



ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

M. ANN MONTGOMERY

ELLIS COUNTY COURTS BUILDING • 109 S. JACKSON • WAXAHACHIE, TX 75165 • (972) 825-5035 • FAX (972) 825-5047

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cynthia Walker, 972-825-5213 (cynthia.walker@co.ellis.tx.us)

Habitual Felon Sentenced to 99 Years in Prison for 7th Driving While Intoxicated

Ellis County and District Attorney Ann Montgomery announced that Virgil Bryant III, 47, of Red Oak, Texas, was convicted by a jury of Driving While Intoxicated Third or More and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Bryant's punishment range was enhanced to 25 years to life in prison based on his prior felony history. The jury also found that he used his vehicle as a deadly weapon.

On July 15, 2022, on Highway 287 E in Midlothian near the US 67 interchange, a 911 caller reported that a white Ford F-150 was driving erratically on the roadway, nearly striking a guard rail and at least three vehicles, running one off the road.

When Midlothian police officers intercepted the truck, Bryant was the sole occupant and driver. Officers conducted a roadside investigation and determined that Bryant was intoxicated. Bryant's vehicle contained a six-pack of beer, with two missing from the pack. The remaining four were still cold to touch when officers collected them. There were also spilled alcoholic beverages in the driver's side floorboard. Bryant refused standardized field sobriety tests, and police obtained a warrant to collect and test his blood. Bryant's blood alcohol concentration was 0.245 – more than three times the legal limit of 0.08.

Bryant's previous six driving while intoxication convictions span eleven years in four different counties. In 2009, an Ellis County jury sentenced him to forty years for his sixth conviction. Less than three years after being released on parole, Bryant committed this offense—his seventh intoxication offense.

“As we are regularly reminded, highways are dangerous places. Driving while intoxicated is one of the most preventable crimes, with some of the most serious consequences for our entire community,” said Montgomery. “Even after receiving a forty-year sentence, Bryant continued to put Ellis County citizens at risk by driving while intoxicated. The jury's strong verdict in this case should serve as a warning sign to anyone who chooses to take that risk in Ellis County.”

During this holiday season, please remember your choices have consequence to you and others. Do not drive while intoxicated.

Assistant County and District Attorneys Hope Sumrow and Lisa Turner prosecuted this case, assisted by County and District Attorney Investigators Joe Aguilar and Luis Hinojosa. The case was investigated by the Midlothian Police Department.

