



West Virginia Medical Examiner Dr. Irwin Sopher, foreground, is among the group working at the New Vrindaban Hare Krishna commune Tuesday to exhume what is believed to be the body of Krishna devotee Charles St. Denis. Daniel Reid, convicted of voluntary manslaughter

in connection with the St. Denis murder, directed law enforcement officers to the grave site. Sopher visited New Vrindaban in November to exhume another body that has yet to be identified.

(N-R Photo — Nelson Hooker)

Possible St. Denis' Remains Are Discovered in Stream Bed Grave

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After more than three years of investigating and searching, West Virginia State Police Tuesday discovered what they think is the remains

of Hare Krishna devotee Charles St. Denis in a stream bed at the New Vrindaban Hare Krishna community in Marshall County.

Aided by the Marshall County Prosecutor's office, state police started digging Monday evening but did not find the remains until 12:30 p.m. Tuesday. The grave was found on a wooded hillside near the New Vrindaban Administration Building.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated Krishna matter, logos from all National Football League, United States Football League, Major League Baseball and many Division I college teams were seized in a raid Monday morning at the New Vrindaban Hare Krishna Community, fed-

eral authorities revealed this morning.

According to Tom Burgoyne, special agent in charge of the FBI's Wheeling office, federal authorities will be "getting in touch with the major universities and colleges and the professional teams" to obtain the legal data regarding the copyright of the confiscated items.

Burgoyne said he could not estimate the value of the items until such contact is made; however, an informed federal source close to the investigation said this morning that in one two-month period alone, the Krishna community allegedly raised about \$1 million selling the merchan-

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dise.

According to this source, federal authorities hauled away "several tractor-trailers" filled with clothing items and bumper stickers, along with financial records and equipment concerning Krishna fund-raising activity.

Although Monday's search turned up possible violations of federal copyright and trademark importation statutes, federal authorities said this morning that other charges — including customs and tax violations — could be brought against the Krishna Community.

Krishna spokesman Gadadhad Das said the community was unaware that selling the hats and stickers might violate copyright laws. He added that several organizations market the items at sporting events and questioned why only the Hare Krishnas are being singled out.

Meanwhile, regarding the discovery of the remains on Krishna property Tuesday, Marshall County Prosecutor Thomas White indicated that Daniel Reid, who was accused in the 1983 St. Denis murder, was allowed to plead guilty Monday to voluntary manslaughter as part of a plea bargaining deal in Marion County Circuit Court.

White said Reid, a former Krishna devotee and New Vrindaban resident, was instrumental in locating the remains.

"He helped bury him, so we are relatively sure that it is the body of St. Denis," White said.

White had said earlier that he entered into an agreement with Reid after it became clear that Reid was not the mastermind behind St. Denis' death.

Ravenna, Ohio, resident Thomas Drescher, 37, was convicted of murder in the St. Denis case in Preston County Circuit Court in December and sentenced to life in prison.

White said Drescher's conviction was only the second time in West Virginia history that a man was found guilty of murder when the state could not produce the victim's remains.

Stating that St. Denis was murdered in what was then Reid's yard, White said Reid and Drescher then took the body to the stream and buried it.

Tuesday, a state police officer said Drescher and St. Denis apparently blocked the flow of water and then buried the body in the stream bed. He said they then let the stream resume its natural course, concealing the shallow grave.

Explaining that the body was doubled over and placed in a small hole-like grave, White said that a recent search for the grave site came within 10 feet of the stream, where the remains were found.

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Dr. Irvin Sopher arrived at New Vrindaban Tuesday afternoon and began exhuming the skeleton, which White said is intact.

White did not say when Sopher's report on the remains will be finished.

White did indicate, however, that Reid will testify before the federal grand jury currently meeting in Elkins. That grand jury, which is investigating activities at New Vrindaban, was empaneled in September.

White refused to comment about the possibility that the leaders at New Vrindaban knew about the murder or the grave.

Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, spiritual leader of the Krishna Community, was in St. Louis for a speaking engagement and was unavailable for comment. However, the Swami had stated earlier that he had no knowledge of the St. Denis murder and said he wasn't convinced that St. Denis was dead, calling him a wanderer who was capable of showing up at any time.

Drescher also is charged with murder in the death of Steve Bryant, 35, a dissident Hare Krishna member who had waged a verbal battle against the community and its leaders. Bryant was shot to death on May 22, 1986, while sitting in his parked van in Los Angeles. Bryant had alleged that Krishna leaders were involved in child abuse, drug dealing and other crimes.

Another body found at the community just as Drescher's trial for St. Denis' murder began has not been identified.

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