



06-01-18

Pickens County Veterinarian Criminally Charged following Investigation of Video Released to Social Media

The Pickens County Sheriff's Office has charged a local veterinarian for *Ill Treatment of an Animal* following the investigation into a video clip that was recently disseminated on social media.

During Memorial Day weekend, a short video clip was posted on social media that contained footage of Dr. Robert McKee striking a dog that was contained in a wire kennel. The video appeared to have been taken from inside a business setting.

Deputies from the *Sheriff's Office Animal Enforcement Unit* initiated an investigation into the incident on Tuesday, May 29th, and were able to develop leads that ultimately led to the identity of the witness that had taken the video.

The results of the investigation have revealed that on the afternoon of Thursday, May 24, 2018, a witness was inside Foothills Animal Hospital located on Moorefield Memorial Hwy in Liberty.

The witness stated that they were in a position inside the facility to have observed Dr. McKee's behavior and mannerisms just prior to the encounter between the veterinarian and a dog that was contained in one of the kennels.

The witness observed the doctor as he approached the dog's kennel and there was ample time for the witness to prepare and record the encounter with the dog on a private cell phone.

Interviews with the eye witness along with other individuals during the investigation have not uncovered any evidence that would indicate that the physical striking of the animal was in the course of any veterinary practice or pursuant to a medical procedure. Additionally, there is no information or evidence discovered during the investigation that would give reason to believe that the striking of the animal was in defense or response to any aggressive or violent behavior exhibited by the dog.

The witness, who does not own the animal, contacted the dog's owner following the incident at which time the owner responded to the facility to retrieve the animal. No signs of physical injury were detected on the dog at the time it was picked up.

The Sheriff's Office has not received any previous complaints or information, prior to this incident, regarding Dr. McKee's veterinarian practice or the Foothills Animal Hospital in Liberty.

Robert James McKee (64 yoa) was charged this morning with the below offense after he voluntarily turned himself in at the Pickens County Sheriff's Office. Dr. McKee was arraigned before a Pickens County Magistrate and released on a \$3000.00 Recognizance Bond.

| <u>Charge:</u> | <u>Warrant#:</u> | <u>Date of Arrest:</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Ill Treatment of Animals | 2018A3910100636 | 06-01-18 |

Reference:
SC Code of Law 47-1-40(A)

Copies of the Arrest Warrant and mug shot have been attached to this Media Release.

The Pickens County Sheriff's Office emphasizes that in **all** criminal investigations, a charge is merely an accusation and all defendants are to be presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

###