

Navajo woman pleads guilty to child abuse charges

Written by Staff Reports

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Plea agreement recommends 10 year prison sentence

ALBUQUERQUE – Elmira Curley, 22, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Navajo, N.M., pleaded guilty Feb. 13 in federal court in Albuquerque, N.M., to assault and child abuse charges.

Curley entered her guilty plea under a plea agreement that recommends a sentence of 120 months of imprisonment followed by a term of supervised release to be determined by the court.

The FBI and Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety arrested Curley on July 6, 2016, on an indictment charging her with abusing a child resulting in great bodily harm. The indictment alleged that Curley committed the crime on the Navajo Indian Reservation in McKinley County on March 14, 2016.

During the Feb. 13 change of plea hearing, Curley pled guilty to a two-count felony information charging her with assault resulting in serious bodily harm and child abuse. In her plea agreement, Curley admitted that on March 14, 2016, she committed the crimes of assault and child abuse in Navajo, N.M., which is on the Navajo Indian Reservation.

Curley admitted committing these crimes by putting the legs and feet of a nine-month-old infant into a bathtub of scalding hot water and causing the infant to sustain severe burns. Curley acknowledged that the infant-victim was hospitalized for several weeks for medical treatment and received skin grafts to repair some of the second- and third-degree burns she sustained as the result of the assault and abuse.

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Curley is in federal custody and remains detained pending her sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

The Gallup, N.M., and Phoenix, Ariz., offices of the FBI and the Window Rock, Ariz., office of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety investigated this case, which is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicholas J. Marshall.