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Months before teacher's death, police removed guns from home

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DUNBARTON — In the months before a Goffstown kindergarten teacher was found dead Sept. 1 of a single gunshot wound in her Barnard Hill Road home, police twice had interactions with her despondent husband and on one occasion removed guns from their residence.

On March 15, Wendy Tefft, 38, went to the police department for advice regarding her husband, Christian "Chris" Tefft, 57, according to police reports released to the New Hampshire Union Leader under a Right-to-Know request. Chris Tefft was back home and Wendy Tefft was concerned he may want to retrieve the guns police had taken for safekeeping after a Jan. 17 incident at their home.

The reports do not indicate whether or not the guns were returned to Chris Tefft, and Dunbarton Police Chief Daniel Sklut was not available Friday to comment.

No one has been charged in connection with Tefft's death. Senior Assistant Attorney General Jeffery A. Strelzin said Friday there is nothing to update publicly in the case.

In the January incident, police went to the Teffts' home after Wendy Tefft returned home to find her husband



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A photo montage of Wendy and Holden Tefft. (Courtesy)



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The New Hampshire State Police Major Crime Unit arrives Sept. 1 at 35 Barnard Hill Road in Dunbarton, where Wendy Tefft was found dead of a single gunshot. (David Lane/Union Leader)



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passed out on the floor and unresponsive. She and their 9-year-old son, Holden, had left the house the night before to go stay at a relative's home in Goffstown. She intimated to Officer Joseph A. Milioto that she left to protect her son.

Prior to police arriving, Chris Tefft had come to and had claimed the FBI was after him or would be after him. He had been drinking that morning, police said.

He told Milioto he had a .357 handgun, which the officer found under a chair cushion. Milioto unloaded the gun, removing three cartridges. Two were intact but the third had been fired. Chris Tefft said he shot the gun "down the driveway at a tree."

His forehead was bruised, which he said happened a couple of nights before when he fell down the cellar stairs. Milioto wrote in his report that there was an empty bottle of rum near where Chris Tefft indicated he was sitting on the stairs when he took a tumble.

Asked if he had been drinking the morning of Jan. 17, Chris Tefft said he had had a couple of Bud Lights around 5 a.m., about five hours earlier. Milioto noticed an open bottle of Crown Royal on the counter and Chris Tefft said he may have had a few sips of that as well.

Wendy Tefft told police her husband had said the FBI had cameras in the house. She said he did have security clearance related to his work as an electronic technician at BAE Systems.

She also told police he said he had called the FBI. The only number she did not recognize on his cell phone was 1-855-731-3260 which police said was for the FBI to report fraud, waste and abuse. The number is no longer in service.

Chris Tefft left in an ambulance. Milioto then retrieved a box of .357 rounds from the center console of Chris Tefft's pickup. From the basement, police recovered a .22 rifle and magazine, an air pistol and several rounds of ammunition for a .22, .357, 30-06 and .223. Some of the ammunition was in a military-style ammo box.

Police did not find .223 or 30-06 firearms. At the hospital, Chris Tefft told Milioto they were upstairs in the house. Wendy Tefft later found the firearms and turned them over to a friend for safekeeping.

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In another episode, Chris Tefft attempted to jump out of a moving car, according to police reports.

On Feb. 22, Wendy Tefft was driving her husband to a doctor's appointment. On the way, he tried to jump out of the car near 183 Stark North Highway. Wendy Tefft pulled over and stopped and he fled the car because he feared if he went to the appointment that he would be locked up, according to a police report.

Police arrived and spoke to Chris Tefft, who was non-confrontational, polite and compliant, according to a report by Chief Sklut. But Chris Tefft was despondent and while he made no overt statements about harming himself, he indicated to the chief that he did not have a long future.

It was determined that Chris Tefft needed to be evaluated and he asked the chief if he would take him to be evaluated. When they arrived at an unnamed "facility," they were met by security.

Later, Sklut spoke with Wendy Tefft, who said her husband had never been violent with her but that lately he was acting strangely and she was afraid to stay with him.

She asked the chief if she could leave the state with their child. He asked her if there were any orders such as a divorce decree or parenting plan that prohibited her from taking the child out of state. The report does not indicate what the chief told her.

A relative of Chris Tefft on Oct. 1 told the New Hampshire Sunday News he had been hospitalized at the New Hampshire Hospital since his wife's death. And, she said, shortly before her death Wendy Tefft asked her to recommend an attorney because she was going to get a divorce.

The morning of his wife's death, Chris Tefft had driven his son to school but on the way he drove into a ditch. A passer-by drove his son to school where a teacher noticed bruises and sent him to the school nurse after he said he had been in a car accident.

Meanwhile, school officials learned that Wendy Tefft had not arrived for the open house at Glen Lake School where she taught and called police. They went to her home to check on her and found her body.

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