

THE

PIONEER NEWS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2026

WWW.PIONEERNEWS.NET

VOL. 143, No. 103 \$2

Man charged with 2014 murder

WEST POINT – It was over 22 years ago that a woman was found shot off Highway 44 West.

She would later die in a hospital from gunshot wounds.

Now, the person allegedly responsible for her death has been indicted.

Deandre Louis McElroy, 41, is currently housed in the Bullitt County Detention Center.

He is charged with murder, assault, possession of a hand-

gun by a convicted felon and tampering with physical evidence.

According to a press release Friday from the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office, members of the U.S. Marshals Service and Louisville Metro Police took McElroy into custody.

It was on May 9, 2014, when Donisha McStoots was found near the entrance of the Knob Creek Gun Range at approximately 6:49 p.m. Partially unclothed, she appeared to

have a gunshot wound to the back.

A private citizen found her and transported McStoots to a local hospital, where she would later die from her injuries.

Detectives from the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office investigated the case after collecting evidence from the scene. McElroy was originally charged with the murder in 2015.

However, those charges were dismissed without prejudice in Bullitt District Court.

Starting earlier this year, the sheriff's detectives re-examined the

case and reviewed the case report.

After consulting with the Bullitt County Commonwealth Attorney's office, the case was then presented to the grand jury.

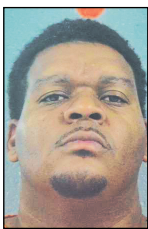
The 12-member panel would return an indictment charging McElroy with the four counts, including murder.

A warrant was then issued for his arrest. The sheriff's office detectives coordinated the effort with the U.S. Marshal's Service and the Louisville Metro Fugitive Unit to locate and then apprehend McElroy.

McElroy, 41, was booked into the Bullitt County Detention Center at 3:59 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21.

The sheriff's department is attempting to contact a member of McStoots family without success. Any family member is asked to contact the sheriff's office detectives at 502-543-2514.

An indictment does not indicate guilt or innocence. It only means that at least nine of the 12 grand jurors felt there was enough evidence to move forward with a criminal trial.



Deandre Louis McElroy



THOMAS J. BARR

Honoring WWII veteran

TEC 5 Robert W. Hirst received a proper burial after serving the U.S. Army during World War II and dying as a POW on July 5, 1942. After many years, his remains were identified and returned to his family for a proper burial. On Thursday, services were held at Schoppenhorst, Underwood and Brooks Funeral Home with burial in the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff. The procession led by law enforcement traveled under the draped flag supported by the Zoneton and Shepherdsville Fire Department. Law enforcement from throughout the county participated in the proceedings.



Freedom celebrated this weekend at LJ Festival

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

LEBANON JUNCTION – It is time once again when the streets of downtown Lebanon Junction will be lined by food, crafts, music and fellowship.

The Main Street Festival will be held on Friday, Oct. 2, and Saturday, Oct. 3, in downtown Lebanon Junction. It will celebrate 250 years of freedom.

The showcase event each year is the parade. However, there are plenty of activities throughout the two days to bring everyone downtown – many will see folks they hadn't seen since the prior year's celebration.

Things will kick off at 5 p.m. on Friday.

The booths will open at that time. A variety of booths will be found throughout the downtown area.

For the kids and the young at heart, Bounce Around Etown will again bring its inflatables to the city's property on Railroad Avenue.

A wristband can be purchased on Friday and Saturday for a unlimited bouncing on that particular day.

Back at the downtown venue, The Brooke West Band will provide music

from 6-9 p.m.

The miniature train from Hillview will provide free rides starting at 5 p.m.

And the Lebanon Junction Railroad City Lions Club will host its annual art show in the Community Center. It will open at 6 p.m. on Friday and at Noon on Saturday.

When things return on Saturday, the featured event will be the parade.

The parade starts at the Pilot and runs downtown with the first unit expected at 10:30 a.m.

To start the day will be the Pancake Breakfast at the Firehouse, which runs from 7-10 a.m.

Booths and concessions open at Noon, although many are open prior to the start of the parade. The miniature train rides will resume at Noon.

The Bounce Around Etown inflatables will be open from Noon until 8 p.m.

The Cake Wheel will also start at Noon.

DJ Richie Rich will spin some music from Noon until 4 p.m.

There will be a pet costume contest at 3 p.m.

And Aces High Band will play from 6-9 p.m.

For more information, contact city hall at 833-4311.

Man charged with attempted murder, arson

SHEPHERDSVILLE – A Bullitt County man has been indicted for the attempted murder of four individuals by setting a structure on fire.

The Bullitt County Grand Jury has indicted Shawn Dewayne Hilbert on four counts of attempted murder, one count of arson and two counts of wanton endangerment.

According to the indictment, Hilbert, 43, of Shepherdsville, allegedly set fire to a structure on July 2, 2026, in which four individuals were inside.

He also allegedly shot a weapon in the direction of two of the individuals.

The most serious offense is a Class A felony, which is punishable by 20 years to life in prison.

In a separate incident, Hilbert

was indicted for possession of a handgun by a convicted felon.

He allegedly had a handgun on July 17, 2026, while he was a convicted felon.

And he was indicted for the charge of assault involving domestic violence when he struck a woman in the face on July 14, 2026.

These are both Class C felonies with penalties of 5-10 years in prison.

Det. William Dobbs of the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office investigated and commonwealth attorney Amanda Troutman presented the case to the grand jury.

IN OTHER FELONY INDICTMENTS:

*James C. Thomas – charged with two counts of trafficking in

marijuana and three counts of trafficking in a controlled substance.

According to the indictment, Thomas allegedly had opiates from July 26, 2026, through Aug. 6, 2026, in which he was attempting to sell. He also had methamphetamine in which he was attempting to sell during that same time period.

He was also charged with trafficking marijuana.

One of the charges alleged that he was in possession of a handgun.

The most serious crime is a Class B felony, which is punishable by 10-20 years in prison.

Deputy sheriff John Fowler investigated the case and assistant commonwealth attorney Charles VanSickle presented the

case.

*Christopher Chase Ferguson – charged with rape.

According to the indictment, on July 13, 2026, Ferguson allegedly forced a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will.

This is a Class B felony, punishable by 10-20 years in prison.

Det. Christopher Boone of the Hillview Police Department investigated and VanSickle presented the case.

*Austin B. Villanueva – charged with unlawful transaction with a minor.

The indictment alleges that on July 15, 2026, Villanueva induced a minor under the age of 16 to have illegal sexual activity.

This is a Class B felony, punishable by 10-20 years in prison. Shepherdsville officer David

Jordan investigated and VanSickle presented the case.

In a separate indictment, Villanueva was indicted for rape, sodomy and possession of matter that shows sex performance by a minor.

According to the indictment, on July 16, 2026, he allegedly had sexual intercourse with a minor under 16 years of age and had material showing a minor in an actual sexual performance.

These are all Class D felonies, each punishable by 1-5 years in prison.

Jordan investigated that case and VanSickle was the prosecutor.

*Travis Scott Kuffner – charged with burglary and

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Don't Forget the first political forum
hosted by the Chamber and Pioneer News
Thursday, Oct. 1, 5:30 p.m.
Fick Hall in Mount Washington



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