

Vet named in scheme to kill horse

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A New Jersey veterinarian was charged with helping a Bucks County horse breeder have his lame horse killed to collect \$75,000 in insurance money. A federal grand jury on Thursday indicted Leonard Patrick, 46, of Moorestown, N.J., on charges of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and making false statements to the grand jury investigating the case.

Oblige, a thoroughbred with a promising career, developed "an acute, painful, massive infection of the foreleg" in 1994 and was euthanized after efforts to save him failed.

The grand jury alleges that Patrick, a track veterinarian at Philadelphia Park Race Track in Bensalem, promised Bucks County owner Robert Deo a "quick and painless death" for Oblige and then orchestrated a plan to blame another veterinarian for the horse's death.

Deo was charged more than a year ago.

Patrick and Deo, a Buckingham resident who raced his horses at area tracks, arranged to have another veterinarian treat Oblige for lameness with a therapeutic injection, according to the indictment.

The plan called for Patrick to sneak into the stall and give the horse a lethal injection in its knee joint, where the medicine was being administered, to make it appear the horse had been killed by an infection that developed because the therapeutic injection was not given properly, the indictment said.

In June 14 or 15, 1994, prosecutors say, Patrick injected Oblige's knee joint with E. coli bacteria, commonly found in fecal matter. The indictment alleges that Patrick planned for Deo to sue the other vet for medical malpractice.

Patrick did not return a call to his Moorestown office Thursday and there is no phone listing for Deo.

Oblige was insured through Lloyds Livestock Insurance Co. of London under a policy issued by Fasig-Tipton Insurance Inc. of Lexington, Ky.