

Office of the State Attorney
Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida
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MELISSA W. NELSON
STATE ATTORNEY

311 West Monroe Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202-4242
TEL: (904) 255-2500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Chapman

Phone: (904) 255-3004

Cell: (904) 524-6626

ChapmanD@coj.net

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GARY GLOWACZ PLEADS GUILTY TO 1987 COLD CASE MURDER OF MISSY ELLISON

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Gary Glowacz pleaded guilty to Second-Degree Murder and Armed Burglary with Assault or Battery in the 1987 killing of 20-year-old Melissa "Missy" Ellison. Following his negotiated plea, the Honorable Jonathan Sacks sentenced Glowacz to 24 years in Florida State Prison, in accordance with the sentencing guidelines that were in effect at the time of the crime.

At 4 a.m. Dec. 28, 1987, 20-year-old Ellison was found dead in her bed at her Westside home. Her roommates found her body and then her 13-month-old daughter, Casie, on the couch. Investigators determined she had been beaten and found a wooden log on the floor near the back door, which was consistent with ash and soot found in her bed. No arrests were made and the case remained unsolved for decades. Ellison's family worked with Project Cold Case in recent years to generate leads. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office also highlighted the case seeking information.

On July 6, 2026, the Clay County Sheriff's Office received a call placed at a Blanding Boulevard credit union by Glowacz, who said he had information about the murder. Glowacz agreed to be interviewed by detectives with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and admitted he committed a burglary in Ellison's home and he was 31 years old at the time. Glowacz also said during the burglary he struck Ellison on the back of the head with a log he found by the fireplace. Glowacz provided additional details about the crime that had not been previously released to the public. He told investigators he did not know Ellison had died until he saw stories from March 2026.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Joel Cooper.