

Florida man defends dinosaur's import

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(AP) — A Florida dealer of fossils who acquired a dinosaur skeleton that the government plans to seize Friday says he wants others to develop a love of science and is "not some international bone smuggler."

Eric Prokopi struck back Thursday at the U.S. government's account of the dinosaur fossils it seeks to hand over to Mongolia.

The Gainesville, Florida, commercial paleontologist says in a statement obtained by The Associated Press that the [government](#) wrongly claimed he misrepresented the skeleton's value. He says import documents were not fraudulent. He says the skeleton was loose, mostly broken bones and rocks with embedded bones before he made it a practically complete, mounted skeleton.

He says efforts to take away the [skeleton](#) have led him "toward financial ruin."

The government declined to comment Thursday.

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