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### **QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Paul Verite has been charged with aggravated cruelty to animals and other crimes for allegedly repeatedly injuring his 10-week-old female Boston Terrier to the point the puppy could neither walk nor stand. A necropsy and review of medical records revealed that the puppy, named Espy, suffered excruciating pain before dying.

District Attorney Katz said: “To see a trusting, defenseless creature brutalized the way this puppy was over the course of her short, tortured life makes you heartsick. The defendant will be held to account for the violence he is alleged to have inflicted upon this poor animal.”

Verite, of Clyde Street, Queens, was arraigned on a complaint charging him with aggravated cruelty to animals and overdriving, torturing and injuring animals, and failure to provide sustenance. Judge Zoll ordered Verite to return to court April 24. If convicted, he faces up to two years in prison.

According to the charges, on multiple occasions in September, October and November, Verite took Espy to Austin Veterinary Care and Blue Pearl Animal Hospital. Each time, Espy required treatment for a variety of unexplained and suspicious injuries, which included a scleral/subconjunctival hemorrhage, torn toenail, suspected traumatic brain injury, head contusion, and bruising suspected to be from blunt force trauma.

During Espy’s final medical visit, a veterinarian at Austin Veterinary Care began treating the dog for a potential seizure but observed the dog was failing to respond to treatment. Suspecting Espy was suffering from a traumatic head injury, the veterinarian referred Verite to Blue Pearl Animal Hospital for emergency care.

Espy arrived at Blue Pearl Animal Hospital in critical condition and was determined to be unable to stand or walk. Further examination revealed that Espy was suffering from bilateral flail chest, swelling and bruising on her abdomen and scleral hemorrhaging on both eyes and was in critical condition. It was further determined that there was no guarantee Espy’s neurological signs would improve if surgery was performed. Verite opted to euthanize Espy.

A necropsy was conducted by a forensic veterinarian who also reviewed prior medical records relating to the injuries Espy sustained during her life. It was determined the Espy suffered multiple injuries, including multiple blunt force traumas to her ribs. Of Espy’s 26 ribs, 21 were fractured, with over half fractured in more than one place. Espy’s broken ribs presented in different stages of healing indicating that Espy had suffered multiple blunt force injuries prior to her death. These injuries caused Espy to experience excruciating pain before her death.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Jeffrey Campo of the NYPD's Special Investigations Animal Cruelty Investigation Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Adrian Ashby and under the overall supervision of Chief Michael Baldassano.

Assistant District Attorney Lauren Michalski, Section Chief of the District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Prosecutions Unit, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Nicoletta Caferri, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Mary Kate Quinn, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Domestic Violence Bureau and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Special Prosecutions Joyce A. Smith.

*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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