

Jennifer Dulos disappearance: Troconis in court, Fotis to discuss finances this week

By Lisa Backus

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As the search for Jennifer Dulos nears three months, her estranged husband will be questioned this week about his financial affairs and his girlfriend will be back in court on pending criminal charges related to the disappearance.



Fotis Dulos, charged with tampering with evidence and hindering prosecution in connection with his wife's disappearance, appears in Stamford Superior Court with his attorney Norm Pattis, left, Friday, August 9.

Fotis Dulos, 52, and Michelle Troconis, 44, have each pleaded not guilty to tampering with evidence and hindering prosecution in connection with the May 24 disappearance.

Troconis is scheduled to return Monday to state Superior Court

in Stamford for what is expected to be a brief hearing since there are no motions pending.

Her attorney, Andrew Bowman, did not return a message seeking comment.

When Fotis Dulos made his last

appearance on Aug. 9, State's Attorney Richard Colangelo revealed Troconis has not taken a polygraph exam, refuting defense attorney Norm Pattis' claim that she had passed a lie detector test.

Pattis, who is representing Fotis Dulos, has contended that the charges against Troconis should be dropped and that she could provide an alibi for his client.

Pattis said the prosecution turned over video to him that showed Troconis grocery shopping in Farmington the morning Jennifer Dulos disappeared.

Troconis has met with investigators at least twice since being released on \$500,000 bond. One of those times she was seen leading investigators to a wooded area behind the Farmington home she shared with Fotis Dulos.

The charges stem from video surveillance footage that police said shows two people resembling Fotis Dulos and Troconis making more than 30 stops in a four-mile stretch of Hartford the night of the disappearance. Police said the videos showed Fotis Dulos dumping bags that were later determined to contain clothing and cleaning supplies with his wife's blood, according to an arrest warrant.

Police said there were signs that Jennifer Dulos was the victim

of a "serious physical assault" based on evidence found in her garage. Colangelo said Fotis Dulos' DNA was also found mixed with his wife's blood on the faucet of her kitchen sink.

The pre-trial proceedings are playing out against the backdrop of the couple's contentious divorce filed in Stamford family court in 2017 and three lawsuits in Hartford civil court against Fotis Dulos filed in 2018 by his mother-in-law, Gloria Farber.

Fotis Dulos is scheduled to provide a deposition in the lawsuits Tuesday at the West Hartford office of Farber's attorney Richard Weinstein. Farber claims in the lawsuits that Fotis Dulos failed to repay her family \$2.5 million in loans to his high-end real estate company, Fore Group.

The lawsuits have been just as contentious as the couple's two-year divorce, with attorneys on both sides filing numerous motions. Fotis Dulos was slated to give the deposition on July 10, but did not show up, prompting Weinstein to file a motion for default — one of several he's filed in the cases.

In a recent filing, Weinstein claims Fotis Dulos was using the Fore Group's funds as his personal "piggy bank," by paying "business" expenses out of his personal accounts and then reimbursing himself for hundreds of thousands of dollars of purchases at Home

Goods, Amazon and other retailers.

Farber is now seeking a pre-judgement remedy of \$3 million in the case, court papers said.

The pre-judgement remedy request is one of four pending motions slated to be discussed before Judge David Sheriden on Aug. 26. The other motions slated for a hearing on Monday were postponed, including Weinstein's motion for default, according to court staff.

The divorce case was on the docket for Monday with a hearing scheduled on the motion filed by Farber to retain permanent custody of the five children, ages 8 to 13, but that was also postponed, court staff said. The 85-year-old Farber, who was granted the right to intervene in the divorce, has been caring for the children in her New York apartment since her daughter disappeared.

A probate court granted her temporary custody after Fotis Dulos was charged in the disappearance. Fotis Dulos has since been banned from contacting his children as part of the terms of his release.

Fotis Dulos has had limited access to the children since 2018 when a judge ruled that he had testified falsely to the court regarding the children and encouraged them to lie, according to a motion filed July 30 by Farber's attorneys Anne

Dranginis and Kelly Scott.

The court further found, the attorneys said, “an immediate and present risk of psychological harm to the children if they have unrestricted and unsupervised contact with the defendant (Fotis Dulos).

“It is in the minor children’s best interests that Mrs. Farber be awarded sole custody of the five minor children,” the motion said.

A date has not yet been scheduled for a judge to hear Farber’s request for sole custody, court staff said.

Attorney Rich Rochlin, representing Fotis Dulos in the divorce, was on vacation last week and declined to comment.

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