



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

May 3, 2012

**FRUITLAND, N.M., MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL VOLUNTARY
MANSLAUGHTER CHARGE**

ALBUQUERQUE – This afternoon, **Uriah Upshaw**, 20, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Fruitland, N.M., entered a guilty plea to voluntary manslaughter. At sentencing, Upshaw faces up to 15 years of imprisonment to be followed by not more than three years of supervised release.

Upshaw had been released to a half-way house under pretrial supervision following his arrest on August 29, 2011. After entering his guilty plea, Upshaw was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service, and will be detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Upshaw pleaded guilty to killing Mario Desheuquette, a 32-year-old Navajo man, on August 26, 2011 by striking him with his hands. Upshaw was indicted on October 26, 2011, and charged with voluntary manslaughter. According to the indictment, Upshaw killed Desheuquette during a sudden quarrel and in the heat of passion.

According to court filings, Desheuquette initiated a physical altercation with Upshaw while Desheuquette was intoxicated. After the fight ended, Upshaw went to Desheuquette's home to retrieve a personal item that Desheuquette had taken from him. While inside Desheuquette's home, the physical altercation resumed.

During today's plea hearing, Upshaw admitted repeatedly striking Desheuquette about the face and head, and that Desheuquette died as a result of Upshaw's actions. Upshaw entered his guilty plea without the benefit of any plea agreement.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, Shiprock District, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Niki Tapia-Brito.

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