable animal lovers and celebrities who collect her work include actresses Jorja Fox and Mary Steenburgen and comedienne Elaine Bosler. For more information, visit mysketches.com.

I have the original poster size signed and framed. She just picks the dogs who inspire her and puts the story of the dog on the back of the painting. When you buy the poster you get the story of the rescue dog. She was following the story of Angel online and told me Angel was sent to me as an angel; it's all very strange, kind of cosmic; our story is really about healing each other, and as a result I have this unbelievable dog."

Angel can be found everywhere Corry is and that includes on stage. Corry shares, "Angel has done TV shows with me. When I taped my hour special up in Seattle, we did *Northwest Afternoon* and all these TV shows up there, so she is a fancy pants this one. She goes on stage with me after shows, and it is hilarious. She loves it. She goes crazy, she wiggles; if she could talk she would say 'thank you, thank you.' Angel is on at the end of my DVD. As I am thanking everyone, 400 people in the audience, my friend lets her go, she comes running out and tried stage diving three times. She loves it when people are clapping. When she is in the audience, she howls when I first go on. When she hears my voice on the PA, she howls, and puns her head back. Then she will quietly watch me the whole time. Soon as I am done and say thank you very much, she starts howling again."

Angel has come a long way since her days of running on the streets of LA, and with the help of human angels on earth, she has found her forever home with someone whose heart she helped to heal. Asking Corry to sum up the lesson she has learned from the tiny Pit Bull, she says,

"My two biggest passions in life are comedy and dogs, specifically pits. Having Angel, people say, 'I am so glad you rescued her'...without question, she rescued me. That really is the truth she is a blessing. My hope is that people will educate themselves. Fear is based in ignorance and if you just educate yourself you can learn about this amazing breed, and they will better your life." Amen, sister. ☺

TIPBIT On October 2, 2011, Rebecca will be partnering with LA-based rescues for Stand Up For Pits at the Hollywood Improv. All proceeds will go toward the rescue efforts that are much needed for Pit Bulls. Adoptions will be held in the parking lot before the show. Rescues featured are Angel City Pits, Ace of Hearts, AARF and Clinco, a nonprofit, low-cost spay/neuter clinic. Check them out at angelcitypits.org, acesangets.org, myaarf.org, clinclo.org, improvc.com, and rebeccacorry.com.

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October 2011 69

68 October 2011