



OFFICE OF
STATE ATTORNEY
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

January 23, 2015

PRESS RELEASE

State Attorney Bill Eddins announced that James Hunter Gates entered a plea today in Santa Rosa County to Manslaughter with a Firearm and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Delinquent. Circuit Court Judge John Miller ordered a presentence investigation and scheduled sentencing for March 17, 2015. Gates faces a maximum sentence of 45 years in state prison.

The 20 year old Gates was arrested on August 25, 2014 after deputies responded to a shooting at a residence on Keyser Lane in Pace where Gates lived. They found 24 year old Romeo Wolff dead from a gunshot wound to the head. Investigators with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office determined that Gates and Wolff were drinking alcoholic beverages in the bedroom that evening while playing with a shotgun that belonged to Gates. As a convicted delinquent, Gates was prohibited from possessing any firearms. Wolff pointed the barrel of the gun at his face and dared Gates to pull the trigger. Gates responded by pulling the trigger which caused the gun to fire. Wolff was struck in the face with the blast and died at the scene.

The investigation and arrest were conducted by the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office. Assistant State Attorney James Parker prosecuted the case for the State of Florida. For further information, please contact James Parker at (850) 981-5500.