



JOSÉ R. RODRÍGUEZ
EL PASO COUNTY ATTORNEY
500 EAST SAN ANTONIO
ROOM 503, COUNTY COURTHOUSE
EL PASO, TEXAS 79901

NO. 200704

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday January 17, 2007

Visit the New Press Releases Archive at:

<http://www.co.el-paso.tx.us/CA/releases.htm>

For More Information Contact:

Elhiu Dominguez

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (915) 546-2016

FAX: (915) 546-2133

Elhiu.dominguez@ca.epcounty.com

**COUNTY ATTORNEY OBTAINS ORDER TO PROTECT HORSES
FROM MALNURISHMENT AND ABUSE**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez has obtained a judicial order to protect two horses from malnourishment and abuse, while the owner, accused of animal cruelty, is taken to trial.

On January 11, 2007 Justice of the Peace Precinct #2 Sissy Hernandez ruled that 61-year-old PEDRO LUNA, a resident of Canutillo, Texas, was mistreating 2 horses and ordered that the animals be placed with Animal Cruelty Heartline of El Paso, to care for and take ownership of the seized horses.

The case began in early January, when a Detective with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Matthew Durning, received a complaint of animal cruelty. His investigation revealed two brown horses that appeared to be malnourished and in bad health, as indicated by the horses' exposed hips, ribs and spines. Detective Durning observed a mare that had what appeared to be a chain dog leash tight around her neck, and a male horse with a halter strap that was clearly too small for the animal. There was no evidence of any hay, grass, alfalfa or grains in the area and only a cracked, broken pail with a small amount of dirty water. On January 5, 2007, Detective Durning obtained a warrant from Justice of the Peace Precinct Two, to have the two animals removed from Pedro Luna's custody and control and executed the warrant.

The final hearing on the case was held on January 11. There, Judge Sissy Hernandez divested Luna of ownership of the two horses and ordered him to pay \$783.00 for court costs, costs incurred by Animal Regulation and Disease Control, transportation costs, and expert witness costs.

Sheriff's officers have also arrested Pedro Luna on criminal animal cruelty charges and will present the case to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution under Penal Code Sec. 42.09. Luna was released on January 6 after paying a \$5,000 bond.

"Animal Cruelty is a serious crime which we will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law," said Rodríguez. "While my office has jurisdiction to only request permanent removal of cruelly treated animals, it is an important first step in trying to save the lives of callously treated animals."

To report animal cruelty, call Animal Control at 821-7000 or your local law enforcement agency. El Paso Police Dept. at 832-4400, or El Paso Sheriff's Dept. at 546-2280.

###



PEDRO LUNA

