

Repeat domestic violence offender sentenced to 30 years

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Convicted of assault against wife on Ute Reservation

DURANGO, Colo. — United States Attorney Jason R. Dunn announced June 8, that David Sidney Wells, age 44, of Towaoc, Colo., was sentenced to serve 360 months in federal prison, followed by 10 years on supervised release, for committing a violent sexual and physical assault against his wife on the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation. The FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs joined in the announcement.

According to court documents, as well as facts presented during trial and sentencing, Wells became angry with his wife at their shared residence on the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation. As his wife attempted to flee, Wells repeatedly dragged her by the hair away from the door and into a bedroom.

There, Wells repeatedly struck his wife with a wooden club and kicked her in the stomach. Wells then sexually assaulted his wife before strangling her to unconsciousness and fleeing the scene.

The victim's injuries resulted in her being medically evacuated by airplane to a hospital in Lakewood, Colo.. At trial, an expert testified that the victim had a substantial chance of dying due to internal bleeding caused by the assault.

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Prior to this offense, Wells had over a dozen prior convictions for assaultive conduct, to include at least two prior incidents where he assaulted his current wife.

At the time of the assault, Wells had a warrant for his arrest from a case brought by the State of Colorado for second degree by strangulation, as an act of domestic violence, for an assault committed against his wife in August of 2018 at a park in Cortez, Colo. Wells will serve his federal sentence consecutive to the 4-year sentence imposed in the prior case, Montezuma Case 18CR276.

After the jury's verdict, Wells violated a court imposed no-contact order by writing a seven-page letter to his wife.

"The brutality of Mr. Wells' assault is almost unimaginable," Dunn said. "But with this sentence, it is all but certain that Mr. Wells' legacy of violent abuse has come to an end.

"This sentence is also important because it sends a strong signal to perpetrators and tribal victims alike, that the U.S. Attorney's office will not tolerate such acts of domestic violence on tribal lands in Colorado and will aggressively prosecute them every time."

The sentence was pronounced by U.S. District Court Judge Robert E. Blackburn. Wells appeared at the sentencing hearing in custody and was remanded at its conclusion.

Wells was indicted by a federal grand jury on April 5, 2019 and was found guilty of aggravated sexual abuse, assault with the intent to commit aggravated sexual abuse, assault resulting in serious bodily injury, and assault with a dangerous weapon, following a week-long trial on Feb. 7.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The defendant was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeff Graves and R. Josh Player.

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