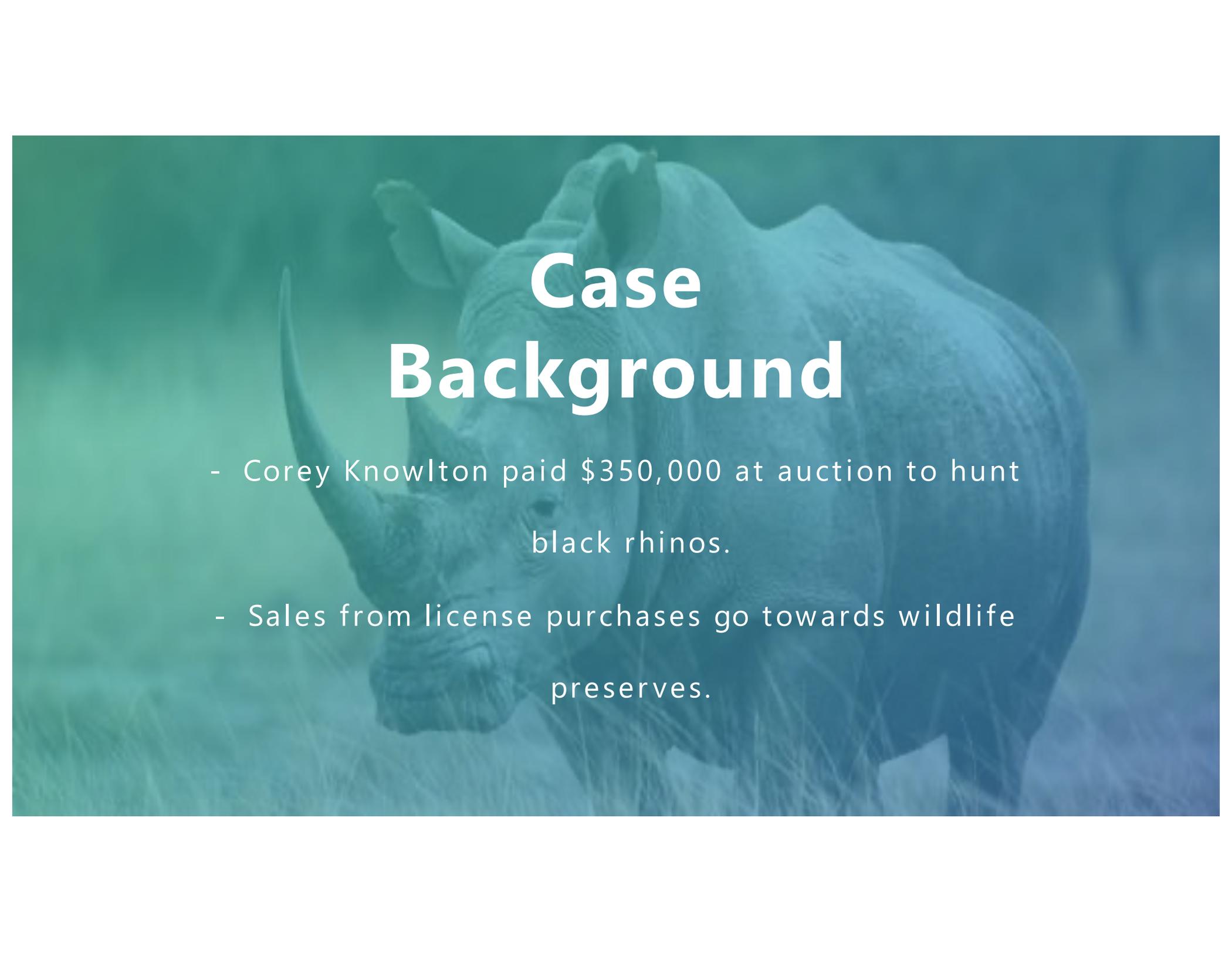# Conservation Hunting

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Case Background

- Corey Knowlton paid $350,000 at auction to hunt black rhinos.

- Sales from license purchases go towards wildlife preserves.

Endangerment of Black Rhinos

Habitat

- Habitat in that location is not well suited for black rhinos.
- Cannot find adequate food supply
- High density and inbreeding causes disease increase
- Human activities: agriculture, settlements, infrastructure, etc.

Source: WWF

Hunting/ Poaching

- Within 35 years the population dropped 98% from game hunting.
- Demand for rhino horn (Vietnam and China) for folk remedies.

Source: WWF

- Political instability affected trade for rhino horn in Africa

Source: Leader-Williams, et.al.

- Rhino horn is worth $60,000 per pound

Source: Adler, Williams

General Information of Black Rhinos

- Oldest group of mammals
- Large source of income of Namibia for ecotourism.

Source WWF

- 1977 ban on all rhino horn trade
- Populations decreased in unprotected areas and increased in protected areas

Source: Leader-Williams, et.al.

Background Information About the License

The license to kill a black rhino was only being sold to kill a specific rhino who was putting other rhinos in danger because of it's aggressiveness and it was unsafe for it to be around. Auction off older males that are post reproductive. Money goes back to agencies for habitat restoration, wildlife conservation, etc. Black rhinos were moved to the conservation grounds in Namibia to grow the population and the population has grown since the move (Adler 2015).

Multiple Questions Arise

1. Was it ethical for Corey Knowlton to kill the black rhino?
2. Was it ethical for the agency to sell Corey Knowlton the license?
3. Was it ethical for the agency not to sell a license to kill the black rhino if they are trying to conserve the species?
4. Should the United States allow Knowlton to transport the carcass of the endangered species?

If We Assume That...

The people of Namibia's Ministry of Environment are protecting endangered species such as black rhinos by using the money to go towards conservation efforts and habitat protection...

...THEN THE QUESTION ARISES..

Should a person purchase a license to hunt and kill an endangered species like the black rhino?

Consequentialism

Utilitarianism:

P1: Corey Knowlton had the choice of purchasing or not purchasing a license to kill a black rhino.

P2: The consequences of buying the license is the death of an endangered black rhino.

P3: The consequences of not purchasing the license is black rhino being able to live.

P4: The consequences of not killing the black rhino are better overall than the consequences of killing the black rhino.

P5: The right action is the one that produces the best overall consequences.

P6: Not killing the black rhino is the right action in this situation.

Why Consequentialism?

Definition:

The view that the ethics of an action or policy depends only on its consequences

Principle of Utility:

The right action is the one that produces the most overall good

Support for P1

P1: Corey Knowlton had the choice of purchasing or not purchasing a license to kill a black rhino.

Support:

- Purchasing the license one knows the consequences and end result of the particular action being made as a result of the purchase of the license to kill the black rhino.

Support for P2

P2: The consequences of buying the license is the death of an endangered black rhino.

Support:

- Purchasing the license results in the death of a black rhino which are critically endangered and killing one would reduce the population size once again.
- Threats from the public for animal welfare rights

Support for P3

P3: The consequences of not purchasing the license is the black rhino will survive, with the possibility that that rhino would injure the other rhinos.

Support:

- There has been instances in the past with older males becoming aggressive (Adler 2015).

Support for P4

P4: The consequences of not killing the black rhino are better overall than the consequences of killing the black rhino.

Support:

- Not killing the black rhino would keep the population of endangered black rhinos at a steady number without any deaths.
- There is no guarantee that specific black rhino was going to injure another, younger rhino, therefore killing the rhino for no reason except for trophy.

Support for P5

P5: The right action is the one that produces the best overall consequences.

Support:

- When performing an action it is necessary to choose the action that produces the best overall consequences because if it had bad consequences there is no good in the end result.

Support for P6

P6: Not killing the black rhino is the right action in this situation.

Support:

- The right action is the one that produces the best overall consequences, therefore not killing the black rhino keeps the population numbers from decreasing.

Perfectionism

X Is good for S if and only if it exercises and develops the distinctive capacities characteristic of S-type beings

Good/Bad for the development of human capacities:
- Physical
- Social
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Sensory

X is bad for S because it is bad for the development of emotional human capacities.

Killing a black rhino is bad for a person because the act of killing an animal takes a toll on the emotional capacities of a human being. The thought of death for human beings always influences the individual's emotional health whether they support animal welfare or not.

Source: University of Arizona

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