

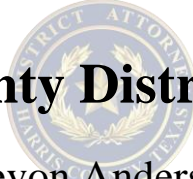
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Woman Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison for Producing “Crush” Videos

Ashley Richards, 23, produced and distributed videos of animals being tortured and killed to satisfy sexual fetishes

Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson announced today the sentencing of Ashley Richards, 23, of Houston. Richards, who plead guilty to 3 counts of animal cruelty, was sentenced by Judge Stacey Bond to 10 years in prison.

According to court documents, Richards used weapons such as meat cleavers, knives and high heels to torture cats and dogs to death for the production of “Crush” videos. “Crush” videos depict women killing small animals with instruments, shoes or barefeet to satisfy the sexual fetishes of those who purchase and watch them.

"While we are satisfied that the defendant received the maximum penalty in these cases, we will fight at the next legislative session to increase the punishment range for this offense to better protect these animals and all citizens of Harris County." said District Attorney Devon Anderson. "When a person tortures and kills an animal that raises a red flag about that person's capacity for violent behavior in general. It will always be a priority for our office to aggressively prosecute offenders who abuse animals."

Richards' co-defendant, Brent Justice, 52, of Houston, is also charged with animal cruelty for his participation. The next court setting for Justice will be on July 17th. He is being held in custody in lieu of a \$50,000 bond. Assistant District Attorney Jessica Milligan will be handling the case.

Richards and Justice were arrested after People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) alerted the Houston Police Department in August 2012 about the suspects' videos.

"Thanks to Harris County District Attorney's Office for their vigorous prosecution of Ashley Richards. This sends a clear message that animal abuse will not be tolerated," said Stephanie Bell, PETA's Cruelty Casework

Director. "Given the undeniable link between cruelty to animals and interpersonal violence, the community at large is safer when convicted abusers such as Richards are behind bars."

Richards' case is the first Harris County prosecution involving "Crush" videos.