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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CRUZ FOUND GUILTY OF MURDER, SENTENCED TO 40 YEARS

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Marsai Cruz was found guilty by a jury of Second Degree-Murder, Attempted Second-Degree Murder, and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. The Honorable Tatiana Salvador sentenced Cruz to 40 years in Florida State Prison during a June 8, 2022, hearing.

In the early morning hours of Nov. 21, 2020, members of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office were in the parking lot of the Zone 6 substation when they heard nearby gunfire. Officers went to the intersection of Harts Road and Dunn Avenue to find a car that had recently crashed and a deceased victim in the driver's seat. When officers pulled the man from the car, they observed he had been shot multiple times. The investigation led to a nearby motel where shell casings were found near the exit. Surveillance footage captured a man — later identified as Cruz — walking on a second-floor landing with a handgun in his hand before running downstairs and shooting multiple times at the victim's car as it drove away. A passenger in the car, also a victim, fled by foot but relayed the incident to law enforcement in an interview. Witnesses at the hotel confirmed seeing the shooting and knowing Cruz through various aliases. Cruz, a previously convicted felon, was unable to possess a firearm and was arrested for his various crimes.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Lara Mattina and LaTasha Campbell.