



PRESS RELEASE

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**FEDERAL INDICTMENT CHARGES AIR FORCE SERGEANT AND WIFE WITH
CHILD ABUSE RESULTING IN DEATH**

LAS CRUCES – Yesterday a federal grand jury sitting in Albuquerque, N.M., filed a seven-count indictment charging **Peter John Zayas**, 27, an Air Force Sergeant stationed at Holloman Air Force Base, and his wife, **Sophia Monique Zayas**, 30, with child abuse offenses arising out of the death of their two-month-old daughter.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Peter and Sophia Zayas were arrested without incident yesterday afternoon by the FBI and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Peter and Sophia Zayas remain in federal custody pending their initial appearances in federal court in Las Cruces, N.M., tomorrow morning.

Count 1 of the Indictment alleges that, between October 21, 2007 and October 22, 2007, Peter and Sophia Zayas caused their infant daughter's death by intentionally torturing and punishing the child. The penalty for a conviction on this charge is life imprisonment. Counts 2, 3 and 4 allege that, between October 1, 2007 and October 21, 2007, Peter and Sophia Zayas caused great bodily harm to their infant daughter by intentionally torturing and punishing the child. The maximum penalty for a conviction on any one of these three counts is 18 years of imprisonment. Counts 5, 6 and 7 allege that, between August 16, 2007 and October 20, 2007, Peter and Sophia Zayas endangered the life of their infant daughter by intentionally torturing and punishing the child. The maximum penalty for a conviction on any one of these three counts is three years of imprisonment.

According to the indictment, the seven offenses charged in the indictment allegedly took place in Otero County, N.M., at Holloman Air Force Base.

The case was investigated by the FBI, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Maria Y. Armijo and Nathan J. Lichvarcik.

Charges in indictments are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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