

Defendants Plead Guilty in Three Separate Animal Cruelty Cases



Sacramento County
District Attorney's Office
Semper Justitia

DATE: January 8, 2019

CASE: Dezhi Zheng (Case #18FE012951), Tyler Blankenship (Case #18FE022659), Elias Rocco (Case #18FE018041)

PROSECUTOR: Supervising Deputy District Attorney Hilary Bagley-Franzoia, Animal Cruelty Unit

Three defendants pled guilty in separate animal cruelty cases:

Forty-three-year-old Dezhi Zheng pled to felony animal neglect after three dogs were seized in November 2017 from the backyard of a house Zheng and others used as a marijuana grow in south Sacramento. One dog was allowed to suffer a deep laceration to its neck from an embedded wire, which was used as a collar. Surgery at the Bradshaw Sacramento County Animal Shelter was required to remove necrotic tissue. Zheng was the primary 'caretaker' for the dogs.

Twenty-three-year-old Tyler Blankenship pled to felony animal cruelty from his malicious treatment of a kitten. On November 12, 2018, Blankenship became irate when he learned that his girlfriend could not keep a 6 to 8-month-old kitten that he had gifted to her. Blankenship grabbed the kitten from his girlfriend and threw the animal as hard as possible into a fence. The kitten died immediately from multiple skull fractures.

Twenty-two-year-old Elias Rocco pled to felony animal neglect

stemming from his abandonment of a dog and cat in an apartment from which he had been evicted. The adult dog had been left in its own filth within a small crate. When found in June 2018, neither animal had food or water and both animals were in very poor condition.

All three defendants will be placed on 5 years formal probation and will be prohibited from owning, possessing, residing with, maintaining or caring for any animal for 10 years. Blankenship will also be ordered to complete 12 anger management classes.

Sentencings and periods of incarceration for Zheng and Blankenship are pending in Department 62 before the Honorable Patrick Marlette.

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