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Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Court of Criminal Appeals Upholds Murder Conviction in Wilcox County

(Montgomery) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the murder conviction of Eric Roshell Gaines, 32, of Camden, Alabama, for murder. Gaines was convicted in the Wilcox County Circuit Court on December 16, 2022.

The evidence at trial showed that Gaines shot and killed his neighbor, Michael Watson, on June 9, 2018. The victim had been engaged in a physical fight with Gaines’s brother which was witnessed by numerous individuals. Gaines apparently left the fight and went to his residence where he retrieved a weapon and confronted the victim. In front of witnesses, he then shot and killed the victim. Gaines claimed at trial that he shot the victim in self-defense and that the victim came toward him in an aggressive manner. The jury rejected Gaines’s defense and found him guilty of murder.

Wilcox County District Attorney Robert Turner’s office successfully prosecuted this case and obtained a guilty verdict. Gaines was sentenced to forty years for his conviction. Gaines sought to have his conviction reversed on appeal.

The Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division handled the case during the appeals process, arguing for the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to affirm Gaines’s conviction. The Court affirmed the decision Friday, February 2, 2024.

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorney General Marc A. Starrett for his successful work on this case and thanks District Attorney Robert Turner and his staff for their valuable assistance in obtaining the murder conviction.

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