

For Immediate Release
April 19, 2011

**NAVAJO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL ASSAULT
WITH INTENT TO COMMIT MURDER CHARGE**

ALBUQUERQUE – Earlier today, **Michael Harrison**, 29, a member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Shiprock, New Mexico, entered a guilty plea to assault with intent to commit murder in Albuquerque federal court under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Harrison will be sentenced to a 78-month term of imprisonment. Harrison has been in federal custody since his arrest on October 7, 2010, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Harrison attempted to murder his common-law wife Cherlyncia Yazzie, also a member of the Navajo Nation, by slashing her throat on September 23, 2010. According to the criminal complaint filed in the case, law enforcement authorities learned of the attack on Ms. Yazzie from staff at the Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) who reported that Harrison drove Ms. Yazzie to the hospital on the afternoon of September 23, 2010 where she was treated for injuries to her throat. The criminal complaint alleges that Ms. Yazzie's injuries included "a deep laceration that went through her trachea, windpipe, voice box, neck muscles, and close to the spinal cord." Upon receiving the report from the NNMC, officers of the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety went to the hospital where they arrested Harrison. Harrison was in the custody of the Navajo Nation until October 7, 2010, when he was arrested by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation based on the offense charged in the criminal complaint.

On October 27, 2010, Harrison was charged in a four-count indictment with: Count 1, assault to commit murder; Count 2, assault with a dangerous weapon; Count 3, assault resulting

in serious bodily injury; and Count 4, abandonment or abuse of a child. This morning, Harrison entered a plea to Count 1 of the indictment, and admitted that he stabbed Ms. Yazzie with the intention of killing her because she was planning to leave him. Under the terms of Harrison's plea agreement, the remaining three counts of the indictment will be dismissed after Harrison is sentenced.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, Shiprock Division, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Rozzoni.

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