

# St. Louis call tips police to first '06 murder

Peter Merlati  
charged with killing  
Debbie Kolb last  
Friday night

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A 37-year-old Jefferson City man who reportedly confessed to stabbing his girlfriend to death is in custody in connection with the first murder of 2006 in the Capital City.

Peter Merlati is charged with second-degree murder and armed criminal action in the killing of 48-year-old Debbie Kolb. He is being held on \$1 million dollar bond at the Cole County Jail.

The killing took place at Kolb's residence, 655 Oak Creek Ct., which is just off Tanner Bridge and not far from Oak Hill's Golf Course.

According to a probable cause statement released by police Tuesday morning, the killing happened Friday night.

The victim apparently died as the result of multiple stab wounds to the chest, the statement said, and a butcher's knife "of consistent size with

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the victim's wounds" was found in an adjoining room.

The statement said Merlati, who was arrested Monday night by St. Louis police, told investigators he had an argument with Kolb and that he stabbed her in the chest "multiple times."

Officers were called to the residence around 11:09 p.m. Monday after they got a call from St. Louis police.

Detectives there said they were told

by staff at Barnes Hospital that a man had informed them he had killed a woman in Jefferson City.

When Jefferson City police arrived on the scene, they could not get a response from anyone inside and had to force the front door open. Inside they found the body of Kolb lying on a bed with apparent stab wounds.

Police say Merlati and Kolb had been living together at this residence for about two years.