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TOPPENISH MAN FOUND GUILTY OF ASSAULT BY STRANGULATION

Yakima, Washington – First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that on August 19, 2025, a jury returned a guilty verdict in the trial of Rickie Lorenzo Smith, 51, a member of the Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation of one count of Assault of a Spouse, Intimate Partner, or Dating Partner by Strangulation in Indian Country in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153, 113(a)(8). Chief United States District Judge Stanley A. Bastian presided over the trial and set sentencing for December 2, 2026. Smith faces a sentence of up to 10 years in prison to be followed by up to 3 years of supervised release.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Smith assaulted his then-partner by hitting, choking and strangling her while the two attended a birthday celebration in Pioneer Park in Toppenish, Washington on August 17, 2023. Evidence of the victim's injuries, the victim's testimony, and the testimony of a bystander who called 911 and reported the crime was presented at trial. Smith has multiple prior arrests related to domestic violence incidents. The jury acquitted Smith of Assault Resulting in Substantial Bodily Injury.

"Today's guilty verdict reflects the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in pursuing justice," stated Serrano. "Assault by strangulation is a grave and violent offense, and this outcome demonstrates our continued commitment to ensuring accountability and safeguarding the well-being of our community. This case also underscores the devastating impact of domestic violence and our resolve to address it with the seriousness it demands."

"This trial verdict emphasizes that assault against intimate partners will not be tolerated," said W. Mike Herrington, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Seattle field office. "Rickie Lorenzo Smith will see consequences for his actions thanks to the hard work of our investigators and prosecutors in pursuing justice on behalf of victims and keeping our communities safe. Their tireless efforts resulted in this outcome, as well as contributing to a 14% drop in the violent crime rate for the state of Washington last year. The FBI will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to combat violent crime, including on tribal lands."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Yakima RA and the Yakama Nation Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Courtney R. Pratten and Michael D. Murphy.

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