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### **DUVAL COUNTY JURY FINDS HUGH PERRY GUILTY OF SEXUAL BATTERY**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Duval County jury found Hugh Perry guilty of Sexual Battery for the 2022 rape of a woman. With the verdict, Perry faces up to 30 years in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Jonathan Sacks will sentence Perry at a later date.

On Feb. 26, 2022, the victim went with friends to a concert in Jacksonville Beach. After the concert, they went to a bar and returned to her friend's apartment. The following morning, the victim woke up naked in her own apartment miles away without any recollection of how she got there. She found her clothes and bed sheets in the washer and had an unknown number in her cellphone, later revealed to be Perry's burner phone. The victim felt soreness and immediately reported to a nearby hospital to undergo a forensic sexual assault exam. During the investigation, the victim reached out to Perry to about the night; he admitted to meeting her outside of her friend's apartment and following her home, but denied having sex with her. Key card information and surveillance footage showed the victim returned home around 2 a.m. and Perry followed her. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement analyzed her forensic exam and confirmed Perry's DNA was found in the sexual assault kit.

A prior incident in 2013 was discovered involving two female victims around the same age who reported a sexual assault after leaving a bar and waking up with significant memory loss. Perry was identified as a suspect after surveillance video captured him leaving the bar with the victims, which they did not remember. Those victims submitted to a forensic sexual assault exam and Perry's DNA was confirmed in one of their sexual assault kits. Their testimony was used as Williams Rule evidence.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Catie Messinger and Elizabeth McEwan.