

The Cold Case Handbook

JOSEPH L. GIACALONE

Blue360°
Media

**This publication is dedicated to the hard-working
law enforcement officers who risk their lives
every day to protect and serve the community.**

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ISBN: 978-1-60885-462-2

eBook ISBN: 978-1-60885-461-5

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(Pub. 93157)

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CHAPTER 1 — THE HOMICIDE VICTIMS' FAMILIES' RIGHTS ACT OF 2021

"We're finally seeing elected officials get it right: Victims matter and the victims' family matters."

—Joseph Giacalone on Fox News upon the Act signed into Law

KEY TERMS:

H.R. 3359

Designated Family Member

Reviewer

Probative Lead

Agency

OPSEC

Yogurt Shop Murders

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this chapter, police executives, detectives, and victims' family members should be able to:

- Recall the case which that was the impetus for H.R. 3359.
- Identify which cold case murders are affected by H.R. 3359.
- Discuss the process by which a cold case murder review is conducted.
- Identify who can file an application for a cold case reexamination under the law.
- Recall what the reporting requirements are under the law.
- Discuss the consequences of willfully not following the law.

On August 3, 2022, President Joe Biden signed H.R. 3359 into law. Upon signing it, the President gave hope to thousands of victims and their families across the nation. The law could also be seen as a nudge to police departments to account for and review every cold case investigation even if they didn't have a federal partner or nexus involved in the case. In recent years, there have been several forensic advancements made which may help solve a case, but that only happens when you open the box or review the binder and its contents.

In an era of declining murder clearance rates, a twenty-year-old-cold case closed today counts in the year you solve it. That's something for police executives to think about. Remember, investigating cold case also keeps the communication line open between the police and the public – something which always needs improvement.

During my research for this handbook as well as during several interviews with cold case advocates, the same problem arose there was a lack of communication between the police and the victims' families. Keep that in mind when you do start reaching out to families. Many feel that they have been forgotten. It is the main complaint told to me over and over again.