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TRIO SENTENCED TO MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR MURDER OF MELVIN CLARK

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces Doug Cercy, Ray Jones, and Jennifer Schulte, all of Jacksonville, were sentenced by the Honorable Angela Cox to the maximum penalties provided by their plea agreements for the murder of Melvin Clark. Cercy and Jones were sentenced to life in Florida State Prison, while Schulte received 40 years for the April 2017 murder of the 86-year-old veteran. Each pleaded guilty to Second-Degree Murder, Armed Kidnapping, and Armed Robbery.

On April 8, 2017, Cercy, Jones, and Schulte schemed to rob Clark. The two men orchestrated the robbery after Schulte made contact with Clark. When Clark arrived at an establishment to meet Schulte, he was ambushed by Cercy and Jones. They used a fake gun to rob Clark before forcing him to drive to an ATM in the Baldwin area to withdraw money. Video surveillance captured this transaction. After the withdrawal, the trio forced Clark to drive to an isolated, wooded area off Interstate 10, where Cercy and Jones forced Clark out of the car. Clark begged for his life, but the men slit his throat and left him for dead in the isolated area. The three then fled south to Boca Raton, Florida, in Clark's vehicle. U.S. Marshals tracked the trio's cellphone usage to a bus station in the area and the three were taken into custody at a nearby pharmacy.

Clark was found unconscious along Maxville Highway by a passerby. He later died from his injuries.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Mark Caliel and Lara Mattina, and was investigated by the U.S. Marshals and Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.