

For Immediate Release
June 27, 2011

SHIPROCK MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SECOND DEGREE MURDER

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Albuquerque, **Gary Redhorse John Begay**, a 25-year-old enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, entered a guilty plea to a second degree murder charge under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Begay will be sentenced to a 14-year term of imprisonment to be followed by not more than five years of supervised release. Begay has been in federal custody since his arrest on December 17, 2010, and will remain detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Begay pleaded guilty to shooting Allen Ashike and causing his death in Shiprock, New Mexico, which is located in the Navajo Indian Reservation, on December 17, 2010. Begay was charged with (1) second degree murder and (2) using a firearm in relation to a crime of violence in a criminal complaint filed on December 20, 2010, and was indicted on those same offenses on January 12, 2011.

The criminal complaint filed in the case alleges that Begay shot Mr. Ashike at approximately 1:30 a.m. on December 17, 2010 after the two men spent the evening drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. According to a witness, Begay shot Mr. Ashike because Mr. Ashike was teasing him and being verbally abusive. In his plea agreement, Begay admitted that he fired three shots at Mr. Ashike, two of which struck Mr. Ashike in the stomach and chest. Under the terms of Begay's plea agreement, the firearms charge will be dismissed after Begay is sentenced.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, Shiprock Division, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United

States Attorney Shana B. Long.

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