

For Immediate Release  
August 3, 2011

**NAVAJO MAN SENTENCED TO 21-MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT  
FOR FEDERAL ASSAULT CONVICTION**

ALBUQUERQUE – On August 2, 2011, in Albuquerque federal court, **Sterling Silversmith**, 25, was sentenced to a 21-month term of imprisonment to be followed by three years of supervised release for his federal assault conviction. Silversmith also was ordered to pay a total of \$3,442 in restitution to the victims of his assault and to healthcare providers who treated the victims. Silversmith, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, has been in federal custody since his arrest on August 18, 2010.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Silversmith was charged on July 13, 2010, in a four-count indictment alleging two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon and two counts of assault resulting in serious bodily injury. The indictment alleged that Silversmith assaulted two men with a knife on June 20, 2010 in Indian Country in McKinley County.

According to court records, Silversmith assaulted Donovan Roe Bitsilly and Jay Bowers Levier, both members of the Navajo Nation, in the vicinity of Whiskey Lake, New Mexico in early hours of June 20, 2010. Mr. Bitsilly, Mr. Levier and their families were camping out near Whiskey Lake after attending a family reunion. Mr. Levier awoke shortly after midnight to find that Silversmith and Mr. Bitsilly were involved in a physical altercation. Based on his observations, Mr. Levier believed that Silversmith was slashing Mr. Bitsilly and attempted to pull Silversmith away from Mr. Bitsilly. Silversmith responded by stabbing Mr. Levier in the arm. Neither Mr. Bitsilly nor Mr. Levier were armed with any weapon.

As a result of Silversmith's assault, Mr. Bitsilly sustained four stab wounds in the back, three on the left side and one on the right side. He also suffered a small hemothorax in the left

chest and a two-inch laceration to the back of his neck. Mr. Levier suffered a major stab wound to the right arm which severed arteries and nerves.

On April 1, 2011, Silversmith pled guilty to count 4 of the indictment charging him with assault resulting in serious bodily injury. At the conclusion of Silversmith's sentencing hearing, the court dismissed the remaining three counts of the indictment.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kyle T. Nayback.

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