



NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 24, 2015**

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**HUNTING SHOW HOST, FOUR HUNTERS, PRODUCTION COMPANY
PLEAD GUILTY IN NOATAK NATIONAL PRESERVE POACHING INVESTIGATION-
AIRCRAFT FORFEITED**

Anchorage, Alaska – U.S. Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced today that a cable TV hunting show host and four other individuals charged in the investigation have pleaded guilty and have been sentenced in Anchorage United States District Court for their participation in a multi-year poaching operation on the Noatak National Preserve.

On November 23, 2015, Syndicate TV show host Clark W. Dixon, 41, of Hazlehurst, Mississippi, pleaded guilty before the Hon. Ralph R. Beistline, Chief United States District Court Judge, to two felony violations of the Lacey Act for his role in the illegal take of a brown bear. The take involved a number of violations of hunting laws including same day airborne, hunting without proper non-resident tags and permits, and the illegal transporting and outfitting of non-resident hunters. The charges involved actions from 2008 through 2014 in the Noatak National Preserve.

Along with the agreement to plead guilty, Clark Dixon has also agreed to a sentence of 18 months in prison, a fine of \$75,000, and forfeiture of 17 trophies including grizzly bear, Dall sheep and caribou, along with bows and several rifles used in the illegal take of game in Alaska. As part of his plea of guilty, Clark Dixon agreed that in 2009 he assisted Clarence Michael Osborne in the illegal take of a grizzly bear, by hunting same day airborne, without a guide or proper permits. The agreement also states that Clark Dixon falsified a hunt record claiming the bear was killed by his father, Charles Dixon. The plea agreement also covers the allegation that at the time the violations were committed, Clark Dixon illegally claimed Alaska residency status while being a resident of the state of Mississippi. The charges against Clark Dixon reflect that he lied about his residency status in order to take advantage of Alaska resident hunting privileges, thus nullifying all of his Alaska hunts which resulted in the forfeiture of the 17 trophies and firearms. Clark Dixon also agreed not to contest the forfeiture of a STOL Quest SQ-4 aircraft used by his father, Charles Dixon, which was instrumental in assisting Clark Dixon in transporting and outfitting non-resident hunters in the illegal take of game. Clark Dixon's sentencing has been set for February 12, 2016, in Anchorage.

Following Clark Dixon's change of plea, his father, Charles W. Dixon, 70, also pleaded guilty to two violations of the Lacey Act for illegally flying a non-resident hunter, Clarence Michael Osborne, into their camp on the Noatak National Preserve to hunt grizzly bear, caribou and moose. During the hunt, Osborne killed a grizzly bear without a guide and without the appropriate non-resident permits. After the hunt, Charles Dixon claimed to have killed Osborne's bear as his own on state hunt records. As part of his plea and sentence imposed by the court, Charles Dixon was sentenced to pay a fine of \$15,000 and

to pay \$10,000 in restitution to the Noatak Preserve with those funds directed toward the removal of their illegal camp materials from the Preserve. In addition, Charles Dixon has forfeited his STOL Quest SQ-4 to the government as the aircraft was used to transport hunters, and illegally taken game in and out of the Preserve.

In other related cases, and on November 13, 2015, Clarence Michael Osborne, 53, of Madison, Mississippi, pleaded guilty to a violation of the Lacey Act for killing a grizzly bear in the Preserve while hunting with and on a hunt arranged by Clark Dixon. Osborne killed the grizzly bear without the proper permits, or tags, and the same day he was airborne. Osborne also pleaded guilty to killing a bull moose without a permit from the Preserve. As part of his plea and sentence, Osborne was sentenced to five years of probation, with a condition that he not hunt anywhere in the world. Osborne was sentenced by Judge Beistline under a plea agreement and was sentenced to pay a fine of \$65,000, and to pay restitution to the Noatak Preserve for the illegally taken game in the amount of \$16,000. Osborne was also required to forfeit a grizzly bear mount, bull moose mount, three caribou mounts and a .375 H and H rifle and scope used to commit the crimes. Osborne is also required to issue a public service announcement to various hunting publications about his illegal acts.

Fulton Wold, 41, of Nashville, Tennessee, also pleaded guilty and was sentenced pursuant to a plea agreement on November 13, 2015. As part of this agreement and sentence, Wold agreed to plead guilty to the illegal take of a caribou on a hunt orchestrated by Clark Dixon in September 2009 in which Wold did not have the proper permits or non-resident tags. As part of his sentence, Wold received a sentence of two years probation, a fine of \$7,500, and was ordered to pay \$1,000 in restitution to the Noatak Preserve. Wold was also required to forfeit a bull moose and caribou mount as both were killed illegally.

On November 6, 2015, Terry Goza, 71, of Hazlehurst, Mississippi, pleaded guilty to taking a Dall sheep ram, same day airborne, in the Noatak preserve while hunting with Clark Dixon and others. Goza was sentenced to a term of probation and the payment of a \$7,500 fine.

Footage from Osborne, Wold's and Goza's hunts were shown on Clark Dixon's cable TV hunting show "*The Syndicate*."

Citations from the National Park Service for conducting filming operations on the Noatak Preserve without a permit were also issued to The Outdoor Syndicate, LLC, in Reno, Nevada, its owner Michael P. Dianda, and an editing studio, Zap Lab, Ltd, in Reno, Nevada. The citations were issued due to the failure of Clark Dixon and another professional videographer to acquire footage for and used on *The Syndicate* without first obtaining a permit to commercially film on the Preserve. All have paid their fines in connection with the case. Defendants Shannon Dale Hooks, 54, of Mendenhall, Mississippi, and Lance David Walker, 37, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have changes of plea set for December 3, 2015. Defendant Randall Goza, 48, of Wasilla, Alaska, has entered a plea of not guilty and his case is set for trial.

Robert Viner has been cited in Mississippi by the investigation for the illegal transport of an unlawfully taken brown bear. Viner has admitted guilt in connection with the charges, and has paid a \$3250 fine.

Ms. Loeffler commends the work of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Law Enforcement and the National Park Service who jointly investigated this case in Alaska and elsewhere.

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