

Prison sentence for final defendant in Springfield cabbie slaying



Christian County Sheriff's Office

Donnella Hamilton

By CHRIS DETTRO

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Posted Jul 14, 2010 @ 11:15 PM

Last update Jul 15, 2010 @ 05:46 AM

TAYLORVILLE — The last defendant in the year-ago shooting death of Springfield cabdriver Steven Brummett pleaded guilty to concealment of a homicide and theft and was sentenced Wednesday to nine years in prison.

Donnella Hamilton, 27, of Springfield accompanied Brandon Allsup, 28, and Ashley Davis, 21, to a vacant farmhouse near Pawnee, where Allsup shot Brummett in the back of the head early on July 25, 2009.

Allsup pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in January and was sentenced to natural life in prison. Davis admitted to concealment of a homicide and was sentenced to five years in prison in May.

Hamilton also had been charged with first-degree murder, but those charges were dismissed as part of the plea agreement.

Circuit Judge Ronald Spears sentenced Hamilton to five years for concealment of a homicide and four years, to be served consecutively, for taking some of the money Brummett had been given for the cab ride.

“There was direct evidence that she (Hamilton) committed certain crimes after the homicide occurred and that she was in some way the recipient of the funds taken from Mr. Brummett,” Wykoff said. “She accepted responsibility for that.”

Brummett, a driver for Lincoln Checker Cab of Springfield, picked up Hamilton, Allsup and Davis at The Cove, a bar at 1616 N. Dirksen Parkway the evening of July 24. He agreed to take them to the Christian County residence for \$45, according to statements from Allsup's plea hearing.

Allsup had met Hamilton at a homeless shelter in Springfield two days earlier, and the two became boyfriend-girlfriend.

Hamilton had hoped to find a friend at The Cove to take the three to a music concert in rural Missouri. When she couldn't find anyone willing to take them, Allsup suggested taking a cab to a farm where he had worked early in the summer and where he believed the owner kept a spare vehicle.

"The primary actor and most culpable person in this crime is the person who fired the gun, Brandon Allsup," Christian County State's Attorney Thomas Finks said Wednesday. "This Texas native, who found his way to Springfield last January, is, we believe, a true psychopath that would kill anyone at any time for any reason or no reason. We demanded that he spend the rest of his life in prison as a punishment commensurate with his conduct and to ensure the public's safety."

There were no witnesses to the crime other than the three defendants, Finks said.

"The vast weight of the available evidence points to an immediate, unplanned and spontaneous decision by Brandon Allsup to pull out the gun and shoot Steven Brummett," Finks said. "All defendants, including Brandon Allsup, have maintained that Allsup was solely responsible, and the two female defendants had no way of knowing what was to occur."

He said it couldn't be proven that either Hamilton or Davis was legally accountable for Allsup's conduct.

"We were prepared to go to trial on that issue — whether my client was responsible for the homicide," Springfield defense attorney Mark Wykoff said.

Chris Dettro can be reached at 788-1510.

Copyright 2010 The State Journal-Register. Some rights reserved