

# Trail-slayings fugitive refuses to waive extradition hearing

CONWAY, S.C. (UPI) — A fugitive accused of killing two Maine hikers on the Appalachian Trail in Virginia refused to waive extradition Tuesday and was put into a cell where he ate a full meal and spent the day reading magazines, officials said.

Randall Lee Smith, 27, of Pearisburg, Va. chose to go through formal proceedings to return him to Virginia for prosecution, assistant solicitor L. Morgan Martin said.

"Since he refused to waive his right to an extradition hearing, the matter must now be settled by the governors' offices in Virginia and South Carolina," Martin said. "That will probably

take several days."

Smith was named in FBI warrants with illegal interstate flight to avoid prosecution in the stabbing and shooting of Laura S. Ramsay and Robert Mountford Jr. Both were 27-year-old counselors at the Homestead Project, an Ellsworth, Maine home for disturbed children.

Authorities found their bodies May 30 and 31 in Giles County, Va., stuffed into sleeping bags covered loosely with dirt and leaves near a bloody wooden shelter on a rugged section of the trail.

Smith, whose abandoned truck was found in nearby Myrtle Beach June 8 with a note in it allegedly linking

him to the killings, was captured Monday at a litter-strewn, makeshift campsite in a heavily wooded area on the outskirts of the popular beach resort.

His capture about 15 miles southwest of Conway by police and FBI agents ended a nationwide manhunt that began when the illegal flight warrants were issued June 12 in Roanoke, Va. An FBI spokesman said Smith had been lurking at the wooded site for about two weeks.

Wearing cutoff khaki pants, a T-shirt and tennis shoes when caught, the suspect had changed into faded dungarees and another shirt by the time he was taken from Myrtle

Beach for a meeting with Phillip Sasser, a court-appointed attorney.

Guards led Smith into the Horry County Courthouse in handcuffs, according to Sheriff M.L. Brown Jr.

"He seemed to be nonchalant," the sheriff said.

After the meeting deputies took Smith, a former welder at a machinery plant in Giles County where he lived with his mother, to the county jail. No bond was set for his release.

Jailer French Collins said the suspect "was eating good. He had a regular lunch like we feed all the prisoners. There was ham and rice, tea to drink, a biscuit and some garden peas. Then he just sat down on his bunk and began reading magazines."

Collins said he spoke briefly with Smith, who "acts like he's got a memory lapse or something. He says 'They say I'm from Virginia, but I don't know.'"



UPI photo

Randall Lee Smith charged with the murders of two hikers on the Appalachian Trail a month ago, is escorted from a meeting with his court appointed attorney Tuesday, in Conway, S.C.