

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG ANNOUNCES THAT COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS UPHOLDS WINSTON COUNTY MURDER CONVICTION

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals on Friday upheld the murder conviction of Varney Ray Calloway. Calloway, 58, of Helicon, was convicted in Winston County Circuit Court in November of 2014 for the murder of Jackie Wright.

Evidence presented at trial showed the following: At approximately 8:30 p.m. on December 12, 2012, a woman was driving home on County Road 40 in Winston County. She observed two men behind a truck on the shoulder of the road, one standing and holding a long gun and one sitting on the ground appearing to hold something white and bloody. Once she arrived home, she called her neighbor who was a deputy sheriff, and told him what she had seen.

Law enforcement officers went to the scene and found the then-unoccupied truck parked on the side of the road. The vehicle was registered to the victim, Jackie Wright. A blood trail from the truck led the officers toward the property of the killer, Calloway. Officers noticed along the blood trail four .30/.30 shell casings on the ground. Officers questioned Calloway, who first denied any involvement. Further investigation indicated that Calloway was involved in a romantic relationship with the victim's wife. Upon additional questioning, Calloway finally admitted he shot and killed Wright, but claimed he had done so in self-defense.

The case was prosecuted at trial by Winston County District Attorney Jack Bostick's office. Calloway was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. 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, September 11.

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorney General Cecil Brendle of the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division for his successful work in this case.

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