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CHAD ABSHER FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER OF ASHLEE RUCKER

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Chad Absher was found guilty by a jury of First-Degree Murder and Attempted First-Degree Murder in the 2017 killing of Ashlee Rucker. He also pleaded guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. With the verdict, Absher faces a mandatory verdict of life in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Tatiana Salvador will formally sentence Absher at a future hearing.

On Oct. 31, 2017, officers with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a San Juan Avenue apartment complex in reference to a person shot. Upon arrival at the residence, officers found two female victims — sisters Ashlee and Lisa Rucker — shot. Ashlee died at the scene; Lisa was transported to a local hospital with life-threatening injuries. Before being transported, Lisa identified Absher as the person who had shot them both. Witnesses who were present at the scene included an adult male who called 911 and two children. Absher and Ashlee began arguing before Absher became physically aggressive toward Ashlee in a back bedroom. The adult witness and Lisa intervened before the adult witness left the residence and retreated to the apartment complex's first floor. Shortly after, the adult witness heard two gunshots and then saw Absher flee the apartment concealing a rifle in his jacket. The male witness returned to the apartment to find the sisters had been shot in the head. Absher — a convicted felon who was not legally able to possess a firearm — was later apprehended after a manhunt by law enforcement with the rifle used in the crime.

"My thanks to law enforcement and the prosecution team of Cameron French, Trey Atkinson, and Jen Braunstein for their commitment to Ashlee Rucker's family and for their great work on this tragic case," said State Attorney Melissa Nelson.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Cameron French, Trey Atkinson, and Jen Braunstein.