

Veteran sentenced in murder of Ashe woman

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Johnson County native Steven Douglas Cochran pled guilty this week to the murder of Leona Blythe "Lee" Schilling, a West Jefferson woman murdered in 2005.

The plea resulted in his being sentenced to at least 22 years in prison. Cochran, a 17-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, lost his job in 2005. In late August of that year, he is believed to have stolen a 2000 Honda Accord in Johnston County. Schilling, 73, was a seasonal resident of the campground at Greenfield who called Florida her permanent residence. On August 30, 2005, Cochran is believed to have entered Schilling's home, stolen her credit cards, and, at some point between Tuesday evening and the next morning, strangled her. Her body was found on August 31.