



Boyfriend of au pair working for NYC comedy club owner charged with killing them in N.J. home

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Authorities have charged a woman's boyfriend with murdering her and her boss at a Maplewood home on Saturday, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office announced.

David Kimowitz, 40, and Karen Bermudez-Rodriguez, 26, died early Saturday morning, authorities said.

Kimowitz owned a comedy club in New York City. Bermudez-Rodriguez worked as the Kimowitz family's au pair.

Joseph D. Porter, 27, an Elizabeth man who was dating Bermudez-Rodriguez, was charged with two counts of murder, two weapons charges and criminal restraint. He is currently in the Essex County Correctional Facility.

Police had responded to a report Saturday of a woman being assaulted, according to the prosecutor's office, and soon found Bermudez-Rodriguez injured in the street, and Kimowitz dead inside the home in the 400 block of Walton Road that he owned with his wife, according to property records.

Chief Assistant Prosecutor Thomas Fennelly said Kimowitz's wife and children were not in the home during the incident, but he declined to comment on the victims' causes of death, pending an autopsy, or what weapons, if any, were used.

Kimowitz helped run The Stand, a comedy club and restaurant in New York. The Wall Street Journal featured him in a 2017 story about a city-wide comedy boom, and his club recently re-opened at a new location near Union Square Park. A host of prominent comedians announced the move in a video.

"There's a stigma about comedy clubs," Kimowitz told The New York Times in 2012. "They're tourist traps, watered-down drinks. We're trying to evolve the comedy club."

Messages left with Kimowitz's family and business partners, as well as with colleagues at another business he was connected to were not immediately returned. Facebook photos showed him with two young daughters.

On Sunday, people left flowers in front of the home.

Although they didn't know the family personally, Kevin Kraft and his son Leo, 10, were among that visited the site.

"I don't want this family to not know that this community loves and supports them. There are children here that are going to be raised without a father," Kevin Kraft said.

Bermudez-Rodriguez was a student from Colombia who started babysitting for the Kimowitz's more than a year ago, according to a family friend named Johan Montoya. He wrote in Spanish to NJ Advance Media that she was in the U.S. to learn English.

He said he and her family were devastated by her death.

Online, people mourned Kimowitz.