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# Mailman guilty of killing poodle

By SAIRA PEESKER  
 Examiner Staff Writer

Shirley Sedore had just finished cooking a pot of hamburger stew for Muffin, her 13-year-old toy poodle, when she heard yips coming from outside.

"I was just removing the stew, the kind she likes, from the stove, when I heard two soft barks and then screams and howls like nothing else," said Sedore, who had left the dog tied to a lawn chair on the porch. "By the time I got outside she was laying on the grass on her side. She never moved again after that."

While Sedore looked around for the source of Muffin's discomfort, a crossing guard near her Water Street home got her attention.

"The guard yelled 'the mailman kicked your dog and he's hurrying away down the street,' and sure enough, he was almost to Parkhill," said Sedore, who is in her 70s. "He turned around and looked at us, and then kept going. Muffin died a few hours later."

That was May 12, a day after Muffin had seen the vet and been given a clear bill of health.

On Wednesday, Canada Post letter carrier Raymond Douglas Baird pleaded guilty to unlawfully killing a domestic animal. He said the dog had been running toward him and he had tried to tap her out of the way.

Baird received a conditional discharge (so the charge won't be on his record), with 12 months probation, forbidding him to own a domestic animal. He must pay \$1,000 to the Sedores, make a \$500 donation to the Humane Society and perform some community service.

Baird refused to comment last night.

According to Peterborough Humane Society manager Kevin Feagan, the vet report submitted to the court attributed the five-kilogram poodle's death to "blunt force trauma to the abdomen."

Feagan said he was pleased with Baird's sentence, saying it sends a message to letter carriers about

how they should treat the pets on their routes.

"Mail carriers have training for dealing with vicious dogs, so he should have known this tiny dog was not a threat to him," he said. "He chose to confront the dog, and kicked it with such force that he killed it."

That kind of language has letter carrier Paul Madigin worrying about how the decision could impact his workplace safety.

"It completely undermines our ability to defend ourselves," said Madigin, adding that all the carriers he has spoken with are absolutely furious about the decision. "What are we supposed to do if a dog comes at us now? It seems like it's open season on postal workers these days."

Most of the dog bites he and his colleagues have received have come from small dogs, Madigin said. Getting bitten shouldn't be among his workplace hazards, whether it involves a poodle or a Rottweiler, he said.

"Dogs can have rabies and bites can develop infection," he said,

adding carriers may start exercising their right to avoid delivering to any street that contains an unruly dog. "When I do routes I've never done, I feel like I'm taking a chance — dogs that don't recognize you can get pretty aggressive."

Since Muffin's death, Baird has remained on the route that includes Sedore's house. Still working to get used to life without her longtime companion, Sedore keeps the blinds shut until after the mail arrives.

"We don't want any contact with him, but the post office said we'd have to let him deliver or come in and pick up the mail ourselves," she said. "We're too old to be doing that, so we'll live with things how they are."

Sedore and her husband John plan to use the restitution money for a donation to the Humane Society and animal shelter.

"I can't keep it, it's blood money," she said. "She was my baby and would sleep beside me every night. I couldn't keep any money that only came to me because she died."