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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville— A Granite City man was sentenced today to 70 years in prison for the 2012 beating death of 20-month-old Jaesean “Bug” Rusher.

John Holmon III (d.o.b. 05/10/1973) was convicted by a Madison County jury on February 12, 2015, following a week-long jury trial at the Madison County Criminal Justice Center in Edwardsville. During the trial, jurors heard evidence presented by State's Attorney Tom Gibbons and First Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Mudge supporting the State's charges that during the time Holmon was alone with Jaesean on September 10, 2012, he beat him and ultimately killed him. Autopsy results showed that the victim had more than 50 injuries, with the cause of death listed as a closed head injury. The jury deliberated less than three hours before returning a guilty verdict against Holmon.

Officers from the Granite City Police Department, along with Granite City Fire Department/EMS responded to a 911 call to the home of Jaesean Rusher (d.o.b. 12/29/10) located in the 2000 block of 14th Street in Granite City at approximately 12:59 p.m. Rusher, who was unresponsive, was taken to Gateway Regional Hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The victim lived at the home with his mother, grandmother and Holmon, who was the boyfriend of his mother at the time. Rusher had been left in the care of Holmon after his mother, Dollie Rusher, left for school around 6:30 a.m. The grandmother of Jaesean, Tommie Rusher (now deceased), had recently returned to the residence before Holmon came to her with the lifeless body of Jaesean. She attempted CPR while also phoning 911. The Madison County State's Attorney's Office charged Holmon the following day with First Degree Murder.

“Today’s sentencing was about attaining justice for Jaesean “Bug” Rusher,” said State's Attorney Gibbons. “His young life was tragically cut short by a man who had been entrusted to care for him. Instead, this violent, brutal man betrayed that trust in the most heinous way possible.” Gibbons added that he was pleased with the sentence. “This defendant has justly been removed from society, and he will spend the rest of his life in prison. Justice demanded it and decency required it. And for taking the life of this innocent, little boy, the defendant deserved it.”

Holmon was sentenced by Associate Judge Neil Schroeder. Normal penalty range for a murder conviction is 20 – 60 years in prison, however, Holmon was eligible for an extended sentence of 60-100 years due to Jaesean’s age at the time of the murder. **He will have to serve 100% of his sentence.**

Gibbons thanked First Assistant Mudge, the Granite City Police Department, the Madison County Coroner and all of the medical personnel whose work on this case contributed to the successful outcome.

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