Interview of Charles Monnett

February 23, 2011

ERIC MAY: Recording, um, it is February 23, 2011. My name is Special Agent Eric May with the Department of Interior, Office of Inspector General. I’m with, uh, Special Agent Lynn Gibson with the Department of Interior, Office of Inspector General, and we’re accompanied by Mr. Monnett, can you –

CHARLES MONNETT: Charles Monnett.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and we are located at 3801 Center Park Drive in –

CHARLES MONNETT: Centerpoint.

ERIC MAY: – Centerpoint Drive in Anchorage, Alaska, and it is approximately, uh, 10:02 in the morning here in Anchorage, Alaska. Um, and on the teleconference call, we’re, we’re talking to – can you guys identify yourselves, please?

FEMALE VOICE: (Inaudible/background noise) an attorney with PEER.

JEFF RUCH: This is Jeff Ruch, an attorney and the Executive Director of PEER.

{TOM ASAGON}: This is Tom Assagon, Legal Fellow at PEER.

MEGAN CORRADO: My name is Megan Corrado, Legal Fellow at PEER.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and you’re all representing Mr. Monnett, correct?
FEMALE VOICE: That’s right.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and what legal firm are you guys with?

FEMALE VOICE: Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER is the acronym.

ERIC MAY: Okay, thank you. Um, uh, you – just a while ago, we agreed to provide Mr. Monnett, upon his request, a copy of the transcription, um, that we will have an independent transcription service complete, um, which will take approximately two weeks.

Um, is there anything else that we need to cover before?

FEMALE VOICE: And, uh, my understanding, um, please confirm, was that this is going to be a verbatim transcription by this independent agency?

ERIC MAY: Yeah, not a problem, then this will be a verbatim transcription of the tape-recording, uh, that I send them.

CHARLES MONNETT: Can I pause it for 10 seconds. I realize that I didn’t bring a pencil. I’m going to ask the secretary to give me one right here, okay?

LYNN GIBSON: Do you want to take –

CHARLES MONNETT: Is that okay?

LYNN GIBSON: Sure, you can take this pen.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, I need something here. Okay.

ERIC MAY: Oh, and, and, uh, Mr. Monnett did sign the Employee-Compelled Interview Notice, also known as Kalkines, signed by me and witnessed by Special Agent Lynn Gibson, and we will maintain a copy. Um, are you good to go?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.
ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Proceed.

ERIC MAY: All right, uh, you – have you – it’s, it’s – you indicated that you worked with the Inspector General’s Office before, and you’ve talked to me before, Mr. Monnett, correct?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes, we had that chat in the summer.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and part of the process of the Inspector General’s Office is that we receive allegations, and we go out and investigate those allegations. And the reason we are here today is that received, our office received some allegations pertaining to potential scientific misconduct perpetrated by you and your, uh, coworker, Mr. Gleason, okay? So that’s what the scope of this interview is going to be is your participation in the bowhead – the BWASP program?

CHARLES MONNETT: Um-hm [yes].

ERIC MAY: Okay?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, how does that, um – you say this is basically “scientific misconduct,” and how does that jive then with this being administrative in nature? What’s that mean, just that it’s not criminal or something?

ERIC MAY: That’s correct.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: Right, this is an administrative matter under the conditions of Kalkines, so –

CHARLES MONNETT: I see.
ERIC MAY: Okay? And the only — and we explained before, the only reason it would be — reach the level of criminal is if we find that you’re lying to us.

CHARLES MONNETT: Right, and you’re going to, you’re going to investigate, uh, the details of our science and you (inaudible/mixed voices) —

ERIC MAY: Based on the allegations that we received.

That’s correct.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, and, and just so I know how to put my answers, do you have scientific credentials of any sort? Uh, what, what, what level of scientist am I speaking with here that’s going to be evaluating my science?

ERIC MAY: No, we’re criminal investigators.

CHARLES MONNETT: Criminal investigators.

ERIC MAY: With the Inspector General’s Office.

LYNN GIBSON: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: So I assume with no formal training in, in science or biology or —

LYNN GIBSON: That’s correct.

ERIC MAY: That’s right.

CHARLES MONNETT: — marine, marine biology (inaudible/mixed voices).

LYNN GIBSON: That’s correct.

ERIC MAY: That’s correct, right.

CHARLES MONNETT: All right, thanks.
ERIC MAY: Okay? All right. All right, we ready to proceed? Um, Mr., uh, Monnett, can you give me some - a brief background of, uh, your involvement with MMS or now BOEMRE -

CHARLES MONNETT: Um-hm [yes].

ERIC MAY: - your, your current title and what your current job responsibilities include?

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, um, I’ll start with the backend there. I’m Charles W. Monnett, Ph.D., and my - I’m a Wildlife Biologist, and I’m responsible for, uh, what we call COR, Contracting Officer’s Representative, duties related to about $50 million worth of studies, uh, which is a significant percentage of the studies that the Minerals Management Service does nationwide.

And my first involvement with MMS, uh, was in 1984, because I did my dissertation under, uh, support from a contract between the Minerals Management Service and the University of Minnesota where I did my Ph.D. dissertation. And for years, I was involved as a contractor, uh, or, uh, someone working on contracts. And then, in 199- - and, and I was very close to the unit. I used to come in and meet with people, because I was always looking for funding and I, I since have come to realize that I was very unusual, because nobody ever comes in here, and I used to pop in all the time and talk to these guys.

And in 1999, um, I was hired, um, into my current position as - well, well, at the time, I was classified as a Marine Ecologist, and then they changed me to a Wildlife Biologist
for some administrative reason. And my duties, um, have evolved some over the years, but primarily it's been a COR role, scientist role, um, managing studies. And for a period, uh, I was involved directly as the Project Manager on the Bowhead Whale Aerial Survey Project, which is an in-house study, and that ended in I think '06.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and that acronym is BWASP?
CHARLES MONNETT: Bowhead Whale Aerial Survey Project.
ERIC MAY: Okay. And can you give us some background of your, your, uh, participation in the – that program?
CHARLES MONNETT: In the BWASP program?
ERIC MAY: Right.
CHARLES MONNETT: Um, well, that's a program that started in 1979. Um, it was managed by a, a Wildlife Biologist named Steve Treacy here, um, until '03 when he retired. I became involved in 1999 as a, as an observer and eventually as a Team Leader, which meant I had the responsibility for, uh, managing the, the Survey on a daily basis in the field. I was on the aircraft. And then when Steve retired, I took over as, uh, Project Leader for the whole Survey and, uh, dealt with all the issues related to securing, uh, the funding and, and reporting.
ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: Um, and then in '90– uh, or I'm sorry, '06 I believe it was, we made a – started to make a transition to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Um, I'm, I'm – I can't remember the years, but it was in that area. Um, and then there
was a year where, uh, we did kind of a cooperative thing where they provided some people, and we provided leadership. And then, the next year, I think which was ’07, I took over completely. And since then, I’ve managed the Project as the, uh, the COR, um, but since I’m so intimate with it and we provided, uh, all of the protocols and data collection software and everything, I’ve had a, an uncommonly involved role in the study.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Can you get into the – a little bit more specific about the BWASP? What – you, you go on up, you observe the bowhead whale migration. Can you get into the specific of, say, a specific flight? I mean, what – who, who participate in the flights and –?

CHARLES MONNETT: All right, um, well, during the period that I was responsible for, most of the period, uh, we flew with the, uh, an air, uh, an airline called, uh, ERA, which was a local airline, in one of their Twin Otters. And we would spend months preparing, doing all the safety, all the training, and I have a – I brought you a manual here. I don’t have one, but this is our, um, safety and etc. field manual. So that gives you a lot of background on it. And, uh, so I was responsible for assembling all of that and, and managing all of it. And you’ll see it’s fairly involved (inaudible) training involved and selection of personnel.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And then we would form our teams, and I would lead one of the teams, that we would have – uh, we, we
tried to - well, the, the - initially, in the early years, there
would be two discrete teams. One would go up for a few weeks,
and the other one would replace them for a few weeks. But it
became clear that staff didn’t want to commit for as long, and
some would commit for longer. So it became, uh, essentially
Team Leaders with teams that were in flux.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And so the - I would be a Team Leader and
would manage the day-to-day operations, which means that I would
confer with the pilots, um, and, and, uh, make decisions based on
their recommendations on operations, uh, about weather and safety
and all of that. They always had the last word when safety was
concerned. And I would, uh, provide oversight during the flights
and quality control, any training that was necessary and, uh,
oversee the - we usually had one person that was designated
as the data, uh, processor. Uh, we used a, uh, some in-house
software for recording the data that had a GIS, uh, mapping
routine built in it, so we could, in the aircraft, track our
progress and input the data and plot it as we went.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And so I would oversee that, quality
control that. And then, at the end of the day, when we got
back, I would have responsibility for sharing information with
the people who we shared with, and we had a list of organizations
and individuals that we provided data to immediately after the
flights.
ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And that’s evolved some, but that’s how it was during the - it’s much more automated now. That’s, that’s how it was when I did - managed the individual flights.

ERIC MAY: How many observers are on a flight? I mean, who, who’s actually on the plane during a mission, going to -?

CHARLES MONNETT: A standard flight would be the, the pilot, the copilot, a Team Leader, uh, who was an observer, a person that was designated as an observer, and it usually was a right-left aircraft thing. And then we would have the, a, uh - I don’t remember what we called them, uh, our data, uh, entry person, and that person was at a window and might or might not look out the window. Um, usually if there, if there was lots going on, they were too busy entering data, um, but if something interesting was seen, they might look out the window, or if it was slow, they might look out the window.

ERIC MAY: And the data, data person has a laptop?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: They used a laptop.

ERIC MAY: So go through a scenario, a quick scenario. Say you observed some whales. What, what happens in the plane?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, the person that saw them would call the observation and, uh, would start to go through a sequence of data. Um, and the data recorder would be, uh, filling in the data form. Some of it would be automated that
would be carried along as we went, some of the weather, and some of it was automated, like from the instruments, like altitude, location. But basically we would say, um, uh, let’s see. Well, we would – say we’ve got an airplane at 2:00, you know, or whatever, coming up, and then we would start to describe, uh, the – I mean, a, a whale at 2:00, a bowhead or a probable or whatever. And then as we closed on it, we would confirm the identification. We would say the number. We identify if it was a calf. If there was any doubt, we would circle and, in most cases, if we had time.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, uh, then we would, uh, provide information on the swim direction, the, uh – we used a clinometer to get the angle from the aircraft so we could plot an exact position – that was all automatic – automated – and, uh, some behavioral things. And a sighting might be a bowhead, it might be a ringed seal, it might be any of 10 different things, even a ship or, you know, other things.

ERIC MAY: Okay, so do – other mammals, what happens if you’d see something else other than a bowhead whale?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, we, we would classify it as another mammal. And in the early program, it was, it was kind of rigid in that it was, it was, uh, it was built with zero flexibility, so that if you saw something outside the norm, uh, you had to improvise. And so the other thing we did was keep notes in a,
a smaller version of one of these green record books. And, uh, some of us were better at that than others.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: But, uh, the idea was to, uh, certainly when we saw something unusual that we couldn’t record, uh, in the program, we would write it down manually and then have that available later.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Uh, and were photos taken, videotape?

CHARLES MONNETT: No.

ERIC MAY: No?

CHARLES MONNETT: No, we, um, we were a very, uh, rigorous and rigid protocol that was designed essentially to fly straight lines with a minimum of circling, with, uh, very, very little diversion of any sort, except when we saw something, um, that required us to, um, maybe circle to do a count. If you came over a, a large group of whales, and maybe there were 20 or 100, then we would have to break our, break our protocol. But as long as we were able to take the data as we went, we would fly straight and at altitude, and we didn’t take pictures, and we didn’t go down and, uh, we, we rarely circled.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Did - have you ever circled?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, yeah.

ERIC MAY: Like for example?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, like I said, over groups of, of large groups of whales would be a case.
ERIC MAY: Okay. After the mission, what happens to the
data that you guys record in terms of the spottings? How is that
maintained?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, it’s all automated.
ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: I mean, virtually, uh, every, everything
with just a very few exceptions were an-- were, were, uh,
anticipated when the database was designed, and so we had a
fairly automated, uh, system that involved bringing an access
file back, running some macros on it that spit out, uh, hard
copies of, you know, standard information maps and all that.
Now there were, there were real problems with that,
that there, there’s, there’s good reasons to have a very
rigid protocol, because it, it keeps you focused on whatever
your question is. And a lot of people have a tendency to
overdocument, and so you end up with a lot of unwelcome stuff,
uh, just details that, that really aren’t relevant. But it also
means that when something changes that you can’t anticipate, um,
you have to break out of that system and, you know, and record
a, a record. Um, but the vast, vast majority of things, this was
a 30-year program, you know, had been, uh, accounted for in, in
some way. Um, we did have our, our, uh, yellow – or our green
books that everybody kept –
ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: – that, that had a lot of documentation.
And, and I would say that as we were nearing the end of, um, my
period, certainly by ’06, we were completely, uh, reinventing the program, um, because we recognized a need to, uh, build flexibility into it so we could capture some things that we hadn’t been able to capture. Um, two examples of that, uh, were the sightings of dead polar bears. We had no way to document a dead polar bear in our system.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: It simply wasn’t an option, so that forced us to write in our books. And another thing we were seeing was, um, we suspected we were seeing some very unusual range expansion in some of the waterfowl. With the retreat of the ice, they were starting to move into offshore areas where birds had never been documented, because it had always been frozen. And so we had a desire, um, because Gleason is primarily a bird biologist, to add some capability to record incidental sightings of waterfowl, because we thought there were probably some – it probably was really important for some of our analytical purposes here.

Uh, so we really reinvented the program and made it much more flexible and much more complex, and that’s the program that NMFS continues to use as, as a more flexible version of that. And that one is totally automated to where at the end of the flight, when you turn the computer off, um, everything you need is dumped to a jump drive and ready to email to anybody in the nation. And a lot of that stuff immediately goes on websites.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Can you explain to us transect – and that’s the path of the airplane?
CHARLES MONNETT: Um-hm [yes].

ERIC MAY: Can you go into a little bit more detail about how is that chosen, and do you go on the same transect each flight?

CHARLES MONNETT: No. Yes, I can. Um, we had a program. Um, we had a design that was a modified, um, it was a modified transect design within fixed blocs, so it wasn’t a true random transect. But it had a random element in it, in that the start and end points for any transect within a bloc was randomized.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And we, uh, had a requirement for some number of transects. It was either six or eight usually. And at the beginning of the flight, uh, we would use this random, uh, it was kind of a random number generator that would give us the beginning and end points for each transect, for each bloc we expected to fly. And we would give those to the pilots beforehand, and they would program them into their aircraft navigation system.

And so when we would get out there, um, we would say, you know, “Go to Bloc 4 and start on the, uh, southeast corner.” And so they would know right where to go. They would go to that lat/long, and then they would start flying in the direction dictated by the other endpoint. And so you would have blocs with transects that would vary in there, and so that gave us a, a random element, um, that there are, uh, there are some problems with, but it’s the best you can do in a large study like that.
ERIC MAY: Okay. And how, how high are you flying typically?

CHARLES MONNETT: We tried to hold the altitude at 1,500 feet.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And we had a reason for that, had two reasons. One was that, uh, when you’re doing research on marine mammals, you’re often required to have a research permit from the agency that has management authority, which in this case was NMFS. And you have to have a permit if you have any possibility of having a take under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which means you disturb the animal in some way.

And in the early stages of the project, there was a discussion between, uh, Steve and NMFS people, and they decided that as long as we stayed above, I think it was 1,200 feet, that we wouldn’t have to have a permit, uh, because we had no potential to disturb the aircraft — or disturb the, the whatever it was, the whales or, or seals. And so we routinely stayed at 1,500 feet, uh, only diverting because of weather, when we had to fly up or down to avoid a cloud or a storm, and there were a lot, a lot of little snowstorms. When you cover this much territory, you’d fly in and around snowstorms. And then we also avoided, uh, uh, any Native subsistence activities, because the Natives would be whaling parts of the time we were out there. And so whenever we saw whalers in the area, we would usually divert and go up, to make sure we didn’t have any potential to upset them.
ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Want some more?

ERIC MAY: No, that’s good.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: So how many, uh, missions have you – did you participate in, roughly?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, gosh, uh, I don’t know. You know, the – we, we would go up there for – I’d go up there for a month pretty much, sometimes longer, each year, and I might fly 10 or 12 or 15 missions, or I might sit there in my room for 30 days in a row and never fly because the weather was too bad.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: So, um, 25 to 75, I – probably around 50, I think. It’s very hard to say and then depends on how you define a mission.

ERIC MAY: Okay, that’s fine. Were you, were, were you required to document other mammals besides bowhead whales?

CHARLES MONNETT: We documented, uh, any marine mammal we saw.

ERIC MAY: Okay, every marine mammal during –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, well, we had priorities. Our top priority was the bowhead, because that was our reason for being there. And then, um, we would, um, drop out some of the things, uh, particularly some of the seals that were harder to see when
we were, uh, in situations where we were encountering a lot of marine mammals.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: So ringed seals, for instance, were frequently not observed, and a lot of the people couldn’t see them. And maybe a third of us had the ability to see them, and that was a combination of experience and eyesight and attention. Some people just wouldn’t look, so –.

ERIC MAY: Okay. All right, so after the bow – do you have anything about the background of the BWASP?

LYNN GIBSON: No.

ERIC MAY: So at the end of a season, what, what –

CHARLES MONNETT: You know, I never gave you the second reason why we stayed at altitude.

ERIC MAY: Oh, okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Can I do that?

ERIC MAY: Yeah, go –

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, the second reason is, is entirely safety.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, because when you’re flying low, you’re at much higher risk if your aircraft, craft loses an engine or something like that, the pilot can’t recover. And, uh, so those of that do this a lot under these circumstances realize how dangerous it is and how high our risk is, and we, we tend to, uh, want to be high rather than low. And I’m particularly sensitive
to that, because I’ve been in airplane accidents in the past, and so I have great comfort the higher I am, really. I’m very uneasy when I’m flying at two- or 300 hundred feet.

Um, and I can only think of really one occasion when I was managing the Survey when we went down, uh, really below 1,000 feet, and that was one time we saw a dead whale. And we were trying to document it, and so we actually went down probably to 500 feet. I think we took some pictures, because we had somebody on board that had a camera, that knew how to use it, so –.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Is there always a camera onboard?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, no. No, a camera was, uh – well, there are a couple of reasons. One is, um, that it’s very hard to get pictures from a moving aircraft at that altitude, um, and people sometimes would take the little cameras, you know, the little digital point-and-shoot type, um, and those were totally inadequate. Um, and we didn’t want to go down. We weren’t in a mode in those days where we were going down and documenting, um, with any certain – I mean, we knew, we knew – you know, it’s very easy to tell what a bowhead is and, and the other things, so we didn’t need to document that.

Um, after ’04, I think it was ’04, we bought that digital camera I was asking you about. Um, I think we bought that at the start of our season, and I don’t even remember why. It had something to do with wanting to, uh, have a camera in case we saw something interesting. But, um, we never really got any good performance out of that, because I, I, I have a very hard time
using, um, cameras, because I - my vision is gone, you know. And I, I can see great way out, but I can’t see, you know, within about four feet, and so having to put glasses on to look at a camera and do all that just doesn’t work for me. It, it, it wrecks my, uh, uh, what do you call it, um - where you, you - your search image, you establish, uh, when you look for something a lot, you establish a “search image” it’s called where, uh, you recognize things better than somebody that’s cold. And, and so it’s kind of like night vision.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: You know, if you come back and blast your eyes with light, you don’t see as well, and so I never really tried to use the, the big camera. A few people did. Uh, Jeff took a few pictures with it, uh, and I actually used to encourage him to go out and take pictures of ducks and things when we were back at the motel to try to learn how to use the camera. Um, but I, I, uh, once they went away from film, about then, my eyes started going, and I just gave up on it altogether, because it was a whole different, you know, sort of procedure.

ERIC MAY: Okay. At the end of the year, um, how do you guys - is there a final report?

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, there’s supposed to be an annual report, and when I inherited the project, Steve was two years behind because, unfortunately, our managers don’t, uh - they don’t, they don’t recognize the amount of work adding something like this on generates. And we don’t lose other duties, and I
still have more studies than anybody else and, and I did when I was doing this. And so, um, you do the report as you can and, and, uh, you’ve got which one there? Is that the ’02 to ’4?

ERIC MAY: Yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, I did that one probably in about ’05 and caught it up, the first, uh, shortly after I took charge of it. And then, uh, it took me a very long time to do this report, just because I was too busy. And we had, uh – if you look in the reports, you’ll see that they’re very heavy on graphics and, and calculations and things and, and summary tables. And we had programming for a while that helped generate a lot of that, but primarily we worked with a GIS contractor, someone, you know, that, that the unit here I had a contract with that came every day and would work with data and produce graphics and summaries and that for us. And that person’s time was, um, heavily in demand and, and I got pretty good support, um, up to about ’07. And then they got rid of them shortly after that. So I had – now I had no capability to, you know, do anything related to that – they don’t even have software – so we’re out of the mapping business.

ERIC MAY: Okay. But did you help put these together when –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, I, I was primary author on, uh, both of those.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and that you – we’re looking at the 2005 study.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: Is that the last one put out by this office?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, and the reason it’s blue is because it’s different than the others in the series, because you’ll notice it isn’t on –

(End of Audio Track 1)

ERIC MAY: This is a continuation of the interview with Mr. Monnett. Uh, Mr. – Special Agent Eric May and Lynn Gibson and representatives from PEER, who’s representing Mr. Monnett in Washington, D.C. Is that correct?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.

ERIC MAY: All right, so –

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, how come you’re so, so careful about your own title, but you won’t call me “Doctor”?

LYNN GIBSON: Ah.

ERIC MAY: Oh.

CHARLES MONNETT: (Laughing).

ERIC MAY: All right, I apologize for that, Dr. Monnett.

Um –

CHARLES MONNETT: I never use that except for when somebody denies me it, then I – (laughing).

ERIC MAY: Oh, understood. All right, Dr. Monnett. All right, Dr. Monnett, we were talking about the reports of the BWASP.
CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, yes, and I, and I said there’s a difference between the two, because this one is authored, and this one is not.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And that has to do with, uh, my unwillingness to be an author on this document –

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: – because I had maintained that the analysis we were using in this one was simplistic and incorrect, and it was misleading. And I was forced to continue to use the analysis in here, and so I took my name off of it and said, “Well, all right, I’ll do the report, but I don’t want anything to do with it.”

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: Okay, understood. Um, so during your participation in the BWASP, did you observe – well, you did observe polar bears.

CHARLES MONNETT: Absolutely, every year.

ERIC MAY: Okay, can you elaborate on your observation of polar bears and what years and be a little bit more specific?

CHARLES MONNETT: What years?

ERIC MAY: Well, I mean, what was the first year you observed a polar bear?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, I don’t know. Um, I imagine I saw a polar bear the first year I was out there, so that would be ’99,
but I don’t know. I don’t, I don’t remember. I didn’t review the reports. That’s, that’s too far back.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: We had, um – we saw polar bears in three - under three sets of circumstances generally. One was polar bears out on the ice, offshore, which were dispersed over in a large area. Another was polar bears on barrier islands all along the coastline, and then there were a couple of places, particularly one at Kaktovic, where the bears concentrated at a bone pile, a bowhead whale, uh, it was, it was left over from the harvest. The Natives would drag all the carcasses, and the bears would gather around there. Um, in a normal year, you could count on seeing 20 or 30 polar bears, uh, at certain times of the year there. So all you had to do was go look; they’d be scattered around the village.

And so we made a point to – uh, another was Cross Island, which is also a, a whaling site, and so we made a point to visit those sites a, a couple of times to document the numbers. And we also made it a, a point to record any, you know, bears we saw out on, uh, the ice. Um, and we had a few, um, behavioral, um, uh, you know, variables that we – that were in the database specifically for polar bears. One was if they were on a kill and, otherwise, I think they were pretty general. Everything swims, you know, so – uh, but, for instance, we didn’t record cubs. We had calves for the – and so it was different. I don’t know, there was – there were some problems with polar bears, and
that was one of the things that led to our redesigning the
program to be more flexible. It’s the inability to record
everything that we might want to on polar bears.

ERIC MAY: Did you redesign it so you can -

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.

ERIC MAY: - record the polar bear? What year was that?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, that was at the end. We were
redesigning it, and I supposed we started in probably about ’05.
I think we had a working version of it in ’06 that we field
tested; it still had some problems. And then by the time NMFS
took it over, they had a, you know, a pretty reliable version.
But we kept - the programmer stayed involved, and we kept
modifying and fixing and all that. But, you know, most of
the program is as it was - now is at it was in - probably
about ’07 or even ’06.

ERIC MAY: Okay. When you observed polar bears, um, what
were your - what was your thought process? Was it a, a big deal
observing -?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, not for most of us. Those of us who’d
seen lots of polar bears, it was - but, you know, the first time
somebody sees a polar bear, it’s, uh - well, we – typically,
if we were - occasionally, we would take a visitor out, um,
you know, like on a single flight, uh, either somebody from
the office here that hadn’t really seen the Arctic, uh, you
know, would put them at another window and let them just fly
around and see it so they, so they understood better what they
were analyzing. Uh, occasionally, we’d have visiting dignitaries.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, uh, you know, they use – they – we, we usually had, uh, I don’t remember. There was a list of species that, you know, if somebody saw all of them, then they were pretty excited. If you saw a bear, if you saw a walrus, musk ox, um, the whales, of course, um, those (inaudible).

ERIC MAY: Okay, did you, you ever see dead polar bears?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.

ERIC MAY: Can you elaborate on that?

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, well, I think the only time that we saw dead polar bears, and I’m just trying to remember if I saw them on any other occasions, I don’t think so, was in ’04, I guess it was, when we saw some floating polar bear carcasses at sea. And, uh, we saw four. Uh, we thought we might have seen another one but, but, uh, we flew by it too fast and didn’t able to go back and find it. It’s one Jeff saw, and he was kind of uncertain. And by the time he decided that he was certain enough to go back, we’d left the area, so -.

Uh, but we did see four, and we took sufficient time to, uh, uh, you know, circle them. I don’t think we dropped a lot of altitude – we might have dropped a little – to, to get a clearer look. Um, but they were pretty obvious.

ERIC MAY: Okay, were you – did, did it occur on the same flight or different flights?
CHARLES MONNETT: Um, I think it was on more than one flight. Yeah, it was on more than one flight. It was spread out over a few days. I don’t, I don’t remember. It’s in that paper, the, the dates and everything.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Were you on all the flights that –

CHARLES MONNETT: I was, yeah.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and who was the other observer?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, well, Jeff I think was on all the flights, but I don’t remember for sure. And then there was another – at least one other, um, person that would have been the data recorder, that’s the word I was looking for, and then the pilots, who would have, you know, seen it.

ERIC MAY: Okay. And did these observations all get recorded or –?

CHARLES MONNETT: No. Um, well, I think the, um – they got recorded, but I can’t remember whether we punched them in the program. We were recording them in our book, because that’s one of the anomalies I was talking about that we really didn’t have any way to signify a dead polar bear. And so rather than have that in the database when really what we wanted to analyze were live polar bears – remember, the stuff is all automated.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: And so somebody has got to go through and delete it, um, or do something, um, and I, I don’t remember whether it’s – we recorded the location in the database or just
wrote it down. I’m guessing we recorded the location, uh, but it
would have been shown as a live bear.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: The other thing we saw were a lot of
swimming bears, um, particularly that year, and in a typical
year, we’d see, you know, a swimming bear somewhere, about one
a year I think or less.

LYNN GIBSON: So the data recorder allowed you to log polar
bears and - on land, polar bears swimming, but not dead polar
bears?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, no, no, we -

LYNN GIBSON: Or how does that w

CHARLES MONNETT: We, um - hm, well, you’re asking me to
remember something I can’t remember the details of now, but
the, the - normally, if the bear was alive, we would record it.
That - we - uh, remember now, up to that point, we had never seen
a, a dead bear to record. Um, we did have swimming in the - uh,
as one of the behavioral choices, because whales swim. And there
were a few things that, um - I’d have to look. We’ve got a list,
you know, of behaviors that long and, and, uh, if they were
feeding on the carcasses, we probably noted that in some way.
Um, you know, it might be in that book, because that has the
protocols and, and, and things in it.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: But that would be the best thing. Don’t
try to drag this out of my memory. Look at -
ERIC MAY: No, it’s understood, so we don’t want –

CHARLES MONNETT: – look at the protocols, because we had probably a hundred choices and, and if you look at all the things, and we – and when we took our books in the field, everybody cut out – we Xeroxed and shrunk and then cut out and pasted them to the covers so we knew what our choices were. And then the data recorder would, would, um, prompt us a lot of times if we couldn’t remember. You know, like ice type, there’s 20 different ice types and, and, uh, some of the data recorders were pretty expert, others weren’t, and then we’d have to use the sheets.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: So the, the, the drowning part, the dead bear part is in our books. It’s not in the database. I, I, I think – and I don’t remember whether the bears are in the database or not at this point.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: They might be.

ERIC MAY: And just how did you know they were dead?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, it was really obvious.

ERIC MAY: Okay, like what, just –

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I’ve seen a lot of dead things in the water. Um, number one, I’ve seen a lot of live things, too, so I know what a swimming polar bear looks like, but something that’s in the water, um, with its head down, with, uh, gurry and stuff streaming off it, that’s one way. Um, another – the last
one we saw was bloated like a, um, a beach ball, and it was this
ting thing with its legs out, and it was visible for a long ways ahead
of the aircraft. The sun was shining on it.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Any photos taken of it?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, you’ve seen the photos. Uh, Jeff,
um, when he first was learning how to use the camera, he snapped
several, um, very disappointing. We call them the “Pillsbury
Doughbear photographs,” because you can see a shape that’s
consistent, you know, what looks like something you’d cut out
of a Christmas cookie or something.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Very rounded, um, and that’s all we have.

ERIC MAY: Did you take an attempt to make a photo of each individual?

CHARLES MONNETT: No.

ERIC MAY: – on each observation?

CHARLES MONNETT: No, I, I – again, it’s – we’re, we’re
flying at a long distance from our base. We’re trying to
complete a different mission and, um, our protocol is not to
break unless there’s a, a very important reason. And I, I think
we probably circled on the one that we photographed. That’s
pretty clear. But I know some of them, we didn’t circle on. We
just kept going. We, we identified them, um, you know, flying
by. The water would be calm, and you’d be able to see them for
a way. And, and they were pretty obvious. You could see their
heads and legs and – even at 1,500 feet.
ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNET: Uh, because remember, I can see a, a tag that big at –

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNET: – at, you know, those kinds of altitudes on the sea otter. Um, we did not, at the time, um, this is one of those things you always look back on, and you wonder why you didn’t recognize how important it was. To us, it was just like weird. You’re flying by. You’re seeing some dead bears. Well, the first one is just a dead bear, big deal, you know. We see dead things floating, so you make a note. Um, by the time we’d seen four, um, we realized that something unusual had happened and – but even then, I, you know, I remember we talked about it and, in fact, before we saw the dead bears, we had a, a couple of days where we saw a lot of bears swimming. And that really got our attention, because it was just incredibly calm, clear weather, you know, just like being in, uh, well, not Hawaii, because it was calmer than Hawaii, like being in the Caribbean or something, you know, where the water just is perfectly clear, and you can see way into it. On a clear day there, the water is so clear that we can see the whales way down in the water, so it was that kind of day where we could see a whale 100 feet down below the surface.

And when we saw these bears swimming, uh, out in open water, and some of them we saw when we were circling on whales, there was some feeding whales and all in there. It was a very
interesting time. And we had this big discussion on the aircraft about how well bears could swim and, you know, isn’t this – I mean, you know, maybe they, maybe they really are a lot more aquatic than you’d think. Maybe they really could spend a lot of time in the water. Because that was our first encounter of any significant number. And I think we saw 10 or so and some, some cubs with the bears.

And then, a few days later, we saw these, uh, we started seeing these dead ones, and I know there were at least two flights, there might have been three. I don’t, I don’t remember. It was over a – it was about a week later, over that period, um, and, again, you know, we had no, uh, notion that it would be an important observation. And it was sometime later I think that we started to realize that it was probably something that was worthy of, of writing a note, you know, for a journal. And we were looking for quick, clean products, um, because that’s how we, uh, justify our work, our study, you know.

ERIC MAY: So elaborate on what you’re, what you’re referring to when you, you realized something important. What are you talking about?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, we realized that we, we had seen something that was probably of general interest, not just something you see that, you know, you just talk about, you don’t memorialize.

ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: Um, if we had seen a bunch of dead whales washed up, then you might write something like that. Um, the Project, uh, I know there was a, a paper in the earlier years, because they saw really a lot of feeding whales one time, you know, just a lot of whales clumped. If you see a, a, a whale that is, uh, hundreds of miles from where anybody would ever expect it to be, like now the, uh, the humpbacks and fin whales are moving north, because the sea ice is retracting, and there’s a lot going on. The water is a lot warmer up there. They seem to be following their prey northward, so we’re seeing this expansion of the ranges. Um, they saw a humpback with a calf to the east of Barrow, so actually around in the Beaufort Sea, which is a huge extension of the range, and that was worthy of a, of a publication in some little journal. These are what we call “Notes –

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: – you know, in the, in the profession. You write little Notes. Jeff Gleason, I don’t know if you saw some of the stuff. When Jeff was here, he was being, uh, very creative in these. He, he saw some mallards eating salmon one time in a stream up north, and he checked all the literature and found that nobody had ever documented that before. And he wrote a Note, and it got published in some little crummy journal. He had a couple of things like that. Uh, this was, you know, more than that, but it was a Note.

ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: Just an observation, anecdotal Note with, with limited analysis.

ERIC MAY: And what Dr. Monnett is referring to is your manuscript.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Can you elaborate on what started the manuscript and how it came to -?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I just did. Um, we realized, after we got back, um - the first thing we realized was that the swimming, the amount of swimming we’d seen we thought was exceptional to there, because we knew that, uh, there hadn’t been that much swimming. We didn’t know how restricted it was until we got back, and we started poking around in the database and realized that we had seen almost as many bears swimming on one day as had been seen in the entire history of the Project, in the past 20-some years. And then we also noticed that there was no history of, uh, or no notes, no indication that anybody had ever seen any bears, and we checked with the other people some. Nobody had ever seen any brown bears, I mean.

Um, and at that point, given that we had a 30-year or in a nearly 30-year, what would it have been then, 26-year record of doing the surveys up there with a time series of sightings on swimming bears, that was worthy of, of acknowledging.

And also remember that this was - ’04 was, um, a record year, uh, for the retraction of sea ice from the coast. In recent - in, in early years, um, it would be very icy when we
were flying surveys, and so the bears would be on ice. And in, in those later years, uh, we would get up there, and it would be wide open. You know, it would be hundreds of miles sometimes out to the nearest ice. And so having a, a very open area where there wasn’t ice within a couple hundred kilometers at the beginning of September was unusual, too. So we had some unusual circumstances. Um, I don’t know, it just came together as a, as a, uh, uh, as relationships.

And then we—in, in the process of looking at this, we realized there were other relationships, which led to a second paper, and which were also mentioned. Um, this paper is very narrow in that it only focuses on the swimming and drowning and what, and what we thought was related to it, in other words, a storm. Um, but when we developed the, uh, entire story, we talk about, uh, our observations of the retreat of sea ice and the changes in the quality of sea ice, going from multiyear to annual, um, thinner sea ice, um, lower coverage, different types, all that. And, and so there’s another paper, um, that Gleason and {Rhode} published, uh, in the last year or so that also documents that.

And then those two papers support two posters that we presented at scientific meetings. Um, one, this paper was at a marine mammal meeting where we presented a poster, which is much more comprehensive than this. And then we had a, a second poster at a Wildlife Society meeting, which has, um, a lot of the data on ice type and, you know, the, the changes we saw.
And then the other change in polar bears we saw was a really
dramatic change in distribution related to the change in sea
ice, which is that the bears were no longer dispersed over the
coastline. They were now either on shore, scattered along the
barrier islands or clumped at the whaling sites, and most of them
had shifted. Um, on this map here, if you look at the original
data, which I don’t think you have – maybe in Jeff’s (inaudible),
the bears would have been scattered along here. By the time we
were doing our study, they were, let’s see, that’s – yeah, here,
this is Camden Bay. The bulk of the bears were right down here,
and the vast majority were at the bone pile.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And then a few at Cross Island, which
is located off of Prudhoe, which is in here, because that’s
another bone pile, and then others on the barrier islands.
But essentially, in the summer, since the – or in the fall,
when we’re out there, since the ice is now gone, the bears have
to be on land, you know, or way out on the ice. And we have a
huge amount of satellite-tagged bears that we know where they
are, so – and they’re in those places.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Well, your manuscript, so when you put
this together, was it peer-reviewed?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, yeah.

ERIC MAY: By whom?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, it was, it was reviewed here.

Um, Lisa Rotterman, my wife, who is a, you know, Ph.D. ecologist,
um, reviewed it and, and, you know, she took the first cut. Cleve Cowles, um, gave it a thorough read. I think Paul Stang did, who’s a manager, and I wouldn’t call that a peer review. That’s a, that’s a political correctness review. And, uh, then we sent it to, um – well, we sent it to Andy Derocher, who’s internationally – he’s the, he’s the, the head of the IUCN, uh, polar bear, uh, specialist group and, uh, Ian Stirling, who’s probably the senior, like the dean, you know, the, the all-time most famous polar bear guy in the world.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, and I had spoken to them on the phone about the result, and I just told them, “Hey, we saw, you know, some weird stuff this year, and what do you think?” And they said, “Well, that’s – you probably ought to write that up. Uh, you know, it would be useful to have that in the literature.” And the other factor is I’m managing contracts that involve those people, so they’re tagging bears and things in a, in a study that I, you know, helped create and manage. And, uh, then we sent it to journal, and they sent it out to three peer reviewers, anonymous peer reviewers.

ERIC MAY: The journal or –?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, Polar Biology.

ERIC MAY: Polar Biology, okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: How did they become involved?

CHARLES MONNETT: The journal?
ERIC MAY: Yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, we submitted it for publication.

ERIC MAY: You just submitted it to them?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and was, um, MMS aware that you submitted it to Polar Bear –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, absolutely.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, we had to, um, you know, go through a, a signoff process that I brought that along here. I think you probably have already seen it, because I know you’ve seen all my stuff. But here’s, um, here’s the signoff, um, for the, um, that paper, and I want you to notice the note.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Basically, the point I’m making is that, um, you know, Cleve, um, pointed out that Paul Stang, his supervisor, had given it a fairly thorough review for I’d say political correctness, and he had a couple of very minor, uh, changes. And then the other thing I want you to note is, uh, towards the top, there’s a box checked, um, {right} here. He checked, “No. Report, uh, contains national scope/policy and requires higher approval.” And so this is all the way through Paul Stang.

Now these are approvals on the two posters, the same thing. And the, uh, the second poster also has the Regional Director’s signature on it, and I want you to notice those also have that
box checked “No.” So even after, um, this paper and the first
poster came out, and there was some, uh, angst within the
Department of Interior about the result, the Region was still
taking the position that this was not a national, of national
scope. And so I would say that tells you that we still weren’t
recognizing at that point, um –

ERIC MAY: Regionally speaking.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, regionally speaking. We weren’t,
we weren’t recognizing the paper as having any potential to be
controversial or influential.

ERIC MAY: In these peer reviews by these individuals, was
there any concern about some of the content and the calculations
or anything to that?

CHARLES MONNETT: No, not really.

ERIC MAY: Did they comment at all about any of the stats
or –

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, there’s no stats in there.

ERIC MAY: Well, calculations, for, for example, the
25 percent survival rate.

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, well, that’s just a mindless thing.
That’s in the discussion. Um, that is not a statistic. Um,
that’s a ratio estimator. It’s a, it’s a fifth grade procedure.

ERIC MAY: No.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, well, if you had kids, you would
know that in about fifth grade, they start doing a thing called
cross multiplication. “X” is to “Y” as, you know, “N” is to “M.”
And you can – there’s, there’s a little procedure you use to compare the proportions. And so that’s a, um, simply a calculation. It’s not a statistic.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, uh, we were very careful, um, in how we presented that, to first make it clear that we had – we didn’t have sufficient sample size, although a, a, a peer statistician type would probably argue we did. But we felt we didn’t have a sufficient sample size to do statistics and, you know, and to estimate, to do any estimators or confidence intervals or anything like that on. And we put caveats throughout that section, saying that, uh, “it’s possible.” And we felt that, um, we didn’t want to leave the reader thinking that, “Okay, they went out, and they surveyed it, and there were four dead bears.” Because this is a survey, and it only looks – it only covers a small part of the habitat.

When you’re out there flying in an airplane, uh, over this vast area, our transects were 100 kilometers or longer, many cases, and we were surveying an area 500, you know, kilometers wide. We appreciated that we had a very limited, you know, scope in this thing. We were only looking at a small percentage of it, and so we thought that it would be worthwhile, uh, letting them know essentially that we only looked at about 10 percent of the area. And so if you just kind of draw a circle around the area where the dead bears were, then if we looked at 10 percent of the
area, um, it’s reasonable to think that if they’re distributed randomly, which we don’t have any reason not to think they are, that we would see 10 percent of what’s there. And that’s a standard thing that’s, um, used all the time and sometimes very rigorously.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: But you, but you have to state your assumptions, which, you know, I think we did, so -. And that’s – that hasn’t been controversial. Nobody, nobody’s really complained about that that I’m – that I recall anyway.

ERIC MAY: Well, on the, on the – let’s go back to the peer review.

CHARLES MONNETT: Sure.

ERIC MAY: Do you recall seeing this? And it’s a, it’s a – where the (inaudible) – for you guys, it’s a – from ESS, a manuscript review approval, like a signature. Do you recall reading those? And I believe it’s from man- – like Cleve Cowles and –

CHARLES MONNETT: Hold on, February 10th. Ah, no, I don’t recall seeing this. This must be what Cleve gave to Paul when he asked him to review the, the document.

ERIC MAY: Well, this was in, uh, Mr. Gleason’s possession and –

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: – and do you want to read it for – some of it – they’re questioning your, your numbers in your poster
presentation, as well as the, the manuscript, particularly regarding the polar bear numbers.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay, where? Here, let me read it.

ERIC MAY: Oh, go ahead.

CHARLES MONNETT: “See my comments on ice. Statement is not supported in the abstract.” That just doesn’t mean anything. Um, “General comment: Are there enough data to make the statement, these statements? Was survey protocol the same through the 26 years?” Um, “This translates” – I don’t know where, where he got this 12 sightings per year. “I need to see the poster.” I don’t – yeah, I don’t know. I don’t have any problem with it. It’s legitimate. He’s just, uh, asking questions. I would assume since they signed off on it, that they were satisfied with whatever answers they got, but I don’t know, um –

ERIC MAY: Well, my question is did you ever – do you recall following up to these comments or concerns regarding the manuscript or the poster presentation when, when he’s – because he circles especially in regards to the polar bears that –

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, is this, um – 2-14-06, this, this must be related to the second poster, which came out after the manuscript.

ERIC MAY: That was the one done at the, the conference, right?

CHARLES MONNETT: See, I can’t tell what this is about, whether this is, um, the second – uh, the Wildlife Society
poster, which Cleve was an author on, um, or, um, whether this
is related to the manuscript, because I think it was published.
I think it was already submitted and would—well, what’s it say?
Where’s that, uh—

ERIC MAY: Which one?
CHARLES MONNETT: The, the signoff, when did that go
through? Yeah, see, this is, uh—
LYNN GIBSON: That’s the first one, and this one looks like
it’s—

CHARLES MONNETT: Two-twenty-one.
LYNN GIBSON: Two, 2-14-06.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay. No, that’s the conference right
there. Here, this is the, uh, this is the signoff on the paper,
and that’s ’05. So this refers to the second poster.

ERIC MAY: The one done at the conference, right, the
13th Annual Wild—

CHARLES MONNETT: The Wildlife one, yeah.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: The, uh, this one here. Um, uh, what’s
at the, 13th Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society, right.

And what you’ve got is Cleve here just, you know, his job is to
point out, um any considerations to his manager so that, uh, his
manager, um, is satisfied with it. And you’ve, um—in there,
you’ve got the, um, paper, um, that, uh, Paul Stang, who this was
directed to, with his comments in it, so he obviously didn’t have
any problems.
ERIC MAY: Now the Regional Director’s signature is there as well, or initials.

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, jeez, I don’t know {with that one}.

ERIC MAY: No, it was {John Gaul}.

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, oh, yeah, yeah, he’s there.

ERIC MAY: So did – so he reviewed it as a peer reviewer, correct?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, no, not as a peer reviewer. That was a management review, and that was the poster, not the paper.

ERIC MAY: Right, but the poster presentation at the Wildlife Conference?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And that one doesn’t, um, that doesn’t have the data on the dead bears in it. That’s stuff on ice, and it, it may mention it, but it doesn’t –

ERIC MAY: Well, actually, since you’re bringing that up, and, and I’m a little confused of how many dead or drowned polar bears you did observe, because in the manuscript, you indicate three, and in the poster presentation –

CHARLES MONNETT: No.

ERIC MAY: – you mentioned four.

CHARLES MONNETT: No, now you’re confusing the, um, the estimator with the, uh, the sightings. There were four drowned bears seen.

ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: Three of which were on transects.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And so for the purpose of that little ratio estimator, we only looked at what we were seeing on transects, because that’s a – you know, we couldn’t be very rigorous, but the least we could do is look at the random transects. And so we based, uh, our extrapolation to only bears on transects, because we’re saying that the transects, the, the swaths we flew, represented I think it was 11 percent of the entire habitat that, you know, that could have had dead polar bears in it.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: And, um, so by limiting it to the transect bears, then, you know, we could do that ratio estimator and say three is to, um, uh, “x” as, uh, 11 is to 100. I mean, it’s that kind of thing. You, you’ve, you’re nodding like you understand.

LYNN GIBSON: Yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, that’s pretty simple, isn’t confusing. I mean, it’s –

ERIC MAY: So, so, so you observed four dead polar bears during MMS –

CHARLES MONNETT: One of which was not on transect.

ERIC MAY: Okay, so that’s what –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: So is that considered an MMS survey, the one that was not?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, because when we go out there, we
don’t – we aren’t just limited to flying transects. We have to
get there.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And we connect. We go between transects.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: And in some cases, uh, we may divert, and
I don’t remember where that bear was seen, but I do know that –
uh, well, no, I’m thinking of the swimming ones. I’m guessing it
was seen when we were flying what we called a base leg, which was
a leg along the shoreline a couple miles out –

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: – because, sometimes, we have to fly 10 or
15 kilometers to get to the next leg.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, I – it could have been something else
but, I mean, that’s –.

ERIC MAY: So will that explain – this is an email from
you – between you and Mr. Gleason.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: And on the first page –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: – Mr. Gleason is talking about four observations,
I believe, then you correct him and say only three observations
during MMS surveys.
CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, huh. Well, that’s a typo, I guess.
I don’t know what the context of this was. But, I mean, I, I
gave four lat/longs here, so –.

ERIC MAY: Right, and, well, that’s, and that’s the
confusion.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: So why did you correct him and – because he
initially in the first email said four observations, using these.
And then you correct him –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: – in, in, in response by saying, no, only three
polar bear, dead, you know, dead polar bear observations during
MMS survey –

CHARLES MONNETT: No –

ERIC MAY: – and that’s why I’m asking about your actual
observation.

CHARLES MONNETT: I don’t know. You know, I don’t know what
that is. I don’t, I don’t remember that, and I don’t know if
that’s the same thing.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, but those are the four locations, and
they’re pretty far apart I think. Well, there’s your dates, so
it was on four different dates. Yeah, no, I – you know, it is
what it is.

ERIC MAY: Okay.
LYNN GIBSON: So going back earlier, that the dead polar bear information will not be in the data recorder, but it – all four would in some way be indicated in the notebooks?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, it’d be in the, in the books.
LYNN GIBSON: Is that correct?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, I would assume Jeff’s books or my books, so –.
LYNN GIBSON: Okay.
ERIC MAY: All right. So I want to – I have the poster presentation and –
CHARLES MONNETT: That’s – if that’s the kind of thing people are after, that’s –
ERIC MAY: Well, that’s why we’re here. Again, we’re,
we’re –
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, I know. That’s just silly.
ERIC MAY: So I highlighted under here, and we’ve got the four, and that’s what –
CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, here you go. Yeah. Well, I’m pretty confident that it was four. I mean, that’s, um – uh, look, look what is in the paper. I mean, it should have the – probably the same information that, you know –
ERIC MAY: Well, it –
CHARLES MONNETT: There’s a table in there, but does it – it has the dead ones in it, doesn’t it?
ERIC MAY: Well, and I think you, you explain, so this is the portion where you’re talking about the 25 percent survival rate.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: And you’re talking about four swimming bears and three drowned or dead polar bears.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah. Yeah, but that’s because those are on transects.

ERIC MAY: On part of this 11 percent?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, it says that right in here and, and –

ERIC MAY: Right, right, but that’s what you’re talking about, so it –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, and that’s why I don’t know about that, that email. Maybe, um, when I said three, what I left out was the word “on transect” or something. I, I don’t know.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: I don’t know. I mean, it’s – I’d have to be pretty stupid to put three and then list four locations right under it, though.

ERIC MAY: Right, and you do list the four.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: And these four locations that you, you indicated on that, I would be able to go back and verify it on the data recorder information?
CHARLES MONNETT: I would assume so, yeah, that's where we got it.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: We, we pulled it out of those books.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And I'm not sure whether, um - sometimes I leaned on - Jeff is, uh, um, was a meticulous data recorder. I mean, he, um, he wrote everything down. And so I leaned on him a lot that way, because I had different duties, and so a lot of times, when we were busy, and we were seeing a lot, I would count on Jeff to record observations. And I would be, um, looking harder. You know, instead of bringing, bringing my eyes into the airplane, I would keep my eyes outside the airplane, because I'm a better observer than anybody. I just am, and if you look at the data, I've, uh, I've seen a lot more, you know, whales.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: On a typical flight, I'll see more than my share of whales. Occasionally not, but usually.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And that has to do with my vision and the fact that I've been doing this for many, many, many years, so -.

ERIC MAY: All right. Can you do me a favor and we're - now that we're on this subject, can you tell me how you came up with the calculations in this little paragraph?

CHARLES MONNETT: Sure.

ERIC MAY: And it - again, this is the 11 percent.
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah. Okay, let’s see.

ERIC MAY: Can you get me my pen, Chuck?


ERIC MAY: Just you (inaudible).

CHARLES MONNETT: That’s all right. It’s easier to –

ERIC MAY: And do you want a piece of paper to –

CHARLES MONNETT: No, no, this is, this is no-brainer stuff here.

ERIC MAY: And, and for the individuals on the other end, we’re, we’re referring to the manuscript and –

CHARLES MONNETT: Stuff under Table 2 –

ERIC MAY: Yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: The paragraph in the left-hand column.

Um, God, I’ve got people here who are second-guessing my calculations. Um, well, um, we flew transects. That was our basic methodology. They were partially randomized. And we, uh, we looked at a, a map. I think we probably used GIS to do it, and we said that our survey area, if you bound it, is so big.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: And then we made some assumptions about our swath width, and I think we assumed we could see a, a bear out to a kilometer with any reliability, which mean you’re looking down like that. And, uh, sometimes you might see more; sometimes you wouldn’t. Sometimes you can’t see a whale out that far, so it depends on the water conditions. And so we just said that, um, if you add up, we had 34 north/south transects provide
11 percent coverage of the 630 kilometer-wide study area, and that was just to get our ratio of coverage. And then the area we really were concerned about was just the area where the bears were, so we could ignore the area at that point and just go with a ratio, because we assume that’s the same, because these things are pretty, uh, they’re pretty standardized. They were designed to be standardized, so in each bloc - have you seen the blocs? Have you seen our design? It’s in here.

ERIC MAY: I took – yeah, in, in your study.

CHARLES MONNETT: It’s right at the beginning here. Um, every map in here has got it on it. Um, there, those are our blocs. And so, uh, this one would have four pairs. This one would have probably three pairs. I don’t know, there will be later maps. Um, and there, you can see the flights. Uh, well, yeah, they’re in here. Um, so we’re flying these transects, and we’re assuming we can see a certain percentage or a certain, certain distance. Therefore, we can total up the length and the width and come up with an area. And so we calculated that our coverage was 11 percent, plus or minus a little bit.

ERIC MAY: Okay. And I believe you rounded up, too. It was 10.8 and you rounded up to 11?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah. Well, that’s a nothing. Um, yeah, 10.8. And then we said, um, four dead - four swimming polar bears were encountered on these transects, in addition to three.

ERIC MAY: Three dead polar bears?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, three dead.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: But the four swimming were a week earlier.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, um, then we said if they accurately reflect 11 percent of the bears present so, in other words, they’re just distributed randomly, so we looked at 11 percent of the area.

ERIC MAY: In that transect?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: In, in our, in our area there, um –

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: – and, therefore, we should have seen 11 percent of the bears. Then you just invert that, and you come up with, um, nine times as many. So that’s where you get the 27, nine times three.

ERIC MAY: Where does the nine come from?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well 11 percent is one-ninth of 100 percent. Nine times 11 is 99 percent. Is that, is that clear?

ERIC MAY: Well, now, seven of 11 – seven of what number is 11 percent? Shouldn’t that be – that’s 63, correct?

CHARLES MONNETT: What?

ERIC MAY: So you said this is –

CHARLES MONNETT: Seven/11ths this is –
ERIC MAY: No, no, no, no, no. This, this is, this is 11 – seven is what number of 11 percent?

CHARLES MONNETT: Seven?

ERIC MAY: Yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: Is what number of 11 percent?

ERIC MAY: Eleven percent, right.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t know. I don’t even know what you’re talking about. It makes no sense.

LYNN GIBSON: I think what he’s saying is since there’s four swimming and three dead, that makes –

ERIC MAY: And three dead.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, you don’t count them all together. That doesn’t have anything to do. You can’t – that doesn’t even –

LYNN GIBSON: So you’re not saying that the seven represent 11 percent of the population.

CHARLES MONNETT: They’re different events.

ERIC MAY: Well, that’s what you try – we’re trying to –

LYNN GIBSON: You’re talking about they’re separate?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, they’re different events.

ERIC MAY: Right, so explain to us how –

CHARLES MONNETT: On one day – well, let me draw. I, I, I don’t have confidence that you’re understanding me here, so let me (inaudible/mixed voices).

ERIC MAY: No, please, please do. That’s why, that’s why we’re here.
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, no, I’m starting to –
LYNN GIBSON: And I have (inaudible).
CHARLES MONNETT: Sorry, Jeff, that all – that we’re going
to go to the blackboard.
ERIC MAY: Can – would you – it would probably be better if
you write it on –
CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, okay, you want evidence.
ERIC MAY: Well, no, so we understand it, so –
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I was going to write it there, and
then you’d understand it, but if you –
LYNN GIBSON: Either way.
ERIC MAY: Yeah, it doesn’t – I mean –
LYNN GIBSON: Either way, it doesn’t matter.
CHARLES MONNETT: All right.
LYNN GIBSON: {The cover is easy}.
CHARLES MONNETT: It makes me feel more professorial if I
write it on the blackboard.
LYNN GIBSON: Okay, go ahead.
CHARLES MONNETT: No, that’s okay.
ERIC MAY: (Inaudible/mixed voices)
CHARLES MONNETT: If you could see it, I wanted you to see
it was why I was going to do it there.
ERIC MAY: (Inaudible/mixed voices)
LYNN GIBSON: We’re your students today.
CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, this has transects on it,
doesn’t it, guys?
LYNN GIBSON: Yes, it does.

CHARLES MONNETT: I mean, look right here. So here’s our coastline right here, this red thing.

ERIC MAY: Okay, yep.

CHARLES MONNETT: And here’s our, um, our study area. We go out to whatever it was. I don’t remember, 70, 71 degrees or something like that. And, um, around each of these things, we survey a tenth of the distance between, basically.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: And so if you draw these lines here, and this is – you’re just going to have to pretend like I did this for all of them. And you calculate the area in here.

LYNN GIBSON: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: And you total them all, and then you calculate the whole area. This – the area inside here was 11 percent.

LYNN GIBSON: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay? Now what we said is that we saw three, three bears in 11 percent.

ERIC MAY: Three dead bears?

CHARLES MONNETT: Three dead, yeah, dead –

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: – in the 11 percent of the habitat.

And so you could set up a, um, a ratio here, three is to “x” equals 11 over 100, right? And so you end up with – you can cross-multiply. You know algebra?
ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes], yeah.

CHARLES MONNETT: You can cross-multiply. Okay, so you end up with 300 equals 11x, and I am sure that that’s – equals 27, okay?

ERIC MAY: Right, right, got that.

CHARLES MONNETT: And if you stick four in here instead, you end up with –

ERIC MAY: Thirty-six.

CHARLES MONNETT: – whatever that number was, yeah, 36.

Now, um, those numbers aren’t related, except we made the further assumption, which is implicit to the analysis. Seems obvious to me. We went out there one week, and we saw four swimming on the transect, which we estimated could have been as many as 36.

LYNN GIBSON: Correct.

CHARLES MONNETT: If we correct for the area. And we went out there later, a week to two weeks later, and then we saw the dead ones, the three dead ones in the same area, which could have been 27. And then we said let’s make the further assumption that – and this, this isn’t in the paper, but it’s implicit to this argument –

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: – that right after we saw these bears swimming, this storm came in and caught them offshore, all right? And so if, um, if you assume that the, the, the 36 all were exposed to the storm, and then we went back and we saw potentially 27 of them, that gives you your 25 percent survival
rate. Now that’s, um, statistically, um, irrelevant. I mean, it, it’s not statistical. It’s just an argument. It’s for, it’s for the sake of discussion. See, right here, “Discussion.”

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: That’s what you do in discussions is you throw things out, um, for people to think about. And so what we said is, look, uh, we saw four. We saw a whole bunch swimming, but if you want to compare them, then let’s do this little ratio estimator and correct for the percentage of the area surveyed. And just doing that, then there might have been as many as 27 bears out there that were dead. There might have been as many as 36, plus or minus. There could have been 50. I don’t know. But the way we were posing it was that it’s serious, because it’s not just four. It’s probably a lot more.

And then we said that with the further assumption, you know, that the bears were exposed or, you know, the ones we’re measuring later that are carcasses out there, it looks like a lot of them, you know, didn’t survive, so - but it’s, it’s discussion, guys. I mean, it’s not in the results.

LYNN GIBSON: And on the two different days, you’re flying the same transects?

CHARLES MONNETT: Not necessarily, no.

LYNN GIBSON: Oh, different -

CHARLES MONNETT: No, it’s randomized. In fact, absolutely not. We were flying -

LYNN GIBSON: Different.
CHARLES MONNETT: - transects in the same blocks, but
different randomized starting and endpoints. I - you know,
that’s only confusing to somebody that is trying really hard
to be negative. That’s - I mean, I think anybody -
ERIC MAY: So combining the three dead polar bears and the
four alive bears is a mistake?
CHARLES MONNETT: No, it’s not a mistake. It’s just not
a, a, a real, uh, rigorous analysis. And a whole bunch of peer
reviewers and a journal, you know -
ERIC MAY: Did they go through - I mean, did they do the
calculations as you just did with us?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I assume they did. That’s their
purpose.
ERIC MAY: Okay. Right, and that’s - again, that’s why I
was asking peer review.
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: Did they do that with that particular section of
your manuscript?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t, I don’t remember anybody
doing the calculations but, um, uh, there weren’t any huge
objections. There weren’t a - let’s put it this way, there
weren’t sufficient objections for the journal editor to ask
us to take it out.
ERIC MAY: Right. Well, let me, let me read you what - the
four bears - and representing what we were just talking about,
this section.
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: So just let me, let me read what I have here, okay?

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: “If four swimming bears, if four bears represent 11 percent of the population of bears swimming before the storm,” –

CHARLES MONNETT: Um-hm [yes].

ERIC MAY: - okay? “Then 36 bears were likely swimming.”

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, maybe, I mean –

ERIC MAY: Okay, but I mean –

CHARLES MONNETT: No, we didn’t say “likely.” I think we said “possibly,” or did you say “likely” or –?

ERIC MAY: Well, or this - again, as you just stated earlier, this is Discussion, so –

CHARLES MONNETT: I’d be surprised if we said “likely,” but mostly we were saying “possibly.”

ERIC MAY: Okay, so let me - let, let me continue, so –

CHARLES MONNETT: Okay.

ERIC MAY: - so you have that. “If three bears represent 11 percent of the population of bears that may have died” –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: - right?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: I think those are your words in your manu– “may have died.”
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: “– as a result of this storm, then 27 bears were likely drowned.” Okay, so far, so good?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, if I used “likely.” I don’t know if I did.

ERIC MAY: Well, okay, that’s –

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, that’s a big deal.

ERIC MAY: Well, no, but I’m saying –

CHARLES MONNETT: (Laughing)

ERIC MAY: – let me get to that – well, let me get to the final thing here.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: “If seven total bears, four swimming, uh, and three drowned represents 11 percent of the population” –

CHARLES MONNETT: It doesn’t.

ERIC MAY: Okay, and we’ll – let me, let – “of bears before the storm, then the total number of bears after the storm is 63,” and that’s where I came up with the sixty –

CHARLES MONNETT: That’s just stupid. I – did you do that?

ERIC MAY: No.

CHARLES MONNETT: That is stupid.

ERIC MAY: I’m a, I’m just – I interview –

CHARLES MONNETT: In the first place, there’s – it’s 200 percent, okay?

ERIC MAY: So explain – tell me why that’s wrong.
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, because they’re acting like they were all seen at the same survey. We flew the whole thing twice to see that, right?

ERIC MAY: Right, and that’s, that’s different.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: That’s where the mistake is here –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: – because they –

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: – they – it occurred on different trips.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, it, it, it’s, it’s three out –

uh, three is to 11 to 100 percent, and then four is to 11 to 100 percent. It’s another 100 percent. And so I, I don’t even still follow what they did to get the 60 percent. That, that’s –

ERIC MAY: The 63 percent.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, that’s just goofy.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: But you should at least be – if you were trying to, uh, uh, document the rate at which we saw something, dead or swimming, it would be seven out of 200 percent.

LYNN GIBSON: I think the math is that if you take – if they’re considering that there are seven total bears, and that represents 11 percent –

ERIC MAY: Eleven percent, right.

LYNN GIBSON: – of 63, and that, that –
ERIC MAY: And that’s – so that’s wrong.
LYNN GIBSON: And that’s what we’re trying to understand is why is that wrong or right in this.
CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, I, I, I have no idea.
LYNN GIBSON: Okay.
ERIC MAY: Is there one – and as – well, you stated just a few minutes ago, it’s because the – it – uh, trips occurred on different days. Now what if this occurred on the same day?
Would –
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, if we had seen seven something on,
uh, on, on –
ERIC MAY: One –
CHARLES MONNETT: Not, not even a same day, but the same pass –
ERIC MAY: Right.
CHARLES MONNETT: – through the system, then that would be 100 percent of it, so it would be seven bears seen in a – not 100 percent but, I mean, we surveyed 100 percent. So seven in, in 11 percent is what that would be. But that’s not, not even close to correct.
ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: It’s just goofy. And I – and, uh, the 63 number, what’s the point of that? You know?
ERIC MAY: Wonder what, what they did is seven of what number is, uh, represents 11 percent, and that would – that’s where the 63 came up.
CHARLES MONNETT: Somebody is deficient in fifth grade math.

ERIC MAY: (Laughing)

CHARLES MONNETT: Seriously. I mean, give me a break.

ERIC MAY: Right, do you have any other questions on -?

LYNN GIBSON: No, no.

ERIC MAY: Okay. Do you have anything else for us on that particular section?

CHARLES MONNETT: No. No, this -

ERIC MAY: Now, and I want to reiterate or re-- go back real quick.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Just the three - when you indicate three dead polar bears in that, that doesn’t mean - you’re just talking about that transect for discussion purpose -

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t, I don’t -

ERIC MAY: Not -

CHARLES MONNETT: I don’t recall. You know, I - you mean the, the contradictory one here?

ERIC MAY: Between three and four observations of -

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, I, I, I don’t recall what that was, um, but I’m, I’m, uh - we, we never thought it was three. We knew it was four. And the three is bears on the transect, and so I don’t, I don’t know, out of context - uh, you’ve got to understand, Jeff sat three cubicles from me, and so when I sent him an email, I was really sending him the, uh, the lat/longs
of all the bears. He must have requested that. What did he say
in his memo or in his message? I don’t remember.

ERIC MAY: Oh, in the -

CHARLES MONNETT: Do you have that?

ERIC MAY: Are you talking about the email?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, his email to me that the - what was
his asking for or - I think it said that.

ERIC MAY: I don’t know if he was even asking for anything.

He was -

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t - why did I send him a
message here?

ERIC MAY: He was basically telling you event numbers where,
you know -

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, okay, so he gave me the event numbers.

All right, now this should tell you that, um, we were basing this
on the notes in Jeff’s book, okay, because I told you that I may
have relied on him to write it down -

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: - because he’s very good at that, and I
was busy. And this wasn’t a high priority at the time. So he
went to his books and, and when we, uh, whenever we record an
observation, the computer logs an event. And if I wasn’t so
rusty on this, what I would have said was, um, we’re flying
along, we see a whale. We’d say, “I see a whale,” and the data
recorder says something like, um, “Okay” or whatever. But at
that point, they push the button. If the bear - or if the, if
the whale or whatever it is is a, {a bemus}, and if, if we say,
“I see a whale ahead two miles,” then they would wait. But at
some point, you would say – we had a word we used. I don’t
remember. Um, it was something like, you know, “fix” or, or I –
it wasn’t fix, but we had a word we used that indicated it was
time to punch the button. And they’d punch the button, and then
that would register, uh, the lat/long. And at that point, the
computer would register an event number. So any time they’d push
the button, it’s an event. Even if it’s weather, it’s an event.

And so they would call to us, “Okay, you have Event #46,”
and Jeff would write that down in his book, or I would. And then
we would look out the window, see what was going on. Which way
is the whale swimming, is it accompanied with a calf? Is there
only one whale? How fast is it going? What direction is it
going – all that stuff. And then we would start to call that
back to the data recorder. At the same time, we would be making
notes in our book if we weren’t too distracted with something
else.

And we got better and better at that, but Jeff was
meticulous at that. And so he’s telling me here that, uh, I
must have said, “Jeff, I don’t have this in my book. What were,
you know, what were the event numbers?” Or maybe, uh, um – you
know, I must – maybe – uh, I must have been, uh, going back and
he, he, he had the event numbers, and I’m guessing I was looking
at the data stream in the computer to get the lat/longs, because
he wouldn’t have those in his book. And so he gave me the four
events. I registered the four, um, locations, and then I don’t
know why I said three. I, yeah, see, he says, “I don’t have
access to the database.” So I did. That’s the electronic
database.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, and so the three dead polar bears
may have been related to another question that he asked me,
um, being three cubicles away and, of course, I sent him this
electronically, because I’m not going to put it in – you know,
I’m not going to yell it at him or something like that. Who
knows? I don’t know. But, uh, what I’m saying is there’s a
lot of context going on here. He’s close to me. We’re talking.
We’re exchanging information verbally, uh, either by phone or
by walking, you know, down a couple of cubicles. And so that
could have been a question that he asked, um, that had to do
with the transects, or maybe it’s just an error. I don’t know.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

LYNN GIBSON: So what makes – one more question on this that
I have is, um, for purposes of a manuscript, you use the three
bears, dead bears –

CHARLES MONNETT: Um-hm [yes].

LYNN GIBSON: – because those were seen on the transects.

CHARLES MONNETT: Transects, yeah.

LYNN GIBSON: Well, why wouldn’t you use the three on the
poster, or what, what then –

CHARLES MONNETT: Well -
LYNN GIBSON: Why do you include the fourth bear in there? What makes the difference I guess, you know, when, when it comes to science and a poster versus a manuscript or -?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, because one is just an observation. You know, when we say we saw four dead bears, we go totally anecdotal. We were out there flying around, dude, and we saw four dead bears. And - but then when we want to do something that involves numbers, you know, some kind of a, a calculation, we have to have, uh, you know, some, some standard, some basis to extrapolate. And so we had to, uh - this, this is real common. Um, you, you’re going to limit it to the most rigorous part of what you’re doing, because then you know.

When, when we’re flying, um, outside our transects, which we do a fair amount of, uh, we see a lot of stuff, um, but we always record it as outside our transects. For instance, in the bowhead reports here, uh, you’ll see this a lot, because we’ll see bowheads on search, and we’ll see bowheads on transect. And “search” just means we’re just flying around, and maybe we’ll see a whale in the distance. And it’s on transect, because we’re flying straight on our transect. And we can estimate the position using our clinometer and doing some geometry, but then we may divert and go over to look at it, because we weren’t able to establish whether it had a calf and, and the circumstances were, uh, right, that we had time to do that.

So we break off transect. Our program has all the stuff in it, “break transect, go on search.” Now anything we see is on
search. And we may start picking up other whales. There may be 25 whales over there, but if they’re not part of the behavioral unit, then they’re classified as “on search” rather than “on transect.” So if the one is there, and it turns out it has three other whales right next to it underwater, and we couldn’t see them, then there will be four whales on transect. But if we see four on the way over, it’s four whales on search.

And then when we do our analyses in here, um, and we do some fairly rigorous stuff in here, we limit it to the transect stuff, because that’s what’s valid for the statistics. But we’ll report everything. How many whales did we see? We saw 427 whales, and 208 were on transect, so – and the same with polar bears. So we saw four polar bears, of which three were on transect, drowned bears, and we saw 10, was it, swimming? I don’t know, 10 or 11 swimming polar bears, of which four were on transect, which meant that we were flying along the coastline, and we were seeing a lot of swimming polar bears. But it wasn’t until we, you know, hit our transect, turned and went out the transect that we would, you know, register them as being in that little swath that represents 11 percent of the study area.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

LYNN GIBSON: Thank you.

CHARLES MONNETT: I hope it’s really clear, because this is –

LYNN GIBSON: Um-hm [yes], that helps, thank you.
CHARLES MONNETT: - this is, is really silly, and if you
don’t understand it, I want to make sure you do.
ERIC MAY: All right, um, in your manuscript, we’ll stick to
the manuscript a little bit.
CHARLES MONNETT: Sure.
ERIC MAY: Um, and I’ll, I’ll quote to make this - you
indicate that “No polar” - and I’ll quote, “No polar bear
carcasses, carcasses were observed, and no dead and floating
polar bears were observed during aerial surveys conducted in
September 1987 through 2003.”
CHARLES MONNETT: That’s what the database told us, yeah.
ERIC MAY: Okay. What database are you talking about?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, the BWASP database.
ERIC MAY: Okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: The, the big one that, that, um, did not
have a way to record the dead ones in it, but we checked with,
um, (inaudible/mixed voices).
ERIC MAY: Okay, because in, in, uh, referencing the BWASP
studies -
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: - in the studies that we reviewed, I’ll quote,
um, “1987 to 2003, BWASP aerial survey reports state, ‘Sightings
of dead marine mammals were not included in summary analysis or
maps.’”
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: So how could you make the statement that no dead polar bears were observed during 1987 to 2–
CHARLES MONNETT: Because we talked to the people that had flown the flights, and they would remember whether they had seen any dead polar bears.
ERIC MAY: So you talked to each individual from ’87 to –
CHARLES MONNETT: No, no, we talked to the team leaders. We talked to Steve Treacy and, and –
ERIC MAY: All the way back to 1987?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: Do you have documentation of that?
CHARLES MONNETT: No.
ERIC MAY: How, how did you talk to them?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, on the phone. He’s retired, but I call him a lot.
ERIC MAY: And you asked him if he observed any dead polar bears?
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.
ERIC MAY: Now how – isn’t that a little questionable, only because the, the objective of the studies was not to observe dead polar bears, but to observe the migration of bowhead whales?
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t know. Um, I think if they would have seen what we saw, they would have noted it. It was pretty obvious and pretty weird.
ERIC MAY: Well, let me –
CHARLES MONNETT: They did see swimming bears.
ERIC MAY: Well, let me ask you, as a scientist, and you made it well known that you’re a doctor.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Isn’t that stretching it a bit, though, saying — making that conclusion that no dead polar bears were observed during these years, and then, all of a sudden, 2003, you guys are — you observe dead polar bears?

CHARLES MONNETT: I don’t think so.

ERIC MAY: Why?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, if you ask me, I would know, I mean, what I saw, I mean, if I saw something weird like that.

ERIC MAY: So as a scientist, if another scientist made these conclusions based on the information, you would be okay with that as a peer reviewer?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, yeah, I would, I mean, if, you know, if they told me that. They keep notes. I mean, they did this — every, everything like we do, so —.

ERIC MAY: And that’s a, that’s a — and it’s a stretch, isn’t it, though, to make that statement?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, no, I didn’t think so. I thought that was perfectly reasonable to ask them, since it isn’t something — remember, the reason it’s not in the database is because it, it doesn’t happen. You know, you don’t see it, so — and there’s a reason, uh, why it’s changed, which is in, in, in a lot of the early years, there was a lot of ice out there, and
there just weren’t opportunities for there to be dead bears. You know, bears don’t drown when there’s ice all over the place.

ERIC MAY: Well, so let me elaborate what I just asked you. Wouldn’t you, wouldn’t you notate that as a – like maybe a – you know, your statement kind of is stretching it, and you would say, “Well, based on my conversations with individuals during these surveys, although they weren’t supposed to look for dead polar bears, they did not” – I mean, because you’re making a very broad statement by, by that, saying that no dead polar bears were observed during those years.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t know, we, we had complete confidence in it. Um, people worked extensively with, with the database and, and, uh, so we were totally comfortable with the swimming ones, um, which, you know, were rarely seen. And it’s a small thing I think to assume that a, um – you know, the person managing the survey would know and –

ERIC MAY: Well, and, and let me – it, it – so incidental sightings of marine mammals, which are not the focus and target of the survey, do not represent, statistically speaking, the valid data and, therefore, wouldn’t it be questionable as to why the data was used to extrapolate such new scientific findings as your manuscript presented?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I don’t think so. Well, you know, Jeff Gleason did the thing on ducks. I mean, you review the literature, um, and there’s no, no indication anybody has ever seen one drowned. I mean, it wasn’t just on our study but, uh,
we really couldn’t find any documentation anybody had ever seen a polar bear that had drowned like that. Uh, we did find evidence that people had seen bears, uh, that were exhausted after long swims, and we mention that in the paper. They, you know, they would come in and, while we didn’t have any history on them, um, there’s one anecdote of a bear that was exhausted to the point where it didn’t respond for three days, even with a {Borreliien} bear dog put on it. You know, I mean, that’s a pretty strong motivation.

ERIC MAY: Well –

CHARLES MONNETT: Now, since then, people have seen some drowned polar bears. I’ve got some pictures of totally emaciated dead polar bears (inaudible/mixed voices), so –.

ERIC MAY: Well, and based on, based on what I just said, in terms of the, you know, your statement, would it not make more sense, too, because there was a major windstorm during this period of time, which you do mention, but you didn’t talk too much about that as in 2004 regarding these dead polar bears.

CHARLES MONNETT: What do you mean (inaudible/mixed voices)?

ERIC MAY: Well, you’re saying that from 1987 to 2003, there was no dead polar bears.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Did you discuss the storm conditions during those period, period of years as well? I mean, you’re extrapolating a lot to make such, you know, scientific findings.
CHARLES MONNETT: You mean, the storms are increasing up there?

ERIC MAY: No, you’re saying that there was no dead polar bears during those years.

CHARLES MONNETT: Certainly.

ERIC MAY: Yet in 2004, you, you observed four dead polar bears.

CHARLES MONNETT: Right.

ERIC MAY: Yet you didn’t really elaborate on why you believe those dead polar bears died or drowned.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, yeah, we did actually. I don’t know why you’re saying that. We’ve got an extensive section in the paper talking about the, uh, you know, the wind speeds and out there, and we looked into that very hard. And, and we, um, we’re very, very careful in this manuscript to, um, write it so that it, uh, reflects uncertainty, uncertainty about the extent of what happened, the uncertainty of why it happened, the uncertainty of what it meant in a, in a broader context.

We knew three things: That we had seen a bunch of swimming bears and that that was unusual in the context of the whole data stream. We knew we saw some dead bears, which had not been reported before and that we had been assured, you know, was new to the study. And we saw, uh – we experienced, we were there, a, a, uh, high wind event, which was actually not a, a very severe high wind – and it wasn’t, you know, one of the really severe high wind events, but it was enough to shut us down, which meant that
there were some pretty good waves breaking, you know, out at sea, which, um, is pretty easy to imagine would be, uh, challenging, you know, for a bear swimming. And a good bit of that, there’s a whole section in the paper that talks about the windstorm.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, right here, there’s a map, you know, of the wind speeds and all that and, uh, you know, it shows that it just fits right in there. Um –

ERIC MAY: When I was relating to that with your – the observation between 1987 and 2003, that’s what I was getting at with that.

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, you mean why we didn’t look at the wind then? I don’t know why we look to the wind for something that didn’t happen. But let me show you something else here. Um, you’ve got to put it in the context of what we know about the Arctic and the, and the changes that are there, because while you’re working a vacuum, we’re not. You know, we have this, this history that’s as good as anybody’s, you know, in knowing what the changes are. And let’s see, um, there’s some discussion here about wave heights over the long haul, on this paragraph right here. I don’t remember exactly what it says but, let’s see, “Wave heights greater than 3.5 meters or 10 feet are not reported during September or October.” Now that’s a – that’s out of, that’s out of the literature. That’s based on the long-term database. And now we have probably 30-foot seas up there or greater. It’s changed dramatically.
Now the storm we saw that time probably had 8- to 10-foot breaking waves. It was blowing something like 25 to 30 knots or 25 knots, I think. But those are based on, um, measurements on land, and the wind is always a lot higher at sea. So that’s an indicator that there were some pretty strong winds out there. The Beaufort Sea state, uh, was enough to shut us down. We don’t fly if we have a Beaufort 5 or greater, which they were probably Beaufort 6 and 7, which is breaking waves, you know, big, tall breaking waves, which just means that—uh, well, you can imagine. It’s just hard to—

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: —stay on the surface when you’ve got steep breaking waves. Um, the reason that there are bigger storms, um, there are just bigger storms now, because there’s more energy in the environment, because the water is warmer, and the water is exposed to the atmosphere. And you’ve got all that conduction and everything, you know, how hurricanes work.

ERIC MAY: Right, right.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, I mean, it’s the same type of a principle. Uh, but there’s also, um, a lot of open water now, which is a big fetch, and any sailor knows that a big fetch is what it takes a generate big waves. And so even fairly light winds can generate, um, much larger waves up there now than they could when the sea was, uh, covered with ice. And, and we know, from our operations, that when we’re flying, that it can be pretty rough, but if we come to an area where there’s scattered
ice, even fairly low coverage, as low as 10 percent, it will be 
calm on the other side of that for a ways. I mean, the water 
will be glassy flat because the waves dampen down that much – or 
the, the ice damps it down that much.

So you’re going from, um, a situation where there used to 
be a lot of ice scattered around out there, um, where no matter 
how windy it was, there weren’t any waves to now, where there’s 
hundreds of miles literally that those waves can generate and 
build. The whole size, the whole storm, you know, basically the 
whole width of the storm is open.

ERIC MAY: So – okay, and I understand, so based – would 
there not be more observa- – dead polar bear observations then 
in the post-years?

CHARLES MONNETT: Now?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, well, I don’t –

ERIC MAY: Based on what you just explained to me.

CHARLES MONNETT: There may be. I mean, we’ve been 
watching. Um, we’ve had some radioed bears disappear out 
there in the summertime.

ERIC MAY: Because in 2005, there was one; 2006, there was 
five; 2007, there was none.

CHARLES MONNETT: One what?

ERIC MAY: One dead – a, a, a –

CHARLES MONNETT: Swimming?

ERIC MAY: Yes, so – and then, in 2008, there was one.
CHARLES MONNETT: Well, look, I can’t explain why all those bears were swimming, but that’s not the point here. The point starts with the fact that there were lots of swimming bears.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: We didn’t make any attempt to explain the motivation of, uh, all these bears. It was, uh, and remains in my mind as a bizarre thing.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: That all these bears were swimming. Nobody that I know of has seen it in those densities, with the exception of in ’08. Uh, one of our surveys that we were supporting with NMFS saw eight or nine bears in the water on a single flight, and it was associated with the breakup of some ice floes in the Chukchi Sea. And we had been watching that situation, because we felt that there, there were a lot of radioed bears out there on the ice, from another study. And we had this tongue of ice hanging way down in the Chukchi Sea, and I don’t know how many bears.

But it looked like – well, all of the radioed bears from this one study, the Chukchi Study, were on there, so it looked like most of the bears in the Chukchi were at some peril. And this thing was out a long ways, and we were very concerned that we would have a wind event at the same time that that ice broke up and that that would have, uh, you know, killed lots of bears. But we didn’t have the wind event. We had a lot of bears in the
water and a lot of bears documented, bears coming on shore. Um, so that’s one.

And then we’ve had other, uh, situations where we can infer that bears will swim ashore, because we, we had – we and Fish and Wildlife have had surveys along the coastline that have been going and going and going with some ice offshore that we knew had bears on it. And then the ice breaks up, and all of a sudden, there’s 30 or 40 bears on shore. So the question of swimming bears is not, um, something that needs to be debated. I mean, and we all know that, that, that they swim and that they are capable of sometimes swimming long distances. Uh, we’ve added a twist that most biologists, you know, and bear biologists recognize is different and is, uh, reasonable, that if the bears, uh, that are swimming encounter really rough sea states, uh, that it’s going to be hard on them, hard energetically. It may cause them to drown.

ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: Um, when, when you have a very rough sea state, the border between the water and the air kind of disappears. In other words, it’s not just water and air, like we think of it. It turns to foam and, and, you know, other – water just moving around so much that there’s an area about this thick that if you stuck your nose in there, you would – you wouldn’t do well. And I suspect that that’s part of what’s going on with these bears is, you know, their head is about that far – you’ve, you’ve seen a swimming one?
ERIC MAY: Um-hm [yes].

CHARLES MONNETT: I mean, they swim with their head right on the water. They don’t roll on their back, I mean, you know, but – so they’re, um, they’re in a tough situation when, uh, it, uh, you know, you’ve got that kind of foam and, and that’s like in the Beaufort. It starts at about a Beaufort 7 and then goes up. So at like 30-knot winds, 25- to 30-knot winds, you get that extremely hostile surface.

And then the other thing is just trying to swim, you probably have swum in big waves, haven’t you, at the beach? I mean, you know what that’s like when you’re –

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: – close to the coastline, and it’s – energetically, you know, you’re fried.

LYNN GIBSON: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: Go out and do it for a couple of days.

ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: You know, three days, try to bob around, so –.

ERIC MAY: Well, and what I was – the – with your manuscript, you would think if, if what you’re indicating or suggesting in your manuscript, that you would see more dead, drowned – or drowned polar bears in, in the next year because of the – what you’re suggesting in your paper.

CHARLES MONNETT: No, no, that’s silly. Um, this is the Arctic. It’s huge. Almost nobody is up there. We’re up there.
ERIC MAY: Right.

CHARLES MONNETT: And, um, it was nothing short of, of, of amazing that we were lucky enough to be flying on that day when it was, I guess, that calm that whatever had lured those bears out, um, had done that so we saw those bears and then to, uh, to have the combination of the storm and then have some more calm weather afterwards.

Um, if you look at our track record for flying, it’s a hard place to fly, and it’s, it’s, um, it’s unusual. We usually have it a few times a year where we have those calm sea states where you can really see something. And, you know, when I said when it’s really calm, you can see a whale under the surface, that’s really rare. And so the day we saw the swimming bears was, uh, in my memory, as calm and summery a day as I’ve ever seen up there. You’d have thought you were in Hawaii. You know, when you’re flying around looking at the beaches and the sun and on the calm, I mean, it, it’s very deceptive, because it’s not Hawaii, believe me. Um, but to expect that, um, you know, this isn’t like the Chesapeake Bay where people are out there running around. If there’s something dead, people are going to see it. To expect that is just, uh, out of touch with the realities of the situation.

LYNN GIBSON: I just want to clarify one thing. Um, going back to Eric’s question on the – that from ’83 to 2000 and –

ERIC MAY: Eighty-seven to 2003.
LYNN GIBSON: Eighty-seven, thank you, to 2003, um, and, of course, the data recorder wasn’t collecting that data and so, you know, that information on dead polar bears would not be included in the data recorder. So you went back and verbally checked with the previous Team Leaders, correct?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, yeah.

LYNN GIBSON: Who would that be from ’87 to 2003?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, it was primarily Steve Treacy. I can’t remember if we talked to – who else we talked to, if anybody, but we, we kicked it around some here.

LYNN GIBSON: So it would be Steve Treacy?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

LYNN GIBSON: And anybody else or –?

CHARLES MONNETT: Uh, I don’t remember.

LYNN GIBSON: And then they would have either, either related to their notebooks or to their memory, because they know?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, no, uh, they used their memory. It was such an unusual thing –

LYNN GIBSON: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: – the – that it, it, uh –

LYNN GIBSON: Okay, thank you. I just wanted to clarify.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: You could just – you called them up and asked them?

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Okay. All right.
JEFF RUCH: This is Jeff Ruch. We’ve been at this for an hour and 45 minutes, and I’m curious, are we going to get to the allegations of scientific misconduct or, uh, have – is that what we’ve been doing?

LYNN GIBSON: Actually, a lot of the questions that we’ve been discussing relate to the allegations.

ERIC MAY: Right.

JEFF RUCH: Um, but, uh, Agent May indicated to, um, Paul that he was going to lay out what the allegations are, and we haven’t heard them yet, or perhaps we don’t understand them from this line of questioning.

ERIC MAY: Well, the scientific – well, scientific misconduct, basically, uh, wrong numbers, uh, miscalculations, uh –

JEFF RUCH: Wrong numbers and calculations?

ERIC MAY: Well, what we’ve been discussing for the last hour.

JEFF RUCH: So this is it?

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, that’s not scientific misconduct anyway. If anything, it’s sloppy. I mean, that’s not – I mean, I mean, the level of criticism that they seem to have leveled here, scientific misconduct, uh, suggests that we did something deliberately to deceive or to, to change it. Um, I sure don’t see any indication of that in what you’re asking me about.

ERIC MAY: No, no, no further comment on my part. We, we’re – I’m just about complete with my – the interview, so –
CHARLES MONNETT: Really? Oh, good. That’s it?
ERIC MAY: Like I said, we receive allegations; we investigate.
CHARLES MONNETT: Don’t you wonder why somebody that can’t even do math is making these allegations and going through this stuff?
ERIC MAY: Well, let me, let me finish the interview, and then we’ll, we’ll -. All right, so as, as a scientist, uh, Dr. Monnett -
CHARLES MONNETT: Yes.
ERIC MAY: Uh, in your, in your manuscript, you use a lot of, um, like, uh, “we speculate,” “we further suggest,” “potential,” “may pose.” If you -
CHARLES MONNETT: Yes, meticulously so (laughing).
ERIC MAY: Well, right, and you use quite a few of them. Um, as a peer reviewer, would you question those terms?
CHARLES MONNETT: No, I would - I, it, it, it - when there is a level of uncertainty, I would require those terms. That’s the way it, it always goes. You know, if, if something, um, moves beyond the realm of, of, of speculation or estimation into certainty, which almost never happens, then you wouldn’t use those terms. But, um, “estimation” is another one of those words, isn’t it? It’s just, you know, that’s - any statistic is inference. That’s what science is. Science is about making the best case you can to test your hypothesis. You assemble your
arguments and your data, you put it out there, and you see who’s
going to knock it down.

ERIC MAY:  Right.

CHARLES MONNETT:  And, surprisingly, nobody, you know,
knocked this down in any way.  Everybody just kind of like,
“Oh, yeah, four dead polar bears.  Okay, that’s kind of cool.”

ERIC MAY:  Right.

CHARLES MONNETT:  But we didn’t say, uh, much.  I mean –

ERIC MAY:  Right.

CHARLES MONNETT:  – we – listen, we, we work for an agency
that is, especially then, extremely hostile to the concept of
climate change, that’s hostile to the idea that there’s any
effects of anything we do on anything.  And we could only write
this paper by being extremely conservative, with a lot of
caveats.  It’s the only way we could publish it.  Because you
saw those names on there.  They’re all looking at it, you know,
wanting to see whether we’ve said anything at all.

I think one of the things in there that, uh, that I had to
change in an early stage was we said that if, um, this continues,
that it’s something that should be, uh, considered by MMS
analysts or something like that, something specific that way.
Well, of course, that went out right away because, you know,
we’re not going to tell the analysts what to do here.

Um, the reason that I’m not on that other paper, the
Gleason-Rhode one, is not because I didn’t do the work.  Jeff
and I developed that paper together, but we abandoned it when
he was here. And when he left here, then he picked it back up, and he found another author. And I just said, “Jeff, publish it without me. If we try to publish it with me, it’s not going to get out the door here. It’ll never get permission.”

And as a COR, I conceive of, I design studies, I fund them, and in some cases, I’ve provided, you know, extensive data and things from my own work. And I tell every one of my PIs that I will not share authorship on anything. And it’s common for people in my position to, you know, to have their name on a paper in some – usually, you know, like a lab, like a lab manager or something, the name is kind of stuck out on the end. But I’ve told them that my name is not going to go anything, because it will make it impossible to publish the paper because of the attitudes here and the review we go to, go through.

And that’s what you guys ought to be thinking about is that, and why somebody is, is asking these silly questions, why they’re trying to, uh, make me look bad and undermine this simple paper that’s an obvious paper, uh, that hasn’t been subject to any scientific criticism up to this point. And it’s been out there for a while.

But why are people gunning for me constantly? Why is it that I’m telling you and Jeff probably told you that we can’t do science here? Why did I outsource this? You know, why do you think I outsourced it? It’s because I couldn’t do it here anymore. They wouldn’t let me do the right kind of analysis here
that had some potential to demonstrate negative effects from what we manage as an agency.

This study was done for 20-some years, and it was permitted to go forward because it never made a ripple in anything, because it was designed in a way that it had almost no potential to identify any sort of a problem. And part of that has to do with the analysis, and part of it just has to do with the, the questions that were asked.

And when I started the project, I had to make a basic decision. Am I going to try to ensure that this study goes forward forever and that we keep doing it the way we are, or am I going to try to do some science in here and get some of this stuff out? And I chose the latter, which led almost immediately to me having to outsource the study, and so it’s at the National Marine Mammal Lab, because they’re a trust agency, they have responsibility for these, these resources, they give a damn. And they’re scientists, and if they find something in there, they’ll, they’ll publish it, regardless of what my management thinks.

And my management have been trying to kill this study for a while, ever since really the polar bear thing came out. That was when they realized that it’s dangerous to take data like this, because if there are changes and, you know, God forbid something that has anything to do with the climate change debate. So I, I thought they’d softened. I’m amazed that it, um, is coming up, at least if it’s coming up here. I don’t know, maybe it’s coming up somewhere else, but -.
LYNN GIBSON: You know, can I ask you then, I know, earlier, you said that on the {blue} survey, which is dated Fall 2005, you are not one of the authors on this, and -

CHARLES MONNETT: There is no author on it.

LYNN GIBSON: There is no author?

CHARLES MONNETT: It’s authorless, right.

LYNN GIBSON: And, basically, you said that that’s because they wouldn’t allow, that, that the analysis, the way they were insisting you do the analysis is incorrect. Can you -

CHARLES MONNETT: I, I’ve said the analysis is incorrect in here and, and for good reasons. I don’t know if you want to get into that, but I drug my feet on doing it, and I asked for time to do the analysis right, which was going to be a bigger deal. And I was, uh, I was threatened; I was given deadlines; eventually, I was, uh, I was given a disciplinary action and required to produce this thing in a certain amount of time on their timetable, at which point I did, and I took my name off it. So there’s a lot below the surface here, you know, that you guys aren’t, aren’t going to be aware of, um -

JEFF RUCH: Or interested in.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

LYNN GIBSON: What in particular, um, was it that, that would - is different from -

CHARLES MONNETT: What’s wrong with the analysis?

LYNN GIBSON: Uh-huh [yes], what’s wrong with it, from the -
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, well, it’s very simple. The, the, the, the, there’s one, um, simple question that has, um, been the motivation for this survey since its beginning. And the Natives, uh, early on, when, uh, they were, they were the first oil and gas activity up there, the seismic vessels, the icebreakers were coming up there, had a concern that those activities might cause the migration, you know, what you think of as a linear thing, right, to be displaced from the coastline. And if you look in here, you’ll see it’s in a fairly narrow band, and it’s sort of consistent. We know that now. Uh, they were, um, afraid that the whales would go so far offshore that they wouldn’t be able to safely, uh, go to the whales to, you know, do their traditional harvest. And there’s some merit to that concern, if the whales—clearly if the whale is displaced. And some of them thought, oh, the whales will scatter, you know, to the North Pole or whatever. Well, that—there’s no evidence for that.

And so they did a, um, a simple, um, line transect survey where you go north/south, so you’re cutting sections across the, the migratory pathway. You establish your coastline. You measure the distance between where the corridor is and (do) a statistical thing, and you say is it deviating from, you know, where it’s been.

And the problem is that over the years, um, whale behaviors changed quite a bit. There’s less ice out there. There are, there, there are other changes in the environment that, uh, are causing the whales not to engage in just a strict migration
anymore. They stop a lot. They come into feed. You know, they divert off of this pathway and, and all that. And, uh, my concern was that instead of testing the hypothesis that the migration, you know, isn’t affected on migrating whales, we’re testing it on all whales. And, uh, in some years, the vast majority of the whales I would argue are not migrating, that they’re doing other things. You know, they’re – they’ve come ashore to – in, in shore to feed or something like that. And so, um, when – you know, when you, when you lump the whole year together, and you’ve got all these things going on like that, it makes it impossible to, to have any statistical power to detect a displacement offshore.

And so I said that, at the very least, we have to select the data from the survey to make sure we include whales that are clearly migrating, and that would be defined as, you know, whales that are moving, um, at, at swim speed, you know, in the right direction, because we know where they go. Um, and that’s what they wouldn’t give me time to do.

They wanted to keep punching this thing out. Uh, I would argue, you know, in a, in a – uh, with an analysis that has no power to detect a deviation. And we were starting to see a lot of deviation, frankly, um, you know, significant differences between one half of the corridor, you know, versus another, and it was explained by things like that. I could see it in the data, you know, that, that, you know, too many whales were in some feeding group right next to the beach, and it blew the
average. Uh, we’re doing a - and in statistical terms, we’re using a parametric statistic that assumes a normal distribution and that the data are all independent, each observation is independent, to do a parametric test, which is a, a, a, an analysis of variance - or multivariate analysis it’s called - when we should be using what’s called a non-parametric test, which does not make assumptions of that sort, and it’s done completely differently. And I actually changed to that, um, in that one. I changed from the, the, uh - I changed to a non-parametric test, um, but we did not do data selection to, um, eliminate, uh, different behaviors. And the feeding is the worst one by far, because some years, more than half of the whales are, are feeding.

Another problem with it, too, um, you’re trying to understand the migration of whales, individual whales, right, and we record sightings. A sighting is any group of whales that we see. And so when we do our means to say what whales are doing, it’s based on sightings. And so if you’ve got whales that are migrating as singles, which they tend to do, they tend to be in small numbers, moving along, you know, offshore, and then you have other whales that are a single sighting that are feeding in groups or milling or resting, you know, doing things in groups. Those count the same, so you can be comparing one whale to 50 in your mean. And so that’s a huge problem, too.

So I don’t - I haven’t thought about this for a while, but these are the kinds of challenges I gave to the Marine Mammal Lab
when I sent the thing to them. I said, “You’ve got to come up with a, a better, uh, analytical procedure to do this,” and they’re working on all that.

LYNN GIBSON: So what was your management then motivation to not want you to ensure that this was statistically correct, by doing all those things? I mean, what - why?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, you didn’t want to get me started (laughing). Well, why do you think? They, they, they don’t want any impediment to, um, you know, what they view as their mission, which is to, uh, you know, drill wells up there, I mean, and, you know, put areas into production. The bowhead whale is extremely political, and the Native community is very powerful, and they’re very concerned about, uh, you know, any impacts that we might have on the whale. So what MMS has done has created, um, the perception that we’re monitoring this, and we’re finding negative results all the time, when I would argue we’re not monitoring at all. We’re just doing this study.

Um, and, you know, and lot of it - I, I think a lot of the people I deal with up there probably do - would agree with me and - but mostly, um, it’s easy to pull the wool over their eyes, because they don’t have the time to dig into all this, they’re not familiar with the data.

ERIC MAY: Who, who are you talking about?

CHARLES MONNETT: Oh, just people in the Native community and the scientists that I work with.

ERIC MAY: Oh, well - okay.
CHARLES MONNETT: And I work with Natives a lot. We do a lot of studies.

JEFF RUCH: This is Jeff Ruch (inaudible/mixed voices).

CHARLES MONNETT: Go ahead.

JEFF RUCH: The Government accounting - uh, Accountability Office did a report on scientific, uh, restraints by the Alaska Office of then MMS that came out in the spring, April or May of 2010, which addresses some of the concerns that, uh, Dr. Monnett just raised in some detail.

ERIC MAY: Hm.

LYNN GIBSON: Okay, thank you.

JEFF RUCH: And none of the underlying, um, dynamics that were identified by the GAO have been remedied, however.

ERIC MAY: What year was that?

LYNN GIBSON: Two thousand ten.

ERIC MAY: Two thousand ten, recently.

JEFF RUCH: That was in ’10.

ERIC MAY: Okay.

CHARLES MONNETT: Well, and the other thing is look at, um, uh, you know, when I, um - as, as I’ve worked here, there have been a lot of quality scientists that I’ve worked alongside of and, uh, many of those people have been driven out of here, and that’s pretty well documented, too. And I think it’s mentioned in -

JEFF RUCH: The GAO report mentions that in some years, the turnover -
CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, the GAO report.

JEFF RUCH: — among the technical and scientific staff is as high as 50 percent.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah.

ERIC MAY: Hm.

CHARLES MONNETT: They basically blew everybody out of here that showed any, uh, desire to be a conscientious scientist.

Jeff Gleason was one of those. Did he tell you his story?

ERIC MAY: Not pertaining to this.

CHARLES MONNETT: Yeah, well, we got blasted, you know, really, uh, hard, you know, by this agency when, when this finding came out, and if you’ve been digging in my emails, and I don’t know if you’ve dug in my emails, or it’s just Jeff Loman selecting it, but you’ll see a lot of emails there, uh, from management to me telling me that I can’t function as a biologist. I’m not allowed to talk about this paper or our findings. I’m not allowed to talk to the media. I can’t, you know, I can’t do these things.

And, and they really dumped on us, um, uh, when this things came out, and then that, um – uh, and, and some other, um, manipulation and restrictions that Jeff got hit with caused him to bail out of here, and he, he took a cut from a GS-13 to a GS-11 position to go to the Fish and Wildlife Service. He’s back with MMS now, um, in the Gulf, um, but he, he, um – and he’s back I think at a level below what he was at here. But his motivation there was he has a, a, a woman down there that he, you know, has
linked up with, and he was looking for any job and, you know, because I think he felt that, uh, the Alaska Region is kind of special in the way it treats its scientists.

ERIC MAY: Hm. Well, I’m – uh, any more questions on –

LYNN GIBSON: No, no.

ERIC MAY: I’ve – I’m done with my questions regarding this matter. Um, it is, uh, 12:04 Alaska time. Um, this interview has concluded.

CHARLES MONNETT: Thank you, guys.

(End of Interview)
CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I, Claudia Miller, do hereby certify that the above was transcribed by me from two audio tracks; that the transcript is a true transcription of those audio tracks; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to which the proceedings were taken; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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