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Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Court of Criminal Appeals Upholds Two Separate Houston County Murder Convictions

(MONTGOMERY) Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals has upheld the murder convictions of Clifford Warren Perry and Va'Kevis Raiel Collins. Perry, 50, of Columbia, was convicted in Houston County Circuit Court in April 2018 for the murder of Trevon Lingo. In a separate unrelated case, Collins, 19, of Dothan, was convicted in Houston County Circuit Court in March 2018 for the murder of William Hawkins.

During Perry's trial, the evidence indicated that on the night of January 27, 2016, Perry approached a vehicle in which Lingo was a passenger. An argument ensued during which Perry fatally stabbed Lingo in the heart. Upon conviction, the trial court sentenced Perry to life imprisonment.

During Collins' trial, the evidence indicated that on May 16, 2016, Collins, Ricky Smith, Devonte Thornton, Brandon Bigham, and R.C., a juvenile, decided to rob William Hawkins. They rode together to a location near Hawkins' residence, got out and ran through the woods. Thornton and Bigham entered Hawkins' house and shot and killed him, while Collins and the other two waited outside nearby. For his part, Collins was convicted of felony murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Ricky Smith, Devonte Thornton, and Brandon Bigham were charged with capital murder and are awaiting trial; R.C.'s case is being adjudicated in the juvenile court.

Houston County District Attorney Pat Jones's Office prosecuted both cases.

The Attorney General's Appeals Division handled the cases during the appeals process, arguing for the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to affirm the convictions. The Court did so in decisions released on Friday, November 9, 2018.

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorneys General Jack Willis and Robin Scales of the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division for their successful work in these cases.

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