

Shiprock man pleads guilty to assault, federal firearms offense

Written by Staff Reports

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A man from Shiprock, New Mexico pled guilty to multiple charges in November, including a federal firearms offense, after he shot into a car, injuring a woman. He also shot at the officers who responded to a call about the incident.

According to court records, on Oct. 11, 2022, 24-year-old Deon Joe Bidtah approached a vehicle near his residence in Shiprock and fired two rounds from a 12-gauge shotgun into it, hitting the woman who was driving the car and injuring her. The woman was taken to San Juan Regional Medical Center for treatment.

Navajo Nation Police officers responded to the incident location, including one officer who, by virtue of a special law enforcement commission, is considered a federal officer. Bidtah, a registered member of the Navajo Nation, approached the officers carrying the 12-gauge shotgun and fired toward them.

Officers took cover behind their patrol units and commanded Bidtah to stop and drop his weapon. However, Bidtah ignored the commands, reloaded the shotgun, and continued to walk toward the officers.

In response, officers fired two rounds at Bidtah. Bidtah was struck and was later transported to the Northern Navajo Medical Center for treatment.

Alexander M.M. Uballez, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and Raul Bujanda, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office, announced that Bidtah pled guilty Nov. 22 to all three counts of the indictment charging him with assault with a dangerous weapon, discharging a firearm during a crime of violence, and assault on a federal officer with a deadly and dangerous weapon. He will remain in custody pending sentencing, which has not been scheduled.

At sentencing, Bidtah faces at least 10 years in prison followed by five years of supervised release.

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The Farmington Resident Agency of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office investigated this case with assistance from the Navajo Nation Department of Investigation and Department of Criminal Investigations. Assistant United States Attorney Matthew J. McGinley is prosecuting the case.

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