



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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HUALAPAI MAN INDICTED FOR MURDER OF FIRST COUSIN AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

PHOENIX - A federal grand jury in Phoenix returned a 4-count indictment Tuesday against Jonathan Bennie Yazzie, Jr. of Peach Springs, Ariz. He is charged with First Degree Premeditated Murder, two counts of Assault, and Aggravated Sexual Abuse. Yazzie is currently in custody in Coconino County awaiting transport to Federal District Court for arraignment on the charges.

The indictment alleges that on or about November 11, 2008, on the Hualapai Indian Reservation, Yazzie, a member of the Gila River Indian tribe, walked into his mother's house, punched and kicked his first cousin Owen Walema Sr., and struck Walema in the head with a wood-splitting maul, which resulted in his death. The indictment also alleges that following the murder, Yazzie went into the bedroom and sexually assaulted an adult female.

Convictions for First Degree Murder and Aggravated Sexual Abuse carry a maximum penalty of Life in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for Assault carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Hualapai Nation Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Jennifer E. Green, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1358-PCT
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-307(Yazzie)

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