



NATIONAL

FBI says it's taking ransom notes 'seriously' in Nancy Guthrie's disappearance

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HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

By Alana Wise

3-Minute Listen

PLAYLIST

TRANSCRIPT

In the search for Nancy Guthrie, law enforcement says they are investigating ransom notes that were sent to media.

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JUANA SUMMERS, HOST:

It has now been five days since law enforcement began searching for Nancy Guthrie. She's the mother of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie. The 84-year-old

was reported missing on Sunday from her home in Tucson, Arizona. Officials gave an update today with a few new details on the investigation. NPR's Alana Wise was following that and is here to explain. Hi.

ALANA WISE, BYLINE: Hi.

SUMMERS: Alana, what more did we learn today?

WISE: So the FBI said that there was a ransom letter sent earlier this week to some news outlets, and they are taking it seriously. But they said there's been no contact with the Guthrie family since the messages were sent to the media. Heith Janke, who's with the FBI's Phoenix office, said that's unusual in kidnapping cases, and there would normally be contact by now. Also, Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos said that blood found on the porch at Nancy Guthrie's house was hers. He said they're hopeful that she can be found and returned home safely.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

CHRIS NANOS: We believe Nancy is still out there.

SUMMERS: At this point, is there any sense of who might have taken her?

WISE: The sheriff was adamant that investigators have not yet identified a suspect or a person of interest. He said they pieced together a timeline of what happened on the night she disappeared. Nancy had gone to one of her daughters' houses for dinner on Saturday night. She was dropped back off at her home around 9:48. At 1:47 a.m. her doorbell camera disconnected, and a while later, her pacemaker disconnected from the app. The doorbell camera was able to detect movement on camera, but they haven't been able to restore the footage. And the FBI also announced today that they were offering a \$50,000 reward for any information that leads to Nancy Guthrie's recovery and/or the arrest and conviction of whoever took her. Here's the FBI's Heith Janke.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

HEITH JANKE: To anyone that may be involved, do the right thing. This is an 84-year-old grandma that needs vital medication for her wellbeing. Please return Nancy home.

WISE: Also, President Trump has said he reached out to Savannah Guthrie and was deploying federal resources to help.

SUMMERS: Do officials believe that Nancy Guthrie was specifically targeted for some reason?

WISE: The sheriff said they can't say one way or the other whether Nancy was specifically targeted, but they said they're not ruling anything out.

SUMMERS: And her family, what have they had to say?

WISE: Last night, Savannah Guthrie and her two siblings posted an emotional video on Instagram, pleading for the kidnappers to return their mom home. They made a direct appeal to the ransomer, saying that they were, quote, "ready to talk" and requesting clear proof that Nancy was still alive.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: We live in a world where voices and images are easily manipulated. We need to know without a doubt that she is alive and that you have her. We want to hear from you, and we are ready to listen.

WISE: The family talked about how Nancy is elderly, how she needs certain medications and she experiences daily pain. But they also talked about what she's like as a mother and a grandmother, and they talked about how much they missed her and wanted to see her come back home.

SUMMERS: I can only imagine. NPR's Alana Wise, thank you so much.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

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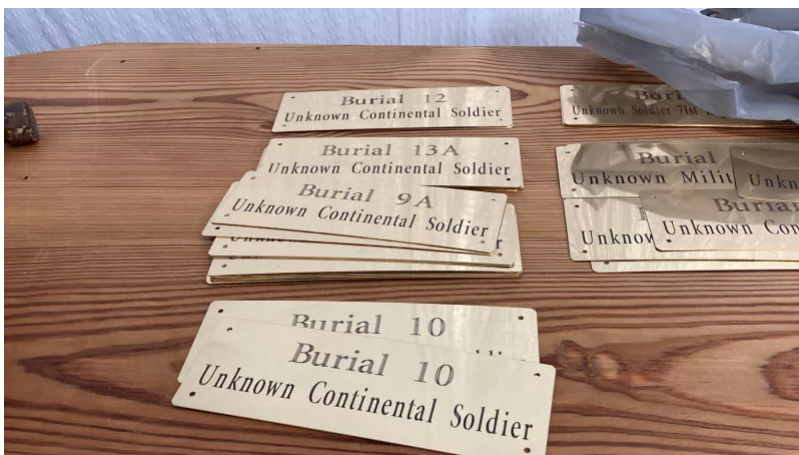
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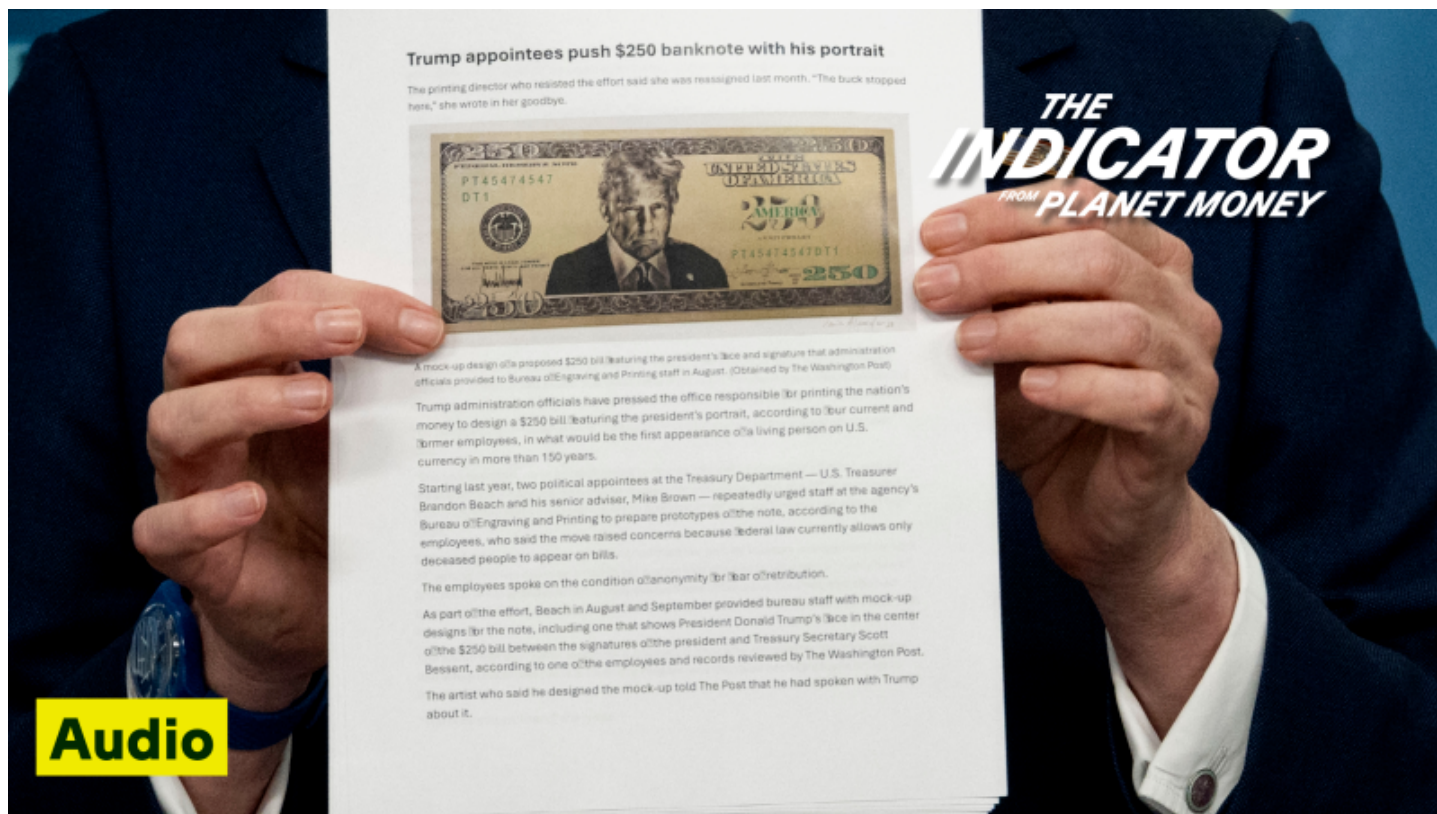
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