# Melody Farris convicted of murdering husband in complex family homicide case



On July 5, 2018, Detective Daniel Hayes of the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, near Atlanta, was called to investigate a human body found in a burn pile on a ten-acre farm belonging to the Farris family. The remains were identified as those of Gary Farris, a 58-year-old successful commercial real estate attorney and patriarch of the Farris estate. Married to Melody Farris for 38 years, the couple had four adult children: Chris, Scott, Emily, and Amanda.

The Farris family had appeared to live an idyllic life on their well-maintained farm, with son Scott, a former Army serviceman, managing daily operations and residing above the barn. However, the discovery of Gary’s skeletal remains in the burn pile, with a bullet lodged in his rib, transformed what had initially seemed like an accidental death into a homicide investigation.

Melody Farris was the last person to see Gary alive, on the evening of July 3, 2018. Family members reported not seeing Gary on July 4, which was not unusual according to Melody, but he was missing by July 5 when grandchildren noticed he was not available to ride the family’s rough terrain vehicle (RTV). Son Scott found bones among the ashes of the burn pile and immediately called 911.

During the investigation, detectives discovered blood drops matching Gary’s in the kitchen, on stairs, and in the basement, where a .38 caliber bullet identical to one in the burn pile was found on the floor. The blood evidence suggested a violent encounter had started inside the house and continued into the basement. This evidence cast suspicion on the circumstances surrounding his death.

Interviews with family members revealed a complex and tense family dynamic, dubbed the "Farris Wheel" by investigators, characterised by frequent disputes, particularly between Gary and Scott. Melody acknowledged conflicts, saying Gary was “so anal about everything” and that Scott was “hot-tempered.” Scott suspected his mother, Melody, of involvement in the death, though both Melody and Scott denied extramarital affairs by Gary, and Melody denied any direct involvement in his death.

Further complicating the case was the exposure of Melody’s long-term affair with Rusty Barton, a farm equipment salesman from Tennessee, discovered through a credit card under Barton’s name found in Melody’s purse and phone records showing frequent contact, even during the early hours after Gary’s disappearance. Prosecutors argued the affair and financial motivations played a significant role in the case, suggesting Melody wanted to kill Gary to gain access to his substantial assets and be with Barton.

Questioning arose about how Melody, weighing around 130 pounds, could have moved the 300-pound body from the basement to the burn pile approximately 50 yards away. Investigators found that both the tractor and the RTV on the farm, which Melody said she operated, had traces of blood. However, no definitive evidence showed how the body was transported to the burn pile, leaving this detail unresolved.

After nearly a year of investigation, Melody was arrested in June 2019 and charged with Gary's murder. The ensuing trial, beginning in October 2024, heavily featured testimonies from family members and experts. Prosecutors pointed to financial motives, the affair, and forensic evidence, including the movement of Gary’s cellphone from the house to the burn pile after his death, while Scott Farris was verifiably away during that time.

The defence challenged much of the prosecution’s evidence, highlighting the lack of a murder weapon, the physical improbability of Melody moving the body alone, and suggested that Scott, who had a financial motive and was physically capable, might be responsible. Scott denied any involvement and testified that he loved his father and had no role in his death.

Throughout the trial, the family was deeply divided. Three of the children, Chris, Scott, and Emily, believed Melody was guilty, while the youngest daughter, Amanda, insisted on her mother’s innocence. The tension culminated in Melody's sentencing hearing, during which she shocked the courtroom by accusing her son Scott of killing Gary, a claim that Scott vehemently denied. This accusation further strained an already fractured family.

Ultimately, on October 30, 2024, the jury found Melody Farris guilty on all five counts, including malice murder, felony murder, and making false statements to police. She was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after 30 years, along with an additional five years for concealing the death and providing false statements.

Following sentencing, Melody gave an exclusive interview reaffirming her innocence and blaming Scott for the murder, saying, “I want everyone, but especially my children, my grandchildren, and at this point, the world, I didn't do this. I know who did. And it's our son, Scott, without a shadow of a doubt.” Scott maintained his innocence and insisted Melody was responsible.

The case highlighted intricate family tensions and unresolved questions about the exact circumstances of Gary Farris' death and the mechanisms by which his body was moved. Melody Farris’ conviction closed a chapter on a high-profile investigation marked by complicated family relations, forensic challenges, and a lengthy trial process. She will be eligible for parole in 2054 at the age of 94.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/trials/melody-farris-sentenced-killing-prominent-attorney-husband-burning-his-body/85-ab887325-56d3-4d09-8aa3-86f55b3ad5ef> - Reports Melody Farris' sentence (life plus 5 years) and details about the 2018 murder, including the burn pile discovery and financial motives.
* <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/melody-farris-receives-life-sentence-killing-husband-claims-son-did-instead> - Details Melody's courtroom accusation against Scott Farris during sentencing, along with trial timeline, charges, and marital conflicts.
* <https://www.courttv.com/news/ga-v-melody-walker-farris-burn-pile-murder-trial/> - Provides timeline specifics (July 3, 2018 murder) and references cell phone evidence placing Gary's device at the burn pile post-mortem.
* <https://www.courthousenews.com/georgia-woman-blames-son-after-life-sentence-for-murdering-husband-burning-body/> - Confirms jury verdict (November 2024 conviction on malice murder, felony murder, etc.) and Melody's post-sentencing claims about Scott's involvement.
* <https://people.com/prominent-attorney-wife-melody-farris-sentenced-to-life-after-found-guilty-of-murdering-him-burning-his-body-8757181> - Documents forensic evidence (bullet in rib bone), insurance policy ($2 million), affair details, and family's farm location (Alpharetta).
* <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/trials/melody-farris-sentenced-killing-prominent-attorney-husband-burning-his-body/85-ab887325-56d3-4d09-8aa3-86f55b3ad5ef> - Note: This appears to be a duplicate of the first URL. However, no additional unique URLs were found in provided search results to cover all claims (e.g., blood evidence location, tractor/RTV traces, family dynamics). The available results collectively cover most but not all narrative elements.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMinAFBVV95cUxPZUZvVWlhYTR2aG5QT21ncWktQ3k4MFU2OEN0cG9hblZYeVQtWVVobWFkd0tLd3R2UzdXR000QUZWbUlKR0ZMZUJFb0kzSDJMZEFkMEpWSGd5c0Rld2xLLUhiNEhNeXJnUm9YUkh1akNnVWVXeHJySWlaeGQzeHZKMVEybmFCYWlXMFl3XzNlNFlyYWxpLW9FdXVieHrSAaIBQVVfeXFMTVd3aEpyVFZDQ2lzOFZHUzMxMmswSGNoZDlzREc4XzAwNHFJc2Zlek51NFFqRURvWURYb3Q4OWdRMWpZNG96d0VxY3JHQVh2d1dHVXpJMlNoS0NtcG9BWlMzNng0Q0x6TDM5N3Q1cDZGdFJwVnkycnZYa01JeGs1c2dKcV9pOU8yRW5mTmdrajNpbmk1M0FOWjJEU1ZlTVhGcTN3?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data