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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **UPDATE ON TRIBAL CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS AND FEDERAL CRIMINAL INDICTMENT AGAINST JOSEPH LAFFERTY**

**Eagle Butte, SD – August 20, 2025** – The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Law Enforcement Department provides the following update regarding multiple criminal proceedings involving Joseph Alan Lafferty, age 67.

#### **Tribal Criminal Complaints**

On **July 24, 2025**, a criminal complaint was filed in the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Court charging Mr. Lafferty with **five counts of Terroristic Threats** under tribal law. The complaint alleges that, on **July 21, 2025**, Mr. Lafferty threatened to kill the Tribal Chairman, Tribal Treasurer, two Tribal Council Representatives, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Cheyenne River Health Center. According to the complaint, Mr. Lafferty claimed to have a firearm and threatened to shoot these individuals one by one.

Mr. Lafferty also faces charges in a **separate and unrelated tribal case** filed on **February 20, 2025**. That complaint alleges that, during one or more Tribal Council meetings, Mr. Lafferty committed multiple offenses, including **Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Terroristic Threats, Obstructing Governmental Function, Public Nuisance, Disorderly Conduct, Resisting Arrest, and Harassment**. Tribal elders were among the alleged victims in that case.

On **August 15, 2025**, Mr. Lafferty was arrested pursuant to a Tribal Court Arrest Warrant. He was detained but released the following day on a **\$500 bond**.

#### **Federal Indictment**

In addition to the tribal charges, Mr. Lafferty faces **federal criminal prosecution**. On **August 14, 2025**, a federal grand jury in the **U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota** indicted Mr. Lafferty on **two felony counts of threatening a Federal**

**Official.** The indictment alleges that Mr. Lafferty threatened to assault the Chief Executive Officer of the Cheyenne River Health Center, an employee of the Indian Health Service, and the Acting Superintendent of the Cheyenne River Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

On **August 18, 2025**, Mr. Lafferty appeared before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Pierre, South Dakota. The Magistrate Judge ordered Mr. Lafferty detained pending trial, citing factors including:

- The violent nature of the charges,
- The strong weight of the evidence,
- The repeated threats to harm or kill multiple individuals, including himself, and
- The serious danger posed to the community if released.

## **Statement**

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Law Enforcement Department emphasizes that **all criminal complaints and indictments contain allegations only**. Mr. Lafferty is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.