

Charles Anthony Smith

Biographical Summary

Operation Something Bruin

Charles Anthony Smith was arrested on seventeen misdemeanor charges by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission on February 20, 2013. During a special session of district court held in Haywood County in September of 2013, upon the completion of a two and one-half day trial, the Special District Court Judge dismissed all seventeen charges against Charles Smith due to lack of evidence by the State.

Prior to the arrest, a search warrant was executed. Smith was in the residence along with his nine-year old daughter who were in the den watching cartoons on television. Mr. Smith was removed from the residence, being held by his arms, placed in a vehicle, questioned by officers then handcuffed. His young daughter was inside the residence while officers with long weapons were searching the house. Pleas by Smith to be with his daughter were ignored by the Officers. Finally, a neighbor came to remove his daughter from the house where she was sitting on the couch with officers. Smith was arrested and taken to the county jail. His young daughter reported to Smith later that she was very frightened, that she had seen officers with large guns outside and inside the house and that the officers asked her questions. Multiple agencies conducted the search and at times numbers ranged from fifteen to twenty or so officers. Officers were present from North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Resources and also the United States Forest Service.

The NCWRC charged that Charles Anthony Smith had performed seventeen wildlife violations on property located in Silver's Cove in Haywood County, NC. When he was placed under arrest, a residence, barn and adjoining sheep pasture located in Medford Cove in Haywood County was searched -- as well as vehicles driven by Smith. Paperwork detailed items that were to be seized during the search. Items were seized that were not included in the Affidavit.

These charges were brought about by a NCWRC Officer who was later named in an Affidavit as Chad Arnold. During Smith's hearing he testified that he had not seen Charles Smith at the Silver's Cove location on the days he was there in an undercover capacity to run his dogs -- the activity in which he later charged Charles Smith with. He testified that on those days in question that he did not even have knowledge as to whether Charles Smith was in the country.

During Smith's trial, when questioned about Chad Arnold's activities in the undercover role as Chad Ryan during Operation Something Bruin, Arnold admitted under Oath that he had committed over thirty wildlife violations -- including the taking of and the actual killing of bears in which he later charged other hunters in the Operation with. Arnold testified under Oath that he was the individual who fired the weapon which ultimately resulted in taking the life of the bears. At this time, hunters have faced charges, fines, revocations of hunting licenses and have spent time in jail and are still awaiting sentencing for those actions.