

Convicted cigar thief sentenced

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La Plata, MD - A man who stole a box of cigars from the Tinder Box in Waldorf was given a break by Charles County Circuit Court Judge Thomas R. Simpson Jr. Thursday, June 18 in La Plata, but still has to pay for them.

Corey Lamont Covington, 47 of Fort Washington, was given three years of supervised probation and told to pay \$360 in restitution.

Charles County Assistant State's Attorney Brandon Northington said Covington had at least six prior convictions including theft, distribution of cocaine and two driving convictions for driving without a license and driving while suspended.

Covington's attorney, James Zafiropulos, told the court that when the incident occurred, his client had a severe alcohol problem.

"He got married and a lot of things changes," Zafiropulos said. "He's calmed down a lot and is attending three meetings a week for alcohol counseling. Alcohol has been the problem. A lot of things have changed."

Zafiropulos was asking the court for a period of supervised probation.

"I would like to apologize to the court for my stupid behavior," Covington said. "I'm glad I'm getting treatment. I'm trying to get myself in a better place."

"Did you take the cigars to sell them or smoke them?" Simpson asked.

"I took them to smoke them," he said.

"It seems like a pretty stupid thing to do, to steal from somebody that knows you," the judge countered.

"I'll give you a choice," Simpson said. "You can do 90 days in the Charles County Detention Center with work release, no probation. You would have to pay restitution. What is behind Door Number Two, you can do supervised probation with a number of conditions."

Covington chose option two. The judge ordered him to serve three years of supervised probation and to pay \$360 of restitution.

"A word to the wise," the judge added. "You come back here and violate probation, you will do the 18 months. I'll give it all to you. I've already discounted you some. I hope I don't see you back here," he said.

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