

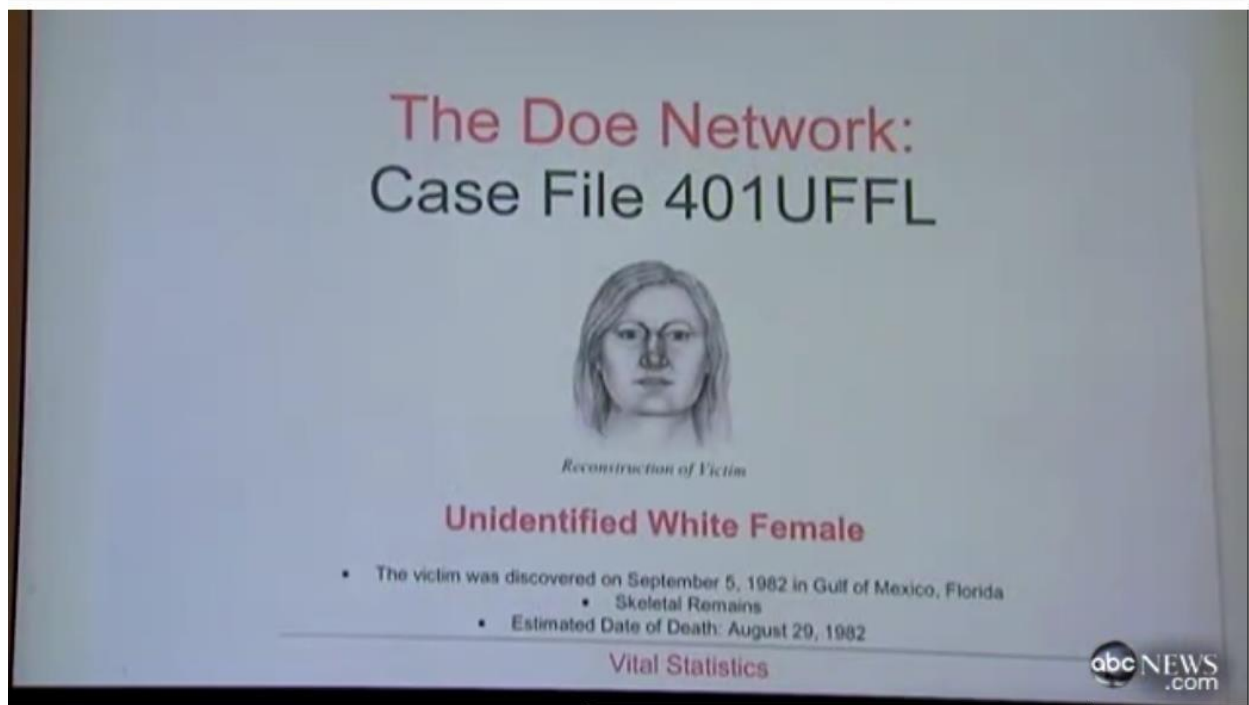
# Florida Cold-Case Killing Ends With Arrest After Family's Detective Work

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The 29-year-old [cold-case disappearance](#) of a Florida mother culminated this week with the arrest of a suspect in Kentucky -- her husband -- thanks largely to the relentless detective work of the victim's children.

William Hurst, 59, was arrested Monday on charges of first-degree murder in the death of wife Amy Hurst in 1982. Remains recovered that year were [identified as hers in July](#).

Jeff Earley and his sister, Lisa Beebe, were 9 and 11, respectively, when their mother disappeared from New Port Richey, Fla. She had moved there from Michigan with new husband William Hurst. But family members feared the worst when they stopped hearing from her.

"Our whole family's known since she disappeared that he did something to her," Earley told [ABC's Tampa affiliate WFTS](#).

It was Earley's own detective work, with the help of his wife, Julie, that led to the re-opening of his mother's case after almost three decades. A missing person's website called the Doe Network provided Earley with his big break, he said.

The website posts photos, sketches, descriptions of clothing, locations, dates and any other relevant information for bodies found in hopes that family members or law enforcement can match them to cases.

One ad sparked recognition in Earley's mind, he said. It was for a woman found in the Gulf of Mexico Sept. 5, 1982, a few months after Earley had last heard from his mother. The description included details such as, "three blue plastic bracelets were found on her left arm and two silver-turquoise rings were located on her left hand and she wore a beaded necklace."

Earley recalled his mother's love of turquoise jewelry, but it was the body's wrapping that triggered his memory about important information. The body was wrapped in an Afghan blanket and a green comforter with a rope tied around the woman's waist, attached to a cement block.

He instantly recognized the pattern on the Afghan as the one his grandmother used to make and give out to all the family members. The family still even had a matching one. And the green comforter matched one the family used to own, of which the family had a photograph with his sister bouncing on it. He was sure it was his mother and the case was re-opened.

"That got the ball rolling," Kevin Doll, the public information officer for the Pasco Sheriff's Office, said. **"Without the son going on the Doe Network**

**and believing that that missing person was his mother, this case would probably still be unsolved."**

DNA tests determined that the woman was Amy Hurst and that she had died from blunt-force trauma to her head. Her death was declared a homicide. Investigators still did not know who had committed the crime, but her children had an idea. They believed it was her new husband, William Hurst.

"I always knew she wasn't going to come home, that was she was probably dead. I knew in my heart who did it," daughter Beebe said. "I don't sleep well at night anymore because I see the image of her floating in the water."

Detectives tracked down William Hurst living in Kentucky and determined after an interview that they had enough information for his arrest. He was arrested this week outside of his home, without resistance. Police have declined to comment on the specifics leading to his arrest but, they say, might disclose more after he is extradited to Florida.

For Amy Hurst's family, the arrest is providing a much-anticipated feeling of closure, but does not take away the anger for their loss.

"She never got to see her grandchildren, either one of our weddings," son Earley said. "She was stripped of her life by him."