

Dog Perishes in 'American Idol' Hopeful's Car

Man had left his dog in a hot car during Denver "American Idol" auditions.

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An "American Idol" contestant has been charged with animal cruelty after his dog died in a hot car during auditions in Denver for the popular FOX show.

North Dakota native Quincy Vanderbilt left his small terrier in his vehicle while he and his girlfriend waited for more than nine hours to audition for the show in Denver. The dog was dead by the time Vanderbilt returned to check on the dog. Temperatures had already soared past 90 degrees.

Denver police issued Vanderbilt a "misdemeanor summons for animal cruelty" for negligence in the dog's death, and a statement warning people to be vigilant about leaving dogs in cars – especially during warm weather. "Most people don't realize how hot it can get in a parked car on a balmy day," the statement reads. "However, on a 78-degree day, temperatures in a car parked in the shade can exceed 90 degrees – and hit a scorching 160 degrees if parked in the sun."

Ironically, "Idol" judge Simon Cowell appears in a national PSA warning of the dangers of leaving dogs in cars.

"Far be it from me to be critical, but I find it really appalling that, this year, thousands of dogs will die of heatstroke inside parked cars," Cowell says in the spot, in which he appears with a dog named Claude. "Never ever leave your dog inside a parked car. Your dog idolizes you. In warm weather, keep him safe at home."