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STATE'S ATTORNEY

----- Official News Release -----

Allen Schimmelpfennig Found Guilty Of First Degree Murder In “Bodyless Murder” Case

May 10, 2023, Peoria, IL – In a first of its kind, prosecutors with the Peoria County State’s Attorney’s Office were able to convict Allen Schimmelpfennig of First Degree Murder, despite never locating the victim’s body. This is often referred to as a bodyless murder case. Based on the strong circumstantial evidence presented, a Peoria County jury took only 90 minutes to convict Schimmelpfennig (30) of First Degree Murder and Concealment of a Homicidal Death.

On March 8, 2021, the victim, Gabriel K. Cook (34) was reported missing by his family. That same day the Peoria County Sheriff’s Department responded to a call of a Jeep on fire on Kickapoo Creek Road. The Jeep turned out to be the vehicle Cook used that belonged to his grandmother. A witness testified to seeing Cook and Schimmelpfennig together earlier that day loading a motorbike into the Jeep. That was the last time Cook was seen alive. Security cameras also captured the Jeep near a storage locker leased by Schimmelpfennig.

In the days following the initial missing person report, investigators found no signs of Cook. Prior to his disappearance, Cook would have daily conversations with his girlfriend and would video chat weekly with his daughter who lived out of state. He also lived with and helped care for his grandmother. That all stopped on March 8, 2021.

Eventually the investigation led Peoria Police Department detectives to Schimmelpfennig’s storage locker. Inside they discovered a large pool of dried blood that was confirmed to be from Cook. Dr. Amanda Youmans, a forensic pathologist, testified that based on the amount of blood found in the storage locker, a person would have needed immediate medical attention in order to survive. There were no records from any area medical facility of Cook receiving treatment. Detectives also located .380 shell casings that matched a shell casing located in Schimmelpfennig’s apartment and the motorbike that Schimmelpfennig and Cook had loaded into the Jeep. Assistant State’s Attorneys, Dave Gast and Jason Ramos, introduced additional incriminating evidence, including cell phone and GPS records, that linked Schimmelpfennig and Cook together that day.

“Murder trials without the victim’s body are difficult to prove. The body is usually the strongest piece of evidence. It can tell you the ‘who, what, when, where and why’ of a murder. Here, we turned to

technology and good old-fashioned police work. We are grateful that Mr. Cook's family can now have the closure they have been searching for." Jodi Hoos, Peoria County State's Attorney

The post-trial motions and sentencing will be held on June 22, 2023.

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