

## Tennessee Man Charged with Stealing Millions from George Jones' Widow

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In a shocking case of betrayal, Kirk West, a 58-year-old Tennessee man, faces charges of stealing over \$10 million in cash and cryptocurrency from Nancy Jones, the widow of country music icon George Jones. The allegations, detailed in court documents, paint a troubling picture of deceit and exploitation, with West accused of targeting a vulnerable woman for financial gain.

West was apprehended at Nashville International Airport, less than a day after the Franklin Police Department launched its investigation. According to an affidavit, Nancy Jones reported the theft on 23 July, alleging that West stole approximately £320,000 in cash and a Ledger cryptocurrency wallet from two safes in her Franklin home around 26 June. The wallet contained 5,534,307 units of XRP, valued at roughly £1.68 per token at the time, equating to nearly £9.3 million. By 25 July, the stolen cryptocurrency's value had surged to approximately £13.6 million. Authorities noted that West was one of only two people with access to the wallet's private key, the other being Nancy Jones herself.

Nancy Jones, who was married to George Jones from 1983 until he died in 2013, told police she suspected West, her long-term partner, of infidelity. On 26 June, she asked her granddaughter to secure her valuables, only to discover the cash and cryptocurrency missing. Court documents reveal that Jones evicted West from her home on 28 June, after which he allegedly promised to return £4 million of the stolen crypto but claimed that was all she would receive. With legal assistance, Jones recovered 5,051,102 XRP, but 483,205 units worth nearly £1.2 million remain unaccounted for.

West's history raises further red flags. Court records show that in 2013, shortly after George Jones' passing, West approached Nancy Jones under the guise of a property investor interested in her home. In an affidavit, Jones described how West's charm and offers of companionship gradually revealed his true circumstances: he was financially insolvent and homeless. Despite this, Jones allowed him to move into her residence, initially in a separate wing, before their relationship turned romantic in October 2013. Over the years, she funded their lifestyle, covering everything from daily expenses to luxury holidays and a Mercedes-Benz for West.

The affidavit further alleges that West has a pattern of targeting "wealthy, potentially vulnerable women." His criminal past includes a 2016 conviction for bank fraud, where he misrepresented himself as a real estate investor to secure loans from Reliant Bank. West pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud, agreeing to pay over £1.3 million in restitution. Nancy Jones reportedly covered these costs, believing West's promises of repayment, which never materialised. During his house arrest at her home, West allegedly positioned himself as a cryptocurrency expert, convincing Jones to invest in assets like XRP, Ethereum, and Dogecoin.

West also played a role in opening the George Jones Museum in 2015, though it closed in 2021 after surviving a 2020 bombing in Nashville. Now, with a £800,000 bond and a court

date set for 23 October, West faces serious consequences for the alleged theft of over £250,000 in assets. The case serves as a stark reminder of the risks posed by those who exploit trust for personal gain, leaving a trail of financial and emotional devastation.