



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Date: March 17, 2025
Case #: 25HF0671

Kimberly Edds
Director of Public Affairs
Office: 714-347-8405, Cell: 714-504-1917
media@ocdapa.org

**Man who Threw Injured Cat in Mission Viejo Dumpster with Broken
Jaw, Concussion
Charged with Animal Cruelty, Abandoning Animal**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A Mission Viejo man has been charged with felony animal cruelty after he was captured on surveillance video throwing an obviously injured cat inside a trash bag into a dumpster. The cat was suffering from a broken jaw, broken blood vessels in her eye, a concussion, and a badly swollen eye when she was rescued just before the dumpster was scheduled to be emptied.

Joseph Harrison Parker, 58, of Mission Viejo, pleaded not guilty on March 14, 2025, to one felony count of animal cruelty and one misdemeanor count of abandoning a domestic dog or cat. Prosecutors successfully objected to a request by the Public Defender's Office to have Parker released on his own recognizance. Despite objections from prosecutors, Orange County Superior Court Commissioner Sheri Sandeck reduced Parker's bail from the statutory \$20,000 to \$2,000. Parker posted bail over the weekend and was released.

He faces a maximum sentence of three years state prison, which is served in local jail pursuant to PC 1170(h).

Mission Viejo Animal Services received a report on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, about a cat "suffering from obvious trauma."

Surveillance video in the area showed a light blue or gray Volkswagen Tiguan parking near a dumpster around 7:20 p.m. near Cabot and La Paz Road in Laguna Hills. A man is then seen getting out of the vehicle, carrying a white garbage bag, and tossing it into the dumpster.

Parker was arrested after his roommate identified him as being the individual pictured in the surveillance video and the cat as her cat, BooBoo.

The cat, who was named Willow by veterinary staff, underwent surgery to repair her broken jaw and is slowly improving.

"Only someone who is truly depraved would make the decision to abuse an animal who has no way to protect itself," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "The abuse of any defenseless animal will not be tolerated and those who engage in violence against animals will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

###