

UPDATED: Foul play suspected in the disappearance of three Leonard residents

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A source close to the investigation into the disappearance of three Leonard residents confirmed late Thursday that Thomas Taunton, 50, was taken into custody in Louisiana at an automobile dealership. Taunton, however, has not been arrested or charged with any crime - he is only wanted for questioning in the case. Taunton's Ford truck and a utility trailer being pulled behind it were taken into possession by authorities in Louisiana, but authorities were awaiting a search warrant by Fannin County Sheriff's Office to open it.

The case began Wednesday after police received information that there may be three people missing from the county. Officers went to the location on State Highway 78 north of Leonard, but were unable to make contact with anybody at the residence. After gaining entrance and searching the property, they still were unable to locate anybody at the home, but did see several suspicious things that led them to believe foul play was involved. Due to the fact that no bodies have been found, police have deemed the investigation a missing persons case.

Missing from the home are the elderly homeowners - Harold and Sue Harpst - and their grown daughter who resided with them. Harold Harpst is a double leg amputee and suffers from diabetes. He works from home and when he does leave home, he usually informs his neighbors so they can watch over his property. Sue Harpst was a seamstress who did alterations. Thomas Taunton is Sue Harpst's son.

A Shreveport newspaper reported that Taunton had broken down in Louisiana on Wednesday, and by the time he returned to the dealership where he took his truck on Thursday, authorities had tracked him down and he was taken into custody there. According to their report, he stated he didn't know what was going on and that the trailer contained his personal belongings. Another source reported that he was using his sister's cell phone that police were able to ping and find out his location as he traveled. This story will be updated with more information as it becomes available.