

Shiprock man pleads guilty to federal assault charge

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ALBUQUERQUE – Lance Wilson, 30, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Shiprock, N.M., pled guilty Oct. 2, in federal court in Albuquerque, to an assault charge. Wilson's plea agreement recommends a prison sentence within the range of 60 to 72 months followed by a term of supervised release to be determined by the court.

Wilson was arrested in January 2017, on a criminal complaint charging him with assaulting a Navajo man by striking him in the head with a pair of wire cutters on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County, N.M.

Wilson subsequently was indicted on Jan. 24. The two-count indictment charged Wilson with assault with intent to commit murder and assault resulting in serious bodily injury. The indictment alleged that Wilson committed the crimes on Dec. 24, on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County.

During proceedings, Wilson pled guilty to Count 2 of the indictment charging him with assault resulting in serious bodily injury. In entering the guilty plea, Wilson admitted that on Dec. 24, 2016, he struck the victim twice in the head with a cable-cutting tool because he was angry with the victim.

Wilson further admitted that as the result of the assault, the victim required multiple surgeries including one to place a plate in his skull. Wilson acknowledged that, as the result of the assault, the victim suffered permanent injuries including memory loss and loss of speech, requires the use of a wheelchair, and resides in a health care facility.

Wilson remains in custody pending a sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

This case was investigated by the Farmington office of the FBI and the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael D. Murphy is prosecuting the case.