

U.S. & WORLD

Classy

Colorado couple lived with their lover's corpse for two years while spending his money

NOELLE Phillips
The Denver Post

DENVER — A Jefferson County couple face multiple felony charges after they lived for almost two years with the corpse of a man with whom they had been involved in a three-way relationship.

The gruesome living arrangement was discovered in early July after the brother of 64-year-old James Frances O'Neill called the Lakewood Police Department and requested a welfare check, according to a July 11 police arrest affidavit. During the investigation, police determined that the roommates spent more than \$17,000 with O'Neill's debit card and that someone had forged his signature on a car title after O'Neill died in their apartment in December 2023, according to the affidavit.

The body had stayed in the apartment under a deflated air mattress since late December 2023 until police served a search warrant on July 3. The couple confessed to keeping the body inside and not reporting the death to police, in part because they were spending O'Neill's social security money, the affidavit stated.

James Agnew, 55, and Suzanne Agnew, 57, each face one count of tampering with a deceased body, abuse of a corpse, one count of theft between \$5,000 and \$20,000 and one count of unauthorized use of a financial device, court records show. The arrest was first reported by 9News.



A Lakewood Police vehicle is parked outside the Lakewood Police Department and Municipal Courts building in Lakewood, Colorado, on July 8, 2025. (RJ Sangosti/The Denver Post/TNS)

The death investigation began after O'Neill's brother called the Lakewood police to ask for a welfare check in June 2025 after not hearing from him since 2021.

When police went to the apartment in the 3400 block of South Ammon Street, a man met them outside, implied that he was O'Neill and told police that he did not wish to have contact with his family.

However, police showed body camera footage of that interaction to O'Neill's brother, who said the man was not his sibling, the affidavit said.

O'Neill's brother convinced the couple to provide him with O'Neill's checking account number and social security number by telling them that O'Neill was in line for an inheritance.

He then checked the account and saw that multiple transactions had taken place monthly and that the account was overdrawn.

Lakewood police found 7-11 video footage that showed James Agnew had harmed O'Neill, and they researched Colorado Department of Motor Vehicle records and found a title to O'Neill's car with a signature that did not resemble his previous signature on titles. They also discovered a recording of a phone call from Dec. 2, 2023, in which O'Neill called Jefferson County dispatch to report that his roommate was threatening him, but he declined to have officers respond, the affidavit said.

Lakewood police agents

served a search warrant at the home on July 3, and Suzanne Agnew told them they would find O'Neill's body in the apartment.

The roommate told police that the three of them had been in a relationship for years and that O'Neill slept on a mattress on the floor next to the other couple's bed. One morning between Dec. 10 and Dec. 12, 2023, they woke to find O'Neill deceased on the air mattress, the affidavit stated.

"Suzanne claimed that James Agnew suggested they call the police, but she did not want him to do that because she was not ready to 'give up' Jim," the affidavit stated. "Suzanne told me more than once that she knew it was wrong and that she should have reported his death."

Suzanne Agnew told police that she did not believe James Agnew had harmed O'Neill, and James Agnew told police that on the night of O'Neill's death, "there probably was drug use going on."

The couple owned eight Chihuahuas so the Agnews covered O'Neill's body with a deflated air mattress to keep them away, the affidavit stated.

James Agnew admitted that O'Neill's Social Security income, "was definitely a consideration in deciding whether or not to report his death," the affidavit stated.

Suzanne Agnew is scheduled to appear in court on Aug. 27, and James Agnew is set to appear on Sept. 2.

Ship explosion causes fire near Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse site



Crews continue removing debris and wreckage around the container ship Dali at the site of the March collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in an effort to clear the shipping channel. (Karl Merton Ferron/Baltimore Sun/TNS)

CHEVALL PRYCE
Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — An explosion aboard a cargo vessel near the site of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge late Monday is under investigation, Baltimore and federal officials said.

Part of a Liberian cargo vessel exploded, causing a fire in a portion of the ship located south of Fort Carroll, according to Baltimore City Fire Department.

At 6:30 p.m., Baltimore City Fire Department firefighters responded to reports of a commercial vessel exploding in the Patapsco River.

The ship, a 751-foot commercial cargo vessel named W-Sapphire, showed signs of a fire consistent with an explosion, according to Baltimore City Fire Department spokesperson John Marsh.

"Firefighters responded by both land and water, including the department's fireboats," Marsh said. "The vessel remained afloat and was being assisted by tugboats."

All 23 of the crew members were accounted for and uninjured after the incident, according to fire officials. The U.S. Coast Guard also assisted in the rescue of the crew and the recovery of the ship.

The ship also had two pilots aboard, according to Coast Guard Petty Officer Matthew West, who said the merchant vessel was carrying coal.

Fireboats with Baltimore City Fire Department and the U.S. Coast Guard remained at the scene.

W-Sapphire was moved to an anchorage area until it is cleared to continue its journey by the U.S. Coast Guard.

An investigation into the cause of the incident is ongoing.

BUSINESS

Invest-minute

■ 529 education savings plans: More flexible than you think

Planning for your child's education can feel overwhelming, but a 529 education savings plan offers a powerful way to build a financial foundation for their educational future.

One in four parents currently invests in a 529 plan, according to 2025 research by Edward Jones and Morning Consult. Perhaps it's because of the tax benefits- earnings are generally tax free if the money is used for qualified educational expenses. Or perhaps it's because of their flexibility.

TYPES OF EDUCATION

While most people know 529 plans can help cover college and university tuition, these versatile accounts can also pay tuition for vocational or trade schools, making them

suitable for students pursuing careers in skilled trades like plumbing, electric works or culinary arts. Additionally, some apprenticeship programs qualify for these funds. And even K-12 tuition expenses are covered, up to \$10,000 per year for private, public and religious elementary and secondary schools.

BEYOND TUITION

Withdrawals from at 529 plan can move beyond tuition and cover the cost of room and board for students enrolled at least half-time. They can help pay for books, computers and qualified educational supplies. And a big surprise for some: A 529 plan can help with student loan repayment up to \$10,000 per beneficiary.

WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE

Fortunately, 529 plans welcome contributions from anyone- parents, grandparents, other family

and friends. Contributions are treated as gifts to the beneficiary, so most contributors will want to stay within the annual nontaxable gifting limit (which for 2025 is \$19,000 for individuals or \$38,000 for married couples filing jointly.)

Interestingly, 1 in 5 parents would prefer for their child to receive 529 contributions as gifts from loved ones, making these accounts perfect for birthdays, holidays and other special occasions.

MULTIPLE CHILDREN

If you have multiple children, you have options in how you structure your 529 savings. You can maintain separate accounts for each child or use one account for all your children.

UNUSED FUNDS

You may be concerned about what happens if your child doesn't use all the money. Fortunately, these accounts offer numerous

penalty-free options. You can easily change the beneficiaries to another qualifying family member, including siblings, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or even yourself as the account owner.

You can also roll funds to another family member's existing 529 plan. If your child receives a scholarship, you can withdraw up to the scholarship amount without penalty (though you'll pay income tax on a portion of the money.) The IRS allows an option to roll up to \$35,000 into Roth IRA for the beneficiary if certain requirements are met. You should consult with your tax advisor on this 529/Roth IRA rollover issue.

STATE OPTIONS

It's important to note that 529 plans vary from state to state and you're not limited to your home state's plan. However, it's smart to examine your home state's offering first, as many pro-

vide special incentives like tax breaks for residents.

When comparing plans, consider factors such as tax benefits, fees, investment options and ease of use. A good financial advisor can help you navigate these choices and identify the plan that makes the most sense for your family's specific situation and goals.

529 savings plans offer flexibility and tax advantages that help make them an excellent tool for education planning. With their expanded uses and multiple options for unused funds, they can help provide families with both security and adaptability in preparing for their children's educational futures.

[This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC.]

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121 Help Wanted

BARTENDER WANTED: VFW Fredonia. Apply within, 10283 Harper Rd, Fredonia. AUG20

135 Pets & Supplies

ACA POMERANIAN puppies, 2 males, \$500 each. Call 620-714-0295. AUG23

151 Services

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