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Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore today released the following statement:

Yesterday, February 16, 2017, prosecutors from the Travis County District Attorney's Office, along with Travis County Attorney's Office, secured a six-year prison sentence for Cuong Tran, who strangled his wife in February of 2013.

In the two-day trial, jurors heard that Defendant Tran's next door neighbor heard her doorbell ringing repeatedly. When she came to the door, she saw the victim holding her neck and crying uncontrollably. She blurted out that the Defendant had choked her, and that she had escaped out of the back door, barefoot, and had climbed the six-foot privacy fence between their properties to reach the neighbor for help. She expressed that she "couldn't take this anymore" and wanted a protective order and a divorce.

The neighbor called police, who arrived and documented visible marks on the victim's neck that appeared to be finger marks. Pflugerville Police Department (PPD) Officer Yurcina noted that the marks got worse throughout the interview with the victim. She told him that they had been arguing because the Defendant had accused her of cheating on him, and that he took her keys and credit cards and refused to let her leave the house. He then pushed her down on their couch, and strangled her repeatedly, causing her head to feel "tingly," and her to lose consciousness, and urinate. She told officers that Defendant had strangled her before, and had made threats to kill her in the past, including that he would "hide her body in a freezer." She later became uncooperative in the investigation, and did not want the Defendant arrested for fear of retaliation.

PPD Officer Ritchie found the Defendant in their home next door, who said his wife had started the altercation, and had scratches on his chest. The Defendant denied strangling the victim, and stated he had only grabbed her shirt. The Officers later found the victim's keys and credit cards in Defendant's pockets in a search incident to arrest.

The victim did not appear for the guilt phase of trial, despite being hand-served by prosecutors. On Wednesday afternoon, the jury convicted Cuong Tran of Assault Family Violence – Strangulation, 3rd degree felony offense. A third-degree felony is punishable under Texas law by a prison sentence from two to ten years, and a fine of up to \$10,000.

On Thursday, February 16, the punishment phase began and the victim appeared on behalf of the defendant to ask the jury for mercy for her husband, who had no prior felony convictions and was probation-eligible. On Thursday afternoon, the jury delivered a verdict sentencing the Defendant to six (6) years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Prosecutor Brandy Gann, lead counsel in the case, said: “This office is dedicated to protecting the victims of domestic abuse and, as this case shows, we will not be deterred even when the victim is too afraid, or otherwise not inclined, to cooperate with the investigation. In all cases, our priority will remain the safety of that individual, and the community at large, and I am delighted that the jurors felt the same way.”