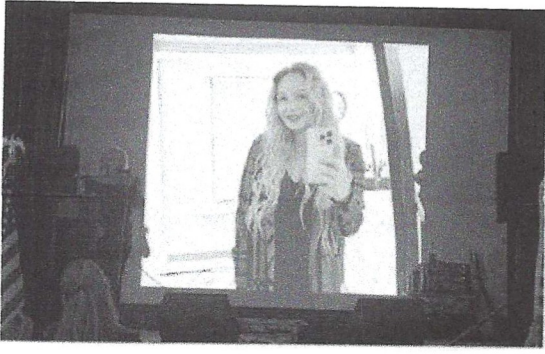


Aunt: Alleged killer still at large



Photos of Breanne “Breezy” Pennington were on display at Gardner City Hall during a vigil for the woman who was killed in her Cherry Street home on Oct. 22, 2023. STEPHEN LANDRY/THE GARDNER NEWS

No plan for suicide, victim’s relative says

Stephen Landry

The Gardner News USA TODAY NETWORK

GARDNER – A day after law enforcement conducted the largest search for the suspect in the murder of Breanne “Breezy” Pennington in Gardner two years ago, Brenda Hull, the victim’s aunt, says she believes that her niece’s husband – Aaron Pennington, who is charged with the killing – remains on the loose.

“I don’t think he’s in those woods, but I think it’s important that (police) do their due diligence,” said Hull.

On Thursday, Nov. 20, dozens of law enforcement agencies and civilian teams gathered at Camp Collier to search the woods around Lake Wampanoag, where Aaron’s car was found in 2023, a day after he allegedly shot his wife to death in their Cherry Street home. He has not been seen since.

The search, which was the largest coordinated search of the area in two years, did not turn up any evidence related to the suspect, according to officials. But Hull said she believed that investigators were searching for something specific in those woods that could possibly shed some light on Aaron’s current whereabouts.

Ninth search of the woods in two years

“In their (previous) searches, they did in fact find something of interest

that would indicate that, yes, Aaron had been out in those woods and that he had plans,” Hull said, adding that the Nov. 20 search marked the ninth time police had combed through the area looking for evidence.

Law enforcement’s working theory was that Pennington had gone into the woods around Camp Collier to kill himself, according to Hull.

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“They have to work that theory – I demand they work that theory,” she said. “But what’s happening is the tide is turning – more people are thinking that, hey, he got out.”

For evidence that Aaron had been planning to escape following the murder, Hull points to the odd messages he had typed into his cell phone the night before his wife’s body was found by police. According to investigators, a note found on the device read: “Don’t say anything. Be quite (sic) If she wakes up just say you’re getting nasal spray. Get on side of bed – very close proximity to head. Put hole in her head.”

Hull said that Aaron wrote that and other messages on the phone in an effort to mislead police.

“He wanted them to believe that he was a) stupid and that b) he was just going to commit suicide,” she said. “But I have always believed that he had been planning (the murder) for upwards of a year and that there was no plan to commit suicide, there was a plan to run.”

Future searches of the area may be conducted as the investigation continued, according to the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office.