



News & Events

ASPCA Announces First Uses of DNA in Trials of NYC Animal Cruelty Case; DNA evidence helps lead to two felony convictions in one day

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NEW YORK—For the first time in New York City's history, two animal cruelty cases that went to trial used DNA analysis as evidence, resulting in felony convictions. Agents from the ASPCA's Humane Law Enforcement (HLE) department, who are New York State licensed peace officers empowered to enforce state animal cruelty laws in the five boroughs, investigated and helped acquire the DNA evidence that led to both juries returning guilty verdicts.

While the ASPCA has performed DNA analysis in New York City animal cruelty cases a total of eight times to date, beginning in September 2008, these are the first two cases that have gone to trial where DNA analysis performed during the investigations was then entered into evidence during the trials.

The DNA testing in both cases was performed at the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine in Davis, Calif. ([see related story](#))

"The majority of guilty convictions in animal cruelty cases come from plea agreements, so it's very unusual to see two convictions in one week, and it's even more significant that these were felony convictions," said Dr. Robert Reisman, medical coordinator of animal cruelty cases at the ASPCA's Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital. Dr. Reisman conducted the forensic veterinary medical investigation and testified in both cases.

The first case pertains to Angelo Monderoy, 20, of Brooklyn, who was found guilty on March 8, 2011 of aggravated animal cruelty, as well as burglary in the second degree and arson in the fourth degree. In 2008, Monderoy doused a cat with lighter fluid and set the animal on fire.

DNA testing in the case identified the crime scene as being indoors in an apartment building, which allowed the charges of arson and burglary to be added to the animal cruelty charge. A sample of the burnt tissue that was found in the room and DNA from the cat's body were tested and analyzed, and the result was a positive match.

Monderoy faces 3 ½ to 15 years in prison, and possible deportation to his native Trinidad. His sentencing is scheduled for April 4, 2011.

The second case involves Lordtyshon Garrett, 33, of Manhattan, who was also found guilty on March 8, 2011 of aggravated cruelty, animal cruelty and criminal mischief. In 2009, Garrett beat a cat with an umbrella that was encased in a plastic telescoping guard, causing the cat to sustain a pneumothorax and collapsed lungs from the blunt force impact. Veterinary care was unsuccessful in resolving these injuries.

That cat's tooth marks were identified on the umbrella guard, which were from an area that the cat's DNA was isolated and matched the DNA from the cat's body.

Garrett faces up to two years in prison; the case is adjourned to May 23, 2011.

"The inclusion of DNA as a forensic tool that can be used to help prosecute cases of animal cruelty in New York City is a groundbreaking development that will aid tremendously in helping bring to justice those perpetrators of animal abuse," added Dr. Reisman. "It illustrates the continued persistence of the ASPCA's

Humane Law Enforcement agents who investigate these cases from beginning to end.”

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. One million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. The ASPCA, which is headquartered in New York City, offers a wide range of programs, including a mobile clinic outreach initiative, its own humane law enforcement team, and a groundbreaking veterinary forensics team and mobile animal CSI unit. For more information, please visit www.asPCA.org.

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