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

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the conviction of Earnie May, 49, for murder. May was convicted in Russell County Circuit Court on March 20, 2020, for the murder of Lorenzo Freeman Sr.

The evidence at trial showed the following events that occurred on January 11, 2018. Responding to a 911 call, Russell County sheriff's deputies found Freeman dead from a shotgun wound in the parking lot of the Dollar General on Highway 165 in Fort Mitchell. An investigation determined that Freeman's son had called his father for help, saying that he had been accosted on the road by a group in a vehicle who were yelling racial slurs and chasing him, trying to run his own vehicle off the road. Freeman drove to meet his son, encountered the vehicle that had been chasing his son, and was gunned down. According to witnesses, May was at the scene, pointed a rifle at the victim and engaged with others in gunfire. A video showed that May provided a weapon to another man, Justin Davidson, who was also convicted for the murder. The jury further found that the murder was racially-motivated and was therefore a hate crime.

Russell County District Attorney Kenneth Davis' office successfully prosecuted this case and obtained a guilty verdict. May was sentenced to life imprisonment for his crime. May 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 May's conviction. The Court did so in a decision issued April 23, 2021.

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorney General Stephen Dodd for his successful work on this case, and thanked District Attorney Kenneth Davis and his staff for their valuable assistance in defending the murder conviction.

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