

Vehicle of missing mother found 23 years later in Arkansas with human remains inside, authorities say

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The blue Ford Tempo pulled from the water in Arkansas matches the description of one belonging to missing mother Samantha Jean Hopper, who disappeared in 1998. (Pope County Sheriff's Office)

RUSSELLVILLE, Ark. - Investigators in [Arkansas](#) say they have recovered a vehicle matching the description of a car that belonged to a mother who was reported missing 23 years ago along with her young daughter.

The Pope County Sheriff's Office said human remains were found inside the Ford Tempo pulled from a body of water. The vehicle matches one belonging to Samantha Jean Hopper, who was reported missing on September 11, 1998.

According to deputies, Hopper was reportedly traveling to drop off her 18-month-old daughter, Courtney Holt, before going to a concert in Little Rock. However, Hopper, her daughter, and her blue Ford Tempo were never located.

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The sheriff's office said they received a 911 call around 12:30 p.m. Monday from individuals who said they had possibly found Hopper's car in a small body of water off Pleasant View Road, approximately 25 yards from the bank in about 8 feet of water.

The vehicle was discovered by the non-profit group Adventures with Purpose, which travels across the country working on cold cases.

According to the group's [Facebook page](#), Hopper was 8 months pregnant at the time she disappeared. They said a car seat was also found in the back of the Ford Tempo. The human remains found inside the vehicle are being sent to the Arkansas State Crime Lab for DNA testing.

"The Pope County Sheriff's Office would like to send our sincere condolences to the family of Samantha Hopper and Courtney Holt," Sheriff Shane Jones said in a statement. "We are thankful to have been a small part of helping bring this 23-year-old case to closure."

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