

DA to fully prosecute Thoreau man for killing pet dog

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 25 May 2018 07:05



A Thoreau man is facing felony charges after he reportedly trapped his dog under his trailer and killed him with a crossbow.

George A. Milliken, 34, has been charged with two counts of felony cruelty to animals. Both are fourth degree felonies, punishable by 18 months in jail.

McKinley County Sheriff Deputy J. Todachine Jr. said he was dispatched to the St. Bonaventure Trailer Park on May 15, in connection with a report of a dog being shot with a crossbow.

When he got there, he spoke to Milliken, who said the dog, named Panda, belonged to him. Panda had gotten under the trailer and damaged his heating unit, which he said would cost about \$1,000 to repair.

Todachine said Milliken had set a trap underneath his trailer and the dog had gotten caught in the trap. Milliken said he saw the dog “going crazy” after getting caught in the trap. He said he then got his crossbow and shot the dog in the shoulder area.

That occurred about midnight on May 15 and 11 hours later, Todachine said, he walked over to the trailer and saw the deceased black and white dog laying on his side.

He said he also saw the trap which he described as being metal with a chain link attached to a metal spike in the ground. The trap was clamped down on the dog’s lower paw. He said he did not see any other injuries to the dog.

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By then, Tiffany Hubbard, a county animal control officer, had arrived on the scene and she told Todachine that she had talked to New Mexico Game and Fish officials and they said traps like that were regulated by their agency.

Todachine then contacted the district attorney's office, and when he finished that call he told Milliken that he was not being charged at that time, but he could be charged in the future. He said he asked Milliken to turn over his crossbow to him and Milliken did so without incident.

Four days later, Cosy Balok, the county's animal control director gave an interview to an Albuquerque television reporter and expressed her concern that Milliken would not be facing charges.

Paula Pakkala, the McKinley County district attorney, said Wednesday, when she learned of Balok's concern she met Balok and told her that Milliken would be charged after the district attorney's office had time to complete its own investigation.

That investigation was completed on May 18, and an arrest warrant was issued on that date for Milliken's arrest, but sheriff deputies were not able to locate him over the weekend. He was finally found on Tuesday and booked into jail.

"He still is in jail now," Pakkala said Wednesday morning, adding that he just had a bond hearing where he was placed on \$3,500 bond. Assuming he was not able to come up with the 10 percent required to get out, he would have another bond hearing on Friday, she said.

Crimes such as the one Milliken is charged with are rare in this area, but in the past these kinds of cases have usually resulted in a plea agreement with the charges being reduced to a misdemeanor and the suspect getting off with a suspended sentence.

"That is not going to happen in this case. That little dog didn't deserve to be trapped and killed with a crossbow," she said, adding that her office will seek jail time even if she has to take the

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case to trial.

She said she would fight for a guilty verdict, and it will then be up to a judge to decide on the sentence, at which time her office will continue to fight for jail time.