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Cold-case podcast led to murder charge



Tucker Simmons attends a release and listening party in Franklinton, Louisiana, for his podcast, “Freeze Frame,” which explores the cold case murder of his aunt, Donna Arceneaux. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TUCKER SIMMONS

Authorities told public 2017 death was a suicide

Amanda Lee Myers
USA TODAY

When Donna Arceneaux’s naked body was found in a small Louisiana town, the local sheriff’s office soon told the public it was a suicide despite a coroner ruling it a homicide.

Now, more than eight years after the 40-year-old mother of three was shot to death, the current sheriff is crediting a podcast by one of Arceneaux’s family members for helping secure an arrest.

“Freeze Frame,” an eight-episode podcast released in 2024, examines Arceneaux’s life, the possible suspects and why the case went cold.

“I would not even know about this case if it weren’t for the podcast,” Washington Parish Sheriff Jason Smith told USA TODAY. “When I started looking at it, I thought, ‘We can solve this. This is

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Tucker Simmons placed this billboard across the street from the Washington Parish [Louisiana] Sheriff’s Office in order to draw attention to his aunt’s cold case. It worked.

FL bill to define ‘domestic terrorism’

Some say bill could encroach on free speech

Stephany Matat
USA TODAY NETWORK

Florida is considering creating a definition for “domestic terrorist organization,” but critics of the move say its vague language may limit lawful speech by advocacy organizations and student groups.

A bill now before the Florida Legislature is one of several touching on terrorist organizations. The bill at issue introduces a number of provisions that would affect school vouchers for private schools and may chill the speech of student groups fearing expulsion, advocates say.

Jonathan Scott Webber, the Florida policy director of the Southern Poverty Law Center, told a House panel Jan. 29 that the “designation standards in this bill are extraordinarily broad and vague.”

He added, “That kind of ambiguity gives the state sweeping discretion and risk capturing lawful advocacy organizations and chilling constitutionally protected activity.”

Three lawmakers in the House Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee voted against the measure, including Democratic state Rep. Michele Rayner, who said she’s concerned with a trend of labeling those with disagreeing viewpoints as domestic terrorists.

“This feels irresponsible. This feels a little too quick,” Rayner said. “What it feels like is criminalizing people that may not believe the way that you believe, or that may not think the way that you think. It is criminalizing them, even though I understand that this is not a criminal process, but I understand that it’s restricting their First Amendment rights.”

This bill was filed by Republican state Rep. Hillary Cassel. In recent weeks, free speech advocates have criticized the Trump administration for calling protesters “domestic terrorists,” including two killed by federal agents: Renee Nicole Good on Jan. 7 and Alex Pretti on Jan. 24.

Cassel said she was offended by an “insinuation” that the bill was in reaction to “tragedies that have occurred.” Domestic terrorism has already been defined by the federal government since 2001, she said.

“You can still protest in support of organizations that are designated as terrorist organizations; what you can’t

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Real ID push grows as new TSA screening fees take effect

Jane Imbody
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The Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles is encouraging residents to upgrade their driver’s licenses or ID cards to a Real ID, especially those planning to travel by air, according to a community announcement.

Starting Feb. 1, air travelers without a Real ID or TSA-approved identification, such as a U.S. passport, will need to undergo additional identity security screenings at airports. This screening will cost \$45 and will only be valid for 10 days.

Currently, about 85% of valid Indiana IDs are Real ID compliant, according to the announcement. This means about

15% of Hoosier travelers could be subject to the new TSA ConfirmID program. Real ID compliant IDs can be identified by a star in the top right corner of the credential.

To get a Real ID, residents can visit a BMV branch and provide the necessary documents to prove their identity, lawful status, Social Security number and Indiana residency. A list of acceptable

documentation is available on the BMV’s website.

This story was created by Jane Imbody, jimbody@usatodayco.com, with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Journalists were involved in every step of the information gathering, review, editing and publishing process. Learn more at cm.usatoday.com/ethical-conduct/.

