



**Sheriff Gary Caruana**  
650 W. State Street  
Rockford, IL 61102  
(815) 319-6300

# Winnebago County Sheriff's Department



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact: Cori Hilliard**  
**(815) 319-6322**  
**Hilliardc@WCSO-il.us**

On Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, at approximately 0345 hours, the Rockford Police Department responded to an address in the 300 block of Cole Avenue for a missing person. During the course of their investigation, they learned that the subject, 38 year old Ashley Hardin, was missing under suspicious circumstances. An ex-boyfriend, 46 year old Rayshawn Smith, was developed as a person of interest. At approximately 0735 hours, the Roscoe Police Department responded to a business in the 5100 block of East Rockton Road for a deceased body located behind the business. The Roscoe Police Department requested the assistance of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department and a murder investigation was initiated. The deceased was found to be Ashley Hardin. The Winnebago County Sheriff's Department, the Rockford Police Department, and the Roscoe Police Department conducted a joint murder investigation. At approximately 1055 hours, Rayshawn Smith, was located in the 300 block of North Main Street in Rockford. The Winnebago County States Attorney's Office reviewed the facts of the case and authorized the following charges:

~RAYSHAWN D. SMITH (03/01/76) OF ROCKFORD.

- FIRST DEGREE MURDER
- AGGRAVATED KIDNAPPING
- AGGRAVATED UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT.

Rayshawn Smith was lodged in the Winnebago County Jail on a \$2 million bond.

The charges against Rayshawn Smith are merely accusations and he is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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