

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 05-308

RELEASE NUMBER

May 19, 2015

RELEASE DATE

APPROVED BY *Joyce E. Dudley*, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Kevin Weichbrod, Deputy District Attorney

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

May 19, 2015

Re: People v. Duanying Chen

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that Duanying Chen pled guilty, as charged, to four felony counts and one misdemeanor count, including the following: two felony counts of animal cruelty, felony assault by force likely to produce great bodily injury, witness dissuasion, and violating a court order. Chen also admitted a special allegation of personally using a deadly weapon, a utility lighter, during the commission of one animal cruelty charge by burning a Doberman pinscher puppy. No plea bargain was offered by the District Attorney's Office in this case.

The charges stemmed from a series of incidents reported by a local veterinary clinic on May 14, 2014, when Mr. Chen's then-girlfriend brought their five-month old puppy in for a checkup. The veterinarian discovered significant injuries which appeared to be intentionally inflicted. Chen's girlfriend explained that she had found the animal in this injured state after leaving the puppy with Chen for the evening. The puppy had broken bones, significant infections, and burns over 80% of its body. Ultimately it was decided that the puppy had to be euthanized. The puppy was then humanely euthanized surrounded by the veterinary staff which spent weeks attempting to rehabilitate him. Santa Barbara Police Department detectives were able to determine that Chen had battered and tortured the puppy by burning him with a utility lighter. Detectives also discovered that Chen's girlfriend had been strangled several weeks earlier in an act of domestic violence. After his arrest, Chen attempted to have his girlfriend fabricate and destroy evidence in an effort to dissuade her from cooperating with law enforcement.

Mr. Chen's sentencing is set for June 30, 2015, in Department 2, in front of the Honorable Judge Brian E. Hill. Chen faces a potential 7 years 6 months in state prison as a result of his guilty pleas.

"Credit for this conviction goes to the superb and lengthy investigation of the Santa Barbara Police Department, City Animal Control, and those local individuals willing to come forward with information to assist in Kevin Weichbrod's rigorous prosecution of these heinous crimes."

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