

Jacksonville man guilty of fatal hammer attack

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A Jacksonville man faces a possible death sentence after being convicted of killing a Sudanese refugee with a hammer during a September 2009 robbery.

A Duval County jury convicted 33-year-old Merlin Williams Jr. Friday of first-degree murder, robbery and car theft. The jury will reconvene Sept. 21 to recommend either life in prison or the death penalty. A judge will make the final decision.

Authorities say Williams and his girlfriend, 24-year-old Ashley Nichole Jerrell, stole 37-year-old Isaac Siliman's credit cards, computer and car after attacking him with the hammer, a stun gun and pepper spray.

As part of a deal with prosecutors, Jerrell pleaded guilty earlier this year to second-degree murder and agreed to testify against Williams.

Information from: The Florida Times-Union, <http://www.jacksonville.com>