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WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MURDERING GIRLFRIEND, TAMPERING WITH EVIDENCE

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Shannon McCarthy pleaded guilty to Second-Degree Murder, Tampering with Evidence, and Written Threats to Kill or Do Bodily Injury for the murder of Heather Sheppard. Per the negotiated plea, the Honorable Meredith Charbula sentenced McCarthy to 30 years in Florida State Prison.

On July 3, 2023, the victim's daughter contacted the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to report her mother, Heather Sheppard, missing. She last saw Sheppard a few days prior at the Colonial Avenue home where she stayed with her girlfriend, McCarthy. When the victim's daughter and another person tried to go inside the home to check on Sheppard, McCarthy would not allow them inside the home and claimed the victim left. On July 4, McCarthy told the victim's daughter and a friend they could pick up Sheppard's belongings; once at the house, McCarthy would not allow them on the front porch, and they reported smelling a foul odor. On July 5, JSO's Missing Persons detectives responded to the home and were given consent to search the home by McCarthy; they witnessed her throw a tarp over items on the front porch. They removed the tarp and found Sheppard's body. Homicide detectives took over the investigation and interviewed neighbors who reported hearing gunshots on June 28 and June 30. Multiple firearms were removed from the home as evidence. Officers detained and questioned McCarthy who admitted to sending Sheppard texts threatening to kill her. Sheppard's autopsy confirmed she was shot multiple times. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement analyzed the projectiles and confirmed they matched McCarthy's gun.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Joseph Licandro.