



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

P.O. Box 1689

Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona) 86515

Phone: (928)871-7436 Fax: (928)871-7437

www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov

 facebook.com/nnhrc

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 24, 2012

Media Contact: Rachele Todea

rtodea@navajo-nsn.gov

NNHRC learns former San Juan County Deputy pleaded guilty today

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission learned a former San Juan County Deputy pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court for unlawfully assaulting a man with a dangerous weapon. The former deputy repeatedly struck a Navajo man with a flashlight in Farmington, N.M.

Former Deputy of San Juan County R. Dale Frazier was indicted on June 27, 2012 by a federal grand jury on a lone charge, according to a U.S. Department of Justice press release posted on June 29, 2012.

On March 17, 2011, Donovan Tanner, Navajo, was beaten with a flashlight in Farmington, N.M. as shown in a video gone viral. At that time, Leonard Gorman for the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission had stated that there was a strong indication from the video that former Deputy Frazier immediately suspected the Native American was at fault.

“I express appreciation to the U.S. Department of Justice for pursuing this incident based on the insistence by the Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission,” said Gorman. “It should be understood that these matters involving law enforcement are taken very seriously by the Navajo Nation leadership. The occurrence of unlawful acts is not tolerated.”

According to a press release issued today by the U.S. Department of Justice New Mexico District, “[t]he federal investigation revealed that on March 17, 2011, the defendant [Dale Frazier] used his department-issued Maglight flashlight to strike Tanner in the head, neck and body after encountering Tanner and his brother outside a bar in Farmington, N.M. Frazier struck Tanner two times in the head and neck with his flashlight while Tanner was on the hood of his police vehicle. Frazier struck Tanner an additional three times with his flashlight while Tanner was on the ground. The assault of Tanner was captured on Frazier’s police dash camera.”

-More-

“This incident is an aspect of law enforcement relations with the public.” said Gorman. “Various third party entities reviewed law enforcement resorting to use of force ahead of other methods. The video indicated it and the third party reports have been vindicated.”

To read a press release about the federal indictment, visit
<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/June/12-crt-835.html>.

To read today’s press release from the U.S. Department of Justice, visit
<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/October/12-crt-1285.html>.

###