

Estranged husband, his ex-girlfriend and his lawyer accused in missing Connecticut mom's death

By Eric Levenson, Melanie Schuman, Brynn Gingras and Jennifer Henderson, CNN

The legal team for Alex Jones closed out 2019 with a bang, garnering upward of \$100,000 in sanctions and fees from an extremely irate Texas state judge in one of the multiple defamation suits over the Infowars host's description of grieving Sandy Hook parents as "crisis actors."

Nearly eight months after Connecticut mother Jennifer Farber Dulos went missing, investigators accused her estranged husband of killing her and his ex-girlfriend and former attorney of conspiring in the plot.

Fotis Dulos, the estranged husband, was arraigned in court Wednesday on charges of murder, felony murder and kidnapping. His ex-girlfriend, Michelle Troconis, as well as his friend and former attorney,

Dulos' attorney Norm Pattis said his client, who has denied wrongdoing, is not a flight risk and his mental health is fine. Pattis said the murder case against Dulos lacks sufficient evidence. "What we have is a suspicious disappearance and an entirely circumstantial case," he said.

Kent Mawhinney, were both arraigned on a charge of conspiracy to commit murder.

The charges stem from the disappearance of Jennifer Dulos, a mother of five who was last seen in New Canaan on May 24, 2019, after she dropped her children off at school. Friends reported her missing after she failed to show up for appointments and they hadn't heard from her for 10 hours. Her body has not been found.

Dulos appeared in court Wednesday and his bond was set at \$6 million. He was ordered to have no contact with the children, his mother-in-law or the children's nanny. Troconis' bond was set at \$1.5 million, and Mawhinney's bond was set at \$2 million.

The charges confirm what had long been presumed and

feared: Authorities believe Jennifer Dulos is dead. Her cell phone has no reported activity since the day she was reported missing, and her last financial activity was on the day before she was last seen.

She likely suffered a combination of “traumatic, blunt-force injuries,” according to the state’s chief medical examiner.

Authorities found a bloodlike stain in three places on her vehicle, which was parked in her garage in New Canaan, where the alleged crime took place, court documents show. Her DNA was found in the stains and on the garage wall and door.

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“What we have is a suspicious disappearance and an entirely circumstantial case,” he said.

He also said investigators took an ax from Dulos’ home during the arrest Tuesday, though he said it likely had no significance to the case.

Mawhinney is represented by attorneys Lee Gold and Jeremy Donnelly. Gold told CNN after the arraignment Wednesday that he had no comment.

Both Fotis Dulos and Troconis were previously arrested on suspicion of evidence tampering in the disappearance. They pleaded not guilty in September to evidence tampering after investigators found a “bloodlike substance” with Jennifer Dulos’ DNA in a truck he had access to the day she disappeared.

Financial records show he faced about \$7 million in debt, including roughly \$4.5 million in various lines of credit, according to court documents.

Mawhinney was Dulos’ former attorney

Though Fulos and Troconis were already implicated in Jennifer Dulos’ disappearance, Mawhinney’s alleged role in the conspiracy was revealed in the arrest warrant released Tuesday.

He is described as a “close friend of Dulos and a practicing attorney” in Connecticut and whose name appeared in the “alibi scripts,” handwritten notes from Troconis and Fotis Dulos. Investigators say the scripts, which list activities and phone calls on the day Jennifer Dulos disappeared, include “alibi witnesses who were later determined to be false,” the warrant stated.

Mawhinney was allegedly present at a meeting with Troconis and Fotis Dulos on the morning Jennifer was last seen, May 24, 2019, according

to the warrant. Mawhinney was interviewed by authorities twice, on June 9 and June 25.

During that second interview, he told police he suffered a concussion following a fall the day after Jennifer Dulos was reported missing. He told authorities he had no memory of seeing Fotis Dulos or Troconis on May 24 and also denied having any contact with Fotis Dulos during both of his interviews.

Separately, Mawhinney also had access to a Connecticut rod and gun club where hunters discovered a shallow grave, a tarp and bags of lime a week before Jennifer Dulos went missing, according to the arrest warrant.

Mawhinney originally found the land and helped secure it years ago for the Windsor Rod & Gun Club, where the hunters discovered the shallow grave. He was no longer a member, and according to one of the hunters, Mawhinney asked him in March or April 2019 whether he could get back onto club property. One of the hunters told him where a key was hidden.

Mawhinney took that information, according to the hunter, but never followed up about renewing his membership to the club, which only has five members.

Police got a search warrant for Mawhinney's cell phone records from February through September 2019 and found Mawhinney's cell phone connected on two occasions to a tower that appears to service the Windsor Rod & Gun Club -- once on March 29 from 1:09 p.m. until 1:43 p.m., and then again on May 31 at 11:04 p.m.

On May 18, 2019, two hunters at the Windsor Rod & Gun Club discovered a hole that was two feet wide and six feet long, hidden by grill grates and sticks. One of the hunters described the hole as "One hundred percent a human grave," according to the warrant.

The hunters found a blue tarp and two bags of lime in the hole. The hunters removed the grill grates and moved debris around so nobody would fall into it.

Days later, one of the hunters checked the hole again and discovered the bags of lime had been removed. The hunter found it curious, the warrant said, but he didn't know of anybody missing so he dismissed it.

In early June, the hole had been filled and covered "as neat as a pin" with leaves and sticks, to the point that couldn't tell that a hole had ever been there, the warrant said.

A friend of one of the hunters encouraged him to contact police after hearing about

the hole and he did, and law enforcement responded to the rod and gun club around June 21. They dug up a portion of the hole but stopped because of hot weather conditions and nothing of note was found.

In August, law enforcement, including the State Police Canine Search and Rescue Teams, searched the site and surrounding property but did not locate any signs of human remains. There was also no sign of the tarp or bags of lime, either, the warrant said. ■