

Murder on Thomas Ridge Road

Written by Debbie Gregory
Tuesday, October 29, 2013



At 2:49 p.m. on Friday afternoon, October 25, a 911 call was received by Macon County emergency personnel of a dead body located around the 200 block of Thomas Ridge Road. The Macon County Sheriffs Office responded to the scene.

Thomas Ridge Road is divided between Macon and Smith Counties and according to Macon County Sheriff Mark Gammons upon arriving at the scene he realized the body was approximately a quarter of a mile into Smith County.

“When I arrived at the site along with my detectives, I quickly realized the crime scene was only a short distance out of my jurisdiction,” said Sheriff Mark Gammons. “I immediately turned the investigation over to Sheriff Steve Hopper and the Smith County Sheriffs Department, however we remained at the scene and offered our assistance. The TBI was also called to Thomas Ridge Road.”

According to the TBI, the body of 29-year-old Dawn Duke, of Carthage, was discovered lying along Thomas Ridge Road. The victim had been stabbed multiple times in the chest area and suffered trauma to the face.

Eddie West, of the Carthage Courier, told the Macon County Chronicle that Duke’s body was discovered by a Pleasant Shade resident while he was on his way to mow grass near where the victim’s body was found.

During the course of the investigation, three TBI agents along with local law enforcement personnel managed to identify the victim, who didn’t have any identification with her, and place murder suspects 42-year-old Stephone Berry and 38-year-old Melinda Bush in custody.

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West also said that the trio were supposedly friends until recently.

The TBI has charged both individuals, of Pleasant Shade, with first degree murder because they each claim that they other committed the crime.

A \$50,000 bond was set for Melinda Bush and bond was set at \$100,000 for Stephone Berry.