



Case: Mysterious Bruises

- Frisco, M/N, white poodle, 7yrs old, deaf, cataracts
- Adopted from shelter 10/2017
- Owners: David Salinas and wife, Casey
- They lived in first floor apartment with outside balcony/courtyard with vertical railings
- David was just finishing Austin PD Academy, had been hired by Kyle PD

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The Beginning

- On 4/22/17 Frisco presented at the ER laterally recumbent, low body temp, depressed mentation, painful, suspicious bruises all over body, tongue laceration, multiple rib fractures on both sides of the chest, elevated liver enzymes, bilateral lung contusions and breathing difficulty
- Clotting time normal
- Bruises were spreading, so outlined areas with black marker

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Client History Provided

- Initially told vet that when David got home, he let Frisco out of kennel. Took for a walk later and dog gave up half way. When picked up he yelped and bit him. When Casey came home, would not get up and tried to bite her when moved
- No history of trauma per owners
- 2-4 wks ago similar episode of pain, not as bad, taken to vet

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ER Vet

- Explained significance of injuries, due to severe blunt force trauma; the treatment and diagnostics needed
- Initially declined, wanted to take home and pain meds; then authorized lab work; also took rads
- Asked 2 more times about trauma and owners unaware what caused injuries
- Notified Austin PD, informed owners; then authorized treatment and care
- APD officer took photos of injuries
- Dog seized; APD Animal Cruelty Detective to respond 4/24/17

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APD Photos 4/22/17: total of 7 photos



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What should have been done with photography:

-  Use a photo scale, take at 90 degrees
-  Ask vet to shave the right side of the chest and take photos
-  Take photo of right side of neck where shaved
-  Take more photos

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ER Bruising Description

- Multifocal bruising along dorsal neck and dorsal body
- Bruising from left axilla to ventral/lateral thorax/abdomen over 10x7cm area. With associated subcutaneous emphysema along left lateral thorax
- Bruising along left ear
- Bruising along both forelimbs with pain and swelling
- Pain and swelling on spinal area
- Bruising dorsal neck

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More ER Info



- Radiologist: confirmed bilateral lung contusions; pneumothorax (lung injury); 9 acute rib fractures each on left and right side (18 total); plus 5 healing rib fractures on left chest, min. 1-2 wks old
- Treated with pain meds, fluids, O2
- Day 2 syringe feeding, walking slowly
- Detective arrives and takes photos – 15 total

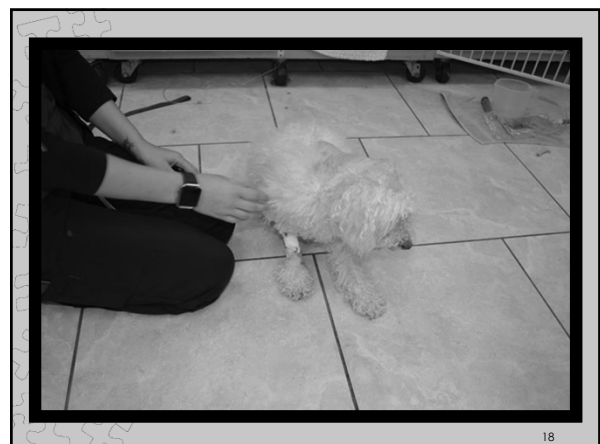
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Issues with the Photos

- No photo scale, not at 90 degrees
- No shaving of right chest
- No close-ups
- No clear photos of bruising on ventral chest, left armpit
- No photos of bruising on right front leg



At this point, what are the injuries most consistent with?

-  Motor vehicle accident
-  Something fell on him
-  Someone inflicted blunt force trauma
-  He was attacked by a dog

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Next Steps:
Interview David and Casey



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 David


- Home alone with Frisco
- Came home and smelled like feces in apartment
- Bathed Frisco then put him in fenced balcony to dry with screen door shut (could hear)
- Cleaned up crate, old feces
- Did not hear anything from dog while he was on balcony

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 David

- Took Frisco for walk to buildings away to dumpster
- On way back Frisco did not want to walk; when he picked him up, he cried out and bit his hand
- Walked into crate when back in apartment until Casey came home

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 Casey

- Confirmed dog was ok when left for work that morning
- Called on way home and David said something was wrong with dog
- Frisco lateral in crate and difficulty breathing when she got home
- When tried to move him he cried, tried to bite and urinated on himself
- Finally they take him to ER

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Additional Info from Interviews

- Casey stated she thought the injuries could come from Frisco trying to squeeze under the railing on the balcony on his side. He had gained weight and could not squeeze through the railings.
- David stated Frisco had nose and mouth injuries from trying to get out of his crate in the past. He stated he did not see Frisco trying to squeeze out the railings that day.
- Apartment maintenance had been in a month ago while not home, Frisco there

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Seizure Hearing set for May 2, 2017: Need more info

- Review regular vet medical records
- Review grooming records, interview groomer
- Need to get scene photos and analysis: measure openings on balcony, under railings, height
- Interview apartment maintenance man

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Issues and Questions:

- Old and acute injuries- occurred that day
- Defense: squeezing through balcony – can we disprove?
- Who else had access to dog and when? Are they likely to have caused injuries (old and fresh)?
- David's story: bathed dog, walked dog, did not hear distress when on balcony

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Zippy Vet Records: Background from Interviews

- Casey and David stated that Frisco sometimes does not want to walk much on leash walks. According to Casey, this started about a month ago. When she picked him up, he cried out.
- Casey also stated Frisco has an intermittent history of not wanting to eat and lethargy that lasts for about a day or so. Casey stated took to vet 1 month ago for Frisco being sluggish and unresponsive

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Zippy Vet Records

- Casey took Frisco to Zippivet on 3/20/17 for vomiting for 3 days, not eating or drinking and lethargy; some soft stool 3/19/17
- Exam findings included bilateral cataracts, dehydrated, painful abdomen, harsh lung sounds, neurologic deficits in his hind legs.
- Casey declined diagnostic testing including lab work and x-rays. He was treated with fluids, anti-nausea injection and antibiotics.
- Note: 10/16 weight 16#, 3/17 19# (17% gain)

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Grooming History

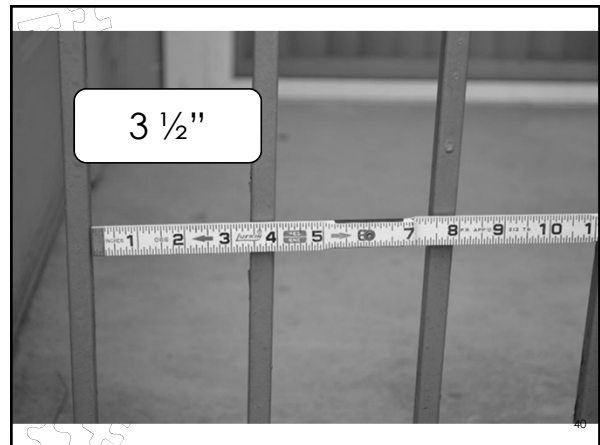
- Frisco has been to Petco for grooming by 3 different groomers on 4/3/17, 1/28/17 and 11/9/16.
- Records state Frisco is a very good boy for the grooming. Groomers stated had never had a problem

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Balcony-Residence Area: Photos taken May 1, 2017



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Apartment Maintenance

- According to the Apartment Maintenance Records, on 4/13/17 Jose Aguerta entered the apartment to fix a door and the stove.
- According to his signed statement the dog was in the kennel, came out and saw him then went back inside the kennel. The dog did not bark and he did not have contact with Frisco.

Seizure Hearing May 2, 2017

- Shelter vet testified
- When asked if it was **possible** Frisco could have squeezed through the railings and caused his injuries, she said **yes**
- Judge, first day on the bench and former defense attorney: found no cruelty and ordered dog returned

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So now what?

- Prosecutor, ADA Jessica Wolfe, said if get an expert to evaluate case and the findings support injuries were NOT from squeezing through the balcony, she would consider moving forward
- APD Sgt. called me

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Issues


- Need measurements of Frisco
- Do not have access to Frisco
- Need to determine size of bruises
- No photo scale

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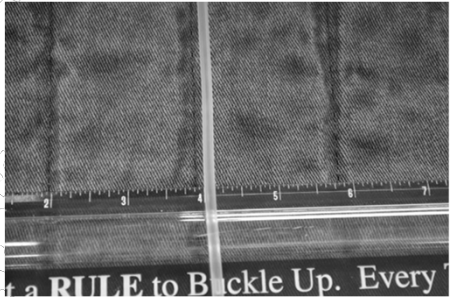
What could you do to get those measurements?

- Get warrant for search and inspection of Frisco
- Ask ER veterinarian if she knows (not documented in computer record)
- Identify items in photos that could be measured to provide a scale

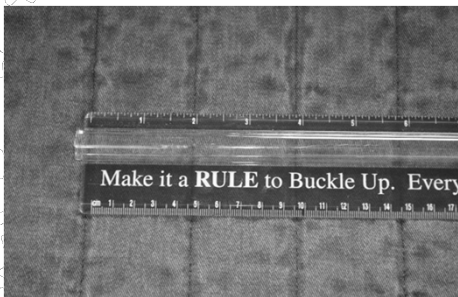
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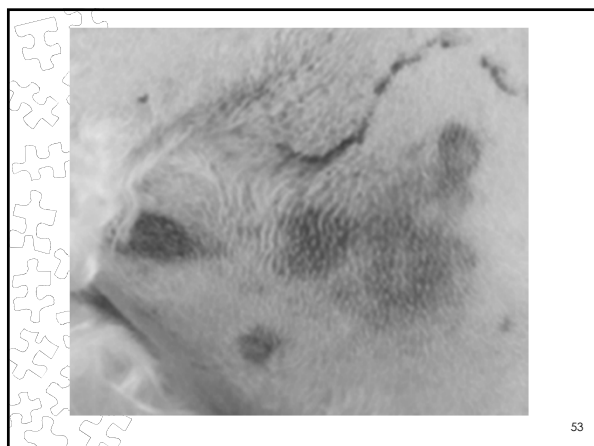
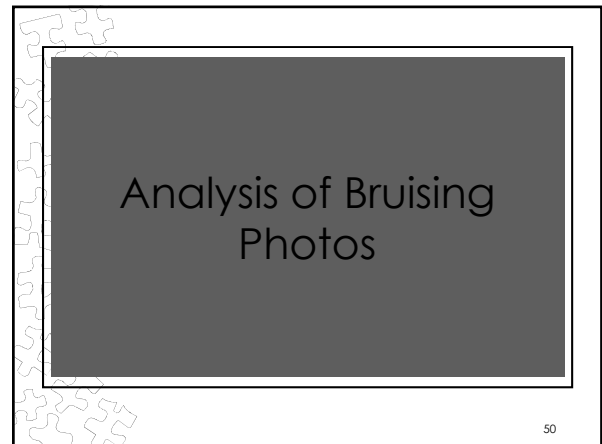


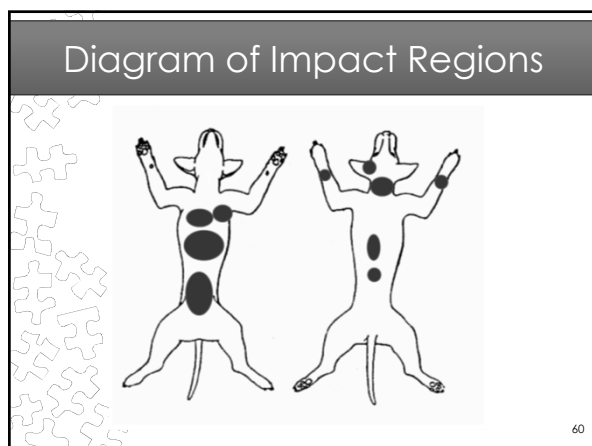
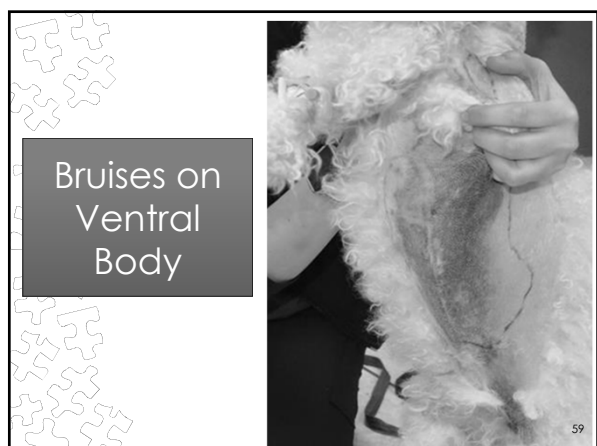
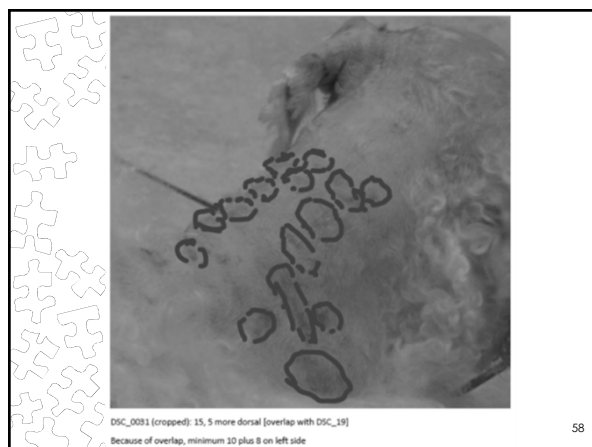
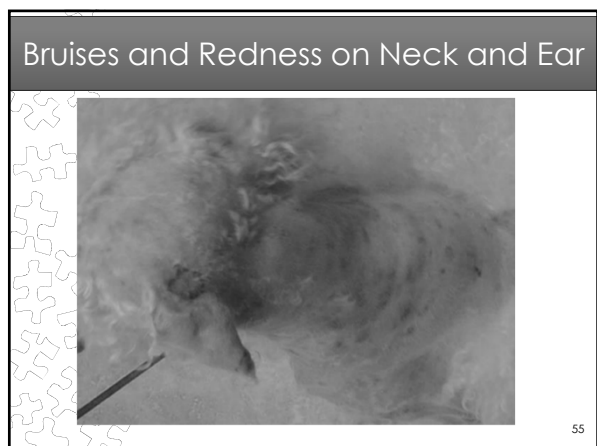
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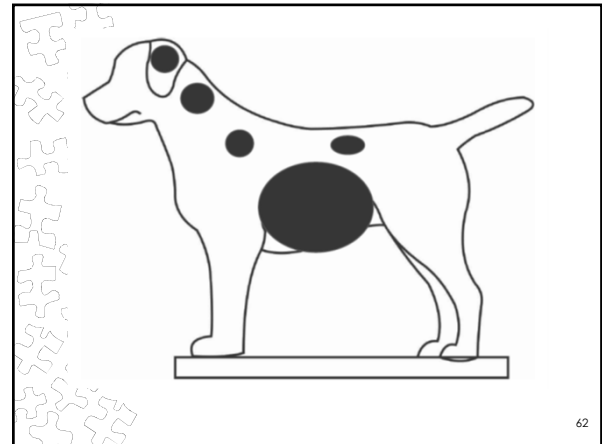
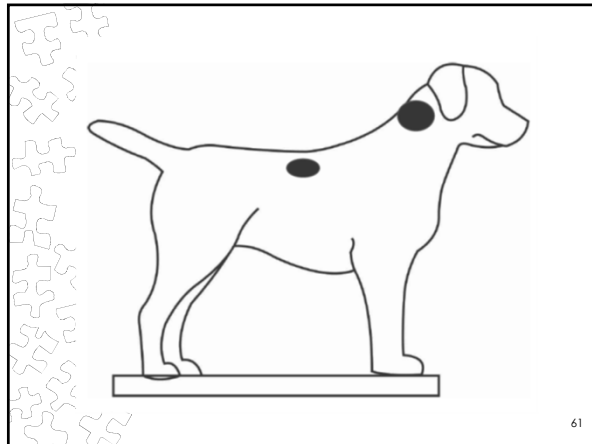


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Summary of Bruising

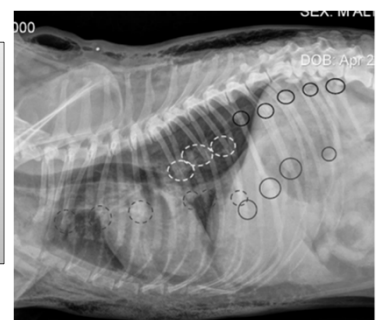
- 14 separate blunt force impacts to ventral chest, armpit, abdomen, groin/penis, left front shoulder, left and right front legs
 - 6 separate impacts to top of chest/abdomen region
 - 18 impacts to neck (possible crushing by a hand)
 - 1-2 impacts to left ear/head
 - None associated with the rib fractures
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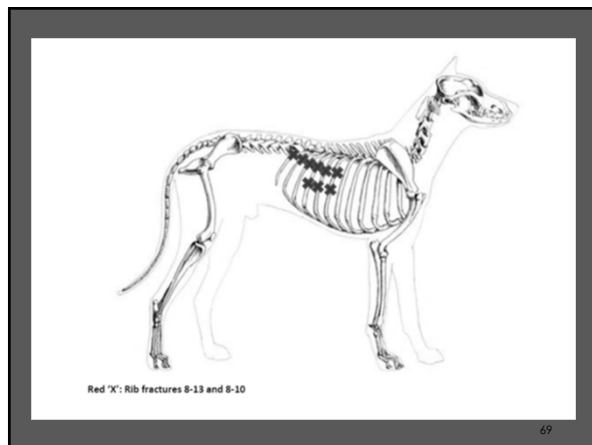
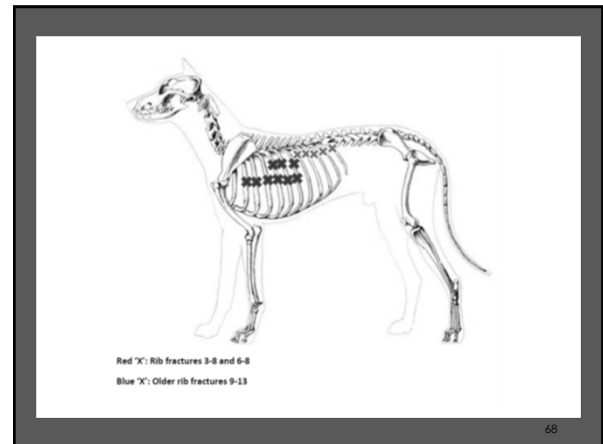
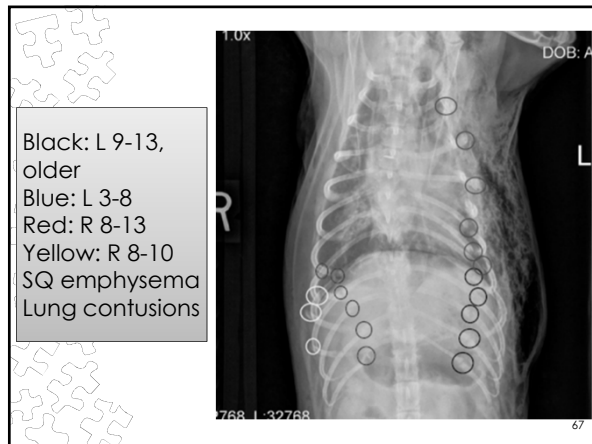
Measurements

- Circular and linear bruises – all appx 1/4 - 3/8" diameter or width
 - Head: appx 5 inches across dorsal cranium
 - Across shoulders – wider than head
 - The chest is wider than the shoulders
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Analysis of Rib Fractures

Black: L 9-13,
older
Yellow dash:
L 6-8
Red dash: L 3-8
Red: R 8-10, 12
SQ emphysema





Considerations for Cause of Rib Fracture Patterns

- Frisco was thrown again the wall – broad surface impact or could impact something protruding from wall or corner
- Motor Vehicle Accident
- Stomping
- Squeezed through balcony railings – compression
- Struck with linear type weapon

Rib Fracture Patterns

- Stomping – expect depression of fractured areas
- Focal linear pattern- not typical when impact broad flat surface
- Compression – fractures at top and lower portion of ribs
- No signs of MVA and pattern inconsistent
- Bilateral lung contusions: blunt force to both sides of the chest

Rib Fractures

- 4 blunt force impacts, consistent with linear weapon
- Older rib fractures: min. 1-2 weeks old per radiologist, 1 blunt force impact
- Vet history: 4 wks prior presented for pain, lethargy, vomiting, harsh lung sounds, evidence of middle spinal injury (neurologic deficits hind legs)
- Cause of pneumothorax, chest SQ emphysema

Additional Analysis

- Acute blunt force trauma – spreading of bruising
- Elevated liver enzymes: trauma to abdomen
- Low body temperature: shock, severe trauma
- SQ emphysema around neck: consistent with grabbing by hand, shaking
- Laceration to tongue: blunt force trauma to muzzle

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Summary of Injuries by Region

- Head: 2 blunt force impacts (BFI)
- Neck: 18 BFI, possible hand grabs
- Shoulder and legs: 5 BFI
- Chest: 13 acute, 1 older BFI
- Abdomen: 6 BFI
- Trauma all over his body: top, both sides, underneath, head, neck, shoulder, front legs

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Compare findings with David's story

- He came home and Frisco was fine; feces smell in home
- Bathed him
- Put out on balcony to dry with screen door shut
- Walked him to dumpster; collapsed on way back, picked him up and he bit him
- No one else had access to dog

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Other possible scenarios?

- Tried to get out of balcony between or underneath railings
- Someone hurt him when he was out on balcony
- Someone came into apartment when David was gone
- Casey did it

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ADA Jessica Wolfe

- Out on maternity leave
- Took to Grand Jury December 2017
- Detective testified, then myself
- Casey Salinas then David testified
- True Bill: Indicted for Felony animal cruelty

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Trial: August 2018

- Jury removed – had to discuss my testimony
- Judge had ordered Frisco could not be referred to as a 'victim'
- Was concerned that I would testify to the patterned bruising and offer expert opinion as to the type of weapon used – thought it was 'speculation'
- Told him I would speak to having linear type weapon and circular characteristics but could be two separate weapons

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Trial: August 2018



- Jury got case at 11am. At 7pm the verdict came in
- Guilty
- Defense went to ADA to work out sentence; I was asked to assist
- Surrender peace officer license, 2 yrs probation and no animal contact, mental health counseling, anger management

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Sentencing: Frisco

- Frisco was living with Casey's parents in south Texas. Could not prevent him from having contact
- I texted Dr. Katie Luke, Medical Director of Austin Humane to see if would take him back and move directly into foster home
- Directive to AHS that there would not be any disclosure of the Salinas name to future adopter, just had been victim of cruelty and rib injuries
- Defense agreed: Salinas had to turn over Frisco within 15 days to Austin Humane Society

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Resources

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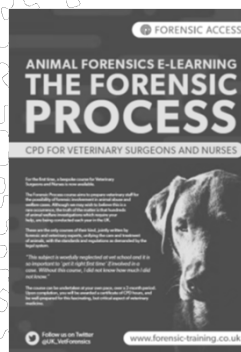
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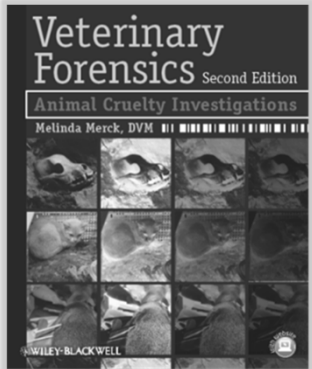
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