

# Kaitlin Armstrong's request for speedy Texas trial may face bumpy road in death of cycling pro 'Mo' Wilson

By Michael Ruiz

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Texas love triangle slaying suspect Kaitlin Armstrong's demands for a speedy trial may be delayed after her latest hearing Wednesday, according to local reports – even as leading legal experts say her defense team has put together a strong challenge to the initial murder warrant.

Judge Brenda Kennedy said she no longer expects to begin the trial in mid-October following a busy week for court filings, the Austin American-Statesman reported Wednesday.

Prosecutors and Armstrong's defense team have been battling over a gag order to affect all or some comment to the media, early aspects of the investigation, including the initial warrant for her arrest, and whether her constitutional rights had been violated.

Court records show lawyers for both sides reached an agreement on restricting media statements Tuesday – although the terms were not immediately clear. Neither the Travis County District Attorney's Office nor Armstrong's defense team responded to requests for comment.

## TEXAS CYCLIST SLAYING SUSPECT KAITLIN ARMSTRONG: 'BIASED PUBLICITY' MAKES FAIR TRIAL 'VIRTUALLY' IMPOSSIBLE



Left: victim Anna Moriah "Mo" Wilson after a race. Right: A photo of suspect Kaitlin Armstrong released by the US Marshals. (The Wilson Family/US Marshals)

Armstrong's attorney Rick Cofer previously filed a "Franks challenge," aiming to suppress evidence he alleges police improperly obtained.

The 34-year-old Armstrong is accused of fatally shooting pro cyclist Anna Moriah "Mo" Wilson on May 11 and then, after being questioned and released, leaving the country.

Immediately before her death, Wilson had gone out to dinner with Colin Strickland, 35, another pro cyclist and Armstrong's live-in boyfriend.

The defense's court filings aim to cast doubt on the investigators' version of events, which paint Armstrong as a jealous woman scorned in a love triangle – and they highlight Strickland's apparent disbelief that his girlfriend of three years would have the motive or ability to kill Wilson.



Kaitlin Armstrong, left, pictured during an interrogation with Austin Police Department Detective Katy Conner in May. (Austin Police)

"Do you think that Kaitlin killed Mo?" Detective Richard Spitler asked Strickland during an interview in May, according to court documents unveiled this week.

#### **TEXAS MURDER SUSPECT KAITLIN ARMSTRONG'S LAWYERS ACCUSE POLICE OF USING INVALID ARREST WARRANT**

"I cannot f---ing fathom it," Strickland replied. "Could Kaitlin hit somebody with a car when she's been drinking? If she were drinking, she doesn't drink much, but it's possible... This is not possible."

He called Armstrong "one of the least volatile women" he's ever dated and that he'd "never seen anything that was alarming."

He told Spitler that he did not think she was jealous and that during the same period he was seeing Wilson last year, when the couple was briefly broken up, Armstrong was dating men she met on the Bumble app.



Colin Strickland seen outside his Austin, Texas, home on June 17, 2022. (MEGA)

Dick DeGeurin, a leading Texas defense attorney whose clients have included David Koresh and Robert Durst, told Fox News Digital Monday that Armstrong's defense team had submitted an "extremely detailed" motion supported by former Plano Police Lt. Douglas Deaton's attached affidavit.

"Franks challenges are rarely granted, but this one seems meritorious," he said.

## TEXAS MURDER SUSPECT KAITLIN ARMSTRONG HAD ACCESS TO \$450K, PRACTICED SHOOTING WITH SISTER, WARRANTS REVEAL

A Franks challenge questions the factual sufficiency of a warrant under the Fourth Amendment, according to James Scozzari, a Michigan-based defense attorney and partner at Scozzari Graham.



An earlier portrait of Kaitlin Armstrong and a booking photo taken after her extradition to the U.S. (US Marshals, Travis County Sheriff's Office)

Cofer argued that the affidavit Detective Richard Spitler used to obtain the warrant for his client's arrest is "rife with false statements, material omissions, reckless exaggerations and gross mischaracterizations made with a reckless disregard for the truth."

His filing included another affidavit from Deaton, a retired Plano police lieutenant serving as an expert witness for Armstrong's defense. Deaton, now a private investigator, said he found numerous issues with Spitler's conclusions.

"On page 4 (paragraph 4) of the affidavit, Detective Spitler writes, 'When Armstrong was confronted with video evidence of her vehicle, she had no explanation as to why it was in the area and did not make any denials surrounding the statements presented to her,'" Deaton wrote. "The video recording of this interaction is clear: Detective [Katy] Conner neither showed any video to Armstrong nor informed Armstrong that video evidence involving her vehicle existed. Detective Conner did not confront Armstrong with video evidence."





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He added that the assertion that Armstrong had no explanation "is a speculative statement bordering on falsehood."

"It is entirely possible that Armstrong possessed undisclosed information or could provide an explanation but preferred not to speak outside the presence of an attorney," Deaton wrote. "All professional law enforcement investigators should be aware that innocent suspects often invoke their constitutional right to remain silent and request an attorney to be present before answering any questions."

"The four paragraphs of the affidavit describing Detective Conner's interview of Kaitlin Armstrong are rife with incorrect quotations and misattributions," Deaton argued. "These error-ridden descriptions of the interview are arranged out of order and in a manner that imbues that affidavit with a negatively skewed and inaccurately sinister depiction of Kaitlin Armstrong's behavior."

#### **KAITLIN ARMSTRONG: TEXAS FUGITIVE USED ALIASES UNTIL COSTA RICA COPS DETAINED HER ON IMMIGRATION CHARGE**

Lara Yeretsian, another high-powered defense lawyer based in California, said that while Cofer's filings raise "very valid, legitimate arguments," she believes the judge could still find enough probable cause in the initial warrant for Armstrong's arrest.

"I think this is going to play out in the court, in front of the jury," she told Fox News Digital.

Among other issues, Armstrong invoked her right to have an attorney present and requested to leave five times before the detective ended her interview.

"There is no doubt that most, if not all information about Armstrong's interview within the affidavit was obtained in violation of the U.S. Constitution and/or law enforcement best practices," a defense filing reads.



Colin Strickland seen outside his Austin, Texas, home on June 17, 2022. (MEGA)

Two key points she noted in the Franks challenge are that Armstrong was not mirandized before her interview and that Spittler may have manipulated Strickland's statements.

"These are great arguments," Yeretsian said. "They've given us a preview of what the case is gonna be, and what the defense is, and the holes they're gonna poke in the case."

Another key assertion in the filing is that timestamps from the electronic lock at the apartment where Wilson was murdered and the surveillance camera next door were out of sync, contradicting the initial narrative that Armstrong's SUV showed up next door a minute after Strickland dropped Wilson off on May 11.

"One of the issues that really popped out at me was, did she even know that this woman was in town?" Yeretsian said. "I could see the defense really zooming on that...If she didn't know, how did she end up killing her?"

As for the expected delay, Yeretsian said that could play out to the advantage of the prosecution.

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"The more time that passes, the harder it becomes to defend," she said. "You lose witnesses, memories fade, it becomes difficult. Clearly, she's adamant that she's innocent and her lawyers believe that she's innocent."

She added, "If the prosecutors think they don't have enough, they should be dismissing the case. It's very simple."

Armstrong remains jailed on \$3 million bond. The jury's docket call has been scheduled for Oct. 19.

*Fox News' Paul Best contributed to this report.*

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