



## Utah tech CEO Erin Valenti found dead after police say she was ‘voluntarily missing’



A screenshot of Facebook shows Erin Valenti

By Paighen Harkins and Becky Jacobs | Oct. 13, 2019, 2:36 a.m.

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A Utah tech CEO who has been missing since Monday, when her “confusing and disjointed” last phone calls to family had them concerned for her safety, was found dead in San Jose, Bay Area TV station [KPIX reported](#) Saturday and her family later



A [statement](#) from the family and friends of Erin Valenti said: “Many of you have seen that the search for Erin has been called off. While we were praying for a initiative for the help and support you have given. ful, smart, funny woman that she was.”

id in a statement Saturday that “a body was he street” in the 6500 block of Bose Lane. “The santa Clara County Coroner’s Office will determine the manner and cause of death,” it said. KPIX reported Valenti was the person found inside the car.

Valenti, 33, [was the founder of Tinker Ventures](#), a Utah company that designs and develops apps and websites. She was last seen in Palo Alto, Calif., on Monday afternoon, according to a Wednesday post by her husband, Harrison Weinstein, on Facebook. She was driving from Palo Alto to San Jose in a rental car to catch a flight, but never returned the gray Nissan Murano or caught her flight, he said. Her phone had been off since Monday night.



The San Jose Police Department was “treating the case as a voluntary missing person,” Sgt. Enrique Garcia said in an email to The Salt Lake Tribune on Friday.

While Unified police aren’t involved in this case, spokeswoman Sgt. Melody Gray said her department has used a similar designation — for example, in cases where police make contact with a reported missing person and he or she says they don’t want to be found.

“If you’re over 18, you have that right,” Gray said.



t the request of the family, a San Jose police officer had contacted Valenti by phone Monday night. “The officer said she wasn’t making any sense. They drove around looking for her on Monday night and never found her,” Weinstein told the newspaper.

Her mother, Whitey Valenti, told the East Bay Times: “We talked to her for hours on and off” on Monday night. “Her thoughts were disconnected. She talked a mile a minute. She’d say I’m coming home for Thanksgiving, then in the next she was saying she’s in the Matrix,” a simulated reality described in the science film film.

Weinstein had posted to a Facebook group called “Help Find Erin Valenti” at midnight on Friday, saying the family didn’t accept the police assessment of Valenti’s disappearance, adding her behavior was “extremely out of character.”

He wrote that the designation “voluntary disappearance” meant police wouldn’t be actively searching for Valenti. “Anybody who can help look for her, pressure authorities to do more,” he wrote, “anything else would be much appreciated.”

Some heeded Weinstein’s call to reach out to police. Faith Witkin Schwartz, who identified herself in other Facebook posts on the disappearance as Weinstein’s aunt, asked the San Jose police for help on their Facebook page.

“As a psychologist, I know that her confusing and disjointed conversations that she had on her last calls with family indicate that she is an extremely vulnerable



Tinker has offices in Salt Lake City and Pakistan. Valenti didn't show up for a sday at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake Cydni Tetro, president of the organization.

Valenti at the end of last week. Nothing indicated week, she said.

"It's really scary," Tetro said at the time, "We just really want her to return safely."

Prior to forming Tinker, which has 120 employees, Valenti was head of product development for Overstock.com, according to the Women Tech Council. She had founded and worked for several finance companies after graduating from Georgetown University, where she majored in finance and international business. In Utah, she founded SLC Tech Startups, a professional networking group, the council said.



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Silicon Slopes, a Utah nonprofit that supports the startup and tech community, tweeted a statement Saturday, saying they were devastated by the news of Valenti's death.

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It's hard to imagine the Silicon Slopes statement read. "Our hearts go out to her inable time."

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