

## Whiting expected to plead guilty to 2004 murder of Bend woman

by Cheryl McDermott

Craig Allen Whiting, one of two men charged with the 2004 murder of Bend resident 21-year old Nicole "Nikki" Marie Hutchings, is expected to plead guilty this afternoon in the circuit court of the State of Oregon for Deschutes County presided by Judge Sullivan.

Nikki Hutchings (left) disappeared in 2004, and her remains were found in a shallow grave in March, 2007. Craig Allen Whiting (right - DCJ photo) is expected to plead guilty of her murder in court today. Hutchings' remains were found in March 2007 in a shallow grave in a remote area on Forest Service land southeast of Sunriver, Bend Police Captain Kevin Sawyer reported.

Hutchings was last seen about 7:30 p.m. November 1, 2004, at her home in the 63200 block of NE Gallop Court in Bend. She was 21-years old at the time of her disappearance.

Information gleaned from follow-up investigation pointed to two suspects responsible for Hutchings' death " Loren Allen Bowers, 37, of 19470 Lone Cow Drive, and 26-year old Craig Allen Whiting of 5475 SW Lynx Lane. Both men were charged with aggravated murder, murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and kidnapping.

Bowers pleaded guilty in December.

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