

Conn. man accused of killing missing wife has died, leaving behind mystery of what happened to her.

By Dave Altimari, Amanda Blanco and Emily Brindley *The Hartford Courant*

Fotis Dulos died Thursday, two days after he was rushed to a New York City hospital in the wake of a suicide attempt, perhaps taking with him forever the mystery of what happened to his estranged wife, Jennifer Farber Dulos.

Dulos, who was facing murder charges in Connecticut in the death of his wife, was pronounced dead at 5:32 p.m. EST, his lawyer, Norm Pattis, said outside Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx.

“It’s been a truly horrific day for the family, filled with difficult decisions, medical tests and meeting the requirements to determine death,” Pattis said.

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Dulos’ body will be taken to the Manhattan medical examiner’s office to determine the cause and manner of his death, Farmington Police Lt. Timothy McKenzie said late Thursday. The investigation into the suicide remains ongoing.

Jennifer Farber Dulos has been missing since she dropped their children off at a private school in New Canaan, Conn., on May 24. The case, which included tales of a bitter and contentious divorce, the compilation of evidence from surveillance video and a high-stakes battle over real estate, has sparked widespread interest and attention.

“This is a horrific tragedy all around,” said Carrie Luft, a spokeswoman for Farber Dulos’ family. “Please respect the privacy of the families and loved

ones involved.”

Pattis said Thursday he is taking the highly unusual step of asking the court to proceed with the criminal charges against Dulos despite his death so his name can be cleared. In a motion filed late Thursday, Pattis asked the court to substitute Dulos’ estate as the defendant in the case and proceed to trial.

“Mr. Dulos’ children should not be subjected to a lifetime coping with the fictional reality that their father murdered their mother in cold blood on the basis of baseless and rampant speculation,” Pattis said in the motion. It went on: “Mr. Dulos’ right to confront these charges and to assert his innocence does not die with him.”

That move puzzled some. “I’ve never heard anything like that,” said former Chief State’s Attorney Christopher Morano. “The statute for murder says a person is to be tried and not an entity.”

Richard Colangelo, who is prosecuting Dulos, heard about the death and Pattis’ motion just as he was being appointed the new chief state’s attorney and declined comment. The state police, who built the case against Dulos, have not yet issued a statement.

Dulos’ death Thursday marked the end of a hectic 72 hours. Faced with the possibility of

going back to prison because of issues with his bail, Dulos on Tuesday made an attempt on his life.

Police found Dulos in his garage, in the front seat of his Chevrolet Suburban. The garage doors had been closed and a vacuum cleaner hose had been clamped onto the tail pipe and run into the interior of the vehicle, sources said. Dulos was unconscious and later would be diagnosed as suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.

He was initially believed to be dead when medical personnel arrived at the Jefferson Crossing home midday Tuesday, but after nearly a half hour of CPR, a faint pulse was found and he was eventually rushed by helicopter to Jacobi to use its hyperbaric chamber.

Farmington police found Dulos after he failed to appear at Stamford Superior Court for a hearing to potentially revoke the \$6 million bond placed on him following his arrest earlier this month for the murder of Farber Dulos. The South Carolina company that secured the bond had raised concerns about whether real estate he posted as collateral had been overvalued.

Early Thursday, Dulos’ sister, Rena Dulos, and other family members arrived from Greece to meet with doctors at Jacobi who have kept Dulos, 52, medically alive for the past few days.

“His family came in from Greece and decided today to donate his organs so that he will live on in some form in the assistance he can provide to others in their own individual struggles,” Pattis said.

As doctors worked to keep Dulos alive Thursday, state police detectives spent the early-morning hours combing through his Jefferson Crossing home looking for notes and other evidence about the whereabouts of Farber Dulos’ body.

Police found a note at the home claiming Dulos’ innocence in the disappearance of Farber Dulos and said his attorneys had the evidence to prove it. There was nothing found during the search that gave any indication on where her body may be, sources said.

It took nearly two days for state police to get a search warrant because there was no crime committed by his suicide attempt. The search also was delayed because police needed a second set of detectives known as a “taint team” to review any documents recovered in the home to ensure Dulos’ attorney-client privilege rights were protected. Pattis filed a motion late Thursday to preserve any evidence seized.

Dulos is accused of murdering his estranged wife May 24 by “lying in wait” for her in the garage of her New Canaan home after she dropped off her

children at school, according to court records. Police believe Dulos attacked her in the garage of her home and drove off with her body.

The couple had been going through a long and contentious divorce that included a battle over custody of their five children. A probate judge last year granted custody of their five children to their maternal grandmother, Gloria Farber.

Pattis has floated several theories as to what happened to Farber Dulos, including suggesting that Farber Dulos may have staged her own disappearance in a plot similar to Gillian Flynn's 2012 novel "Gone Girl," in which a wife pretends to vanish to frame her husband for murder. He also has said that Farber Dulos may have engaged in a form of "revenge suicide" after receiving alarming medical news and suffering reversals in the couple's bitter divorce and custody battle.

Dulos, 52, is survived by his children as well as his sister, Rena Dulos, and other family in Greece and Spain. His sister, niece and brother-in-law arrived late Wednesday from Greece and met with doctors early Thursday morning to discuss his possibilities to survive.

Dulos has been arrested three times since Farber Dulos disappeared — the first two times he was charged with tampering with evidence. In

both of those cases he posted \$500,000 bonds.

Those charges stem from surveillance video from Albany Avenue in Hartford on the night of May 24 that shows Dulos dropping garbage bags into trash cans in the area. State police recovered some of the bags and found the bloody, cut-up Vineyard Vines shirt that Farber Dulos was wearing the day she disappeared as well as other items such as sponges and paper towels that had Farber Dulos' blood on them.

Michelle Troconis, his girlfriend at the time Farber Dulos disappeared, also was arrested twice on tampering with evidence and hindering prosecution charges. Court records said Troconis was in the vehicle with him on Albany Avenue. She also has been charged with conspiracy to commit murder. She is free on a combined \$2.1 million in bonds.

A third person, Bloomfield attorney Kent Mawhinney, also has been charged with conspiracy to commit murder and is currently being held on a \$2 million bond.

It was not immediately clear how Dulos' death will affect those cases.

Police said Troconis and Mawhinney helped try to cover up Farber Dulos' killing, according to court records.

In a 35-page arrest warrant

affidavit supporting Dulos' murder charge, state police detectives said they found Dulos' DNA on an inside doorknob to the mudroom of Farber Dulos' New Canaan home, along with his DNA and her blood mixed on a faucet in the home.

After tracking Dulos' phone to the North End of Hartford on the day Farber Dulos went missing, investigators said they found surveillance video showing a man they say is Dulos throwing out garbage bags in the area of Albany Avenue, court records said.

In the trash, investigators reported finding a number of items, including zip ties, a bloodstained poncho, a sponge and a bloodstained paper towel with Farber Dulos' DNA on it, court records said.

Police also traced a red Toyota truck they allege belongs to an employee of Dulos' luxury homebuilding company, Fore Group Inc., from Farmington to New Canaan and back on the morning of May 24. They allege it was Dulos driving the truck although none of the videos shows the driver's face clearly. The vehicle was first seen in Fairfield about 6:30 a.m. and then was spotted parked at 7:40 a.m. in a turn around off Lapham Road in New Canaan, about 100 feet from where Farber Dulos' Suburban was found abandoned later that day.

The Toyota returned to Mountain Spring Road, where police allege Dulos cleaned up after the crime.

Troconis told state police in one of her three interviews that she saw Dulos cleaning the front seat of the red truck. She said Dulos told her he had spilled coffee but when he handed her the stained paper towel, it didn't smell like coffee, court records said.

Police said in court records that they later found Farber Dulos' DNA on the front seat of the truck.

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