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NATION

Idaho case seen as motive to kill

Molesters slain in Washington

By Valerie Richardson
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Washington state man was arraigned yesterday on charges of murder in connection with the deaths of two convicted child molesters, whose names he found on the local sheriff's Web site.

Michael Anthony Mullen, 36, told authorities in Bellingham, Wash., that he was motivated by the case of Joseph Edward Duncan III, who is facing charges of murder and child abduction in Idaho.

"One possible reason was the case in Idaho," said Bellingham Police Lt. Craig Ambrose, who added that authorities interviewed Mr. Mullen for several hours. "That came up a few times as part of his thing."

Police said Mr. Mullen called 911 on Monday to confess to the Aug. 27 slayings of Hank Eisses, 49, and Victor Vasquez, 68, both convicted sex offenders who were sharing a house in Bellingham after serving time in jail.

Police arrested Mr. Mullen after he provided details that only the killer would know, such as the caliber of the weapon and that each man was shot once in the head, a department statement said.

"Mullen also said that he had planned the murders for some time and that on July 13, 2005, he had accessed the Whatcom County Sheriff's sex-offender Web site, and from that selected at least one of the two victims," the statement said.

The Web site gives the names, addresses and photos of Level III sex offenders, who are considered the most likely to offend again. Sex offenders are required to register with local authorities, and posting their names and whereabouts is a common practice for many law-enforcement agencies.

The Idaho case drew national attention to the risks associated with released sex offenders. Duncan, who has a history of child molestation, is accused of killing three persons in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, so he could kidnap two children, Shasta and Dylan Groene, for sex.

Duncan was captured July 2 at a Denny's restaurant in Coeur d'Alene with 8-year-old Shasta. The body of her brother Dylan, 9, later was found in Montana.

The two men killed in Bellingham were released about two years ago after serving time for child molestation. Eisses was convicted in 1997 of raping a 13-year-old boy, and Vasquez was convicted in 1991 of molesting several relatives.

Mr. Mullen mailed letters to several local press outlets threatening to kill sex offenders, police said. The Bellingham Herald and KING-TV, the local NBC affiliate, reported receiving a letter in which the author threatened the lives of other child molesters.

Mr. Mullen listed no permanent address but told police he had lived in Whatcom County most of his life. Located just south of the Canadian border, Bellingham lies on the Washington coastline about 90 miles north of Seattle.