



Third suspect in Stevens County killings arrested

By John Craig
Staff writer

COLVILLE, Wash. — The third of three suspects was arrested Tuesday in connection with the killing of two men whose bodies were found Sept. 24 in a burned-out car in northern Stevens County.

Sheriff Craig Thayer said John Douglas "Choey" Grange, 26, was arrested Tuesday in Portland on a warrant charging him with two counts of second-degree murder. Thayer said two other men were arrested earlier this month on warrants charging them with rendering first-degree criminal assistance to Grange.

Dane Matthew Williams, 27, was arrested last Wednesday near Vancouver, Wash., and Jeffrey Stephen Cunningham, 25, was arrested Nov. 3 in Broward County, Florida.

The victims, both 21, are believed to be Josh Schaefer, of San Diego, and Nicholas Dewayne Kaiser, who is from Waynesboro, Penn., but had recently been a transient in Western Washington. Kaiser's body was identified from dental records, but genet-

ic testing is pending to confirm Schaefer's identity.

Hunters found their bones, which had been scattered by animals, on Sept. 24 in and around a burned car on a logging road about 15 miles north of Colville. The car was near a cabin that sheriff's detectives believe the victims may have used.

Schaefer's common-law wife, Kimberly Kerpan, reported him missing when he failed to get in touch with her after a planned visit to the Northport Bartre Faire with Kaiser on June 10. She said she suspected foul play because of Kaiser's criminal associations.

Prosecutor Jerry Wetle offered this account of the crime in court documents used to charge the suspects and obtain arrest warrants:

Cunningham told sheriff's Sgt. James Caruso that he had been living at the cabin where Schaefer and Kaiser were killed. Cunningham said he was there to grow marijuana and smuggle the drug from Canada for collection by a Portland man identified as Rob Schultz.

Schultz told Cunningham that "there were some kids in San Francisco that wanted Nick (Kaiser) dead because he had cooperated with the law," Wetle wrote. So Cunningham passed the information to Grange when Cunningham spotted Kaiser at the Bartre Faire.

Cunningham said "the people in Portland" didn't want Kaiser to be at the Bartre Faire, and he thought "Choey would want to know." Cunningham said he also warned Kaiser to leave because he might be in danger, but "Nick wanted to meet with Rob Schultz to smooth things over."

On the morning of June 11, with Grange and Williams present, Cunningham called Schultz to find out whether he wanted a meeting. Schultz said "no way," and then talked to Grange for a few minutes. Later that day, Grange asked Cunningham to bring Kaiser to the cabin where Cunningham was living.

Cunningham said he brought Schaefer along with Kaiser, who believed he was going to buy some

illegal mushrooms. Cunningham told authorities he thought Grange — who was at the cabin along with Williams — intended only to intimidate Kaiser.

But, while Cunningham went to a nearby creek to get water to make dinner, Williams told him "Choey's

underneath the house and it's gonna happen right now." About 10 seconds later, Cunningham heard a half-dozen shots. He ran back to the cabin, where he found Grange holding a .22-caliber rifle while Kaiser and Schaefer lay dead in a fire pit. Grange told Cunningham and Wil-

liams to remove the bodies in Kaiser's truck and bury them in the woods, while Grange remained at the cabin to bury the rifle. Cunningham said he and Williams found the digging too hard, so Grange got some gasoline and set fire to the truck with the bodies inside.

