

## Ex-Avon officer who pleaded no contest to child porn charges apparently hangs self - Chronicle-Telegram

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ELYRIA — A former Avon police officer on probation for child pornography and identity theft charges was found hanged in an Elyria apartment Monday in what police suspect was a suicide.

Elyria police Capt. Chris Costantino said police found the body of Michael Kish, 54, at 40 Chestnut St. about 6 p.m. Monday after Kish's sister and another person who knew him expressed concern about his welfare.

Costantino said Kish had recently lost a job and was worried about making his rent. He said there was no sign of foul play at the scene.

"There was a note, and it did appear to be a suicide," he said.

Kish has long maintained that he was innocent of the criminal allegations against him and that he had been a victim of a "witch hunt" by certain people within the Avon Police Department.

Police began investigating Kish after Avon police Officer Josh Stell was informed that a LorainCounty.com account in his name had been suspended for abusive posts. Stell had never set up an account, and police traced the account to Kish, who was accused of using Stell's email address and his wife's name as a password.

Kish's home was searched and his computer was seized. Investigators later discovered child pornography on the computer, although Kish's lawyers have long insisted that their client was unaware of the illegal material. They suggested the child pornography may have come from a computer virus that makes it appear as if child pornography was viewed on the machine.

Kish ultimately pleaded no contest to child pornography and identity theft charges, but his attorneys said the plea was only so they could appeal Lorain County Common Pleas Judge Raymond Ewers' decision to uphold the search warrant that Kish's lawyers wanted thrown out along with the evidence gathered during the search.

Ewers had concluded that there was "misleading and false" information used to obtain the warrant, but even if that was removed there was still enough evidence to justify the warrant.

Mike Duff, one of Kish's lawyers, said he had known Kish for years.

"It's sad," Duff said. "I truly believe he was innocent."

Kish's appeal will now be dismissed because of his death, Duff said.

*Contact Brad Dicken at 329-7147 or [bdicken@chroniclet.com](mailto:bdicken@chroniclet.com).*