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Prince William County, VA

Prince William County Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth is pleased to announce a significant development in the case against Frederick Pierce who was accused of the senseless and cruel killing of a defenseless kitten and setting an apartment building on fire.

On January 4, 2024, Mr. Pierce pled guilty to one count of Animal Cruelty and one count of Arson. He was subsequently found guilty of both charges. The guilty pleas follow a thorough investigation conducted by the Prince William County Police Department and the Prince William County Fire Marshall's Office.

On or about May 26, 2023, Prince William County Police Department officers responded to a Potomac Heights Place apartment in reference to a domestic dispute. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the caller who was visibly upset and crying. She reported that when she left for work in the morning around 9:00 A.M., her 3-month-old male Siamese/Maine Coon kitten named "Misty" was in her room. When she returned home from work prior to 7:00 P.M. she observed her bedroom door open and the kitten laying on her bedroom floor with its legs barely moving. Frederick Pierce, the defendant, admitted he struck the cat with a shoe stating that the kitten was "bad" and that it destroyed furniture. He further said the kitten came into the room and kept bothering him, so he came into the hallway and struck it two times in the head with his blue Jordan shoe, which he was wearing. The kitten died from the injuries inflicted by Mr. Pierce.

On or about June 14, 2023, Fire Marshall Lt. D. Schultz responded to the same Potomac Heights Place apartment for a report that Mr. Frederick Pierce had ignited two (2) separate fires after threatening to burn the apartment down. A witness observed a fire at the foot of Mr. Pierce's bed and extinguished the fire with the aid of another witness. They then locked Mr. Pierce out of the apartment and after he failed to gain re-entry, they heard the smoke detectors from the hallway activate and saw smoke via the peep hole. A neighbor was able to put out the fire which was started in the trash can in the apartment complex mail room on the second floor with the help of Prince William County Police officers.

Mr. Pierce will be sentenced by the court on April 25, 2024. The maximum punishment is ten years in prison.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Roshni Dhillon. The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney would like to commend the Prince William County Police Department and the Prince William County Fire Marshall's Office, specifically Officer Brent Williams and Animal Control Officer Norah Beard as well as Fire Marshall Lt. D. Schultz for their work on the case.

Amy Ashworth, Commonwealth's Attorney, offered the following comment about this case:

“Animal cruelty is a serious offense that will not be tolerated in our community. My office remains committed to vigorously prosecuting individuals who engage in such reprehensible acts, seeking justice for the helpless victims who cannot speak for themselves. This case serves as a reminder that our community will not tolerate such acts of violence and those who commit them will be held accountable.”

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Amy Ashworth is the elected Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. She was elected in November 2019 and was re-elected in 2023 for another four year term. The Commonwealth Attorney's Office can be reached from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. every business day by phone at 703-792-6050 or email at cwoffice@pwcgov.org.

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