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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: Anthony Martin, Commonwealth's Attorney for Nelson County

DATE: January 23, 2015

RE: DNA Testing By FBI Excludes Jesse Matthew from Evidence Collected from the Randy Taylor case involving the murder and abduction of Alexis Murphy

In October 2014, Jesse Leroy Matthew, Jr. was arrested on charges relating to the disappearance of Hannah Graham, a University of Virginia student. Michael J. Hallahan, II, attorney for Randy Allen Taylor who was convicted of the August 2013 murder and abduction of Alexis Murphy in Nelson County requested DNA tests in order to determine whether or not Jesse Matthew's DNA could be found on evidence collected in the Taylor case.

Specifically, Taylor's attorney requested a comparison between Matthew's DNA collected in investigations unrelated to the Randy Taylor case, and DNA samples found on swabs taken from inside the 2003 Nissan Maxima that Alexis Murphy was driving on August 3, 2013 when she disappeared to see if there was a match.

At the time Taylor's attorney requested this testing, the Nelson County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, the Nelson County Sheriff's Office, the FBI and Virginia State Police maintained that there was no credible evidence linking Matthew to the abduction and murder of Alexis Murphy in which Randy Taylor was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

Randy Taylor was the last known person to have had contact with Alexis Murphy on August 3, 2013 shortly before she went missing. All of the physical evidence at trial showing a violent struggle was located inside Randy Taylor's camper. This physical evidence consisted of a diamond stud, a fingernail fragment, a long black hair that showed signs of being forcibly removed, all of which had Alexis Murphy's DNA. The diamond stud and nail were found on the floor of Randy Taylor's camper. The long black hair was found on Randy Taylor's pillow.

Alexis Murphy's shattered cellphone was found in the brush outside Randy Taylor's camper. The blue T-shirt that Randy Taylor was seen wearing at the Liberty gas station on August 3rd when he was seen talking with Alexis Murphy, was found under Randy Taylor's sofa inside his camper. That shirt contained Alexis Murphy's blood and had hair extensions and false eyelashes that had Alexis Murphy's DNA and Randy Taylor's DNA balled up inside the shirt.

Randy Taylor was then seen at Applebee's Restaurant around 10:00 p.m. August 4th approximately 15 minutes after Alexis Murphy's vehicle was seen pulling in the Carmike parking lot within walking distance of Applebee's. Taylor then got a cab ride back to Nelson County, and refused to give authorities the name of the person who drove him down to Charlottesville that evening. The cab driver's name was John Sapp who testified at trial.

Randy Taylor denied ever going to Liberty gas station on August 3rd and denied ever seeing Alexis Murphy. Only after authorities found forensic evidence, putting Alexis Murphy inside his camper, did Randy Taylor admit that Alexis Murphy was in his camper but was with a third person. According to Randy Taylor, the "black guy with cornrows" and Alexis Murphy left in separate vehicles and everything was fine.

Within days after Randy Taylor's arrest for abduction of Alexis Murphy, Randy Taylor and Mr. Hallahan, his attorney, were 100% certain that the black male that Taylor says Alexis Murphy left with was Dameon Bradley, a thin light-skinned black male, who drove a maroon Chevy caprice. Mr. Hallahan provided law enforcement with a photo of Dameon Bradley who looks absolutely nothing like Jesse Matthew. Dameon Bradley testified at Taylor's trial that he did know Alexis Murphy and they were only friends and he worked at the McDonalds at the Liberty gas station which is a place that Randy Taylor frequented on a daily basis. Bradley also denied ever going to Taylor's camper and had an alibi for the weekend of August 3, 2013.

At no time did the name Jesse Matthew ever come up by Randy Taylor or Mr. Hallahan until Matthew's arrest in the Hannah Graham case in October 2014.

Nelson County authorities have still not received any information from investigators in the Jesse Matthew case that links him in any way to the abduction and murder of Alexis Murphy. Some of the same investigators who worked the Alexis Murphy case were also involved in the Hannah Graham and Morgan Harrington cases in which Jesse Matthew is either charged or considered a suspect.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned facts and to act in an abundance of caution, Nelson County law enforcement authorities agreed to compare Matthew's DNA collected from other cases to the DNA that was collected in the Randy Taylor case in 2013.

This testing has been completed by the FBI Laboratory in Quantico, Virginia. After comparing Jesse Matthew's DNA profile to the evidence collected from the 2003 Nissan Maxima that was driven by Alexis Murphy on the day she disappeared from Nelson County on August 3, 2013 and owned by her father, **Matthew was excluded as the source of DNA from samples found on swabs from the Nissan's driver's side head rest, and the steering wheel.** The FBI Laboratory was not able to exclude Murphy's father nor her brother from the driver's side headrest nor the steering wheel of the Nissan Maxima. They were however able to exclude Jesse Matthew.

In an effort to be completely thorough, and in accordance with FBI Laboratory procedures, a DNA scientist also compared Matthew's DNA profile from evidence collected in 2013 from both inside Randy Taylor's camper and his GMC Suburban. **Matthew again was excluded as a source of DNA from all of that evidence.**

In light of all the factors mentioned above and now the added scientific testing that has excluded Jesse Matthew, law enforcement affirms its earlier conclusion that there is no credible evidence linking Jesse Matthew to the abduction and murder of Alexis Murphy.