

**Suffocation of two cats
Auburn, CA (US)**

Incident Date: Sunday, Feb 29, 2004
County: Placer

Disposition: Open

Suspect(s) Unknown - We need your help!

Placer County Animal Control was continuing its investigation into the suffocation death of two cats found in a sealed container in the Bowman area.

Two cat corpses were discovered sealed into a 12-gallon plastic container with duct tape. Evidence showed the two had struggled in vain to escape suffocation.

The 12-gallon plastic container sealed with duct tape, according to Rick Stout, Placer County Animal Control officer investigating the case.

The container and duct tape have been handed over to the Placer County Sheriff's Department, where they are being checked for fingerprints.

Authorities stated there are no leads in the case, but based on thier experience in investigating animal cruelty, he does not believe the perpetrators were the cats' owners.

Both cats were adults. One was a cream-and-chocolate-colored female Siamese with short hair. The other cat was a black, shorthaired male that had been neutered.

Stout described the container as made by Conico with a two-sided lid that closes in the center in a zigzag pattern.

Dr. Nicki Kominek, Bowman Veterinary Hospital veterinarian, said the necropsy on the cats determined that both were alive and in good health when they were placed in the container.

"It was the worst case I've seen," she said. "(The container) was covered with blood, feces, urine and vomit. Both of the animals had face and paw trauma."

Renee Youngblood, veterinary technician who helped with the necropsy, agreed it was the worst case of animal cruelty she'd seen. She described the lung tissue as very bloody, a signature of suffocation.

"The faces were very battered and bloodied from trying to escape," she said. "They were young, healthy cats and they suffered,"

Dede Shaw, who runs the Animal Spay and Neuter Clinic in the DeWitt Center, had heard about the incident earlier and was incensed.

"Those cats suffered very badly," she said. "Whoever did this deserves jail time."

Shaw emphasized that there are number of organizations - including the Placer SPCA, Auburn Area Animal Rescue Foundation or Placer County Animal Services - that take animals in, so there is never a reason for animals to be mistreated or abandoned.

At Placer SPCA, Renee Spann, animal care manager, said that in addition to finding homes for animals, the group also offers an animal-behavior help line and animal-behavior department to provide advice and assistance to pet owners who are encountering problems such as incessant barking or aggression.

In downtown Auburn Thursday, Rebecca Miller of Auburn and Danielle Paul of Foresthill - both longtime pet owners - were saddened by the incident.

"That hurts so bad, I don't have words for it," Miller said. "Animals are such special beings. I had a special cat pass away recently. She was 17 years old."

"(Animals) are no different than you and me, they just come in different forms," Paul said.

Stout said he is hoping to hear from anyone who heard or saw something unusual in the area between 5 p.m. Friday and 5 a.m. Monday. He also hopes the cats' owners will report them missing.

Anyone with information on the incident is asked to call Placer County Animal Services at 530-886-5548.

If you have information on this case, please contact:

Placer County Animal Services

530-886-5548