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**Haine announces guilty verdict for first-degree
murder following jury trial in cold case**

Edwardsville, IL — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced Thursday that a jury has found a former Pontoon Beach man guilty of first-degree murder in the cold-case killing of a woman who disappeared in 2013.

The jury deliberated about three hours Thursday before finding Roger Dale Sutton, 57, guilty of first-degree murder and concealment of a homicidal death. The jury found that he fatally beat and strangled Patrenia "Trina" Butler-Turner, who was 40 and had been a resident of East St. Louis. She was reported missing by her family in January 2013, after she failed to return from a trip to the store.

The murder came to light in December 2022, when a nephew of Sutton walked into the Pontoon Beach Police Department and made a report: He had witnessed his uncle kill a woman nearly 10 years earlier, and helped dispose of the body. The nephew led investigators to a wooded location in Pontoon Beach, behind Sutton's former apartment. There, amid dense brush and debris, investigators discovered a skull and other skeletal remains.

The nephew testified at trial about how he began feeling guilt after seeing television commercials featuring family gatherings during the holidays. He said he drove to the Police Department, parked nearby, prayed for 20 minutes, then went inside. He told police he saw Sutton punch the woman for no apparent reason, then choke her as she cried for help.

"I replay that moment over and over again, and I hate myself for freezing," the nephew testified.

Haine said it's always preferable that police be notified immediately when a crime has been committed.

"But as this case shows, it's never too late to do the right thing. It's never too late to help bring justice and closure to a grieving family," Haine said. "With this verdict, I pray that the family and loved ones of Trina can finally begin to heal."

Haine commended Pontoon Beach Police and other agencies that assisted in the investigation, including Madison County Sheriff's Office, Madison County Coroner's Office and Illinois State Police Division of Forensic Services.

“Their tireless and meticulous investigation pieced together what happened nearly 10 years earlier, and allowed our prosecution team to paint a clear picture for the jury,” Haine said. “People who choose to hurt and kill people in our community should look over their shoulders, because there is no statute of limitations on finding, arresting and prosecuting them.”

The case was prosecuted by Assistant State’s Attorney Lauren Maricle, who is Chief of the Violent Crimes Unit at the State’s Attorney’s Office, and Assistant State’s Attorney Mike Stewart.

Maricle, in her closing argument, said: “For 10 long years, Patrenia’s children waited for their mother to come home. For 10 long years, Patrenia’s mother, Ms. Butler, wondered what happened to her daughter. For 10 long years, her loved ones had no answers about what happened to her.”

That all changed, Maricle argued, when the nephew “decided he could no longer keep the defendant’s despicable secret.”

The jury rejected a defense argument that the defendant panicked and hid the victim’s body after she died of an overdose at his apartment.

Maricle argued that Sutton hid the victim’s body in an attempt to conceal the manner of her death.

“He strangled her in cold blood,” Maricle argued. “He discarded her like a piece of trash.”

Circuit Judge Tim Berkley presided at the trial. Sutton will be sentenced later.

First-degree murder is punishable by up to 60 years in prison; concealment of a homicidal death is punishable by up to 7 years in prison.

Charges of concealment of a homicidal death are pending against the nephew.