



OFFICE OF THE VANDERBURGH COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**DIANA L. MOERS**

ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - ROOM 108  
1 NW MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47708  
(812) 435-5150 | prosecutorinfo@vanderburghgov.org

**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

**For Immediate Release**

*May 17, 2023*

*CONTACT: Winston Lin  
Phone: 219-242-2417*

## **WOMAN WHO ABANDONED DOGS IN HOUSE PLEADS GUILTY AS CHARGED TO SEVEN ANIMAL CRUELTY FELONIES**

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on May 17, 2023, Shayna Faye Burko pleaded guilty to seven felony-level counts of cruelty to an animal before Magistrate Judge Ryan C. Reed of the Vanderburgh Circuit Court.

On July 9 2022, Vanderburgh County Sherriff's Office and Vanderburgh County Animal Control were dispatched to 3133 Mooring Rd in reference to a welfare check on animals left unattended. Deputy Jung was unable to make contact with anyone upon arrival, but could smell an odor coming from inside the residence and heard several dogs barking. A neighbor stated he had not seen the owner of the residence, Kimberly Burko, who is the mother of the Defendant in weeks. Deputy Jung could see several dogs inside the residence, one of which looked extremely malnourished. After Animal Control Officer Anthony McKnight stated the conditions met the threshold for removal of the animals, a search warrant was submitted and signed.

Deputy Persinger contacted the grandmother of the Defendant who stated her granddaughter, Shayna Burko, has been going to 3133 Mooring Rd to care for the animals. Neither the owner of the residence, Kimberly Burko, or Shayna Burko lived at 3133 Mooring Rd. The Defendant, Shayna Burko, was later picked up by officers and transported to the residence where she then gave officers a key and consent to enter the home.

In her interview, Shayna Burko, who has a prior conviction in Warrick County for cruelty to an animal, admitted to knowing the dogs were at the residence and failing to care for them. Upon entering the residence, officers were immediately met with a “putrid” smell and rooms filled with urine and feces. There was a deceased German Shepard dog inside a closed kennel and a detached head of a dog both found in the living room. In the hallway, officers found a detached dog limb. There were five living dogs inside the residence, one of which was missing a paw different from the limb found in the hallway.

Animal Control removed the five dogs from the residence, several of which were malnourished.

The Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's Office charged Shayna Burko with seven felony counts of cruelty to an animal and the Defendant pleaded guilty as charged.

Prosecutor Moers stated: "Those who abuse or neglect some of the most innocent in our society—animals—will be investigated and face harsh legal consequences. Here, these innocent and completely helpless dogs were counting on the Defendant to take care of them but she left them to suffer and die while she carried on with her own life. I am thankful for the citizen heroes who called the police in this case as well as animal control and the deputies who were able to remove the remaining living dogs from this house of horrors and bring them to safety. It is my prayer that these dogs find loving homes and healing."

Moers went on to say: "If you suspect animal abuse, neglect, or mistreatment, please call authorities. It is very important to identify those who harm and neglect animals—not only for the benefit of the animals, but our society. I take cases of proven animal abuse and neglect very seriously."

Prosecutor Moers thanks Deputy Jeremy Kemper on successfully obtaining a guilty plea on all counts. Moers also thanks Adrienne McDowell and Anthony McKnight with Animal Control, Detective Matthew Elrod and Deputies Jung and Kuester with the Vanderburgh County Sheriff's office, and all other officers for their diligent efforts in this case.

Sentencing is scheduled for June 29, 2023 in front of Judge Ryan C. Reed of the Vanderburgh Circuit Court.

###