



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Odessa Man Sentenced for Selling Fake Indian Art

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Odessa, Mo., man who falsely claimed to be a Cherokee Indian was sentenced in federal court today for utilizing a fraudulent tribal identification card to sell his Indian artwork at fairs and on-line.

Terry Lee Whetstone, 63, of Odessa, was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge Sarah W. Hays to three years of probation after also pleading guilty today to the charge of misrepresentation of Indian-produced goods and products.

Whetstone is an artist who created and sold paintings and other artwork, representing them to be Indian produced. He sold his artwork via the Internet and at art fairs and events around the country.

Under the terms of today's plea agreement, Whetstone may not sell art during his term of probation unless he notifies buyers that he is not a member of an Indian tribe. Whetstone must take down his Web site and refrain from advertising or promoting his artwork in any fashion during the term of probation. Whetstone is prohibited from performing flute music publically during the term of probation unless he notifies the audience that he is not a member of an Indian tribe.

On May 31, 2007, the Department of Interior Indian Arts and Crafts Board received a complaint that Whetstone was using a fraudulent Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma enrollment card in conjunction with the sale of his products. The Cherokee Nation verified that Terry Lee Whetstone

is not a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

Whetstone claimed on his Web site to be a Native American and a Cherokee artist. An undercover officer purchased a print of Whetstone's "Endless Flame" artwork from his Web site in July 2013 and also received a brochure entitled, "Cherokee Artist."

By pleading guilty today, Whetstone admitted that he knew he was not a member of a formally recognized Indian tribe.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roseann A. Ketchmark. It was investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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