

Jailed man's attempt to work from inside backfires

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Ryan Westman was back in the news this week for reportedly trying to get associates to retaliate against a witness.

Warrants have been issued for the arrest of Amanda Romero, 29, of Gallup and Benjamin Gonzales, 25, of Gallup for conspiracy.

Westman is currently residing in the McKinley County Adult Detention Center, charged with multiple charges, including murder. But before he was brought back to Gallup, he was sitting in the San Juan County Jail after he attempted to avoid arrest by fleeing to Farmington where he was later arrested by U.S. Marshals.

According to a police report filed in the McKinley County Sheriff's Office, Robert Turney, a sheriff investigator, suspicion had been raised about telephone calls Westman had made while at the San Juan County jail.

All phone calls made to and from inmates were taped and available to police. Turney said he looked at Westman's call record at the Gallup jail and discovered two phone numbers which he wanted to see if Westman had called while in the other jail.

It turned out he didn't make any phone calls to those numbers using his account but San Juan jail officials found one of those numbers used under another inmate's account number.

When Turney listened to the tape of the phone calls to Romero's phone, he determined that both she and Gonzales had talked to Westman on that number and that Westman had used

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another inmate's account in an effort to keep law enforcement from hearing what was said.

In his report, Turney said he could hear Westman soliciting Romero and Gonzales to retaliate against an individual who was a witness to the murder of Mitchell Chavez back in January.

He said both Romero and Gonzales can then be heard saying they were not going to allow the witness to testify against him. Gonzales told Westman during the conversation, said Turney, that he drove by the witness's house "waving a gun and will do it again."

Gonzales then told Westman their plan was to pin the murder on the witness. Westman can also be heard in the tape, said Turney, telling Romero that the witness helped him murder Chavez.

Also during the conversation, said Turney, Westman can be heard admitting that he had shot another person by the name of Rusty because "he had a reason to shoot him."