

Convicted drug dealer to stay in treatment

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La Plata, MD - There was a little courtroom drama at the sentencing hearing of Charles William Lattisaw Jr., 36 of Waldorf, Wednesday, July 29 before Charles County Circuit Court Judge Amy J. Bragunier.

Charles County Deputy State's Attorney Karen R. Piper Mitchell was aggressive out of the box, saying the defendant has been engaged in criminal behavior "for quite some time." She said Lattisaw has had 41 convictions since 1989 for various offenses.

He was facing sentencing on narcotic drug distribution and theft charges dating back to 2013 and 2012 respectively.

"They say he's not a violent offender," Piper Mitchell said. "That doesn't make it any better. His conduct has been a problem. He refuses to stop.

"He has been given opportunities," she added. "When he got out last time he was told to go to the Jude House. He didn't report. He's been given opportunity after opportunity. He's in violation of the conditions of his probation on a regular basis. This is what he does. The last time he appeared before your honor Dec. 20, 2013, and you told him, 'this is the last time.' Every time he is put on probation, he violates it."

Charles County Assistant Public Defender Allison Heldreth painted a different picture.

"There is no explaining away the fact that he violated probation numerous times," she said. "But people are capable of growth. He's not just recovering from drug abuse, he has had a lifetime of criminal behavior. I think he still has work to do.

"He was ordered to drug therapy at the Jude House, he did successfully complete that," Heldreth added. "That's telling, someone who could easily fail at something, he succeeded. People at the Jude House are willing to work with him. It was not easy. It's not a straight and narrow road. Despite the fact that he had other issues going on, he completed that program."

Bragunier said that the presentencing investigation show a lack of accountability on the part of the defendant.

Lattisaw told the judge he was serious about seeking help.

"I don't want you to think I don't take my life and recovery seriously. I do," he said. "Nothing changes overnight. I had a 30-year history of drug and alcohol addiction. I have been able to stay clean for two years. I'm not giving up," Lattisaw added. "I have a lot of work to do. I can't overlook how hard it was to get to where I am today."

He told the judge he lost his father in 2009, a nephew in 2013 and his mother a month after the nephew.

"The only thing I have left is my sobriety," Lattisaw stated.

"Why didn't you report to your agent?" Bragunier asked.

"I was incarcerated in P.G. [Prince George's] County," he told her.

"This is not his first time around the block," Piper Mitchell said. "He says, 'I couldn't report because I was locked up.'"

"I take responsibility for my actions," Lattisaw said. "I'm doing everything I was supposed to be doing."

Bragunier decided to leave Lattisaw in treatment, and said he has 17 years and 215 days of backup time.

"I'm going to suspend all of that but eight years," she said.

The judge added she would revisit the case Jan. 14, 2016.

"The court can accelerate that date if he violates and gets new charges," Bragunier added. "It's up to him."

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