

Woman is sentenced to 25 years for her infant son's death in Alton in 2012

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE—A St. Louis woman - Wallisha S. Bland - was sentenced Monday to 25 years in prison for the October 2012 death of her infant son in Alton.

Bland (03/10/1993), pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree murder on December 30, 2016. She had been set for a jury trial the following week.

Assistant State's Attorney Crystal Uhe, Chief of the Violent Crimes Unit, prosecuted the case. Circuit Judge Kyle Napp accepted Bland's plea and handed down the 25-year sentence. Bland will be required to serve 100 percent of her sentence.

Police in Alton were dispatched to an apartment at 3210 Belle Street in Alton on October 4, 2012, after a 911 call at 8:28 a.m. Jace R. Gillespie (d.o.b. 8/7/12) was unresponsive and taken to Saint Anthony's Hospital in Alton where he was pronounced dead at 10:02 a.m. Following an investigation by Alton detectives and the results of the autopsy, his mother, Bland, was charged with first-degree murder.

At the time of Jace's death, no immediate cause of death had been determined. However, the autopsy conducted by the Madison County Coroner's Office showed that Jace died from a skull fracture. Following an investigation by the Alton Police Department, it was determined that on the previous evening, Bland threw her infant son down on the floor which caused the skull fracture that he died from the next day.

Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons thanked Assistant State's Attorney Uhe, Assistant State's Attorney Crowe, the Alton Police Department and the Madison County Coroner's Office for their work in securing Bland's conviction.