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PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville—Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons announced that Granite City resident Brian W. Pinkas was sentenced to 45 years in prison for the murder of Sharon Reynolds.

Pinkas, 52, was convicted by a Madison County jury on September 13, 2012, for the February 2004 murder of Reynolds, 37. On the night of the murder, Pinkas and Reynolds, who were involved in a relationship, began arguing at their home in Granite City. Pinkas threatened Reynolds with a shotgun before shooting her in the head and killing her.

Jury deliberations lasted approximately three hours before the jurors returned a guilty verdict on the First Degree Murder charge. Assistant State's Attorneys Jennifer Vucich and Ryan Sweet prosecuted the case.

Pinkas originally pleaded guilty to Reynolds murder in March 2005 and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. He appealed his sentence, stating his plea was invalid based on the fact that Illinois law requires a person receive an additional 25 years added to their sentence when a gun is used in a murder. The Illinois Fifth District Appellate Court agreed and remanded the case back to Madison County. Pinkas was allowed to withdraw his plea and request a new trial.

“It was unwise of Mr. Pinkas to roll the dice with my office,” said State's Attorney Gibbons. “Though this was a challenging case to prosecute, we nonetheless refused a plea bargain and tried the case, and the defendant lost. His failed gamble in the justice system will more than double his prison sentence – which is virtually a life sentence, which is appropriate for this gruesome crime.”

Pinkas faced 20-60 years in prison on the murder as well as the mandatory, additional 25 years. Individuals convicted of murder in Illinois are required to serve 100% of their sentence. Associate Judge James Hackett presided over the case.

“I want to commend the extraordinary work of my trial team, the Granite City Police Department, and the Madison County Coroner for giving it their all to see justice done for this family,” Gibbons added. “Hopefully now, the victim’s family can rest more peacefully knowing that he will be behind bars for decades to come.”

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