

# Beverly attorney goes to the dogs

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Dog lawyer Jeremy Cohen and his golden retriever, Maisie. (PHOTO COURTESY OF KELSEY MEDIA PRODUCTIONS)

Beverly lawyer Jeremy Cohen loves his clients — unless they bite him. Which is an occupational hazard when you are the head attorney at **Boston Dog Lawyers**.

"I went to meet a new client and he bit me on the hand," Cohen told the Track. "It's kind of hard to advocate for a dog in a dog-biting case when he bites you, but I don't have to disclose it. Attorney-client privilege."

Cohen, who spent years as an insurance lawyer for GE, became a dog lawyer full time last spring. His clients include canines who bite people, dogs who bite other dogs, a pooch that was falsely accused of killing goats, and a parakeet.

"Nobody's speaking up for dogs or their owners," Cohen said. "So my firm is all about dogs."

The dog lawyer's first dog case was a family affair. Jesse, a German shepherd owned by his stepkids' dad, was accused of terrorizing his Marblehead neighborhood. A hearing was scheduled before the town's selectmen.

"Thirty people showed up and they all wanted to see Jesse killed," he recalled. "They said he was like an al-Qaeda terrorist who lies in wait. I was amazed."

The selectmen ordered the dog euthanized, but Cohen appealed it and won.

"No one had ever examined the dog before they ordered him killed," he said. "I realized the impact this one decision had, a decision that was made without a proper hearing or good evidence, and I saw how often this was happening."

So Cohen hung out his Dog Lawyer shingle. Since then, he has represented a dog whose leg was broken during an

airline flight in a damaged crate, and another canine that was accused of killing two goats in Ipswich. (Turns out, it was likely coyotes.) And he advocated for an allegedly vicious pit bull in East Bridgewater. "The dog was owned by a 24-year-old guy and his parents told me that when he got the dog, he got sober," Cohen said.

"They said, 'We're afraid if he loses the dog, we'll lose him.'"

And then there's the parakeet. The bird was being treated by an avian veterinarian, and, according to its owner, the vet mishandled the bird, which got excited and nearly bit its own toe off.

"You're supposed to hold the bird so it can't bite or can't flap its wings," Cohen said. "The toe is a problem because birds sleep standing up."

So far, the nearly severed toe has cost the bird owner nearly \$5,000 in vet bills, he said.

"And they've only bandaged the toe. They haven't attached it yet," he said. "The woman said to me, 'I don't have any children. This is my baby.' So it's serious to her. I tried not to giggle."

Cohen's practice seems ripe for a reality show, and Pet Radio host Lisa Smith Putnam is sending a camera crew to Boston this spring to follow him around for a possible show or webisodes.

"I didn't get into this for that," he said. "I saw how quickly the loudest voice in the room can win, and as a lawyer, I realized it wasn't right."

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