



J. HANLEY

WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE

October 17, 2022

State's Attorney J. Hanley

Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley announces that on October 12, 2022, **RAYSHAWN SMITH (DOB 3/1/1976)** pled guilty to First Degree Murder. There is no agreement to his sentence and there will be a sentencing hearing on December 15, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom C before the Honorable Judge Jennifer Clifford.

In the early morning hours of July 23, 2022, Ashley Hardin was reported missing from her residence by her minor child. Ashley Hardin and her child smelled an odor of gasoline and went outside to investigate. Ashley never returned to the residence. During an investigation, officers learned that Ashley and Rayshawn Smith had previously been in a dating relationship. The defendant posted a video on FaceBook indicating "People are going to wonder why I did what I did" and referred to Ashley in the video. Officers located Ashley who was pronounced deceased on scene and also located the defendant in his vehicle with evidence pertaining to the crime. Among other injuries, Ashley suffered from two gunshot wounds.

The defendant open pled to the charge of First Degree Murder with a firearm enhancement. First Degree Murder is punishable by 20-60 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Due to the firearm enhancement, Rayshawn faces an additional 25 years to natural life to any sentence he receives.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, the Rockford City Police Department, and Rockford Fire Department conducted the investigation in this case. Assistant State's Attorney Ali Friend handled the prosecution.

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