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CLAY COUNTY JURY FINDS AUSTIN GUILTY OF MURDER OF SKYLER TOWNSEND

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Clay County jury found Daveion Austin guilty of Second-Degree Murder and Armed Robbery. With the verdict, Austin faces up to life in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Don Lester will sentence Austin during a July 5, 2023, hearing.

On Nov. 17, 2020, Austin posted a picture of handguns on a social media platform and sought to sell or trade the firearms. The victim responded to Austin's post and the two came to an agreement on a purchase price and location to complete the transaction. The victim, a friend, and a family member traveled from Jacksonville to Green Cove Springs to make the deal. Austin, however, did not have the handguns and instead had recruited four other men to rob the victim of his money. When the victim arrived and gave Austin the money, Austin directed him to a spot where the other men, including Skyler Townsend, were waiting — one was armed with an AR-style rifle. Townsend and the men attacked the victim and tried to remove him from the vehicle he fled into when he was attacked. The attacker armed with the rifle fired two shots. One of the victim's entourage returned fire that struck Townsend. Everyone fled the area; neighbors came out of their homes to the scene to find Townsend in the street with gunshot wounds. He died at the hospital. The investigation revealed Austin as the mastermind of the robbery and is responsible for Townsend's death.

The case was investigated by the Green Cove Springs Police Department and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Randi Daugustinis and Hector Murcia-Bustos.