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Alabama Attorney General



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**Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Conviction and Imprisonment of Lawyer in Colbert County for Jury Tampering**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that a Colbert County attorney today pleaded guilty to jury tampering rather than continuing with a trial that began this morning. William J. (Billy) Underwood was sentenced to serve four months in jail. He was further required to permanently surrender his license to practice law in the State of Alabama.

Underwood was convicted for contacting a potential juror on a civil case and attempting to influence him about the outcome of that case. The potential juror recorded the conversation and, realizing that the action was illegal, gave it to authorities.

Agents of the State Bureau of Investigation confirmed that the person with whom Underwood spoke was a potential juror in Colbert County Circuit Court. The Attorney General’s Criminal Trials Division presented evidence to a Colbert County grand jury, resulting in Underwood’s indictment in January of 2018. Afterward, the Alabama State Bar suspended his license to practice law in Alabama.

“It is disgraceful that this defendant, an officer of the court sworn to uphold justice, instead attempted to instigate a miscarriage of justice,” said Attorney General Marshall. “An impartial jury is essential to the integrity and fairness of our judicial process in America in which our citizens must be able to trust. Because of the honesty of the person this defendant tried to corrupt, the outcome of that case was not affected. However, Mr. Underwood’s attempt to do so is a betrayal of the people and a serious crime. It is appropriate that he will serve jail time and will never again practice law in the State of Alabama.”

Attorney General Marshall thanked the State Bureau of Investigation of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency for its investigation of this matter and commended Assistant Attorneys General John Kachelman and Tara Ratz of his Criminal Trials Division for bringing the case to a successful conclusion.

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