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For Immediate Release

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DA Brings Consumer Protection Charge of Fraud Against San Marcos Pet Cremation Business Owner

Defendant Failed to Refund Customers for Undelivered Services

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that the DA's Economic Crimes and Consumer Protection Division has charged the owner of a pet cremation business in San Marcos for not delivering promised cremation services to customers and not refunding their payments. Christopher Settle, 39, was arraigned in San Diego Superior Court today on one felony count of grand theft.

Twenty victims have been identified as not receiving refunds for services from Angel Paws Pet Cremation that weren't completed between July and September of this year. The combined loss for all 20 victims is over \$4,700. Three victims received ashes that were supposed to be cremains of their pets but later discovered their pet's deceased bodies remained intact at the business. Settle continued to operate his pet cremation business without the legal or physical ability to complete orders customers paid for. The business closed this past summer.

"These pet owners trusted this business to handle their pets' remains with dignity and respect but instead were denied that consideration," said DA Stephan. "The owner is being held accountable for his actions thanks to the hard work of our consumer protection prosecution team."

Settle was taken into custody at his Temecula home on December 2 by deputies from the San Marcos Sheriff's Station. The defendant waived extradition and was transported to San Diego County, where he was booked at the Vista Detention Facility on an outstanding arrest warrant.

The business's abrupt closure in the summer caused significant distress to grieving pet owners who made multiple complaints to law enforcement. In court filings, prosecutors said power was cut off to the business during the summer because of non-payment, leaving some of the deceased animals unrefrigerated for extended periods. Settle continued to accept animals for cremation services despite the gas being shut off.

Settle's permit from the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District to operate expired in March of 2024 and the permit retired in September of last year. Without a valid permit from the



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SDCAPCD, Settle did not have the legal or physical ability to operate the incinerator at the business.

Between September 24 and December 1 of this year, 46 Angel Paws customers contacted the San Diego County Sheriff's Office in San Marcos to make a complaint regarding Angel Paws. Several of the Angel Paws customers are not included in victim list because their veterinary clinic outsourced cremations with Angel Paws. Angel Paws picked up several deceased pets from ABC Veterinary Hospital, Julian Pet Clinic, Pets Place Animal Hospital, and Santa Fe Pet Clinic, but never sent invoices for payment. Some pet owners received ashes back during the time Angel Paws was nonoperational, and some have still not received ashes or their pet's body back.

The District Attorney's Economic Crimes and Consumer Protection Division is responsible for prosecuting a wide variety of wrongdoing, including elder financial abuse, computer intrusion, complex identity theft, investment scams, embezzlements, real estate matters, counterfeit goods, environmental crimes and the theft of public assistance funds.

Deputy District Attorney Alexander Poyhonen is prosecuting this case.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.