

AO 91 (Rev. 01/09) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the District of New Mexico

FILED UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APR 19 2011

MATTHEW J. DYKMAN CLERK

11M51046

United States of America v. Dennis J. Lovato

Case No.

Defendant

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date of 04/15/2011 in the county of Sandoval in the District of New Mexico, the defendant violated 18 U. S. C. § 1111, 1153, an offense described as follows: did murder Joseph Melvin Lucero, a Native American, on the Santo Domingo Pueblo. Lovato is also Native American.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit.

Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Russell S. Romero, Special Agent, FBI Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 04/19/2011

Judge's signature ROBERT H. SCOTT U.S. Magistrate Judge Printed name and title

City and state: Albuquerque, New Mexico

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
12)
13 VS.)
14)
15 Dennis J. Lovato)
16 Year of Birth: 1984)
17 SSAN: xxx-xx-1299)

18 AFFIDAVIT

19 I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, hereby depose
20 and state as follows:

21
22 I, Russell S. Romero, am a Special Agent of the
23 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and have been so employed
24 for over four years. I am currently assigned to the Santa Fe
25 Resident Agency of the Albuquerque Field Office, to investigate
26 violations of Federal Laws, including crimes committed in Indian
27 Country such as homicide, sexual assault, and assault. I was
28 previously assigned to the Honolulu and San Francisco divisions,
29 respectively, where I investigated gang and drug cases, as well
30 as special jurisdiction cases involving crimes aboard aircraft
31 to include sexual assault and assault. The information set
32 forth in this affidavit has been derived from my own
33 investigation or communicated to me by other sworn law
34 enforcement officers.

35

1 On Friday, April 15, 2011 at approximately 11:45 p.m.,
2 your affiant received a call from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
3 Special Agent Jeff Sandoval reporting that a possible homicide
4 had occurred on Santo Domingo Pueblo, Santo Domingo, New Mexico.

5
6 Your affiant, as well as FBI Special Agent David A.
7 Kice, responded to the pueblo with BIA Special Agent Sandoval to
8 initiate an investigation. Interviews of first responders
9 revealed that on April 15, 2011, Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal
10 Officials Samson Bailan and Nathaniel Pacheco were patrolling
11 Santo Domingo Pueblo, when they noticed a blue Dodge Durango,
12 New Mexico License 904PLC, driving on Cochiti Lane. The driver
13 appeared intoxicated and was advised to stop; however, the
14 driver of the vehicle did not comply and fled. BIA police were
15 called at approximately 9:45pm to stop the vehicle.

16
17 Soon after, BIA Police Officer Earl Chicharello caught
18 up to the vehicle at the Mateo Overpass in Santo Domingo Pueblo,
19 and arrested the driver, identified as Dennis J. Lovato, Year of
20 Birth (YOB) 1984, SSAN XXX-XX-1299, a Tribal Member of Santo
21 Domingo Pueblo, on suspicion of Driving Under the Influence
22 (DUI). Upon arrest, Lovato advised Officer Chicharello that he
23 had just been involved in a fight with "Youngblood," later
24 identified as Joseph Melvin Lucero, YOB 1949, SSAN XXX-XX-6845,
25 also a Tribal Member of Santo Domingo Pueblo. Lovato stated
26 that the fight occurred at Lucero's residence, located on Santo
27 Domingo Pueblo. The arresting officer noted that Lovato's shirt

1 and hands were covered in blood, and that Lovato had a cut on a
2 finger on his right hand. Lovato told Officer Chicharello that
3 he was, "fighting for his life."
4

5 There were two other occupants in the vehicle,
6 including the registered owner, Eddie N. Garcia (Eddie), YOB
7 1959 and Nelson Lee Garcia (Nelson), YOB 1963. Both Eddie and
8 Nelson were also arrested. All three occupants were intoxicated
9 and were transported to the Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal Office.
10

11 Lovato was transported to Indian Health Services (IHS)
12 in Santa Fe, New Mexico to tend to his injured right hand.
13 Prior to being taken to IHS, Lovato was overheard making
14 physical threats to the BIA officers. He was also overheard
15 saying, "I was defending myself; I got in a knife fight with
16 'Youngblood," and "I got scared; I got paranoid; I just left."
17 He was later booked at the Sandoval County Detention Center for
18 the DUI charges.
19

20 Also on Friday, April 15, 2011, at approximately
21 9:45pm, Lucero's neighbor's son, Ray Rosetta (Ray), noticed
22 someone lying outside of Lucero's residence, between the
23 residence and the road. Ray noted that Lucero was known to have
24 parties and he believed that whoever it was had just passed out.
25 Later, when Ray's father, Martin Rosetta, arrived home, he
26 notified Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal Officials of the body
27 laying outside of Lucero's residence.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

BIA police, along with Tribal Officials and Santo Domingo Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived at Lucero's residence and found Lucero deceased with his face swollen and bloody.

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant, FBI Special Agent Kice, and BIA Special Agent Sandoval interviewed Eddie N. Garcia at the Santo Domingo Tribal Office. Prior to beginning the interview, Eddie was advised of his Miranda rights and acknowledged that he understood them. Eddie stated that he was so intoxicated that he did not recall going to Lucero's residence, nor did he recall a fight between Lovato and Lucero.

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant, FBI Special Agent Kice, and BIA Special Agent Sandoval interviewed Nelson Lee Garcia at the Santo Domingo Tribal Office. Prior to beginning the interview, Nelson was advised of his Miranda rights and acknowledged that he understood them. Nelson stated that Lovato and Eddie picked him up at the New Mexico Rail Runner that evening. When they returned to the pueblo, they drove to Lucero's residence. Nelson stated that Lovato and Lucero had been in an argument a long time ago. Nelson overheard Lovato say that that he (Lovato) was "gonna get him (Lucero)." Lovato then exited the vehicle and starting fighting with Lucero. Nelson stated that he saw Lovato punching and kicking Lucero and stated that neither party had any weapons, to

1 include a knife. During this time, Nelson told Eddie, "What's
2 he doing?" and "Come on, help me out, let's tell Dennis not to
3 fight 'Youngblood.'" Nelson and Eddie then stepped out of the
4 vehicle, and pulled Lovato back in while Nelson told him
5 (Lovato), "Don't do that to him," and "let's get out of here,
6 don't hit him no more." Lovato then exited the truck a second
7 time to continue beating Lucero. Lucero was already down on the
8 ground when Lovato was kicking him. When Lovato returned to the
9 vehicle, he stated, "I think I hit him hard; I think I killed
10 him." They then "took off real fast," and Nelson was scared
11 that they would flip the vehicle over.

12
13 On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant and FBI SA
14 Kice interviewed Dennis J. Lovato at the Sandoval County
15 Detention Center. Prior to beginning the interview, Lovato was
16 advised of his Miranda rights and acknowledged that he
17 understood them. Lovato stated that he had stopped at Lucero's
18 residence because Nelson had wanted to stop there. Lovato and
19 Eddie stayed in the vehicle to wait for Nelson. Lovato exited
20 the vehicle when he saw Lucero shoving Nelson. Lovato stated
21 that he hit Lucero twice and knocked him down, where he then
22 kicked him. Lovato then got on top of Lucero and began punching
23 Lucero through Lucero's fists as he was trying to cover his
24 face. Lovato stated that he hit Lucero several times while he
25 was on the ground, and that he stood up and kicked Lucero in the
26 head twice more after he finished punching him. He then got
27 back into the vehicle and left the scene with Eddie and Nelson.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

Lovato initially stated that Lucero had a knife when Lucero was fighting with Nelson; however, he did not know what happened to it when he and Lucero were fighting.

There was no knife found at the crime scene; however, a folding knife was found upon search of the vehicle which was conducted on April 18, 2011.

New Mexico Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records list Lovato's height and weight as 6'3", 265lb. New Mexico DMV records list Lucero's height and weight as 5'6", 180lb.

On Saturday, April 16th, 2011, FBI Special Agent Mark Buie attended an autopsy performed on Lucero's body at the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Preliminary autopsy results indicate that the cause/manner of Lucero's death was Multiple Blunt Force Trauma/Homicide.

Based on the information set forth in this affidavit, your affiant submits that there is probable cause to believe that Dennis J. Lovato, an Indian, did unlawfully, maliciously, and with malice aforethought, kill Joseph Melvin Lucero, also an Indian, on April 15, 2011 on Santo Domingo Pueblo, Santo Domingo, New Mexico.

