

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast. My name is Jacqueline Pinol. I am an actor, documentary filmmaker and animal rescue advocate. The Canine Condition Podcast is a platform to bring awareness to dog adoption and to provide all dog lovers and pet owners with information and resources on how to raise a healthy and well-balanced dog. If you are thinking about getting your first dog or just want to know where and how you can help a dog in need, this is also a place for you.

If you have ever been wronged or are a victim in a given situation, surely you want to seek justice, but what if the victim in a given situation is of the canine species and you want to seek justice? Where do you go? When I say the word attorney, do you feel excitement and relief, or fear and anxiety? Well, since this podcast is about the canine condition, I am here to tell you that when dogs are victims in a given scenario, yes, they too deserve justice, and if you ever find yourself or a beloved canine companion in a situation where you need to have your voice heard and have justice be served, then the word attorney should give you hope and relief. There are attorneys out there who are a voice for the voiceless, a voice for our canine companions.

My guest on the podcast today is Criminal Defense Attorney John Schill from the Schill Law Group in Arizona, and he is one of those voices. Besides serving his human clients for 20 years as an attorney, John is a passionate animal welfare advocate, who uses his expertise to also represent cases where the victim or defendant is of the canine species. He and his team of lawyers have formed the strongest animal crimes protection group in the State of Arizona. Hi, John. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast.

**John Schill:**

Hello. I'm happy to be here.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes. I am so excited that you get to join me for this conversation for this episode, and for our listeners, I would like to let you know how I know Attorney John Schill. He came recommended to me by a wonderful dog rescue volunteer in Arizona, named Nadine Swart. I reached out to John back in 2016 for our upcoming documentary series, which is thankfully in the works now, and John very graciously granted us an interview to share with us his advocacy for animal welfare and his expertise with cases involving dogs as defendants in the State of Arizona. John, I'm very happy to have you as my guest and get an update on some of the changes and things that have occurred since we last spoke and in the area of animal welfare and in regards to your canine companions, so why don't you start with telling us about your pack and how they motivate you and just fill your life with joy because I know they do.

**John Schill:**

Well, I have 11 dogs, actually. They're called Petey's Pack.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wow.

**John Schill:**

They're named after Mr. Peterson, right there. There's Petey.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, yes.

**John Schill:**

He's my little one-eyed guy. He started this back many years ago, probably 2010, '11 when I first got him, Facebook. I set up a Facebook page for him and it just grew and grew, and people would ask me legal questions. They would have dogs that would need help, and I would do that, and I adopted a few myself. I fostered a few myself.

They ended up staying with me. They never left.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes. I know that story all too well.

**John Schill:**

I have a rule, if I spend more than 5,000 on a dog, I usually end up keeping them, so that's what I used to do then. I've actually now set up a 501(c)(3) myself called Mickey's Cares, that I do a lot of my financing through to help people that are in need for it to help their dogs.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, great. Oh, wonderful.

**John Schill:**

So my dogs, and I also had another dog named Mickey that passed away last year. He was a dog I defended.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes, we're definitely going to talk about that.

**John Schill:**

Mickey the pit bull, so that's how I really got into this, and I'm a big animal advocate, big dog advocate. I'm probably the ... I know I'm the largest animal attorney in Arizona, maybe in Southwest United States. We do a lot of animal cases at my firm.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. When we spoke for our on-camera interview, Mickey the pit bull was the focus of our story, so for our podcast audience, can you tell us Mickey's story, and has his story led you to dive deeper into animal advocacy?

**John Schill:**

Sure. Mickey was a dog. He was a bulldog that was accused of biting a small child back in 2014. I was asked to get into the case and defend Mickey. They wanted to euthanize him.

His owners wanted to kill him. The state wanted to kill him. I got involved. I went in and solely represented Mickey. No owner, no nothing.

I just represented the dog. I was successful in getting him his life spared. He was found to be vicious, but he did the bite according to the judge, but the judge allowed Mickey to live if I could put him in a sanctuary. I ended up doing some research. I had several sanctuaries, but then, at the time, Joe Arpaio was the Sheriff of Maricopa County. He called in the courtroom one day and said, "Hey, I'll take the dog," so Joe agreed to put Mickey at the MASH facility, his jail, so he was transferred there.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, great.

**John Schill:**

Mickey had a webcam, the Sheriff set up so people could watch Mickey 24/7, and it was quite unique, but Mickey didn't do well in the jail. He was getting sick. It's just a hard environment, so after a year, I went back to court. I was able to get Mickey's release conditions changed, and he was allowed to go to a veterinarian office that had a very high-end boarding facility. I worked a deal, but to give you an idea, it was 5,000 a month to put Mickey there.

It was cheaper for us, but that's how high-end it was. He had his own 10 by 10 room with a TV. He had a grass playing area. He got to get out and be exercised 10 times a day.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

That's a lot. That's great.

**John Schill:**

They took extremely good care of him there, but once again, it was a boarding facility. It wasn't in a home, and if you're in a hospital boarding, eventually, it's going to wear on you. Conditions started to deteriorate, where at the same time, his behavior was very good, so we went back to court again. His vets, the staff, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, we all went to court and we were able to get Mickey released to my house at the time. It was a house in Scottsdale that I had, and Mickey lived with me the last two years of his life in a very nice, two-acre estate in Scottsdale with grass and trees, and we kept it very quiet.

Everybody thought he was still at some boarding facility. I did not want people to know Mickey was at my house, so up until his death, we kept it secret. Mickey developed stomach cancer in the middle of June last year, so about a year ago, and at that time, my office went to court for me and Mickey, and they went in front of the judge again and argued that his viciousness should be dropped, and the judge agreed, and everything was dropped against Mickey.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wonderful.

**John Schill:**

When Mickey passed, he was not a vicious dog. He was free, so that worked out well, and he is a legacy. I learned a lot from Mickey in handling vicious dog cases and I try to help people throughout the world. I get emails daily about, "Hey, can you help with this case, or what's your advice on this case?," so I do a lot of vicious dog cases.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Gotcha. Just for our audience to understand the technicalities, first of all, I do want to explain that MASH is a great program. It is a licensed nonprofit rescue that is located at a jail, but all the dogs are safe. A lot of them are court case dogs, and I feel like Mickey fit right in at the time. It was a safe place for him to go, right?

**John Schill:**

Yeah. They actually are all court case dogs. They're the dogs at the Maricopa County Sheriff seizes for one reason or another, usually on an abuse case or bestiality case, and they will put the dog ... It's no kill, so a lot of times, police departments will seize dogs due to abuse cases, and the dogs end up being killed in the pound. That's not the case with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

There's been some changes. There's a new sheriff, but they still, as far as I know, still follow that rule that they do not euthanize those dogs.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. Just to let people know that Mickey, although he was deemed vicious by the system or his family, the bite was actually provoked, wasn't it? Wasn't it a scenario where he was not being carefully supervised?

**John Schill:**

Sure. There was a small child, four years old, outside with a dog on a chain. Mickey had a bone, and the child took the bone from Mickey, and Mickey barked once and growled for what the witnesses said. There was witnesses that didn't intervene. They should've, but they watched this happen and the child didn't get the bone back, and then Mickey's head was eye level with the child, so when he went to bite, that's why he bit the face.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Gotcha. Okay. John, I've spoken to many animal rescue advocates who tell us that the law by nature sees animals as personal property. As an example, in Mickey's case, why is the personal property punished and not the humans who owned the personal property, who were the responsible ones for the accident?

**John Schill:**

That's a very good question, and we actually said we thought the adults that were supervising Mickey should have been charged with endangerment. Just like if an adult doesn't watch a child and they drown in a pool, I believe the adult should be charged with endangerment there.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Absolutely.

**John Schill:**

They clearly are, if they're drinking and driving and their child's in the car, they're charged with endangerment, so I believe if the adult is being negligent and fails to supervise a child and the child suffers serious injury or death, they should be charged.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

I do too, but they're often not, as was the case with Mickey, they got to just walk away?

**John Schill:**

That's true, and there is a lot of prosecutors that thought that they should have been charged, but the County Attorney at the time made a decision not to charge the babysitter.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wow, that's unfortunate. Sometimes, it's like your heart and your brain, and you're trying to tie the two together and understand why things happen the way they do, but it just, sometimes it's not clear-cut every case. It doesn't seem to follow the same rules, right?

**John Schill:**

Well, I think it's somewhat clear-cut in that the cases that we handle, it's usually not the dog's fault. The dog may do something bad, but it's the human that owns a dog that caused the eventual bite, either through neglect or abuse, and that's why if I take a dog case on, I don't really want to represent the owner, I want to represent the dog, and that's what we usually do, because it's difficult if you're representing the owner because they're looking out for their own interests. We get a lot of cases where the owners have agreed to a plea, and they're not charged so long as they euthanize the dog, so that's where we get involved to go save the dog then.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. What are some of the reasons that families reach out to you or that you feel, "Okay, this is a case we need to help out, there is something here where we can find some sort of justice"?

**John Schill:**

Well, it's usually a case involving a bite. There's only been one case I've turned down. It was at the same time as Mickey, and it was an Akita that killed a child, and I did not want to take that case, but usually, we'll take it, and we have not, knock on wood, lost a case involving a dog. I consider a loss is when the dog has to be put down or killed. We've never had a dog on our watch killed, so we do a lot of those cases.

We also do, and I think we talked about this back in 2016, we represent people for boarding facilities, where their dogs die in a boarding facility, the Gilbert 23 case. We also do a lot of cases involving negligent groomers or sometimes even veterinarians, but mostly groomers, dog babysitters.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes.

**John Schill:**

I get cases like that probably once or twice a week.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes. I do remember the Gilbert 23, and to any of my listeners who are not familiar with the case, you can look up the case. There's plenty of articles on the details of that. It was a very unfortunate incident.

**John Schill:**

It actually happened on my birthday, June 20th.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

You'll never forget that. Oh, dear.

**John Schill:**

I will never forget that, and 23 dogs died at a boarding facility where the air conditioning malfunctioned. It was a tragic case. It was supposed to be a free-roam boarding facility, where there was only supposed to be four or five dogs there. It turned out that they had over 30 dogs. There was a criminal investigation.

There was criminal charges, and the owners of the facility were actually found guilty of felony, animal cruelty and fraud schemes. They were taking money from people and promising and defrauding the people, so they all went to jail for that, and they're still on probation. Now, I think they're going to get off probation in a year or so. You have a bad boarding facility, when we looked at it, they were making 20,000 a month by defrauding people, and they've been in operation for a couple years. That's a half a million dollars that they've taken from the public by committing fraud.

That's a juicy criminal case, but they don't take their time to look at it. That was ... The law just changed here in Arizona though, recently. In fact, last month, that if you're charged and convicted of animal cruelty, at a minimum, you cannot have dogs for five years now in Arizona.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wow, that's fantastic.

**John Schill:**

Yeah, that's brand new.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

That is really good news because it's a step in the right direction and a model for perhaps for other states to follow?

**John Schill:**

Right, and it's just for domestic animals because we have a big agricultural industry in Arizona, so it's your dogs and your cats, and those are protected now. It's five years for the first offense, but it actually goes up to, you could be permanently banned from owning animals now in Arizona under some circumstances.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Now that you brought that up, I was going to ask you, so there's federal law, state law. Do they change from county to county? There's just so many facets of the law, and I think as the general public, even myself, we kind of get lost in it, you know? You read a headline, and then you think it applies to everyone, and it doesn't. In terms of laws in Arizona, what are the ones like this one that passed? Is this only Arizona law or is that federal?

**John Schill:**

That's correct. That's only Arizona, and a lot of people, I've seen some, the federal laws where it's punishable by seven years, in prison or what. That's if it's a federal crime, and a federal crime usually involves federal land or at a federal facility, or involving federal animals. Most of the time you're dealing with animal cruelty is going to be a state crime. It would be the state law enforce, like here in Arizona are animal cruelty statutes.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay, so when people, with the media being so prevalent in social media and people posting articles, when you read things like, and I can reference one in The New York Times article that was in 2019, it said federal crime, animal cruelty, bill passes, and it talked about that seven-year punishment, but that doesn't mean that anybody who commits cruelty against animals is getting that maximum penalty.

**John Schill:**

Right. It has to be one that's investigated by federal law enforcement, and a lot of times, you see those involving dog fighting rings, when they're transporting them across state lines, in federal laws are, come into play, but most animal cases, animal cruelty cases are handled at the state level.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Uh-huh (affirmative), okay. Okay, and does Arizona ... I have to ask because I'm so against chaining dogs. Does Arizona have anti-chaining laws, especially considering the extreme heat, and how hard would it be to pass one if there isn't one?

**John Schill:**

I don't think there is one. I meant to look that up. It's not so much chaining here in Arizona. That's not really the issue. The issue is shade and water, because this is Arizona after all.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Right.

**John Schill:**

You have to be able to provide shade and water for the animal, and that's by law. That's where a lot of the animal cruelty cases in Arizona come up, is people find dogs that don't have shade or water. The problem in those cases are very hard to prove because an animal rescuer or an animal advocate comes out, they see a dog in distress, that doesn't have shade, usually doesn't have water, so what's their first instinct? Give the dog water. The problem is they call law enforcement, they come out, and they see the water that the good person just gave him, there's no crime.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, yeah. Oh my goodness. Okay.

**John Schill:**

So it's really sad that in order to get the crime, you can't do anything. You got to leave the dog as is, so we always recommend taking videos, pictures, whatever it may be.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh my gosh.

**John Schill:**

We've had several cases here recently where videos come up with people beating their dogs in the backyard.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, gosh.

**John Schill:**

Those have been high profile cases, and there's been a lot of disagreement because some law enforcement agencies have felt that that wasn't a crime, so that's a very hot topic here in Arizona.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. You mentioned something about involving the farmers, and I've heard this topic before, they'll say, "First, you're coming for our dogs, and you'll come for our cows and pigs," and so is that why dogs are ... Because I always wonder, why is the Department of Agriculture still having jurisdiction over dogs and dog rescue?

**John Schill:**

Well, I think the Department of Agriculture really gets into it with dog breeding, where they're investigating puppy mills and whatnot, from my knowledge, because we don't really deal with them a lot in Arizona, except for the fact if there is a dog breeder, which we don't really want a lot of in Arizona.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, I see. What I've noticed is in different states is that the Department of Agriculture actually monitors licensed nonprofit dog rescue organizations, and audits them and visits them and regulates them.

**John Schill:**

I think that's state by state. Here in Arizona, dog shelters, basically you have to get a kennel permit if you have more than, say 10 dogs in certain circumstances. Not my house, but others.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Right. Oh, I broke in the law then too because I'm in LA and-

**John Schill:**

As long as the dogs are all licensed, that's a different story. Mine are all licensed to me, but if you're a rescue and the dogs aren't licensed, you have to apply and get a kennel permit in some instances.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes.

**John Schill:**

Kennel permits are governed by the county, usually the county animal control, or in smaller counties here in Arizona, it's the Sheriff's Department that regulates the kennel permits.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

As far as what you were mentioning with the farmers and not separating the two, is it because they fear regulation then with the farming industry?



**John Schill:**

Exactly. Farmers or ranchers fear that you're going to interfere with their livestock, specifically sheep, cattle horses, because those animals are abused in those facilities, but they don't want the regulation.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yeah, right.

**John Schill:**

They have very strong lobbies, so that's why you see most states that have very successful animal crime ordinances or statutes.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay.

**John Schill:**

They usually have just domesticated animals covered. Ohio, Nitro's Law is a very good example of that, is specifically written. It says domestic animals only, so you get your dogs, your cats, I believe your potbellied pigs, and in Arizona, your miniature horses because a miniature horse is considered a service animal in Arizona.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, wow. That's so nice. I didn't know that. When you talk about, because it's the different facets of rescue, right, so people want to rescue livestock, people want to rescue different kinds of animals that are not domesticated, so I get that. There's this antagonism in rescue because some want to save some, and how can the general public, because the general public, it gets overwhelming that people just throw their arms up and they go, "Well, can't do anything. Let the politicians take care of it," but the politicians work for us.

**John Schill:**

Right. They do, and the politicians do not like emails and phone calls from constituents.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Ah.

**John Schill:**

Animal advocates are very good at emailing and calling and raising a fuss. The problem you usually have on big, high-profile cases is that the people that are calling the politicians are from out of state or out of the country. They don't really care. It has to be someone in their district and a voter, and that's what's really important, I think.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Uh-huh (affirmative). Okay. People can really make a difference. I mean, if you're listening to this podcast and you're thinking like, "Well, this is all above me," or, "I can't even do anything," people can in their own district or county or city.

**John Schill:**

100%. A case I was involved with last year in the City of Scottsdale, a gentleman was caught videoing, or videotaped beating his dog, and Scottsdale police came out, and they didn't really want to do anything. People started calling their legislatures or city councilman. Scottsdale was in a transition. They had an interim police chief.

They had an interim mayor. They didn't really want to do anything, but the state legislatures, representatives and senators, they got ahold of them and the city council members in the City of Scottsdale and the public pressure by the voters resulted in action being taken finally.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, really? So see, it was the voters putting pressure that made a difference.

**John Schill:**

Oh, 100%, because I was involved in that. I was there from the very beginning, dealing with the police. At the time, Scottsdale PD had no understanding of animal cruelty. I mean, the officer gets out of his vehicle, and the first thing he asked me, "Has the ASPCA been contacted?," and I said, "Officer, with all due respect, there is no ASPCA in Arizona. It would be the Humane Society." "Oh, I didn't know that," so it went downhill quickly from there.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wow. Yeah, and that's also another thing, is there's so many areas, gray areas in this topic because people aren't informed, and so then, things go over people's head and they don't know that they can do something about it.

**John Schill:**

True.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

I always try to tell people like make phone calls, share information, write emails. It's so easy and it makes a difference, and I feel like people don't really believe that part.

**John Schill:**

No, and I 100% agree with you, and it has to be not a derogatory email, not an attacking email, but a professional, concise email, "Here's my concerns, here's my position, here's what I'm asking you to do."

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. Got it. Hear that, people.

**John Schill:**

Because with rescue, it's so easy just to call up and say, "You can't do that," because they'll just hang up on you, but if you send something precise and accurate and you're one of their voters, constituents, they owe a duty to you to respond.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Right, so it's about how you [words 00:22:39] ... It's how you say what you say, basically.

**John Schill:**

Exactly.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. You made a comment to us in our on-camera interview. We were talking about mental illness. It is prevalent and it leads sometimes these animal abusers to then take it a step further. Can you talk to us a little bit about how serious that is?

**John Schill:**

Well, I think there's a lot of situations with mental illness and animal cruelty or hoarding situations. You have some people that are mentally ill, and they tend to hoard dogs in because for one reason or another. I think you also have people that are mentally ill or mentally deranged. I'm not sure what you want to call that. They start off abusing animals, and then they end up abusing people.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes, yes. I remember you mentioned that.

**John Schill:**

I handled a case about five years ago, that actually, the Phoenix homicide detectives got involved in because a small puppy was taken out of the bedroom of a child, basically kidnapped by a family friend, and they took the dog, and I'm sorry for your listeners, but they dismembered it. It was like a scene out of Dexter, the TV show. That's what the police officers said, and this person definitely had problem, and they strongly felt that if this was not addressed at this time, that he could go on to be a serial killer.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Wow. Okay.

**John Schill:**

I participated in that case as a victim's advocate. The individual was kept in jail the whole time, which is very rare for an animal abuser to be kept in jail with no bond, and he was given the maximum penalty of six months. That doesn't sound like a lot, but ...

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

It doesn't. I know my listeners can't see, but I'm just cringing right now.

**John Schill:**

I had problems with that case because what they didn't do, and this is going to go back to what you said, personal property. I always look at what else can be charged, and that person broke into a house and took someone's property, and then destroyed it.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, okay. Okay.

**John Schill:**

To me, that's robbery, [crosstalk 00:24:39]-

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Is there higher punishment for robbery?

**John Schill:**

Well, of course.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay.

**John Schill:**

Yeah. It's a very-

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Really, than hurting an animal?

**John Schill:**

Yeah. Than hurting an animal. Hurting an animal in Arizona is a Class 6 felony, the lowest felony, or maybe even a misdemeanor, lower than that, like getting a DUI.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, gosh.

**John Schill:**

Burglary is a Class 3 felony, a far more serious crime.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

And they could have pursued that, right, but didn't-

**John Schill:**

They didn't, yeah. Whenever I get involved with these animal cases, that's what I always try to explain, "What's going on here? What can you charge?," and that's why in the Gilbert 23 case that I handled, I was involved from the very beginning, dealing with the Sheriff's office, and I pushed for fraudulent scheme charges, which is a Class 2 felony, and that's what they were charged with and that's what they were convicted of, and prosecutors like that because they always want to say, "Well, I got a conviction of a Class 2 felony."

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Gotcha.

**John Schill:**

A lot of prosecutors don't even want to handle animal crimes because they feel it's below them. Sad, but true.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, gosh. It's sad. I think we have a long way to go in some areas too.

**John Schill:**

Oh, I agree.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

As much as I want to give my listeners hope and understanding that there is a way to make things better, I do apologize if some of the things you're hearing on this episode are difficult to hear, but it's the reality and it's the truth, and we can only make it better and change it if we're willing to look at it at face value and see what's really going on out there. Talk to me, John, a little bit about the Mickey the Pit Bull Facebook page, which I follow and love that you use it to advocate for other messages within animal welfare.

**John Schill:**

We do. We've used it for lots of things for bringing, highlighting the Gilbert 23 case. We brought light that way. We've helped other dogs in distress or a need throughout the country, and even in the UK where there's a lot of breed specific litigation. We highlight cases there or cases here in the United States where dogs are unjustly accused, and we try to help them as much as possible.

We also use it to advocate for dogs and cats and animals in weather situations, usually with the hurricane. We're sharing information, trying to reunite people with their dogs, where to send donations to, et cetera. I've met wonderful rescues throughout the country through helping them with the hurricanes. A hurricane that hit Houston, a rescue down there that really stepped up and help locate and save a lot of pit bulls, it was Country Love Bullies out of Texas, and I'm still very good friends with them.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, I love hearing that because I do hear about a lot of neglect, abuse and abandonment out of Texas, so ...

**John Schill:**

Right, at Texas, but then I have friends that wherever there's a hurricane, they go and they try to save the animals. It doesn't matter. They leave from Arizona and they go down there, and they locate dogs and cats that are stranded in a, abandoned in houses or in fields or whatever it is, and they try to save them and bring them back to the collection point so that their owners could be reunited with them.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Ah, that's wonderful.

**John Schill:**

So we helped out through Mickey's page as well. We also have a foundation set up, a 501(3)(c), Mickey's Cares.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, yes. Tell us about it.

**John Schill:**

Over the years, people always come up to me and say, "Hey, my dog needs this, and I don't have any money," or, "My dog needs food. What can I do?," so I can't do a lot. We don't have a lot of donations yet for Mickey Cares, but we try to help people with their situations, and I've paid ... I think this year, we've probably helped several dogs that have been injured or in one case, shot by the police unnecessarily. We've paid for their medical treatment, or at least part of their medical treatment.

With COVID-19 hit really hard last year, a lot of people before we started getting stimulus checks were running out of money. I helped get food to a lot of people that needed food, so we were using Amazon to deliver food to wherever it needed to be here in Arizona.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, that's so cool, and it's called the Mickey Cares?

**John Schill:**

Mickey Cares, yeah, and we have a Facebook page and a website. Mickeycares.org, I believe is the website for Mickey Cares, named after Mickey, of course.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, yes. He's still ... He's got his angel wings and is looking out for others, you know? I love that you have kept that going.

**John Schill:**

He has a very strong following.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

He does?

**John Schill:**

He still had 70,000 people that a year later, follow his page and I'll do a post, and I could have 10, 20,000, and people looking at his posts for a dog, sadly that died last year, so we tried to keep his memory alive and in everything we do.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, I love that you do that.

**John Schill:**

I have another big bulldog that I saved recently. It looks a lot like Mickey. His name's Titus, and I have him now. We rescued him through Mickey's Cares. He was adopted by an individual, and she needed help.

Titus is a very big, strong dog, well over 90 pounds. She just couldn't handle him, so she called the rescue, as a good adopter should, call the ...

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes.

**John Schill:**

Don't take the dog to the pound.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Right.

**John Schill:**

Call the rescue that you got the dog from. This rescue would not take Titus back. Instead, they said, "Hey, for \$200, we'll kill them for you. We'll euthanize him," so I got the phone call and initially, I said, "All right, I'll help Titus out."

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh my gosh.

**John Schill:**

"I'll board him. I'll get him vetted by my vet and I'll pay my trainer to train him." That was fine with my vet. I sent him to the trainer that I used to work with. Didn't work out well there.

With COVID and everything, they're not the same caliber that they used to be. He was left unwatched overnight and he destroyed his kennel and broke one of his canine teeth, so they called me and they wanted another kennel.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, boy. Right.

**John Schill:**

I'm like, "No. I'll take the dog."

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh my gosh. Where's the compassion for the distress and the dog?

**John Schill:**

Titus had a root canal and came to stay at my house, so he's here. He gets trained three times a week by a different trainer. The rest of the time, I train him. He's doing great. He still has some issues with dogs.

Little Petey is a little jealous, so he's not 100% with Petey yet because Petey tends to growl. I mean, he's 12, so he set in his ways, which-

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

He's the alpha.

**John Schill:**

He's the alpha at 30 pounds, so we have-

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

As he should be. Oh, that's so [cute 00:30:41].

**John Schill:**

We have to work with Titus a little bit, but he's doing great and making great strides. Haven't decided if Titus is going to be adoptable, if I'm just going to keep him, but it's leaning towards ... He's one of my 11. He's probably not going anywhere.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Gotcha. Oh, well, thank you for keeping him safe and protected.

**John Schill:**

Oh, he's definitely safe and protected and spoiled. You could follow him. He's on Mickey's page in Mickey Cares. He had a couple of cute posts. We training him how to press buttons in an elevator the other day.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh, gosh. That's adorable.

**John Schill:**

Yeah. My law firm's kind of changed since you interviewed us. I mean, I have three of my attorneys that handle animal cases that are our former prosecutors. One's a former animal crimes prosecutor, so when we get involved in a case, we get a lot of ... We know what we're doing. I'm on the animal law section for the State Bar of Arizona, so we have a lot more credibility than we had six years ago because we're just so much more well-known, I guess, at this.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Right. No, that's wonderful. I always like to say, because I see on social media, obviously I'm so involved with so many different rescues looking out to see who's doing good and who's not and whatnot, and people say like, "Oh, how could they show up at that house and leave the dog in those conditions?," like you were saying earlier, if there's no crime, but also, if there is no law, law enforcement can't step in and do anything about it.

**John Schill:**

You're 100% correct, and you also have the problem with a good intention rescuer committing a crime, trying to save a dog, so they end up getting charged, and that's horrible, and you don't want that to happen, but it does because it goes back to dogs, cats are personal property.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Oh my gosh.

**John Schill:**

You can't go onto somebody's property and take their lawnmower, but that's the way the law looks at it, and that is so sad.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

That's where I still think we're a little backwards in this country and ...



**John Schill:**

Well, fortunately, at least in Arizona, they're addressing it somewhat because now, you can use self-help to rescue a dog in distress in a car, which is very big here in Arizona. Today, it was 110 degrees.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

The heat.

**John Schill:**

You can't leave a dog at all in a car, even with the air conditioning running.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Gotcha. Yeah. No, I mean, not for a second. I mean, come on. I wanted to ask you one more thing. When people want to donate and they want to help, and maybe they feel like, "I can't do anything else except send a donation," what is your advice for people who don't know who to send a donation to and who they can trust?

**John Schill:**

Ask who they trust. People that have been on your show. I mean, you have Second Chance New York, I think you did a segment on.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Yes. Yes.

**John Schill:**

I love that rescue. Okay. Those guys are legit. Ask me, I know most of the reputable rescues here in Arizona and throughout the country, because I get bombarded with people saying those are bad rescues, so there's a lot of bad rescues out there. I've dealt with them myself. I mean, there's rescues I thought were good, and then I learned were bad.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Give us, for our listeners to find and follow your animal welfare pages, what is for Mickey, what's the actual name they should look for on Facebook?

**John Schill:**

Sure. On Facebook, it's Mickey the Pit Bull, M-I-C-K-E-Y the Pit Bull. I also have Petey's page, which is Petey's Pack, P-E-T-E-Y Pack, and then we have Mickey Cares, and then we have my law firm's Facebook page, The Schill, S-C-H-I-L-L Law Group, where we have a lot of animal law types information we post there.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Great. I will have all of those live links in the show notes so anyone can find and follow John Schill's social media very easily and stay up-to-date with information that could really help make a difference should you ever have a question or need help and be guided in a certain direction. Our listeners should know that I am not getting paid to advocate for any one person or organization on this podcast. I choose to interview guests that I know are doing the good work for dogs and for people across America. The Schill Group has The Canine Condition seal of approval from me, and so does Mickey Cares.

**John Schill:**

Thank you.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Thank you, John, for everything you do, and I know that your time is very valuable and you have a lot on your hands, but I so appreciate you sharing this information to get out to our listeners.

**John Schill:**

No problem. Happy to help any time.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

Okay. You take care.

**John Schill:**

All right. Thank you.

**Jacqueline Pinol:**

As you have just heard in this wonderful dialogue with John, he is genuinely interested in helping people and dogs in any way he can. This is why I said the word attorney can bring you hope and relief. You may never need to hire an attorney to help a dog, but one day, you may have questions or need a trustworthy and reputable resource who can give you sound advice, and although we all assume that hiring an attorney is costly, let's also remember that there are so many ways to raise funds and collaborate with like-minded people to be a voice for the voiceless. In the words of activist and author, Julia Butterfly Hill, I leave you with this quote, "The question is not, 'Can you make a difference?' You already do make a difference. It's just a matter of what kind of difference you want to make during your life on this planet."

Thank you for joining me on this episode. Please subscribe to our podcast and tell your dog-loving friends about it. Until next time. Hang on to those leashes. The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay.