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Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Court of Criminal Appeals Upholds Felony Murder Conviction in Jefferson County

(Montgomery, Ala) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the felony murder conviction of Frank Jamall Steele, 26, of Jefferson County. Steele was convicted for the 2019 murder of Benjamin Gonzalez in the Jefferson County Circuit Court on August 9, 2024.

The evidence at trial showed that on the night of October 13, 2019, Steele went to the apartment where the victim, Benjamin Gonzalez, was living with a woman and her young children. Steele, who was a co-worker of the woman at McDonald's, woke the victim and the woman up during the middle of the night under the pretext of borrowing a cellular telephone to make a call. Steele shot the victim twice and fled the scene. Steele was arrested at work the next day and had a wound to his hand that indicated he had been the person who climbed over a barbed wire fence while fleeing the scene of the murder. Moreover, firearms ballistic evidence linked the gun used in the murder to Steele's residence.

Jefferson County District Attorney Danny Carr successfully prosecuted this case and obtained a guilty verdict. Steele was sentenced to 35 years' imprisonment for his felony murder conviction. Steele sought to have his conviction reversed on appeal.

The Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division handled the case during the appeals process, arguing for the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to affirm Steele's conviction. The Court did so in a decision issued Friday, August 14, 2026.

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorney General John J. Davis for his successful work on this case and thanks District Attorney Danny Carr and his staff for their valuable assistance in obtaining the felony murder conviction.

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