

Dead fugitive in New Mexico suspected in California beach killing

Holland youth, fiance were killed as they camped in 2004

By **ANDREA GOODELL**

The Holland Sentinel

Posted Jul 22, 2009 @ 01:37 PM

Last update Jul 23, 2009 @ 09:53 AM

Holland, MI — Delores Allen will wait for more evidence to be convinced a man killed in a New Mexico shootout is the man who killed her son, Jason Allen, 26, and his fiancée, Lindsay Cutshall, 22, on a Northern California beach five years ago.

Sonoma County, Calif., sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Tim Duke said 62-year-old Joseph Henry Burgess was at the top of a list of people authorities were looking at as suspects in the deaths of Allen and Cutshall, of Fresno, Ohio.

ON THE WEB:
jason-lindsay.blogspot.com/

Each was shot in the head while camping on an isolated Sonoma County beach on Aug. 18, 2004. The couple planned to be married in September 2004.

"We were surprised. This man has been on the run for 37 years. We know he was considered a person of interest in our case," said Delores Allen, of Holland Township. "At this point, anything is possible. We're not convinced he is the one. It needs to be checked out, and that's what they're doing."

Duke said Burgess also was wanted in Canada for the killings of a couple camping near Vancouver, B.C., in 1972. The two situations were remarkably similar, making police believe Burgess might be behind both of them.

Authorities believe he killed the unmarried couple because they were sleeping in the same tent.

"He thought it was his duty to take wrath on that couple up there," Delores Allen said.

"Our kids were innocent," she said, pointing to autopsy reports.

Authorities in New Mexico came to call Burgess the "Cookie Bandit" after a rash of break-ins at cabins over the past six years. The burglar often stole food, boots and other goods. They did not know his identity or possible connection to other cases until after he died.

Burgess was killed Thursday during a gunfight with Sandoval County sheriff's Sgt. Joe Harris during a stakeout in the Jemez Mountains. Harris also was fatally shot.

A Tuesday blog post by family friend, Janna Kuiphof, at jason-lindsay.blogspot.com says: "Well, I finally have some news to post! I'm not sure if this will turn out to be relevant to Jason & Lindsay's case or not, but we will soon find out!"

The couples' parents have made it a tradition to spend the anniversary of their children's deaths together. This year, however, Delores and Robert Allen had planned a trip to California. They wanted to speak with police about any progress made over the past year.

Now, Delores Allen said, they don't know what they'll be doing Aug. 15.

"The pain is always there. The loneliness of not having our kids around that will never end," she said.

If evidence proves Burgess was, in fact, the man who murdered her son and his fiancée, she said, she could find some closure in that.

However, she said, "It's only half of the mystery. The other half is why he did it, and that would never be answered."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Copyright © 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.
Original content available for non-commercial use under a [Creative Commons](#) license, except where noted.