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San Diego Humane Society Secures Justice for Poochie: Todd Buntich Sentenced for Felony Animal Cruelty



SAN DIEGO, CA — San Diego Humane Society's Humane Law Enforcement successfully investigated and helped secure a conviction in a heartbreaking case of animal cruelty, ensuring justice for Poochie, a small senior Shih Tzu service dog who suffered a fatal attack.

On May 23, 2024, **Jeffrey Todd Buntich** threatened to kill Poochie before violently kicking the dog at a Motel 6 in El Cajon. Poochie sustained severe internal injuries and, despite emergency veterinary care, had to be humanely euthanized to prevent further suffering.

Buntich fled to Sacramento following the attack, but thanks to collaboration between law enforcement agencies, he was arrested on November 11, 2024, on a felony warrant by the Sacramento Sheriff's Department. He was extradited to San Diego County, where he pled guilty to one felony count of animal cruelty under California Penal Code 597(a).

On **February 25, 2025**, Buntich was sentenced to:

- **365 days in jail**
- **Two years of probation**
- **A 5-year ban on animal ownership**

Buntich surrendered himself for incarceration on February 24, 2024. Had he failed to do so, he would have faced up to 16 years in prison due to his extensive prior criminal history.

"This case is a tragic reminder of the consequences of violence against animals," said **Chief Jace Huggins, San Diego Humane Society's Humane Law Enforcement**. "While nothing can undo the suffering Poochie endured, we are grateful to see justice served and hope this sentencing sends a strong message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated."

San Diego Humane Society urges anyone who witnesses animal cruelty or neglect to report it immediately by calling **619-299-7012 (press 1 for Humane Law Enforcement)**.

Photos of Poochie for media use are available here:
https://spaces.hightail.com/space/dtsRWiqZ5s
Photo credit: San Diego Humane Society

About San Diego Humane Society
San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.

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