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*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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**MOTHER PLEADS GUILTY-AS-CHARGED FOR HER
ROLE IN DEPLORABLE LIVING CONDITIONS OF HOME
WHICH LED TO INFANT RAT-BITE CASE INVOLVING
FATHER**

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on October 24, 2024, Agnel Schonabaum pleaded guilty and agreed to be sentenced as follows to three felony counts including a level 3 neglect of a dependent resulting in serious bodily injury and two counts of neglect of a dependent (each a level 6 felony) involving each of her three children. In count 1, Schonabaum received 4 years in the department of correction and for counts 2 and 3 she received 2 years, 182 days. The Defendant has served 399 days in custody and the balance of her time is suspended to probation. The Defendant was also ordered to obtain a mental health evaluation and follow any recommended treatment. She is ordered to have no contact with her children at the discretion of DCS. The Honorable Carl Heldt presided over the plea hearing.

Her husband, David Schonabaum, was previously sentenced on similar neglect charges and also for his role in the serious bodily injury of his infant son who was severely maimed by rats and left bleeding in his bassinet while in his care. David Schonabaum received 16 years in the department of correction for his role in the infant rat-bite case which occurred when the mother was not residing in the home—having left nearly 2 weeks prior. The Honorable Judge Robert J. Pigman of the Vanderburgh County Superior Court presided over David Schonabaum’s case.

On September 13, 2023, David Schonabaum called 911 from his house located at 1606 S. Linwood Ave stating he had found his infant son in his bassinet covered in blood. It was made clear to first responders that there was a rat infestation in the house. The 6-month old baby was found in his bassinet in a pool of blood with over 50 bites to his body including his face and extremities. The infant’s right hand suffered the most traumatic injuries with all four fingers and the thumb missing flesh and exposing the fingertip bones. The mother was not residing in the home at the time.

Evidence revealed that the Department of Child Services had already been providing services to the home to address the safety concerns associated with the conditions of the house. A third-party provider had also been assisting the family. A representative from that company revealed that, despite their assistance, any progress in the conditions of the house was fleeting.

The mother in this case had not resided, or been to the home, since September 1, 2023 and thus was not residing in the home at the time of the rat-bite incident; however, she was held accountable for the deplorable conditions of the home which she was responsible for when residing there— and for which she was offered multiple services to assist with clean-up of the home and did not cooperate or remove the children from the home. This matter has ultimately resulted in losing custody of her children.

Prosecutor Moers commented: “Today Angel Schonabaum took responsibility for her role in a home which was found to be a disgusting and dangerous environment for her three children to reside. Although she was not in the home during the rat-bite incident, it is important to note she is being prosecuted for not providing an adequate living arrangement for her children and has lost custody of them.

It is imperative that you keep your living environment clean and free of trash, feces, debris and other hazards to your children and pets. If you are struggling with mental illness you need to reach out for assistance and remove the children—and any animals—from dangerous and unsanitary conditions that pose a risk to their health and safety—if you fail to do so, you will be held accountable.

While the public may be confused by the sentence of one parent being much more than the sentence of the other parent in this matter, it is important to note that the father in this case was the only one residing in the home during the rat-bite incident (the mother having left and not returned nearly 2 weeks prior) and thus his case is wholly different than the facts which we can hold the mother accountable for. The law has nuance and detail that we must follow and that cannot be overstated when the public is considering their opinion.”

Prosecutor Moers extends a special thank you to her Deputy Prosecutor Ian Blair and all the law enforcement officers who responded to and investigated this case including Officer R. Green, Officer C. Thomas, Officer G. Hosterman, Officers J. Beard, Officer D. Vonderscher, Officer J. Helm, and former Officer J. Spencer. Finally, Prosecutor Moers thanks her legal and investigations staff including Jessica Pollock, Tony Carden, Morgan Richardville, Kiersten Butler, and Jen Savage for unwavering dedication to prepare for smooth and successful trials.

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