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JURY FINDS CLAY COUNTY MAN GUILTY OF POSSESSING FIREARM, ANIMAL CRUELTY

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces Richard Pate, of Keystone Heights, was found guilty by a jury of Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon and Animal Cruelty. Pate now faces up to 15 years in Florida State Prison. A sentencing hearing is scheduled before the Honorable Don Lester on Aug. 3, 2021.

On Aug. 1, 2020, Pate was at his residence with his family and a couple of friends. Pate's dog growled at a 3-year-old child, which resulted in Pate grabbing the dog, taking him to a bathroom, and striking him multiple times. In the process, the dog bit Pate, causing him to become angry and taking the dog to the front porch. Pate returned to his bedroom, retrieved a revolver, then went back to the front porch and shot the dog in the head and another round into the ground. Pate was previously convicted of a felony and was prohibited from having a firearm.

The case was investigated by the Clay County Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Ashley Young Terry and Jamie Cona