

NEWS

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Authorities find missing Arundel woman dead, say gunshot killed husband

Investigators are trying to determine whether Sue Kim Coito, who had dementia, was a suspect or a witness in the death of her husband, Matthew Coito.



BY **MATT BYRNE** STAFF WRITER



A Maine State Police van is parked Thursday outside the home of Matthew and Sue Kim Coito on Campground Road in Arundel. His body was found Wednesday in the kitchen. Hers was found Friday about 375 yards into the woods near the home. *Staff photo by Shawn Patrick Ouellette*

Authorities found the body of a missing Arundel woman Friday and investigators are trying to determine whether she was a suspect or a witness in her husband's shooting death.

Matthew Coito, 63, was [found Wednesday in the kitchen of his home](#) at 45 Campground Road by a relative who went to check on him and his wife, Sue Kim Coito, 65, after no one had heard from them since the previous Friday or Saturday, Maine State Police said.



Sue Kim Coito

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Sue Kim Coito, who had severe Alzheimer's, was missing from the home.

A search dog with the Maine Warden Service found her body just after 8 a.m. Friday, about 375 yards into the woods near their home. In the afternoon, state police said that Matthew Coito had died of a gunshot wound.

Now investigators will work to determine what role, if any, his wife may have had in his death and whether her dementia might have been a factor.

“It’s suspicious, but we’ve narrowed it down to a couple of scenarios,” said state police Sgt. Chris Harriman during a news conference after Sue Kim Coito’s body was found. “She could be a suspect. She could just be a witness.”

Harriman said homicide has not been ruled out. Previously, officials said his death was suspicious. There was no evidence of a break-in, and both of the Coitos’ vehicles were accounted for. Harriman noted that there were weapons in the house.

During the news conference, game warden Lt. Kevin Adam said the death scene in the woods appeared consistent with other deaths involving people with memory problems. He would not comment on the condition of Sue Kim Coito’s body or provide details about what she was wearing.

He said she was found deep in the woods, in a swampy area covered in patches of snow.

Sue Kim Coito’s body will be examined by the state medical examiner, who will try to make a positive identification and determine the cause and manner of her death.

Officials searched a half-square-mile area south-southwest of the home Thursday as state police investigators tried to retrace the couple’s last steps and interviewed neighbors in the sparsely populated neighborhood where the Coitos had lived since 2005, when they purchased the home from Sue Kim Coito’s sister, Kimberly Eaton of Biddeford.

Several game wardens, 14 dogs and members of the state’s search-and-rescue teams had resumed looking for the missing woman Friday after two days of fruitless searching upon discovery of Matthew Coito’s body. Game warden Michelle Merrifield and her dog, Piper, discovered Sue Kim Coito’s body.

The Medical Examiner’s Office has completed an autopsy on Matthew Coito, but has not confirmed his cause of death, pending the ongoing investigation.

Harriman estimated that at the time when Matthew Coito was found in his kitchen, he already had been dead for about three days. Mail in their mailbox did not appear to have been picked up in several days. Their dog was found alive in the home.

In a brief phone interview Thursday, Eaton said the Coitos' marriage was the second for both of them. She said her sister had one daughter from a previous marriage and Matthew Coito had two children from a previous marriage.

A neighbor said she occasionally saw the couple walking their dog along the road, but she had not seen them since the beginning of winter.

The neighbor said she worked briefly with Sue Kim Coito at a Biddeford manufacturing facility, but didn't get to know her well, and she did not say much.

State police detectives remained at the house Friday afternoon to gather evidence and document the location with measurements and photos.