



Lebanon Man Convicted of Aggravated Murder

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Warren County Prosecutor David P. Fornshell announced that Elijah Malik Thomas, 28, of Lebanon, Ohio, was convicted of aggravated murder for the 2023 killing of Katelyn Puckett, 23, at her residence in Franklin. Following a 2-day trial to the court, Judge Donald E. Oda II found Thomas guilty of aggravated murder with firearm specifications, two counts of murder, felonious assault and improperly discharging a firearm at or into a habitation.

On June 17, 2023, Thomas approached Puckett as she returned to her apartment and fired nine shots at close range in front of eyewitnesses. Six of the shots struck Puckett. Thomas then fled the area. City of Franklin police officers and emergency medical services responded and attempted life saving measures. The Montgomery County Coroner's Office determined Puckett's cause of death to be multiple gunshot wounds.

Detectives from the City of Franklin Police Department responded to begin their investigation. Officers recovered nine shell casings and multiple bullet fragments at the scene. A neighbor's RING camera recorded audio of the shooting. Family members shared with law enforcement multiple violent threats by Thomas in the days and weeks preceding the shooting. GPS location data showed that Thomas had been lying in wait for more than 30 minutes before Puckett and her companions returned home.

Judge Oda ordered a pre-sentence investigation and scheduled the sentencing for a later date. Thomas faces a mandatory life sentence.

Fornshell commended Franklin Police Department Detective Amanda Myers, Warren County Prosecutor's Office Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Travis J. Vieux and Gray Chester, and Director of Victim Witness Services Erika Bourelle for their work on the case.



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