



PRESS RELEASE

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PINEDALE, N.M., MAN SENTENCED TO 50 YEARS IN PRISON FOR KIDNAPPING AND RAPING A WHEELCHAIR-BOUND TEENAGER

ALBUQUERQUE – Earlier today, a federal judge in Santa Fe, N.M., sentenced Stanton Begay, 37, to a 50-year term of imprisonment for his conviction on kidnapping and aggravated sexual abuse charges, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Carol K.O. Lee, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Albuquerque Division. Begay will be on supervised release for five years after he completes his prison sentence. He also will be required to register as a sex offender.

A federal jury convicted Begay, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Pinedale, N.M., of these charges on May 24, 2012, after a four-day trial.

The evidence at trial established that, on Dec. 12, 2010, Begay and a wheelchair-bound fifteen- year-old girl, who was paralyzed from the waist down, were left alone at a residence in Prewitt, N.M., which is located within the Navajo Indian Reservation. When the victim tried to leave the residence, Begay prevented her from leaving by grabbing her wheel-chair. He then forced her to engage in oral sex. The victim tried to push Begay away and pleaded with him to let her go. Instead, Begay unbuckled the victim from the wheel-chair, threw her on the bed, and threatened to hit her if she did not shut up. When the victim continued to resist his attack, Begay hit her and bit her on the face and neck. Despite the victim’s continued efforts to fight him off, Begay vaginally raped her. He also threatened the victim, “If you tell anyone, I will come after you!” During the sexual assault, when the victim’s father arrived at the residence looking for his daughter, Begay put his hand over the victim’s mouth so she could not speak.

After the sexual attack, the victim’s unsuspecting father wheeled her home. The victim first reported the rape to a friend who is a nurse at the University of New Mexico Hospital. At the urging of the nurse, the victim reported the rape to her mother and also confided in her father and cousin. The victim’s mother contacted the police and arranged for the victim to be examined at a nearby hospital, where the victim’s injuries were documented and photographed, and evidence was collected pursuant to a forensic sexual assault examination. The forensic examination and DNA analysis revealed that Begay’s semen was found on the victim’s shirt where it fell after Begay orally penetrated her.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Crownpoint Division of the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Roberto D. Ortega and Niki Tapia-Brito.

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