

Manhattan couple commit suicide due to “financial spiral”

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On the morning of Friday, July 28, a middle-aged couple jumped to their death from a building in midtown Manhattan. In their suicide notes the couple explained they “cannot live with” their “financial reality.”

According to media reports, Glenn Scarpelli, 53, and his wife, Patricia Colant, 50, were seen the night before their deaths removing their belongings from their home and putting them on the curb—a sign they may have been recently evicted. The following morning they leaped from the ninth floor of a Madison Avenue building, where Scarpelli worked as a chiropractor and Colant as his receptionist.

The couple had placed their respective suicide notes and IDs inside plastic bags in their pockets.

Scarpelli’s note, which was headed, “We had a wonderful life,” explained, “Patricia and I had everything in life,” before referring to the couple’s “financial spiral.”

Colant’s letter also provided contact information for family and friends, and instructions on how to notify their two children about their deaths.

Friends and relatives of Scarpelli and Colant have expressed shock to the media over the couple’s death, and it has been widely reported that the family was well known and liked at restaurants and bars in New York’s financial district—where they lived.

Scarpelli was also known for generosity with his time. Following the events of September 11, 2001, he volunteered countless hours as a chiropractor at ground zero. Adam Lamb, a fellow volunteer, told the *New York Post*, “We helped adjust for stressed and freaked out firefighters, policemen anyone who needed help.”

Amy Lambert, who rented a room at Scarpelli’s Madison Wellness Center, described him as someone who “just wanted to help people.” She also noted that

he “never turned anyone away if they couldn’t afford his services.”

Scarpelli’s father, Joseph C. Scarpelli, was mayor of Brick Township, New Jersey, until he was named in a federal government corruption probe. The elder Scarpelli was eventually sentenced to 18 months in jail.

New York Police Department Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce told the media that the source of the couple’s money problems was unclear. However, part of the difficulties seem to stem from Scarpelli’s student loans. In 2013 a federal judge ordered him to pay almost \$62,000 as part of a lawsuit by the government over his failure to repay loans he took out in 2000 as a student at Logan College of Chiropractic (now Logan University) in Chesterfield, Missouri in suburban St. Louis.

Scarpelli and Colant also sent both their children to the prestigious Loyola High School, which costs roughly \$38,000 a year. Their daughter Isabella, 20, is currently a student at St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas, and their son, Joseph, 19, attends the University of Miami.

The family also had a lien against them from September showing they owed \$23,304 in federal back taxes, and a separate lien in April 2015 revealed they were \$232,295 in arrears.

Numerous friends of the couple have told the media they were entirely unaware of the financial problems, and some have speculated that other factors may have contributed to Scarpelli and Colant’s decision to end their lives. Further details may well emerge over the course of the next few days.

According to a report published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in 2015, a close relation exists between the rise in suicide rates among 40 to 64-year-olds and economic instability or decline.

The report notes that “external economic factors” were tied to 37.5 percent of all suicides in 2010 compared to 32.9 percent in 2005. From 2000 to 2014, the *Journal* pointed out, there was an increase in suicide rates by 43 percent for men and 63 percent for women between the ages of 45 to 64.

A growing number of people in the US, many of them working class and living in small towns or rural areas, feel that debt, deteriorating economic conditions or outright poverty have deprived them of a future worth living. Scarpelli and Colant were erstwhile successful professionals living in the middle of New York City.



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