



## ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

PATRICK M. WILSON

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

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Contact: Ann Montgomery, 972-825-5035 ([ann.montgomery@co.ellis.tx.us](mailto:ann.montgomery@co.ellis.tx.us))

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### **JURY SENTENCES CAREER DRUG DEALER TO 68 YEARS**

On August 16, 2013, an Ellis County jury sentenced Ryan Keith Mason, 41, of Italy, to 68 years in prison after he was convicted of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver. Mason was charged with possessing four grams or more but less than 200 grams of methamphetamine. He was also enhanced by two prior final felony convictions. These prior convictions made the range of punishment 25 years to 99 years/life imprisonment. Mason had 12 prior misdemeanor and felony convictions, including eight drug-related felony convictions. At the time of his arrest, Mason was on parole for a 15-year prison sentence he received in 2006 for possession of controlled substance with intent to deliver.

On March 22, 2012, investigators from the Ellis County Special Investigation Unit executed two felony arrest warrants on Mason and a search warrant at Mason's residence. At the time, Mason was living in a shed behind his mother's home. That shed is located next to the Italy High School. Mason was arrested and placed in the back seat of an Italy Police officer's patrol car. Inside Mason's pants pocket were small plastic bags commonly used for distribution of drugs. He also had \$1,360.00 in cash in his wallet.

A bag of methamphetamine, weighing 13.18 grams, was later found next to Mason in the back seat of the patrol car. Inside Mason's shed, the Special Investigation Unit located a police scanner and digital scale. Two cameras were located outside of the shed with a live feed from those cameras displayed on a television inside the shed. When Mason arrived at the Ellis County jail, he told the deputy that he had a pipe in his crotch. A pipe placed inside a skillet handle holder was retrieved.

The Ellis County and District Attorney's Office thanks the Italy Police Department and Ellis County Special Investigations Unit for their assistance in this case. The prosecutors on the case, Assistant County and District Attorneys Amy Nguyen and Ricky Sipes, issued the following statement, "We want to thank the jury in this case for their hard work and attention in arriving at a fair verdict of guilty and for a just and appropriate punishment for this defendant."

