

GPD nabs fugitive Paradise; jailed on \$22K bond

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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A Gallup man remained jailed Feb. 2 at the McKinley County Detention Center on a \$22,500 bond amount after being arrested by the Gallup Police Department on two outstanding warrants. The arrest ends a months-long search.

An arrest warrant indicates that John Paradise, 26, was taken into custody Jan. 31 on shooting at or from a motor vehicle, criminal damage to property over \$1,000 and negligent use of a deadly weapon charges.

“Mr. Paradise was arrested,” Marinda Spencer, public information officer with the GPD, said. He is still in custody.”

Spencer said the GPD and the McKinley County Sheriff’s Office have been searching for Paradise for months. She said GPD believes Paradise could be a suspect in at least one homicide over the past year.

Paradise is a primary suspect in the kidnapping and beating of Zebulon Graves of Gallup, according to the warrant. The two were in a vehicle with at least two other individuals when cruising on Gallup’s north side on Jan. 22. Paradise told the driver of the car to pull over. Once pulled over, Paradise punched Graves in the face as did the other occupants of the vehicle, according to the arrest warrant.

Graves said Paradise called him a “rat” and accused him of giving information about him to the cops. Paradise took command of the car and drove to Fire Rock Navajo Casino near Church Rock where the occupants administered more beatings toward Graves. Graves was ultimately able to flee the vehicle and summon help, the arrest warrant states.

Gallup police officer Andrew Thayer recorded in a report that upon encountering Graves from an emergency call, that Graves’ eyes were nearly swollen shut, apparently from a beating. Graves was taken to the hospital, but not before someone sent a text message to Paul Graves, the father of Zebulon. The message said the younger Graves was hurt and if the father valued his son’s life that some money had to be exchanged.

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Another warrant related to Paradise was connected to shots fired at a residence on Freedom Drive in Gallup. In that case, Jay Anderson told police that Paradise went mad after an argument after some drinking.

A person interviewed for this article said Paradise is married and lived with his wife and family at the former Roadrunner Hotel in Gallup located along East Historic Highway 66. That hotel burned about a little more than a year ago. Paradise was arrested by the GPD at the America's Best Value Inn at 2003 W. Historic Highway 66, Spencer said.

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