

Zuni man pleads guilty to sexual abuse against children

Written by gallupsun
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A 51-year-old man from Zuni has plead guilty to sexual abuse against children after he allegedly touched two girls who were under the age of 9 years old in a sexual manner.

According to publicly available court records, between Sept. 21, 2000, and Sept. 20, 2001, Rodney Waikaniwa intentionally touched his first victim with the intent of gratifying his own sexual desire. At the time, the victim was only about 8 years old. Between Jan. 1, 2013, and Dec. 31, 2015, Waikaniwa, an enrolled member of the Zuni Pueblo, intentionally touched a second victim with the same sexual intent. At the time, the second victim was approximately 6 years old.

A federal grand jury indicted Waikaniwa on May 24.

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 on March 13 that Waikaniwa pled guilty in federal court to two counts of abusive sexual contact. Waikaniwa will remain in custody pending sentencing, which has not been scheduled as of press time.

Under the terms of the agreement, at sentencing, Waikaniwa faces a minimum of 10 years in prison and up to a maximum of 15 years. This term of incarceration will be followed by a term of supervised release of no less than 5 years and up to life. He will be required to register as a sex offender.

The Gallup Resident Agency of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office investigated this case with assistance from the Zuni Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Mark A. Probasco is prosecuting the case.

If you have reason to believe you or your child may be a victim, please call the FBI at (505) 889-1300 or submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.

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