



Life is just to cruel for Conde

MANILA, Philippines -- In what was to be its last hours as a maltreated working horse, Conde finally found a way to get even with his cruel master: The 16-year-old horse collapsed in front of the Philippine Daily Inquirer office on Chino Roces Avenue in Makati City and found the attention he probably never received in his entire life.

The sight of Conde being forced by his owner to get up was unbearable as a number of Inquirer employees accosted the owner, 65-year-old Jose Hernandez, who even tried to load the crippled horse into a jeepney.

"It's not every day that you see a horse collapse in front of your office. Seeing the owner force the horse to get up was too much and one just had to intervene," said editor Aries Espinosa, one of the employees who first rushed to the scene and called a veterinarian.

According to the responding staff of Modomo [Veterinary Clinic](#) in Makati, the horse which was pulling a sulky and heading for the Philippine Racing Club at the Sta. Ana Race Track, was malnourished and severely dehydrated. A sulky is a lightweight, two-wheeled cart usually pulled by a horse or [dogs](#).

"The condition of Conde is so despicable. Yes, the horse is already old with his hind legs showing evidence of fractures. But the evidence is clear that the owner was maltreating the horse," said Dr. Percy Modomo, who used up eight bottles of dextrose to revive the fallen horse.

Irreversible

But in the end, Modomo decided to put Conde to sleep as his condition was irreversible. The doctor volunteered to take the body for safekeeping and later informed the Inquirer that it would be buried in his farm in Lipa City in Batangas province.

Rebutting the veterinarian's claim, Hernandez insisted that he was taking good care of his horse which he claimed he had sold but bought back a few months ago.

Hernandez, who failed to show a registration for the horse, said he sold Conde several years ago for P20,000.

"Conde became a sulky racer and had different owners. When his last owner realized that he no longer needed the horse and voiced his intention to have Conde slaughtered, I decided to buy the horse back for P5,000 three months ago," said Hernandez, who left the scene with the sulky after realizing he could no longer take his horse home.

According to a source who refused to give his name, Hernandez used Conde as a form of transport from his stable on Mojica Street in Bangkal, Makati, to other places in the city but more often to the Sta. Ana Race Track, just a few blocks away from the Inquirer office.

Slaughterhouse

“But he told me of his plan to eventually slaughter Conde because he was already old and sickly,” said the source, who added that Hernandez had a slaughterhouse in his stable.

According to Mona Consunji of the [Animal Welfare Coalition \(AWC\)](#), a horse may be considered a food [animal](#) but there should be a process that must be strictly followed in slaughtering. The slaughterhouse should also be licensed.

Consunji rushed to the scene after she was informed of Conde’s plight and assisted the horse during his last hours.

Responding authorities, PO2 Rory Jay Fernandez and PO1 Richard Calalay of the Makati police, said they would investigate the slaughterhouse in Bangkal that Hernandez owns.

Hernandez could be held liable for Conde’s fate under the Philippine Animal Welfare Act, which makes it unlawful for any person to torture, to neglect to provide adequate care, sustenance or shelter, or maltreat any animal, including horses.

Several motorists who saw Conde along Malugay Street that afternoon already noted that the horse was limping. Bystanders also noted that Conde was already on his knees as he was nearing the Inquirer office.