



California man accused of killing dog that peed on yard - The Associated Press, December 11, 2018

TULARE, Calif. — Authorities say a man accused of using an assault rifle to shoot and kill a dog that peed on his yard and car was arrested and faces animal cruelty charges.

The Tulare County Sheriff's Office said in a statement Monday that the dog's owner contacted officials Saturday after noticing her dog was missing and told authorities she suspected her neighbour, 23-year-old Modesto Ramos.

The office says Ramos was arrested later Saturday after he told investigators he became angry at the dog for urinating on his yard and car, fatally shot him and then buried the dog.

Deputies searched Ramos' home and found AR-15 and AK-47 rifles that are banned in California.

The sheriff's office says Ramos also faces possession of banned assault weapons and negligent discharge of firearm charges.

1. Rabbi Yoseph Karo, Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 336:3

מותר לילך על גבי עשבים, בין לחים בין יבשים, כיון שאינו מתכוין לתלוש. אבל האוכלים בגנות, אסורים ליטול ידיהם על העשבים שמשקים אותם, אע"פ שאינם מכוונים, פסיק רישיה הוא; אבל מותר להטיל בהם מי רגלים או שאר משקין שאינם מצמיחין.

It is permitted to walk on plants, whether they are wet or dry, since one is not intending to uproot them. But those who eat in gardens, it is prohibited for them to wash their hands on the plants, as they water them, [because] even though they do not intend [to water plants on Shabbat], it is certainly going to happen [and is therefore prohibited]; but it is permitted to urinate (or pour other liquids, which do not contribute to growth) on them.

2. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 336:22

... אבל מותר להטיל בהם מי רגלים או שאר משקין שאינם מצמיחין ונכון למנוע גם משארי משקין [מג"א סק"ז] דמי יימר שאין מצמיחין וגם במי רגלים ראיתי מי שכתב שעכשיו אומרים ע"פ הנסיון דטובים הם לזיבול הקרקע [תפארת ישראל בפתיחה לסדר מועד] ... But it is permitted to urinate (or pour other liquids, which do not contribute to growth) on them, and it is proper to avoid even other liquids [Magen Avraham note 7], as who says that they do not contribute to growth? And even regarding urine, I saw that there are those who wrote that nowadays they say based on testing that it is good for the fertilization of the ground [Tiferet Yisrael, Introduction to Seder Moed].

3. Rebecca McMackin, Dog Urine, NY Times Complaint Box, April 15, 2011

<https://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/complaint-box-dog-urine/>

...I use the phrase "Excuse me, but did you know that dog pee is bad for plants?" more times a day than I would ever admit at a dinner party. Although most people respond with surprise and apologies, there is always an entitled minority. Well-dressed and sometimes quite famous people will threaten to call the police, write angry letters or use their powerful connections to protect their inalienable right to allow Miffy to urinate with reckless abandon on every inch of our beautiful city.

Legally, it's a gray area. New York City's Canine Waste Law of 1978 requires dog owners to pick up only solid waste. Parks regulations state that no person shall "injure" trees or "mutilate" plants — and while dog urine does injure plants, proving prior knowledge of this and forethought would be a challenge. Ethically, however,

it's pretty straightforward: dogs should not pee on anything alive, nor do they naturally want to. The sad truth is that most owners have trained their dogs to relieve themselves on trees.

After a less than scientific survey of dog owners, it is clear that a majority think their pets' urine is good for plants. Owners fantasize about their dogs in a forest, running free, bestowing lucky trees with much needed fertilizer. Miffy, they say, is doing the same thing here, for the less fortunate urban trees.

While urea is rich in nitrogen, and plants require nitrogen for leaf growth, urea is also rich in salt. Remember Carthage? The Romans salted the earth so that no crops would ever grow again. Salt sucks moisture from leaves and roots alike and kills beneficial soil microorganisms. Next time you're in any park, look at the shrubs at the entrance and on corners; they all have a sad brown arc of dead leaves at the base.

More important, the nitrogen the dogs distribute so readily is in the form of nitrates. Most plants can't use the nitrate form and must rely on soil bacteria to turn it into ammonium, the form they can absorb. Both natural and well-cared-for soils usually contain the bacterial and microbial communities to perform this function, but urban trees, like all of us city folk, have it rough. The soil is compacted, unwatered and lacking in organic material to support this activity. The urea generally stays as it is...

4. Talmud Bavli Bava Batra 19b (Davidson Edition translation)

ואת מי רגלים מן הכותל ג' טפחים וכו': אמר רבה בר בר חנה מותר לאדם להשתין מים בצד כותלו של חבירו דכתיב (מלכים א כא, כא) והכרתי לאהאב משתין בקיר ועצור ועזוב בישראל והא אנן תנן ואת מי רגלים מן הכותל שלשה טפחים התם בשופכין תא שמע לא ישפוך אדם מים בצד כותלו של חבירו אלא אם כן הרחיק ממנו ג' טפחים בד"א בכותל לבינים אבל בכותל אבנים בכדי שלא יזיק וכמה טפח ושל צונמא מותר תיובתא דרבה בר בר חנה תיובתא והא רבה בר בר חנה קרא קאמר התם הכי קאמר אפילו מידי דדרכיה לאישתוני בקיר לא שביקנא ליה ומאי ניהו כלבא

§ The mishna teaches: And urine must be kept at a distance of three handbreadths from the wall of one's neighbor. Rabba bar bar Ḥana says: It is permitted for a person to urinate alongside the wall of another, as it is written: "And I will cut off from Ahab those who urinate against the wall, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel" (I Kings 21:21). As the verse employs the term "those who urinate against the wall" to mean males, it seems that urinating against a wall was a common practice. The Gemara asks: But didn't we learn in the mishna that urine must be kept a distance of three handbreadths from the wall? The Gemara answers: There, the mishna is referring to urine that is poured from a chamber pot, as opposed to urine that is passed from the body. The Gemara suggests: Come and hear a baraita: A person may not pour water at the side of the wall of another unless he distances the water three handbreadths from it. If pouring water is prohibited, then all the more so should urination be prohibited. The Gemara explains: There too, it is referring to urine that is poured from a chamber pot. The Gemara suggests: Come and hear another proof from a baraita: A person may not urinate alongside the wall of another unless he distances himself three handbreadths from it. In what case is this statement said? It is said in the case of a brick wall. But in the case of a stone wall, one must distance himself enough so that it does not cause damage. And how far must he distance himself? One handbreadth. And if there is hard rock present, it is permitted to urinate there. The Gemara comments: The refutation of the opinion of Rabba bar bar Ḥana is a conclusive refutation, and his ruling is rejected. The Gemara asks: But Rabba bar bar Ḥana stated a verse in support of his opinion; how can the baraita rule counter to what is written in a verse? The Gemara answers: This is what it is saying there, i.e., this is the meaning of that verse: I will not even leave Ahab something whose manner is to urinate against a wall. And what is that? A dog. According to this interpretation, the verse is not referring to people at all.

5. Talmud Bavli Bava Kama 27b (Davidson Edition translation)

שלה ליה דההוא גרגותא דבי תרי דכל יומא הוה דלי חד מנייהו אתא חד קא דלי ביומא דלא דיליה א"ל יומא דידי הוא לא אשגח ביה שקל פנדא דמרא מחייה א"ל מאה פנדי בפנדא למחייה אפילו למ"ד לא עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה במקום פסידא עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה דאתמר רב יהודה אמר לא עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה רב נחמן אמר עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה היכא פסידא כ"ע לא פליגי דעביד איניש דינא לנפשיה כי פליגי היכא דליכא פסידא רב יהודה אמר לא עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה דכיון דליכא פסידא ליזיל קמיה דינא ר"נ אמר עביד איניש דינא לנפשיה דכיון דבדין עביד לא טרה

Rav H̄isda sent him in response: There is a certain cistern belonging to two people whose arrangement was to alternate its use so that every day one of them would draw from it in turn. It happened that one of them came and was drawing water on a day that was not his turn. His co-owner said to him: This is my day to draw, not yours. His colleague did not pay attention to him. The person whose turn it was therefore took the handle of a hoe and struck the person who was stealing his water, who then sued for damages. Rav Naḥman said to him: In that case, he was right to do so, and he should have hit him even a hundred times with the hoe. Even according to the one who says that a person may not take justice into his own hands but should go to court, in a case where there would be a loss involved if no immediate action is taken, a person may take justice into his own hands. This is as it was stated, that Rav Yehuda says: A person may not take justice into his own hands, whereas Rav Naḥman says: A person may take justice into his own hands. Where there is an imminent loss that will be suffered if the injured party does not take action, everyone agrees that a person may take justice into his own hands. They disagree only when there is no imminent loss that will be suffered. Rav Yehuda says that a person may not take justice into his own hands, because since there is no loss, he should go before the judge to have him enforce the law. Rav Naḥman says that a person may take justice into his own hands. Since he is acting lawfully, as he is clearly in the right, he need not trouble himself to go before the judge to have him enforce the law.

Teacher Bans Afros, Dreadlocks Before Choir Concert, Middle School Apologizes

- Benjamin Fearnow, Newsweek, December 10, 2018

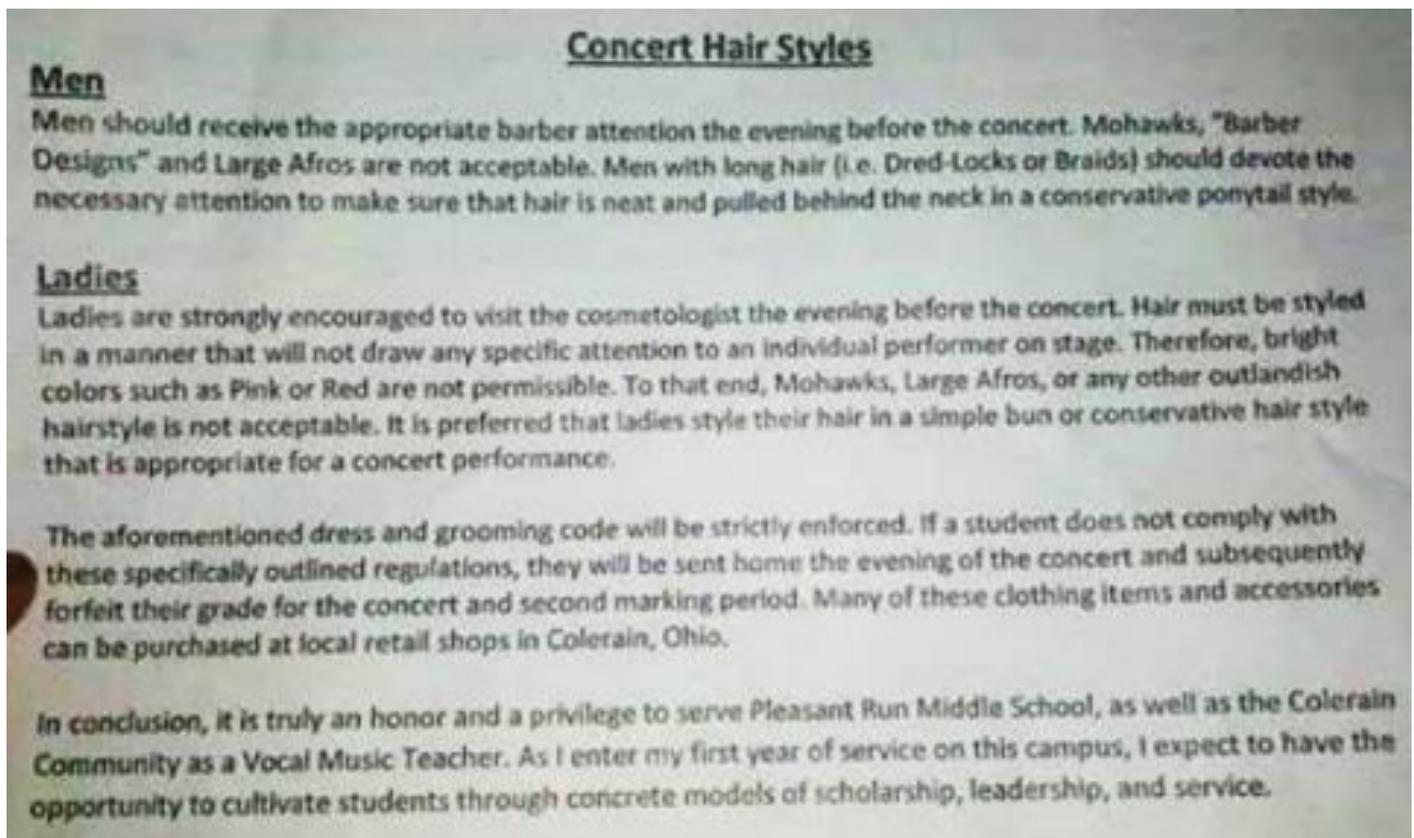
Parents of students at a Cincinnati middle school were incensed by a letter sent home saying that Afros and dreadlocks would be banned from an upcoming winter concert, and that girls should visit a cosmetologist the night before the event. First-year Pleasant Run Middle School vocal music teacher Steven Reeves sent the "2018 Winter Concert Attire" letter home describing what hairstyle and grooming standards would be acceptable. Male students set to perform in the chorus were informed that "mohawks, 'Barber Designs' and Large Afros" would not be permitted. Female students were "strongly encouraged" to visit the cosmetologist and to "style their hair in a simple bun or conservative hair style." Northwest School District Superintendent Todd Bowling issued a statement addressing complaints in a Facebook post Monday alongside a note of apology from Reeves. "We sincerely apologize for the frustration the original language caused or breakdown in relationship that resulted from the original set of guidelines. The original student presentation guidelines were not approved and not reflective of how we feel in any way," wrote Bowling. Reeves, who is black, sent the letter to parents of the Pleasant Run Middle School students who were in the vocal ensemble. Reeves wrote he "expects to have the opportunity to cultivate students" during his tenure at the school, the Cincinnati Enquirer first reported.

Reeves responded to the backlash in the school district's Facebook post Monday:

"Along with a revised dress guideline for the upcoming and future chorus concerts, I wanted to send a note of apology for any negative feelings that were created due to the previous dress guideline communication. The wording and expectations were insensitive and were a mistake. My hope in the foreseeable future is to mend relationships that have been broken with students, parents, and the Pleasant Run Middle School community. If you would like to meet with me to discuss concerns going forward, please do not hesitate to reach out to get something scheduled. Since I have been a part of the Pleasant Run Middle School community for only a short time, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself. Prior to this year, I served in Dayton Public Schools in Ohio as well as Orange Public Schools in New Jersey. I also served briefly at Central State University of Ohio. The students at PRMS have already made a wonderful impression on me. They are fantastic. The revised guidelines for the upcoming concert require students to wear a white top and black pants or skirt. Students are encouraged to look their best the evening of the concert. The choir is now asked to report

to Northwest High School at 5:30pm on December 13, 2018. I hope to see all of you at the concert. Your students are working so very hard. I believe you will really enjoy their performance.”

Reeves' letter said the rules will be "strictly enforced" and offending students will be sent home and subsequently forced to forfeit their grade for the concert within the second marking period. The letter claims the rules are intended to keep any specific student from drawing particular attention to themselves as opposed to the chorus as a whole. But others in the Cincinnati community considered the initial letter a racist attack on the school's black students. "Them sending home something like this is sending a message that it's not OK to show up in our natural state," parent Marlicia Robinson told WKRC-TV. "My daughter wears an Afro to school on a regular basis. That's her regular hairstyle; she has a lot of hair. It's going to be large. That's just what her hair does, that's what our hair does as black people." "WOW..but living in Cincinnati all these years this mindset/ideology doesn't surprise me at all...why not just tell the black kids not to come," wrote another resident, Brian Keith, in a Sunday Facebook post. Administrators with the Northwest School District issued a response Sunday: "Today we were made aware of guidelines sent home to students for the upcoming chorus concert. This message was not approved by PRMS administration and does not reflect our views at all. PRMS apologizes for the letter. We will address this issue on Monday morning and new communication about the concert will be sent home Monday afternoon."



Parents of students at a Cincinnati middle school were incensed by a letter sent home saying that Afros and dreadlocks would be banned from an upcoming winter concert, and that girls should visit a cosmetologist the night before the event. SCREENSHOT: PLEASANT RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL

6. Rabbi Yoseph Karo/Rabbi Moshe Isserles, Shulchan Aruch/Mappah Orach Chaim 27:4

לא יהא דבר חוצץ בין תפילין לבשרו לא שנא של יד לא שנא של ראש: הגה ודוקא בתפילין אבל ברצועות אין להקפיד: [רשב"א בתשו' סי' תתכ"ז]:

One should not have any object obstructing between the tefillin and skin, whether it is the "hand tefillin" or "head tefillin". Rama: This is only referring to the actual tefillin boxes, but with straps we are not as careful.

7. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan Poupko, Mishnah Berurah Orach Chaim 27:15

(טו) לא שנא ש"ר - כתב בספר מחצית השקל ורע עלי המעשה של אותן האנשים שמגדלין בלורתיהן מלבד כי הוא דרך שחץ וגאווה עיין מה שכתוב ביו"ד סימן קע"ו יש בו איסור בהנחת תפילין דכיון דגדולי הרבה ליכא למימר בהו היינו רבתייהו וחוצצים עי"ש ובלאו חציצה נמי בשביל הני שערות המרובים א"א לצמצם שיהיו מהודקין ומונחין על מקומן כדין:

It says in the Sefer Machatzis Hashekel “and in my opinion, it is negative that which some people grow out their hair. Besides for the fact that it is the way of haughtiness and arrogance (see Yoreh De’ah 176), there is an [additional] prohibition in the area of laying the tefillin, that since [their hair] is very large, we cannot say that it [naturally] grows that way [which is a reason to not consider regular hair growth as a chatzitza], and therefore, it obstructs,” see there. And even without being an obstruction, due to the great amount of hair it is impossible to make certain that they should be attached to the proper place on the head.

8. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 27:14

ויש רוצים להחמיר גם כשהשיער גדול מאוד. ואיני רואה בזה שום טעם, דאיזה גבול תתן להשיער? ושיער הראש כעצם הראש דמי. ואולי אם יש לו בלורית שמסבב גם צדדי השיער של מקום אחר למקום הנחת תפילין – בזה וודאי יש חציצה, אבל לא השיער הטבעי הגדל במקום זה. וכן המנהג פשוט, ואין לפקפק כלל בזה.

And there are those who want to be stringent when the hair is very large. I do not see any reason [to be stringent], as what limit will we impose for hair? The hair of the head is considered like the head itself [and does not obstruct]. And maybe if one has a “comb over”, which moves the hair which grows in another place [on the head] to the place that the tefillin are placed – that will certainly be an obstruction, but not natural hair which grows in this place. And this is the accepted custom, and one should not question it at all.

9. Rabbi Moshe Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 12:9-10 (Chabad.org translation)

העברת השיער משאר הגוף כגון בית השחי ובית הערוה אינו אסור מן התורה אלא מדברי סופרים והמעבירו מכין אותו מכת מרדות במה דברים אמורים במקום שאין מעבירין אותו אלא נשים כדי שלא יתקן עצמו תיקון נשים אבל במקום שמעבירין השיער הנשים ואנשים אם העביר אין מכין אותו ומותר להעביר שיער שאר איברים במספריים בכ"מ:
לא תעדה אשה עדי האיש כגון שתשים בראשה מצנפת או כובע או תלבש שריון וכיוצא בו או שתגלה ראשה כאיש ולא יעדה איש עדי אשה כגון שילבש בגדי צבעונין וחלי זהב במקום שאין לובשין אותן הכלים ואין משימים אותו החלי אלא נשים הכל כמנהג המדינה איש שעדה עדי אשה ואשה שעדתה עדי איש לוקין המלקט שערות לבנות מתוך השחורות מראשו או מזקנו משילקט שיערה אחת לוקה מפני שעדה עדי אשה וכן אם צבע שיערו שחור משיצבע שיער לבנה אחת לוקה טומטום ואנדרוגינוס אינו עוטף כאשה ולא מגלה ראשו כאיש ואם עשה כן אינו לוקה:

The Torah does not forbid the removal of hair from other portions of the body - e.g., the armpits or the genitalia. This is, however, prohibited by the Rabbis. A man who removes [such hair] is given stripes for rebelliousness. Where does the above apply? In places where it is customary only for women to remove such hair, so that one will not beautify himself as women do. In places where it is customary for both men and women to remove such hair, one is not given stripes. It is permitted to remove hair from our other limbs with scissors in all communities.

A woman should not adorn herself as a man does - e.g., she may not place a turban or a hat on her head or wear armor or the like. She may not cut [the hair of] her head as men do. A man should not adorn himself as a woman does - e.g., he should not wear colored garments or golden bracelets in a place where such garments and such bracelets are worn only by women. Everything follows local custom. A man who adorns himself as a woman does, and a woman who adorns herself as a man does, are [liable for] lashes. When a man removes white hairs from among the dark hairs of his head or beard, he should be lashed as soon as he removes a single hair, because he has beautified himself as a woman does. Similarly, if he dyes his hair dark, he is given lashes after dyeing a single hair. A tumtum and an androgynous may not wrap their heads [in a veil] as women do, or cut [the hair of] their head as men do. If they do [either of the above], they are not [liable for] lashes.

10. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, Letting One's Hair Grow Long, Yeshivat Har Etzion VBM

(Widmonte translation), <https://etzion.org.il/en/letting-ones-hair-grow-long>

Everything which we said thus far relates to pure halakhic considerations. It is clear that even if we were to reach the conclusion that there is no prohibition from any direction whatsoever, neither rabbinic nor scriptural, against growing long hair - nevertheless, on the educational and valuational level one should oppose the phenomenon. The source of the phenomenon of men growing long hair is a certain cultural stream which developed at the beginning of the 1960's in the Western world. At that stage, growing long hair accompanied other cultural expressions which are flawed and unacceptable from both a halakhic and a moral standpoint. This phenomenon itself carried a very clear cultural message - the shattering of societal norms, the removal of moral restraints, permissiveness, etc. Therefore, even if the phenomenon has spread to Israel, and even to certain parts of the religious community, one should oppose the phenomenon due to the cultural message which it carries with it. More generally, one should attempt to understand why a person would want to grow long hair. Since this testifies to his absorption of cultural norms inimical to Torah values, in and of itself this "absorption" should cause concern.

11. Elisha Svetitsky, <https://www.quora.com/Can-ultra-orthodox-Jews-have-long-hair>

...That said, I know of two major rabbis in (relatively) recent history who famously had long hair, both iconoclasts in their own way.

One is Rabbi David Cohen (1882–1972), mystic and one of the seminal figures of religious Zionism. He was known as 'the Nazirite Rabbi' for taking the lifelong Nazirite vow, which involves, among other things, a prohibition on cutting one's hair or beard. (I don't know of any other Nazirites since pre-Talmudic times.)



← The Nazirite Rabbi in youth:

Rabbis are usually remembered as they were in venerated old age, hence his more well-known portrait: →

Another rabbi who never cut his hair was one of the greatest Talmudic scholars of the millennium, the Rogatchover Gaon (1858–1936), who refused to be idle from his studies long enough to get a haircut.



The Rogatchover:

