

Man charged with murder in Indian Country

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 26 July 2019 02:55



A criminal complaint filed by FBI Special Agent Cary Cahoon , who has primary responsibility for investigating major crimes that occur in Indian Country, says he was notified July 2 at about 11:50 am of a possible homicide at a residence in Shiprock.

Criminal Investigator Jerrick Curley said he found a woman (Year of birth 1974) deceased on the bedroom floor of her residence, with what appeared to be multiple lacerations and blood around her. She suffered trauma to her neck, back and chest area. The OMI pronounced her death at 5:30 pm on July 2.

He said her nephew, Tavor Tom, 18, of Shiprock, had been involved in a single vehicle crash in the area of Nenahnezad, located on the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation.

Tom was found in a black, 2016 Jeep Cherokee Sport, belonging to the victim. Inside was a knife found on the passenger side floor board, containing what was suspected to be blood. Tom was the only person inside the vehicle. He was taken to San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington.

A damaged fence was also reported at a church in close proximity to where the vehicle was found. The damage appeared consistent with damage seen on the vehicle Tom was driving. The vehicle was towed to a secure lot.

Curley continued his investigation and returned to the residence where he made contact with the victim's father and sister. He also spoke with Derrick Woody, of Navajo Nation Fire, who said that Tom had attempted to overdose on Mucinex, an over-the-counter medication, which

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was found inside the vehicle.

According to Tom's mother (the victim's sister), who lives with him in Shiprock, he has reportedly been addicted to Mucinex for several years and uses it to get high. She told Curley that her son has been suicidal in the past, and became more violent recently. He was treated at the Northern Navajo Medical Center and has been receiving mental health services there. She said he often takes her vehicle without permission and drives to the store to steal Mucinex.

The father of the victim told Curley that Tom had visited his residence, next door to the victim's home, on July 1 around 6 pm, to use his computer and then left.

The sister said she received a text message from Tom on the night of July 1, in which he indicated he was with friends. She visited the victim around 6:30 pm, July 1. When she saw her sister's vehicle was gone, she thought her sister had gone somewhere.

The father discovered the victim on July 2. He called 911.

On July 2, at the San Juan Regional Medical Center, FBI Special Agent Kalon Fancher interviewed Tom after advising him he did not have to speak. Tom subsequently admitted to killing the victim with a folding knife he took from his father's vehicle around 1 pm on July 2, with the intention of going to the victim's home to steal her vehicle to drive to Farmington to steal Mucinex.

That evening around 5 or 6 pm, Tom said he went to his aunt's home and slit her throat and stabbed her 7 or 8 times with the knife and then stole her vehicle.

He told Fancher that he drove to the Walmart in west Farmington and stole Mucinex from there at around 7 pm, and then took back roads to Shiprock, when he crashed into the fence at a church. He could not drive further after damaging the vehicle and getting high from the Mucinex.

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The next morning, emergency responders found him.

Curley said in his statement, that, based on the investigation he and others conducted, he submits that there is probable cause that Tom, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, violated 18 U. S. C. §§ 1111(a), 1153, when he unlawfully killed the victim, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation at her residence in Shiprock, which is located within the exterior boundaries of the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, in the District of New Mexico.

The FBI arrested Tom on July 5, He appeared in court for a detention hearing where the judge ordered him to remain in custody pending trial. He faces up to life in prison if convicted.

A criminal complaint is only an allegation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.