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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Haine announces Appellate Court decision upholding
conviction of man serving life sentence for triple murder**

Edwardsville, IL — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced Friday that an appellate court has upheld the convictions of a man serving a life sentence in prison for a triple murder and armed robbery in Bethalto.

The 5th District Appellate Court in Mount Vernon has upheld the convictions of Brady Witcher, 44. In 2022, a jury in Madison County found Witcher guilty of three counts of first-degree murder and one count of armed robbery.

The appeals court found that it was proper for the trial judge in Madison County to allow prosecutors to present evidence to jurors that Witcher committed other crimes in other states – including a kidnapping and a murder – prior to the murders of three people in Bethalto.

“We appreciate the Appellate Prosecutor’s work in defending this case on appeal, and are glad the Appellate Court has upheld this dangerous murderer’s conviction in this violent, multi-state crime spree,” Haine said. “Madison County’s prosecutors on this case, Assistant State’s Attorney Lauren Maricle and Assistant State’s Attorney Morgan Hudson, presented evidence and testimony that gave jurors a complete picture of this killer’s destructive, murderous path. The evidence developed by investigators was exhaustive, crossing state lines and pointing precisely to this ruthless killer.”

The jury convicted Witcher of murder in the shooting deaths of Shari Yates, 59; her son, Andrew “A.J.” Brooks, 30; and John McMillian, 32. Their bodies were found in a Bethalto home in December 2019.

At trial, the prosecutors presented evidence that, in the days prior to the Bethalto killings, Witcher and his accomplice kidnapped one woman and killed another woman in Alabama. A few days after that, Witcher and the accomplice entered the home of a Tennessee couple, tied them up, placed them in a closet, robbed them and stabbed one of the victims.

Witcher, in an appeal, claimed the evidence about the other crimes was prejudicial and should not have been presented to the jury.

The appeals court, in its ruling, found that the evidence of the prior crimes "was relevant to connect the evidence found at the Illinois crime scene to the defendant." The appeals court wrote that "the probative value of the other-crimes evidence outweighed its prejudicial effect."

Circuit Judge Kyle Napp sentenced Witcher to a term of natural life in prison for the murders, plus a consecutive sentence of 30 years in prison for armed robbery.

Witcher's accomplice, Brittany McMillan, 31, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and received a life sentence.

Witcher and McMillan were residents of Alabama. McMillan had previous ties to the Bethalto area. The pair knew the victims in the Madison County case but were not related to them. Evidence showed that Witcher and McMillan stole vehicles from the victims.

"We will continue to pray for the family and loved ones of the victims, and hope that this positive decision by the Appellate Court helps continue their healing process," Haine said.