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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2023

**TROUP COUNTY JURY CONVICTS CAMRON DOWNING OF MALICE MURDER FOR APPARENT
INDISCRIMINATE AND RANDOM SHOOTING WITH NO MOTIVE**

On November 17, 2023, a Troup County Jury found Camron Chase Downing, 26, of Carrollton, Georgia, guilty of Malice Murder and Possession of a Firearm during the Commission of a Felony. The Honorable Judge Matthew Simmons presided over the trial and sentenced Downing to life in prison without the possibility of parole plus a consecutive five years to serve in prison. Assistant District Attorney Julia Slater prosecuted the case. Detective Darrell Prichard of the LaGrange Police Department (LPD) led the investigation. The evidence presented to the jury showed the following:

On January 1, 2021, at approximately 3 p.m., Camron Downing drove down Second Avenue in LaGrange, Georgia and fired his revolver at least five times into a parked vehicle occupied by Keenen Leonard, who was struck by three bullets and killed. At the time of the shooting, Leonard was on the phone with his girlfriend, parked in the driveway of their home, with food he had just purchased for them. His girlfriend heard the gunshots over the phone and from inside the house. She came outside to find Leonard dead in the driver's seat.

The LPD investigation did not determine a motive for the shooting nor any connection between Downing and Leonard or Leonard's girlfriend. When interviewed, Downing claimed he was lost in LaGrange, asked Leonard for directions, which turned into an argument, and he thought Leonard was going to shoot him first. Leonard did not have a weapon and his girlfriend did not hear him speaking to anyone else at the time of the shooting.

The investigation that led to Downing as the murderer began with witnesses on Second Avenue observing a red or maroon SUV at the time of the murder. Investigators carefully reviewed security videos from a nearby school and traffic cameras until they located a vehicle that matched the description- a red Nissan Pathfinder registered to Camron Downing's mother. In one of the videos, investigators obtained an image of the driver of the vehicle, who appeared to be Camron Downing.

Upon looking into Downing's prior interactions with law enforcement, investigators learned of three encounters in the past year during which Downing was connected to either a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum revolver, a holster for a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum, or both. This was significant because investigators did not find any shell casings at the crime scene, which suggested the shooter may have used a revolver. After conducting the autopsy, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) determined that the bullets, which hit the victim, were shot from a .357 or .38 caliber firearm.

On January 5, 2021, LPD investigators interviewed Downing. He initially lied about possessing the Pathfinder and about being in LaGrange on the day of the murder. However, after being confronted the evidence that proved otherwise, he admitted the shooting and claimed self-defense. He told investigators

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where to find the Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum revolver he used to kill Leonard and the GBI ultimately confirmed that Downing's revolver fired the bullets that killed Leonard.

The LaGrange Police Department deserves high praise for their tireless investigation into this senseless crime. For taking Keenen Leonard from his family and loved ones without any apparent reason, it is just that Downing never be released from prison.

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