

## Covington Secures Retrial for Former Death Row Inmate

**WASHINGTON, DC, November 19, 2009** — The Mississippi Court of Appeals has granted a retrial for Covington & Burling LLP client Cory Maye, who was convicted and sentenced to death for the 2001 shooting of a police officer that occurred during a narcotics task force search of Mr. Maye's home. In its opinion of November 17, the Court of Appeals found that Mr. Maye had been denied the right to be tried in the county where the offense occurred, and that the trial court had improperly rejected Mr. Maye's attempt to withdraw a prior motion to transfer venue.

The shooting for which Mr. Maye had been convicted took place on the night after Christmas in 2001. Mr. Maye, a young father with no prior arrests or convictions, testified at his trial that he did not realize it was the police who were breaking into his home, and that he fired to protect himself and his one year old daughter from what he thought was an unlawful intruder. A jury convicted him and sentenced him to death. In February 2006, Covington began representing Mr. Maye in connection with post-trial motions. After evidentiary hearings before the judge who presided over Mr. Maye's original trial, the Circuit Court for Jefferson Davis County held in December 2006 that Mr. Maye's trial counsel had provided ineffective assistance during the sentencing phase of the trial. The death penalty was vacated, and Mr. Maye was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The appeal successfully resolved on November 17 sought review of the trial court's 2006 decision not to disturb Mr. Maye's conviction. Over the past three years, Mr. Maye's case has gained considerable attention in both legal and non-legal media, and his plight was the subject of the award-winning 2008 documentary *Mississippi Drug War Blues: The Case of Cory Maye*.

The Covington team which represented Mr. Maye in securing his retrial was led by partner Michael Labson, with associates Abram Pafford, Anna St. John and Alissa Jijon, and former Covington lawyers Ben Vernia, Jessica Gabel and James Sullivan. The firm's co-counsel is Bob Evans of Monticello, Mississippi.

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