

I'LL NEVER FORGET WALKING INTO THE HOWLS OF SLAUGHTER OF WELCOME TO



This report is not for the squeamish. It's about sickening cruelty to animals are callously killed then chopped up and cooked as delicacies to eat. And it



The market in Seoul is full of cages packed with cats and dogs waiting to die

Yes, it was going to be a long day's killing. He slipped the rope around the neck and ran it through the S-hook so that it formed a crude noose, then he began to tug. You could see the terror in the animal's eyes, he had maybe 20 seconds left to live. The rope tightened a little more and his eyes began to bulge, froth bubbled out of the side of his mouth, the lips rolled back and his tongue twisted in agony.

Slowly, his legs that had been beating frantically, began to buckle. The nails were bleeding where they'd scratched and scraped across the concrete floor. A few moments later, he was lying on his side, legs twitching involuntarily. With a final few gasps, the dog was dead. Outside another 27 dogs and eight cats waited to die.

This is not a nice story and, tragically, there is no happy ending. It is about untold suffering inflicted daily on innocent animals, about the wholesale, brutal murder of one million cats and dogs a year in cruel and appalling conditions that seem quite impossible to believe or comprehend in the 20th century. This is not taking place in some primitive country. These are scenes in the country staging the Olympic Games, which start in two months time—the killing fields of South Korea.

Around the world, 1,000 million people will watch the games, as £1,600 million worth of investment and propaganda is paraded. But as the Seoul Olympics get under way, there is a side of the country that will not be shown.

Within a couple of miles and within the late evening shadows cast by the stadiums and Olympic villages, the wretched and barbaric trade will continue. For every dove of peace set free, 1,000 cats will die, and for every firework that lights the sky, 10,000 dogs will be

slaughtered. There, under the symbol of brotherhood—the five Olympic rings, the terrible suffering will continue.

I spent many miserable and depressing hours tramping through the markets of Seoul investigating this trade. Like many people, I had read and heard the allegations of cruelty, untold suffering and appalling conditions. But nothing was to prepare me for what lay ahead. Nothing was to give me any idea of the scale of the operation or the degree of savagery.

During 15 years in journalism I have experienced many heart-rending and deeply disturbing sights but nothing can quite prepare you for the shocking scenes ahead. There are images in your life that you never forget—some are pleasant, some are not. The ones that I witnessed in those markets in South Korea will haunt me for ever, not because I'm soppy about cats and dogs, but simply, no animal should be put through the kind of torment they undergo.

I shall never forget the other dogs watching as one was dragged from their cage and slaughtered in front of their very eyes. I shall never forget the smell of death that surrounded the stalls where dogs were slaughtered, cooked and sold. And I shall never forget the death mask, petrified on to the face of every dog in a stack of carcasses.

This is not about the rights and wrongs of eating dog meat. It is to do with humanity versus cruelty. I have visited British slaughterhouses. They are not pleasant places but death is instantaneous, as painless and humane as possible. For the dogs and cats who pass through Hell's Kitchens in South Korea, it is not. Indeed, there is even the superstition that the more painful the death the more potent the taste of the meat.

It's a few minutes after 7 a.m. and rain is slanting in the grey chill

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IFAW