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COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2023

***JONATHAN LAWRENCE FOUND GUILTY OF AUGUST 2020 PLOT TO MURDER SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
AND OTHER CHARGES; SENTENCED TO SERVE 35 YEARS IN PRISON***

On August 25, 2023, after a weeklong trial, a Troup County jury found Jonathan Taylor Lawrence, now 31, of Hogansville, guilty of Conspiracy to Commit Malice Murder, Threatening a Witness in an Official Proceeding, and Trafficking Methamphetamine. The jury acquitted Lawrence of Criminal Attempt to Commit Malice Murder and an additional count of Threatening a Witness in an Official Proceeding. On September 6, 2023, Coweta Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Erica Tisinger sentenced Lawrence to serve 35 years in prison.

Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Jack Winne prosecuted the case. Troup County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) Lieutenant Jeff Adams was the lead investigator.

At trial, the evidence showed that, on April 24, 2020, TCSO deputies initiated a traffic stop for a suspended registration on East Main Street in Hogansville. Lawrence was the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, in which deputies found just under two ounces of methamphetamine in a container. At the time of his arrest, Lawrence was out on bond for Possession of Methamphetamine for an arrest earlier in 2020.

During the pandemic when jail crowding was a serious problem, Lawrence was granted bond with numerous conditions on the April 2020 Drug Trafficking arrest, and he did not take long to violate those conditions of release. When the State initiated bond revocation proceedings, Lawrence sent menacing and threatening messages to two people he believed were helping the State with prove he was violating bond.

On July 20, 2020, Lawrence's bond was revoked, and he was sent back to jail. At the bond hearing, a TCSO drug investigator, who was involved as a deputy in the April 24 arrest, testified about some of Lawrence's bond violations. Approximately a month after Lawrence's bond was revoked, an inmate came forward and informed TCSO investigators that Lawrence had a "hit" on the drug investigator and was soliciting assistance with getting the drug investigator killed. The evidence admitted at trial suggests that Lawrence took this investigator's involvement particularly personally because they lived in the same neighborhood in Troup County.

On August 29, 2020, investigators equipped the inmate with a recording device and sent him back into the dorm—in which he and Lawrence were housed. That day, Lawrence was captured on audio recording discussing the plot, describing the layout of the investigator's neighborhood, and logistics and tactics that could be employed to best carry out the hit at the drug investigator's house, including drawing a map of the neighborhood. Two days later, the inmate and Lawrence called an undercover TCSO deputy, posing as a hitman. On that recorded call, Lawrence provided contact information for an associate of his who

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could facilitate a down payment for the hit. (Due to security concerns, the drug investigator victim and inmate source are not named in this release.)

I am thankful that this egregious murderous plot was stopped in its infancy. This Troup County Sheriff's Office investigator puts his life on the line every day he is on duty, just like every law enforcement officer in this state. The Coweta Circuit's District Attorney's Office will seek substantial prison sentences, as was handed down in this case, for those who seek to harm members of our law enforcement community.

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