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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Sentenced to Six Years in Prison For Scalding and Nearly Drowning Girlfriend's 10-Month-Old Baby - He Left Child Alone In Bathtub While He Watched TV -

WASHINGTON - Edward J. Saunders, 21, was sentenced today to six years in prison on a charge of first degree cruelty to children while armed for the severe burning and near drowning of his girlfriend's 10-month-old baby, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Saunders, of the 200 block of 37th Street SE, Washington, D.C., pled guilty to the charge in November 2010 in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He was sentenced today by the Honorable Judge Ronna L. Beck. Upon completion of his prison term, he is to be on five years of supervised release.

According to the government's factual proffer at last November's plea hearing, Saunders was asked to take care of the baby girl on February 19, 2010 while the child's mother – Saunders's girlfriend at the time – was away from the home running some errands.

Saunders agreed to take care of the baby. While doing so, the baby soiled her diaper. Saunders decided to give her a bath in order to clean her off. Saunders put the baby in the bathtub, turned on the water, and stayed with the baby for awhile.

However, he then left the little girl alone in the bathtub – with the water still running – to go into an adjoining room to watch televised news of developing sports stories. While he was watching television, the baby was left alone in the tub with the water running for five to 10 minutes.

When Saunders returned to the bathroom, he saw that the baby was slumped over and having difficulty breathing. Another adult in the home called 911. When the ambulance crew arrived, the baby was unconscious. They could hear that she had water in her lungs, and could see that she was suffering severe scalding burns on her buttocks, legs and feet.

The little girl was rushed to Children's National Medical Center. She was found to be suffering from third-degree burns to her buttocks and lower extremities, in respiratory distress, and dehydrated. About six fluid ounces of soapy water was removed from the baby's stomach. The little girl was still unconscious and fighting for her life.

Doctors concluded that the injuries were consistent with an intentional immersion scalding burn and that she nearly drowned. According to the charge, Saunders was armed with scalding water in committing the crime.

In announcing today's sentencing, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Detectives Carlos Hilliard, Gina Powell, Norma Horne and Sgt. Bobby Parker, Investigators Jeff Folts, Stephanie Garner and Damion Johnson, Mobile Crime Lab Technician Ronald Royster, Jr; and Officers Ruben Agosto, Valerie Campbell, Jeffrey Beaudin, Edward Espinoza, S. Stanford, V. Dunbar and S. Hickman, all of whom did an exemplary job investigating the case, processing the scene and working with the victim, her family and other witnesses. He also praised the work of Dr. Tanya Hinds, Nurse Elaine Lamb and other personnel of Children's National Medical Center, as well as EMTs Christopher Castner and Dave Hoagland, and their supervisor, Capt. Craig Callaway, of the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, for their superb life-saving treatment of the victim.

U.S. Attorney Machen also commended the work of Paralegal Joyce Arthur, Legal Assistants Tanisha "Nikki" Nelson and Ashley Patterson, and Victim Advocate Veronica Vaughan. Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter V. Taylor, who investigated and prosecuted this case.

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