



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
June 20, 2019**

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## **VIRGINIA COURT OF APPEALS AFFIRMED THE CONVICTIONS AGAINST BRAULIO CASTILLO**

LEESBURG, Virginia – June 4, 2019. The Virginia Court of Appeals affirmed the convictions for first degree murder, burglary and violation of a protective order against Braulio Castillo. A six week trial concluded in the Spring of 2016 with the Jury fixing Castillo's sentence at life, plus sixteen years imprisonment.

The jury heard evidence of how Castillo broke into his estranged wife's home, suffocated and strangled her, and then staged it to look like a suicide. Forensic, medical, and cell phone evidence proved otherwise. A neighbor's security camera footage caught an individual going up to the home before Michele Castillo was killed. A close friend of Braulio Castillo identified him in the video.

In a sixty-six page published opinion, the Court repeatedly stressed that the evidence of his guilt was overwhelming. The defense alleged ten separate assignments of error in the case and the Court rejected each.

"The opinion is a significant one for the Commonwealth," said Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Nicole Wittmann, who was the lead trial attorney. "The Court was very thorough in its analysis, addressing each issue of appeal. Additionally, of particular significance was that the evidence related to the cadaver dog, an issue of first impression in Virginia, was found it to be proper and admissible."

The dog handler that deployed the victim recovery dogs, Martin Grime, is a world-wide renowned expert in the field of cadaver dogs. He and his first cadaver dog Eddie and his blood detection dog Keela were deployed to Portugal by the British Government when Madeline McCann disappeared. You can presently see Mr. Grime on the Netflix show, "What happened to Madeline" as he uses them to help investigate the case.

Mr. Grime was hired by the FBI to come to America and help them establish a cadaver dog program. Mr. Grime brought his two dogs, Morse the cadaver dog, and Keela the blood detection dog, to the Castillo home seventeen days after her body was located. Morse alerted to

the basement bathroom where Mrs. Castillo was found, and also to the foot of her bed in the master bedroom.

The cadaver dog testimony was presented at trial so the jury could consider whether the victim had been killed in her bedroom and then moved to the bathroom. The defendant continuously alleged throughout the course of the trial that Mrs. Castillo committed suicide. The cadaver dog evidence helped the Commonwealth show that this defense was not possible.

After being informed of the Court of Appeals decision, Martin Grime stated that the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office "support for our search philosophy and strategy ensured that all relevant forensic intelligence was secured and helped solve the case. It is that sort of forward thinking and acceptance of science and support of research that makes your team a cut above the rest."

In addition to the cadaver dog evidence, the Commonwealth presented expert testimony from the Medical Examiner, a cell phone expert, and several scientists related to DNA recovered.

A full copy of the Court of Appeals Opinion may be found at:  
<http://www.courts.state.va.us/opinions/opncavwp/0140174.pdf>



Michelle Castillo



Martin Grime

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