



PRESS RELEASE

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ISLETA PUEBLO MAN TO SERVE FIFTY-ONE MONTHS IN PRISON
FOR FEDERAL ARMED BANK ROBBERY CONVICTION

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning a federal judge in Santa Fe, N.M., sentenced **James Joshua Abeita**, 31, to a 51-month term of imprisonment for his armed bank robbery conviction. Mr. Abeita, a member and resident of Isleta Pueblo, will be on supervised release for five years after he completes his prison sentence. Mr. Abeita also was ordered to pay full restitution to the bank that was the victim of his crime.

Mr. Abeita committed the armed bank robbery offense while on supervised release for another crime. During today’s hearing, the judge sentenced Mr. Abeita to 18 months of imprisonment for violating the conditions of his supervised release. The 18 month sentence will run concurrent with Mr. Abeita’s bank robbery sentence.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Mr. Abeita and his co-defendant Adriana Nicole Abeita, 24, also of Isleta Pueblo, were charged with robbing the Bank of the West (Bank) located at 500 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard NE, in Albuquerque on June 22, 2010. Ms. Abeita, who is unrelated to Mr. Abeita, was arrested that day and subsequently was released under pretrial supervision. Mr. Abeita was arrested on July 28, 2010 and has been in federal custody since that time.

According to court filings, the Bank was robbed at approximately 10:00 a.m. on June 22, 2010, by a man who verbally demanded money and brandished a 12" kitchen knife at a bank teller. The bank teller provided cash to the robber in response to his demand for “hundreds and fifties” and the money from her “refill” drawer. After leaving the Bank, the robber was seen getting into the passenger side of a dark green Dodge Stratus with a missing front bumper that was driven by a woman. Later that day, several law enforcement agencies received tips from various sources identifying Mr. Abeita as the bank robber and Ms. Abeita as the driver of the Dodge Stratus. Thereafter, the victim bank teller and another teller identified Mr. Abeita as the bank robber from photo-arrays, and officers of the Pueblo of Isleta Police Department arrested Ms. Abeita.

On June 2, 2011, Mr. Abeita entered a guilty plea to the indictment charging him with armed bank robbery under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office. In entering his plea, Mr. Abeita admitted brandishing a 12" knife at the bank teller when he verbally demanded cash from her on June 22, 2010.

On June 17, 2011, Ms. Abeita entered a guilty plea to an information charging her with bank robbery under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office, and admitted that she served as the getaway driver for Mr. Abeita with the knowledge that he had entered the bank for the purpose of committing bank robbery. On November 3, 2011, Ms. Abeita was sentenced to three days imprisonment or time served to be followed by three years of supervised release.

The case was investigated by the FBI, the Albuquerque Police Department and the Pueblo of Isleta Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roberto D. Ortega.

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