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**JACKSON FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER, SEXUAL BATTERY
OF 10-YEAR OLD TAMMY WELCH IN 1984 COLD CASE**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that James Jackson, of Jacksonville, was found guilty by a jury of First-Degree Murder and Sexual Battery (Defendant 18 or Older, Victim Less Than 12 Years of Age). A jury will now determine whether Jackson will receive the Death Penalty or Life in Florida State Prison. That sentencing hearing is scheduled to begin before the Honorable James Daniel on Dec. 19, 2018.

On Aug. 27, 1984, 10-year-old Tammy Welch was found deceased in a courtyard behind her Westside apartment. She was home with her mother, older brother and younger sister, as the Navy family prepared to move from the apartment to on-base housing. Tammy's father was deployed at the time.

At approximately 9:30 a.m., Tammy and her younger sister went outside to play while her mother and brother assisted movers. At some point, her sister went back inside the house and left Tammy alone. Close to 10 a.m., Tammy's sister went back outside to look for her and soon after found her lying on the ground deceased. An autopsy revealed Tammy had been strangled and was the victim of a brutal sexual assault.

Jackson lived in the apartment next to the Welch's and, when interviewed, told detectives he was home alone and sleeping at the time of the incident.

The case was reactivated in 1999 as a joint investigation by the Cold Case Units of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). During this time, voluntary DNA samples were collected from neighbors and witnesses present at the time of the crime. Jackson was re-interviewed in 2002 and provided his DNA and, again, told detectives he was home alone and was asleep at the time of the crime. Jackson told investigators his cousin woke him up to inform him a girl had been found dead just outside his apartment.

Jackson's DNA was sent to a forensic lab for examination and a DNA profile was obtained from Tammy's sexual assault kit. The DNA profile from the sexual assault kit linked Jackson to the crime. On Feb. 5, 2013, Jackson was interviewed by members of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and NCIS, during which time he again stated he was alone and had no paternal male family members present at the time of the crime. He was subsequently arrested.

The case was investigated by Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Naval Criminal Investigative Services and is being prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Alan Mizrahi and Pam Hazel.