CONTACT: Ana Bustilloz @ 323-730-5300, ext. 252, 323-707-1271 cell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   September 4, 2013

Abuser Convicted of 4 Felony Counts of Animal Cruelty
Owner of J.R. Ewing Guard Dogs to be sentenced September 16

Los Angeles, CA –Charles Ferguson, owner and operator of J.R. Ewing Guard Dogs, Inc. et al, was convicted of 4 felony and 4 misdemeanor animal cruelty charges, as the result of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) animal cruelty investigation. Sentencing is scheduled for September 16, 2013. Ferguson could receive up to 16 (consecutive) years in prison and/or $160,000 in fines.

spcaLA led an interagency investigation which unearthed evidence of horrible mistreatment and agonizing deaths of working dogs at J.R. Ewing Guard Dogs, Inc. These findings and others resulted in Ferguson's November 2012 arrest.

During the case, County of Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney, Christopher Frisco successfully proved to the judge, the Honorable Allen Webster, the abuse and neglect of several dogs in Ewing's care.

The investigation of Ferguson began when spcaLA Humane Officers responded to an anonymous tip from the spcaLA Animal Cruelty Tip Line. The reporting person described seeing a bleeding Doberman with a large bloody mass hanging from her posterior, which was later determined to be a prolapsed uterus.

Upon investigating Ferguson's property, spcaLA Humane Officers discovered the decaying bodies of deceased dogs inside the compartments of utility trucks (similar to the vehicle an animal control agency may use). "Ferguson treated his vehicles with more regard than he did the dogs who were the backbone of his business," said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. "Working animals live, breathe and feel, and your spcaLA will continue to act as their voice, as we have since 1877."

Pete, of the initial animal cruelty complaint, was found dead inside the first truck with her uterus severed and missing. A necropsy would reveal that Pete was suffering from a severe infection and her uterus was cut while she was still alive. She slowly bled to death and endured enormous amounts of pain before she died of bacterial shock.

Inside another truck, spcaLA officers discovered the body of Tank. Forensic evidence and expert testimony from Dr. Karen Halligan DVM proved he was alive when he was placed inside the compartment. He was alone, locked inside the dark box, with no food, water, or ventilation. Tank was left to die a slow, painful, and horrifying death from emaciation and dehydration.

County of Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney, Christopher Frisco said, "I am pleased with the results of 4 felony counts. This shows that the DA's office takes these cases seriously and sends a message to anyone who abuses or mistreats animals: you will pay."

The facility at 1207 West El Segundo Blvd. in Gardena that formerly housed J.R. Ewing Guard Dogs now stands vacant. Ferguson's license to own and operate a guard dog business has been revoked by Los Angeles County.

--MORE--

PAGE 2-2-2

"I am extremely proud of our work and the inter-agency cooperation involved to bring this criminal to justice," said the Director of spcaLA's Animal Protection Services, Lieutenant Cesar Perea, "It was a difficult case to prove but the forensic evidence and expert testimony sealed his fate."

spcaLA is the only private animal welfare organization that is also Law Enforcement in Los Angeles. To report animal cruelty, call the spcaLA Animal Cruelty Tip Line at 1-800-540-SPCA (7722) or report online at www.spcaLA.com.

For more information, please contact Ana Bustilloz at 323-730-5300 x252, cell 323-707-1271 or abustilloz@spcaLA.com.

Photos upon request.

Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.

####