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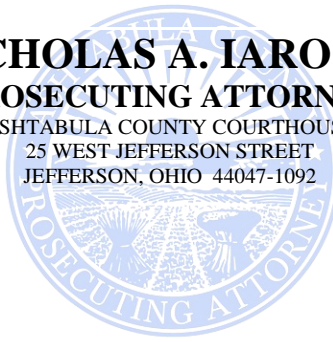
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June 12, 2018

After a bench trial that took place on June 5, 2018 before Judge David A. Schroeder in the Ashtabula County Court - Western Area Division (Western County Court), **Angela Matty**, **Christopher Lawrence**, and **Brittany Merkely** were found guilty of the following charges:

Angela Matty

1. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (September 2, 2017 incident)
2. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (December 7, 2017 incident)
3. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (December 7, 2017 incident)
4. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (December 7, 2017 incident)
5. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (December 7, 2017 incident)

Christopher Lawrence

1. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (September 2, 2017 incident)

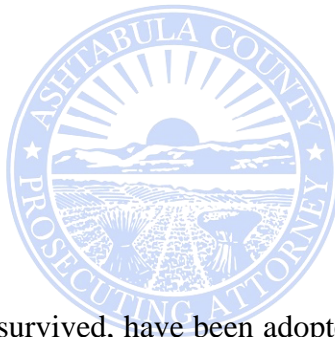
Brittany Merkely

1. Cruelty to Animals, a second degree misdemeanor (September 2, 2017 incident)

This case involved one of the worse cases of animal abuse and neglect in Ashtabula County in recent years. Two incidents of abuse and neglect occurred at the defendants' residence at 2372 N. County Line Road in Harpersfield Township, the first on September 2 and the second on December 7, 2017.

On September 2, 2017, the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office investigated a neighbor complaint of a dog barking at the residence for approximately four hours and a report that there was no human activity at the residence for several days. A Sheriff's deputy discovered that the residence was open and full of garbage. The deputy also found the smell of rotting carcass outside of the house. A pig was roaming freely on ground floor inside the residence, and a female adult dog which was terribly emaciated was in the upstairs bathroom with four five-week old puppies in the bath tub. The deputy noted the stench to be horrible, and that the upstairs windows were covered with wood and plastic. There was no water in the bath tub. Adult kibbles were in the bath tub which the puppies were unable to eat. The deputy found the dog, puppies, and the kibbles covered in feces and urine. Ashtabula County Dog Warden Donna Yan arrived thereafter and took the dog and puppies to the Ashtabula County Animal Protective League. Warden Yan noted that the dog was so emaciated that she has no milk to feed puppies; that the dog and puppies were bloated as a result of worms; and that the puppies were shaking. Photographs taken of the atrocious condition of the residence and the animals were presented at

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trial.

Fortunately, the dogs have survived, have been adopted, and are all currently doing well. In addition, horses, goats, pigs, chickens, and ducks were located in a back barn on the property, and all were observed to be thin at that time. Warden Yan requested a welfare check of those animals by the Ashtabula County Humane Society at that time.

On December 7, 2017, Warden Yan was dispatched to same residence for cows being in the road. After she responded, Warden Yan and a neighbor attempted to get the cows back into the barn. When doing so, Warden Yan noted that there is livestock in the barn; that the horses were in terrible condition, with one being near death; that there was no food or proper shelter given to the animals from the elements as they were standing in mud and manure; that there were dead ducks mashed into the mud; that there were some emaciated ducks, chickens, and goats that were found alive which could not raise their heads; and that there also were pigs on the property that were emaciated. All of the animals were removed and taken to Olavi Farms and Happy Trails and other livestock rescue organizations the following day.

Sentencing for all of the defendants will be scheduled at a later date before Judge Schroeder after a presentence investigation is performed and a report is generated.

At trial, the State of Ohio was represented by Ashtabula County Assistant Prosecutor Harold E. Specht and the defendants were represented by attorney Nicholas Sidoti.

I would like to personally thank Mr. Specht, Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office Deputy Justin Hammond, Dog Warden Donna Yan, the APL, Olavi Farms, Happy Trails, the neighbors who assisted with these investigations and rescues, and all other livestock rescue agencies who were involved in this horrendous case of animal abuse in our county.

Very truly yours,

Nicholas A. Iarocci

NICHOLAS A. IAROCCI
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