

Norm Pattis: Michelle Troconis not in New Canaan day Jennifer Dulos went missing

By Jim Shay and Lisa Backus



Members of an FBI Evidence Response Team searched Waveny Park near the bridge that carries Lapham Road over the Merritt Parkway Monday, June 3, as part of the Jennifer Dulos case.

While authorities have been speaking with one of the defendants in the Jennifer Dulos case, they may not be any closer to finding the mother of five.

Her estranged husband, Fotis Dulos, and his girlfriend, Michelle Troconis are expected to plead not guilty Tuesday when

they appear in state Superior Court in Stamford.

They have been charged with evidence tampering and hindering prosecution in the disappearance of Jennifer Dulos, who was last seen around 8 a.m. May 24 dropping off

“From afar, people have concluded that Mr. Dulos was both present and did in fact engage in unlawful conduct,” **Norm Pattis** said Monday. “Based on what I’ve learned in the last 72 hours, I’m not prepared to assume that’s the case any longer.”

her children at New Canaan Country School.

Troconis, who has met with investigators at least twice since she was released on bail last Monday, was not in New Canaan the day Jennifer Dulos went missing, her boyfriend's new high-profile attorney said Monday.

Norm Pattis, a controversial New Haven lawyer who represents Infowars host Alex Jones and was condemned for racial Facebook posts, said on WPLR's Chaz & AJ radio show that law enforcement "may be satisfied" with Troconis' story.

"I'm told by people with information that the girlfriend was never at the New Canaan home that day — the day the wife went missing — and that she can prove she never was there and that law enforcement may be satisfied," Pattis said on the radio show. "That is a very significant fact in this case."

Pattis met with his new client for the first time on Monday at the Bridgeport Correctional Center, where Fotis Dulos is being held on \$500,000 bond. Pattis said he plans to request a "substantial bond reduction" at Tuesday's hearing.

"There are powerful reasons to doubt he was even at the scene of his estranged wife's home the day she disappeared," Pattis said in a statement after meeting with his client. "I am unaware

of any evidence supporting the theory he was involved in foul play."

Pattis replaced Eugene Riccio, who represented Fotis Dulos at his first court appearance last week. Three teams of attorneys who have represented Fotis Dulos in his divorce case, which is scheduled for a hearing in Stamford family court on Tuesday, and a civil lawsuit filed by his mother-in-law have petitioned to be removed from the proceedings in recent days.

As the search for Jennifer Dulos continued for a 17th day on Monday, investigators returned to a Hartford garbage dump and local police announced the launch of a website dedicated to the case.

Investigators spent most of the past week at the garbage site sifting through trash they say came from receptacles where Fotis Dulos was seen tossing bags containing his estranged wife's blood the night she disappeared.

According to their arrest warrants, Fotis Dulos and Troconis were seen on video driving in the Albany Avenue area of Hartford on May 24 when the bags were dumped. Police said cellphone data placed them there as well.

State police with the help of K-9s trained to sniff cadavers have been searching the garbage facility. New Canaan police

said Monday investigators were looking for biological fluids connected to the case.

New Canaan police have also created a website dedicated to the case. Police said they have received more than 300 tips and about 75 responses to their request for security video footage.

"We urge everyone with information regarding Jennifer's disappearance to contact us," New Canaan Police Chief Leon Krolikowski said in a statement. "We will not rest until we find Jennifer."

Pattis told WPLR that he was "gobsmacked" by what he heard reported about his client.

"From afar, people have concluded that Mr. Dulos was both present and did in fact engage in unlawful conduct," Pattis said Monday. "Based on what I've learned in the last 72 hours, I'm not prepared to assume that's the case any longer."

Pattis took on a similar case in 2015 when he represented Jennifer Valiante, the girlfriend of Kyle Navin, who is serving 55 years in prison for killing his parents, Jeffrey and Jeannette. Valiante cooperated with authorities and was sentenced to eight years for her role in the killings.

Like the Dulos case, authorities conducted a massive search for

the Navins, including at landfills as investigators have been doing for the past week in Hartford.

In addition to the Hartford dump, authorities have been focusing their searches at properties connected to Fotis Dulos' custom homebuilding company, the Fore Group.

Police searched a metal dumpster last week outside a New Canaan home being developed by the Fore Group. Neighbors of 61 Sturbridge Hill Road said they were woken up by the loud sounds of metal banging in the predawn hours the morning after Jennifer Dulos went missing.

Troconis met at least twice with investigators last week, including on Friday when she and her attorney, Andrew Bowman, were seen at 4 Jefferson Crossing in Farmington, where she and her boyfriend have been living together after Jennifer Dulos moved to New Canaan when she filed for divorce in 2017.

Drone footage showed Troconis leading investigators into the wooded area behind the home that leads to the West Hartford Reservoir.

State officials have been closely watching the investigation, according to a top aide for James Rovella, the commissioner of the state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

Rovella's agency encompasses the Connecticut State Police who have been working with New Canaan police and Richard Colangelo Jr., the state's attorney for the Stamford-Norwalk judicial district.

"Commissioner Rovella and (state police) Col. Stavros Mellekas are two of the most respected homicide detectives in the state and they are watching this very closely," said Brian Foley, executive aide to Rovella.

As the head of the Chief State's Attorney's Cold Case Unit, Rovella was instrumental in New Britain State's Attorney Brian Preleski gaining a 2007 manslaughter conviction of William Devon Howell in the disappearance of Nilsa Arizmendi whose body was not found until 2015, Foley said.

Howell was serving a 15-year sentence in her death when new information led to the discovery that he killed six other victims around the time Arizmendi disappeared in 2003. Howell is now serving a 360-year sentence.

Foley said the state police have provided resources as needed for the New Canaan investigation, which is now under the direction of Colangelo.

"Technically, it's a missing person's case," Foley said. "But investigators approach these cases as if it were a homicide until we learn otherwise."

The investigators from the various agencies are "functioning like a task force under the state's attorney right now," Foley said. ■