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NEWS RELEASE

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County Attorney's Office files charges against husband in 2010 homicide

Local & Federal authorities combine efforts with prosecutors to unravel decade old mystery

Saint Paul, MN – The Ramsey County Attorney's Office today charged Nicholas Firkus with one count of intentional Murder in the Second Degree in connection with the April 25, 2010 shooting death of his wife Heidi inside their Saint Paul home. At the time, Firkus maintained that his wife was shot by a burglar during a break-in of the couple's Saint Paul home. His next appearance in Ramsey County District Court will be July 1. Judge Kellie Charles ordered bail set at \$3 Million.

"Dedication and meticulous investigative work have led us to a reckoning with the justice system for Mr. Firkus," said Ramsey County Attorney John Choi. "My thanks go out to the Saint Paul Police Department, the FBI and the prosecutors in my office who worked tirelessly to bring this case before us today. Our hearts go out to the victim's family and friends who have patiently waited for answers to the events of that terrible day."

According to the complaint, on the morning of April 25, 2010, 911 dispatch received a frantic call from Heidi Firkus that someone was trying to break into the home on Minnehaha Avenue in Saint Paul. Less than a minute into the call, a gunshot can be heard, and the line went dead. Attempts to reconnect the call by 911 staff were unsuccessful. Approximately two minutes later, they received a call from a highly emotional Nicholas Firkus who states that an intruder shot both him and his wife.

Upon their arrival, Saint Paul Police found the front door ajar, a distinct odor of gunpowder inside the residence and Heidi Firkus lying dead in the kitchen with Nicholas Firkus' shotgun on the floor near the front entrance. Authorities removed Nicolas from the home by ambulance to address his wounds, but not before he gave them an initial recount of the incident, including a vague description of the assailant.

Both at the hospital and at the police station, Firkus filled in details from the moment he heard someone at the door, to the struggle just inside the front door with his shotgun to the first and second shots that killed Heidi and wounded Nicholas. He also provided authorities a more complete profile of the intruder: black, 6'1" or 6'2", dark hoodie drawn over his face, maybe wearing sunglasses, maybe wearing gloves.

“Every homicide is a tragedy. Every victim deserves justice. Every family that has had a loved one stolen from them deserves the truth. Today, after years of tenacious work by investigators and our law enforcement partners, we are one step closer to getting justice for Heidi and the truth for everyone who loved her—especially her mother, father and brothers,” said Saint Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell. “I’m proud of our team and thankful for our partners. Investigating homicides is incredibly taxing work. It can be hard. It can be difficult. It can be slow going. But together, we never quit. I couldn’t be more proud of the team, and I’m hopeful that this provides Heidi’s family with some sense of solace. We never forget and we never stop working.”

The investigation:

- Investigators learned from Nicholas that they had been foreclosed on and Sheriff lockout was scheduled for the next day at noon.
- Nicholas was personally served with foreclosure documents on April 30, 2009 and on June 4 of that same year, the house was sold at a Sheriff’s auction.
- Their bank account was overdrawn and was closed by the bank on January 8, 2010. They owed the bank \$1,736 at the time of Heidi’s death.
- An REI credit card had an outstanding balance of \$17,381.66, the majority of which Nicholas was responsible for charging.
- In emails between the couple in March and April 2010, Heidi asked Nicholas to address the repeat calls from creditors that she was receiving, and Nicholas assured her that he was dealing with the bank regarding alleged fraud on their account.
- Investigators did not uncover any evidence that Heidi knew about the bank debt, the foreclosure or that Nicholas had canceled their home and auto policies.
- Despite a reported life and death struggle just inside the front door, a small table in easy proximity was left completely undisturbed.
- No such struggle can be detected in the 38 second 911 call between Heidi and the dispatcher, yet the arrival of Saint Paul PD on scene during the 2nd call can be heard.
- One of the final email exchanges between the couple on Friday, April 23 where Heidi discusses plans with friends, Nicholas simply replies: “Oh, I’m ok with that as long as I can have you to myself tomorrow night.”

A complete case update can be found on the [RCAO Case Updates](#) page.

Note: Contact Dennis Gerhardstein for additional information.