



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

August 13, 2017

News Release

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Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol and National Parks Service Investigating Case of Missing Couple

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office is investigating the circumstances of the possible disappearance of a husband and wife. On the morning of August 11th, a sheriff's deputy took a report from a family member who said 31 year old Yinan Wang and his 30 year old wife, Jie Song were possibly missing. The relative said Wang and Song were last seen August 6th at Crystal Caves in Sequoia National Park. The couple had planned to drive to Fresno that night, stay in a hotel and continue on to Yosemite National Park the next day. They were scheduled to return home to San Diego on August 9th. However, the relative has not heard from the couple since August 6th and there is no indication they made it to any of the destinations listed above. The Sheriff's Office contacted rangers with Sequoia National Park and learned they had also received a similar report on August 11th. Wang and Song were last seen driving a 2012 white Ford Focus with a California license plate of 6XMM431.

On August 8th, members of the Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SAR) team were working in the area of Hwy.180 near Convict Flat. This was in relation to the recovery operation being planned for the car that went through a guard rail, off a 500 foot cliff and into the Kings River in late July. A SAR deputy, watching local news coverage about it on TV, saw a video clip in the story of a license plate, 6XMM431, lying in the brush. The deputy knew it did not belong to the red car in the river, which is presumed to have been carrying a man and woman from Thailand who are currently enrolled as exchange students at the University of South

Florida. The SAR member performed a records check on the plate to see if the vehicle had been reported missing, stolen or involved in an accident. Results showed it belonged to a 2012 Ford Focus and no police reports had been filed in relation to the car. Information about the license plate and vehicle parts found in the area was relayed to the California Highway Patrol so it could create an investigative report. After getting the missing persons report three days later, the connection between Wang, Song and the car became apparent to both agencies.

On August 12th, the Sheriff's Office and CHP both flew their helicopters above the canyon where the red car remains in the river to see if there are any signs of a white car. Deputies and officers found some vehicle parts in the water about 40 yards upstream from the red car. At this point, we are unable to determine if the parts belong to the white Ford Focus. Members of SAR will have to retrieve the parts before drawing any conclusions. No additional bodies have been found in the water. National Parks Service rangers continue to check their parks for Wang and Song.

SAR is now working a parallel investigation involving the Ford Focus as they continue their efforts to developing a plan to recover the red car belonging to the Thai students. SAR continues to consult with other experts in the field, equipment available to them, daily weather patterns and daily water flows of the river to construct a recovery plan. A date to carry out an operation has not been determined and Sheriff Mims must approve any plan before it is placed into action. The Sheriff's Office and CHP continue to work together to investigate both cases.

On August 11th, Sheriff Mims, our SAR commander and Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig met with family members of the missing Thai students and Thai Consulate of Los Angeles. This was their first meeting. Sheriff Mims and our SAR commander explained to the families the challenges they face and also showed them pictures and video of the area. They explained to the families that a date has not been chosen for the recovery, but retrieving the bodies of their loved ones is a top priority. Everyone left the meeting with a better understanding of the challenging circumstances.

Anyone with information about Yinan Wang, Jie Song or their car is asked to please contact the Sheriff's Office at (559) 600-3111.