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DUVAL COUNTY JURY FINDS HOWARD GUILTY OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER OF FRIEND

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Duval County jury found Darien Howard guilty of First-Degree Murder and Armed Robbery in the 2021 killing of Michael Livermore. With the verdict, Howard faces a mandatory life sentence in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Anthony Salem will sentence Howard at a later date.

Just before noon on Oct. 14, 2022, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a report of a person shot at an Arlington apartment complex. When officers arrived, they found Livermore on the ground with a single gunshot wound to his chest; he was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. Homicide detectives located a witness at the scene who told them three men — later identified as Livermore, Howard, and an unknown man — stood at the back of two cars with their trunks open. The men moved some items from one car to another, then a gunshot rang out. The witness said Livermore fell to the ground, Howard got into Livermore's vehicle and drove away, and the unknown man got into a black sedan and drove away. Surveillance footage from the area captured the driving patterns of both cars. Livermore's car was found a short time later in a different apartment complex.

Further investigation revealed Livermore and Howard were friends and often conducted business deals for large shipments of marijuana. The investigation uncovered Howard's fingerprints and DNA in Livermore's recovered car; Livermore's missing cellphones were tracked near Howard's residence; and Howard changed cellphones, deleted his social media accounts, did not respond to Livermore's family, and moved to Virginia shortly after the crime. When police ultimately interviewed Howard, he lied numerous times about different things related to the crime and refused to identify the other assailant.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Alan Mizrahi and Emily Jones.