

ISLAND COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
GREGORY M. BANKS

David L. Jamieson, Jr., *Chief Civil Deputy*

Deputy Prosecutors
Eric M. Ohme
Colleen S. Kenimond
Daniel B. Mitchell
David E. Carman
Erin M. Lewis

Michele M. Graaff, *Office Administrator*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: Greg Banks, Island County Prosecuting Attorney 
DATE: July 11, 2010
RE: Peggy Thomas Charged As Accomplice In 2003 Murder Of Russel Douglas and
Arrested in San Juan County, New Mexico

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On July 6, 2011, we charged Peggy Thomas as an accomplice in the 2003 premeditated murder of Russel Douglas. Superior Court Judge Alan Hancock found there was probable cause for the charge, and ordered that an arrest warrant be issued with bail set at \$5 million. On Saturday, July 9, the San Juan County, New Mexico fugitive task force located Ms. Thomas and took her into custody.

Ms. Thomas is the second person charged in the death of Russel Douglas. Douglas was found shot in the head in his car at a remote location on South Whidbey Island two days after Christmas in 2003. Russel Douglas was 32 years old at the time. Mr. Douglas had two young children.

James Huden was charged with Douglas' murder in 2005. Huden had been a fugitive from justice for nearly seven years, until he was apprehended in Veracruz, Mexico on June 9, 2011. Huden is now awaiting trial in the Island County Jail.

Since Huden's arrest, Island County Detective Mark Plumberg has been in contact with Huden's wife in Florida. Mrs. Huden told Detective Plumberg that both her husband and Peggy Thomas admitted to her that Thomas was involved in planning and carrying out the murder. Fingerprint evidence links Thomas to the murder weapon. We allege that Thomas helped to lure Russel Douglas to the remote location of the murder knowing that he would be killed there. More details of the investigation are described in the charging documents located on the Prosecutor's web page: www.islandcounty.net/prosecutor.

Peggy Thomas is 45 years old. She is formerly of Langley, Washington on Whidbey Island. At the time of her arrest she was living in Navajo Dam, New Mexico. Ms. Thomas is a former Ms. Washington. She has been a person of interest in the case since Huden was identified as the primary suspect. If convicted she faces a standard range sentence under Washington law of 300 – 380 months in prison. To the best of our knowledge, she has no criminal record.

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The circumstances of Ms. Thomas' arrest are not known to us. Detective Plumberg enlisted the assistance of San Juan County, New Mexico authorities after the warrant was issued on July 6th. Her apprehension on Saturday came after five days of tracking her. It may be several weeks before she is returned to Washington State. If she challenges her extradition it could be longer.

This is a very important case to us, and to the people of Island County. The premeditated killing of another human being is a wicked act in any community. It is especially shocking in a community such as ours where murders are extremely rare. I am gratified that these much delayed proceedings are now underway, and that Russel Douglas and his family may now get the justice they deserve. I look forward to presenting our case to a jury.