

# Second man admits he helped conceal double-murder

## ***Jeffery Cunningham enters a guilty plea for helping burn the bodies of Nick Kaiser and Josh Schaefer***

Statesman Examiner, By Jodi Miller

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Jeffery S. Cunningham, 25, plead guilty last Wednesday to helping burn the bodies of two men allegedly shot by John D. Grange on June 11 in the Crown Creek area west of Northport. He is charged with one count of first degree rendering criminal assistance. Cunningham, along with Dane M. Williams, 27, are accused of helping Grange cover up the murders of Nicholas Kaiser, a 21-year-old Pennsylvania native and Joshua Schaefer, a 21-year-old California resident, by loading their bodies into Kaiser's truck and helping to set fire to it.

Grange is accused of shooting the two after they were lured to a remote cabin to buy hallucinogenic mushrooms. The victims met up with the suspects at the June 10 Northport Barter Fair.

Kaiser's burned out vehicle and the scattered bones of the two victims were discovered by a hunter on Sept. 24. Investigators from the Steven's County Sheriff's Office discovered the cabin not far from where the vehicle was found.

Cunningham and Williams claim they did not know the murders were going to take place. They say they thought Grange was merely going to threaten the victims, and both say they were getting water at a nearby creek when they heard the shots of a .22 caliber rifle. Kaiser was believed to have 'narced" on associates of Grange. According to Schaefer's widow, Schaefer was visiting Kaiser, an old friend.

Based on a 1997 second-degree burglary conviction in New York, Cunningham faces a standard sentence of 12 to 14 months. The burglary charge is being investigated further, although Cunningham claims that it was a juvenile offense committed in 1993, though he did not receive his sentence until 1997. Standard range without the prior offense is six to 12 months.

"For all practical purposes, it means the difference of about a day," explained Stevens County Prosecutor Jerry Wetle. "The big difference is whether or not he'll go to prison or county jail."

As part of a plea bargain, Cunningham may be granted his wish to serve his sentence in the county jail.

The plea bargain also states that Cunningham and Williams are to testify against Grange at his trial, scheduled for Feb. 5. Neither will be sentenced until Grange's trial has concluded. Cunningham opted to remain in jail until the trial is finished. He will get credit for time served. Williams opted to post bail.

Wetle is recommending a 12-month sentence with on year of community supervision for both Cunningham and Williams.