

Woman jailed on battery, abuse charges after argument in moving vehicle

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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An argument inside of a moving vehicle nearly turned deadly before Deputy Lasheena Johnson of the McKinley County Sheriff's Office stepped in to quell things.

According to a police report, Johnson stopped driver Ricky Gatewood, Jr., 36, and Coral Cleveland, 25, along U.S. Highway 491 near Francisco Pond Road. The tan van the two were in was reportedly "swerving" and the occupants were said to have been fighting.

"The van was in the slow lane and did swerve outside of the lane twice," Johnson recorded.

The couple began the journey in Window Rock, Ariz., and were arguing for most of the drive into Gallup, the police report states. The two were heading to Albuquerque for school testing, Gatewood told Johnson. But arguments ensued when Cleveland brought up issues about the couple's past. Things took off from there, Johnson wrote.

Gatewood said he was driving at speeds of 55 miles per hour and Cleveland attempted to open the car door to get out at least three times during the ride, saying she was going to "kill herself." Gatewood managed to grab Cleveland by the arm each time, telling her that he didn't want her "to die like that."

A 3-year-old child was strapped in a car seat in the back seat of the van and was not injured, Johnson wrote.

"[Ms. Cleveland] stated that they were on their way to Albuquerque for testing and they were

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arguing about her staying out there after the testing,” Johnson said in the report. Reportedly, the couple started arguing as soon as they left Speedy’s in Arizona.

Cleveland was arrested on battery against a household member and abuse of a child placed in a dangerous situation charges. Cleveland was later released on her own recognizance, according to jail records. Gatewood was issued a temporary restraining order packet by Johnson.

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