



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON IN MURDER OF MISSING PERSON

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that DUSTIN C. WINTER, 33, of Springfield, Missouri was sentenced on Friday, January 20, 2023, for the 2019 kidnapping and murder in the first degree of a missing Springfield man.

A jury had previously found Winter guilty in September of 2022. Those verdicts were made possible by a concerned citizen who reported to the Springfield Police that he believed a murder had been committed. The Defendant had forced the concerned citizen to clean a U-Haul van that had blood inside as well as rope believed to have been used to restrain the victim. Investigators found the defendant had rented a U-Haul van and failed to return it. When investigators located the van and the defendant, he led them on a high speed chase ending near Marshfield, Missouri.

During a search of the van, blood was discovered and additional testing resulted in a DNA profile matching that of the victim. The concerned citizen also turned over a bag labeled “Bell” containing items of identification belonging to the victim who had been missing for several weeks. During a recorded jail phone call, the defendant asked a woman on the phone if she recalled the day they had to “clean the van out real quick” and referenced a “Bell” bag he had put in her home from the van and asked her to destroy or get rid of the bag.

Evidence was also presented that the defendant believed the victim had previously assaulted an acquaintance and the defendant lured the victim to a house in Springfield under the pretense of helping with a move. In addition, the Defendant sent messages to the person he thought had been assaulted stating the defendant was “going to made sure [the victim] suffers slowly and agony. . .” GPS location information

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was also introduced in evidence to place the defendant and victim together and to place the defendant later driving to remote locations in the Mark Twain National Forrest. After the defendant lured the victim to the house in Springfield, he made Google searches that included, "sulfuric acid on animals." "Can acid dissolve a body?" and "55 gallon drum." The victim's body has never been located.

Friday, Winter was sentenced by the Honorable David Jones to life in prison without the possibility of parole for murder in the first degree consecutive to a life sentence for kidnapping in the first degree.

Mr. Patterson would like to thank the Springfield Police Department for their effort in solving this case, in particular the work of Detective Kelly Patton who was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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