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News Release

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Red Lake woman pleads guilty to maiming another

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, a 24-year-old Red Lake woman pleaded guilty to maiming another Red Lake woman by biting her ear off and biting her nose. Joelyn Rose Hart specifically pleaded guilty to one count of maiming. Hart, who was indicted on June 8, 2011, entered her plea before United States District Court Judge Richard H. Kyle.

In her plea agreement, Hart admitted that on January 1, 2009, she intended to torture, maim, and disfigure the victim by biting off the victim's ear and biting her nose, and she had no just cause or excuse to do so. The incident occurred during a New Year's Day party on the Red Lake Indian Reservation. The victim had to undergo five reconstructive surgeries to re-attach her ear.

For her crime, Hart faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Kyle will determine her sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Red Lake Tribal Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael A. Dees.

Because the Red Lake Indian Reservation is a federal-jurisdiction reservation, some of the crimes that occur there are investigated by the FBI in conjunction with the Red Lake Tribal Police Department. Those cases are prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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