

Kidnappers Send Cote, Other Hostage Fingers To US

Thursday, March 13, 2008 07:44 AM - WBEN Newsroom



(WBEN/AP) - Kidnappers in Baghdad have sent the U.S. Government five severed fingers , four of which belong to abducted security workers, including Williamsville native Jonathon Cote.

The fingers were sent to US officials in Iraq last month, and have since been identified as belonging to Cote and three other guards kidnapped in Nov. 2006.

Cote, 25, and the others-- Paul Reuben, 41, Joshua Munns, 25, and Bert Nussbaumer, 26, are employees of Crescent Security Group, a military contractor providing security to convoys in Iraq and elsewhere through the region. A fifth finger, from computer specialist Ronald Withrow, was also sent. Withrow was abducted in Jan of 2006. Cote's team leader with Crescent, John Young, was also abducted, but has not been linked to the body parts.

It is not known whether the fingers were taken from dead bodies or while the men were alive, according to a US official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Families of the victims were informed last month that some fingerprint evidence was recovered, the Washington Post reported Thursday.

The managing partner of the Crescent group, was quoted by the Post as saying he still thinks the hostages are alive.

"The fact is, what reason would they have to kill them, first and foremost?" he said. "And no one has found any bodies, you know? All the information we have tends us to believe that they are alive."

Copyright © 2006. NewsRadio 930 WBEN. All Right Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

[> Contact Us](#) > [Terms of Service](#) > [Privacy Policy](#)