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**HINDS COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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PRESS RELEASE

Hinds County Jury finds Habitual Offender Guilty

March 11, 2015

For Immediate Release

(Jackson, Miss) Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith announced on March 11, 2015 that Marcus Shelby, one of three co-defendants, was found guilty of one count of depraved heart murder. This jury verdict followed a trial for the beating, strangulation, and burning of murder victim Duan Penn. The Hinds County Jury reached this verdict following a three day trial including the testimony of several officers of the Jackson Police Department and expert witnesses from the Mississippi Crime Laboratory.

On April 11, 2012, Jackson Fire Department was dispatched to a fire in a wooded area just off Methodist Home Road. Upon extinguishing the fire, a human body burned beyond recognition was discovered. Later the autopsy revealed that the body was that of a male who died as a result of blunt force trauma and strangulation. During the course of the investigation, dental records identified the victim as Duan Penn. Subsequent investigation, over the course of several months, led JPD investigators to the Huron Street area. The execution of search warrants and extensive crime scene investigation produced physical evidence linking the burned body of Penn to the original crime scene. The JPD Homicide detectives were able to identify Shelby as one of the perpetrators of the murder.

Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith addressed the jury verdict stating:

"This verdict is another step toward our goal of removing violent habitual offenders from the streets. Citizens of Hinds County, serving as jurors, play a very significant role in the justice system. As attorneys prosecuting on behalf of the State of Mississippi, we dedicate our time and efforts to accurately and effectively present the evidence of crimes committed by violent offenders to a jury of Hinds County residents. Through service as jurors, the residents of Hinds County have the power to stand with this office and demand that habitual violent offenders be held accountable."

Marcus Shelby was indicted and convicted as a violent habitual offender and is currently facing a potential life sentence. Shelby will be sentenced April 14, 2015, by Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Jeff Weill.