

State's Attorney Haine Praises Prosecutors Lauren Maricle, Morgan Hudson/Law Enforcement Work In Witcher Murder Conviction

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine praised the work of his prosecutors and law enforcement after a Madison County jury found Brady Witcher, 43, of Alabama, guilty of three counts of first-degree murder and one count of armed robbery for the December 2019 murders of Shari Yates, AJ Brooks, and John McMillian in Bethalto. The jury deliberated for less than an hour.

These multiple murder convictions guarantee that Witcher will be sentenced to natural life in prison. Sentencing will officially occur at a future date.

"This case involved a level of complexity that is highly unusual, with almost 400 exhibits and dozens of witnesses, which is due to extraordinary police work," Haine said. "Assistant State's Attorney Lauren Maricle deserves special praise for her fantastic lead prosecution of this case and as chief of our Violent Crimes Unit. ASA Morgan Hudson was also integral to this successful prosecution, and did an excellent job on behalf of the victims of this terrible crime."

Haine thanked the Hazelwood Police Department, Bethalto Police Department, the Major Case Squad, for their work in investigating the case.

"These murders shocked the entire Madison County community," Haine said. "We are glad the jury agreed that the evidence clearly showed that Brady Witcher is a heartless murderer. It was a dark day when he and his co-defendant drove into our community, fleeing crimes in multiple other states, and destroyed so many lives. With this verdict, the families of Shari, AJ, and John can know both of these killers will spend the rest of their lives in jail."

On December 19, 2019, authorities found the bodies of Yates, Brooks, and McMillian in a home on Mill Street in Bethalto. Brittany McMillan, 30, of Alabama, was arrested in Hazelwood, Mo. with Witcher. Both were charged with nine counts of first-degree murder, one county of armed robbery, and one count of aggravated vehicular hijacking.

In December, McMillan pled guilty to three counts of first-degree murder for her role in the killings. She is serving a life sentence, the maximum sentence available under Illinois law. There is no relation between Brittany McMillan and John McMillian.

Madison County Circuit Judge Kyle Napp presided over the case.