



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

May 24, 2012

**FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS PINEDALE, N.M., MAN ON KIDNAPPING
AND AGGRAVATED CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CHARGES**

***Stanton Begay Faces Minimum 30 Years to Life Imprisonment for
Kidnapping and Raping a Wheelchair-Bound 15-Year-Old Girl***

ALBUQUERQUE – This afternoon, a federal jury sitting in Albuquerque, N.M., convicted Stanton Begay, 36, on a two-count superseding indictment charging him with (1) kidnapping and (2) aggravated sexual abuse of a minor, after a four-day trial, U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced.

At sentencing, Begay, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Pinedale, N.M., faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment on his kidnapping conviction. He faces a minimum 30 years and a maximum of life imprisonment on his rape conviction. Begay has been in federal custody since his arrest on March 22, 2011, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

The evidence at trial established that, on Dec. 12, 2010, Begay and a wheelchair-bound fifteen-year-old girl (victim), who was paralyzed from the waist down, were left alone at a residence in Prewitt, N.M., which is located within the Navajo Indian Reservation. When the victim tried to leave the residence because she did not want to be alone with Begay, Begay prevented her from leaving by grabbing her wheel-chair. He then forced her to engage in oral sex. The victim tried to push Begay away and pleaded with him to let her go. Instead, Begay unbuckled the victim from the wheel-chair, threw her on the bed, and threatened to hit her if she did not shut up. When the victim continued to resist his attack, Begay hit her and bit her on the face and neck. Despite the victim's continued efforts to resist and fight him off, Begay then vaginally raped her. Begay also threatened her, "If you tell anyone, I will come after you!" During the sexual assault, when the victim's father arrived at the residence looking for his daughter, Begay put his hand over the victim's mouth so she could not speak.

After the sexual attack, the victim's father wheeled her home. The victim first reported the rape to a friend who is a nurse at the University of New Mexico Hospital. She then reported the rape to her father and cousin. Following the nurse's direction, the victim also reported the rape to her mother, who called the police and arranged for the victim to be examined at a nearby

hospital, where her injuries were documented and photographed and evidence was collected pursuant to a forensic sexual assault examination. The forensic examination and DNA analysis revealed that Begay's semen was found on the victim's shirt where it fell after Begay orally penetrated her.

The defendant did not present a defense, but instead sought to establish through questioning of the prosecution's witnesses that the victim consented to have sex with Begay.

The jury deliberated for approximately four hours before returning a verdict of guilty on both counts of the superseding indictment.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Crownpoint Division of the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Roberto D. Ortega and Niki Tapia-Brito.

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