

Caretaker couple jailed 15 years for 2022 death of 4-year-old Eric Chang

KUCHING: The High Court here yesterday sentenced the caretakers of four-year-old Eric Chang Wei Jie to 15 years in jail each for causing the boy's death three years ago.

Justice Leonard David Shim convicted Wendy Chai Xue Zhen, 40, and her husband Ling Kok Liang, 54, on their own guilty plea to an alternative charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, framed under Section 304(a) of the Penal Code read together with Section 34 of the same law.

They committed the offence at a house in Taman Riverview, Bintawa here between March 4 and 7, 2022.

Based on the facts of the case, Eric had been left in the care of Chai and Ling on Feb 21, 2022 as his mother was unwell from a

pregnancy and her boyfriend injured in an accident.

While under their supervision, the boy was frequently beaten, slapped, and hit with objects such as belts, hoses and water scoopers whenever he soiled himself, causing bruises and swelling.

On the night of March 4, Eric was severely assaulted and found dead by Ling the following morning.

The pair then left his body in the house until it began to smell.

On March 6, Ling planned to dispose of the body, with Chai wrapping Eric in a blanket and plastic bag before placing him into a large polystyrene foam box.

That night, they drove to the Muara Tebas jetty and dumped the box into the river, before

discarding some of the Eric's belongings, including a towel and shoes.

The next day, Chai falsely informed Eric's mother that he had gone missing. To support the claim, she left their front gate and door open to make it appear as if the child had run away.

A police report was lodged that evening and on March 16, police arrested Chai and Ling and seized several exhibits for analysis.

Despite an extensive search, Eric's body and the foam box were never recovered.

Prosecuting the case was deputy public prosecutor Mohd Fillany Siji, while Chai and Ling were represented by counsels Daniel Ling and Fung Lee Fook, respectively.



File photo shows Chang and Ling escorted by police at the Kuching High Court in 2023.