

**FRONTLINE**

**NEW FROM FRONTLINE AND THE NEW YORK TIMES: WHAT  
HAPPENS WHEN THE POLICE INVESTIGATE ONE OF THEIR OWN?**

WGBH  
One Guest Street  
Boston, MA  
02135

617.300.3500  
fax 617.300.1001

[pbs.org/frontline](http://pbs.org/frontline)



FRONTLINE Presents

*A Death in St. Augustine*

Tuesday, November 26, 2013, at 10 P.M. on PBS

[www.facebook.com/frontline](http://www.facebook.com/frontline) | [@frontlinepbs](https://twitter.com/frontlinepbs) #frontlinepbs

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/death-in-st-augustine/>

On the night she broke up with her police officer boyfriend, 24-year-old Michelle O’Connell was found dead from a gunshot in the mouth. Next to her was her boyfriend’s semi-automatic service pistol.

The local sheriff’s investigation concluded it was a suicide—but was it?

In *A Death in St. Augustine*, premiering Tuesday, November 26 at 10 P.M. ([check local PBS listings](#)), FRONTLINE and The New York Times investigate the death of this young, single mother in Florida — and how effectively police handle cases involving their own officers, especially when there are allegations of domestic violence.

“What first caught my eye about this death was that an officer’s gun had fired the fatal shot,” says New York Times investigative reporter Walt Bogdanich, the on-camera reporter for *A Death in St. Augustine*. “The sheriff concluded this was a simple suicide, but I wanted to know how thoroughly did his office investigate the possible involvement of one of its officers.”

As part of the nine-month investigation, FRONTLINE and The New York Times reviewed police, medical and legal records, interviewed dozens of people connected to the case, and consulted with independent forensic and law enforcement experts who found significant problems with the investigation and conclusions of the local medical examiners and St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office.

Through the lens of this complex case, FRONTLINE and The New York Times report on what law enforcement experts say is a vexing and under-reported national problem: officer-involved domestic violence.

“There are many barriers to reporting domestic violence under ‘ordinary’ circumstances,” Bogdanich says. “But when your abuser *is* the police, those barriers — including fear of retaliation — can feel even more daunting.”

The problem of officer-involved domestic violence is compounded by the fact that there’s no central, national collection agency to track complaints. Using police disciplinary records and its own survey of police practices nationally, The Times and

FRONTLINE examined how police departments handle allegations of officer-involved domestic violence

“We’re pleased to collaborate with The New York Times to tell this important story in innovative ways, across all of our collective platforms,” says Raney Aronson-Rath, FRONTLINE deputy executive producer.

### **Credits**

*A Death in St. Augustine* is a FRONTLINE Production with The New York Times and Left/Right Docs in association with Catalyst Media Productions. The director, producer, and writer is Glenn Silber. The co-producer is Frank Koughan. The reporter and writer is Walt Bogdanich. The deputy executive producer of FRONTLINE is Raney Aronson-Rath. The executive producer of FRONTLINE is David Fanning.

### **About FRONTLINE**

FRONTLINE, U.S. television’s longest running investigative documentary series, explores the issues of our times through powerful storytelling. The series has won every major journalism and broadcasting award, including 65 Emmy Awards and 14 Peabody Awards. More than 150 FRONTLINE films can be watched online at [pbs.org/frontline](http://pbs.org/frontline).

FRONTLINE is produced by WGBH Boston and is broadcast nationwide on PBS. Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Major funding for FRONTLINE is provided by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Park Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation and the FRONTLINE Journalism Fund. FRONTLINE is a registered trademark of the WGBH Educational Foundation.

### **About The New York Times**

[The New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com) is one of the world’s most influential news organizations with numerous news bureaus around the New York region, the nation and the globe. The Times is known for accuracy, depth and authority and produces award-winning journalism, breaking news coverage and opinion and commentary along with deep databases of content and rich multimedia presentations. The Times has won 112 Pulitzer Prizes and Citations, more than any other news organization. Follow The Times on Twitter at [@NYTimes](https://twitter.com/NYTimes).

### **Press Contacts**

Patrice Taddonio, (617) 300-5375, [patrice\\_taddonio@wgbh.org](mailto:patrice_taddonio@wgbh.org)  
Danielle Rhoades Ha, (212) 556-8710, [danielle.rhoades-ha@nytimes.com](mailto:danielle.rhoades-ha@nytimes.com)

**pbs.org/pressroom:** Download promotional photography from the PBS Pressroom.

###