

Two suspects from Navajo Nation: one gets commerce interference charge

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE— A convenience store in Vanderwagen was the site of a robbery on April 18, 2019 that resulted in the sentencing of three men to jail, two of them members of the Navajo Nation.

According to the plea agreements and other court records, on April 18, 2019, Julian Silversmith, 44 of Jones Ranch, N.M. drove co-defendants Aurelius Eddie, 20, of Vanderwagen and Kevin Marquez, 22, of Gallup, to a convenience store in Vanderwagen, with the intent to rob the store. As Eddie and Marquez entered the convenience store, they began waving firearms, and Eddie fired a round into the ceiling. They then proceeded to steal alcohol from the refrigerators and behind the counter, while Marquez pointed his firearm at the clerk. Eddie admitted that following the robbery, he fired a round at two Navajo Police officers.

The crimes were committed on the Navajo Nation.

Silversmith pleaded guilty on Aug. 12, 2019, while Eddie pleaded guilty on Sept. 19, 2019.

Silversmith was sentenced in federal court on Jan. 28 to nine years in prison for one count of interference with interstate commerce by robbery and violence, and one count of using, carrying, and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence in Indian Country.

Eddie was also sentenced on Jan. 28 to 12 years in prison for one count of interference with interstate commerce by robbery and violence, one count of using, carrying, and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence, and one count of assault with a dangerous weapon in Indian Country.

Both defendants are members of the Navajo Nation.

Upon release from prison, Silversmith and Eddie will be subject to three years of supervised release.

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Marquez pleaded guilty on Sept. 26, 2019, to one count of interference with interstate commerce by robbery and violence, one count of using, carrying, and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

On Jan. 27, 2021, Marquez was sentenced to seven years in prison and three years of supervised release.

The office of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office investigated this case with assistance from the McKinley County Sheriff's Department and Navajo Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Spindle and Frederick Mendenhall prosecuted the case.

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