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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

People v. Christopher Echols 2021 CF 497

On January 18, 2021, Jose Pacheco was shot and killed in Danville, IL. After a thorough investigation by the Danville Police Department, in cooperation with the Vermilion County State's Attorney's Office, Christopher Echols was indicted by a Vermilion County Grand Jury and formally charged with First Degree Murder, on September 16, 2021. Subsequently, Echols was apprehended in Joplin, Mo.

The Illinois Rules of Professional Responsibility and the Illinois Rules of Evidence require the prosecution and the police to continuously disclose to the defense throughout the course of any prosecution any new evidence that is discovered. When a prosecutor knows of new, credible, and material evidence creating a reasonable likelihood that a defendant did not commit the offense charged the prosecutor must remedy the circumstances. Once new evidence is discovered, justice requires, in any criminal prosecution, that the prosecutor in cooperation with the police evaluate the new evidence and determine if the prosecution can move forward to a trial.

As the duly-elected State's Attorney I am bound by my ethical obligations to act as justice requires. The integrity of any prosecution is the foundation of justice, truth, and fairness.

During the diligent preparation for trial with the Danville Police Department, new evidence in this case was discovered, which prevents the prosecution of Christopher Echols at this time. The murder charges against Christopher Echols have been dismissed. The newly discovered evidence is being assessed and reviewed by the Danville Police Department and the Vermilion County State's Attorney's Office.

The murder of Jose Pacheco is still under investigation by the Danville Police Department and the Vermilion County State's Attorney's Office. The public is reminded that in the State of Illinois the charge of First-Degree Murder has no statute of limitations.

THE PUBLIC IS REMINDED THAT CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO PROVE ITS CHARGES IN COURT BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT.