

Summary: BIA Realty Specialist Allegedly Bribed Lessee in Exchange for Renewing Lease

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The OIG investigated an allegation that a former Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) realty specialist solicited a \$200 bribe from a longtime lessee of tribal land so the lessee could retain the lease.

We could not prove or disprove the bribery allegation. The lessee provided us a transaction receipt for a \$200 check he wrote to a local store for cash, which he said he then paid to the BIA employee in exchange for assistance with renewing the lease. The lessee, however, could not provide any further evidence to corroborate his claim. The former BIA employee denied soliciting or accepting money from the lessee.

During our investigation, we learned the lessee submitted a \$57,000 lease renewal payment to the BIA but was not awarded the lease because he did not submit his bid in time. The former BIA employee erroneously sent the lessee an invoice and then accepted the payment and issued it to the Tribe. At the time of our report, neither the Tribe nor the BIA had reimbursed the lessee for the erroneous payment.

The employee left the Department during our investigation. We referred this matter to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which declined prosecution.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the BIA Acting Director.

