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**(SD)-Guilty Plea In 2017 Beating Death Of Retired Teacher**

By: John Axtell Posted at: 07/31/2019 11:25 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - A Rapid City man has pleaded guilty to the beating death of a retired Rapid City middle school teacher 2 years ago as part of an escape while on work release.

30-year old Andrew Eastman pleaded guilty to 1st degree manslaughter in the death of 64-year old Larry Mintzlaff with a plea agreement allowing the state to ask for 60-years in prison. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for December 10th.

Eastman was a state prison inmate on escape status in June 2017 after walking away from his work release job and stealing his work pickup when he went to Mintzlaff's home and killed him during a burglary then stole his vehicle.

Eastman was arrested in Albuquerque, New Mexico, three days later driving Mintzlaff's car and using his credit cards. Police found a baseball bat and bloody clothes in the vehicle.

In entering his guilty plea yesterday, Eastman said he remembers leaving the minimum security unit and taking a pickup, but little after that. He said when he sobered up, he realized he made a terrible choice and that he now accepts responsibility for what happened.