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## Man who stalked ex-wife now sought for her murder

By Bill Torpy

In March, John S. Kristofak was under court supervision on a drug charge and was also harassing his ex-wife, Donna. At one point, he warned her “you are in danger – protect yourself. No one can help you at this point.”

Last weekend, police say, Kristofak made true on his threat, allegedly killing her in her Cobb County home. He is now the focus of a manhunt.

Kristofak, 58, a failed entrepreneur who ran a cell phone business and then a mortgage company, was jailed this year for several months on multiple charges of aggravated stalking. He pleaded guilty in October and was sentenced to seven months times served, with the rest of a five-year sentence to be served on probation.

Police are not releasing much about Kristofak or the couple's stormy breakup, and county officials were hard to find for comment Monday because of the holiday. But court records indicate that Donna Kristofak, who was 48, filed for divorce in August 2011 after 19 years of marriage. In the filing, the mother of two teen-aged boys, who served as her own lawyer, asked that she get her old name back — Donna Jean Nations.

But it was not a clean break. The next month she filed for a restraining order against her ex-husband.

Her sister, Kathy Nations, called Donna “a dear sister who will be dearly missed,” but added little in the way of details. “We don't want to say anything to interfere with the police,” she said. “But we're glad the media is involved and his picture is everywhere.”

The Kristofaks' union, at least on the outside, seemed happy. The family lived in a prosperous neighborhood, he headed a company called Metro Mobility Cellular and Donna was even featured in a 1995 newspaper article where pregnant women gave fashion tips.

In 2003, John Kristofak started East Cobb Mortgage during a real estate boom and the family lived in a home valued at nearly \$500,000. However, the couple filed for bankruptcy in 2007, saying that they had three mortgages on their home and had a family income averaging less than \$20,000 a year. He dissolved the mortgage company in 2008.

Things then apparently unravelled at a rapid rate. After the 2011 divorce and restraining order, Kristofak faced felony drug charges and agreed to a guilty plea in February, according to court papers. He was to be confined for eight months but allowed to be released to go to work.

But although he was apparently supposed to be serving jail time and under court supervision, Kristofak started repeatedly harassing his ex-wife.

Between March 9 and March 19, Kristofak “called the victim's place of work 12 times and used vile, vulgar language to her and her coworkers,” according to a warrant for his arrest signed March 28.

The warrant also accused Kristofak of sending an e-mail to Donna on March 19, that read, “you are in danger – protect yourself. No one can help you at this point. You won't know where it is coming from.”

Four minutes later, another e-mail read, “I warned you never cut me off from my children. You did and you will pay,” according to the warrant. “I am not living past tonight so I will do anything to get you back.”

Minutes later, another asked, “Have you ever been hit by a car going 140 not knowing where it's coming from?”

Later, John Kristofak allegedly advised his wife in an e-mail to “make your final goodbyes with your children.” He then allegedly tacked posters to a tree in front of her house accusing her of “vile, vulgar sexual things,” the warrant states. One of her sons found the posters.

John Kristofak was arrested on the first warrant on March 29 after he allegedly followed his ex-wife to a Walmart parking lot, and “at one point pulled his vehicle in front of Donna's in an attempt to stop her from leaving.”

In August, a magistrate set his bond at \$250,000, although it is unclear whether he was released before the October guilty plea. With the plea, Kristofak agreed to a psychological evaluation, to not drink alcohol and to permanently stay away from his ex-wife.

He was also accorded first-offender status, as he had been eight months earlier.

Police were called to Donna Kristofak's rented Cobb home late Saturday morning and found her unresponsive. She was

taken to Wellstar Kennestone Hospital, where she later died of her injuries, according to Cobb police spokesman Michael Bowman.

John Kristofak remained at large Monday evening. Police say he is armed and dangerous. He faces charges of aggravated assault and murder, and was last seen driving a brown Chevrolet Equinox with Georgia tag BUV 2635.

Police ask that if anyone sees John Kristofak, they call 9-1-1 immediately. Anyone with information that could assist investigators is asked to call (770) 499-3945.

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## Cobb man accused of killing ex-wife arrested

### Related

By Mike Morris

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A Cobb County man accused of killing his ex-wife over the weekend has been arrested.

John Kristofak was arrested early Thursday at a motel in Union City by members of the Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Force, Cobb sheriff's Fugitive Unit and Union City police.

U.S. Marshals Service spokesman Gavin Duffy said in an e-mail that Kristofak was taken into custody "after a brief struggle."

Duffy said a firearm was found during the service of the murder warrant.

Kristofak is being held without bond at the Cobb County jail on charges of murder and aggravated assault.

Cobb police said Kristofak, 58, is suspected of killing his ex-wife, Donna Nations Kristofak.

Donna Kristofak, 48, was found unresponsive Saturday morning inside the east Cobb home she was renting. She was taken to WellStar Kennestone Hospital, where she later died.

In March, John Kristofak was arrested and charged with stalking his ex-wife.

He pleaded guilty in October and was sentenced to seven months time served, with the rest of a five-year sentence to be served on probation.

Posted: 6:19 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 27, 2012

## Slain woman predicted her own death

### Related

By Bill Torpy

Donna Kristofak was terrified and letting the court know it. John S. Kristofak, who was her husband for 19 years, had been arrested six months earlier as he chased her in a Wal-Mart parking lot. In his car were a butcher's knife and what police called "a suicide note."

During a court hearing Oct. 12, Mrs. Kristofak begged a Cobb County judge not to release him from jail. "I fear for my life," she told Superior Court Judge Adele Grubbs, telling the judge that a court-issued order of protection would not stop her crazed ex-spouse.

Early Thursday, fugitive squads arrested Kristofak, 58, after a short struggle at a Motel 6 in Union City, ending a publicized five-day manhunt. He was charged with doing exactly what he'd promised earlier this year: murder.

Late Saturday morning, Kristofak allegedly entered the garage of his 48-year-old ex-wife's East Cobb home and stabbed her once in the upper torso, according to a warrant. She died later at a hospital.

Kristofak apparently alluded to an intention to kill himself. "Let me say by the time you get this (I) will be dead," wrote a man identifying himself as Kristofak in an e-mail to a Marietta Daily Journal reporter. "There is no justifying what I did and I'm sure I will burn in hell for it."

Mrs. Kristofak's sister, Kathy Nettleman, said she was glad he didn't kill himself "because now he can suffer for the rest of his life."

Nettleman said the family remained fearful while Kristofak was on the run. "Now we can try to go through the grief process like normal people," she said.

Donna and John Kristofak had two sons together and he had another, older son. John started a cellular phone company in the 1990s and later, a mortgage firm. But the couple filed for bankruptcy in 2007.

Donna, acting as her own attorney, divorced John in August 2011 and got a restraining order a month later.

But in March, he started harassing his ex-wife, according to court documents, repeatedly calling her workplace using "vile, vulgar language to her and her coworkers."

He allegedly sent an e-mail March 19 saying, "You are in danger — protect yourself. No one can help you at this point. You won't know where it is coming from." Then another, "I warned you never cut me off from my children. You did and you will pay," according to an arrest warrant from March. "I am not living past tonight so I will do anything to get you back."

On March 26, he erected posters in front of her house accusing her of "vile, vulgar sexual things," a warrant states. One of their teen-aged sons found the posters.

Three days later, he was arrested at the Wal-Mart parking lot as she "frantically called for help."

Kristofak remained in jail until October, when he cut a plea deal with the court that would sentence him to seven months in jail and have him serve the rest of the 5-year term on probation.

According to the transcript of the guilty plea Oct. 12, Donna Kristofak told the judge: "I definitely want a permanent order of no contact. May I also say that a protective order existed the night of the arrest and I do not feel that will necessarily bring safety."

Judge Grubbs: "I understand that. It's a little different with a TPO and filing a protective order. ... If he violates the order in this case he gets picked up by the probation violation and put in jail immediately."

Mrs. Kristofak: "Yes, your honor, I respect that and thank you for that. My fear is that I may not survive that ..."

"I understand," the judge said, cutting in.

"... I fear for my life," Mrs. Kristofak continued.

"I can't tell you with 100 percent, I'd be lying to you and I am sorry you are in that position," said the judge, sounding sympathetic. "But whatever I do, you can go out and, you've got that risk but you will have that ... copy of the protective order

so the minute you get nervous about anything you call the police. ... It's as close as we can get to 100 percent."

"Thank you, your honor," Mrs. Kristofak said. "May I ask, your honor, that it is on the record that I fear for my life?"

"It is on the record," said Judge Grubbs, who then threatened John Kristofak, saying she would send him to prison in an instant if he ever came near his ex-wife or tried to contact her.

In an interview Thursday, Grubbs said she could not comment on the case but added, "You cannot predict human behavior. After (the school massacre in) Newtown people ask, 'How can we stop someone before they do something?' We don't do that."

Grubbs, who has sat on the bench for 16 years, said the domestic violence cases that worry her the most are the ones where a woman tells the court that her husband didn't mean to threaten her and she wants him back.

Jean Douglas, executive director of the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence, said her organization assists in seeking more than 1,000 temporary protection orders each year in DeKalb County.

"If someone is afraid of the law, these kind of orders work; if they don't, nothing short of jail works," she said.

Douglas said the fact that Kristofak had a knife and suicide note when arrested in March was "a huge red flag."

"Every one of these cases is excruciating; the victim called it right here," she said. "She did incredibly well. She articulated exactly what he would do. He was determined to do it and no piece of paper would stop him."