



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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CASE OF INTEREST

Felony Animal Cruelty Cases, One with Felony Domestic Violence

DATE: August 6, 2018

CASE: Ignatius Chavarria (Case #15F00622) & Tawuan Batiste (Case #18FE012950)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Hilary Bagley-Franzoia, Animal Cruelty Unit

Ignatius Chavarria was sentenced to 10 years in state prison after pleading to felony animal abuse as well as felony domestic violence. His plea involved his admission to committing a violent strike offense. After serving his prison sentence, Chavarria will be banned from owning, possessing, residing with, maintaining or caring for any animals for 10 years.

In 2013, Chavarria got upset with his girlfriend's 4-year-old neutered Maltese mix named "Tucker" because he had an accident in his crate after waiting in it to be relieved for several hours. Chavarria abusively scalded Tucker by holding him in a 143-degree hot shower, and then closing the door to confine him without a way to escape. Tucker suffered third-degree burns over 80% of his body. He was humanely euthanized the following day to end his suffering from the increasingly painful burns. Initially the case went unreported, but eventually a felony charge was filed. After bailing out on the animal abuse case, Chavarria reoffended by body slamming a female date onto concrete pavement. The victim sustained a broken hip, which required surgery. Chavarria's bail was increased, but not enough to avoid his bailing out a second time. After his second release, he again committed domestic violence on a different female victim.

Special appreciation is owed to DA Criminal Investigator Joyce Thorgrimson. Due to her limitless diligence and investigative skills, the felony animal cruelty case was filed although it did not include the benefit of a forensic necropsy. Tucker's remains had already been cremated.

In the last 20+ years, statistics have been compiled showing that 71% of abused women report that their partners had killed, abused or threatened to abuse at least one of their animals. In a 2007 study, 12 different states in the U.S. reported that up to 48% of female domestic violence victims stay with their partner because they are worried about the safety of their companion animals.

Tawuan Batiste was sentenced to 180 days on felony animal abuse charges, and banned from owning, possessing or living with animals for the next 10 years.

In September 2017, Batiste beat a small dog to death after it urinated on his shoes. After the dog was seen bleeding from its mouth, Batiste carried the dog outdoors. He returned 15 minutes later carrying the nearly dead dog. The dog expired within seconds.

Although the abuse was reported that day, the owner buried her dog's remains in a public park. The dog was exhumed five months later by members of the Sacramento County Animal Abuse Task Force, which included Sacramento Sheriff's Detective Scott Brown and Sacramento County Animal Control Officers. While only a limited necropsy was conducted, it was enough to eliminate any natural cause of death and revealed a fresh rib fracture.

The public as well as veterinarians should be aware that abuse cases and evidence can be compromised unless the crime is reported in a timely manner. Veterinarians additionally have a mandatory duty to report animal abuse when they reasonably suspect it.