

For Immediate Release
May 12, 2011

**LAGUNA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL
SECOND DEGREE MURDER CHARGE**

Defendant, who Committed Murder as a 15-Year-Old, Prosecuted as Adult

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court in Albuquerque, **Elias Whitmore**, a 19-year-old member of the Pueblo of Laguna, entered a guilty plea to an information charging him with second degree murder under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. Whitmore committed the murder when he was 15-years-old, but entered his plea as an adult after the court authorized the United States Attorney's Office to proceed against Whitmore as an adult. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Whitmore will be sentenced to a prison term of at least 168-months but not more than 210-months, the applicable sentencing guideline range for second degree murder. Whitmore has been in federal custody since his arrest in September 2007 and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Whitmore and two others killed 38-year-old Loren Alan Kie at his home on the Pueblo of Laguna on September 2, 2007. The criminal complaint filed against co-defendant Gerald Allen Mora, a member of the Jicarilla Apache Nation who was then 20, alleges that Mora and two juveniles, ages 15 and 16, killed Mr. Kie by bludgeoning and stabbing him to death. Mora, the only adult involved in the offense, was indicted on a first degree murder charge on October 10, 2007. On January 12, 2011, a federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment adding Whitmore as a defendant after the court transferred him to adult status.

According to the criminal complaint, which identifies Whitmore as Juvenile 1, on September 5, 2007, officers of the Pueblo of Laguna Police Department (LPD) went to Mr. Kie's

residence and found Mr. Kie's severely beaten body in a bedroom that appeared to have been the scene of a violent struggle. The LPD contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and they commenced an investigation into Mr. Kie's death. An autopsy of Mr. Kie's body on the following day revealed that the cause of death was blunt force trauma. Mr. Kie had sustained blunt force trauma to the head and torso, numerous stab wounds, a fractured wrist, a dislocated shoulder, missing teeth, and skull fractures.

The complaint alleges that, during a September 12, 2007 interview, Whitmore admitted his involvement in Mr. Kie's murder. Whitmore stated that he, Mora and another juvenile (the Juvenile) went to Mr. Kie's home in an attempt to get beer. When Mr. Kie demanded that they leave, Mora hit Mr. Kie in the face and knocked him down. Whitmore, Mora and the Juvenile then "jumped" Mr. Kie and beat him with their fists and a police nightstick that was under Mr. Kie's bed. While Mr. Kie was bleeding all over, Whitmore repeatedly hit Mr. Kie in the head with a brick. As Mr. Kie yelled for help, Whitmore repeatedly stabbed Mr. Kie with a knife, and then again bashed Mr. Kie in the head with the brick. The complaint alleges that, when the three assailants left Mr. Kie's home, they took their weapons with them and disposed of them after agreeing that they would not implicate each other in the murder if they were apprehended.

In his plea agreement, Whitmore admitted that he killed Mr. Kie by beating him. Under the terms of the plea agreement, the indictment against Whitmore will be dismissed after he is sentenced.

On January 19, 2011, Mora entered a guilty plea to an information charging him with second degree murder. Mora remains in federal custody pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the LPD, and is being prosecuted by Assistant

United States Attorneys Presiliano Torrez and Kimberly A. Brawley.

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