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August 25, 2023

JURY FINDS SMITH GUILTY OF MURDERING 2-YEAR-OLD GIRL

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Duval County jury has found Brandon Smith guilty of First-Degree Murder and Aggravated Child Abuse for the death of a 2-year-old girl. The Honorable Judge London Kite sentenced Smith to life in Florida State Prison for Murder and a consecutive 30 years in Florida State Prison for Aggravated Child Abuse.

On March 22, 2017, Smith and his girlfriend brought the 2-year-old victim into Memorial Hospital in Jacksonville for severe trauma. The toddler was unresponsive and not breathing. Medical staff documented brain swelling, bruises on her face, and other severe injuries. The victim was taken to UF Health Hospital for further treatment where she died the following day. Investigators with Jacksonville Sheriff's Office interviewed the mother at UF Health Jacksonville. She explained that she, Smith, and her daughter were living at a motel. On March 21, she left her daughter with Smith while she went to buy food. When she returned, the victim was in the shower. She wrapped her daughter in a towel to dry off and noticed bruising on her daughter's face. She confronted Smith about the injuries, and Smith claimed the child must have fallen in the shower. The next day, on March 22, the mother left the victim in Smith's care while she went to the laundromat. While at the laundromat, Smith called her saying he was bringing her daughter there and that the toddler was injured and bleeding. Instead of waiting for them at the laundromat, the victim's mother returned to the motel. When she pulled into the parking lot, Smith was carrying the victim to the car. They drove to the hospital with the victim in the front seat unresponsive and not breathing. Smith fled the hospital and never returned. An autopsy on March 24 showed the victim died from a multiplicity of blunt force trauma to the head.

The case was investigated by Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Adair Newman, Marleigh Gulliford, and Joy Whitmore.