

Suspect may end extradition fight

BELLINGHAM (AP) — John K. Peel, charged in the slaying of eight people aboard a fishing boat in Alaska two years ago, may agree to waive extradition and return to Alaska voluntarily for trial, his lawyer told a Whittier County Superior Court judge Wednesday.

In a hearing before superior Superior Court Judge Dave Nichols, Peel's lawyer, Michael Tario, said such a decision would be contingent on the recovery of documents drawn up by Alaska authorities.

"If everything is in order, we may just go to Alaska because he's outside of there," said Tario. "We're not here to throw a bunch of chewing gum in the cog."

Another hearing is scheduled for Nov. 7.

Peel did not attend Wednesday's hearing. A court commissioner had earlier granted a request allowing Peel to exercise his right not to be present at court hearings. Nichols said he would grant a hearing if necessary to ensure a fair trial.

Tario said Nichols has not yet received documents he is entitled to from Gov. John Spellman's office. Spellman has signed a warrant ordering Peel's return to Alaska.

Whittier County Prosecuting Attorney Dave McEwen said a new Alaska fugitive warrant was served on Peel in the Whittier County Jail Tuesday because Tario has indicated he planned to challenge the original warrant because it was issued before Peel was indicted by a grand jury on eight counts of murder.

Tario signed the new fugitive warrant has made "one of my more

important motions moot."

Peel, 24, was arrested Sept. 18 in Bellingham on a warrant issued by Bethel, Alaska, authorities in the slaying of eight Washington residents on the party motor investor schooner of the Big Fish near Craig, Alaska.

He was later named by a grand jury in Alaska for eight counts of murder in the case.

Spellman signed a governor's warrant Sept. 14 authorizing Peel's extradition to Alaska. Spellman, who immediately approved Alaska's request for extradition soon receiving the Alaska warrant, recently refused to consider a reversal of his decision.

Peel has remained in the Whittier County Jail since his arrest with bail set at \$1 million.

Alaskan state district attorney Jeff Allen here said Peel's challenge of extradition involved only the recovery of legal grounds.

Peel is scheduled to be arraigned the day after he returns to Alaska before state Superior Court Judge Thomas Schab.

Tario has been to Alaska to set up an Alaskan defense team.

Peel is accused of murdering investor owner and skipper, Mark Coulthart, his wife, Irene Hudson Coulthart, both 29, their daughter Kimberly Lynn, 3, their son Adam Jr., 4, crewman Dean Moon and Jerome Brown, both 19, all of Bethel. Mark's cousin, crewman Michael Rosehart, 19, of Bellingham, and crewman Cliff Heyman, 18, of San Rafael, Calif.

Peel also is charged with setting the investor afloat after the killings.

Ecologists neutral in governor race

SEATTLE (AP) — The Washington Environmental Political Action Committee has decided to be neutral in the governor's race, saying that both incumbent Republican John Spellman and Democratic challenger Booth Gardner could be "excellent governors for our environment."

The committee is the political arm of the Washington Environmental Council.

Both candidates have the potential to be excellent governors for our environment," Steve Spitzer, chairman of the committee, said in a press release.

The Sierra Club, another large environmental organization, endorsed Gardner on Tuesday, the first time that group has backed a candidate in a governor's race in Washington.

Padden-Kinnure

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Know" bill that came before the legislature last year, saying it was a nightmare that had gravitated that would be counterproductive to creating new jobs.

While he supports the concept "absolutely," Kinnure says he would have to study any proposals from the House before supporting them.

One of Kinnure's major concerns is the dumping of nuclear waste at the Hanford Reservation and the transport of that waste through the state — especially the route through Interstate 90 in the 4th District.

"We simply have to get pressure on the federal government to change its policies," he says. "I'm frightened by what's going on."

Although Padden is not vocal on the issue, he doubts anyone wants Washington to be the country's nuclear dumping ground. And he believes other states have an obligation to develop their own sites.

"I don't think you can flat turn the trucks away," Kinnure says. "The U.S. Supreme Court overruled the state's authority to ban nuclear-waste storage based on interstate commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution."

"It's our state's uncomfortable as the decision for them," says Kinnure. "and I think that's about 42 percent of the vote in the 1st primary, admits he has an "uphill battle."

"Any incumbent's difficult to beat — even though I believe we're in some serious trouble, which is not as good a challenger."

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