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Attorney Says Client Devised Defense Strategy

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - A northeast Kansas attorney facing disciplinary action for how he represented a man in a capital murder case says he is being punished for using a trial strategy developed and advocated by his client.

Dennis Hawver of Ozawkie represented Phillip Cheatham Jr. during a jury trial in 2005 in which the defendant was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death. The Kansas Supreme court reversed Cheatham's convictions and ordered a new trial, ruling he had received ineffective counsel from Hawver.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reports Hawver on Tuesday filed a brief with the Kansas Supreme Court contesting the findings of a three-member disciplinary panel that recommended disbarment or indefinite suspension.

Regardless of the outcome, Hawver says his lawyering days are probably over.

Associated Press