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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DODSON PLEADS GUILTY TO FIRST-DEGREE MURDER IN KILLING OF CHILD

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Steven Dodson pleaded guilty to First-Degree Murder, Attempted First-Degree Murder, Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, and Aggravated Child Abuse, all related to the shooting death of a 2-year-old boy. Dodson pleaded guilty in open court shortly after a Duval County grand jury indicted him on the charges. Following his plea, the Honorable Jonathan Sacks sentenced Dodson to life in Florida State Prison without the possibility of parole.

On March 22, 2026, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a Labelle Street apartment complex after calls of a person shot. When they arrived, they found a 2-year-old boy who had suffered a gunshot wound to the head; he was pronounced deceased a short time later at the hospital. The additional victim was in a relationship with Dodson and told police he was the shooter. Dodson had shot toward her while she held the child in her arms. Video surveillance from the complex showed Dodson run from the apartment and throw a gun into a dumpster before running away. Another witness heard Dodson and the victim argue before she heard a gunshot and the victim yell about her child being shot. A child witness also relayed information to investigators. Dodson was apprehended the next day by the U.S. Marshals and JSO SWAT at a nearby apartment complex.

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