

Lawyer talks about catfish charges in Tennessee

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Reported by Carley Gordon (WSMV)



NASHVILLE, TN (WSMV) -

Disorderly conduct, disrupting a meeting, and possessing an instrument of crime were all charges Tennessee local Jacob Waddell faced after launching a gutted catfish onto Pittsburgh's ice.

Lucky for any potential home game catfish launchers, that "instrument of crime" statute doesn't exist in Tennessee.

"We only have very few things that would fit in that category, typically firearms used in a crime or burglary tools," said Ben Raybin, a criminal defense attorney in Nashville.

Raybin doesn't think Pittsburgh's charges would stick in Tennessee, but after doing some research, he does point to some Tennessee code that could apply, like littering.

"In Tennessee, our littering statute is very broad and includes throwing any animal or plant waste onto public or private property with out permission," Raybin said.

There's also a law that prohibits "blocking a waterway."

"Even though the water is frozen, as ice, that could still potentially apply. And if you throw that fish in the way of an oncoming Zamboni and the Zamboni has to move out of the way, that could be potentially interfering with a passage way," Raybin said.

If you're going to launch, Raybin suggested doing it during a timeout so you aren't legally "disrupting a meeting," and he said don't hit anyone.

"That could certainly be considered an assault," Raybin said.

Raybin said if anyone does get charged Saturday night, he'd be happy to represent them, but just in case, he said you may want to consider having an attorney present at the game.

"And if anyone has any extra tickets I would certainly be up for providing legal advice during the game," Raybin said.

Keep in mind the chances of getting charged for throwing a catfish on the ice in Nashville are slim. Metro police have already weighed in on the issue saying they plan to be lenient with any harmless catfish pranks.

To see Raybin's original blog post visit:

<https://www.nashvilletnlaw.com/blog/can-throwing-a-catfish-get-you-arrested-at-a-nashville-predators-game/>