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VIRGINIA MAN CONVICTED OF 1992 COLD CASE MURDER OF FAR ROCKAWAY TEEN

*DNA Testing Helped Solve Case After More Than Three Decades;
Defendant Faces 25 Years to Life in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Jerry Lewis was convicted at trial of murder for strangling 15-year-old Nadine Slade to death in May 1992. The victim was found dead inside a bathroom her family shared with an adjacent unit at a multi-family home in Far Rockaway. The defendant was arrested in May 2023 after preserved DNA evidence was re-tested at the request of the District Attorney's Cold Case Unit and the NYPD Cold Case Squad.

District Attorney Katz said: "For nearly 34 years the family of Nadine Slade grieved without answers and without justice. Through the relentless work of my Cold Case Unit and our partners in the NYPD Cold Case Squad, new DNA testing led to the apprehension of the man responsible for brutally strangling the young victim in 1992. He has now been convicted of murder. The passage of time will not shield those who commit violent crimes, and we will never stop pursuing justice — no matter how long it takes."

Lewis, 61, of Shawsville, Virginia, was convicted today by a jury of murder in the second degree before Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder.

Trial openings began on January 12 and closing arguments took place today. The jury deliberated for less than three hours before reaching a verdict. The defendant is due back for sentencing on February 17 and faces 25 years to life in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and trial testimony, on the morning of May 7, 1992, at approximately 9:30 a.m., the victim's mother returned to their Far Rockaway apartment from her job as a school bus driver and discovered her 15-year-old daughter lying unconscious in the bathroom. The victim had a bra tied tightly around her neck. A can opener, which was found in the bathroom sink, was used to twist the bra strap tighter around Nadine's neck.

At the time of the murder, investigators determined that the night before Nadine was found, the defendant was present with several other people inside the apartment directly adjacent to the one occupied by the victim and her mother. The bathroom was shared between the two units.

The defendant had no known prior affiliation with the victim or her mother.

An autopsy by the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) determined that Nadine died of asphyxia due to ligature strangulation. Other injuries that were present indicated a struggle took place at the scene and DNA evidence was collected from underneath the victim's fingernails.

In 2022, DA Katz's Cold Case Unit and the NYPD Cold Case Squad requested additional DNA testing by the OCME of the victim's preserved fingernail clippings. A DNA profile was developed and linked to Lewis, who is a convicted sex offender.

Lewis was interviewed by detectives in March 2023 when he appeared for a scheduled parole visit. He was arrested on the murder charge on May 1, 2023.

Assistant District Attorney Karen L. Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief of the DA's Homicide Bureau and Chief of the Cold Case Unit, prosecuted the case with assistance from Assistant District Attorney Jennie Evangelista under the supervision of John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of

Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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