

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



311 West Monroe Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32202-4242
Tel: (904) 255-2500

**MELISSA W. NELSON
STATE ATTORNEY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: David Chapman
Phone: (904) 255-3004
Cell: (904) 524-6626
ChapmanD@coj.net

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RONNIE L. HYDE CHARGED WITH MURDER, POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

State Attorney Melissa Nelson today announces the filing of an information charging Ronnie Leon Hyde, 60, of Jacksonville Beach, with murder and multiple counts of possessing images depicting sexual conduct by children. If convicted on all counts, Hyde faces a maximum sentence of life plus 180 years.

According to court documents, Hyde is charged with committing the 1994 murder of Fred Paul Laster, whose torso was located in Columbia County, Florida. Hyde also is charged with 12 counts of possessing images depicting sexual conduct by children. Because the information alleges Hyde possessed 10 or more images, to include movies, he faces up to 15 years in prison on each of those counts.

An information is simply a charging document alleging that a defendant committed one or more acts in violation of Florida criminal laws. Every defendant is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

The case has been investigated by the FBI, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and the Jacksonville Beach Police Department and will be prosecuted by State Attorney Melissa W. Nelson, Chief Assistant State Attorney Mac D. Heavener, III, and Assistant State Attorney Katelyn Johnston.

For additional inquiries, please contact David Chapman, communications director, at the contact information above.