



## AG ANNOUNCES COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS UPHOLDS RUSSELL COUNTY MURDER CONVICTION

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Luther Strange announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals on Friday upheld the murder conviction of Sylvester Davis Jr., 32, of Springville. Davis was convicted in Russell County Circuit Court in October of 2013 for the murder of Yamisha Thomas.

Evidence was presented at trial that the victim’s mother reported her missing on April 24, 2011. Davis, who was Thomas’s boyfriend, told her mother that he also was looking for her, but later changed his story to say he had been with her that day. Police recovered Thomas’s abandoned vehicle in Columbus, Georgia. Subsequently, while questioning Davis, the officers noticed he had a mark on his face as though he had been in a struggle.

A month later, while Alabama Bureau of Investigation agents were questioning jail inmate Jerry Foster, he indicated that he knew information about the murder of Thomas. Foster had previously lived and worked at Davis’s automotive detail shop. He told agents that on April 23, 2011, Davis came to the shop with scratches on his face and neck. Davis took Foster to an isolated area near the shop; Davis said he had killed his girlfriend and wanted Foster’s help to bury her. Foster refused, and as he was walking away he noticed what appeared to be a body wrapped in a sheet, feet exposed and toenails painted. ABI agents then took Foster to Phenix City, where he directed them to the remote area where Foster had seen the body. Officers searched the area and found a mattress lying on the ground, with Thomas’s body underneath.

The case was prosecuted at trial by Russell County District Attorney Kenneth Davis’s office. The defendant, Sylvester Davis, was sentenced as a habitual offender to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, and he subsequently 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 the conviction. The Court did so in a decision issued on Friday, March, 6, 2015. Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorney General Kristi Wilkerson of the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division for her successful work in this case.

