

White House looking into growing list of ‘missing scientists’

Theories have circulated online after about ten scientists disappeared or died since 2024



Michael Hicks, a Nasa researcher, died in July 2023

The White House is looking into claims that the deaths or disappearances of a growing list of scientists over the past three years may be connected.

There is no evidence to suggest that their deaths and disappearances are linked, but conspiracy theories have circulated online to suggest this may be the case.

During a White House briefing on Wednesday, a Fox News reporter asked Karoline Leavitt, President Trump’s press secretary, about ten scientists who had disappeared or died since mid-2024 and “reportedly had access to classified nuclear or aerospace material”.

Leavitt said that the Trump administration planned to look into the reports. “I haven’t spoken to our relevant agencies about it. I will certainly do that, and we’ll get you an

answer. If true, of course, that's definitely something I think this government administration would deem work worth looking into," she said.

Steven Garcia, a 48-year-old government contractor, vanished last August in New Mexico, according to reports this week. Garcia was last seen leaving his Albuquerque home on foot and carrying a handgun, according to the Daily Mail. A source told the outlet that Garcia worked for the Kansas City National Security Campus, a federal site that produces non-nuclear material components for national defence systems, according to the US Department of Energy.

The Times has asked the security campus for confirmation of his employment.

In February, William Neil McCasland, a retired Air Force general, vanished. He was also last seen near his home in Albuquerque.

McCasland, 68, left his phone and glasses at home. His hiking boots, wallet and a .38 calibre revolver were not recovered, Bernalillo County sheriff's office said last month, adding: "While there is currently no evidence indicating foul play, investigators are examining all available information as the case remains active." The office noted it had not received any confirmed sighting or videos showing McCasland leaving the area.

According to the Air Force, McCasland was responsible for managing the military branch's \$2.2 billion science and technology programme.



Retired Air Force General William McCasland

Eric Burlison, a Republican congressman representing Missouri, posted on social media last month: “The disappearance of multiple scientists and military personnel

with ties to advanced research is deeply concerning. I've already requested [FBI](#) involvement, and we will keep pressing for answers.”

Online amateur sleuths have linked the disappearances to the 2023 death of Michael David Hicks, a 59-year-old Nasa researcher. He served on the science teams of the Double Asteroid Redirection Test Project and the Nasa Deep Space 1 Mission, among others, according to the American Astronomical Society. His cause of death was listed as “arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease” and it was listed as “natural”. The case status is still open, according to Los Angeles county medical examiner records.

Also in Los Angeles, Monica Reza, 60, went missing last June while hiking in the Angeles National Forest. She had worked at Aerojet Rocketdyne, a defence and space manufacturer, for decades, according to her [LinkedIn](#) profile.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL BULLETIN

SHERIFF ROBERT G. LUNA

MISSING PERSON

AT RISK



REZA, Monica

Female, White, 60 years old

4'11", 101 lbs., gray hair, brown eyes

Last seen wearing red long sleeve shirt, green hiking pants, hiking shoes

MISSING HIKER

NIC: M668487735

FCN: 2322517300164

Detectives from the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department are seeking assistance in locating the above missing person.

Missing person, Monica Reza, resident of Los Angeles County, was last seen hiking on June 22, 2025 at 9:10 a.m., at 60001 Trailhead Ave, Angeles Crest Highway. There is concern for Ms. Reza's well-being. Any information, please contact the Sheriff's Homicide Bureau, Missing Person's Detail.

If you prefer to provide information anonymously, you may call "Crime Stoppers" by dialing (800) 222-TIPS (8477), use your smartphone by downloading the "P3Tips" Mobile APP on Google play or the Apple App Store or by using the website <http://lacrimestoppers.org>.

Any information, please contact:

LASD Homicide Bureau

1 Cupania Circle, Monterey Park, CA 91755, 323-890-5500

ATTENTION: Det. S. Rincon

Monica Reza has been missing since June 22, 2025 LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFFS DEPARTMENT
Other scientists who have disappeared include Jason Thomas, a Novartis biologist last seen in December, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory employees Anthony Chavez, 78, and Melissa Caslas, 45.

There is also speculation about the deaths of Frank Maiwald, a 61-year-old Nasa scientist, [Nuno Loureiro](#), a 47-year-old Portuguese professor of nuclear science at MIT, and Carl Grillmair, a 67-year-old Canadian astrophysicist.



Melissa Casias

Cláudio Manuel Neves Valente, a 48-year-old who died by suicide after he allegedly killed two Brown University students last December, is believed to have also killed Loureiro.

Retrieved April 16, 2026 from [White House looking into growing list of 'missing scientists'](#)