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FEATURED

Search Continues for Missing Woman, Community Remains Hopeful

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Community members partake in prayer and candle lighting ceremony to bring Allisha Watts home. Elena Marsh / The Pilot

As the search for Allisha Watts enters its third week, the community of West Southern Pines has gathered for the second Tuesday evening in a row for a candlelight vigil to pray for Watts safe return.

That same morning, WRAL news published an article that detailed documents describing Watts' boyfriend, James Dummore, as a person of interest in her disappearance and speculate he attempted to commit suicide.

According to Michael Allinger, Senior Public Affairs Specialist at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, “The warrants that mention searching for evidence of homicide simply widen the scope of the search for our investigators, this is still a missing persons case.”

The West Southern Pines Community are still hopeful that the search will end with Watts’ safe return home. As the sun went down, a chorus of event goers shouted out “Allisha Watts is shining, my Watts is shining.”

So far the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department has released one statement about Watts’ disappearance and have neither publicly confirmed nor denied the existence of Dunmore in the case. On July 25, CMPD said, “She was seen in her black 2023 Mercedes Benz GLC 300, possibly heading towards Moore County. The vehicle was located on July 18 in Anson County, however, the victim’s whereabouts are still unknown.”

As reported by WRAL, an incident report from the Anson County Sheriff's Office dated July 20 states Dunmore “does have a history of domestic violence and is considered a person of interest at this time.”

Dunmore was found, unresponsive, in Watts' car in a DMV parking lot in Polkton on July 18, two days after the couple was seen together in Charlotte. Watts was never located.

Friend Learen Blue said she last heard from Watts on July 14, before Watts traveled to Charlotte for the weekend to visit her boyfriend. Watts planned to see a comedy show on Sunday night with some friends, but she did not respond to messages and did not attend.

Friend Brittany Harris last saw Watts active on social media that Friday night.

“We’re just longing for her to return home,” Harris said. “This is unlike Allisha to not be in touch.”

Watts is active in the West Southern Pines community, serving as the corresponding secretary for the Rufus McLaughlin American Legion Auxiliary Unit 177. She also is a board member of the Southern Pines Land and Housing Trust, a member of the Moore County branch of the NAACP and member of the West Southern Pines Community Association.

She is also the owner and CEO of Inspired Visions Support Services, Inc. in Siler City, which provides disability services to people of all ages.

“When we didn’t hear from her, we knew something was wrong,” Harris said.

A missing person report was filed with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department on July 19, said Detective Keenan Childers. He said the department is “actively working around the clock” to find Watts.

“She is a daughter, sister, aunt and best friend,” Blue said. “She’s the best that you can ever have.”

Blue later said, “All efforts are greatly appreciated to bring Allisha home safely.”

Based on police reports acquired so far, the timeline of events is as follows:

July 14: Learen Blue, Allisha Watts' friend, said Watts traveled to Charlotte on July 14 to see her boyfriend, James Dunmore, in her black Mercedes SUV.

July 16: Allisha Watts was last seen by friends in Moore County. Watts and Dunmore leave for Charlotte in her black Mercedes SUV. The two had tickets to a comedy show at Bojangles Coliseum, but did not attend.

July 18: Watts' black Mercedes SUV was found in the parking lot of the Anson County DMV office in Polkton. Dunmore was found inside and unresponsive.

July 19: Charlotte–Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) file a missing persons report for Allisha Watts. Foxfire police search Watts' home and do not find her.

July 20: Anson County Sheriff's Office links SUV to Watts and calls Dunmore "a person of interest" in her disappearance.

July 24: CMPD announces Watts' car has been found.

July 25: Anson County Sheriff's Office releases statement saying Dunmore was found along with the SUV.

July 26: Police officers are seen searching Dunmore's Charlotte-area home.

If anyone has information about Watts, they can call the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department’s Crime Stoppers Line at (704) 334-1600.

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