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CLAYTON JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Clayton County District Attorney Tasha M. Mosley announces the conviction of Kathan Guzman. A Clayton County jury returned a guilty verdict on one count of felony murder and one count of aggravated assault.

During the trial, the State presented evidence showing that after arguing on and off for three hours in the early morning of August 7, 2022, the defendant manually strangled his 19-year-old Delila Grayson to death. After strangling Delila to death, the defendant moved her body to the bathroom, closed the door, left the apartment, and did not contact law enforcement for ten plus hours. The defendant testified and claimed that Delila attacked him with a knife and in self-defense, he placed her in a “sleeper hold” for 10 seconds and there was no way she should have died as a result. The defendant further claimed that he was professionally trained in martial arts and used the technique successfully multiple times. The State called Dr. Rachel Geller, Medical Examiner, who testified that Delila would have lost consciousness at a minimum of 10 seconds to 1 minute of continuous pressure being placed on her neck. Dr. Geller further testified that loss of consciousness would not have equated to death, but Delila’s body would have gone limp. For death to occur, at a minimum, there would have needed to be continuous pressure applied to Delila’s neck after loss of consciousness for an additional 4 to 6 minutes. The jury concluded self defense was not applicable in this case as the force used was excessive, due to the amount of time it took to manually strangle Delila.

Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Nigel H. Hunter led the State’s case with Chief Assistant District Attorney Zina Pitts serving as second chair. Major Case Investigator Khalil Rajahn as well as Victim Advocate Maria Dillard played vital roles in the prosecution of this case. The trial began October 21, 2024, and concluded on October 25, 2024.

Senior Judge David Irwin presided over the trial and sentenced the defendant to life with the possibility of parole.

District Attorney Mosley stated, *"We hope this conviction brings some measure of closure for the loved ones of Ms. Grayson. Our office is committed to holding perpetrators of such violent acts accountable and ensuring the safety of Clayton County’s residents."*

