

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SUSAN K. TREADAWAY
District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cyndi Crossland
Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488

Guilty Verdict for Man Accused of Dog Fighting and Cruelty to Animals
State vs. Randall Larry Thaxton

December 8, 2023 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that on December 8, 2023, a Cherokee County jury deliberated for approximately three hours before convicting Randall Larry Thaxton, 59, of 9 counts of dog fighting and 7 counts of cruelty to animals. Superior Court Judge Tony Baker announced that sentencing would be set at a later date.

On November 29, 2022, the Cherokee County Marshal's Office began an investigation into Thaxton after receiving a tip that linked Thaxton to a dogfighter in Dallas, Georgia. During a welfare check at Thaxton's Union Hill Road property, officers noted dogs tethered, with heavy logging chains.

On December 6, 2022, Cherokee Sheriff's Office SWAT team and the Cherokee County Marshal's Office executed a search warrant of the property. Inside the home, they found items associated with dog fighting, including: a break stick, which is a device to pry open the jaws of a dog during a fight; documents linking Thaxton's dogs to other known dog fighters; a journal with workout regimens to prepare dogs for fighting; a catalog to order training equipment, steroids, tattoo guns, staplers and medical supplies to treat wounds; contracts for the sale of specific dogs to known dog fighters; and a dog fighting creed pledging allegiance to the dog fighting community.

While on-scene that same day, a veterinarian examined the dogs and found that they had skin infections, rashes around their necks from their collars, and swollen paw pads. One dog also had a growth hanging from his stomach. That same day, the Cherokee County Animal Shelter took custody of the dogs. A pregnant dog gave birth to puppies ten days later.

During the trial, 11 witnesses testified for the State and over 300 exhibits were presented, including photos, the physical evidence found in defendant's home, heavy logging chains, and the thick collars the dogs were wearing.

The case was investigated by the Cherokee County Marshal's Office and prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Rachel Murphy, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit, with the assistance of special prosecutor Jessica K. Rock, Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia.

###

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.