



The United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
Western District of Louisiana

For Immediate Release  
October 4, 2012

[www.justice.gov/usao/law](http://www.justice.gov/usao/law)

Stephanie A. Finley  
United States Attorney  
(337) 262-6618  
[mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov](mailto:mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov)

**MEMBER OF COUSHATTA TRIBE OF LOUISIANA PLEADS GUILTY  
IN FEDERAL COURT TO ASSAULT CHARGE**

**LAKE CHARLES, La.:** United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that a member of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana pleaded guilty to an assault charge before the Honorable Judge Patricia Minaldi, in the United States District Court, Lake Charles Division.

Nicholas Tyler Poncho, 21, of Elton, La., was indicted by a federal grand jury in May of 2012, with two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon and once count of assault resulting in serious bodily injury. During a change of plea hearing held today, Poncho pleaded guilty to one count of assault with a dangerous weapon, related to an incident that occurred on the Coushatta Tribal Reservation on January 22, 2012. In documents filed with the Court today, Poncho admitted that he intentionally struck his father with a 1.5 liter wine bottle, with the intent to do bodily harm. Poncho also admitted that the 1.5 liter 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 United States 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.

At sentencing, this defendant faces a term of imprisonment of not more than 10 years, a fine of not more than \$250,000, or both, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years. **Sentencing has been scheduled for January 10, 2013.**

The case was investigated by the Coushatta Tribal Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lake Charles Resident Agency. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel J. McCoy.

###