

# Three killed in Moscow, shooter in custody

Motive of suspect John Lee unknown



## Anthony Kuipers/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

A Moscow man is in custody after allegedly shooting and killing three people Saturday afternoon in Moscow before leading local police on a high-speed chase.

Pullman Police, with the assistance of Whitman County Sheriff's deputies and Washington State Patrol troopers, took 29-year-old John Lee into custody after he led police on a 24-mile pursuit and crashed his vehicle north of Colfax on U.S. Highway 195.

According to Moscow Police, Lee is suspected of killing his landlord and Moscow businessman David Trail, 76, in the office of the apartments Trail owns at 303 E. Third St. in Moscow. He also allegedly shot and killed Arby's restaurant manager Belinda Niebuhr, 47, at the restaurant located on Peterson Drive. His third alleged victim, his 61-year-old adoptive mother Terri Grzebielski, was killed at her home at the 400 block of Veatch Street.

Trail was declared dead at Pullman Regional Hospital. Niebuhr was declared dead at Gritman Medical Center.

Also injured in the assault was Seattle resident Michael Chin, 39, who was first taken to Gritman and later flown to a Spokane hospital. He was listed in critical condition after being shot in the arm and leg at Trail's office, and was the man who first alerted police of a shooting at 2:31 p.m.

"He was talking with David Trail to do some office work, and he was just in the office when the shooter came in and immediately started shooting," said Moscow Police Chief David Duke at a Saturday press conference.

Duke said Sunday that Chin was taken out of the intensive care unit and is doing better, according to Chin's family.

"His condition has improved," Duke said.

Lee was initially taken to Whitman Hospital in Colfax following the crash before being booked into Whitman County Jail. He allegedly used a handgun in the shootings.

According to The Associated Press, investigators found two semi-automatic pistols, a revolver, a shotgun and a rifle in his vehicle, along with a laptop computer.

Pullman Police tried to stop Lee's 2009 Honda Fit as he was heading west on the Moscow-Pullman Road, but Lee allegedly sped away from the officer and led Pullman Police, Colfax Police and Whitman County Sheriff's deputies in a high-speed chase. According to Pullman Police, Lee drove in excess of 100 miles per hour before his vehicle rolled near mile marker 47.

During a Saturday evening press conference, Duke said police do not believe there are any additional victims.

Duke said the shooting at Arby's was reported while police were on scene at Trail's office. He said it was reported that Lee walked into the restaurant and asked for Niebuhr and then allegedly shot her, Duke said.

Duke told the AP that Lee's parents ate at the restaurant and knew the manager well, but it's not clear whether Lee did as well.

After Lee was identified as the suspect, Duke said, police began checking his acquaintances, which led them to investigating Grzebielski's residence, where she was found dead.

Police are still investigating Lee's relationship with the other victims and a possible motive.

"At this point, we're not sure exactly what the motive is," he said. "It's currently in the preliminary stages of the investigation, so there won't be any conclusions at this point made until we identify additional witnesses and have a chance to talk to them."

While few details were available on Lee's background, Duke told the AP that Lee had been adopted at birth, and he recently returned to Moscow after living for a few years in the Midwest.

Moscow Police are working with Pullman Police and the Whitman County Sheriff's Office in the investigation and to retrieve search warrants to investigate Lee's vehicle and residence.

Moscow Police have issued an arrest warrant for John Lee in order to extradite him to Moscow, Duke said. The arrest warrant includes charges for three counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted first-degree murder.

Idaho State Police and Latah County Sheriff's Office have volunteered to help in the investigation.

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