

# Custody war a tug-o'-goldendoodle

## Nasty LI divorce a rabid dog fight



**If they were my dogs, I would have taken them with me even if I was going to live in the street.**

— Margaret Healy, who's cared for Lucy for more than two years



**GET YOUR PAWS OFF!** Slaney O'Hanlon (above) and her mom are fighting in court to win custody of their goldendoodle, Lucy, from in-law Margaret Healy (left), who says their motive is divorce payback.

By WILLIAM J. GORTA

A routine divorce proceeding has escalated into all-out war — over the custody of a dog named Lucy.

The dogfight, which has ripped a family apart, features, in one corner, Margaret Healy of Brooklyn and her brother, James O'Hanlon.

In the other corner is Susan McCarthy, who is James' estranged wife, and her daughter, Slaney O'Hanlon.

Caught in the middle is Lucy the goldendoodle, a cross between a golden retriever and a poodle.

Lucy has been cared for by Margaret for two years, according to papers filed in Brooklyn Supreme Court.

She said James gave her the dog

when Susan and Slaney moved out of their Manhasset, LI, home, leaving behind Lucy and another dog.

But after the second dog, Lady, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, died, Slaney and her mother made two trips to Brooklyn to demand Lucy's return, the filings say.

"They walked out and never came back for the dogs," said Healy, who holds the license for Lucy.

"If they were my dogs, I would have taken them with me even if I was going to live in the street.

"They never came to see the dogs or inquired after the dogs."

She claims that last month, after Lady died, Susan left her a threatening voice mail "replete with curses, hatred and intimidation" demanding Lucy's return. She also

said that Susan and Slaney tried to run her off the road as part of a "campaign of threats."

Susan said she regrets losing her cool on the voicemail but denied chasing Healy's car.

She said Lucy is being used as a pawn in a nasty divorce and that Slaney is suffering the most.

"She lost her father, she lost her home," Susan said. "All she wants is her dog."

Susan said that Lucy had been implanted with a microchip listing Slaney as the owner three years ago.

Slaney said both dogs had been given to her as gifts and that Margaret was supposed to look after them only until she was out of school.

She said she couldn't visit the pooches because of another com-

plication in the tangled family drama. Margaret's husband, Walter, is her father's lawyer in the divorce.

"Unfortunately I'm caught up in my parents' divorce," she said.

Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Sylvia Ash ordered Slaney and her mom to stay away from Margaret and to refrain from trying to get Lucy back until the case is heard in court.

James, a psychologist who with Susan owns part of two restaurants, said Slaney and her mother abandoned the dogs and he was unable to care for them.

"I totally transferred ownership to my sister [Margaret]," he said. "Since that day, the dogs have had a wonderful life."

*william.gorta@nypost.com*



Updated: Thu., Oct. 6, 2011, 7:09 AM

## Nasty LI divorce a rabid dog fight

By WILLIAM J. GORTA

Last Updated: 7:09 AM, October 6, 2011

Posted: 1:59 AM, October 6, 2011

A routine divorce proceeding has escalated into all-out war -- over the custody of a dog named Lucy.

The dogfight, which has ripped a family apart, features, in one corner, Margaret Healy of Brooklyn and her brother, James O'Hanlon.

In the other corner is Susan McCarthy, who is James' estranged wife, and her daughter, Slaney O'Hanlon.

Caught in the middle is Lucy the goldendoodle, a cross between a golden retriever and a poodle.

Lucy has been cared for by Margaret for two years, according to papers filed in Brooklyn Supreme Court.

She said James gave her the dog when Susan and Slaney moved out of their Manhasset, LI, home, leaving behind Lucy and another dog.

But after the second dog, Lady, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, died, Slaney and her mother made two trips to Brooklyn to demand Lucy's return, the filings say.

"They walked out and never came back for the dogs," said Healy, who holds the license for Lucy.

"If they were my dogs, I would have taken them with me even if I was going to live in the street.

"They never came to see the dogs or inquired after the dogs."

She claims that last month, after Lady died, Susan left her a threatening voice mail "replete with curses, hatred and intimidation" demanding Lucy's return. She also said that Susan and Slaney tried to run her off the road as part of a "campaign of threats."

Susan said she regrets losing her cool on the voicemail but denied chasing Healy's car.

She said Lucy is being used as a pawn in a nasty divorce and that Slaney is suffering the most.

"She lost her father, she lost her home," Susan said. "All she wants is her dog."

Susan said that Lucy had been implanted with a microchip listing Slaney as the owner three years ago.

Slaney said both dogs had been given to her as gifts and that Margaret was supposed to look after them only until she was out of school.

She said she couldn't visit the pooches because of another complication in the tangled family drama. Margaret's husband, Walter, is her father's lawyer in the divorce.

"Unfortunately I'm caught up in my parents' divorce," she said.

Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Sylvia Ash ordered Slaney and her mom to stay away from Margaret and to refrain from trying to get Lucy back until the case is heard in court.

James, a psychologist who with Susan owns part of two restaurants, said Slaney and her mother abandoned the dogs and he was unable to care for them.

"I totally transferred ownership to my sister [Margaret]," he said. "Since that day, the dogs have had a wonderful life."

[william.gorta@nypost.com](mailto:william.gorta@nypost.com)

Divorce unleashes family feud as hubby's sister sez she has ...

# A dog in this fight

BY OREN YANIV

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A BOW-WOW brouhaha for the custody of a beloved family dog has erupted in the divorce case of the couple who own trendy Greenwich Village restaurant Agave.

In an offshoot to the acrimonious feud between James O'Hanlon and Susan McCarthy, his sister has asked a Brooklyn judge to make her the rightful owner of the disputed goldendoodle — Lucy.

"I became surgically attached to the dog," said O'Hanlon's sister, Margaret Healy of Brooklyn Heights.

She says she has cared for the canine for two years while her brother and soon-to-be ex-sister-in-law have been warring in Nassau County Court.

But Healy's niece, 18-year-old Slaney O'Hanlon, insists she is Lucy's rightful owner and that a chip implanted in the pooch's hide proves it.

Slaney O'Hanlon claims her aunt only got her four-legged friend for safekeeping while she was attending a Baltimore-area boarding school.

She suggested that Healy's court request stems from her father's attempt to drag her into his matrimonial mess.

"It's just my father trying to get me in the middle of his divorce," a tearful Slaney O'Hanlon told The News. "I just want my dog back."

Healy shot back: "They (McCarthy and Slaney O'Hanlon) never came to see the dog or inquired about the dog."

When Healy's brother and McCarthy separated in 2009, their dogs, Lady, 9, and Lucy, who was less than a year old, were handed over to Healy. When the elder dog died last month of a sudden heart failure, things came to a head.

Healy, 68, charges that McCarthy left her a nasty voice message upon learning of Lady's death, blaming her for having "no f---ing heart" and calling her an expletive associated with a female mutt.

She claims McCarthy and her niece tried to dognap Lucy from her Brooklyn Heights building and even chased her in an SUV.

"I couldn't believe she followed me in the car," Healy said, as Lucy chewed a bone-shaped fluffy toy in her crate. "I almost fainted."

The ordeal prompted Healy to file papers in Brooklyn Supreme Court asking to be affirmed as Lucy's sole owner and for a restraining order against her niece and McCarthy.



It's a real dogfight between Margaret Healy (above) and her niece Slaney O'Hanlon (inset) over who should take care of goldendoodle, Lucy. Photo by Jesse A. Ward

She's also demanding \$500,000 in damages.

Healy said that she initially thought she would only keep Lucy briefly, but as months turned into years, she licensed the dog in her name and formed a strong bond.

Slaney O'Hanlon countered that a chip implanted in Lucy names her as the owner.

She argues that she was barred from checking on her pet because Healy's husband represents her dad in the divorce action.

She has until next month to file a counterclaim.

Healy's lawyer, Thomas Chaves, said the dogfight will likely come down to "what the best interest of the dog is."

oyaniv@nydailynews.com





Home Autos Real Estate Jobs Classifieds Apps Place an Ad Buy Pictures Buy Tickets Deal of the Day

Facebook Twitter YouTube LinkedIn Login Register

NYDailyNews.com  
**DAILY NEWS** Local

SITE BLOGS DISCUSSIONS WEB Search powered by YAHOO!



News Sports Gossip Entertainment Events Local Opinion Life & Style uPhoto More Sections Like

Bronx Brooklyn Queens Uptown Education Weather Traffic Directions Lottery Death Notices Latino Photos

Article  
Comments (3)

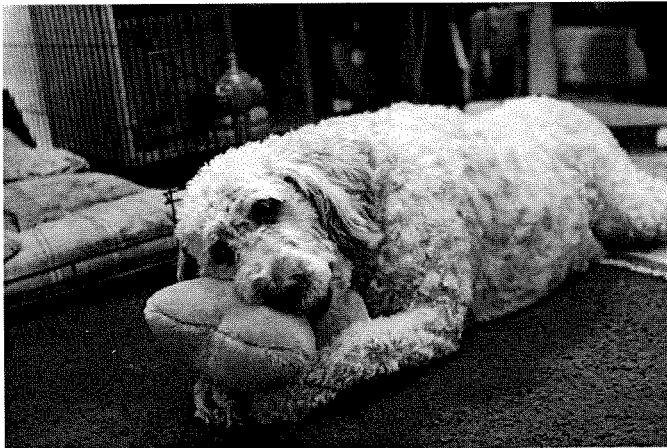
Share

## Divorce unleashes feud as hubby's sister claims ownership of family dog

BY Oren Yaniv  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Thursday, October 6th 2011, 4:00 AM

Recommend Be the first of your friends to recommend this.



Jesse Ward for News

A bitter custody battle over Golden-doodle Lucy Margaret Healy has instigated a family feud.

A bow-wow brouhaha for the custody of a beloved family dog has erupted in the divorce case of the couple who own trendy Greenwich Village restaurant Agave.

In an offshoot to the acrimonious feud between James O'Hanlon and Susan McCarthy, his sister has asked a Brooklyn judge to make her the rightful owner of the disputed goldendoodle - Lucy.

"I became surgically attached to the dog," said O'Hanlon's sister, Margaret Healy of Brooklyn Heights.

She says she has cared for the canine for two years while her brother and soon-to-be ex-sister-in-law have been warring in Nassau County Court.

But Healy's niece, 18-year-old Slaney O'Hanlon, insists she is Lucy's rightful owner and that a chip implanted in the pooch's hide proves it.

Slaney O'Hanlon claims her aunt only got her four-legged friend for safekeeping while she was attending a Baltimore-area boarding school.

She suggested that Healy's court request stems from her father's attempt to drag her into his matrimonial mess.

"It's just my father trying to get me in the middle of his divorce," a tearful Slaney O'Hanlon told The News. "I just want my dog back."

Healy shot back: "They (McCarthy and Slaney O'Hanlon) never came to see the dog or inquired about the dog."

When Healy's brother and McCarthy separated in 2009, their dogs, Lady, 9, and Lucy, who was less than a year old, were handed over to Healy. When the elder dog died last month of a sudden heart failure, things came to a head.

Healy, 68, charges that McCarthy left her a nasty voice message upon learning of Lady's death, blaming her for having "no f---ing heart" and calling her an expletive associated with a female mutt.

She claims McCarthy and her niece tried to dognap Lucy from her Brooklyn Heights building and even chased her in an SUV.

"I couldn't believe she followed me in the car," Healy said, as Lucy chewed a bone-shaped fluffy toy in her crate. "I almost fainted."

The ordeal prompted Healy to file papers in Brooklyn Supreme Court asking to be affirmed as Lucy's sole owner and for a restraining order against her niece and McCarthy.

She's also demanding \$500,000 in damages.

Healy said that she initially thought she would only keep Lucy briefly, but as months turned into years, she licensed the dog in her name and formed a strong bond.

Slaney O'Hanlon countered that a chip implanted in Lucy names her as the owner. She argues that she was barred from checking on her pet because Healy's husband represents her dad in the divorce action.

She has until next month to file a counterclaim.