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**COUSHATTA TRIBE MEMBER SENTENCED  
IN FEDERAL COURT FOR ASSAULT CHARGE**

**LAKE CHARLES, La.:** United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana member Nicholas Tyler Poncho, 21, of Elton, La., was sentenced Thursday before U.S. District Court Judge Patricia Minaldi to 33 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release and a \$1,000 fine for assault.

Poncho pleaded guilty October 4, 2012, to one count of assault with a dangerous weapon after a federal grand jury indicted him in May 2012 for assault with a dangerous weapon and assault resulting in serious bodily injury. According to court documents, Poncho admitted to intentionally striking his father Jan. 22, 2012, while on the Coushatta Tribal Reservation with a 1.5 liter wine bottle with the intent to do bodily harm. Poncho also admitted that the wine bottle was an instrument capable of inflicting grave bodily harm or death.

Jurisdiction in Indian Country is based upon the unique sovereign relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes. Congress has criminalized certain acts that take place in Indian Country. The U.S. Attorney's Office prosecutes all felony and misdemeanor cases, arising in Indian Country, that are within the jurisdiction of this office. The U.S. Attorney's Office prosecutes cases, arising in Indian Country, involving felonies where either the defendant or the victim is an Indian or both the defendant and the victim are Indian. The U.S. Attorney's Office also prosecutes cases involving misdemeanors where the defendant is a non-Indian.

"Safeguarding the lives of those on reservations is of upmost concern to our office," Finley said. "Violence on the lands of native peoples will not be tolerated and offenders will be prosecuted."

The Coushatta Tribal Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lake Charles Resident Agency, investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel J. McCoy prosecuted the case.

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