

# Fairbanks ivory shop owner sentenced for illegal ivory sales

From the Associated Press

Fairbanks ivory shop owner, Douglas O'Neill, has been convicted of six counts of violating federal laws covering possession, sale and shipment of protected marine mammals.

A U.S. District Court jury returned the verdicts Tuesday following a week-long trial in

Fairbanks. The misdemeanor charges carry a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a fine of \$20,000 on each count.

O'Neill's conviction is the second resulting from an 11-month investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service into the multi-million-

dollar illegal ivory trade in Alaska. The investigation led to a series of raids in several Alaska communities and the Lower 48 during which federal agents seized 5 tons of fresh walrus ivory and other marine mammal parts.

During O'Neill's trial, federal agents testified they visited

his store, TCR's Ivory, and telephoned him in August 1980 posing as ivory buyers from Louisiana. Agents said they obtained 71 walrus tusks from O'Neill in purchases and trades and by serving search warrants on his home and business in February.

The federal Marine Mammal Protection Act allows only Alaska Natives to hunt walrus and possess raw walrus ivory. The ivory may be sold to non-Natives only after it has been made into artwork.

Non-Natives may own unworked ivory only if it is fossil ivory and if it is tagged by a state identification.