

Office of the State Attorney  
Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida  
www.sao4th.com



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](mailto:ChapmanD@coj.net)

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### **PERKINS PLEADS GUILTY TO MURDERS OF LEAH KLINE AND VIVIAN JAMES**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Zebulon Perkins pleaded guilty to two counts of Second-Degree Murder for killing Leah Kline and Vivian James in two separate incidents. Per the negotiated plea, Perkins will be sentenced to 70 years in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Anthony Salem will officially sentence Perkins at a later date.

On Dec. 25, 2019, Perkins was at a Westside Jacksonville motel with Kline when they got into an argument. Perkins strangled Kline and threw her body in the dumpster.

The next day, Perkins went to James' Cedar Hills home looking for advice — James was Perkins' former teacher. When James told Perkins to turn himself in to the police, Perkins beat and strangled her with a cord. On Dec. 28, 2019, a friend stopped by James' home and found her body. She called 911 and informed the police her friend's car was missing. That same day, investigators with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office found Perkins with James' car at the Westside motel where he had been staying. Inside her car, police recovered Perkins' bag containing a pair of sweatpants with James' DNA on them, James' camera, and her three laptops. Officers found two of James' televisions and her computer monitor inside Perkins' mother's home. During the investigation, Perkins' DNA was found under James' fingernails.

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