

Office of the State Attorney  
Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida  
www.sao4th.com



MELISSA W. NELSON  
STATE ATTORNEY

311 West Monroe Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202-4242  
TEL: (904) 255-2500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Chapman

Phone: (904) 255-3004

Cell: (904) 524-6626

[ChapmanD@coj.net](mailto:ChapmanD@coj.net)

May 28, 2021

### **JOHNSON FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER IN 2019 DEATH OF NEIGHBOR**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Darnell Johnson, of Jacksonville, was found guilty by a jury of First-Degree Murder of Shirley Blakely and Armed Burglary. Johnson now faces a mandatory sentence of life in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Adrian Soud will sentence Johnson during a hearing the week of June 14, 2021.

On June 5, 2019, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a Westside Jacksonville home in reference to a deceased woman who had been stabbed multiple times and found in her bedroom. An investigation revealed that Johnson, who lived next door to Blakely, had made statements to his mother that evening that Blakely, a 54-year-old-grandmother, had worked "voodoo" on him and left. Johnson's mother drove around the neighborhood when she heard him call out — she picked him up immediately behind the victim's home. Johnson acted erratically and made statements about "voodoo" magic to the point his mother became concerned. She dropped him off and called law enforcement. Johnson's mother provided law enforcement consent to search her vehicle, where they found a shoeprint and a white plastic bag containing blood in the back seat where Johnson had sat. The shoeprint matched bloody shoeprints from the scene and a forensic analysis of the white bag with blood showed a mixture of the victim's blood and Johnson's DNA. Johnson was subsequently arrested.

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

