



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**LAGUNA PUEBLO MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR  
FEDERAL SECOND DEGREE MURDER AND ASSAULT CONVICTIONS**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning, a federal judge sentenced Vincent Paul Francis, 45, a member and resident of the Pueblo of Laguna, to ten years of imprisonment for his second degree and assault convictions. Francis will be on supervised release for three years after completing his prison sentence. Francis also was ordered to pay \$82,647 in restitution to cover the victims' funeral and medical costs.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that, on May 13, 2012, Francis pled guilty to killing his girlfriend, Shannon Luarkie, 45, and his sister Anita Yazzie, 38, and seriously injuring a 20-year-old woman on Nov. 20, 2011. In entering his guilty plea, Francis admitted to driving while intoxicated and crashing the vehicle that in which his victims were passengers. All of Francis's victims were members of the Pueblo of Laguna, and the vehicle crash occurred near mile marker 134 on Interstate 40 and within the boundaries of the Pueblo of Laguna.

According to court records, the crash occurred on the afternoon of Nov. 20, 2011, when Francis attempted to pass a semi-tractor and trailer without due regard to safety and clipped the semi's front bumper, causing Francis's vehicle to spin out of control across the median and onto eastbound oncoming traffic. Another semi-tractor and trailer was unable to avoid Francis's vehicle and struck the vehicle head-on. Ms. Luarkie and Ms. Yazzie were pronounced dead at the scene, and the 20-year-old and Francis were transported to the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) for treatment of multiple internal and external injuries. At the time he received medical treatment at UNMH, Francis had a BAC of .148.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services, Laguna & Acoma Agencies, and the Pueblo of Laguna Police Department, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle T. Nayback.

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