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JUDGE SENTENCES PRIDGEN TO 30 YEARS FOR MURDER OF TERESA GORCZYCA

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Honorable Judge Jeb Branham sentenced North Pridgen to 30 years in Florida State Prison for the murder of Teresa Gorczyca. Pridgen previously pleaded guilty to Second-Degree Murder at a Feb. 6, 2023, hearing. Per the plea agreement, Branham could sentence Pridgen to a range that would be followed by 10 years of probation.

On Sept. 26, 2021, Gorczyca was at the home of Pridgen's parents, where he lived. Video surveillance with audio captured Pridgen and Gorczyca walking away from the home, and she told Pridgen to not follow her and go home. Pridgen and Gorczyca walked to a nearby lake, where Pridgen killed her and disposed of her belongings. He then dragged her body into the lake and hid it under debris. Pridgen then had a friend come and pick him up nearby and confessed to killing Gorczyca. The friend reported the confession to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, which conducted a welfare check, issued a missing persons bulletin, and initiated an investigation. Days later, investigators discovered Gorczyca's body in the water. Further investigation revealed Pridgen attempted to solicit Gorczyca's Facebook friends for money to buy marijuana pretending to be her after he had murdered her.

The case was investigated by Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Sheila Loizos.