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**BRONX MAN SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR FOR BEATING PUPPY WITH SHOVEL
Defendant Banned From Owning Pets, Will Register with NYC Animal Abuse Registry;
“Peanut Butter” the Pit Bull Recovered and Found Home**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a Bronx man has been sentenced to one year in jail for repeated acts of cruelty against his puppy — including beating her with a shovel — that were captured on video.

District Attorney Clark said “The defendant was relentless in his horrific abuse of a defenseless creature. His prosecution and sentence shows that we are serious about protecting vulnerable animals.”

Howard Lawrence, Vice President, ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement, said, “The amount of pain and suffering Peanut Butter endured is truly heartbreaking. Despite the abuse and weeks of medical treatment at the ASPCA Animal Hospital, Peanut Butter’s gentle, playful spirit was never broken. Fortunately, she was able to recover and find a safe, loving home. The ASPCA is thankful to the NYPD and Bronx District Attorney for their dedication to seeking justice in this case. Peanut Butter’s story is a great example of how reporting animal cruelty to 911 immediately can help save a life.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Raul Cruz, 45, of 855 East 167 St., was sentenced today by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Robert Neary to one year in jail for Aggravated Cruelty to Animals. Cruz will also sign an agreement declaring he won’t own any pets and will register with the New York City Animal Abuse Registry. He pleaded guilty on Jan. 11, 2017.

According to the investigation, on Jan. 28, 2015, Cruz was videotaped striking his pit bull numerous times with a shovel. Two days later, he was again seen striking the canine and burying her in the snow, where she was discovered by the NYPD. The dog was taken to the ASPCA and other injuries consistent with long-term abuse were discovered. The pit bull,

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renamed Peanut Butter, was rehabilitated and has since been adopted.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kate Christobek of the Economic Crimes Bureau under the supervision of William Zelenka, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Stuart Levy, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division and Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked the 41st Precinct, the Animal Cruelty Investigation Squad of the New York City Police Department, as well as the veterinarians and staff of the ASPCA.

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