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BEVEL RESENTENCED TO DEATH FOR 2004 KILLINGS OF 13-YEAR-OLD BOY, MAN

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a jury unanimously recommended two death sentences for Thomas Bevel, who was previously found guilty of two counts of First-Degree Murder in the killing of 13-year-old Phillip Sims and Garrick Strickland in 2004. Bevel was also found guilty of Attempted First-Degree Murder and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. The case was returned to the Circuit Court level for a new penalty phase after a ruling by the Florida Supreme Court. A Spencer hearing is scheduled before the Honorable Adrian Soud on Jan. 7, 2022.

On Feb. 29, 2004, Bevel was inside of a Brentwood-area home when he fatally shot 30-year-old Stringfield in his bedroom, then fired several shots at Feletta Smith, who was with him. After shooting the couple, Bevel then went into the living room of the home and fired two shots at 13-year-old Sims, who was on the couch playing video games. Bevel shot Sims to eliminate him as a witness before he fled the home. Smith feigned death and was able to identify Bevel by name as the person who shot Stringfield, Sims, and her. A warrant was issued, and Bevel was arrested.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Bernie de la Rionda and Chief Assistant L.E. Hutton.