

Youth facing murder charges

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 20 December 2019 09:08



The McKinley County Sheriff's Department issued an affidavit for the arrest of a Gallup minor charged with first-degree murder.

At 11 pm on Nov. 29, McKinley County Investigator Frank Villa Jr. received a phone call from Deputy Clayton Etsitty in reference to a stabbing that had occurred at an apartment on the 500 block of Chino Loop in Gamerco.

Etsitty said he was dispatched to the apartment for a welfare check after a call to Metro Dispatch advised there had been a gunshot heard in the vicinity. When Etsitty arrived at the complex, he was waved down by subjects who directed him to a male in one of the bedrooms with a stab wound.

As he waited for an ambulance and additional officers to arrive, Etsitty made contact with two others at the scene, Shania Coeeyate and Johnny Lee, who identified the stab victim to Etsitty as Arvin Billy.

Billy was unable to speak with Etsitty. Though Billy was transported to Gallup Indian Medical Center, Etsitty was later informed by hospital staff that Billy had succumbed to the stab wound and died.

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Etsitty spoke with one subject at the scene, identified only as Marie, who directed him to a knife in the kitchen she said was the weapon used to stab Billy. The perpetrator, Isaiah Coeeyate, was nowhere to be found the night of the incident.

Villa and McKinley County Chief Investigator Lt. Merle Bates went to GIMC to identify the stab victim before heading to the Gamerco residence to speak with the rest of the occupants. Each of them were then transported to McKinley County Sheriff's Office for questioning.

The occupants, Avey Coeeyate, Bailey House, and Genice Tsosie, each told Bates that Isaiah Coeeyate and Billy had gotten into an argument in one of the bedrooms. After an initial fist fight, Isaiah Coeeyate went to the kitchen, retrieved a knife, and then stabbed Billy before fleeing from the residence.

Shania Coeeyate told Bates she had tried to stop Isaiah and Billy from fighting, and that she tried to help tend to Billy's wounds after Isaiah had fled.

Another occupant, Johnny Lee, said Billy was drunk and argued with him first. After Lee left Billy in the bedroom, Isaiah Coeeyate entered the residence in an angry state and began fighting with Billy. Lee also said he saw Isaiah Coeeyate retrieve something from the kitchen, and knew Billy had been stabbed when he saw him lying on the floor and Shania Coeeyate had blood on her shirt next to him.

After speaking with each of the apartment occupants, Bates and other officers executed a search warrant of the premises. During this time, Isaiah Coeeyate contacted Tsosie, his mother, through text message and said he was down the street from the apartment and wanted to be picked up.

Bates and several deputies searched the area and eventually tracked Isaiah Coeeyate to Ray Street. After confirming his identity, the deputies transported him to the sheriff's office for questioning.

In the criminal complaint, it is stated Isaiah Coeeyate faces a charge for first degree murder.

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Bates said the District Attorney is either going to charge him or have him charged him as an adult.