

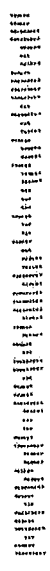
**W**  
AKFIELD  
&  
Associates

2600 Michelson Drive, Suite 1700  
Irvine, CA 92612

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Sheriff Mark Essick  
Deputy Writz  
County Sheriff's Office  
Sonoma County  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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SONOMA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
ADMINISTRATION

December 21, 2021

James R. Wakefield, P.C.  
Jim.Wakefield@wakefieldlawyers.com

**VIA EMAIL**

[mark.essick@sonoma-county.org](mailto:mark.essick@sonoma-county.org)

Sheriff Mark Essick  
Deputy Writz  
County Sheriff's Office  
Sonoma County  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Sonoma County's Efforts to Deliberately Mistreat a Homeless Cat

Dear Sheriff Essick:

You can determine a great deal about the personal character of a person by how he or she treats those in a position of vulnerability. We do not need to know much about a person whom we see kick his dog. Seeing the act is enough to tell us all we really need to know about that person's character.

I have never written a letter to a law enforcement agency. But then I and those I care for (including a little ten pound cat) have never been quite so effected as we have by the disgusting conduct of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department. And I say your conduct Sheriff, because one thing I know about organizations is that the character of the organization (or lack thereof) starts at the top.

The first time I had any interaction with your Department was when a Deputy Writz called to tell me that my wife and I had stolen a cat and he wished to get the cat back before it was necessary to take other actions. Yes, that is who we are, two seventy-year-old cat thieves.

Of course, you know that we are not thieves. You are very familiar with Section 484 of the California Penal Code. It requires specific intent to "feloniously steal, take...the personal property of another..." As you know, two elements of the crime are essential. One is the specific intent to steal, and two that it be the property of another. And you know Sheriff Essick that the seventy-year-old cat nappers did not have any intent to steal, and you also know that no one can establish that cat is the "property of another."

To the extent that you did your investigation, you know the truth. But the truth is not stopping you from harming my family and probably killing a little cat. The truth is the complaining parties have been mistreating this cat for at least four years and the cat has the scars to prove it.



During the Thanksgiving Holiday my family (all my children, their significant others and our grandchildren) stayed at an Airbnb called the Sonoma Sanctuary Bed Retreat located at 17895 Railroad Ave. in Sonoma. When we arrived, we were greeted by a little cat missing her upper lip and most of her tail. She was obviously hungry and so we fed her. You can tell when a cat or dog is really hungry or just a little hungry. She scarfed the food down in under a minute and asked for more.

At night the cat retreated to the back yard of the house. We assumed the cat must live at the house and so we called the owner of the house and asked whether the cat belonged to him. He said she did not belong to anyone. It was a stray cat that showed up in the neighborhood four years ago. Many of the neighbors would feed her (including him). But none of the neighbors allowed her to come into their homes.

Whether the temperatures fell below freezing or it rained (like it is today) the cat remained outdoors for four years and fended for itself when it came to protection. The next morning of our stay when it was 36 degrees outside, we found her curled up in a lawn chair in the back yard. We fed her and my son made an igloo bed out of towels. She stayed in that igloo for the next four days. All our family would go out and check on her. They would pet her, hold her, basically just love her. We were the only ones who fed her or provided water to her for the five days we were in Sonoma.

My daughter was very concerned about the health of the cat and again called the owner. She asked him if it would be a problem if we brought her home and adopted her. Not only did he say there would be no problem he said (his words) "it would be awesome if someone adopted her and gave her a good home." Ultimately because my daughter lives in Colorado, the logistics of her taking the cat to Colorado seem to daunting so my wife and I brought her home.

The first thing we did when we brought her home is we made an appointment for her to see a veterinarian and receive whatever shot and vaccinations she might need. We knew then it was possible the cat was chipped. And we assumed that if it was chipped, we could locate her real owner and return it. Little did we know the person who caused her to be chipped was a neighbor who got tired of her having kittens in the neighborhood and wanted to neuter her.

The vet called the woman (complaining witness whose identity remains a mystery). She admitted to the vet that the cat lived outdoors and would walk the neighborhood looking for food. No one cared about this cat enough to bring her indoors and make her life bearable—and safe. The vet arrived at the same conclusion we did. She was an outdoor stray cat that would be safer and healthier in a home that kept her indoors. She agreed to provide the cat whatever care she required, and she made an appointment to provide the cat all the vaccinations she might need.

Then you, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department stepped in. First Deputy Writz called me. He called me a thief and told me we had an obligation to return the cat to the neighborhood. He told me (seriously), that he had talked to at least two people in the neighborhood that claimed to own the cat. I suggested to him that it was not even possible for a neighborhood to own and outdoor cat that roamed the neighborhood. But I also told him that we were never going to let that cat get put back in the living conditions she was in without a fight. Well, I guess you took that as a challenge Sheriff Essick.

Sheriff Mark Essick  
Sonoma County Sheriff's Office  
December 21, 2021  
Page 3



You obviously could not care less about the little cat's welfare. I get that. You spelled it out clearly by your next actions. **In fact, you established that you would rather the cat die from a lack of medical care than let her remain in our home.** And that is what prompts this letter. Your conduct in calling the vet's office and threatening them if they provided medical care to the cat because of "disputed ownership" is beyond reprehensible. It is truly disgusting. The Manager of the office could not tell me what statute you cited as authority. But the Manager of the office believed your threats and have advised us that they cannot provide the cat treatment no matter how badly she might need it because of your threats.

You have made it very clear Sheriff. The cat either dies for lack of medical care, or the cat is returned to a neighborhood that doesn't care enough about her to protect her from predators or get her out of the freezing windy rain she finds herself in each winter. And Sheriff that says everything I need to know about your character and the character of your organization.

I am certain you will continue to do whatever you can to prevail and get the little cat back outside in the neighborhood where she belongs. And you can be assured that your seventy-year-old cat nappers will do everything in our ability to protect her.

Oh, and by the way, the two complaining owners that live on either side of the Airbnb absolutely hate the owner of the home—they and he told us as much. They do not like us Southern California riff raff disturbing their tranquility. And of course, us being from Southern California completely justifies your actions. Again, it's that character thing.....

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRW', written over a horizontal line.

JAMES R. WAKEFIELD

JRW

cc: VCA Animal Hospital, 3080 Woodruff Avenue, Suite B, Long Beach, CA 90808, Attn: Trisha Carter  
Humane Society in Sonoma, PO Box 1296, Santa Rosa, CA 95402-1296