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Fugitive Bainbridge woman now in Kitsap custody

Port Orchard, Wash. – The fugitive Bainbridge Island woman who had been in hiding for more than three years was turned over into the custody of the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, today, and has made an initial appearance in court.

Juliette Cybelle Gilbert, 37, arrived at Kitsap County Jail around 11:30 a.m. for booking on an outstanding warrant of arrest for custodial interference, 1st degree. She had been arrested in New Zealand April 8 and transported to the U. S., under escort, April 13. Upon arrival in San Francisco, she was met by a Kitsap County Sheriff's deputy and detective, and subsequently turned over into the custody of San Francisco Police Department for intermediate housing and eventual transfer up to Washington.

During her arraignment shortly after 3:00 p.m. before The Honorable Sally Olsen, Kitsap County Superior Court Judge, Gilbert entered a plea of not guilty to the charge specified in the warrant. Gilbert was represented by counsel. After listening to a brief oral argument from the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office, Judge Olsen set Gilbert's bail amount at \$250,000. Following her court appearance Gilbert was escorted back to the jail, by Sheriff's corrections officers, for housing.

On or about April 3, 2002, Juliette Gilbert disappeared from Bainbridge Island with her son, Sky Thomas Gilbert (then age 6), after failing to return Sky to his father, as designated by a court-ordered parenting plan, after a day's visitation and attendance at a birthday party. Sky's father, Roby Gilbert, and Juliette Gilbert are divorced.

Following an initial investigation, Juliette Gilbert was charged in Kitsap County Superior Court with custodial interference, 1st degree on April 12, 2002, and the warrant for her arrest was issued. She was subsequently charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution in U. S. District Court, Tacoma, a month later.

Although the Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies spent thousands of man-hours attempting to find Juliette and Sky, all leads proved futile until this past January when both mother and son were found to be living in Welcome Bay, New Zealand, in the residence of Juliette's then boyfriend, Craig Henwood.

Henwood notified New Zealand civil authorities when Juliette and Sky suddenly picked-up and left without notice. It was then that Henwood discovered that Juliette was wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), following an Internet search of her name.

When the story about Sky's disappearance started receiving international media attention, Juliette eventually contacted civil authorities and surrendered their U. S. passports to New Zealand Immigration Services. Juliette was allowed 14 days to settle her personal affairs on her promise that she and Sky would voluntarily leave the country by Feb. 7, and return to the United States. Instead, Juliette disappeared with Sky and went into hiding in New Zealand.

Acting on information developed by the FBI and Kitsap County Sheriff's detectives, New Zealand police arrested Juliette Gilbert in Rotorua, New Zealand, when she arrived with her son at a real estate office to pick-up keys to a rental house. The rental unit had been leased for her under the name of a third party. Rotorua is a tourist destination on the country's north island, located some 280 miles north of the New Zealand's capitol, Wellington.

Sky Gilbert was placed into temporary custody of New Zealand's Child, Youth and Family Services and also transported back to the U. S. Following a brief hearing in Kitsap County Superior Court, pursuant to a writ of habeas corpus, Sky was reunited with his father and family April 14.

Juliette Gilbert is scheduled for another superior court hearing May 25. Judge Olsen set an initial trial date of June 20.

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