

Wells Proclaims Husband's Innocence in ComStay Killings

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The U.S. Attorney in Anchorage announced Friday evening that an arrest has been made in the double-murder at the Communications Station on Coast Guard Base Kodiak nearly a year ago. James Michael "Jim" Wells, long considered the prime suspect by the FBI, was taken into custody by members of the Coast Guard Investigative Service and the Alaska State Troopers. From KMXT, Brianna Gibbs has more.

On the morning of April 12th of last year, U.S. Coast Guard Electrician's Mate First Class James Hopkins and retired Chief Boatswain's Mate Richard Belisle were found by coworkers, shot to death in one of the buildings at the Coast Guard Communications Station. Belisle was working for the Coast Guard as a civilian contractor at the time, as was the accused, Jim Wells.

FBI spokesman Eric Gonzales said the 61-year-old Wells was taken into custody after a sealed federal arrest warrant was issued. Gonzales said the complaint, or affidavit, is sealed, and will remain so until Wells appears in court, which is expected sometime this week in Anchorage. This means the underlying details and facts leading up to the arrest remain confidential. Gonzales did not say what the motive in the killings might have been.

On Saturday, Wells' wife, Nancy, told the Associated Press that she has full faith in her husband's innocence, and none in the quality of the investigation. She declined any further comment.

The Kodiak Daily Mirror reported that Richard Belisle's daughter, Amy Belisle, and his wife, Nicola Belisle were in Anchorage when they learned of the arrest.

Amy Belisle told the Mirror said she and her mother were "overjoyed that finally something had happened." She said the arrest offers a little bit more closure, but also expressed sadness for Wells' family. She said she feels sorry that "someone else's family is now going to be torn apart." KTUU-TV contacted Amy's sister, Emily Belisle, on Friday and reported she was extremely happy about the arrest.

Wells' arrest on Friday came after 10 months of investigation led by the FBI and the Coast Guard Investigative Service, along with the Alaska State Troopers.