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FEB. 28, 1983

Police say woman fabricated story in 'bizarre' case

VANCOUVER, Wash. -- A couple will enter pleas Friday in a case involving a woman who authorities now believed falsely claimed she was abducted, assaulted and raped.

Superior Court Thomas L. Lodge today continued the bail for the couple in setting a 1:30 p.m. Friday arraignment appearance.

Clark County sheriff's chief criminal Deputy Bob Songer called it 'the most bizarre case I've come across' in 13 years of law enforcement work.

Sandra K. Thomas, 44, Vancouver, and her husband, David, 47, faced arraignment today in Superior Court on multiple charges, including fabricating information, authorities said.

They were arrested Friday and held in the county jail, with her bail set at \$42,000 and his at \$15,000, deputies said.

Songer said six law enforcement agencies in two states spent at least \$250,000 in investigating the case and protecting the couple since the initial report was received.

Mrs. Thomas claimed she was abducted and raped on Jan. 18, 1982. She and her husband also alleged the woman was similarly kidnapped and sexually assaulted in March and December of last year by one of the individuals who first abducted her.

'Mrs. Thomas has also reported numerous threats of harm and death to her and her family,' Songer said.

'At the result of an extensive, yearlong investigation by the Clark County sheriff's office and the Vancouver Police Department, we now believe most, if not all, the information provided to us by Sandra and David Thomas was either fabricated or is untrue.

'At this point in our investigation, we just don't have a clear motive.'

Songer said the investigation also included the Washington state and FBI crime laboratories, the Portland Police Bureau and Washington County Sheriff's Department in Oregon.

'We've just put in an untold amount of man-hours on this thing, and we've exhausted hundreds of leads,' Songer said.

He said that officers entered into the case with 'an open mind' but now intend to pursue the Thomases for allegedly fabricating information 'as vigorously as we would have pursued the suspect (in the rape accusations).'

Mrs. Thomas was accused of five counts of forgery, seven counts of tampering with physical evidence, six counts of obstructing a public servant, seven counts of false reporting, one count of reckless endangerment, one count of unlawful use of a firearm in a prohibited area and two counts of first-degree theft, authorities said.

The theft accusations were in connection with the alleged theft of police services, while the reckless endangerment and firearms counts stemmed from a shot reportedly fired into the couple's home, officials said.

Thomas was accused of one count of reckless endangerment, one count of false reporting, one count of unlawful use of a firearm in a prohibited area, one count of tampering with physical evidence, two counts of tampering with a witness and two counts of first-degree theft, deputies said

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