



# BCPO News

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## **Lumberton Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for 2016 Homicide**

**MOUNT HOLLY, N.J.** – Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Lumberton man was sentenced today to 20 years in New Jersey state prison for killing an acquaintance in late 2016 and burying his body in the back yard of the home he shared with his father and brother.

Christopher Costello, 29, must serve 85 percent of the term before becoming eligible for parole under the sentence handed down by the Hon. Christopher J. Garrenger, J.S.C.

A jury found Costello guilty in August of Aggravated Manslaughter (First Degree) in the death of Justin Dubois, 23, who was originally from West Windsor, Mercer County.

The conviction came during the second trial for Costello involving the death of Dubois. He was convicted in March of Desecration of Human Remains (Second Degree) and Hindering Apprehension (Third Degree). The jury found Costello not guilty of Murder following the first trial, and could not reach a verdict on the charge of Aggravated Manslaughter.

Costello's brother, Bryan, 26, was sentenced to 15 years in New Jersey state prison in April after declaring that he killed Dubois. He pled guilty to one count of Aggravated Manslaughter (First Degree).

Bryan Costello asserted in Superior Court that he beat Dubois with a baseball bat, then buried his body in the backyard of the family's Spencer Court home with the help of his brother, Christopher.

"This was a gruesome, horrifying crime that was difficult to prosecute due to the collusion of the defendants in their attempt to evade justice," Prosecutor Coffina said. "But the Costello brothers could not escape the physical evidence presented to the jury. Justin's family has endured a terrible ordeal over the past two years, and we honor them today for their perseverance in seeking justice for him.

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## **Page 2**

The investigation into the killing began as a missing persons case when a relative of the victim contacted police on October 31, 2016, and indicated she had not seen nor heard from Justin Dubois for a few days, which was uncharacteristic.

Investigators who were executing a search warrant at the Costellos' residence observed an area in the back yard where the soil appeared to have been recently tilled. Excavation of the area uncovered the body of Justin Dubois, who had occasionally been residing with the Costellos at the time of his death.

The trial of Christopher Costello was led by Assistant Prosecutor Louis Casadia, with assistance from Bob VanGilst, supervisor of the Violent Crime Section of the Major Crimes Unit.

The case was investigated by the BCPO Major Crimes Unit – Violent Crimes Section, Crime Scene Unit and High-Tech Crimes Unit, the Lumberton Police Department and the West Windsor Police Department.

The lead investigators were BCPO Detective Nick Villano, BCPO Detective Tom LaRosa and West Windsor Police Department detectives William Jones and Carey Zacheis.

**END**

**2018 - 85**