



PRESS RELEASE

Defendant Sentenced to Life in Prison for Death of Child April 7, 2017

Talawrence Tennell, 38, will spend the rest of his life in prison after a Brazos County jury convicted him of Capital Murder. He will not be eligible for parole.

Tennell was arrested on February 25, 2015, after 7-month-old Hailey Burleson died from blunt force trauma to her head and body. Baby Hailey's mother left her with the defendant to take her older daughter to an eye doctor appointment. When she returned, she found Tennell holding the lifeless baby and immediately called 911, who had not been called by Tennell. The only explanation given was that Hailey had fallen off the bed.

When she arrived at the hospital, Baby Hailey was covered in bruises and suffered from broken wrists, a broken arm, a broken femur, broken ribs, and a shattered skull. Emergency personnel and the emergency room doctor testified that these were the worst injuries they had seen in their career. The brain was injured because of the force and trauma suffered. Testimony showed that these injuries could not have occurred from falling off a bed.

During the investigation, officers determined that Tennell was high on PCP at the time of the murder. Tennell also made statements that he had smoked PCP that day, presumably while taking care of the child. Voluntary intoxication on drugs or alcohol is not a defense to committing a crime in the State of Texas and, therefore, the jury found Tennell to still be responsible for his conduct in the death of Hailey.

District Attorney Jarvis Parsons and Assistant District Attorney Kara Comte prosecuted the case on behalf of the State of Texas.

