

Still missing

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as isolated from the kids in their own house. I felt much better when Dalana was around in the house.

Melissa's sister Mandy Mboge said that Derek 'would force drugs on you' in the sense that, when coming through the door, instead of offering food or a drink to the guest, "he's ask if you wanted a Vicodin or a Percocet."

Mandy said over the course of about a year, her sister quickly became addicted to narcotics and would often doze off in the middle of a conversation.

"The hardest thing I've watched in life was how quickly she spiraled out of control," Affrunti said. He said that he still loves her and had hoped she would come to her senses to leave Hammer, get clean, and rekindle their relationship.

Mandy and her young daughter Athena lived with Melissa and her kids prior to Hammer moving in. She said one night Hammer violently put his hands on Melissa, and the next day she and her daughter moved out, "because no kid should see that."

Drugs became a mainstay in the home. Melissa said Derek's drugs of choice were heroin and crystal methamphetamine. In the summer of 2021, Derek "coded out" on the front porch, only for Melissa to call 9-1-1, with a dose of Narcan used to revive him.

"She saved his life, and two months later he murders her," Mandy said. Her accusation, is shared by much of the family,

however, authorities have not charged him with anything in regards to her disappearance.

Matters only got worse with time. In early September 2021, with Dalana away from the home, young Matteo, then 6, was outside in the yard when Hammer came outside angry and frustrated because pills were missing, Affrunti said. Matteo then witnessed Hammer hit Melissa with a kitchen object, either a spoon or a spatula, then went and pointed a shotgun at her.

"He said he didn't feel in danger, because Derek 'only pointed it at mommy,'" Affrunti said. Matteo told a teacher at school, and Child Protective Services quickly investigated, referring the case to authorities.

On Sept. 11, 2021, the Stateline Area Narcotics Taskforce (SLANT), executed a warrant on Melissa's home. Green County Deputies, Dane County Sheriff's Office, Green County Human Services, Stateline Area Narcotics Taskforce, Green County Sheriff's Office Special Response Team, Lafayette County Sheriff's Office Emergency Response Team, and Monroe Police Dept. Emergency Response Team aided in the investigation and conduction of the search warrant.

After the search, Hammer was arrested for two counts disorderly conduct (domestic abuse related), battery (domestic abuse related), possession of THC (felony), possession of cocaine (2nd offense), two counts of a felon in possession of a firearm, two counts of child neglect, maintaining a drug trafficking dwelling, and possession of

drug paraphernalia.

Melissa was arrested for child neglect, possession of THC, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Previously, Melissa's legal record consisted only of minor traffic violations.

Melissa's disappearance

Melissa's family struggles with regret.

Mandy said the last time she saw her sister was at Melissa's birthday, less than two weeks before her disappearance. She was angry at her sister for spiraling out of control and not heeding the advice of family.

"I didn't hug her, say I love you or anything, I was mad. And that was the last time I saw her," Mandy said.

Dalana said she wishes she'd have done things differently in the days leading up to her mother's disappearance.

"A couple days before she went missing, I sent her a big long paragraph saying how— trying to convince her how much I want her to change her life. I'm sick of being the mom when I shouldn't be the mom. And I need my mom," Dalana said.

Family members spoke to Trumpy the evening of Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021 and were alerted to Trumpy's disappearance the following morning when they received a call after Trumpy did not show up for work. She had worked a previous shift until 10:30 p.m. the night before.

The Carroll County Sheriff Office launched an investigation looking into Trumpy's whereabouts on Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. It was believed Trumpy was destined to Shannon, Ill., where Derek and his mother reside. Per a

court order, Derek was on a no-contact stipulation with Melissa.

A search party with dogs combed through the Freeport area for several hours with no conclusion. The family searched a 20-mile radius around Shannon, including areas of Stephenson County.

Trumpy was believed to be in a silver Toyota Tundra extended-cab truck or a white Toyota Avalon four-door sedan. The truck was later found abandoned near W. Pearl City and S. Bolton Roads in Stephenson County, Ill.

Deputies physically searched a number of properties, from her rural Monticello home to fields, woods, farms and rivers in Illinois. Search warrants and subpoenas have been requested for telephone, social media and financial records in an effort to find any activity that could give clues to her current location. Authorities in both Illinois, Wisconsin and the FBI were reportedly working the case.

"I think that they are working on things behind the scenes — things we can't talk about — and one day he'll (Hammer) get what he deserves," Andrea said. "And that's what we can hope for."

A criminal complaint also states that "(Melissa Trumpy) Was present at (friend's) residence...in Shannon, IL, with...Derek Hammer, in the basement." The complaint also stated that Melissa and Derek were in and out of that home on that day.

Skatrud said his staff is still communicating with the Illinois agencies that are also working on the case. And on Oct. 25, Skatrud met with the

Wis. Department of Justice's Clearinghouse for Missing & Exploited Children & Adults, and they were creating a new poster for Melissa that should help broaden the scope of the search.

Those with tips or relevant information are urged to contact the Carroll County (Ill.) Sheriff's office at 815-244-7867. Green County authorities can be reached at 608-328-9401.

"The biggest struggle now is we just want to bring her home. She deserves that. The kids especially deserve a place to go and see their mother, so-to-speak," Andrea said. "That unknown is what's the worst, I feel, at this point. We've accepted that she's not probably coming back. I believe that's accurate. We just want to bring her home, because that's what she deserves. She didn't deserve what happened to her."

Family coming together

"I definitely miss being with them (Jocie, 9, and Matteo, 7) a lot, because when I lived with them, I was pretty much a parent to them. I did everything I could to help them, because my mom wasn't, like, 100% a parent through everything she

was going through, and that made me step up," said Dalana, who now only sees her siblings a couple times a week. "Me stepping away from that makes me not as close to them, but it also makes me realize that I am a kid and I should just enjoy life, like I hadn't been, because I was too worried about taking care of my siblings."

Andrea said that she and her husband, John Trumpy, co-parented with Melissa and got along quite well. "Her mother and I co-parented and got along; we were friends, like adults," she said.

That foundation of trust and understanding between the children and adults paid dividends when Melissa disappeared.

"We have all just kind of come together and co-parent all of them, really," Andrea said. "I already was and am a big part of both of their lives, and that didn't change. I just became more present in their lives, too."

She said the simple skills of listening and being present went a long way in comforting the children throughout the

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For more info contact Bridget 744-2440

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