



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 12, 2009

For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

PEACH SPRINGS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DEATH OF BRITISH TOURIST IN CRASH NEAR GRAND CANYON

PHOENIX - Philbert Watahomigie, Jr., (pronounced Wah-ta-HOM'-a-gee), 40, of Peach Springs, Ariz., pleaded guilty today to Involuntary Manslaughter and Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury. Watahomigie was the driver of a vehicle which struck another vehicle near the Grand Canyon in November 2007. When tested shortly after the crash, his blood alcohol content was .302, much higher than the Arizona legal limit of .08.

On November 6, 2007, Watahomigie was driving a vehicle on the Hualapai Indian Reservation near the Grand Canyon when he hit another vehicle from behind. In the vehicle he struck were two couples, tourists visiting from Great Britain, who were trying to find the Grand Canyon at the time. The driver of the two couples' vehicle died instantly. The remaining passengers all suffered serious bodily injury. One passenger was flown to a local hospital where she died a short while later from her injuries.

Sentencing is set before Judge Earl H. Carroll on May 28, 2009. A conviction for Involuntary Manslaughter carries a maximum penalty of six years in federal prison and Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. Both carry a maximum \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Earl H. Carroll will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Arizona Department of Public Safety and the Hualapai Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Raynette Logan, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-0644-PCT-EHC
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-085(Watahomigie)

###

For more information on the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Arizona, visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/az/>