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Friend is acquitted in a murder case

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MANATEE COUNTY — A jury acquitted a 20-year-old man of a murder charge late Friday, a day after he took the stand in his own defense in a July 2008 killing.

Attorneys for Cody Rogers, who was at the scene of the murder, argued the murderer — a former high school quarterback — acted alone.

The jury also acquitted Rogers of a robbery charge. But the jury did convict Rogers of a lesser included charge of attempted robbery with a firearm.

Still, the acquittal on the murder charge means he avoids a potential life sentence.

The gunman, former Lakewood Ranch High School quarterback Timothy Brooks, has already



Rogers was convicted on a charge of attempted robbery with a firearm.

been convicted of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

But prosecutors argued Rogers kept a pistol pointed at the victim, 19-year-old William White, during the robbery.

In Florida, someone who participates in a crime that leads to a death can be charged with murder.

Prosecutors said Brooks and Rogers approached a car stopped on Bradenton's 27th Avenue Drive East.

Rogers' defense lawyer, Derek Byrd of Sarasota, had Rogers take the stand to convince the jury he was not part of the killing.