

Sep 4, 2024

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**STATE OF FLORIDA**

## Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

### Attorney General Moody's Cold Case Investigations Unit Files Murder Charges in 1996 Homicide Case



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Cold Case Investigations Unit is filing murder charges in a 28-year-old homicide case. Authorities in Delaware arrested Stephen Ford for the murder of his girlfriend Doris Korell. In 1996, law enforcement found Korell's body with 83 stab wounds in a drainage ditch in Manatee County. Attorney General Moody's CCIU worked with multiple agencies to bring information together regarding the case and tested additional DNA evidence. Through further testing, CCIU helped law enforcement eliminate the possibility of other suspects and solidified a clearer picture of the case.

**Attorney General Ashley Moody** said, "Cold cases are some of the most difficult crimes to crack. I am proud of our Cold Case Investigations Unit bringing information together from multiple law enforcement agencies and working with State Attorney Ed Brodsky's Office on this case. The defendant is correct when he said after his arrest, 'my past has come up to haunt me.' My office and our partners will continue to seek justice for Doris Korell."

In December 1996, Korell was reported missing. At the time, Ford shared in interviews with law enforcement that the couple had an argument on the evening of Dec. 8, and then the next evening Korell uncharacteristically left to go shopping and never returned home. Korell failed to show up for work or call in sick on Dec. 9. Korell's daughter, who lives in another state, became

suspicious and reported Korell missing to authorities on Dec. 12. One week later, a body was found floating face down in a drainage canal. Authorities identified the body as Korell's seven months later using dental records.

Over the course of the investigation, authorities interviewed Ford several times. At one point, Ford stated, "If I killed her, I should get the death penalty." Ford made multiple deliberate actions and statements to mislead law enforcement. At the time of the initial investigation, Ford twice attempted suicide. After the first attempt, detectives found a suicide note under a stuffed cat on an end table. Upon trying to conduct a follow-up interview, the detectives found Ford in bed, semi-conscious and foaming at the mouth after drinking liquid bleach in another attempt to commit suicide. In July 2024, CCIU tested additional evidence, including Ford's bed sheets, that corroborated the multiple suicide attempts.

This year, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office submitted swabs collected from Korell's body at the time of the autopsy in 1997 to CCIU for retesting for possible signs of sexual abuse to rule out other suspects. CCIU determined no foreign DNA present, making it improbable that Korell was the victim of a random sexual assault at the time of the murder.

Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution is working the case in conjunction with the State Attorney's Office in Manatee County.

Earlier this year, Attorney General Moody announced the [launch](#) of Florida's CCIU. Attorney General Moody created the unit to assist local law enforcement agencies, particularly those facing resource constraints, by dedicating additional resources to select unsolved cases.

CCIU consists of a small group of dedicated investigators and attorneys working on cases as requested by law enforcement. Anyone interested in or looking for more information on cold cases in Florida should contact the relevant local law enforcement agency. Anyone with information about unsolved cases can report anonymously by calling \*\*TIPS and may be eligible for a large cash reward.

To learn more about the unit, click [here](#).

# # #