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## Arizona traffic stops lead to deportations

### Officials say patrols aim to stop child trafficking, despite lack of related arrests

**Richard Ruelas**  
Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

On a heavily patrolled stretch of Interstate 10 south of Phoenix, people pulled over for having a cracked windshield or an object dangling from their rear view mirror have ended up in deportation proceedings.

The stated goal of the traffic stops is to prevent human trafficking through Arizona's Pinal County, a largely rural area between Phoenix and Tucson, according to Pinal County Sheriff Ross Teeple. The sheriff said he mainly was concerned with child trafficking, a crime he called "horrific."

The aim is not freeway safety, which is the purview of the Arizona Department of Public Safety. Instead, the stops are a pretext for further investigation, Teeple said.

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**"If it's a violation of the Arizona Revised Statutes, it's a legitimate reason to pull someone over."**

**Ross Teeple**  
Pinal County sheriff



**ABOVE:** Interstate 10 in Arizona has been the site of traffic stops that have led to deportation proceedings. Federal court filings detailed the reasons for some stops: following too closely, having a temporary paper license plate that was flapping in the wind, going 3 mph over the speed limit. GETTY IMAGES

**AT TOP:** Pinal County Sheriff Ross Teeple poses for a portrait in his office Oct. 16 in Florence, Arizona. Teeple said the traffic stops aim to prevent human trafficking through the county, a largely rural area between Phoenix and Tucson. MEGAN MENDOZA/ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## Hagerstown man gets 100 years for 2023 double shooting

**Julie E. Greene**  
The Herald-Mail  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Hagerstown man was recently sentenced to 100 years in prison after a Washington County jury found him guilty of second-degree murder and attempted first-degree murder stemming from a July 2023 double shooting in Hagerstown, according to court records and the Washington County State's Attorney Office.

Brian Christopher Francis, 43, was found guilty on Dec. 11 for the second-degree murder of Elijah Raymond Raphael and the attempted first-degree murder of Madalina Paula Ciobanita.

The jury acquitted Francis of first-degree murder in the death of Raphael, according to Francis' online case docket. Francis had faced up to life in prison without the possibility of parole if convicted of first-degree murder.

Washington County Circuit Court Judge Joseph S. Michael, on Dec. 12, sentenced Francis to a total of 100 years in state prison, according to online case dockets and the State's Attorney office.

"We would like to thank law enforcement for their excellent work, members of this community who cooperated and testified, and the jury for their careful consideration of the case," Washington County State's Attorney Regina "Gina" Cirincion said in a news release from her office.

Assistant State's Attorneys Christopher McCormack and Dakota Parrish prosecuted the case during a four-day trial in circuit court.

Hagerstown Police Detective Dustin Vogel was the lead investigator on the case, the release states. The Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Washington County Narcotics Task Force assisted on the case.

The Herald-Mail reached out to the legal defense team that represented Francis, but it had no comment for this story. Francis was represented by Hutchison & Mc Nicolls LLC of Hagerstown.

Francis' online case docket shows a motion/petition for modification/reconsideration was filed in court on Dec. 15.

Francis was born in Brooklyn, New York, and had lived in Hagerstown for one year, according to a December 2023 court document. Prior to living in Hagerstown, he had lived in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, near Wilkes-Barre.

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