



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

October 18, 2012

**UPPER FRUITLAND MAN TO SERVE ELEVEN YEARS IN PRISON FOR
MANSLAUGHTER AND ABUSIVE SEXUAL CONTACT CONVICTIONS**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning, a federal judge sentenced Lamuel Thomas, 27, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Upper Fruitland, N.M., to eleven years of imprisonment for his convictions on involuntary manslaughter and abusive sexual contact charges. Thomas will be on supervised release for ten years after completing his prison sentence. He also will be required to register as a sex offender.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that, on July 17, 2012, Thomas pled guilty to killing a 70-year-old Navajo woman on Nov. 9, 2010, while driving under the influence of alcohol on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County. He also pleaded guilty to sexually molesting a 13-year-old child on March 2, 2011 in a location within the Navajo Indian Reservation.

During his plea hearing, Thomas admitted that, on the night of Nov. 9, 2010, he drove a truck along a rural highway on the Navajo Indian Reservation after drinking a large amount of alcohol and smoking marijuana. He crossed into the lane of incoming traffic and struck a car head on. The driver of the car, who was returning home from work, died as a result of the injuries she sustained in the crash. At the time of the crash, Thomas' blood alcohol concentration was more than twice the legal limit of .08. Thomas also admitted that in the early morning hours of March 2, 2011, he inappropriately touched a 13 year old while he was an overnight guest of the victim's parents.

The case was investigated by the Farmington Office of the FBI and Shiprock Division of the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark T. Baker and Jacob A. Wishard.

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