

Guilty of voluntary manslaughter

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE — John Youngboy Lodgepole, 21, of Fruitland, N.M., an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, pleaded guilty in federal court Nov. 3 to an indictment charging him with voluntary manslaughter. A grand jury indicted Lodgepole on Oct. 9, 2019.

According to his plea agreement, Lodgepole acknowledged that on Aug. 1, 2019, he and the victim, identified in court records as Jane Doe, were drinking and that he became angry when she started calling him names and provoking him. He threw the victim to the ground, kicked her in the head multiple times, and punched her about 10 times in the face and head. Lodgepole then used a cinder block to smash the back of the victim's head. Seeing that the victim was still breathing, Lodgepole placed the cinder block beneath her feet and repeatedly struck her ankles with a cane.

She was pronounced dead at the scene as a result of the injuries suffered from the attack, which took place in San Juan County on the Navajo Nation.

Lodgepole will remain in custody pending sentencing, which has yet to be scheduled.

The Farmington office of the FBI investigated this case with the assistance of the Navajo Nation Department of Criminal Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorney Raquel Ruiz Velez is prosecuting the case.