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# Evansville COURIER & PRESS

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## Son of missing woman sues over arrest

Houston Harwood

Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

BOONVILLE — The son of missing Boonville woman Donna Hatfield filed suit against the city’s police department in federal court, alleging among other things that officials upended his life by aggressively targeting him as a suspect in his mother’s disappearance.

The suit, first filed in state court in July on behalf of Hatfield’s son, Thomas Rainey Jr., and removed on Thursday to U.S. District Court, centers on Rainey’s 2023 arrest on charges of fraud and forgery — a since-dismissed case Rainey alleges was part of an unlawful campaign to pressure him into confessing involvement in Hatfield’s disappearance.

Hatfield, 72, was last seen at her Boonville home, where she lived with Rainey, sometime between May

or early June of 2019, according to the FBI. Hatfield’s whereabouts remain a mystery.

Rainey alleges that by publicly “tying” him to his mother’s disappearance, Boonville police had subjected him to “intense humiliation and ostracization from the community.”

The defendants – the City of Boonville, the Boonville Police Department, Chief of Police Brandon Wells and BPD officers Adam Wilmes and Thomas Anderson – have yet to file a formal response to Rainey’s allegations.

Attorneys representing the city and the officers filed an unopposed motion on Friday to extend the deadline to respond through Sept. 11.

An attorney representing the defendants, Cameron Huffman of Kopka Pinkus Dolin, declined to comment on the matter, citing the ongoing litigation.

Boonville Police Department officials likewise de-

clined to comment on the lawsuit and referred the Courier & Press to the department’s attorneys.

**Rainey accuses Boonville police of unlawful arrest**

In the six years since Hatfield was reported missing on Aug. 26, 2019, Rainey has failed to escape the suspicions of his family and of police that he could have had something to do with her disappearance.

While Rainey has never been charged with harming Hatfield, he has been named a “person of interest,” and news reports stretching back to 2019 detail the shifting accounts Rainey is alleged to have given to various family members concerning what could have happened to her.

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## U.S. citizen lived every immigrant’s nightmare



**Kenny Laynez records his coworker, Esdras, being shot with a Taser during his arrest on May 2, along State Road A1A in Singer Island. Officers from the Florida Highway Patrol and U.S. Border Patrol said Esdras, called Kevin by his coworkers, had resisted arrest. The incident was part of a crackdown on undocumented immigrants in Florida.** PROVIDED BY KENNY LAYNEZ AND THE GUATEMALA-MAYAN CENTER

## 18-year-old captured ICE arrest on video

Valentina Palm

Palm Beach Post | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – Kenny Laynez experienced every undocumented immigrant’s nightmare on the morning of May 2: being taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

With one difference: He is a U.S. citizen.

Laynez captured the event on video, which shows Florida Highway Patrol officers and Border Patrol agents stopping the 18-year-old landscaper and his three coworkers — one of them his mother — as they drove by luxury buildings to a job.

The camera captured officers dragging his coworkers out of their van by their necks and twisting Laynez’s arms and pushing him face down to the pavement. The video also showed an officer shooting one of Laynez’s coworkers with a Taser, saying he had resisted arrest.

“I have rights. I was born and raised here,” Laynez told the officers, according to a copy of the video shared by Florida’s Guatemalan-Maya Center of Lake Worth Beach.

“You don’t have any rights here. You are a ‘migo,’ brother,” said the officer, who hurried him into a van. “Migo” is short for “amigo,” the Spanish word for “friend” and here a reference to Laynez’s ethnicity.

Laynez won his release from a federal facility six hours later, with the video still on his cellphone because he said he refused to give the device to an officer.

His coworkers, including the one who was Tased, were undocumented and weren’t as fortunate. They were transferred to the Krome Detention Center in Miami. Laynez said they are free on bail but fear they will be arrested if they show up in court.

Their arrests are part of President Donald Trump’s nationwide immigration crackdown, enforced by the agreements Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis made all Florida police agencies sign, deputizing their officers as federal agents. That means law enforcement officers not only police communities but apprehend people they suspect of being undocumented.

For years, unauthorized entry to the United States was considered a misdemeanor. However, an ICE official said in April the agency now considers anyone without documentation to be a felon.

The Palm Beach Post made multiple attempts to contact Florida Highway Patrol, ICE and Border Patrol for comment about the incident and the body camera footage, as well as multiple requests for copies of the arrest reports. None of them responded.

“They treated us like dogs they picked up in the street,” said Laynez, who said he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of obstruction without violence simply to get the incident over with.

“They are just pulling over people and kidnapping

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## Sentencing date set for ex-county aide

Thomas B. Langhorne

Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

There is a new time and date — 10:30 a.m. Central on Aug. 29 — for sentencing in the case of Regene Newman, the former high-ranking Vanderburgh County judicial employee who has admitted to a series of financial crimes.

Newman’s plea and sentencing hearing on a charge of wire fraud was to have been held July 31 before U.S. District Judge Richard L. Young in Evansville’s federal courthouse. But that was delayed at the request of Newman’s attorney, for what Young called a personal matter having come up.

Sentencing for Newman will happen in Room 301 of Evansville’s federal building at 101 NW M.L. King, Jr., Blvd.

Newman, former finance director in the Vanderburgh County Prosecutor’s Office and business director of Vanderburgh County Community Corrections, has admitted to using more than \$125,000 — much of it meant to battle drug addiction and support at-risk youth — to treat herself to shopping sprees, luxury items and other freebies over a period of years.

A sentencing memorandum written by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Indiana says Newman used credit and debit cards to enrich herself at the prosecutor’s office, adding a timesheet fraud scheme that involved double-billing her time working for a separate governmental entity.

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## Earthquake hit Southwestern IN Friday night

Ryan Reynolds

Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Geological Survey reported a small earthquake in Southwestern Indiana on Friday night, Aug. 8.

The quake, reported at 10:06 p.m. Central, measured as a magnitude 2.6, according to the USGS, and was centered less than a mile east of Cynthiana, Indiana. Preliminary data suggests the quake came from a depth of 10 kilometers, or a little more than six miles.

The area is near where Vanderburgh, Posey and Gibson counties meet.

The Evansville/Tri-State area is in the Wabash Valley seismic zone.

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