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Woman pleads guilty in case of baby left on car roof

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By Steve Stout -



Catalina Mariah Clouser in 2012.
(Source: CBS 5 News)

A woman accused of leaving her 2-month-old child on top of her car and driving off pleaded guilty to charges of child abuse and misdemeanor DUI on Wednesday, according to Maricopa County Superior Court.

Catalina Mariah Clouser initially pleaded not guilty in 2012 to the abuse charge and to aggravated DUI before her revised plea Monday morning, according to a Maricopa County Superior Court spokeswoman.

Clouser, then 19, was charged after a witness found her baby strapped in a child safety seat in the middle of the intersection at 45th Avenue and Cholla at 12:45 a.m. June 2, 2012, Phoenix police said.

Clouser's boyfriend and the infant's father, Manuel M. Pena, 19, was arrested early that night for driving under the influence with the child in the car, officers said. He was charged with aggravated DUI.

Officers said Clouser was upset after Pena was arrested and went to a friend's residence, where she smoked marijuana.

According to authorities, Clouser admitted to being under the influence of marijuana when she left the child on the roof of her car and drove off. She drove about 12 miles before reaching her destination and realizing the child was missing.

She was arrested after returning to where the baby was found. Police said they witnessed her driving up to the scene and detected signs of impairment when they spoke with her.

The infant was taken to the hospital and released with no injuries.

Her sentencing is scheduled for March 26 before Judge Cynthia Bailey.

<http://www.kpho.com/story/18835923/woman-pleads-not-guilty-in-case-where-baby-was-left-on-car-roof>