

August 29, 2008

The Honorable Andrew P. Thomas
Maricopa County Attorney
301 W. Jefferson, Ste. 800
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dear Mr. Thomas:

We hope that this letter finds you well. We are writing again in reference to Earl Simmons, also known as DMX, who has been indicted on a myriad of charges, including cruelty to animals and felony drug possession. The cruelty-to-animals charges stem from officials' reported 2007 discovery of 12 neglected, malnourished, and scarred pit bulls on the aging rapper's Cave Creek property north of Phoenix. Officials apparently also found three dogs buried at this location, one of whom might have been burned. As you know, in 2002, authorities also discovered 13 caged and neglected pit bulls at Simmons' Teaneck, N.J., home. Simmons pleaded guilty to cruelty-to-animals charges and was fined and placed on probation. Most recently, we understand that on August 14, Simmons was arrested at a Miami Wal-Mart on a felony fugitive warrant issued in Maricopa County because he failed to appear for a court date two days earlier.

Mental health professionals and top law enforcement officials consider cruelty to animals to be a red flag. The American Psychiatric Association identifies cruelty to animals as one of the diagnostic criteria for conduct disorders, and the FBI uses reports of these crimes in analyzing the threat potential of suspected and known criminals. Experts agree that it is the severity of the behavior—not the species of the victim—that matters.

On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Arizona, we respectfully urge your office to prosecute Simmons to the fullest extent of the law. As Simmons' alleged conduct might well demonstrate, repeat crimes are the rule rather than the exception among animal abusers, so we implore your office to take every measure necessary to ensure that Simmons, if convicted, is barred from owning or harboring animals for as long as possible. We also ask that, if convicted, Simmons serve a meaningful period of incarceration and be required to undergo a thorough psychological evaluation followed by mandatory counseling at his own expense. The safety of the community might depend on it. Thank you in advance for your diligence in this matter and for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter Wood, Cruelty Caseworker
Cruelty Investigations Department
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

501 FRONT ST.
NORFOLK, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
757-622-0457 (FAX)

PETA.org
Info@peta.org

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