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# SENTINEL ARCHIVES

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## Murders stun family, friends

*Zeeland man, fiancée found killed on remote California beach*

By **RICHARD HARROLD** and **KORTNI CHRISTIAN**

*Staff writers*

Bob and Delores Allen's first meeting with Chris and Kathy Cutshall wasn't the one they had planned.

Instead of meeting for the Sept. 11 wedding of their children, Jason Allen, 26, of Zeeland and Lindsay Cutshall, 23, of Fresno, Ohio, the parents met this week in Northern California when their children were reported missing from their jobs at a Christian adventure camp Monday.

Their worst fears were confirmed when two bodies found shot dead on a secluded beach about 75 miles north of San Francisco were identified Thursday night as Allen, a 1996 Zeeland High School graduate, and Cutshall.

"Most of all, we want to get a completely insane, cold-blooded killer off the beaches and off the streets," Chris Cutshall said Friday at a news conference in Placerville, Calif., near the camp where the couple worked.



TRAGEDY: Lindsay Cutshall, 23, of Ohio, and Jason Allen, 26, of Zeeland, were discovered about three miles north of Jenner on Wednesday afternoon, according to the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department.

*Family photo*



"Whoever did this is the exact opposite of Jason and Lindsay," he said.

An autopsy performed

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PARENTS: Kathy Cutshall, second from right, answers questions concerning the murder of her daughter, Lindsay, during a news conference held in Placerville, Calif., Friday. Kathy Cutshall and her husband, Chris, along with Allen's parents, Bob and Delores, left, spoke to reporter's about the loss of their children.

AP

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Friday confirmed that the young couple were each shot in the head at close range while they slept in their sleeping bags at Sonoma Coast State Beach, three miles north of Jenner, Calif., said officials of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department. Police said they may have been dead since Sunday or Monday.

Police found no evidence of robbery or sexual assault and have ruled out

the possibility of it being a murder-suicide.

Friends of Allen learned of his death Friday.

Alyn Goossen, director of student ministries at Immanuel Baptist Church in Holland, where the Allen family attended church, said Allen and Cutshall "were perfect for each other."

He said Allen and Cutshall were both expert river guides and loved camping and hiking.

"Jason loved being in creation," Goossen said.

Goossen was a volunteer youth leader for middle school students at Immanuel Baptist when he first crossed paths with Allen. He said Allen had a heart for God, and a great attitude toward life.



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Oars with various biblical passages

"He went to sleep, and now he's in heaven," said Felix Hart, who also attends Immanuel Baptist Church.

"He was a fine young Christian man," he said of Allen. "He just wanted to minister to young people." Hart said Allen eventually wanted to found a camping ministry.

California police hope to find some DNA evidence that may help them



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TRAGEDY: a Sonoma County Sheriff's helicopter flies over Sonoma Coast State Beach, north of Jenner, Calif., at the site where the bodies of Lindsay Cutshall, 23, of Ohio, and Jason Allen, 26, of Zeeland were discovered.

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written on them are shown leaning against whitewater rafts at Rock-N-Water, a Christian outdoor adventure camp in Coloma, Calif., in the Sierra foothills about 40 miles east of Sacramento, Calif., Friday, Aug. 20, 2004. On Wednesday the bodies of two of the camps counselors, Lindsay Cutshall, 23, and Jason Allen, 26, were found shot to death on a remote Sonoma County beach. Cutshall and Allen were missionaries who were spending the summer as whitewater rafting guides at the Rock-N-Water. The camp was closed for the season after the two disappeared and campers were sent to nearby camps.

identify a suspect and have impounded the couple's Ford Tempo to check for fingerprints.

"This is a very disturbing case," Sonoma County Sheriff's Lt. Dave Edmonds said. "It appears to be a terrible crime absent of motive, which is of concern to us."

The bodies were discovered by chance. They were spotted by a helicopter crew sent to rescue a 17-year-old boy who had fallen about 50 feet among the cliffs by the beach while trying to retrieve a purse his girlfriend dropped.

"We are scouring the coastline in hopes of developing leads," Edmonds said at a Friday press conference.

Allen and Cutshall were found side by side in separate sleeping bags about 20 yards from the surf on an almost inaccessible stretch of isolated beach littered with large pieces of driftwood and tree trunks.

"I understand there is a path, but it is difficult to get down to the beach," Edmonds said.

The couple was fully clothed in sleep wear. A Christian book and wedding literature was found among their belongings. Their car was found parked on a nearby bluff, and no valuables were missing, police said.

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Allen and Cutshall worked at the Christian adventure camp Rock-n-Water near Coloma, Calif., in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada about 40 miles east of Sacramento.

"Jason and Lindsay came to California this summer to do what they love to do-- work at a Christian adventure camp," Chris Cutshall said. "And they came for one reason only -- to serve the Lord by serving people, especially children and young people."

Allen and Cutshall met while they both attended Appalachian Bible College in Bradley, W.Va.

Friends say Allen camped all over the United States, even living in a bus at one point while working as a river guide in West Virginia.

After college, friends say Allen worked odd jobs to support himself when he wasn't leading rafting groups at various

rivers around the country.

After their marriage, Allen and Cutshall planned to honeymoon in Costa Rica before moving into a tent for the fall river season in West Virginia.

In addition to his parents, Allen is survived by two sisters, Elizabeth Allen, a 1999 Zeeland High graduate, and Vanessa Allen, who graduated from Zeeland last spring.

"He was a hero to them," Goosen said, "and they love him and miss him."

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat, The Placerville Mountain Democrat and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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