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LIPFORD PLEADS GUILTY TO AGGRAVATED ANIMAL CRUELTY IN DEATH OF DOG

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Dawn Lipford pleaded guilty in open court to Aggravated Animal Cruelty in the 2025 death of a Great Dane later named Miracle by Animal Care and Protective Services. With the plea, Lipford faces up to five years in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Tatiana Salvador will sentence Lipford during an Aug. 17, 2026, hearing.

On Nov. 2, 2025, the City of Jacksonville's Animal Care and Protective Services responded to West 45th Street after receiving a call about a severely emaciated dog in distress. Before arriving, officials saw a social media post about the same dog that showed a Great Dane in poor health. A Good Samaritan had taken the dog to a facility before officials arrived and, when they were able to observe the dog, confirmed the dog was physically suffering. The dog, which officials named Miracle, was microchipped and an investigation led to a store where Lipford had purchased the puppy in March 2023. Further investigation revealed the dog's name was Oakleaf and Lipford lied about rehoming the dog, physically abused him, and starved him. Ultimately, Oakleaf had to be euthanized due to his irreversible condition.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Cyrus Zomorodian.