

Defendants sentenced to 25 years for murder of Sanders man

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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PHOENIX – Earlier this month, Vaughn Paul James, 24, of Sanders, Ariz., was sentenced by Senior U.S. District Judge Susan R. Bolton to 300 months of imprisonment, to be followed by five years of supervised release.

James had previously pleaded guilty to second-degree murder-aid and abet. James's co-defendant, Nolan Lewis, 30, of Kykotsmovi, Ariz., had also previously pleaded guilty to the same crime and received the same sentence.

On Sept. 10, 2013, James and Lewis assaulted the victim near Sanders, Ariz. While the victim was still alive, he was placed in the trunk of his own car. The victim was later found deceased inside the trunk of the car, which had burn marks near the gas tank. The victim died of blunt force trauma to the neck and head. James and Lewis are both enrolled members of the Navajo Nation, as was the victim.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Navajo Nation Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution was handled by Kiyoko Patterson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.