



George W. Dumstorf Jr. is accused of bigamy in Florida and is accused of fraud in Louisville. He also claimed to be an Air Force general, which the military denies.

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Martha-Irene Gaunt Weed, left, married him in 2004, thinking that his first wife was dead.

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Julie Jones lived with Dumstorf for 20 years, not knowing he was married.

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Bigamy, fraud charges dog ex-Louisville man

For 20 years, Dumstorf reportedly juggled lives

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He stands accused in Florida of bigamy, for allegedly carrying on marriages to two women at once, during which time he proposed to a third.

Over 20 years, former Louisville businessman and educator George W. Dumstorf Jr. juggled three wives and a girlfriend, the women say, in what prosecutors call "a scheme to court single ladies ... and make money off of them."

To explain his frequent absences, he told the women, who didn't know each other, that he had a secret job at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, that he was an Air Force general, that he worked for the CIA.

None of it was true, according to spokesmen for those agencies.

"He was a great teller of stories," said Stephanie Dumstorf, his first spouse, a former teacher at St Gabriel Catholic School in Louisville.

Now George Dumstorf, 69, whose family owns an appliance company, The Trend Cos. of Kentucky, is in trouble in his hometown too.

According to an indictment unsealed Jan. 3 in U.S. District Court in Louisville, Dumstorf allegedly passed counterfeit certificates of deposit to Stock Yards Bank & Trust Co. as collateral for \$850,000 in loans.

The bank is suing him for fraud, as are two of his siblings, who allege that he looted their mother's estate in the amount of \$500,000 with a doctored power of attorney.

Dumstorf didn't respond to e-mails, faxes and requests for comment passed through one of his attorneys. He lives in a trailer in the woods 40 miles north of Tampa, according to his third wife, Martha-Irene Gaunt Weed.

He has pleaded not guilty to charges in Florida and Kentucky and denied the fraud allegations in the lawsuits. He faces a maximum of five years in prison if convicted on the bigamy charge and 30 years on the fraud charge. Trials are set for Feb. 15 and Feb. 28, respectively.

The accusations against Dumstorf have stunned his family, his ex-wives and former girlfriend, who say they've been left to wonder if he ever really cared about them.

"My world collapsed -- the sun rose and set with him," said Weed, a Tampa lawyer who married Dumstorf in 2004, a few years after representing him in his divorce from his second wife, Judy Howell, who says she didn't know about his marriage to first wife Stephanie Dumstorf until near the end of her own marriage.

George Dumstorf's younger brother, Joseph, president of The Trend Cos., said that he was flabbergasted to discover that his brother had any wives besides Stephanie, with whom he had seven children.

"I don't know my brother," Joseph Dumstorf said. "The person I thought I knew does not exist."

The first wife

Stephanie and George William Dumstorf Jr. met in Louisville in 1958, when they were in a club for Catholic college students. They married two years later.

George was a student at what then was Bellarmine College, where he later worked from 1965 to 1973 in a variety of posts, including assistant night school dean.

"I thought he was kind of full of himself, but a lot of people are," recalled former state Rep. Louie Guenther Jr., who once worked for Dumstorf at Bellarmine.

Stephanie, now a 69-year-old writing teacher in Melbourne, Fla., declined to be interviewed, saying only, "I'll write the novel when it is time."

But in a long deposition in a suit in which Weed is seeking an annulment of her marriage to Dumstorf, Stephanie described her 46-year relationship with him, saying he'd been a "fabulous dad" to their children.

She said he began in the 1960s leaving home for a week at a time, returning for a week, then leaving again.

He told her, she said, that he was commuting to Cape Canaveral, where he worked in a secret capacity in NASA's fledgling space program. She said he was "tweaking satellites" on Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean.

She said that both in Louisville and Melbourne, where the family moved in 1988, her husband would celebrate Christmas Eve with the family, then leave the next day, saying he had to fill in for other workers.

Yet she never saw any of his pay stubs or met any of his co-workers. And the one time he took her to Kennedy Space Center, she said, it was for an event open to the public -- a June 27, 1995, ceremony to mark the launch of NASA's 100th manned space flight.

She said he paid some of the family's bills over the years, while she paid others, using money from her teaching jobs.

Nearly 40 years into their marriage, she said, another woman surfaced and sued Dumstorf for divorce. But he claimed it was all a big mistake, that he'd never married anyone else, and she believed him.

He was very persuasive, she said.

A few years later, she saw that he'd marked another woman's birthday on his calendar -- on the same day he was leaving home. He claimed it was no big deal, she recalled, that he was just going to help some "poor children" who were visiting the woman's ranch.

The second wife

Dumstorf met the woman who would become his second wife in the 1970s, at the King Center, a Nelson County environmental camp for students he started and ran for a few years.

A divorced mother of three, Judy Howell and Dumstorf lived together, then moved to Florida and married Dec. 14, 1984. They settled in Dania, about 25 miles north of Miami.

"He was a real charmer," Howell, now 65, said in an interview.

She said he often would disappear for a while, then show up in a bomber jacket, saying he had been running test flights for the space program.

In 1999, Howell's daughter, Valerie Gaines, suspecting he was hiding something, initiated a computer search on Dumstorf, she said, and found property documents showing he was married to Stephanie and still owned a Florida home with her.

Gaines said her mother, who had filed for divorce from him that year, was devastated by the news: "She loved him dearly and trusted him."

Howell reported the allegation of bigamy to police, but Dumstorf insisted that he and Stephanie had divorced, and he was never charged, according to a Nov. 18 story in the St. Petersburg Times, which first reported the Dumstorf case.

Howell and Dumstorf divorced in 2000.

The third wife

Weed, Dumstorf's Tampa divorce lawyer, initially dismissed Howell's claims of bigamy, buying what she says now seemed to be a plausible explanation for the property records that showed he still owned a home with Stephanie.

Weed said she believed in Dumstorf, fell in love with him, and eventually they decided to marry.

But Weed, 12 years Dumstorf's junior, wanted an Episcopal church wedding, and the bishop insisted on proof that Dumstorf and Stephanie were divorced.

Weed said neither she nor Dumstorf could find the decree, but one day she received an e-mail, purportedly from one of Dumstorf's children, saying that Stephanie had died in a car accident in Haiti, where she was on a church mission.

Thinking Stephanie was dead, the bishop gave his blessing, Weed said, and she married Dumstorf on March 27, 2004, in Panama City, Fla.

"Gen." Dumstorf wore his Air Force dress uniform.

Weed said that over time, she lent her new husband money and signed for loans. She said she was proud of his military exploits, and passed along copies of articles about them that he supplied to her mother and friends, including attorney Ashley Myers, with whom she practiced.

Digging around on the Internet one day early in 2006, Myers said she found the originals of those articles, and none mentioned Dumstorf. He had doctored them by adding paragraphs about himself, Myers said.

Myers said that she soon learned something even more disturbing:

Stephanie was alive and teaching writing at a community college in Brevard County, Florida.

The girlfriend

Julie Jones, who owned a travel agency, said she assumed George Dumstorf was single when she met him in 1986 at a chamber of commerce meeting in Plantation, Fla., near Fort Lauderdale.

They started dating a few months later, and lived together for nearly two decades, though they never married.

He was attractive -- "a people person," Jones recalled. "I think everybody who ever met him was crazy about him."

He regaled her and her friends with stories, she said, about his tours of duty in Vietnam and about playing football at Notre Dame.

She said he told her that his first wife had walked out on him, leaving him with five children. She said he told her she couldn't meet his children or his parents because they were devout Catholics and estranged from him over the divorce.

She said she also never met any of his alleged colleagues at Cape Canaveral, but she didn't find that unusual given that it was 3 ½ hours to the north. She was an independent businesswoman, and didn't mind that he would disappear for weeks at a time, she said.

When she sold her travel agency, she said, he helped arrange the purchase of what appeared to be \$200,000 worth certificates of deposit with the Kennedy Space Center Credit Union.

Then, in December 2005, he suggested they should marry.

But in April 2006, Dumstorf's story began to unravel.

Jones' son, a computer engineer, discovered that Dumstorf had altered an article to say he'd retired from the Air Force.

When she confronted him and asked for her CDs back, he said it might take a while. "He said he'd have to get them from his chief of staff," she said, but he never produced them.

And when she called the credit union, a representative told her that federal credit unions don't even issue CDs. They call their version "share certificates," said credit union CEO Janice Hollar, who called Dumstorf's alleged counterfeits "pretty bad renditions."

Jones, now 63, said that she lost every penny of her retirement savings and has had to go back to work -- for the woman to whom she sold her travel agency.

She now believes she also wasted 20 years of her life.

"Did he love me? Did he love the other women?" she asked. "Those are things we will never know. But I have to assume now that he was just using us."

The 'careers,' 'colleges'

NASA says Dumstorf never worked for the agency. The Air Force said it has never had an officer named George Dumstorf. Even a spokesman for the CIA, which normally doesn't confirm or deny employment, said Dumstorf never worked for the agency.

The registrar at Notre Dame said Dumstorf never attended the university. Nor did he get an MBA from Indiana University, or finish a master's degree in education from the University of Louisville, both of which he has claimed to the Bellarmine alumni office, said spokesman John Spugnardi.