

Statement of Stephanie Martin

My name is Stephanie Martin.

I attended the round-up at the Jackson Mountains on June 9 and June 10-namely day 2 and 3 of the gather. I attended the gather as an observer in order to research an upcoming narrative film I will be directing with the support of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women.

I was one of three observers present. The second was my producer Tara Tucker and the third was Laura Leigh.

The following is true to the best of my ability.

I had never met Laura Leigh prior to June 9th. I was somewhat familiar with her work as an advocate on behalf of wild horse herds and was curious to witness what her interaction with the BLM would be given her history with the organization.

Daily, she impressed me with the way in which she interacted with the BLM personnel. She always listened to them and was never quick to make an assumption. If she agreed, she had no problem saying so. If she disagreed, she expressed so in a calm manner, never raising her voice.

However, the BLM often was not as cooperative. She made several requests that went ignored. For instance, on June 9, a mare escaped the trap only to leave her foal within it. After a long pursuit the mare was finally caught. Laura asked the two supervising PAOs Kaitlin E. Godbey and Artulia (?) if they could call Gene Seidliz in the base for permission to document the reunion of the two. At first they acted as if they did not understand the request. Laura said it was important that they make the request at that moment so as not to miss the reunion. This didn't happen. We eventually were allowed to see the two together but not the reunion as requested. On other occasions, she asked if they could communicate certain requests to base and they used the excuse that their satellite phones didn't work yet I cannot tell you how many times Kaitlin and Artulia called the Local BLM Office (I believe they spoke with Heather) to communicate their constant "tweets". On June 10, the temperatures escalated. Laura asked about the temperature at the trap. They communicated with Allan Shepard who was the Incident Commander and he communicated that he did not have a thermometer at the trap site to gauge the temperature. They had to call in to another remote location to get a temperature reading which might not have been accurate for the area we were in. The max. temperature allowed according to the gather rules was 84. They said it was 79, this without an accurate reading. They chose to continue with the gather. Laura was disappointed with the decision, but never intervened.

Another important point to remark was that the trap was not set up correctly. After the horses were lured into the trap site by the helicopter the trap bent into an L Shape. The trap should have been set directly in front of the Canyon from which the bands emerged. The result was that horses would be lured in, only to become confused about where to go.

The trap was not on level ground and we documented horses jumping into ditches to get away from the helicopter. By this time the horses showed signs of exhaustion; some looked lame. Because we were unable to see the other side of the canyon, we were unable to determine how long these horses were pursued. Another factor that exacerbated the confusion in the trap site was the dust. At one point, the water truck came in and watered down the area but this did not happen often. Because of the confusion in the trap, many horses escaped. And not from just one spot, from all different sides. What followed was an excruciating pursuit which often lasted another 30 minutes to an hour and a half. On several occasions this involved very young foals. On other occasions, we were able to see horses go lame after being pursued by the helicopter and the wranglers. It is important to point out that after the horses escaped the trap that they would sometimes be pursued for an additional 5-10 miles beyond what they had already been run. On the second day, three horses were euthanized for "non gather related injuries". I can tell you exactly which horses were euthanized. I saw them being run by the helicopter. All but the foal who was euthanized out of site.

The helicopter pilot should be subpoenaed about how far those horses were run prior to arriving at the trap site.

Lastly, I should remark about the two observation areas that we were restricted to. The first one was four hundred feet above from the trap site and 100 feet away. From this position we could not see the horses entering the wings of the trap site nor the trap as our view was obscured by rocks. All we were able to see was a portion of the trap site. On the second day, we were moved to a position situated in front of the trap at least 1/3 of a mile away. The only reason we were able to see anything was because we had two cameras with 400mm lenses. Without these, we wouldn't have seen a thing. The reason given was that we had to remain 500 feet from the helicopter yet at times, the helicopter came very close to our observation spot when it was in pursuit of a stray horse.

Videos:

Band of horses entering trap/Stallion escaping

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY2X-Ivlass>

Foals rounded up by Helicopter and Wrangler:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8CmyznbKCU&feature=plcp>