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PRESS RELEASE

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Santa Ana Man Accused of Luring Cats with Food to Kidnap and Stomp and Beat Them to Death Charged with Felony Animal Cruelty, Felony Theft of a Companion Animal

A Santa Ana man accused of luring cats with cat food in order to kidnap the animals to stomp them and beat them to death has been charged with felony animal cruelty along with felony theft of a companion animal for stealing a Bengal Lynx from a Westminster home. He is also accused of having methamphetamine on him when he was booked into jail.

Alejandro Oliveros Acosta, 46, of Santa Ana faces a maximum sentence of four years and four months in if convicted of two counts of felony animal cruelty, one felony count of theft of a companion animal, and an additional one year in custody if convicted of one misdemeanor count of possession of a controlled substance.

Prosecutors have asked for bail to be increased from the statutory \$20,000 bail to \$100,000 given the danger Oliveros Acosta poses to public safety. The investigation is continuing, and anyone with additional information should contact the Santa Ana and Westminster Police Departments. Additional evidence will be reviewed to determine whether additional criminal charges can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Oliveros is scheduled to be arraigned at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana on May 21, 2025.

Beginning in November 2024, Santa Ana Animal Control, which is part of the Santa Ana Police Department, began receiving reports of injured and dead cats near the area of W. Wilshire Avenue and S. Clara Street in Santa Ana. Between November and April, seven reports of dead and injured cats were reported to Santa Ana Animal Control, including animals suffering from broken backs and bloody faces, all in the vicinity of W. Wilshire Avenue and S. Clara Street.

On March 21, 2025, a Westminster woman came home to find her Bengal Lynx cat, Clubber, missing. Video surveillance showed a man with what appeared to be a can of food luring the cat before grabbing the animal and driving away in a white Toyota Tacoma pickup truck. Clubber was returned to his owner after the theft was publicized, but the suspect remained unidentified.

On April 3, 2025, at about 4 a.m., a Santa Ana man who was leaving his home saw his neighbor, later identified as Oliveros Acosta, pick a cat up over his head and slam it to the ground. The witness called his wife to check to see if the cat was dead, which it was. The couple called Santa Ana Animal Control, which took possession of the dead cat.

On April 5, 2025, Santa Ana Animal Control was called for reports of a sick cat who was not moving. Video surveillance showed a white Toyota Tacoma pickup truck. A man is seen picking what appeared to be a cat out of the truck's bed, dropping it on the ground and appears to stomp on it with his foot. The man was later identified as Alejandro Oliveros Acosta.

Oliveros Acosta was arrested both by the Santa Ana Police Department and the Westminster Police Department on April 24, 2025, but he posted the \$40,000 statutory bail (\$20,000 separately on the Westminster and Santa Ana cases) and was released before the police department finished its investigation and presented the case to the Orange County District Attorney's Office's Animal Abuse prosecutor who is responsible for determining what charges could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Deputy District Attorney Danica Drotman of the Environmental and Consumer Protection Unit is prosecuting this case.