



August 6, 2010

SUSPECT INDICTED IN COLD CASE MURDER

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and Florida Department of Law Enforcement today announce a Grand Jury Indictment in connection with the murder of a Niceville teenager twenty-two years ago.

54 year old John R McMaster-Wade, currently serving a life sentence at the Taylor Correctional Institution for a 1990 Kidnapping, Sexual Battery and Lewd and Lascivious on child under the age of 16, will now be charged with the 1988 murder of Ulai Sookruetai. The 18 year old Niceville High School student disappeared from a Niceville convenience store on September 13, 1988. Her body was discovered approximately two months later on the Eglin Reservation.

McMaster-Wade was identified as a suspect early on in the initial investigation through a Crime Stoppers tip. OCSO Investigators and Special Agents with the FDLE continued to work the case for many years.

Approximately 18 months ago, FDLE began a Cold Case Review Team consisting of special agents from the FDLE, Assistant State Attorney's from the First Judicial Circuit, Police Agencies, and Sheriff's Offices within the Northwest Florida Region. The team brings together investigators from different agencies, jurisdictions, and experiences, which has been a tremendous help in getting new perspectives on these cases. The team chose the Sookruetai case as one of the first to review. Its work paid off. On Monday, August 2, 2010, Assistant State Attorney John Molchan presented evidence in the case to the Grand Jury. The panel returned an indictment on a first degree murder charge.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office this week informed Ulai's mother and step-father, who currently reside outside of the U.S., of the grand jury indictment. They say they have waited a long time and are blessed with the outcome. They thanked all law enforcement who continued investigating Ulai's murder, saying it gave them new hope.

McMaster-Wade will be transferred from the Taylor Correctional Institution in Perry, Florida to the Okaloosa County Jail in Crestview where he will be served with his indictment.

Ulai Sookruetai was featured in 2008 on the FDLE's Cold Case Playing Cards, Deck #3, which were distributed to 65,000 inmates in all 67 county jails and to 141,000 supervised offenders serving on state probation.

For further information, please contact Assistant State Attorney John Molchan at 850-595-4200.

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