

## **3 indicted in pair of animal cruelty cases**

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LAS CRUCES - Three men were indicted Thursday in two separate cases involving cruelty to animals - one by starvation, one by firearm.

A Doña Ana County grand jury charged 23-year-old Marcos A. Sandoval Jr. with extreme cruelty to animals and cruelty to animals. Sandoval is alleged to have neglected and malnourished his horse and dog to extreme conditions last September - the second county man to be formally charged with starving a horse and a dog in less than a month. (Armando Gomez, 51, the other, was scheduled to be arraigned this week.)

Sandoval, of 600 Joe Gutierrez in Doña Ana, was never arrested and his whereabouts are unknown, according to the district attorney's office.

The grand jury also indicted Marcos Carmona and Moses Salido, of 540 Palmas St. in Chaparral, for allegedly using their neighbors' dogs for target practice.

Salido, 19, and Carmona, his brother-in-law, were indicted on three counts of extreme cruelty to animals, a felony.

Salido allegedly told investigators they'd shot the three dogs - taking a few shots each with a .22 caliber rifle - because he thought the dogs were chasing his uncle's cat. He'd had a problem with dogs in the area since a pack of them killed his aunt's chickens and scratched her car, he told investigators.

The dogs initially got out of a neighbor's yard just three doors away Sept. 12 when the man who owned the dogs opened his gate, the man told a sheriff's deputy.

The neighbor said he'd tried to run after his dogs, but lost sight of them. Some time later, he heard several gunshots, a pause, and two more gunshots, according to the report. A few moments later, his golden retriever mix, shot in the chest, and his boxer cross, shot in the back, dragged themselves home and fell to the ground, he told police.

The third dog, a white pit-bull injured so badly it could barely breathe, was shot a second time by the pair, "so it wouldn't suffer," Carmona told investigators.

The 3rd Judicial District Attorney's office decided to pursue charges after investigation determined "the dogs were not chasing livestock at the time of the incident, nor were the dogs endangering any persons on the property," according to the warrant.

The golden retriever died before its owner could make it to the emergency veterinary services in Las Cruces. It's unknown if the boxer-mix, which was taken to a vet in Juárez, ultimately survived.

An indictment is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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