

Judge Dismisses Tiger Owners Lawsuit

Man had said police didn't have a search warrant.

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by a man who said the police that confiscated his 450-pound Siberian tiger did not have a warrant to search his apartment.

Monday, Aug. 7, U.S. District Judge Sidney Stein dismissed New York resident Antoine Yates lawsuit. In 2003, authorities discovered Yates was hiding a 10-foot-long tiger named Ming, as well as a 6-foot alligator in his fifth floor apartment.

Police learned Yates had been keeping the wild animals as pets after an anonymous tip led them to find him inside his apartment, screaming from wounds, including a gash below one knee that exposed the bone, the judges ruling said.

Although Yates told officers he'd been bitten by a dog, a neighbor said Yates had shown a full-grown tiger to her daughter and that large urine amounts had fallen into her apartment below, the ruling said.

Later, Yates told police he had purchased Ming from a woman in Minnesota for \$3,500.

When Yates returned to his apartment a week after the mauling, he claimed missing items included \$7,000 in cash, \$30,000 in jewelry and a brown, 3-to-4 pound pet rabbit.

Yates was sentenced to five months in prison for reckless endangerment in 2004, the same year he brought the charges against the city.

Ming was shipped to an animal refuge in Ohio, but Yates has said he hoped to get the tiger back and open his own animal sanctuary in upstate New York.

Posted: August 09, 2006, 5 a.m. EST