

Grand jury indicts three in home invasion, assault

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — A Cape May County grand jury has indicted three persons on first-degree attempted murder and other related charges in connection with a violent home invasion Oct. 17 at a home on Old Mill Road in North Cape May.

Deshyamma R. Dalton, Michael Woods Jr. and Jeremy Thompson-Pierce were indicted Dec. 18 on charges of attempted murder, armed robbery, conspiracy, burglary, criminal restraint, terroristic threats, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and theft.

Lower Township police received a 911 call at about 12:51 a.m. Oct. 17 regarding an assault that had just taken place. Upon arriving at the scene in the 100 block of Old Mill Road, officers found the victim, Barry Van Orden, badly beaten.

The 48-year-old was transported to the AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center for treatment of his

injuries. He was released several days later.

Authorities said Woods and Thompson-Pierce, aided by Dalton, entered the victim's home, restrained him and assaulted him, causing severe injuries to his head and hand. The victim was struck repeatedly with a rifle over an extended period of time with significant enough force to break the wooden stock off the rifle, according to a news release from the Prosecutor's Office.

Dalton, a 22-year-old woman from the 200 block of Sinnickson Street in Salem, was charged Oct. 26 with robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, aggravated assault, criminal restraint and theft. She was lodged in the Cape May County Jail pending court proceedings.

Thompson-Pierce, 19, of the 700 block of Cedar Street in Vineland, was located Nov. 20 in Bridgeton, arrested and lodged

in the jail on charges of attempted murder, robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, conspiracy to commit attempted murder, aggravated assault, criminal restraint and theft.

The same day, Woods, 20, of the 400 block of Second Street in Millville, was located in Millville, arrested and lodged in the jail on the charges of attempted murder, robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, conspiracy to commit attempted murder, aggravated assault, criminal restraint and theft.

On Nov. 29, both Thompson-Pierce and Woods were charged with possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and unlawful possession of a weapon. Both were served with their additional charges while in jail.

Cape May County Prosecutor Jeffrey H. Sutherland urged anyone who has information concerning this investigation to contact the Prosecutor's Office at (609) 465-1135.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony Michael/U.S. COAST GUARD

Just another day at the office

A U.S. Coast Guard boat crew prepares to board and assist the crew of the trawler Capt. Garland on Dec. 18 about 50 miles east of Cape May. After the trawler began taking on water, the crew activated its 406 EPIRB and the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Lawrence Lawson responded, sending over a crew and water pumps.

Holidays can be perilous time for pets

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first. Venzie said each critter at the shelter — cats and dogs — undergoes behavioral assessments that establish a protocol for placement. She said these protocols allow the staff to determine which living arrangements and environments are suitable to individual animals.

"If we know this dog doesn't do well with children or doesn't do well with cats, we certainly won't send them into one of those homes," Venzie said.

While the holidays are a time when families get together and celebrate, pets are also part of the festivities.

Keeping your pets safe requires pet owners to be vigilant, according to Venzie.

Shiny tinsel can be attractive to cats, which may swallow it. There also are pets who climb into Christmas trees and break ornaments by swatting them, or chew on electrical cords.

"If you have one (pet) that's a chewer, sometimes people put the Christmas tree up on a table rather than leave it on the floor," Venzie said.

Poinsettias, the ubiquitous Christmas plant with the broad red and green leaves, may brighten your room, but keeping them out of reach of your pets is another safety tip.

"Poinsettias are not deadly but they are toxic and cause stomach upset," Venzie said.

Holiday treats are another safety concern, with

chocolate and raisins the two culprits, so no fruitcake for Fido.

"Raisins are definitely toxic. It can be one or 10; it depends on how the dog reacts to it. Chocolate usually goes by weight, so compare the weight of the dog to the weight of chocolate. Dark chocolate is more toxic than milk chocolate. Baker's chocolate is even more toxic," Venzie said. "One dog can eat 10 raisins and be fine and another dog of the same size can eat one and be really sick from it."

Securing trash bags so pets don't help themselves to another meal is another concern, Venzie said.

"Another thing is people after dinner Christmas night scrape the turkey into the trash. If your dog raids the trash, they end up with bad stomach stuff because they've eaten rotten food," Venzie said.

Pet owners should also make sure their animals don't choke on bones or large chunks of food.

Treating your animal companions with holiday gifts is always a good idea, she said.

"With cats, a lot of people

make gift baskets. You use the litter box as your gift basket and you can put food, toys, treats in it and wrap it up. For dogs you can buy a leash, col-

lar, things that aren't size-specific, and food," Venzie said.

While some are tempted to purchase animals for their loved ones, Venzie

recommends stopping by the Humane Society.

"We don't really take money in advance because you don't know that they're going to find what they

want here," Venzie said. "I have 10 dogs to choose from. I can't guarantee you they're going to pick one of those 10 dogs. They might end up somewhere else."