



ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Wrong-Way Intoxicated Driver Sentenced to 12 Years in Prison

Ellis County and District Attorney Ann Montgomery announced that Hannah Dillard (33) of Dallas, Texas, was sentenced to 12 years in prison in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Dillard pled guilty to the offense and proceeded to a punishment hearing in front of a jury, which lasted three days. Montgomery stated, "there is no excuse for driving while intoxicated. Five innocent lives were affected by Dillard's reckless actions, and the jury sent a strong message that intoxicated driving will not be tolerated in Ellis County."

On October 22, 2017, Hannah Dillard drove southbound in the northbound lanes of I-35. Dillard's journey started from her home in Dallas, moved through DeSoto and Lancaster before ending in Ellis County in a head-on collision. Multiple people called 911 regarding Dillard driving the wrong-way, and Red Oak Police attempted to stop Dillard as she drove, but Dillard did not stop. Dillard only came to a complete stop when she ran head-on into a car carrying five Southern Methodist University students traveling home toward Dallas from Waco. Three of the students suffered debilitating injuries. One victim's injuries included a spinal injury, a shattered ankle, a broken arm, and a broken pelvis. This victim testified that she now had 37 implants in her body as a result of the crash; she stated, "I was able bodied before and now I have a disability for decisions that were not mine."

Dillard was charged with Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon because she was reckless by driving a vehicle while intoxicated, causing bodily injury to others, and using her car as a deadly weapon. Evidence showed that Dillard had a blood alcohol content of .24 – three times the legal limit. Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon is a second-degree felony and has a punishment range of 2-20 years in prison. A jury may also recommend community supervision instead of prison time if a defendant has never previously been convicted of a felony. Though Dillard had no previous criminal history, Prosecutors asked the jury to assess punishment at 12 years in prison, and the jury returned their verdict of 12 years within 25 minutes.

Assistant County and District Attorneys Sherry Roeder and Grace Pandithurai prosecuted the case, assisted by County and District Attorney Investigator Joseph

Aguilar. The case was investigated by the Waxahachie Police Department and the victims and defendant were extracted from the scene and cared for by the Waxahachie Fire Department. Judge Cindy Ermatinger, of the 443rd District Court, presided over the case.

If you have any questions, please contact Samantha Johnson at (972) 825-5035 or ECDAPIO@co.ellis.tx.us.