



# BCPO News

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## Maple Shade Man Sentenced for Shooting Neighbor's Dog

*Toby, a Pomeranian-poodle, was euthanized a day after being wounded with an air rifle*

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a 65-year-old Maple Shade man has been sentenced to five years in New Jersey state prison for shooting a neighbor's dog with an air rifle in 2019, causing the animal to be euthanized.

The sentence, handed down yesterday by the Hon. Gerard H. Breland, J.S.C., was the result of a negotiated plea with William D. Stroemel, who pled guilty in April to Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose (Second Degree) and Animal Cruelty (Third Degree).

The investigation began in September 2019 after police were contacted by the owners of Toby, a 9-year-old Pomeranian-poodle mix. They told police that Toby had been discovered howling in pain by a neighbor the previous day. An examination by a veterinarian revealed that he had been shot in the head. Toby was euthanized a day after being shot.

The investigation, which was conducted by detectives from the Maple Shade Police Department, revealed that Stroemel shot Toby with an air rifle while the dog was passing his home in the street, and then gave the gun to an acquaintance and asked him to hold it for him.

Judge Breland sentenced the defendant in accordance with the negotiated agreement, even though Stroemel and his attorney argued that the prison term should be reconsidered.

"He admitted that he shot Toby, an innocent, defenseless pet," Prosecutor Coffina said. "But rather than express true remorse, he attempted to evade the custodial sentence that was agreed upon."

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Assistant Prosecutor Melissa O'Mara stressed to the court that the defendant must be held accountable for his actions.

"Mr. Stroemel is here because he possessed a weapon he could not have, he used that weapon unlawfully in broad daylight and shot a dog in the middle of the street in Maple Shade, killing that dog, and then took that weapon and gave it to somebody else to hide," she said.

Stroemel, a heavy equipment operator who is also known as Wild Willie, was initially charged with weapons offenses following the discovery of a .22 caliber pistol during the execution of a search warrant at his residence. Additional charges were added after a necropsy was performed and the pellet removed from Toby's head was connected to an air rifle in Stroemel's possession at the time of the shooting.

As part of the plea agreement, Stroemel must make restitution to Toby's owners for the cost of the veterinary care and necropsy.

**END**

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