

Man pleads not guilty in the hanging death of a Mississippi woman

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A man charged with murder in the hanging death of a Black woman in Mississippi pleaded not guilty Monday during his first court appearance.

The body of Tasia Fortune, 29, was found hanging from a tree behind an abandoned home in Jackson, the state capital, on Aug. 3.

On Friday, police arrested 51-year-old Jarques Ratliff on a murder charge after the state medical examiner deemed her death a homicide. Ratliff is also Black.

During Monday’s brief hearing in Municipal Court, a judge denied bond for Ratliff, who told the court he’s not guilty. Ratliff’s attorney at the hearing left the courthouse without speaking to reporters.

The case has attracted widespread attention because the manner of Fortune’s death recalled lynchings in the Southern state, which has a tumultuous civil rights history stained by episodes of racial violence.

Police and prosecutors haven’t given a suspected motive or said whether they think race played any role.

Police Chief RaShall Brackney said Friday that Ratliff, 51, had an “association” with Fortune, but she didn’t elaborate. The chief also said additional arrests are expected.

Prosecutors on Monday offered few new details in court, though they said Fortune had been hanged with a “black cable cord” and that Ratliff had tried to hide

from officers in a vehicle the day of his arrest.

Brackney and other police officials who attended Ratliff’s hearing Monday declined to comment afterward.

A Kentucky native, Fortune had a Black father and a white mother, though she identified as Black, said Christy Spivey, the dead woman’s mother. Fortune had been living in Jackson for about 10 years, according to relatives. Fortune had four children, Spivey said, adding she rarely saw two of her grandchildren.

Spivey wasn’t sure where Fortune was living when she died, but she said her daughter had struggled with homelessness in recent years. She said Fortune had talked recently about starting a cleaning business and was trying to get her life in order.

Two other Mississippi hanging deaths over the past year — those of a Black student at Delta State University and a homeless white man in Vicksburg — also drew widespread attention. Both of those deaths were deemed to be suicides.

This story has been corrected to show that Spivey said she rarely saw two of Fortune’s four children, not that Fortune rarely saw two of her own children.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988.

Class of 1978 joins band on stage during concert at The Virginia



TRICIA NEAL

The Broken Hearts lead vocalist Shawn Scheller invited audience members who graduated with the class of 1978 to come on stage for a singalong during Saturday night’s concert at The Virginia. The Broken Hearts is a Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers tribute band from Gainesville, Fla.

Warning signs of social isolation



Human beings are wired for social connection, but millions of people confront isolation every day. Many of those people are seniors who lose contact with loved ones as time goes by. While temporary loneliness can be tolerated, prolonged isolation can be very harmful.

Research by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and

Medicine found roughly one-quarter of American adults age 65 and older live in isolation. Identifying the early warning signs of isolation may help to prevent the physiological and psychological toll isolation can take.

Here are some signs of social isolation to watch for.

- Withdrawal from events: An early indicator of social isolation,

according to Healthline, is a pattern of canceling plans, not answering phone calls, and withdrawing from established social circles or hobbies.

- Self-care is not prioritized: Another sign of social isolation is personal hygiene and other self-care habits like eating nutritious meals becomes neglected. It can signal that a person’s routine has changed due to a lack

of social accountability.

- Home upkeep falters: A person who is withdrawing from social connections may feel it’s no longer necessary to keep a home clean and tidy since they don’t anticipate visitors.
- Irritability and low mood: Persistent isolation can trigger a sense of hopelessness. Individuals may become defensive or experience dramatic shifts in mood and sleep patterns, according to Healthline.
- Reliance on social media or television: Socially isolated individuals may turn to television or non-interactive social media scrolling as a proxy for human interaction, offers HealthDirect.

Social isolation can take its toll on anyone, particularly seniors. Individuals are urged to check in with friends, family or neighbors they suspect may be isolating to provide the companionship and help they may need.

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THE NANCY HIGH SCHOOL HOMECOMING

SATURDAY • OCTBER 3, 2026

AT THE WHITE OAK BAPTIST CHURCH

THIS REUNION IS FOR ALL FORMER STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF!

The baccalaureate services for graduation classes at Nancy H.S. were held at White Oak Baptist Church.

Nancy High School was built in 1935 by the Federal Works Progress Administration, a depression-era jobs program. The last graduating class was in 1981 and the building was used until 1987 as Nancy junior High and was closed because of consolidation.

REGISTRATION WILL BEGIN AT 10:30 AM. PLEASE BRING PHOTOS & MEMORABILIA TO DISPLAY!

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Somerset is proposing an Ad Valorem levy of twelve and four tenths cents on each hundred dollars of taxable property within the city limits of Somerset, Kentucky for 2026. The anticipated revenue of this levy is \$1,902,805. The 2025 rate of twelve and eight tenths cents produced revenue of \$1,817,933. The revenue expected from new property is \$16,679.86. Excess revenue will go to the City of Somerset General Fund. A public hearing will be held at 10 am EST, 11 am CST on September 23, 2026 in the Somerset City Council Chambers, 306 E. Mt. Vernon St., Somerset, KY 42501 to discuss the 2026 property tax rate. This publication is required by the Kentucky General Assembly KRS 132.027.

PULASKI COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE IS NOW ACCEPTING VEHICLE BIDS

The Pulaski County Sheriff’s Office is accepting bids for the purchase of:

Sport Utility Vehicles and ½ Ton 4-Door Pick Up Trucks

Sealed bids will be accepted from September 14th through September 21st, 2026 and should be mailed to the address below, or you may drop off your sealed bid to the Sheriff’s Office at 100 North Main Street, Somerset:

Pulaski County Sheriff’s Office Attn: Bids P.O. Box 752 Somerset, Ky. 42502

If you have any questions, please contact the Sheriff’s Office at 606-678-5145. The Sheriff’s Office reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.