



AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES CONVICTION OF MAN FOR 1997 MURDER OF HIS WIFE IN JACKSON COUNTY

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction of Barry Whitton for the 1997 murder of his wife, Michelle Townson Whitton, in Jackson County. Whitton, formerly of Section, was found guilty by a jury in Jackson County Circuit Court late yesterday afternoon following a nine-day trial. Sentencing is set for October 15. He faces a penalty of 20 years to life imprisonment for the Class A felony.

Attorney General Strange's Criminal Trials Division presented evidence that Whitton murdered his wife, who was 28 years old, by bludgeoning her in the head with a shotgun. He then placed her body in a shallow grave, and for 17 years went uncharged for her murder.

"This case demonstrates the determination and dedication of law enforcement officers to deliver justice no matter how much time has passed," said Attorney General Strange. "I am proud of the outstanding teamwork by people in my office and those in many agencies to convict this killer and hold him to account for his horrible crime."

During the trial, forensic evidence was presented about blood that was found in the bedroom of the Whitton home. Two witnesses testified that Whitton confessed to them that he had killed his wife in the bedroom. Additional evidence was presented about his disposal of her body, the shotgun he used to kill her, carpeting from the bedroom and other related items. Further testimony was presented from family and members of the community about Whitton's actions and consciousness of guilt following the murder.

Attorney General Strange commended those who worked on this case, noting in particular the Assistant Attorneys General Leigh Gwathney and John Hensley of the Criminal Trials Division and Special Agents of the Attorney General's Cold Case Unit. He thanked the sheriff's offices of Jackson, DeKalb and Cullman counties, the Jackson County District Attorney's Office, the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, and the State Bureau of Investigations.

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