

## **Shiprock woman sentenced to prison for assault conviction**

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ALBUQUERQUE – Cornelia Tom Tapaha, 41, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Shiprock, N.M., was sentenced June 7 in Santa Fe to 24 months in prison followed by two years of supervised release for her conviction on an assault charge.

Tapaha was arrested in June 2016, on an indictment charging her with assault with a dangerous weapon, a vehicle, and assault resulting in serious bodily injury. The indictment alleged that Tapaha committed the crimes on July 8, 2015, on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County, N.M.

A federal jury returned a verdict finding Tapaha guilty of assault and assault resulting in serious bodily injury on Dec. 12, 2016, after a five day.

The evidence at trial established that on the evening of July 8, 2016, Tapaha, the victim and another individual consumed alcohol while driving on the Navajo Indian Reservation. While Tapaha was driving and the victim was in the front passenger seat, Tapaha and the victim began arguing. Eventually Tapaha pulled over, and the victim and the other individual got out of the vehicle and began walking away. Tapaha remained in the vehicle and proceeded to run over the victim. As a result of this assault, the victim's ribs, collar bone and ankle were broken and required surgical repair. The victim also suffered multiple lacerations requiring stitches.

This case was investigated by the Farmington office of the FBI and the Shiprock office of the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Spindle and Novaline D. Wilson prosecuted the case.