

# Florida Supreme Court throws out death sentence for Fort Pierce killer

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TALLAHASSEE — A Fort Pierce man convicted of a 2004 murder will not face death following a Florida Supreme Court ruling Thursday that reduced his sentence and sent the case back to trial.

Eddie Junior Bigham, now 50, will leave death row following a state high court decision to reduce his penalty to second-degree murder in the strangulation death of Lourdes "Lulu" Cavazos-Blandin. She was found dead in a wooded area in Fort Pierce. She was 40 at the time of her death.

In a 6-1 ruling, the court majority determined there was insufficient evidence to charge Bigham with first-degree murder and a sentence of death. That said, the court said enough evidence existed to prove that Bigham was the killer.

"While we find that the evidence was sufficient to rule out any hypothesis but that Bigham caused Lulu's death, we do not find that the evidence was sufficient to prove that Bigham had the conscious purpose to kill Lulu," the court wrote in a group opinion.

One justice disagreed while another who supported the majority said evidence showed Bigham should not have been charged with second-degree murder.