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Assistant District Attorney Leila Kermani and Hon. Michael J. Obus:

Concerned citizens recently urged you to retry Joseph Petcka, the one-time minor league pitcher and aspiring actor who killed his girlfriend's cat Norman on March 27, 2007.

We now implore you to reject a plea deal, offered by defense lawyer Charles Hochbaum, which would let Petcka evade another trial altogether.

In a drunken rage, Petcka mutilated former girlfriend Lisa Altobelli's 8-pound orange and white tabby because he believed she loved her cat more than him. An ASPCA investigator said Norman suffered smashed ribs and teeth. His internal injuries were so severe, his lungs filled with blood.

Rather than strike a deal, prosecutors ought to demand a retrial and seek maximum penalties allowed by law — including incarceration and fines. Petcka requires intensive anger management counseling and should be barred from contact with animals.

Please don't resolve a felony aggravated animal cruelty case with mere probation. A plea deal is particularly negligent. As you know, Petcka allegedly abused both animal and human victims in his past.

When the justice system excuses blatant cruelty, it perpetuates the cycle of violence. Men prosecuted for animal cruelty are five times as likely to be arrested for other violent crimes, according to Utah State University professor Frank Ascione. Even the FBI red flags animal abuse when profiling homicidal criminals and their potential for recurring violence.

Joseph Petcka poses a risk to animals and humans. Thank you for recognizing the gravity of his crime and punishing him to the fullest degree.

Sincerely,