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COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 29, 2022

***MIKELLE HARRISON AND CODY MERCER FOUND GUILTY OF  
DECEMBER 2020 MURDER OF JAYLIN EVERETT***

On August 26, 2022, after a weeklong trial, a Coweta County jury found Mikelle Howard Harrison, 23, of Columbus, and Cody Lamar Mercer, 20, of Columbus, guilty of Malice Murder, Felony Murder, Criminal Attempt to Commit Entering an Automobile, Aggravated Assault, Criminal Attempt to Commit Armed Robbery, and Possession of Firearm during Commission of a Felony. After the jury returned its verdict, Coweta Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Emory Palmer sentenced Harrison to serve life in prison, without the possibility of parole, followed by 37.5 years, and sentenced Mercer to serve life in prison, with the possibility of parole, followed by 5 years. Chief Assistant District Attorney Jep Bendinger prosecuted the case. Newnan Police Department Lieutenant Chris Robinson was the lead investigator.

The evidence at trial showed that, on December 2, 2020, at approximately 3:10 am, NPD officers responded to a person shot at Jefferson Grove Apartments in Newnan. There they found Jaylin Everett, 22, suffering from a gunshot wound. The victim's girlfriend was also present and told officers that three men attempted to rob them in the parking lot of the Jefferson Grove Apartments, where the victim and his girlfriend resided. The victim had just returned from picking up his girlfriend from her place of employment in Fairburn; her shift ended around 2:30 am.

Upon arriving at Jefferson Grove, Mr. Everett noticed some men acting suspiciously near some other vehicles in the parking lot. The three men were each armed with a handgun, approached Everett, and demanded his property while brandishing handguns. Mr. Everett was also armed and attempted to protect himself and his girlfriend. A shootout ensued. One of the suspects was struck in the foot and Mr. Everett was struck in the neck. Forensic firearms evidence showed that Harrison fired ten times, and showed that the fatal shot was fired from his weapon. The evidence showed Mercer fired twice. The third gunman was identified as David Alberto Berrio, 35, of Columbus, who brandished his firearm during the assault but did not discharge it. After the shootout, the three perpetrators ran to their getaway vehicle, driven by Angelina Marie Plemons, 19, of Columbus, and fled the scene.

NPD Detectives were quickly able to identify the suspect vehicle and then the perpetrators. Once apprehended, Mercer, Berrio, and Plemons all confessed to their roles in the homicide. Harrison fled the state and was eventually apprehended in Michigan. According to the evidence, the four traveled to Atlanta from Columbus to break into cars earlier in the evening. On the way back to Columbus, they detoured to Newnan to continue their crime spree. They happened upon Jefferson Grove minutes before Mack and Everett arrived home. Prior to trial, Berrio and Plemons agreed to testify truthfully in the trial of their codefendants. As a result, in consideration for their cooperation and relative culpability, Berrio will receive a 40 year sentence with 25 to serve in prison and Plemons will receive a 20 year sentence to serve 15 years.

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This tragic case provides a stark contrast between those who choose to commit violent felonies and contribute nothing but suffering to our society and those who choose to live honorable lives by following the law and contributing positively to our community. The victim in this case was a responsible young man with no criminal history who had just gotten home from picking up his girlfriend from her job. In contrast, these defendants had spent their day committing felonies throughout the state of Georgia, and rather than walk away when this victim tried to defend himself, his girlfriend, and his property, they murdered him. The District Attorney's Office is thankful that this victim and his loved one received a measure of justice with these convictions and substantial prison sentences.

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