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AG STEVE MARSHALL ANNOUNCES COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS UPHOLDS TALLADEGA COUNTY CAPITAL MURDER CONVICTIONS

(MONTGOMERY) - Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals has upheld the capital murder convictions of Charles Andrew Joseph Hendrix. Hendrix, 27, of Birmingham, was convicted in Talladega County Circuit Court in May of 2017 for three counts of capital murder relating to the contract for hire murder of Sylacauga attorney Blake Lazenby.

Evidence was presented at trial that Hendrix participated in killing Lazenby in a murder-for-hire agreement. The man who initiated the murder-for hire, Ernest "L.A." Files told another man, Charles "Boobie" Haynes, that he was looking for someone to kill Lazenby for \$40,000. Haynes told the defendant in this appeal, Hendrix, and others about the murder-for-hire offer. Hendrix, willingly and without hesitation, agreed to participate in the murder for a portion of the \$40,000.

On July 27, 2011, Hendrix and an accomplice, Ocie Lynch, committed the physical act of murdering Lazenby. The two men hid and waited for Lazenby to arrive at his home, and then confronted the victim in his driveway. Lazenby was able to get inside his kitchen when Lynch, who was still outside, shot him in the face through the glass storm door with a .38 pistol. Lazenby fell by the door and the killers pushed their way inside. When they discovered that Lazenby was alive, Lynch shot Lazenby in the face but this did not kill him. Determined to kill Lazenby, Lynch asked Hendrix to hand him a knife that was in the kitchen. Hendrix did so and Lynch cut Lazenby's throat, resulting in Lazenby bleeding to death. Hendrix and Lynch subsequently stole Lazenby's vehicle and drove to Birmingham where they burned it. Hendrix and Lynch also stole Lazenby's wallet, I.D. and cellular telephone.

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Talladega County District Attorney Steve Giddens prosecuted the case against Hendrix (the defendant in this appeal), resulting in the jury finding Hendrix guilty of three counts of capital murder: murder for pecuniary gain, pursuant to a contract for hire; murder committed during a first-degree burglary; and, murder committed during a first-degree robbery. Hendrix was sentenced to serve a term of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for each conviction and subsequently sought to have his convictions reversed on appeal. The Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division defended the verdicts on appeal before the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals. That Court issued an opinion on Friday, April 20, affirming Hendrix's capital murder convictions.

The others who participated in the murder-for-hire also were prosecuted by District Attorney Giddens and convicted. Lynch, the man who committed the physical act of the killing along with Hendrix, was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Files, the man who hired Lynch and Hendrix, was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Haynes, who was the go-between in arranging the murder-for-hire, testified for the State and ultimately pleaded guilty to murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorney General Beth Slate Poe of the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division for her successful work in this case.