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KEY SENTENCED AS CAREER CRIMINAL TO LIFE IN PRISON

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces the Honorable Mark Borello has sentenced Cody Key, of Jacksonville, to life in Florida State Prison as a Violent Career Criminal. A jury convicted Key on March 30, 2021, of Burglary to a Dwelling or Structure with Damage Over \$1,000, two counts of Burglary to a Dwelling, two counts of Grand Theft Auto, and Trespass in a Structure or Conveyance.

In the early morning hours of Aug. 18, 2019, officers with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a witness call about a tow truck and a white sedan stuck in the mud at a park. The witness said Key had knocked on his door asking for assistance to get his vehicle out of the mud. Despite their attempts, the car was not freed, and the witness told Key he would need a tow truck. About an hour later, Key returned driving a tow truck, but it also became stuck in the mud. Key then left the scene on foot and the witness called authorities. Shortly before this occurred, an officer transporting a prisoner to jail noticed the gate to a Philips Highway wrecker service was laying in the road and tire tracks from where the gate was located — the stolen wrecker was the one Key attempted to use to dislodge the vehicle. Officers obtained the stuck sedan's information and tracked it to a residence a street away from the scene, but neighbors said the homeowner was out of town. In the same time span, a burglary alarm on the same street alerted law enforcement to another home where they found Key sitting in the driver's seat of another car with a bottle of liquor in his lap. Officers detained Key, who was covered in mud, and the witness was able to identify him as the man with the tow truck and sedan.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Matt Silverstein and Katelyn Johnston.