

Missing Sunday School Teacher Found Dead in Remote Location

Authorities have identified a woman's body found off a forest road in northern Arizona as a New Mexico resident reported missing over a month ago.

Sasha Krause, 27, was last seen Jan. 18 picking up items from the Farmington Mennonite Church in northwestern New Mexico. Her car was parked outside.

A body that matched her description was discovered Friday near Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki national monuments, more than 270 miles (434 kilometers) away from where Krause last was seen. Fingerprints taken at the scene matched Krause's driver's license record in Texas, authorities said Tuesday.

The investigation into how she died is ongoing, said Coconino County sheriff's spokesman Jon Paxton. The Coconino County medical examiner's office said the results of an autopsy will take a few weeks.

"I think it's all just kind of a mystery right now," Paxton said. "Once we get a cause from the ME, that's really going to lead us forward."

Paxton said it's unclear when Krause died or how long her body had been there.

Krause was wearing the same clothing—a gray dress with white pinstripes, a white jacket and black shoes—that she had on outside the Mennonite church in Farmington, New Mexico, said San Juan County, New Mexico, sheriff's spokeswoman Jayme Harcrow.

San Juan County authorities have been treating Krause's disappearance as suspicious, checking Krause's cellphone

records and bank statements, and interviewing those who knew her. Searches by ground and air near where she lived turned up no sign of her.

Krause lived close to the church with other women who were known to travel together. She also taught Sunday school, was seemingly happy, wasn't struggling financially and had a good relationship with her parents, Harcrow said.

She disappeared after eating dinner with her roommates but without her wallet, money, her driver's license or car, indicating she might not have left on her own or willingly, Harcrow said.

"Based off her leaving unusually and being found dead in a remote location, our office is comfortable saying we're treating it as a homicide investigation," Harcrow said. {eo}

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