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### **THREE ST. JOHNS COUNTY MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO ROLES IN MURDER OF LOCAL MAN**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces Ryan Nichols, Daniel DeGuardia, and Holden Dodson have all pleaded guilty for their roles in the 2023 murder of a man in Downtown Jacksonville. Nichols on May 28, 2024, pleaded guilty to Second-Degree Murder and will be sentenced to between 15-40 years in Florida State Prison. DeGuardia and Dodson both previously pleaded guilty to Accessory After the Fact, a crime punishable by up to 15 years in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Anthony Salem will conduct a sentencing hearing for the three at a later date.

On the afternoon of May 2, 2023, a witness flagged down a Jacksonville Sheriff's Office bailiff to inform him a man was injured next to a dumpster on West Ashley Street in Downtown Jacksonville. The bailiff reported the incident and detectives arrived to find shell casings and an extended magazine with live rounds next to the victim, who had been shot. Surveillance footage from the area showed the victim being chased by a man — later identified as Nichols — with a firearm. The footage goes on to show Nichols corner the victim next to the dumpster and shoot him several times before searching him. As Nichols shoots, a Jeep with DeGuardia and Dodson inside pulls up next to the dumpster; shortly after, Nichols enters the backseat, and they drive away. During law enforcement interviews, Dodson and DeGuardia said Nichols demanded Dodson's firearm after the victim stole his. Nichols took Dodson's firearm to kill the victim; the group then threw the firearm in the St. Johns River and Dodson reported it stolen.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and is being prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Lauren Anderson.