



MOTIVE UNKNOWN
Police say Tristan Beaudette was killed by a gunshot while tent camping with his kids.

A YOUNG FATHER'S TRAGIC DEATH

MURDER IN THE CAMPGROUND

After a man is fatally shot while camping with his daughters at a California park, authorities desperately search for a killer *By STEVE HELLING and CHRISTINE PELISEK*



HEARTBREAKING LOSS
Beaudette spent his free time outdoors with his wife, Erica, and two daughters. "He was an incredible father who was emotionally invested in his children," says his rabbi Arnold Rachlis.

Just 25 miles from the traffic-choked streets of Los Angeles, Malibu Creek State Park has long offered an oasis of calm. With its 8,000 acres of tranquil streams and hiking trails with spectacular views of the Santa Monica Mountains, it's a favorite place for nature lovers to escape and unwind. And for Tristan Beaudette, a 35-year-old pharmaceutical-company scientist and father of two girls ages 2 and 4, the park's campground seemed the perfect location for outdoor bonding with his daughters while his wife, Erica Wu, a resident in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, Irvine, stayed home to study for an upcoming exam. Beaudette and the girls enjoyed some leisurely family time there on June 21, the kids riding their bikes and playing with shovels and buckets in the campground sand before settling into their tent



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Special Bulletin
INFORMATION WANTED
HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION

Victim
Tristan Thomas Beaudette

On Friday, June 22, 2018, at 4:44 a.m., Victim Tristan Thomas Beaudette, 35, was shot and killed while camping with his two young daughters in Santa Monica State Park near the 10000 block of Los Angeles Blvd. in Calabasas, CA.

If you possess any pertinent information anonymously, you may call "Crime Stoppers" by dialing 311 or 310-341-2500. Use your anonymous tip by contacting the "311" line. Reward \$5000.00. Please give us the facts that help solve a crime by using the website: <http://www.crimestoppers.com>

Any questions or information contact: LATD Homicide Bureau, ATTN: SAC, 4800 North of USF, Malibu, California 90263-5900
1. 805-451-7000, 2. 805-451-7001, 3. 805-451-7002
Sheriff's Office 310-341-2500

CLUES & QUESTIONS
Authorities searched Beaudette's campsite (above, left) and launched an investigation (above, right) but have not named a suspect in the shooting.

for the night. But around 4:44 a.m. on June 22, the predawn peace was shattered. "I woke up to a gunshot," says Lauren McClelland, 27, a camper who was in a tent approximately 50 yards away from Beaudette's. "It sounded like four shots, one after another. I lay there for a while to see if I could hear people screaming or crying. I didn't hear anything." Tragically, what McClelland heard were the sounds of a murder. Police responding to several 911 calls found Beaudette dead from a gunshot wound to the head, his daughters unharmed at the campsite. Because the murder happened while most campers were asleep, authorities have been unable to find eyewitnesses—and have no idea whether the killing was targeted or random. "It's a busy campground," Los Angeles County Sheriff Lt. Rodney Moore says. "I wouldn't define it as secluded. No one saw anyone fleeing the scene; there's no suspect description. The motive is unknown. . . . I couldn't even begin to guess."

With the park closed to overnight campers while the investigation is ongoing, police are looking into whether Beaudette's murder could have a connection to other shootings that have taken place at and near the park over the past two years. Police confirm to *People* that there have been at least three additional unsolved gunfire incidents in the vicinity of the park since June 2017, and four additional unsolved shootings date back to November 2016. But so far authorities have not found any definitive link to the killing of Beaudette. "We look at all the evidence," says Moore. "Nothing is off the table."

Campers who were in the park the night that Beaudette was killed say they are shaken and shocked—and that they may never return to the park they once viewed as a place of peaceful beauty. "I've been taking high schoolers, middle school-

'IT'S A TRULY TRANQUIL PLACE, BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GO BACK. IT'S UPSETTING'
—CAMPER LAUREN MCCLELLAND

ers and college students to the park, not knowing there was an ongoing situation," says Stephen Finkel, 33, a Glendale pastor who was camping near Beaudette. "Camping out here is so beautiful, I never thought to ask about shootings. It is just heartbreaking." "I can't imagine what this is like for [Beaudette's] children," adds McClelland, who heard the fatal shots. "It's the saddest thing I've ever heard." Meanwhile Beaudette's family and friends mourn the loss of the devoted family man with a promising future. "He was a rare combination of unrestrained kindness and refined competence," says college friend Tripp Floyd, 34. "He had a knack for finding silver linings or casting things in a light that would make you feel better about life." With a chemistry Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, Beaudette worked as a researcher at Allergan, a pharmaceutical company. He was married to his high school sweetheart, Erica, and they were planning career moves to the Bay Area soon. "Tristan was happiest out in nature, and spent every chance he could hiking, biking, snowboarding and camping with his family," the family said in a statement. Though police have few leads in the murder as of now, friends hope for a break in the case soon. "It seems like it's a pattern that's happening in the park," says Brian Chen, 39, a friend of Beaudette's. "I'm glad that the police are pursuing this. I hope they don't give up." ●

Anyone with information on Beaudette's murder—or other shootings at Malibu Creek State Park—should contact the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau at 323-890-5500.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KABC-TV; LOS ANGELES; JULIE ELLERTON/LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; TOP: DEN KORNIG/LOS ANGELES TIMES; INTER: COURTESY BEAUDETTE FAMILY