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Attorney General Marshall's Statement on the Execution of Convicted Double-Murderer Jeffery Lee

(Montgomery, Ala) – Attorney General Steve Marshall tonight issued a statement following the execution of Jeffery Lee by lethal injection at the William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore:

"Twenty-seven years ago, Jimmy Ellis's and Elaine Thompson's lives were stolen. They were victims of a senseless, violent robbery-murder. Justice was finally served.

The case against Jeffery Lee was overwhelming and unambiguous. Surveillance footage captured him firing shots. Eyewitnesses confirmed what the camera recorded. And in his own admission, he signed a confession. Court after court, appeal after appeal, the record spoke with one voice and the verdict held strong.

Over time, it can be easy to look at these convicted murderers as old men rather than the dangerous killers they were when they stole the lives of their victims and terrorized their communities. Those victims are the people I keep in mind.

Nothing can give back what was taken from Jimmy and Elaine and their families, but today we proved that every innocent life is worth fighting for, no matter how long it takes."

Attorney General Marshall cleared the execution to commence at 6:08 p.m.

Jeffery Lee's time of death was 6:22 p.m.

Legal Summary: *State of Alabama v. Jeffery Lee*

On December 12, 1998, after a night of binge drinking, smoking marijuana, and using cocaine, Jeffery Lee walked into Jimmy's Pawn Shop in Orrville, Alabama, claiming he wanted to purchase a ring for his girlfriend. Lee asked one of the employees, Helen King, about the wedding rings in the jewelry display case, and admitted he didn't have any money. However, he would come back when he got money from his grandmother. After purchasing a pint of liquor, he left the pawn shop. Lee, his brother, and their cousin drove down the street and parked, where Lee drank the liquor and smoked marijuana laced with cocaine.



Only minutes later, Lee returned to Jimmy's Pawn Shop with a sawed-off shotgun, while his accomplices waited outside. Announcing himself profanely, Lee fired the shotgun at the store's owner, Jimmy Ellis, and his two employees, Helen King and Elaine Thompson. He then walked around the shop and attempted to open the cash register but failed. Lee finally walked out of Jimmy's Pawn Shop, leaving the murder weapon on the store counter.

Jimmy Ellis and Elaine Thompson were killed by the close-range shotgun blasts. Helen King was wounded but still alive. She pretended to be dead until Lee left the store, at which time she got up, locked the door, and called 911. Lee attempted to re-enter the store at one point but could not do so because the door was locked. Lee and his accomplices departed before law enforcement arrived.

The men went to briefly visit with family before fleeing for Newnan, Georgia, where they rented a motel room. Lee's brother and cousin departed later that day, but Lee remained in hiding at the motel. Lee was apprehended by law enforcement in the early morning of December 13, 1998, in Coweta County, Georgia. He signed a confession shortly after.

On April 12, 2000, Lee was unanimously convicted on four counts, including three counts of capital murder. The trial court sentenced Lee to death for his crimes, and that conviction and sentence were upheld at every level.

Photos of [Jimmy Ellis](#) and [Elaine Thompson](#) can be found here.