

## Judge threatens \$12M bond after items taken from Jennifer Dulos memorial

By Pat Tomlinson



Fotis Dulos, left, arrives with one of his attorneys, Chris La Tronica, for a hearing Thursday at state Superior Court in Stamford.

**N**orm Pattis said his client was already “on the edge financially” and a judge’s ruling on Thursday could push Fotis Dulos to the brink.

Judge Gary White ordered Fotis Dulos to be on strict home confinement after he removed

items from a memorial for his estranged wife who he is accused of killing.

The ruling will prevent Fotis Dulos from leaving his Farmington home for work. He has been on house arrest since being released this month on

“He had permission for each of the stops he made that day when he got to the front of the common area of his private property, he removed a few items that were taunting him,” Pattis said. “It was a technical violation and I would ask you not to remove his right to work. Mr. Dulos is a home builder and the sale of just one house could be finance altering for him.”

**\$6 million bond on charges of murder, felony murder and first-degree kidnapping in the May 24 death of Jennifer Dulos.**

White, who was filling in for Judge John Blawie, threatened to double his bond if Fotis Dulos violated the terms of his release again, pointing out he was previously warned about the battery running too low on the electronic device that is monitoring his movements.

Fotis Dulos had received court approval to go to the grocery store last Friday when he stopped at the memorial that was placed at the end of Jefferson Crossing, a private road consisting of homes his company developed.

Fotis and Jennifer Dulos lived there until she left for New Canaan with their five children when she filed for divorce in 2017.

Pattis admitted Fotis Dulos should not have stopped at the memorial, but told White his client deserved only a “stern admonishment.”

“He had permission for each of the stops he made that day when he got to the front of the common area of his private property, he removed a few items that were taunting him,” Pattis said. “It was a technical violation and I would ask you not to remove his right to work. Mr. Dulos is a home builder and the sale of just one house could

be finance altering for him.”

“He has strict requirements to follow,” White said. “He messed up one time. He messed up two times. If he messes up a third time, I’m going to raise his bond.”

Fotis Dulos has been in trouble financially and a \$2.5 million civil lawsuit filed by his mother-in-law, Gloria Farber, is pending a Hartford judge’s ruling. Farber is also foreclosing on his Farmington home and a bank is trying to seize a New Canaan property his company has been trying to sell.

The 7,000-square-foot home at 61 Sturbridge Hill Road was part of the Jennifer Dulos investigation after neighbors reported hearing loud bangs coming from the property the morning after the May 24 disappearance. Nothing connected to the disappearance was found on the property, according to search warrants unsealed last week.

In a sworn affidavit, Nicholas Gazetos, executive vice president of the Savings Bank of Danbury, said Fotis Dulos does not have “sufficient funds” to maintain the property. Gazetos said Fotis Dulos has asked the bank to pay utilities to keep the electricity and heat on, the court documents said.

Pattis said the defense is hoping to quickly go to trial, waiving his client’s right to a probable cause

hearing as Fotis Dulos pleaded not guilty Thursday to the latest charges.

“We discussed the pros and cons, and I received my client’s consent for the waiver,” Pattis said.

It was a change in strategy after Pattis said last week the defense was going to request a probable cause hearing.

Pattis is also calling for the state Supreme Court to “make haste” with its decision on the gag order that Blawie imposed in September.

“We would like to speak freely, but we are limited in what we can say,” Pattis said outside the courthouse following the hearing.

Pattis has contended his team has not been able to properly defend against accusations police have made in arrest warrants that have been released to the public.

Last week, 469 pages of search warrants in the case were unsealed for the first time since the investigation began eight months ago.

The documents outline how police believe Fotis Dulos, 52, and his former girlfriend, Michelle Troconis, 45, and his close friend and former lawyer, Kent Mawhinney, 54, allegedly conspired to kill Jennifer Dulos and clean up the crime.

Fotis Dulos and Troconis were charged last year with two counts of tampering with evidence and hindering prosecution. On the same day Fotis Dulos was charged with murder this month, Troconis and Mawhinney were charged with conspiracy to commit murder.

Troconis has been released on house arrest on \$1.5 million bond, while Mawhinney remains jailed in lieu of \$2 million bond.

According to arrest warrants, Jennifer Dulos was last seen on a neighbor's security camera at 8:05 a.m. May 24, returning to her Welles Lane home after dropping off her children at a nearby school.

Police believe Fotis Dulos was "lying in wait" and attacked her in the garage, the warrants indicate.

Fotis Dulos and Troconis were caught on video that night in Hartford dumping bags that were later determined to contain Jennifer Dulos' blood and clothing, according to arrest warrants.

Jennifer Dulos' blood was also found on the seat of a pickup truck belonging to an employee of Fotis Dulos, according to arrest warrants. Police say Fotis Dulos used the truck on the day his wife was killed, arrest warrants said.

The search warrants revealed that Fotis Dulos' 2015 black

Chevrolet Suburban was spotted on a residential security camera parked on Thurton Drive, a dead-end street about 600 feet from the backyard of Jennifer Dulos' home.

Police took 19 swabs from that vehicle, including ones from what appeared to be "bloodlike" stains, the warrants said.

Troconis and Mawhinney are each due in court on Feb. 20, while Fotis Dulos is scheduled to return on Feb. 28. ■