A Bastrop family is devastated after finding out their cat “Moody” died after suffering serious injuries.

The family received a phone call from a local veterinarian who told them about the cat’s injuries, which were consistent with it being thrown off a bridge.

55 year old Rick Bartlett was arrested on Friday in connection to the cat’s death, and faces animal cruelty charges. Bartlett is reportedly a Pastor of Bastrop Christian Church.

Veterinarians told Moody’s owner, Eddy Bell, that his cat was found on the river walk in Bastrop near the Loop 150 bridge.

“The vet explained he was in shock, open mouth breathing and determined he had a ruptured
lungs," Bell explained.

The Bell family says Moody was an indoor cat but did go spend time outside. Late last week they let him out and he never came back.

According to the family, individuals at the animal control shelter told them Bartlett sometimes brings in stray cats.

"The animal control officers told us that he traps feral cats that get in his garden. Moody was not a feral cat, we had for eleven years and was a member of our family," said Bell.

The Bell's say Bartlett took Moody to police, who said they would return him to his owners. Bartlett allegedly volunteered to do it himself, but the cat never made it home.

"The bottom line this man was the last one to have our cat, and then he was found dying under a bridge. We all want answers and want him prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Bell.

According to Bastrop County Jail records, Bartlett was taken into custody Friday by the Bastrop Police Department. He was later released the same day on $5,000 bond.