

# **MURDER CONVICTION: Jury finds man guilty in beating death of 20-month-old**

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**EDWARDSVILLE** – A Madison County jury convicted a Granite City man of murder today in the 2012 beating death of 20-month-old **Jasean “Bug” Rusher** following a week-long jury trial at the Madison County Criminal Justice Center in Edwardsville.

The case began with jury selection on Monday morning in the case against **John Holmon III** (d.o.b. 05/10/1973) who was charged by the Madison County State's Attorney's Office on Sept. 11, 2012, with first-degree murder. The case went to the jury at about 11:50 a.m. this morning. The jury deliberated almost three hours before returning a guilty verdict against Holmon.

Officers from the **Granite City Police Department**, along with **Granite City Fire Department/EMS** responded to a 911 call to the home of Jaesean Rusher (d.o.b. 12/29/10) located in the 2000 block of 14th Street in Granite City at approximately 12:59 p.m. on Sept. 10, 2012. Rusher, who was unresponsive, was taken to Gateway Regional Hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

The victim lived at the home with his mother, grandmother and Holmon, who was the boyfriend of his mother at the time.

Rusher had been left in the care of Holmon after his mother, Dollie Rusher, left for school around 6:30 a.m. The grandmother of Jaesean, Tommie Rusher (now deceased), had recently returned to the residence before Holmon came to her with the lifeless body of Jaesean. She attempted CPR while also phoning 911.

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons and First Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Mudge presented evidence to the jury that supported the state's claim that during the time Holmon was alone with Jaesean, he beat him and ultimately killed him. Autopsy results showed that the victim had more than 50 injuries, with the cause of death listed as a closed head injury.

State's Attorney Gibbons expressed satisfaction with the guilty conviction. "I'm pleased that the jury rejected the defense's suggestion that Holmon wasn't responsible for the death of Jaesean. This poor, little boy died a brutal death at the hands of someone he and his family trusted and today's guilty verdict was a significant step towards justice for Jaesean."

Holmon will remain in custody at the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville where he has been held without bond pending sentencing by Associate Judge Neil Schroeder. Sentencing will occur following the completion of a pre-sentencing investigation that usually takes 6-8 weeks.

Normal penalty range for a murder conviction is 20 – 60 years in prison, however, Holmon is eligible for extended time due to Jaesean's age at the time of the murder. He will have to serve 100 percent of his sentence.

Gibbons offered his thanks to jurors for their service. Additionally, he conveyed his appreciation to First Assistant Mudge, the Granite City Police Department, the Madison County Coroner and all of the medical personnel whose work on this case contributed to the guilty verdict.