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Nurse Gets Six Months In Scalding Case

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OCEAN CITY (11/12/2004)- A nurse convicted of leaving a severely disabled woman in scalding, 130-degree bathwater to the point she received second-degree burns was sentenced last week to six months in jail.

Haja Bah, 25, of Hyattsville, Md., was sentenced last Friday to six months in jail for one count of first-degree neglect of a vulnerable adult, a felony charge that carries a maximum 10 year sentence. Bah was credited with 15 days in jail that she already served.

She was convicted in Worcester County Circuit Court, in August, on the charges. Last week's sentencing hearing followed the completion of a pre-sentence investigation.

The incident occurred in September 2003 when Violette Stuart, a 47-year-old woman with developmental disabilities that leave her prone to seizures, unable to speak, and limited motor skills, was brought to Ocean City for a vacation. Stuart lives in Washington, D.C. group home and Bah was one of her caretakers.

On Sept. 5, Bah placed Stuart in the unit's bathtub and turned on the water. Bah then left the room, leaving Stuart alone. Her left foot, which was directly under the faucet, suffered the most severe burns. Investigators later found evidence that Stuart, to the extent she was capable, had thrashed around in the tub in a failed effort to escape the scalding water.

Bah later told investigators that she left Stuart alone for only about five or 10 minutes. However, she admitted that she was trained to not leave a developmentally disabled person alone in a bathtub.

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