

Man shot by police in New Mexico may have ties to the murder of a West Michigan couple

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(NEWSCHANNEL 3) – Police out west have shot and killed a suspect with possible ties to the murder of a West Michigan couple.

Joseph Burgess was killed in New Mexico during a recent shootout with police. After digging into his past, police think Burgess was involved in a string of murders, including the 2004 killing of a West Michigan couple.

Deputies shot and killed Burgess in Sandoval County, New Mexico, but not before he managed to shoot and kill Sergeant Joe Harris, a 27 year law enforcement veteran.

Days after his death, police identified Burgess as the suspected killer of a couple in British Columbia back in 1972. He's also suspected in the 2004 murder of a West Michigan couple.

Jason Allen, and his fiancée, Lindsay Cutshall, were found shot to death at a campsite in Jenner, that's on the northern California coast.

The couple had traveled to California from Zeeland to attend a Christian camp.

Police think Burgess may have murdered them, because signs and evidence show their murders closely resembled those of the British Columbia couple killed in 1972.

Newschannel 3 spoke to Jason Allen's mother on Wednesday.

Reactions are pouring in to Ottawa County with the news of the first possible big break in the murders in some five years.

Bob and Delores Allen from Zeeland admit they're still struggling with the loss of their son Jason, and now they're dealing with the reality that their loved one could have been killed by former cult member Joseph Burgess, a man who lived in the wild and apparently didn't like Christian couples camping together before they were married.

Jason and his fiancée were killed while sleeping on the beach in California.

The Allens say the couple were dedicated to their faith and were about to be married, they had just finished working at a church camp.

The family in West Michigan say they knew Burgess was a person of interest in the double murder in California for several years, but nobody could find him to question him about what happened. Now the family regrets not being able to see him brought to trial.

"It's kind of disappointing that he's dead now and we really won't know the whole story, hopefully if he is the person, we pray that they'll find something," said Bob Allen.

"We were very cautious that this is the guy, because we didn't know and wanted to get too excited until the detectives had a chance to go to New Mexico and find some concrete evidence," said Dolores Allen.

The Allen family is hopeful that such evidence will be found, but say they're not optimistic, considering that Burgess had been on the loose for so long.