

For Immediate Release
August 15, 2011

NAVAJO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL ASSAULT CHARGE

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Albuquerque, **Andre Francisco**, a 24-year-old Navajo man who resides in Fort Wingate, New Mexico, entered a guilty plea to an assault resulting in serious bodily injury charge under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. At sentencing, Francisco faces a maximum penalty of ten years of imprisonment to be followed by not more than five years of supervised release. Francisco was released to a half-way house following his arrest on March 3, 2011. At the conclusion of today's plea hearing, Francisco was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service and will be detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Francisco pleaded guilty to slashing the face of another Navajo man with a steak knife in August 2010. Francisco was indicted on the offense on January 28, 2011 and charged with (i) assault with a dangerous weapon, and (ii) assault resulting in serious bodily injury. Francisco pled guilty to the second count of the indictment. Under the terms of the plea agreement, the first count will be dismissed after Francisco is sentenced.

In his plea agreement, Francisco admitted committing the assault charged in the indictment. According to the plea agreement, on the afternoon of August 27, 2010, Francisco and the victim became intoxicated and argued over ownership of some of the alcohol. The argument ended when Francisco slashed the victim's face with a 12" steak knife. As a result of Francisco's assault, the victim sustained a deep cut to the left side of his face that runs from the top of his ear to the left corner of his mouth.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation

Department of Public Safety, Crownpoint Division, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Paul H. Spiers.

#

11-345