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Ref: Theft of antlers and SF956

March 19, 2025

To whom it may concern:

Here is a case that I worked while I was the Chief Deputy at the Kittson County Sheriffs Department. The case is straight forward. John Bedard hits a buck while driving into work one night. John doesn't hunt and was really not that interested in deer. John did not stop to look for the buck after the collision with the buck. John did not want to be late for work and continued on his way to work. The following morning when John had finished working his night shift, he and some friends went to look for the buck, and they did find the buck. John called the Sheriff's office and Sheriff Kenny Hultgren agreed to give John a possession tag for the buck. John loaded the buck up and took it home to butcher.

At some point, the local Conservation Officer Pat Zandja heard about the road kill buck and went and visited John. John was skinning the buck and the CO found no evidence of the deer being shot illegally. The CO decided to seize the head and antlers off of the buck, but allowed John to keep the meat. Yes! The CO stated that he was seizing the head as evidence in an ongoing investigation, but allowed John (the suspect?) to keep the meat.

Never in the history of law enforcement does an officer take some of the evidence, but then decide to be nice and leave the suspect the rest of the evidence. This was actually a case of theft. The sheriff had stated that he would issue a possession tag to John for the deer, and at that exact moment on the phone, John Bedard was the legal owner of the roadkill buck, including all of the meat and antlers. When the CO took the antlers he was seizing John Bedard's personal property.

When John reported to the Sheriff what had happened with the buck antlers being stolen, Sheriff Hultgren called and spoke to the COL of the DNR, and I believe it was a COL Jim Konrad. COL Konrad admitted that there was no evidence of illegal behavior and that it certainly appeared that the buck was legitimately hit by a vehicle. Sheriff Hultgren explained that John was the legal owner of the buck antlers and that the DNR needed to give the antlers back. COL Konrad stated that he was reluctant to give the antlers back to John Bedard as he wanted to be able to support his officers. Sheriff Hultgren stated that the DNR is committing an act of theft. COL Konrad didn't care and the antlers were never returned to their rightful owner John Bedard.

Attached in this email you will find the original report of this incident and a statement that I took from John Bedard.

Steve Porter

