

K9 Toad

[Mungo Jerry: In the Summertime]

My dad's only rule walking into the humane society was that we were not allowed to get a cocker spaniel, because he thought they were too high maintenance. Of course, an hour and a half later... we left with an adorable cocker spaniel puppy.

We voted on the name, my mom argued for Trouble, my brother Andrew petitioned for Rommel von Barbarossa, and I won with Lady.

Lady was my baby from the very beginning. At first, she lived up to her Disney namesake...

(Andrew)

She was really perky, and happy and generally excited to see you when you came in the door every day...

(Kathy)

She was sweet, and engaged, she loved to interact with the kid and family members...

(Andrew)

Just a really nice, all-around, all-American dog.

However, all of that changed when we moved into our new house...

(Kathy)

She would just kind of wander around the pool, looking around... glassy-eyed, maybe throw up then crawl into the bushes, and go to sleep, or you know, her behavior could be different. – But just a total change in personality.

[Quiet Pond Ambience]

We noticed Lady spending an awful lot of time down by the pond in our backyard. Then, late one night after I'd put the dogs out, Lady wouldn't come in.

She finally staggered over to me from the cattails. She looked up at me, leaned her head over and opened her mouth like she was going to throw up, and out plopped this disgusting toad.

[Hendrix: Purple Haze starts]

And it wasn't the last time.

(Andrew)

Well, after Lady had sucked on the toads they would be bleached white. They'd still be functional, they'd hop but they'd be pale and uhh... it was really gross.

Toad licking has been documented across the world.

As the Fox television show *Family Guy* explains:

[Family Guy: When licked, these toads...Toad licking is also known as...]

At our house it was called toad sucking, and Lady started doing it all the time no matter what we tried.

(Kathy)

She was pretty unstoppable once she knew that she needed to have it.

We tried to intervene ...

(Kathy)

You know, with any kind of addiction in the family like this you try different types of interventions, we tried just putting her out in the front not the back so she couldn't get to the toads

At first she was just...

(Ian)

Running into walls, tripping out, barking at random things.

But it got worse...

As Lady's usage increased, my brothers and I would sit, wide-eyed and horrified in front of the TV

[Brain on Drugs PSA: 10 seconds]

We wondered if Lady's brain was also sizzling away inside her head.

Our next hurdle with Lady's toad abuse... was her withdrawal.

(Kathy)

Winter was going to come and we were going to have a dog that didn't have toad.

When the toads started hibernating, Lady's withdrawal pushed us all to more drastic measures.

(Kathy)

I tried to help her find a toad because I realized that I wasn't going to get back to bed until she had her fix.

Luckily, she made it through the winter. We hoped that she would forget about the toads.

On the first day of spring, she was back at it, even more intensely.

We couldn't keep our dog's addiction a secret any longer. The neighbors all knew that Lady was a drug addict, and soon the other dogs weren't allowed to play with her.

(Kathy)

Sometimes I would try to explain to people that weren't in the neighborhood, and often I was met with just complete disbelief, that this could not be the case, that we did not have a dog that was addicted to toad sucking.

[Family Guy: Give up the Toad Now song]

(Andrew)

How many people can say that their dog habitually uses drugs... toads none-the-less?

(Kathy)

And so I'm sure there were many people out there who just thought I was totally loony.

[Reggae Dylan: Lay Lady Lay]

After a few years, Lady learned how to use the toads, what her limits were. She didn't have any more wild trips or freak outs. Generally, she just sat around, contemplating the anthills in our driveway.

This was especially awkward when my mom had the PTA ladies over for coffee. And Lady didn't move, the entire time...

(Kathy)

They had no idea that she was just too stoned to notice them.

She seems to have outgrown the wild toad-obsessed years of her youth and now only sucks on weekends. You know, just for fun.

[Family Guy: We're gonna do some toad, you in?]

For Intern Edition, I'm Laura Mirsch in Washington, D.C.

