

Haynes pleads guilty to animal abuse

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The man who drove two nails into the head of a dog he had been asked to kill will spend 15 days in the county jail for his actions.

John M. Haynes, 41, of Humansville pleaded guilty Wednesday in Polk County Circuit Court to class A misdemeanor animal abuse. He was sentenced to six months in jail, but that sentence was suspended, and he was placed on probation for two years. He must serve 15 days of shock detention in the county jail beginning June 13.

As part of a plea agreement, Haynes may not own or care for any animals during his probation.

"Some people will think it's too much, and some people will think it's not enough, but I think we hit a good balance," said Prosecutor John C. Porter. "The important thing we've done is demonstrate that this kind of behavior is not appropriate."

The dog's owner had reportedly asked Haynes to kill the dog for her because the dog had caused injuries to the owner that required medical attention, and it had acted aggressively toward her daughter. The dog had also reportedly killed some puppies.

Haynes attempted to kill the dog on March 4 by hitting it in the head several times with a hammer and then using a nail gun to shoot two nails into its skull to make sure it was dead.

The blue heeler mix, named "Trucker" by rescuers, survived and was taken to a Springfield animal shelter, where numerous applications to adopt it have been received. The injuries left the dog blind in one eye and deaf.

Prosecutor troubled by public's response

As he looked through a 3-inch stack of hundreds of letters he received from all over the country demanding punishment for Haynes, Porter said he felt frustrated as a prosecutor by people's reaction to the case.

"I don't intend to slight animals or animal lovers, but I've prosecuted murderers, rapists and child molesters, and in all those cases I never received one-hundredth of the moral outrage that I did in this case," Porter said. "I hope that's not an accurate reflection of our priorities in this country."

"We charged four people with child molestation last week, but does anybody remember their names?" he asked. "I wish we were as offended about crimes against our children as we are about what happened to a dog."