

IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT FOR DALLAS COUNTY

STATE OF IOWA, v. KRISTIN RAMSEY, Defendant.	Case No. FECR051688 RULING ON DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR BOND REVIEW
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Introduction

On April 10, 2026, the Court convened a reported hearing on the Defendant's Motion for Bond Review. The State appeared through counsel, Matthew Schultz, Scott Brown, and Andrea Lovig. The Defendant appeared in person with counsel, Alfredo Parrish, Brandon Brown, and Tammy Westhoff Gentry. Having now considered the evidence presented, the pleadings, and the arguments of counsel, the Court enters the following Ruling.

Procedural History

On March 17, 2026, a Dallas County Grand Jury returned a one-count indictment against the Defendant charging her with Murder in the First Degree, a Class A felony. If convicted as charged, Defendant faces a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Following the return of the indictment, the Court issued an arrest warrant for the Defendant and set bail in the amount of \$2,000,000, cash only. Defendant was arrested on March 17, 2026.

On March 18, 2026, Defendant made her initial appearance before the Court. At the time of her initial appearance, Defendant was not represented by counsel. After reviewing a Financial Affidavit and Application for Counsel filed by Defendant, the Court found Defendant indigent and appointed her counsel at State's expense.

Appointed counsel was allowed to withdraw after Defendant's current counsel filed their appearances.

On March 19, 2026, Defendant filed a motion for bond review and requested an expedited hearing. In her motion, Defendant requests that the Court modify the terms and conditions of Defendant's release to the following:

1. An unsecured bond in the amount of \$100,000.
2. Defendant shall pay 10% of the cash bond (\$10,000) to the Clerk of Court.
3. Defendant shall be supervised by Pretrial Release Services provided by the Fifth Judicial District Department of Corrections.
4. Defendant shall be monitored by GPS monitoring as a condition of Pretrial Release supervision.
5. Defendant shall comply with a curfew set by the Court.
6. Defendant shall voluntarily turn over passport, if any.¹

Because an expedited hearing on Defendant's motion was requested by the Defendant, the Court set a hearing on Defendant's motion for March 30, 2026. However, due to a scheduling conflict involving one of the prosecutors, the State moved to continue the hearing, which was granted by the Court. Ultimately, the Court convened a reported hearing on April 10, 2026.

Prior to the hearing, on April 8, 2026, the State filed its written resistance to the Defendant's motion for bond review. In its resistance, the State, while agreeing that the Court has the discretionary authority to establish and modify bail conditions, argues that the nature and circumstances of the pending charge support the current bond in the amount of \$2,000,000, cash only. The State's position is that the Court

¹ At the April 10, 2026, hearing, the Defendant informed the Court that she does not have a passport.

should maintain the current \$2,000,000 cash only bond and deny Defendant's motion for bond review.

Evidence Presented at the Bond Review Hearing

The State did not present any evidence at the hearing in support of its resistance to the Defendant's motion to amend the conditions of release.² To support her motion, the Defendant presented an exhibit and the in-court testimony from three witnesses: Kristy Williamson, Eugene Grell, and Julie Boyles. The Court will next summarize the evidence presented by the Defendant starting with Exhibit A.

Exhibit A³ is best described as a compilation of letters of support for Defendant's request to amend bond made by both members of Defendant's extended family and community members. All 52 of these letters of support are consistent in that each person who submitted a letter of support contends that Defendant is not a flight risk and does not pose a threat to the community at large.

In weighing the evidence presented, the Court has given more weight to the statements made by community members as opposed to the statements and testimony from Defendant's extended family members. Exhibit A supports the Court's conclusion that Defendant has strong local community ties. This conclusion is supported by the statements of various community members set out in Exhibit A.

One community member wrote:

I have known Kristin since she was in high school. Her parents are good friends with my husband and myself. She was a cheerleader in high school with my daughter. She was a nice girl, quiet but always cheerful. All her family live in central Iowa, including her son who is attending

² In its written resistance, the State has requested that the Court take judicial notice of and give evidentiary consideration to the minutes of testimony filed both in support of the indictment and as supplemented through the additional minutes of testimony filed on April 9, 2026 (D0047). The Court grants the State's request. While the Court and the parties have access to the minutes of testimony, these records are confidential as a matter of law. Therefore, the Court will not summarize in this Order the content of these records.

³ The Exhibit is designated as Bond-A in the record.

college at the university of Iowa. She has always been a devoted wife and mother and is very close with her mother and grandfather.

I do not feel that she possesses a threat to the community, nor would she be a flight risk. I would urge you to consider reducing her bail.⁴

Another community member wrote:

I have known Kristin for over 40 years. Past high school we have stayed in touch, our sons played sports against one another so I had the privilege of reconnecting with Kristin and Toby several times a year for the last 8-10 years. Kristin is, and always has been, a very caring, soft spoken and upstanding person. I have valued her friendship over the years, as she has always been someone that is trustworthy and loyal.

Please consider this letter as a sign of support for Kristin. I believe she is not a risk to the community and she is not a flight risk either. Kristin has a very stable support group around her with her immediate family and friends, who all live in the Woodward area.⁵

Another community member wrote:

I have known Krissy Ramsey for over 25 years through family and mutual friends. During this time, I have come to know her as a kind, responsible, and trustworthy individual. Krissy has consistently demonstrated strong moral character, compassion for others, and a genuine commitment to doing what is right.

Krissy is not a risk to the community. In my experience, she has always been respectful of others and mindful of her actions. She is dependable and has shown that she takes her responsibilities seriously. Additionally, I do not believe she is at risk of fleeing. She has strong ties to her community, including her family and long term employment in the real estate industry which reflects her stability and accountability.⁶

Another community member wrote:

I have known Kristen for more than 25 years, and during that time I have come to know her as a person of honesty, compassion, and steady character. She has always demonstrated responsibility, integrity, and genuine care for the people in her life.

Kristen is a devoted mother whose commitment to her family is unwavering. She is also a contributing member of her community, consistently showing kindness and support to those around her. One meaningful example occurred during my mother's battle with lung

⁴ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 1.

⁵ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 5.

⁶ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 26.

cancer. Throughout that difficult period, Kristen regularly reached out to ask how my mother was doing, to check on me personally, and to offer help.

In all my years knowing Kristen, she has shown respect toward others, reliability in her commitments, and compassion in her relationships. I believe strongly that she poses no risk to the community whatsoever. Additionally, based on her deep family ties and consistent stability, I am confident that she is not a flight risk.

Another community member wrote:

I grew up in Perry, Iowa, and have known Krissy and her family since I was five years old (39 years). I regularly visit and communicate with Krissy's younger sister, mother, and maternal grandfather. I most recently saw Krissy at the 100th birthday celebration of her grandfather, Mahlon Conway, a WWII veteran and beloved pillar of the Perry community. . .

First and foremost, Krissy is not a flight risk. She has deep and longstanding roots in Iowa, including close family relationships and a strong connection to her community. These ties are not superficial – they represent the foundation of her life. Her family, support network, and sense of belonging are all here. It is my firm belief that Krissy has every reason to remain in the area and face the legal process responsibly. Her willingness to comply with strict conditions such as GPS monitoring, curfew, passport surrender, and supervision by a release officer further demonstrates her commitment to accountability and cooperation with the court.

Second, Krissy has no criminal record or history of violent behavior. To my knowledge, she has lived a law-abiding life and has not posed a threat to the safety of others. The person I know is not someone who brings harm to her community, but rather someone who has maintained positive relationships and conducted herself with care and respect. There is nothing in her past behavior that suggests she presents a danger if released under appropriate supervision.⁷

Another community member wrote:

I am writing this letter for consideration at a bond review hearing. I am aware that Krissy has been accused of a horrible crime but I don't believe she is a risk to the community. Furthermore, I don't feel like she is a risk to flee because her husband is employed in the community and her son is a college student in the state and I feel like she will rely on her family for support. She also has lived in and been employed in the area for many years and has community ties in and around her home.⁸

⁷ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 26.

⁸ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 40.

Another community member wrote:

I know Krissy through her family and through her son. Our boys have been friends since elementary school, so roughly 15 years or more. I'm writing this letter to ask for the bond to be lowered to an affordable amount. I don't believe that Krissy is a flight risk or risk to the community and want her to be treated fairly as a person that is innocent until proven guilty.

I can speak for the character that I've witnessed in the years that I've known Krissy. She's always been incredibly kind to our family, especially my son who considers her son one of his very best friends. I would never in a million years hesitate to have my son spend time in their home. We spent many summers watching our boys play baseball together and falls watching them play football. Even when many of us would get heated about a call or a game, she was always level headed and calm. What she is being accused of is absolutely out of character, I've never seen her raise her voice or get heated about anything!

Krissy is a good mom, she has volunteered for fundraising for our kids' class throughout the years, helping in elementary as well as helping plan for and decorate for our Prom. Her son Tanner is an amazing young man that is caring, respectful, thoughtful and considerate, you don't raise a great human like this by accident.

Respectfully, I support Krissy and her defense team in asking for lower bond. I understand the seriousness of what she's been charged with and do not believe she is a harm to our community while she awaits trial, where she is prayerfully found innocent.⁹

Another community member wrote:

I have known Ms. Ramsey and her family for many years, as we attended Woodward-Granger High School together. Throughout that time, I have had the opportunity to observe her character and conduct. Ms. Ramsey is, above all, a devoted and caring mother. Her son, Tanner, is clearly her highest priority. The care, guidance, and values she has instilled in him are evident in his character. He is both personable and sincere, reflecting the positive influence she has had in his upbringing. Based on my personal knowledge and experiences with Ms. Ramsey, I can attest that she is a trustworthy, dependable, and compassionate individual. She has consistently demonstrated integrity and a genuine concern for others. Given her strong ties to the community, longstanding relationships, and family responsibilities, I do not believe Ms. Ramsey poses any risk to the community. Furthermore, I do not believe she presents any risk of flight,

⁹ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 42.

as her deep roots and commitments provide strong assurance of her reliability and stability.¹⁰

Another community member wrote:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Krissy Ramsey for consideration at her bond hearing. I have known Krissy since around 2010 when our sons became friends. Through their friendship, our families spent time together at school activities and youth sports. Our husbands also coached Little League baseball together, which gave us more opportunities to get to know each other through our shared support of our children and families. Krissy has always been a kind, friendly, but quiet person. In the 15+ years that I've known her, she has always been caring toward her family and respectful to others around her. Through the years at youth sports and school activities, I have consistently observed her being supportive of her son and kind toward other families.

Based on my personal experience with Krissy, I am confident she is not a danger to the community. I am also confident she is not a flight risk. She has strong ties to this area through her family and friendships, and I believe she would follow any conditions set by the court.¹¹

In addition to the letters of support, which were introduced into evidence and which the Court has considered as part of its decision making, the Court also heard testimony from three witnesses. Each of these witnesses also supported Defendant's motion to amend the conditions of release. Each witness was consistent, that they believed Defendant had strong community ties, was not a flight risk, and in their view posed no risk to public.

While the Court has considered the testimony of all three witnesses, given her lack of objectivity, the Court has given little weight to the opinion testimony of Julie Boyles about whether Defendant is a flight risk or poses a danger to the public. As Defendant's mother, Ms. Boyle understandably clearly wants what is best for Defendant. Her objectivity on the issues before the Court can reasonably be called into

¹⁰ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 48

¹¹ Bond Exhibit A at pg. 64.

question. However, the Court has given weight to Ms. Boyle's testimony concerning Defendant's strong family ties to the area.

Finally, the Court has considered as evidence the professional statement of Defendant's attorney, Alfredo Parrish. Of significance, Defendant has no criminal record other than a single traffic ticket 25 years ago. Defendant has had no disciplinary issues while she has been in the Dallas County Jail. Jail staff have expressed no concerns that she poses any risk of self-harm.

It is important to note that the evidence offered by the Defendant was uncontroverted. The State choose not to offer any exhibits or witness testimony at the hearing. Consequently, there is no evidence before the Court that Defendant has made any statements or taken any actions that could be interpreted as threats to other people or threats to flee to avoid prosecution either during the investigation or since her arrest. Nor is there any evidence that Defendant has a history of failing to follow court orders. Defendant also has no history of failing to appear for court appearances.

Governing Law

Both the federal (Eighth Amendment) and state (Art I, § 17) constitutions prohibit excessive bail. Article 1, § 12 of the Iowa Constitution provides that every criminal defendant¹² "shall, before conviction, be bailable, by sufficient sureties." Iowa Code Chapter 809 also provides a statutory basis for the principle that with certain exceptions¹³, all defendants are bailable before trial. Additionally, even though bond is set at the time of the initial appearance, the Court retains the authority to set and modify conditions of release "at any time." *See*, Iowa Code § 811.2(6).

¹² There is an exception in Article 1, § 12 of the Iowa Constitution that is applicable only to capital crimes; however, Iowa no longer imposes the death penalty.

¹³ No bail is permitted prior to trial for a defendant charged with the first-degree murder of a law enforcement or correctional officer acting in his or her official capacity where the defendant is aware of the victim's status as a law enforcement officer. Iowa Code § 811.1(2)(a).

The determination of the appropriate form and amount of bail lies within the discretion of the district court. *See*, Iowa Code § 811.2; *State v. Briggs*, 666 N.W.2d 573 (Iowa 2003). In exercising its discretion, the Court's is guided by consideration of certain factors. As the Iowa Supreme Court has noted:

The court's determination is guided by the necessity of "reasonably assur[ing] the appearance of the person for trial or deferral of judgment and [guaranteeing] the safety of other persons." *Id.* § 811.2(1).

These purposes are accomplished by considering a number of factors in setting bail, including the nature of the defendant's offense, prior record of criminal activity, and adherence to any other bail requirements imposed by the district court in the past or present. *See Id.* § 811.2(2).

State v. Briggs, 666 N.W.2d 573, 584 (Iowa 2003).

Iowa Code § 811.2(1)(a) provides that in exercising its discretion, the district court shall impose the least restrictive conditions of release that will reasonably assure the appearance of the defendant for trial while also reasonably assuring the safety of other persons. Specifically, section 811.2(1)(a) provides:

1. Conditions for release of defendant.

a. All bailable defendants shall be ordered released from custody pending judgment or entry of deferred judgment on their personal recognizance, or upon the execution of an unsecured appearance bond in an amount specified by the magistrate unless the magistrate determines in the exercise of the magistrate's discretion, that such a release will not reasonably assure the appearance of the defendant as required or that release will jeopardize the personal safety of another person or persons. When such determination is made, the magistrate shall, either in lieu of or in addition to the above methods of release, impose the first of the following conditions of release which will reasonably assure the appearance of the person for trial or deferral of judgment and the safety of other persons, or, if no single condition gives that assurance, any combination of the following conditions:

(1) Place the defendant in the custody of a designated person or organization agreeing to supervise the defendant.

(2) Place restrictions on the travel, association or place of abode of the defendant during the period of release.

(3) Require the execution of an appearance bond in a specified amount and the deposit with the clerk of the district court or a public officer designated under section 602.1211, subsection 4, in cash or other qualified security, of a sum not to exceed ten percent of the amount of the bond, the deposit to be returned to the person who deposited the specified amount with the clerk upon the performance of the appearances as required in section 811.6.

(4) Require the execution of a bail bond with sufficient surety, or the deposit of cash in lieu of bond. However, except as provided in section 811.1, bail initially given remains valid until final disposition of the offense or entry of an order deferring judgment. If the amount of bail is deemed insufficient by the court before whom the offense is pending, the court may order an increase of bail and the defendant must provide the additional undertaking, written or in cash, to secure release.

(5) Impose any other condition deemed reasonably necessary to assure appearance as required, or the safety of another person or persons including a condition requiring that the defendant return to custody after specified hours, or a condition that the defendant have no contact with the victim or other persons specified by the court.

See, Iowa Code § 811.2(1)(a).

Analysis

As the Court undertakes its legal analysis, the Court is mindful of two separate, but related, legal principles. First, Defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charge of Murder in the First Degree. It is a bedrock principle of American law that every person accused of a crime, including the Defendant in this case, is presumed to be innocent. This presumption of innocence stays with the Defendant throughout these proceedings until such time, if ever, that she is proven guilty by evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

The second, but related, legal principle is that the purpose of bail is not to punish a person accused of a crime, no matter how serious or egregious the allegations may be. Instead, the purpose of setting bail is twofold: to reasonably assure

the defendants appearance at trial while also reasonably assuring the safety of the public at large. The Court's bail decision is aimed at these considerations alone.¹⁴

The starting place in the Court's analysis as to the proper conditions of release is an evaluation of Defendant's risk of flight to avoid prosecution if her bail is lowered. The Defendant has been a resident of central Iowa for decades. Defendant is married and has a college-aged son who is attending college in the state. Defendant has extended family members who also live in the area and who have expressed support for her. Defendant has established that she has strong community connections and ties as evidenced by the many letters of support presented to the Court.

Defendant also has a history of maintaining stable full-time employment. However, at the hearing, Defendant informed the Court that after her arrest she is no longer employed. Whether she is employable now is an open question.

The crime that Defendant has been charged with occurred fifteen years ago. It appears that Defendant was identified as a person of interest by law enforcement early in the investigation into the death of Ashley Okland. Defendant was questioned by law enforcement, and a search warrant was executed at her residence in 2011. It appears that Defendant has been interviewed by law enforcement several times in the intervening 15 years since the death of Ashley Okland. It is noteworthy that even though she clearly remained a person of interest to law enforcement as the investigation proceeded, Defendant did not flee or leave the area.

On the other hand, as the State has reasonably argued, now that Defendant has been charged with the crime of Murder in the First Degree, which carries a mandatory life sentence in the event of a conviction, the very nature of the charge and

¹⁴ The Court recognizes that the family of Ashley Okland has suffered a profound loss. The Court does not mean to minimize this loss in any way, but the Okland family's loss is not a factor the Court is to consider in making a bail decision.

its penalties raise the risk that any person accused of such a crime may flee to avoid prosecution. Experience teaches that it is not uncommon for the stress or weight of pending charges, especially with those with severe penalties, to impair decision-making, leading those accused of such crimes to make poor decisions like fleeing to avoid prosecution.

After considering Defendant's strong community and family ties, her history of stable employment, and that she has remained in the area over the past 15 years while the investigation proceeded, the Court determines while there remains a risk that Defendant may flee to avoid prosecution if released on bail, that risk is relatively moderate in the Court's estimation. However, due to nature of the charge and the severity of the penalties, there remains some degree of risk of flight that the Court must consider in its bail determination.

In evaluating the conditions of release, the Court is also to consider the nature of the charged offense. In its pleadings and arguments to the Court, the State summarizes the evidence it believes supports its contention that Defendant murdered Ashley Okland. In her pleadings and arguments to the Court, the Defendant summarizes what it believes are weaknesses in the State's evidence and points out what it believes is the lack of evidence connecting Defendant to the murder of Ashlyn Okland. Both parties ask that the Court consider their opposing views on the strength or weakness of the State's evidence in setting bail.

The Court declines to do so. That is because it is clear to the Court that the parties fundamentally disagree on what the evidence will and will not show regarding whether Defendant committed the crime she is charged with. The Court has not heard any witnesses testify and the evidence outlined by the State has not yet been tested by the trial process, including cross-examination. Consequently, the only conclusions the

Court can draw about the nature and circumstances of the crime to use in setting bail are the following objective facts.

Ashley Okland was violently killed. She was shot twice, at close range, once in the face and once in the chest. Ahsley Okland's death has been ruled a homicide. A Dallas County Grand Jury has returned an indictment charging Defendant with Murder in the First Degree. In doing so, the Grand Jury determined that the evidence presented to it was "such that, if unexplained, would warrant a conviction by the trial jury." *See*, Iowa Rule of Criminal Procedure 2.4(6)(i). In sum, Defendant stands accused of a serious and violent crime. If convicted as charged, she faces a life sentence. This is the extent of the nature and circumstances of the charge that the Court is considering in setting bail.

It is true that Defendant has no criminal record.¹⁵ Nor has the Court been presented with any claim that Defendant has a history of acting out violently other than the allegations made in this case. Even when taking these factors into account, the violent nature of the crime charged in this case raises reasonable concerns in the Court's mind about whether Defendant may reasonably pose a safety risk to the community if released on bail.

After considering and weighing all the evidence in light of the applicable law, the Court concludes that a \$2,000,000 cash only bond is not the least restrictive condition of release supported by the evidence presented. The Court concludes that a combination of a cash bond posted with the Clerk of Court, pre-trial monitoring, and restrictions on Defendant's ability to move freely in the community are the least

¹⁵ At the hearing, the State alleged that Defendant's home is not a safe place because it contained drugs and weapons. There is no evidence any weapons were possessed illegally. The Court is ordering that all weapons be removed from the home. As to the allegation about drugs, the State presented no evidence on the type or location of where any alleged drugs were found in the Defendant's home which she shared with her husband and son. The Defendant has not been charged with any drug offenses. There having been no proof of this claim presented to the Court to evaluate, the Court has given it no consideration.

restrictive conditions of release necessary to ensure Defendant's appearance at future court hearings while reasonably assuring protection of others.

In setting a cash bond, it is important to note that Iowa law does not currently provide any uniform bond schedule for Class A felonies nor is there any presumptive minimum pretrial bond amounts for Class A felonies.¹⁶ It is up to the Court to exercise its discretion after applying the governing legal principles to make a bail determination. After doing so in this case, the Court concludes and Orders that Defendant's bond conditions will be amended as provided below.

RULING

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant's conditions of release are modified as follows:

1. Bond is amended from \$2,000,000, cash only, to \$500,000. Defendant may be released upon posting 10%, or \$50,000 cash, with the Clerk of Court in lieu of using a commercial surety. If Defendant appears at all court hearings, at the conclusion of this case, the posted bond will be returned.
2. Upon posting bond, Defendant shall be supervised on pretrial release by the Fifth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services. Defendant shall follow any conditions of release set by Pretrial Services in their discretion.
3. Pretrial supervision shall include the use of GPS monitoring 24/7.
4. As a condition of release, Defendant shall not possess or consume any controlled substances unless legally prescribed for her. Defendant shall be subject to random UAs at the discretion of Pretrial Services to enforce this provision.

¹⁶ While there is no current presumptive bond amount for Class A felonies, both the Iowa House and Iowa Senate have recently passed legislation which would amend Iowa Code Chapter 811 to add a new subsection setting presumed minimum bond amounts for certain felonies. For a Class A felony, this legislation would set the presumed minimum bond amount at \$500,000. See, S.F. 2399. To be clear, this is not yet the law in Iowa.

5. Defendant shall be subject to confinement by house arrest at her residence in Woodward as a condition of release. Defendant shall be authorized to leave her home confinement only to attend meetings with her attorneys, to attend any future court hearings, and to attend medical and dental appointments. Defendant shall cooperate with Pretrial Release Services to keep them informed of such appointments. Should Defendant become employed outside the home, the Court, upon proper application, will consider whether work release is appropriate.

6. Any firearms shall be removed from Defendant's residence prior to her home confinement.

7. Defendant shall not make application for a passport as a condition of her release.

SO ORDERED.



State of Iowa Courts

Case Number
FECR051688
Type:

Case Title
STATE OF IOWA VS KRISTIN RAMSEY
OTHER ORDER

So Ordered

Coleman McAllister, District Judge
Fifth Judicial District of Iowa

Electronically signed on 2026-04-16 09:45:23