

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

October 22, 2026

DAVID AUSTIN FOUND GUILTY OF 1985 MURDER OF LESLIE MCCRAY

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that following a bench trial, the Honorable Meredith Charbula found David Austin guilty of First-Degree Murder, two counts of Armed Kidnapping, and Armed Sexual Battery in the 1985 killing of Leslie McCray. With the verdict, Austin faces a mandatory sentence of life in Florida State Prison. Judge Charbula will formally sentence Austin during a hearing Nov. 18, 2026.

On Christmas Eve 1985, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office found the naked body of 17-year-old Leslie McCray on the side of Old Middleburg Road. She had been beaten, stabbed, and raped. Austin previously lived in McCray's apartment and broke in, kidnapped her at knifepoint, and bound her roommate by the hands and ankles. The roommate heard Austin take McCray downstairs and leave the apartment — he eventually freed himself and called police. Austin was a person of interest, but there was not enough evidence at the time to make an arrest.

Evidence was tested with new technology in the ensuing decades. In April 2020, a DNA profile matched Austin and further tests confirmed the link. At the time of the Aug. 19, 2021, arrest announcement, Austin was serving two life sentences in Michigan after being convicted for multiple sex crimes.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Lauren Anderson and Chyna Makarowski.