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Manchester woman charged with cruelty after ferret found burned in oven

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MANCHESTER — Pregnant, homeless and possibly mentally ill, a Manchester woman was charged with a felony animal cruelty on Wednesday, after firefighters found a pet ferret burned to death inside the oven where she was living.

Ivana Clifford, 26, allegedly mutilated and killed her roommate's ferret by placing it in the oven, according to police affidavits filed in Hillsborough County Superior Court-North.



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IVANA CLIFFORD

"These allegations demonstrate a profound level of sadism that is of deep concern," said Superior Court Judge Gillian Abramson when she set Clifford's bail at \$10,000 cash only. If defense lawyers want a psychiatric examination of Clifford, Abramson said, it will have to be done at jail; Abramson barred her release to either of the city's hospitals for mental health examination.

"I'm devastated, disgusted. It's disturbing finding your own animal in the oven," said Cara Murray, the owner of the ferret, which was named Angel. Murray, who spoke outside the court house, said she and her roommate let Clifford and her boyfriend stay in their third-floor apartment at 80 Lowell St.

Murray said she and her boyfriend, James Klimavich, woke about 2:30 a.m. to the sound of a smoke alarm. Flames were shooting out of the stove, Klimavich opened the door, saw the ferret and Clifford ran off, Murray said.

According to a police affidavit, the ferret was stuck to the bottom oven coil and had distinct linear burn marks that matched the shape of the coil.

Clifford appeared in a Valley Street jail jumpsuit in court. She said nothing. Her lawyer told Abramson

that Clifford was 32 weeks pregnant and requested a psychiatric evaluation.

Murray said she believes the ferret was alive when Clifford placed it in the oven.

She said Clifford and her boyfriend were staying in her apartment because she had nowhere else to stay.

The affidavit said that Clifford told police she burned the ferret because her host shouldn't have a ferret because Clifford is pregnant. She told police she killed the ferret for revenge because the owner stole her clothes.

Murray disputed stealing clothes and said she gave Clifford her clothes. She said Clifford killed the 2-year-old ferret because it nipped at her heels.

"She didn't draw any blood. She just nipped her," Murray said. She said she has two other ferrets and two cats.

She said Clifford often complained she didn't want her baby. "If she can throw a live ferret in the oven, what makes you think she wouldn't throw a live baby in the oven?" Murray said.

The five-story building at the corner of Lowell and Chestnut streets has numerous small apartments, most studio and single-bedroom units, residents said.

Kristin Stoddard, who lives next door to Murray, said she spoke to Clifford a few times. "She was odd. You could tell she wasn't all there," Stoddard said. Stoddard's mother, Patricia Stoddard, said she was awoken by the smoke alarm and said the smoke smelled like burning hair.

Other residents said Clifford and her boyfriend had been staying with different residents in the building for the last few months.

A man who gave his name as Jeremy said he let Clifford stay in his apartment, but she had to leave because she woke in the middle of the night slamming doors and screaming.

"She needs help," he said.

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