Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Extensive investigations by the Bureau of Indian ·Affairs (BIA) have exonerated Kenneth Whitehorn, former BIA agency superintendent for education on the Tohono O'odham reservation, of allegations he had prior knowledge that an employee he hired had been involved in a child abuse case in Arizona.

Thomas Goff, hired by Whitehorn in July, 1985, as principal of the Santa Rosa Boarding School at Tohono O'odham, had previously served for nine and one-half years as superintendent of the Polacca Day School on the Hopi Indian reservation where a former teacher, John Boone, was charged in 1987 with multiple counts of child molestation.

After the arrest of Boone, allegations surfaced that Whitehorn had prior knowledge of the child abuse which had not come to light when Goff was hired at Santa Rosa. Subsequent investigations by BIA found no truth to the allegations, and that Whitehorn had no knowledge or involvement in the Boone case whatsoever.

Goff retired from the BIA earlier this year. Whitehorn declined to accept reassignment to Washington, D.C. and has been separated from the federal service. Boone pled guilty to charges against him and is serving a life sentence.