

through the rancher's other company. The taxidermist stated that he would have billed either the ranch or the other company for the skull and that the rancher should have, in turn, billed Smith. At the time of this interview, the taxidermist could not locate any invoices or paperwork to show this transaction but promised to search his files and send the information to agents at a later date. As of the date of this report, the taxidermist has not provided this office with any paperwork or related documents.

David Smith was asked specifically about the December 2004 visit to the ranch where he was alleged to have shot and killed a bison on his friend's ranch property. Smith advised that since the rancher considers him a guest and a friend, he was presented with the offer to shoot something. According to Smith, it was brought to his attention that there was an older bison on the ranch that "needed to be cold," or killed. Smith stated that he was "talked into it." Smith stated that he drove out to where the bison was known to graze and, upon seeing it, got out of the vehicle and shot the bison from approximately 50 to 75 yards in the head with a 300 Winchester Rifle. Smith stated that he had to shoot it in such a way that would put it down without it injuring any of the hunters or the other animals and that the bison needed to be killed because it was "tearing up a bunch of stuff." After the initial shot, Smith advised that he shot it additional times in the head to make sure it was dead.

Smith advised that he took the bison's shoulder mount, skull, tanned hide, and hooves away from the kill. Smith stated that he currently had the skull still in the packaging from the taxidermy shop in his garage and that he had had made the hooves into bookends. Smith maintained that he had been in contact with the ranch-hand, about paying for these items, and that, as of September 8, 2005, he has paid the rancher in full, which totaled \$3,170.54. Smith provided a copy of his check as well as an invoice faxed to him from the rancher himself, dated September 8, 2005, where the rancher requests the additional payment of \$1410. *Agent's note: This invoice from the rancher to Smith was dated September 8, 2005, one day after the agents' September 7 interview with rancher concerning this matter. Smith's check for the additional \$1410 was also dated September 8, 2005.*

Smith was then asked what happened to the bison meat, and he stated that, to the best of his recollection, it was distributed among some of the individuals at the ranch. When asked again if he had been given any meat, Smith said that he and his wife were preparing to move and that they would not have any room for the meat and that there was no room in his freezer for it, either. When Smith was asked yet again if he had taken any meat from the ranch, Smith then admitted that he had taken a cooler of the meat from the ranch and had given it to a relative but that he did not take any for his own consumption. Smith advised that there had been approximately 20 pounds of meat in the cooler.

Following the completion of this investigation, OIG agents presented these facts to the Fraud and Public Corruption Section, U.S. Attorney's Office, Washington, D.C. The U.S. Attorney's Office had a chance to review this report and subsequently declined the case in lieu of administrative action by the Department.