

Hi.

I saw your ad on craigslist for a free pet.

I'm sure you care about what happens to your pet and want to make sure that he/she gets a good home, but by offering your pet for free, in reality, you are putting your pet in very grave danger.

You may have heard that craigslist does not allow pets to be sold on their site, but they DO allow you to ask an adoption/rehoming fee. If you receive any responses about your free pet, would you please say that your ad is a mistake, and that there is a \$25 adoption fee? (Any amount over \$20 is all right, but please don't ask less than that.) The reason is because of the types of people who specifically look for "free pet" ads.

We'd all like to think that caring people who are dying to have a pet will answer a free pet ad, but the awful reality is that that is not the case. Here's what you can expect:

1. People tend to value what they pay for. Pets obtained for free are less likely to be spayed or neutered (or vetted at all) by their new owners and more likely to be abused and/or discarded.
2. There's a big market in selling pets to laboratories that perform experiments on animals. "Bunchers" gather free pets until they have enough for a trip to a Class B Dealer who is licensed by the USDA to sell animals from "random sources" for research. Random sources include strays, stolen pets, seized shelter animals, animals purchased at flea markets—and pets found through "Free to good home" ads. Bunchers will sell the free animals they obtain for \$25. apiece to Class B. Dealers.
3. Free animals are taken to "blood" pit-bulls & other fighting dogs — to train them how to kill, and to enjoy it. This can be dogs and cats, of any size. Often, a larger dog's muzzle will be duct-taped shut so that he can't bite back, and the fighting dog will gain confidence in killing a dog larger than he is.
4. Sometimes free puppies or kittens or smaller animals are "adopted" by owners of large snakes, who feed the baby animals to their reptile.
5. Purebred dogs offered "free to a good home" are often "adopted" by puppy mill owners, who use the animals for "breeding stock".

I know it seems crazy that this sort of thing goes on, but I see the evidence every day in animal rescue. There was even a story in the news in 2011 about a man in W.Virginia who obtained 30 pets from "free pet" ads and then he tortured and killed them to terrorize his girlfriend.

[<http://tinyurl.com/84zymr2>]

Charge at least a \$25 adoption fee to discourage resale of pets to labs. (Some sources suggest charging no less than \$100 for pure-bred dogs.)

Remember, the welfare of pets is in our hands. If you are thinking of surrendering your pet, please [check out the alternatives at wonderpuppy.net](http://wonderpuppy.net) to giving pets away, including tips on solving common behavior problems, moving, house breaking, new baby, allergies, pet health problems, and grooming tips. If there is no other alternative, this site lists things to consider in finding your pet a new home.