

'You've lost some humanity,' judge tells trio who tortured goats

Keith Epps

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Three men who participated in what a prosecutor called the “sadistic and idiotic” slaughter of two goats last year in Spotsylvania County were ordered Tuesday to serve at least three years in prison.

Andrew J. Haefele, 37, and Donald Ray Compton Jr., 35, both of Spotsylvania, and Charles E. McKinney, 35, of Maurertown all received three years to serve in connection with a June 18 videotaped incident in which the goats were battered with a medieval weapon known as a spiked mace, attacked by dogs and had their throats slit.

Compton received another three years for convictions of possessing a gun as a felon and violating his probation, giving him a total of six years to serve.

A neighbor called police that day and reported that people at a home on Heather Greens Circle were using various objects to torture the goats and ordering dogs to attack them. Police later recovered a video narrated by Compton that showed the defendants taking obvious pleasure in the goats’ suffering.

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They were all previously convicted of charges that included felony maiming of an animal and conspiracy.

The owner of the goats, 22-year-old Halie E. Morgan, was previously convicted of two misdemeanors and sentenced to 24 months in jail. Because her convictions are misdemeanors, she will only have to serve half of that time.

The attorneys for the three men referred to Morgan's case several times Tuesday in requesting leniency for their clients. Because of the way the law is written, Morgan could not be convicted of a felony involving her own goats even though she authorized and encouraged the slaughter.

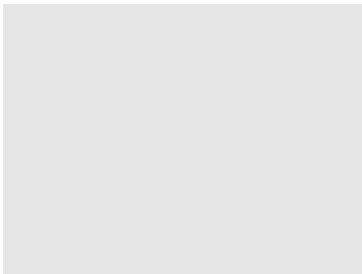
"The entire reason we are here is because of a fourth defendant who isn't here today," said Christopher Reyes, Compton's attorney. "It boggles the mind."

Prosecutor Ryan Mehaffey referred to the group as "meth heads" and said the level of vileness displayed was worthy of a stiff sentence. He said the men have significant criminal histories and said the "sadistic quality" of their actions with the goats is "shocking to any normal citizen."

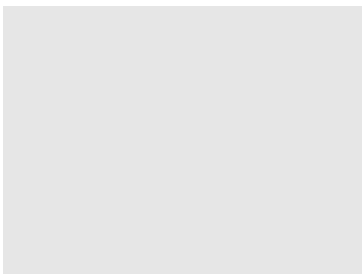
Defense attorneys Reyes, Jim Ilijevich and Alex Raymond agreed that the actions were vile. But they asked for mercy, pointing out that at least most of the defendants have longstanding drug addictions that skewed their judgements.

Ilijevich said his client, Compton, had been using methamphetamines for five straight days and has no recollection of the incident. Judge Ricardo Rigual said he regularly sees people in court with serious drug problems and said that doesn't account for that kind of behavior.

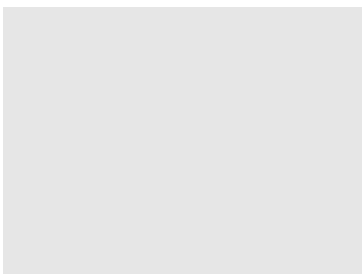
"You've lost some humanity and I hope you're able to get it back at some point," Rigual said.



McKinney



Donald Compton Jr.



Haeefe

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