

Menu

Subscribe

ADVERTISEMENT

NEWS / FLORIDA

# Florida developer Sergio Pino found dead amid FBI 'murder for hire' investigation

Pino's death marks a startling turn weeks after the FBI raided his waterfront home in the posh Coral Gables neighborhood.



Donate

FBI and police are seen on the street near developer Sergio Pino's home in Coral Gables on Tuesday. [ PHOTO BY AL DIAZ | Miami Herald ]

Published July 16 | Updated July 16

Menu

# Tampa Bay Times

Subscribe

Cocopium nome amia what tne bureau called a murder for hire [investigation related to threats](#) made against his estranged wife, Tatiana Pino.

It was a startling end for a prominent businessperson who faced a federal inquiry into whether he had any connection to a group of men charged with stalking and threatening his wife of more than three decades during a contentious divorce. The dissolution of the couple's marriage had played out in shocking headlines since FBI agents raided Pino's Coral Gables home and office in late June — the pages of their divorce file show the couple relaying alleged incidents of poisoning, vehicle fires and a drive-by shooting at Sergio Pino's home in recent years. Threats made against Tatiana Pino and her sister, including arson and a hit-and-run, led to the arrests of four men, including one of Sergio Pino's household employees, earlier this year.

ADVERTISEMENT

Early Tuesday, weeks after the first raid, FBI agents descended on Sergio Pino's Coral Gables neighborhood as part of a "search and arrest" operation related to a murder-for-hire investigation that began in the fall of 2023, according to a statement by Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey Veltri. A SWAT team entered Pino's home after attempting to call out to anyone inside and getting no response, according to the FBI's statement. Veltri said that Pino, who was 67, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound and that FBI agents discovered him "alone in an upstairs bedroom."

Law enforcement raided another home in Cutler Bay as part of the operation. One person was arrested, according to Veltri, who did not provide the suspect's name or further details.

In a statement Tuesday afternoon, Pino's criminal defense attorney criticized the FBI's actions.

"Sergio Pino took his own life today," said lawyer Sam Rabin. "The level of law enforcement activity at his residence was unprecedented and unnecessary, and the force we had offered to surrender him, should that have become necessary. Today's events mark a very tragic ending to an investigation that we were confident we could successfully defend. There were many rumors and allegations, but what was lacking was evidence."

Donate

ADVERTISEMENT

Menu

Subscribe

incidents involving his wife.

The striking scene in Cocoplum unfolded Tuesday morning as FBI agents returned to Pino's home, where the couple once lived together. For much of the morning, Coral Gables police cruisers blocked off Isla Dorada Boulevard, where the house is located. A series of loud bangs could be heard from about a block away, beginning at 9:30 a.m., about every 15 minutes. Two helicopters hovered overhead at the waterfront estate, near the Cocoplum Yacht Club.

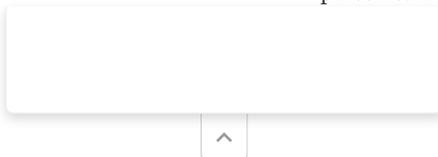
**Spend your days with Hayes**  
 Subscribe to our free Stephinitely newsletter  
 Columnist Stephanie Hayes will share thoughts, feelings and funny business with you every Monday.

Around 10 a.m., Coral Gables Fire Rescue arrived with lights on. Thirty minutes later, an ambulance left with lights on but no siren. Around 11:30 a.m., a van from the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner's office arrived in the area.

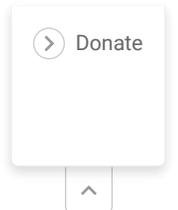
The Miami-Dade Medical Examiner's office later confirmed that Pino died inside his home on Isla Dorada Boulevard around 10:20 a.m.

The residence was not visible from the area blocked off by law enforcement on Tuesday morning.

A person in the neighborhood told the Miami Herald that law enforcement surrounding the house appeared calm, with weapons pointed at the ground. The person said that at one point they heard police say over the megaphone that they h the front door.



ADVERTISEMENT



Four Miami-Dade men, including an employee of Sergio Pino's, were arrested earlier this year in connection with threats and attacks against Tatiana Pino and her sister. Bayron Bennett, who worked putting together food and beverage service on Sergio Pino's yacht, is accused of recruiting Michael Dulfo, Edner Etienne and Jerren Howard to carry out a hit-and-run at Tatiana Pino's residence and multiple arsons at her sister's residence. The four men have pleaded not guilty.

A rented Home Depot trailer [rammed into Tatiana Pino's car](#) as she pulled into her driveway after a day of divorce proceedings in August 2023. And three vehicles were set ablaze in two separate arsons at Tatiana Pino's sister's residence.

In a motion filed on July 5, Tatiana Pino's divorce attorney said there had been another "attempt on Ms. Pino's life just weeks ago at her home." Pinecrest police have refused to release the report from that incident because it is part of the ongoing federal investigation.

ADVERTISEMENT

In court testimony, Tatiana Pino said she blamed health problems [on what she believed was a poisoning attempt](#) by her husband. Sergio Pino had denied that allegation.

And he testified that he had also received threats throughout the divorce proceedings.

A month after Tatiana Pino filed for divorce, Sergio Pino said someone [shot at his Coral Gables home](#) and that he had received threatening phone calls around that time.

In September 2023, shortly after the hit-and-run at Tatiana Pino's residence, Sergio Pino said someone set his car on fire. About a year before that, he testified, another car of his was vandalized.

©2024 Miami Herald. Visit [miamiherald.com](http://miamiherald.com). Distributed by Tribune Content Agency LLC.

**UP NEXT:** [Man bitten by shark while spearfishing off Key West, police say](#)

[Donate](#)

## MORE FOR YOU

### Here's how many Florida Democratic delegates have already pledged for Kamala Harris

4 hours ago  
• Elections

### What did Andrew Warren's legal rulings actually say?

Earlier today  
• Elections

ADVERTISEMENT



**Secret Revealed: How Gardeners Remove Gravel Weeds 'faster' Than Other Methods**  
Sherum

**This New Portable AC is Sweeping the USA**  
Outfany

**Hospitality Horizon: Embark on a Hotel Management Degree**  
Search sedo | Hotel Management

### Florida hopes to reduce 'diagnostic odyssey' for children with rare diseases

Earlier today  
• Health

### Tensions mark Hillsborough public defender campaigns

Earlier today  
• Elections

### Kamala Harris could boost Florida's abortion rights measure

Earlier today  
• Elections

### Sorry Dems: Biden dropping out won't make Florida a battleground state

Earlier today  
• Elections

### 'Earthshaking': Kamala Harris at top of ticket excites South Florida Democrats

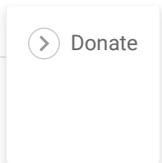
Earlier today  
• Elections

### Which Florida Democrats endorse Harris for president?

Yesterday  
• Elections



**Florida: ...**  
Yesterday  
• Elections



### Live updates: President Joe Biden drops out, endorses VP Kamala Harris

Yesterday  
• Elections

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

# Tampa Bay Times



## Contact

[Help Chat](#)
[Customer Service](#)
[Submit a News Tip](#)
[Contact](#)

## Account

[Digital access](#)
[Home delivery](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[Manage my account](#)
[Donate](#)
[Subscriber FAQ](#)
[e-Newspaper FAQ](#)
[e-Newspaper App FAQ](#)

## About

[Times Publishing Company](#)
[About us](#)
[Connect with us](#)
[Careers](#)

[Public Notices](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Best of the Best](#)
[Local Ads](#)

[Donate](#)



## Shop

Menu

**Tampa Bay Times**

Subscribe

---

**More**

[News in Education](#) [Expos](#) [Homes](#) [Sponsored Content](#) [Special Sections](#) [Apps](#) [Podcasts](#) [Archives](#)

---

© 2024 All Rights Reserved

**Times Publishing Company**

[Privacy Policy](#)