



ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Son Sentenced to 70 years for Beating Mother to Death

Ellis County and District Attorney Ann Montgomery announced that Chad Gillen, 37, of Waxahachie, Texas, was convicted of murder by a jury and sentenced to 70 years in prison.

In 2010, Karen Gillen suffered a stroke, which left her disabled. As a widow, her only child, Chad Gillen, was charged with her care. Though disabled, Karen would attend church and occasionally have visitors. However, during the Covid shutdown, Karen stopped going to church, going out in public, and having visitors to her home. It appeared that no one, other than her son, had any contact with her for six months.

On September 23, 2020, Gillen brought his deceased mother to the Baylor Scott and White emergency room in Waxahachie. At the hospital, Gillen reported that he had just heard Karen fall from another room and immediately brought her to the hospital. Medical professionals were suspicious of his version of events because Karen had fractures, skin tears, and bruises all over her body. An autopsy revealed that Karen had suffered an acute traumatic brain injury that left her in a comatose state, a traumatic injury to her stomach, a broken right humerus, and 21 fractures of her ribs at various stages of healing, including recent injuries. Police believed that Chad Gillen had neglected and beaten Karen for several months.

Days later in an interview, Gillen admitted to officers that he was frustrated with his mother because she would not eat and punched her in the stomach. He also told officers that in the past, he had punched her, bitten her, and slapped her. In fact, in 2012, Gillen had been placed on deferred adjudication for assaulting his mother.

After four days of trial an Ellis County jury convicted Gillen of murder and sentenced him today to 70 years in prison. Judge Cindy Ermatinger of the 443rd Judicial Court presided over the case.

“During Covid, many of our most vulnerable citizens were isolated from family and friends,” stated Montgomery. “Domestic violence, crimes against children and the elderly increased nationwide. Ellis County also saw an increase in these types of crimes. Karen was isolated, which created the perfect opportunity for Gillen to neglect and beat her to death. I know this was a difficult case for the jury to observe. I appreciate the jury’s verdict.”

Assistant County and District Attorneys Sherry Roeder and Jeff Bullock prosecuted the case, assisted by County and District Attorney Investigator Todd Woodruff. The case was investigated by the Waxahachie Police Department.

