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RESERVATION POLICE



FAILURE

TO PROTECT

Critics say failures in tribal policing led to deadly outcomes

TED McDERMOTT | ted.mcdermott@lee.net, Public Service Journalism Team

When Jolene Cliffe heard that Bessie Blackeagle was dead, her “blood ran cold.”

Then she sat on her living-room floor and had “a mental breakdown.”

“I just knew,” Cliffe said. “I just knew what he’d done.”

He was Travis Ellenwood. And what he’d done was beat, strangle and murder Blackeagle — who was then his live-in girlfriend — on Oct. 31, 2020, on the Nez Perce Tribe’s reservation in central Idaho.

Ellenwood pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in 2021 and was sentenced to almost 20 years in federal prison.

Cliffe said she knew what Ellenwood had done without being told because of what she says Ellenwood did to her when she was his live-in girlfriend less than two years before.

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About this series

This story is part of a series by investigative journalist Ted McDermott of Lee Enterprises’ Public Service Journalism team.



Flags fly outside the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee office on Saturday, Feb. 22, in Lapwai, Idaho.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Chaos reigns at CDC amid leadership shake-up

3 senior officials quit in protest as turmoil sparks bipartisan alarm

MIKE STOBBE, AMANDA SEITZ AND CHRIS MEGERIAN  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The nation’s top public health agency was left reeling Thursday as the White House worked to expel the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director and replace her with a top adviser to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

The turmoil triggered rare bipartisan alarm as Kennedy tries to advance anti-vaccine policies that are contradicted by decades of scientific research.

Two administration officials said Jim O’Neill, a former investment executive, would supplant Susan Monarez, a longtime government scientist. O’Neill worked at the Department of Health and Human Services under President George W. Bush, but he does not have a medical background. The officials requested anonymity.

A flashpoint is expected in the coming weeks as a key advisory committee, which Kennedy reshaped with vaccine skeptics, is expected to issue new recommendations on immunizations. The panel is scheduled to review standard childhood shots for measles, hepatitis and other diseases.

Two Republican senators called for congressional oversight and some Democrats said Kennedy should be fired. He is scheduled to testify on Capitol Hill on Sept. 4.

No explanation for ouster

Kennedy has not explained the

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US tariff exemption for small parcels ends Friday

Trump order likely to have big impact on some small businesses, online shoppers

MAE ANDERSON  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Low-value imports are losing their duty-free status in the United States this week as part of President Donald Trump’s agenda for making the nation less dependent on foreign goods and resetting global trade with tariffs.

An executive order the Republican signed last month eliminates a customs exemption for international shipments worth \$800 or less starting Friday, nearly two years earlier than the deadline set in the tax cuts and spending law approved by Congress. Though the president previously ended the de minimis rule for inexpensive items sent from China and Hong Kong, having to pay import taxes on small parcels from everywhere else likely will be a big change for some small businesses and online shoppers.

Purchases that previously entered the U.S. without needing to clear customs will require vetting and be subject to their origin country’s applicable tariff rate, which can range from 10% to 50%.

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