

SCI is a worldwide safari hunting organization working for the conservation of wildlife, education, and protection of the right to hunt. As of January 2004, a former supervisor, FWS, Office of Law Enforcement, Southeastern Region, has been an SCI executive. Another SCI executive maintains that he and SCI are big supporters of FWS and that he and David Smith have known each other for many years.

Details of Investigation

On June 21, 2005, an FWS law enforcement officer, Houston, TX, provided information to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) concerning the alleged inappropriate designation of the Houston port. According to him, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks inappropriately designated Houston as a port of entry under section 9(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, in order to allow his friend, a taxidermist and executive of SCI, to import wildlife and wildlife products into the country at a reduced cost. The FWS law enforcement officer stated that Smith had been overheard by a supervisory FWS law enforcement official saying that if Houston was not designated, he would not designate Memphis or Louisville, either.

According to the FWS law enforcement officer, on October 1, 2003, he took part in a conference call that also included Kevin Adams, Chief, Office of Law Enforcement, FWS; a wildlife inspector; a supervisory FWS law enforcement official; and another high-level FWS law enforcement official. The FWS law enforcement officer advised that during this call, Adams instructed the supervisory law enforcement official and another supervisory FWS law enforcement official to travel to Houston the following week to join him and meet with the taxidermist, who is also a close friend of David Smith. The FWS law enforcement officer advised that the taxidermist was troubled by a recent FWS decision that affected local port policy, specifically the August 2003 decision to require that outfitters, hunters, and taxidermists obtain the Federal Fish and Wildlife Import/Export license. The intention of FWS law enforcement officials' trip was to quell the taxidermist's confusion over this policy.

According to the FWS law enforcement official, he and the other FWS law enforcement officials met with the taxidermist on October 9, 2003, at his taxidermy shop in Houston. The FWS law enforcement official maintained that the taxidermist was concerned about recent policies concerning the port of Houston, which the other FWS law enforcement officials clarified for him. According to the FWS law enforcement official, while there was some mention of designating Houston as a port of entry, it was just general conversation and nothing specific. He maintained that the only reason the taxidermist received such personal attention from FWS law enforcement concerning this matter was because of his close friendship with David Smith.

The FWS law enforcement official further suggested that Houston was designated as a port of entry due to Smith's friendship with the taxidermist and other members of SCI. According to the FWS law enforcement official, the designation of the Houston port allows for more expedient handling of overseas trophies, such as animal carcasses, hides, or byproducts, to enter the United States, and this would provide a great benefit to both Houston-based SCI members who hunt overseas, as well as Mr. Smith's friend's taxidermy business in Houston. He stated that Houston did not need to be designated as a port because Dallas, approximately 3 hours away, was already designated, and there was not enough influx to warrant the designation of both ports. Furthermore, he advised that FWS law enforcement did not have the funds to staff the port of Houston, and the entirety of FWS was hurting