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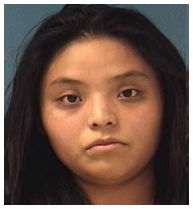

In what can only be described as heartbreaking tragedy, a seven month old child is deceased and a mother and father have been arrested in connection with the death.

According to the arrest warrants filed by Gallup Police Department Detective Neil Yazzie, the seven month long investigation ended in the arrest of Zachary M. Terrazas, 21, of Vanderwagen, NM along with his girlfriend and mother of the child, Lashana James, 21, of Vanderwagen, NM.

The arrest warrant states that police officers responded to a call of a baby not breathing at the Villa De Gallup Apartments on Klagetoh Drive Jan. 2.

Terrazas was administering CPR to the baby while medical personnel were on their way to assist. GPD Officer Matthew Graham noted that he smelled marijuana in the house and medical personnel observed signs of bruising to the baby's face. The baby was rushed to a local hospital and later pronounced dead.

Terrazas told officers and detectives that they had laid the baby face down on the couch to sleep and when they went back to check on her, she wasn't breathing. Next, they ran next door

and told neighbors to call 911.

Office of the Medical Investigator Senior Deputy Investigator Richard Malone also observed swelling, bruising and bumps to the baby's face and head area, according to the arrest warrant.

Terrazas and James both said that their other son commonly threw toys at the baby to explain the marks on their daughter.

"Affiant explained to Lashana that with [her son's] age, the weight of the toy, it just was not consistent with the injuries to [the baby's] face and head," Yazzie said in the warrant.

Both parents soon admitted that they were young parents and sometimes overwhelmed by the cries of the children and the financial problems that they were having. Terrazas told Yazzie that he did get upset with the baby for crying and that he "forced her down into the bed" and he thought she might have hit her head on a plastic drum.

"Zachary stated [the baby] hit her head and he got so scared that he started patting her down," Yazzie said in the warrant.

Terrazas admitted that he kept James in the dark about the baby hitting her head on the drum.

GPD secured a search warrant for the apartment Jan. 3 and collected evidence. A few hours after the warrant was served, Yazzie attended the autopsy of the infant but cause of death could not be determined until lab results were received.

On May 12, GPD received word from the Office of the Medical Investigator that the cause of death was smothering and was classified as a homicide.

James was arrested July 24 on the charge of abuse of a child, a third degree felony. The warrant held a $5,000 cash or surety bond.

Terrazas was arrested July 24 on the charge of abuse of a child resulting in death, a first degree felony. The warrant was for $50,000 cash only bond.

A preliminary hearing was scheduled Aug. 5 in Magistrate Judge Kenneth Howard Jr.'s courtroom.