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Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Court of Criminal Appeals Upholds Murder Conviction in Mobile County

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the conviction of Joseph Ryan Carter, 35, for murder. Carter was convicted in Mobile County Circuit Court on June 18, 2020, for the murder of Joe Nathan Thomas.

The evidence at trial showed that on or about November 10, 2016, Carter, along with the victim and one other person, planned a trip to a casino in Biloxi Mississippi. At some point, Carter became agitated and upset when the trio stopped at a gas station, and he pulled out a gun. After the victim urged him to calm down, Carter put the gun away and the trip continued. Later, Carter stopped the vehicle to allow his passengers to go to the bathroom. The surviving passenger, who was at the other end of the parked truck, testified that she heard a gunshot and saw that the victim was on the ground. The passenger heard several more shots as she fled the scene. Carter contended the shooting was self-defense.

Mobile County District Attorney Ashley Rich's office successfully prosecuted this case and obtained a guilty verdict. Carter was sentenced to 28 years imprisonment. Carter sought to have his conviction reversed on appeal.

The Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division handled the case during the appeals process, arguing for the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to affirm Carter's conviction. The Court did so in a decision issued Friday, August 27.

Attorney General Marshall commended the Criminal Appeals Division for its successful work on this case, and thanked District Attorney Ashley Rich and her staff for their valuable assistance in defending the murder conviction.

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