

MCSO deputy has “allergic reaction” to fentanyl, meth

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 10 February 2023 02:25



A McKinley County Sheriff's Deputy had an allergic reaction to the drugs he found in a woman's car.

Deputy Shane Bennett was traveling southbound on US Highway 491 and approaching the intersection of US Highway 491 and Jefferson Avenue in Gallup on Jan. 13 when he noticed a small silver Kia passenger car almost side swipe a semi truck.

The car was swerving all over the road. The driver, who was later identified as Starrissa Yazzie, approached the intersection and turned onto Jefferson Avenue. That's when Bennett turned on his siren and told Yazzie, 40, from Fort Defiance, Ariz., to pull over.

Yazie pulled into the American Heritage Plaza parking lot at 840 U.S. Hwy. 491. According to Bennett's report, the car's rear end was damaged.

When Bennett met with Yazzie, she told him that she was having car problems. Bennett asked for her license, registration, and insurance, and as Yazzie was looking for those documents he noticed a small plastic baggie with a glass shard-like object inside it on the driver's floor board. In his report Bennet identified the item as meth.

When Bennett asked Yazzie who the meth belonged to, she went to pick it up, but he told her to leave it and step out of the vehicle. Yazzie claimed she didn't know who the meth belonged to. Yazzie said she got her car serviced around 10 pm that night.

Bennett asked Gallup Police Officer Philamina Chischilly to do a pat search on Yazzie, but

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when the female officer approached her Yazzie tried to grab her keys off the roof of her car. But Bennett was faster, and grabbed the keys first. He noticed a small silver container attached to the keys, and when he shook the keys he heard what sounded like small items moving around inside the container.

When Bennett opened the container, a puff of dust/smoke came out. Small round blue pills were found inside the container, which Bennett identified as fentanyl.

Bennett walked Yazzie to his patrol car and told her she was under arrest, although he couldn't handcuff her due to her arm being in a cast.

Yazzie had a total of 11.5 pills of fentanyl on her.

As Bennett was transporting Yazzie to the McKinley County Sheriff's Office he allegedly began to notice his hands were tingling and swelling up. When he arrived at MCSO, his hands were bright red and beginning to blister. He was also coughing, and in his report he said he could feel his throat swelling up. His fingertips were turning purple.

Bennett was transported to the Gallup Indian Medical Center, where he was treated for an “allergic reaction” and possible drug inhalation from the fentanyl.

Deputy Franklin Begay was able to take over for Bennett. He stood by while Yazzie's car was towed, and she was charged with controlled substance possession and failure to maintain traffic lanes. Her preliminary examination was on Feb. 1.

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