



NEWS RELEASE

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MAN SENTENCED IN DOG STABBING

A young man accused of stabbing a puppy and causing serious injuries earlier this year has pleaded guilty and been sentenced in connection with the case.

Matthew D. Weatherspoon (dob: 06-21-92) pleaded guilty on Monday to one count of *aggravated cruelty to animals*, a class 6 felony. He appeared in Denver District Court today and was sentenced to 30 months of supervised mental health probation and 100 hours of community service. In addition, the Court ordered \$6,800 in restitution and prohibited Weatherspoon from owning any pets for the duration of his probation.

Weatherspoon has been in custody in the Denver Detention Center since his arrest last June for stabbing a puppy several times in head and face. He could have faced prison, but prosecutors with access to a large amount of confidential information about the young man's childhood determined that a lengthy sentence of supervised probation with mental health treatment was more appropriate than prison and would help ensure the safety of the community.

The Court, in accepting the recommendation, noted that Weatherspoon's actions were horribly wrong, and said were it not for understanding the abuse and neglect he had endured as a child, the Court would "not have hesitated" to give him a prison sentence. The Court noted that Weatherspoon faces up to 3 years in prison if he is not 100-percent compliant while on probation.

The puppy continues to reside with the medical fostering family that has cared for her since her release from the animal hospital; she is doing very well.