

For Immediate Release
August 11, 2011

**FEDERAL JURY FINDS TOHAJIILEE MAN GUILTY OF
SEXUALLY ABUSING CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 12**

Defendant Faces Minimum 30 Year Prison Sentence

ALBUQUERQUE – At 8:00 p.m. last night, a federal jury sitting in Albuquerque found **Eddie Chaco, Jr.**, 30, guilty on all counts of a three count indictment charging him with aggravated sexual abuse of a child under the age of 12 in Indian Country after a three day trial. At sentencing, Chaco faces imprisonment for not less than 30 years and up to life. Chaco, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Tohajiilee, New Mexico, has been in federal custody since his arrest on March 1, 2011, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Chaco was indicted on December 29, 2010 and charged with three counts of aggravated sexual abuse. The indictment alleged that Chaco engaged in sexual acts, including sexual intercourse, with a female child under the age of 12 on three occasions between August 2008 and May 2010.

The evidence at trial established that the investigation into Chaco was initiated after the New Mexico Children, Youth and Family Department (CYFD) in Albuquerque received a telephone call on June 9, 2010 reporting that Chaco had sexually assaulting a child. The report was made by a woman who had temporary custody of the child and who contacted CYFD after the child told her that Chaco had touched her in an inappropriate, sexual way. During the initial call to CYFD, the child, who was then 11-years-old, told the intake worker that, a month earlier (in May 2010), Chaco had sexual intercourse with her while she was residing with her grandparents.

CYFD referred the matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the FBI arranged for the child to be forensically interviewed at All Faith's Receiving Home, a non-profit organization in Albuquerque that provides child abuse intervention, prevention and treatment services. During the interview, the child described numerous instances during which Chaco sexually assaulted her while she was living with her grandparents in Tohajiilee. According to the child, the abuse occurred between August 2008, when the child was only 9-years-old, and May 2010, when she was 11-years-old.

The child, now 12-years-old, testified during the trial and described the pattern of sexual abuse she suffered at Chaco's hand over an extended period of time. She also told the jury that Chaco usually was drunk when he sexually assaulted her.

Chaco testified in his own defense, and denied the charges against him.

The jury deliberated two and a half hours before returning a verdict of guilty on each of the three counts in the indictment.

The case was investigated by the FBI with assistance from All Faith's Receiving Home, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jack Burkhead and Niki Tapia-Brito.

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