



U.S. Department of Justice

Kenneth J. Gonzales

United States Attorney

District of New Mexico

201 3rd Street NW

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

CONTACT: *Elizabeth M. Martinez, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Public Affairs Officer*
elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov – 505-224-1469

PRESS RELEASE

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JICARILLA APACHE WOMAN CHARGED
WITH DUI-RELATED VEHICULAR HOMICIDE

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that, earlier today, **Richaline Atole**, 30, a member of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe, appeared in federal court before United States Magistrate Judge W. Daniel Schneider on a criminal complaint charging her with involuntary manslaughter. The complaint alleges that Atole killed Andy Talamante, 41, while operating a motor vehicle and under the influence of alcohol within the confines of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation. If convicted of this offense, Atole faces up to 8 years imprisonment, a maximum \$250,000 fine, and three years supervised release.

According to the complaint, the motor vehicle accident leading to Mr. Talamante's death occurred on the evening of October 16, 2010, on Jicarilla Road 8 near Dulce, New Mexico. Atole was driving a car with two passengers, her boyfriend Wilfred Bia, who was in the front passenger seat, and Mr. Talamante, who was in the back seat. The complaint alleges that Mr. Talamante was in a hurry to get home and insisted that Atole

pass a slower moving vehicle in front of them. When Atole attempted to pass the slower vehicle, she swerved, lost control of her car and went off the side of the road into an arroyo. Witnesses said that Atole's car went airborne and flipped four or five times before coming to rest. Mr. Talamante was ejected from Atole's car and was laying on the ground death when officers from the Jicarilla Apache Police Department arrived on the scene. Atole and Mr. Bia suffered only minor injuries.

According to the complaint, when talking with Atole at the scene of the accident, a Jicarilla Apache Police Officer detected a strong odor of alcohol. Tests on blood drawn from Atole at San Juan Regional Medical Center more than three hours after the accident revealed that Atole had a blood alcohol content of .231. Atole told officers that she lost control of the vehicle while driving 40 to 45 miles per hour and admitted that she drank a six-pack of beer before the accident.

"This case is yet another tragic example of the dangers associated with drinking and driving," noted U.S. Attorney Gonzales. The case was investigated by the Jicarilla Apache Police Department, the Jicarilla Apache Game and Fish Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jack Burkhead.

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

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