

## **Q&A with Ginger Kathrens, Volunteer Executive Director of the Cloud Foundation**

September 11, 2009

The news of this removal has generated a huge following that has now gone international, with several thousands of phone calls, letters and emails to every government official even remotely involved, all the way to President Obama. In talking with Ginger Kathrens, filmmaker and founder of the Cloud Foundation, I've asked the questions that have been burning in all of our minds. Several comments and statements have been made about Ginger and the Cloud Foundation over the past several months in the media, on the internet, and in the equine and political arenas. Some have been good, and some have been bad. In this interview, I've asked Ginger to help clear up any of the confusion that has been stirred up by quotes and comments. As well, I've asked her bluntly about the ill-natured comments and statements. Her answers proved to be quite enlightening.

(TRACIE) What was the BLM's original plan in this gather?

(GINGER) According to documents released by the BLM and from statements made by BLM officials from Billings, MT, initially we understood the plan would be to have a *selective removal* which would leave the core breeding population. The plan stated that the BLM would remove other horses based off of characteristics, primarily the younger horses. Contrary to this, the actual plan on the ages of the horses to be removed was very unclear from the beginning and throughout until the end when we found out by watching which horses had been released and which ones had been slated for removal and consequent adoption. Early on BLM officials stated they would remove older horses, then recanted saying they wouldn't, only to recant again and say they would. It was quite confusing.

(TRACIE) So would it be safe to say that in your opinion, the BLM has been unclear in what their final plans and decisions would actually be, despite information given in the released Gather Plan and Environmental Assessment that was put forth?

(GINGER) Yes, that's correct.

(TRACIE) Throughout this gather, how many horses were brought in total?

(GINGER) There were 146 horses, plus 10-15 foals. The foals are not included in the 146 as they are counted as one horse with their mother due to the foal not being weaned. When the BLM is talking numbers they're speaking of horses 1 year and older.

(TRACIE) According to BLM officials on scene at the gather, as of this morning, what is the total number of horses slated for removal and consequent adoption?

(GINGER) There are to be 57 horses 1 yr and older removed, including 3 foals. Of these 57, there are 12 horses over the age of 10 and the rest are less than 10 years old. We are continuing to push for BLM to return the oldest back to their home.

(TRACIE) Where will these numbers leave the Pryor Mountain herds in the wild in regards to population?

(GINGER) Instead of 120 left in the wild population, there will be 131 approximately, and that's rough.

(TRACIE) What is the genetic significance of the 57 horses that the BLM has slated for removal?

(GINGER) This particular herd of horses can be dated back to the horses brought back by the Conquistadors in the 1500's; they are very Spanish horses. But more clearly, this herd was stolen by the Crow Native Americans from the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806 at the base of the mountain. So these horses are *really* the descendants of the Lewis and Clark horses. For this reason, their genetics are "cut off" in 1806.

(TRACIE) What does this removal mean in regards to these particular horses and their genetics?

(GINGER) Despite recommendations by well-known and published equine geneticists, the BLM has removed all four bands plus a bachelor stallion (31) from Commissary Ridge in the Forest Service. Doing so will take an entire sub-population of very unique genetics. These horses are some of the most Spanish horses still living on the range. For horses like *Conquistador*, future progeny and their genetic lines are done. When you have such a very small herd, there is a great need to manage it selectively. Thinking that a herd population of 120 head is genetically viable is ridiculous when speaking about genetics that are this rare.

(TRACIE) Dr. E. Gus Cothran, Ph.D., Equine Geneticist at Texas A&M University sent a letter to the BLM on July 16, 2009, giving his opinion about their plans to lower the AML in the Pryors to 95 horses, that it was not a recommended removal due to the small size of the population and their special genetics. In your opinion, did this sway the BLM's decisions in any way?

(GINGER) The BLM completely discounted his opinion. They've spent tens of thousands of dollars to determine what a genetically viable herd number is and then paid no attention to any of that.

(TRACIE) There is now another victory for all of the supporters and Cloud Foundation Camp in that the gather was called to an end yesterday morning. Which official made the decision to end the round-up?

(GINGER) Jared Bybee, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist from the Billings, MT BLM office made the announcement in the morning briefing. As for who the *actual* official was that made the decision, we're not sure. I am positive that there were several phone calls made to [Jared's] superiors, so I can't see how that wouldn't have had an impact on this decision.

(TRACIE) One of the main questions people have been asking me is "who did it, was it Obama, was it the senators, congressman, or was it from within the BLM?", because

they want to know how far this issue has gone up the chain of command. What is your take on this?

(GINGER) It's hard to know, Tracie. The BLM received calls from congressman, senators, I don't know if they got a call from the White House. You know, we put so many people like you [on this campaign] who are working all these different angles. [Jared] gave one reason as there's a young foal up there, that's brand new, but we can't find it. Another reason was basically that the horses were coming in sore-footed because they'd been run all over the mountain side; probably some of them ran 15-20 miles down. Another was that the operation was almost over anyway. It's my opinion that the BLM officials were afraid that a horse was going to die. They had already had one horse colic. Then they had one tie up. And of course, they had to do [the roundup] before it snowed.

(TRACIE) Which horse suffered a colic and when?

(GINGER) Rain, Cloud's daughter, on September 7<sup>th</sup>, in the evening.

(TRACIE) To your knowledge, what is her status at this point?

(GINGER) Rain looks to be fine now. We saw her two days ago while she was treated [by the BLM veterinarians]. She was laying down shaking so they covered her with blankets, and I assume they gave her banamine. It's my opinion that it would be the death nail in their coffin if she had died, and I mean, they're already in the coffin.

(TRACIE) Will Rain be released or will she be among the horses slated for adoption?

(GINGER) She is slated to be removed & adopted.

(TRACIE) Brumby was the mare that tied-up early on in the gather. To your knowledge, what is her status at this point?

(GINGER) Brumby looked fine yesterday. I saw her up on the mountain top. Obviously, she looked tired and sore, but her hind end wasn't as tight as it had been. She traveled the 10-12 miles back up the mountain with her family and her foot-sore filly.

(TRACIE) On September 9<sup>th</sup>, reports flew across the internet at lightning speed about the one month old bay colt who was "lamed" as a result of this gather. To your knowledge, what is his status at this point?

(GINGER) BLM officials told us he was to be held with his family until he could recover. We went up to film the release of Cloud and the other band, and probably an hour and a half to two hours later when we came back down, they had released the rest of his family but kept the foal and his mother. They are slated for removal and adoption, so the little sore baby is going to lose his freedom.

(TRACIE) Severe concerns have been expressed by people all over the world about this foal and what his condition is currently, as well as what his prognosis will be. Is this temporary lameness that he will recover from?

(GINGER) Hopefully he'll recover but he could have abscess in all four feet. I don't think it would be all four, but it's hard to say. He's very foot-sore and in obvious pain. In 2001 when they ran Cloud's son, Flint, all over the mountain, he was only two months old. He abscessed in one foot, and the abscess came out between the hoof wall and the coronet band. This foal is less than a month old so it may end up being somewhat worse.

(TRACIE) That's my personal concern along with the countless others who are involved. When you take a one month old foal and you run him down the side of a mountain for 10 miles, you know, their knees are not closed up yet and they can be permanently hurt.

(GINGER) Right, there's no fusing of any joints, and the foal's feet are so soft. Nothing has had time to harden up yet because they are so young.

(TRACIE) This particular foal is, at this point, we can say *possibly* going to be a "casualty", in a way, of this gather. Would it be possible to follow his progress as he is moved through the BLM system and not let him be lost among the crowd, in this case 33,000 others, to see what his outcome will be?

(GINGER) Yes, I think that will happen, you know, keeping tabs on him and his health progress as much as we can, but I imagine on September 26<sup>th</sup>, he will be adopted with his mother.

(TRACIE) That's wonderful and greatly appreciated. Going further into this issue, is there a way to follow his progress, even to his adoptive family, in order to follow his progress and his health completely? I would like to see if he is going to be lamed permanently or if he will recover, and to what extent that recover will go, hopefully 100%.

(GINGER) Sure, I think to a certain extent that would be possible. We would have to have the permission of the adoptive family, but someone has already expressed interest in adopting him, because you know, who couldn't? Yeah, I think that's a great idea Tracie. Of course, we will not let him go to a kill or slaughter house or where someone is not going to take care of him.

(TRACIE) Wonderful! It will be interesting to see how well he develops, and of course, who can resist watching a new foal grow up! Next I would like to talk about your position on the gather as a whole, the procedures that were employed, with PZP, and on immunocontraceptives in general. You have been quoted in several articles and interviews as saying that you prefer the "let nature take its course" approach, to allow the natural predators of the horses on the range to control the population, "If they die, they die, because that's the way its been for 100's of years." But the question that has come up is that the prey vs. predator relationship on the range is imbalanced. The overhunting of mountain lions for the purposes of keeping them from killing the rancher's sheep and calves has caused an imbalance in the ecosystem as far as how many mountain lions there are *to* kill what should be killed for natural population control. If there aren't enough mountain lions to kill the wild horses that would be killed in this approach to population control, what is your position, or rather your opinion on that?

(GINGER) There was a balance in 2003, 2004, and 2005 in which there was zero population growth among the [Pryor Mountain Range] herds. In 2003 and 2005, there were no surviving foals on the mountain top. In 2004, one foal survived. He was at the gate of the paved Highway on the lower side of the mountain in the Dryhead area. What I saw [as a result of this] was that the horses were compensating for the intense predation of the population *non-growth* by altering their herd behaviors.

(TRACIE) In what ways?

(GINGER) The bands were staying closer together; more eyes and ears I think. The stallions were retaining their sons longer, and that's portrayed in *Cloud: Challenge of the Stallions*. BLM's response to this was to encourage hunters to kill the mountain lions, and in some cases according the minutes of a RAC (Regional Advisory Council) meeting, the BLM stated that their agency had *paid* hunters to kill the mountain lions. However, they didn't pay hunters to kill mountain lions because they were afraid that there were too many. Their reasoning for not paying hunters to kill the mountain lions was not because they thought the herd was going to die out, it was due to the fact that if they wanted to keep supplying infertility drugs to the wild horse population, their herds needed to show a population growth of at least 5% each year.

(TRACIE) And did the population growth of the herds increase after this was done?

(GINGER) Yes and the horses changed their behavior and became less cautious too.

(TRACIE) You have been quoted several times that you do not approve of the use of immunocontraceptives, specifically PZP. Could you elaborate on this?

(GINGER) My position on PZP is that it should never be used in herds that are not genetically viable to start with. In other words, they should not be used on herds that are under 150 animals, ever, because those herds are not viable anyway, so you don't want to suppress a potential population growth to a herd that is not genetically viable.

(TRACIE) One of your reasons for opposing the use of PZP is that it causes out of season births. Proponents of PZP have stated that there are mares who have never been inoculated with PZP who give birth out of season, so therefore there can be no comparison of the number of births out of season for PZP vs. non-PZP inoculated mares. Their position is that this is a naturally occurring phenomenon that can happen whether PZP on board or not, and therefore the argument is not viable. Can you elaborate on this?

(GINGER) Yes, out of season births do occur naturally. And I'm not saying that this has happened in every other herd, but specifically with the use of PZP in Cloud's herd, some young mares are barren and have never had foals and they are now 9 year olds. The first population that was given PZP was in 2001 and 2002. There are mares of that population who have had out of season births from September through December. So to me that's not a humane application of the drugs. I believe that it has caused unexpected, aberrant effects. So I'm very skeptical of the use of PZP. This information is not from my own statistical data; these are statistics developed by the BLM. According to these documents, you can see that from 1994 onward, the overall numbers of out of

season births shifted dramatically after the use of PZP in comparison to the number before the use of PZP. Out of season births had only occurred twice before the use of PZP in this herd. There were three out of season births in 2008 alone. Statistically the argument that PZP does not cause out of season births does not hold up.

(TRACIE) The populations of the herds on Assateague Island have been managed to an AML of 300 through the use of PZP for several years now without reported complication. What makes the horses of the Pryors different?

(GINGER) I can't speak for wild horse programs throughout the US; I can only speak of my firsthand knowledge and experience of the Pryor Mountain herds. [Again, this goes back to the genetics of these horses, as well as the environmental factors and breed specific characteristics.] Out of season births had occurred twice in that herd up to the point where it was being given. And during the time when it started being given, Exclaim was a mare who gave birth out of season in September and she died. And so yes, you do occasionally have out of season births, no doubt about it. But what I'm talking about is the statistical when you look at the statistics of how many births vs. how many there used to be, you'll see that there is no comparison. Statistically, that argument does not hold up in the Pryors. And I don't think you can develop those statistics in hardly any other herd because most of the herds are anonymous, there's no field work, there's no monitoring of the date to be developed. So we don't know whether or not that statistic might show in other places. The Cattoor Livestock company has indicated that they are seeing more births at all times of the year throughout the program, and they ought to know because they're rounding up the horses. Another thing that should not be done with PZP is it should not be used non-selectively, particularly in Cloud's herd [where the genetic viability is already endangered]. Not all of the mares should be given this drug. It should be a one year drug that is administered, if it [the one year PZP drug] is used, via field dart, in the early spring. Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick has indicated to the BLM, and this is through the BLM not through Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick, that the drug has worked in an unpredictable way in the Pryors because it wasn't applied at the right time. The wrong time being in the fall. And of course, now we have all the mares that were returned to the range [inoculated] at the wrong time of the year. And it wasn't selective. They didn't choose some mares; they did it to all of the mares that they returned. And so I disagree with both applying it at the wrong time of the year and applying it non-selectively. So, for those people who say I'm adamantly opposed to the use of PZP, you have to look at the nuance of this thing and not just use it as a blanket, "She hates PZP."

What I'm saying is that you try to do it in an intelligent and selective way if you're going to use it, if you need to use it, on a [genetically] viable herd. And you use it at the right time of the year. The reason it's important to use a one year drug in the Pryors is because you do have extreme weather there that can create disaster stuff. That happened in the 1977 and 1978 winters where nearly half the herd was lost. And you also have the possibility, because its such a wilderness area, to have unpredicted and intense predation that would take most of the foal crop and so if you're using PZP you want to be able to respond with a drug that's not multiple year type drug but a one year drug so you can back off in the years in which that happens, and [therefore] you're not going to have a total crash in the population with no foals because of a multi-yr drug for multiple years. You're only having the crash that occurs through the predation of the weather.

(TRACIE) You have mentioned the timing of the administration of PZP as being one of the reasons you believe there have out of season births. In your opinion, what would be the correct timing of the year to inoculate the Pryor Mountain herds with PZP, should its use be deemed necessary?

(GINGER) It would be in the very late winter / early spring. Matt Dillon, the Executive Director of the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center did a test in which he went out on the range this past late winter / early spring just to see if he could hike up and find mares. His reasoning was because it has been said that you can't access the mares for administration with darts in the wild because of snow depth and weather conditions and you can't locate the mares. At that time, Matt found that he could access nearly every mare on the range and could've gotten close enough to administer the drug via dart with a one year dosage of an infertility drug. This would have been the appropriate time of the year to prevent breeding and birthing season interruptions.

(TRACIE) Several people have stated they are skeptical of the darting approach due to questions about what happens whenever the mares are darted if the dart does not completely fall out; what do you do with the darts that do fall on the ground; what do you do with the darts that are left to be a possible source of injury for other horses and/or wildlife on the range?

(GINGER) That's really more of a question for Dr. Kirkpatrick. I am not aware of the darts not falling out. Most of the darts are retrieved because you're probably 50ft from the mare when you are darting. You make a visual contact, and you can retrieve the dart. If the dart is not retrieved, if it remains on the ground, I am not aware of any huge environmental damage that could potentially cause.

(TRACIE) Have there been any injuries to the horses as a result of the darting process?

(GINGER) They have had some abscesses. Cloud's mother developed a severe abscess on her rump from a previous darting location. There is really a need to monitor situations such as this. That may have been due to the type of agent that was used at the time. The agents have been modified since the time of this occurrence, but again, that's a question for Dr. Kirkpatrick. The abscess on Cloud's mother was so severe that her entire hip was raw. The BLM, I think realizing that this was a human caused situation, removed the mare and her buckskin colt to the bottom of the mountain for treatment. She was treated, and she and the colt were returned to her band stallion. So that was an appropriate response I think and we really very much appreciated that.

(TRACIE) Interesting that you've mentioned that because the need for monitoring of the inoculated mares in a controlled environment has been one of the main concerns from the public. The general statement has been that *if* you are going to dart these horses, then it would certainly be better to do this in a controlled environment, such as having the horses in corrals, so that you *could* monitor them for signs of injury or illness. However, even greater concern stems from the methods that are being used in order to get the horses *into* the controlled environment.

(GINGER) Well, they certainly shouldn't be happy about it because the two-year PZP-22 currently requires that the horses be rounded up and run through a chute. It's not just

that they are in a corral; they have to run these horses through alley ways and into a chute. It's a traumatic experience for the animals, and of course very expensive if every two years you are rounding up wild horses just to apply a two year infertility drug. So it's impractical and cruel to do it that way. The one-year drug that can be given via field dart is not realistic in most herd areas where the horses don't allow you close enough to dart them.

(TRACIE) Public opinion has agreed with that statement on most every level and has been the source of the majority of the public outcry and outrage. While the public agrees with the need for population control due to scientific statistics concerning the balance of ecological systems, they do not agree with the options currently in place for population control. Current options are not, by any means or any standards, viable nor sufficient. The public has demanded immediate revision. We need clearer information from all sides, and not limit the sources of that information to data from government officials. There has been a vast realization for the need of information sources in the form of individuals who are on the range and among these herds every day, day in and day out, studying and monitoring these horses and these herds. Sources of this kind will be invaluable in the respect of what they need because the Pryor Mountains herds are not the same as the herds in Nevada, California, or any other place for that matter. Comments and statements have been made across the board about of "they're just radical animal rights activists" when in reality, this could be our greatest link to the wild horses. Why not listen to them?

(GINGER) Yes that's an excellent point. In 99.9% of the herds, there is no money allocated for monitoring the herds. The herds are on these vast tracts of land that would require somebody riding horseback or some form of cross terrain transportation to facilitate any monitoring or studying. There would have to be development of monitoring procedures and plans to make a difference. Currently, all the BLM knows is that they give a drug and then when they do another round up, they know whether it worked or not by the number of foals there gathered. They don't know *when* they were born, they don't know the condition of the mare, or if she's abscessed. The BLM doesn't know anything about them. They just give them the drug and let them out. Specifically in Cloud's herd, we *do* know this information because like you say, the herd is watched so closely. On the subject of natural management, however, population control has not been used ever on the herds in Montgomery Pass near the California / Nevada border. They've had no round ups or anything done in something like 27 years of Montgomery Pass. There is only one reason why, and that's mountain lions.

(TRACIE) But the BLM messed that up whenever they encouraged hunters to go out and kill the mountain lions there in the Pryors?

(GINGER) Right. In talking about a one year infertility drug, I don't like the idea of a one year infertility drugs or *any* kind of infertility drugs. What I like the idea of is using it if necessary for the short term but having the philosophy in the administrators who are willing to consider trying to get back to what we had in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. Once that happens again, let the herd experience that intense predation and that large die off, because they were adapting. You can see how they adapt to that [with compensated breeding], and over decades, there's a dynamic equilibrium. It's not going to be that no foals survive every year and therefore you have zero population growth.

You're going to lose 20, and then you're going to lose 5, and then you're going to lose 30, and then you're going to lose 7. But it's all over the decades that you have to look at this and it evens out. That should be the long range goal; that should be the philosophical goal. Wild horses are not different than any other wildlife species. They can be regulated through natural means. I mean, wolves in Yellowstone have certainly remarkably altered the elk population, and then you see the whole ecosystem improved in Yellowstone. I'd call the Pryor Mountain wild horse herd "the Yellowstone of wild horses" because you can observe those horses in a beautiful way without them racing away from you. Furthermore, you can do so in this wild enough place that you can have adequate predation to keep the herd in some kind of equilibrium through natural means. That's not to say that BLM shouldn't take any of their tools out of their toolbox. That's just to say that that should be your long range goal: preservation of mountain lions.

(TRACIE) How do you propose this goal could be accomplished?

(GINGER) Pull back on the 6 hunting permits and make it 2 or none at all. Work with Wyoming Fish and Game and Montana Fish and Game. That would be the philosophical goal, not spending a gazillion dollars rounding these horses up, putting them in short to long term holding all over the place, and then killing any natural predators. Of course then you get into the whole livestock industry side of things, but in the Pryors that's not a huge issue.

(TRACIE) Do you have knowledge of where the livestock grazing is a larger issue?

(GINGER) The horses that were removed off of Commissary Ridge in the Forest Service were removed largely because a livestock permittee could not run his cattle on Commissary Ridge. His cattle plus the wild horses would have damaged the land. So there is a little bit of the livestock push-and-pull there.

(TRACIE) According to BLM documents, taxpayers spend \$8,000 per day plus \$270 per head of horse inoculated with PZP for this gather. Tax dollars cover the approximately \$100,000 that the BLM says they spend daily to feed and house horses that are removed but not adopted. One suggestion for better management of these funds is to appropriate some of them toward foundations and centers like the Cloud Foundation or the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center with the intent of "employing" individuals to monitor these horses and these herds, looking at them as a scientific project and study group. Their information could be sent back to the BLM or other appropriate government agency for review; sort of an "eyes and ears in the field" system. Do you agree?

(GINGER) I think that anytime they can have independent observations its better than operating in a vacuum. The herds are largely unobserved by anyone from BLM. I think that it would be important that whoever would be doing this monitoring is not then beholden to the BLM to produce statistical evidence in their favor. Given this point, having anyone paid by BLM might be a problem. I would think that the funding would need to come from an independent source and not from BLM itself. BLM works with the Humane Society of the United States to a certain extent. HSUS determines whether PZP can be given. As well, HSUS is selling the drug to the BLM. So it really needs to be an independent group. I think it would be great to have a "Wild Horse Observation Corp" that is *not* funded by the agency who *wants* to see statistics that match theirs.

(TRACIE) Again, public outcry states that obviously there needs to be a total revamping of this system and its administration. Public opinion says that all information would have to be made open to the public from the start, sort of an "open file" policy.

(TRACIE) Several articles have been cited about the use of PZP being stopped because of petitions to the government about using it, i.e. a 2005 AP article, *Petition Idles Horse Birth Control Project*. You were quoted in this one several times about the natural selection approach and the BLM was saying that they can't do anything now because they were being held up in court. Some have said that you're holding up progress. What is your opinion of this?

(GINGER) Well, obviously we're not trying to hold up progress. But then I guess you'd have to define progress. If *progress* means that we're screaming that the BLM should not manage wild horses to extinction, then that's what we're screaming about. I mean, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to look at the statistics and the number of wild horses that have been removed and placed in holding vs. the amount of money that's been spent for that purpose. Sitting on your hands and saying that we are impeding progress, yea, by God I hope we are if progress is defined as managing animals to extinction.

(TRACIE) Is "management to extinction" your opinion of the current situation?

(GINGER) Yes, I think that that is what the BLM is doing right now. We brought suit to set aside the HMAP, which is the new long range document for the herd. It would allow for only 120 animals to be on the range. We did not bring suit to stop water projects or to be obnoxious for heaven's sake. But when a document that could stand for 25 years would manage these horses at a wild population of 120, we know that's a non-viable level. The last HMAP was adopted in 1984. It was revised in 1992. So people who say "well, it's ok to manage them for a few years at 120" have to realize that that's not the reality. The reality is this document could be the plan and implementation document for 25 years, not just a few.

(TRACIE) Speculation has been made about the reasoning for the BLM "going after specific herds" and "why it is are they going after Cloud's herd? Several people have asked, "Does this have something to do with (Ginger) and the Cloud Foundation? Is there some sort of vendetta? Is this personal? Is the BLM going after Cloud's herd because the Cloud Foundation went to court over this and took to legal measures?"

(GINGER) As far as a personal vendetta against Cloud, I think there are a certain number of people who are jealous of Cloud and his fame and popularity. I think that there are people who are jealous of the Cloud Foundation and the fact that we support viable herds on public lands. And that's tough you know. I do believe there is within the Wild Horse and Burro Program a disdain for me. I've been attending meetings for over a decade. I've spoken out against them in a clear, concise and rational voice, and they hate that. I mean, I come from a livestock rearing family. I live in the west. I've been on the land. I document what I see and it runs on television for the world to see. That is scary if you have something to hide.

(TRACIE) A metaphor has been made that the government is trying to hide under the covers, such as a little child trying to hide from his mama with a flashlight in bed reading after he's supposed to be asleep, and you're the mama who comes in and turns on the light so the flashlight is no longer needed. You're the mama who comes in and turns on the light and says, "Go to bed!"

(GINGER) I like that and I hope that's what we're doing. The worst thing in the world is that I know that Cloud's family is suffering perhaps *because of* the light that we're trying to shine right now. I regret that his progeny has been removed during this round up. And I think that that is a punishment in a way for us trying to shine the light and speak up, and do so not in a dishonest way and not in a wild and irrational way but in a very rational way that simply speaks to the science of it, to the behavior of horses, and to the reality of the situation.

(TRACIE) To elaborate on the issue of a personal vendetta towards you because of the light that you have been shedding, do you feel as though that it the case?

(GINGER) I don't know. I really don't know. I cannot answer that in any way that would be based on anything factual. I do know that there are people within the Wild Horse and Burro Program that feel very threatened by the factual documentation of Cloud's herd, and that it shines a light then on the others that are anonymous. There are a lot of other "Cloud's" out there.

(TRACIE) Definitely! We have all seen that. I think that's one the main reasons for the involvement of so many. This is not just about Cloud; it's about all of them.

(GINGER) Yes, he is their ambassador. So if BLM can cut the legs out from under his family in the wild, and if they can cut the legs out from under The Cloud Foundation, that is a victory for them. Cloud helps by his fame & his family to illuminate people and bring people into the wonder of his world. If they can destroy that, then they have won a victory.

(TRACIE) Is a personal agenda on your part and on the part of The Cloud Foundation that is not entirely altruistic, or rather is there personal gain for you and the Cloud Foundation as a result of this campaign?

(GINGER) [Laughing] Well, that's pretty funny! You know, I don't know what that agenda might be. You know, a lot of people who have horses will say, "I don't have money, I have horses." Well in this case, I don't have money because I campaign for wild horses. The personal sacrifices that we make as volunteers... We're not paid one cent for what we're doing, not one cent do we get. The Cloud Foundation functions only from donations, mainly small donations, from people all over the United States and occasionally via Europe. I'm not sure what we have to gain per se, and I don't have any personal agenda. You know, do I want to be the reincarnation of Wild Horse Annie or something like that? No, I don't. I'd love for a bunch of other people to step up to the plate here, and they have really. If they can draw attention to themselves personally that could benefit the horses, I say go for it, I don't care. I don't want to be the lightning rod. You know, but if I am, then so be it. I take the hits, but as far as a personal agenda, that's a joke.

(TRACIE) As a filmmaker for PBS, you make money from your films of Cloud and his family. I can understand how someone could think that could be a personal agenda because, let's face it, realistically money makes the world go around. How would you respond to this?

(GINGER) Well, I am a filmmaker. I do make films. And PBS has paid me make three Cloud programs. But there were many of the years since Cloud was born that I was not under contract to PBS to produce a documentary. I was shooting on my own dime just to keep up with the threads of his life. I've realized that this is a unique opportunity to document the life of real, wild animal. And it's the only time that I'm aware of where we've had this opportunity in our hemisphere. So I feel very strongly that I want to keep up.

(TRACIE) What about your film work over the course of this most recent gather in Lovell, WY?

(GINGER) I'm not being paid anything now. We were out documenting [the roundup] but no one was paying us to be out there. If this material is subsequently used in a program, then it's subsequently used in a program. But I don't have any reason to believe that there will be another Cloud program. I mean, I hope there will be, I think that would be wonderful. But I don't know that. So I make my living as a filmmaker. And beyond the work I do for Cloud, I do other projects as well. I worked on a film recently on Factory Farming for a producer in Atlanta. I did film and produce a program about the history of the Western States Trail where the Tevis ride and the Western States 100 mile run take place. We do other projects all along that allow me to have some time to work on behalf of wild horses on a voluntary basis.

(TRACIE) So to sum up, your agenda, if you will, is simply to protect the wild horses of the Pryor Mountain Range as well as all wild horses, but as far as you having an agenda of having all of this done because you make money, and you make fame and fortune because Cloud and his family are still on the range...

(GINGER) [Laughing] Any of my friends who have worked in natural history would get a good chuckle at what you just said because people that do television commercials get paid for one 30 second spot in a national television production probably 2-3 times more than we get paid to create a one hour documentary.

(TRACIE) Would it be correct to say that you do this on your own time, on your own dime, simply because you love the breed and you love the essence of the wild mustang?

(GINGER) I love wild animals. I don't just love wild horses. I have an affinity for wildness and freedom. To me there's something that admirable that an animal or species can take care of itself without any interference from humans. They can survive and thrive. I love watching the behavior of any species. I do find that wild horses, because they're so wolf-like, have this intricate and involved social system that makes them particularly fascinating to watch. I've gotten caught up in their world. Wild horses are unlike elk or mountain lions or wolves, even though a lot of people can tell each individual wolf in Yellowstone. I find that wild horses are particularly fascinating because

they usually look different from one another. You can distinguish one from another based on their markings or color. So not only do we have a social system that is so intriguing and intricate, but you can tell the individuals visually. Even from some distance away you can identify each individual. This makes it really, really fascinating because you can know the individual behaviors and you can know the individual family groups. It's just an incredibly fascinating process. What I've tried to do in the Cloud programs is to show the wild horse as part of a larger ecosystem. They don't exist in a vacuum, nor should they exist in a vacuum. And they are natural prey to natural predators, therefore they get killed. That's just the reality of it. And that's really kind of their role. So their job is to *not* get killed. And that whole drama is very, very interesting to me. What I'm seeing right now is a little rock; a famous horse who is that rock. In our love of him and in our commitment to him, ripples will go out to all the rest like ripples from a rock thrown into a pond.

(TRACIE) The intricacy that you speak of can be simply put as "the language of equus". It's such a fascinating and wonderful thing to watch. A person can feel as though they are a part of this world even if they can't be there with the horses in person.

(GINGER) But don't you find that the bears, the coyotes, the eagles, the varmints, the butterflies, you know, whatever, they're all there in this rich beautiful tapestry. And of course, the showcase animals in this beautiful wilderness are wild horses. They're these big animals that make me... I can sit on a rock and think, what must it have been like ten or fifteen thousand years ago when you had, not just wild horses, but the giant sloths and mammoths and all these other animals who are now gone? But we still have the wild horse and we so need to preserve it. It's so speaks to a time of long ago, not just long ago in the West, but long ago *long ago*. It's such a wonderful animal and it lives in harmony with its environment. Sadly they've been so trashed by a government agency that has very little empathy for them and very little scientific background in their lives and in the way they live, or how beneficial they are to the land. They don't care. They really don't care.

(TRACIE) The mantra of the BLM has always been along the lines of "our only interest is to preserve the lands, and to preserve the ecosystem". From my own personal stand point, it seems that the BLM is basically taking Mother Nature's job away from her and arrogantly proclaiming that they can do it better. By doing so, what they've done is horribly and totally messed up a path that is going to take years upon years and years to restore. The closest thing I've been able to liken it to is the Caribou. These horses are the original descendants of the Spanish Conquistadors and from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. They are not a renewable resource.

(GINGER) The London Times writer/photographer that I was with yesterday just couldn't understand, they said, "America that's so proud of their western history and don't they realize that these are the horses of the Lewis and Clark Expedition?"

(TRACIE) For a country that values so highly on their history, it speaks volumes that they've essentially turned their backs on a major piece of that history. The history of the Americas and how it came to be is the main advertisement for tourism across the U.S. Personally it just floors me that they speak so highly about all of the accomplishments and achievements only to contradict themselves with their actions.

(GINGER) It does speak to a median agenda. You know, when you were just talking, I thought about how people who are not even huge fans of wild horses just don't understand why the BLM would risk taking on the world's most popular horse herd, the one that is so known and so popular, why would they do that? Because they risk such a backlash, and now I hope they're feeling that backlash. It risks exposing them to massive criticism on their management of all wild horses.

(TRACIE) Do you feel that the fact that they are being watched by so many people right now influenced the decision to stop the round up?

(GINGER) I think they called off trying to round up every horse on the Pryor Mountains because they knew that they were going to have a dead horse. They almost did have a dead horse; that would have been [Rain]. That should've scared them deeply. I had no idea that she was covered with blankets, I just thought she had a mild case of colic. During the course of the round up there was near 100 degree temperatures and they were running animals down a mountain, 10 - 12 - 15 miles, and that's only what we knew about. We didn't know about how much they were running around on the mountain top before they ever raced them down from a 5000 foot elevation on a rocky trail. I think they knew that if they didn't stop, they were going to have some cripples and they were going to have some deaths.

(TRACIE) There was a resounding comment when we received the news of the end of the round up, "Well it's about damn time!"

(TRACIE) What happened in the Forest Service lands, with the bands in the Custer National Forest?

(GINGER) It's unfortunate that the end of the round up was too late for all of the beautiful bands that live in the Forest Service lands. The BLM indiscriminately removed every single horse off Commissary Ridge. Those horses will have lost their freedom forever unless we can turn things around. It was a very wrong thing to do and it was a surprise to everyone. It was rude and unnecessary. According to a Forest Official they did not know that they were going to permanently remove those older animals. They indicated to me that yes, they had asked for the horses to be removed from that area, but she did not know that they were going to *permanently* remove the older horses.

(TRACIE) Had the Forest Service asked for a relocation of the older horses?

(GINGER) Yes, all the horses but when I mentioned that 21 year old Grumpy Grulla and 19 year old Conquistador had been removed, the official indicated to me that they were not aware that this was going to happen. I trust that they were being forthright because we've found that the Forest Service officials have been far more civil and willing to give us the time of day and to not be aggressive and/or not get in our face trying to be intimidating. We welcome that because we like to think that we can sit down at a table and work and play well with others. That's the way you get things done.

(TRACIE) What was the overall reception you received during this gather?

(GINGER) The BLM officials that were in charge of this event and some of their staff were disgustingly arrogant. They were rude for no reason. They were in your face. They clearly were trying to intimidate us away and make us disappear and, of course, we just wouldn't. We were not doing anything [in provocation] but when we asked sincere questions, we were treated as if we were criminals. 'How dare you ask us that question', was their perceived response. I did have a discussion with Ed Roberson of the Interior Dept, about the attitude of these people, and I have to say that the attitude did change towards the end, dramatically. I had a conversation with the state director and I said the same thing to him, "This is just not necessary, just really unnecessary, to feel like asking a question, that there's some kind of criminal intent in it." And attitudes did dramatically change after that for a while.

(TRACIE) Would you characterize this as though there was an edge, a "chip on your shoulder" from the officials?

(GINGER) Definitely. I said the "chip on the shoulder", some of these people, I surprised they can walk and not unbalance themselves and tip over. The BLM acts as if they have something to hide when they act like this. And by George, I think they do!

(TRACIE) What is it that you feel they have to hide?

(GINGER) They have to hide what their real plans are. They totally changed the whole course of events during this round up, both before and during the event. They would tell you one thing and then hours later you would find out the opposite had happened. It happened in the months leading up to this as well. We would have a meeting with the Wild Horse and Burro Specialists and think we had nice, honest and forthright discussion. Then, three days later, there'd be an article in the Billings Gazette saying exactly the opposite of what he'd told us. For Instance, "We're going to let Baja's band go after the foal has recovered." We went out to film the release of Cloud and others and when we came back to the corrals, here is the mare and the baby, and the mare has a string around her neck with a number on it and they've already freeze branded her, that quick, right while we were out filming the release of the horses. During that two hour period, we'd come back and found that what they'd told us was exactly the opposite of what they'd intended to do. I don't think that this is an isolated case, and I don't think that *these* BLM officials are necessarily any different than any of the others. I just think that this culture of deception, of dishonesty, and lack of forthrightness. It's got to change.

(TRACIE) What do you hope to have come out of this ordeal from this point forward?

(GINGER) Even though I think Cloud's family has suffered terribly at the hand's of the BLM during this round-up, and the herds have suffered terribly, and certain animals - their lives [of freedom] are gone obviously- if it serves the greater good, and the BLM changes the way they look at public involvement and the way they accept criticism, and suggestions, and actually you know, listen to the American public, if that's the result of this then I guess it would have all been worth it. I hope that the BLM will at least release the 13 animals that are over the age of 10 back into their home range. I mean, what the hell are 13 animals to them, but to [the horses] it's their life. These are not animals that can domesticate. These are band stallions and lead mares. This is the heart and soul of

that herd, from a genetic standpoint and from a leadership standpoint. Its chaos when you pull leadership out. You get escalating birth rates, all the ditzing around and rounding up that they've done to America's wild horses and then they complain about how they're reproducing like rabbits. Well, this is called compensatory reproduction. Plus, look at truthful science and not just statistics that they dummy up to truth what they want to have happen. There has to be a sincere effort to manage wild horses on public lands in a fair way. If the BLM cannot come up with the changing way of looking at this program, then I do believe that there should be another group of people or government agency that has a lot of public involvement from groups such as ours, and others all around the country. And it needs to be a new organization that looks [only] at the management of wild horses. If things don't ultimately change, then the BLM needs to not be managing these precious resources.

(TRACIE) I think you just hit the nail on the head: the BLM is the Bureau of *Land* Management; they are not the Bureau of *Horse* Management. Why is it that they are being allowed to manage wild horse while having "sideline" objectives and no un-objectivity? The land is the land. The horses are the *inhabitants* of the land. They're not the land.

(GINGER) So [BLM] still retains their same mantra that they have from the very beginning: "Wild horses are starving and need to be rescued. They are trashing the land that they live upon, and they will die out there." It's very humorous just to sit and here that side.

(TRACIE) That makes me laugh because honestly, the part about the horses starving, my own horses, I spend you know, a whole lot of money and you said it earlier – people who have horses don't have money – no I don't. [both laughing] All of my money is either in the truck, the trailer, or in the barn! Or in the tack room, but mainly in the feed room. And I feed great feed that was developed out at A&M – I'm big A&M everything – and they developed a feed that has everything in it supplement wise and it's about \$14 for a 50 pound bag. Well, I don't care that it's about \$14 for a 50 pound bag because it works. But I was kind of, er, embarrassed I suppose, because when The Cloud Foundation sent me all the pictures from the first day of the round up, I'm looking at them and I thinking, *My gosh, these horses look better than some of them that I have, and they aren't eating anything but mountain range!* [laughing]

(GINGER) [Laughing] Yea, the problem that I have with Trace and my two Spanish Mustangs - and that Ann has with Smoky and Mahogany, Cloud's sisters- is trying to get the weight *off* of them. They all run together on a 140 acre tract that's all one piece, 100 of mine and 40 of Ann's. I mean, they're not on lush pasture, God forbid, they would founder. They are on kind of semi rocky, lots of wildflowers – which they eat as well – just marginal, nice upland grazing, which is kind of typical of the Pryors, although the Pryors probably have better grazing. And we have to "send them to the fat farm" occasionally because they've gotten too obese! [both laughing] So while you're buying your all in one feed and spending your money on that, I have to spend my money to send mine to the fat farm to get them into riding condition and to be put on a diet!

(GINGER) "You want them to starve out there?" You know, "how cruel is that?" And it's like, uh, well, let's see: when your teeth wear out and you're a 25 year old wild horse,

guess what'll happen? You starve. You die. I consider that such a privilege. The wild horse that gets to be born on the land, and stay in their home, and raise a family and live free, and then die, what a privileged life they have had.

(TRACIE) Thank you very much, again, taking the words right out of my mouth. The fact remains that these horses were put there for a reason. Now, I'm not going to say that they were put there by man. I'm not going to say they were put there from the very beginning or whatever, you know, I'm just saying, that by a higher power – that we do not know the plans of – they were put there. And Mother Nature has done what she has done because they are there. When you go in there and you start jacking with Mother Nature, guess what's going to happen? You're going to get your hand slapped. And it just gets to the point, [incredulous] where it's like, guys come on!

(GINGER) Yea, well a lot of people don't get it. I mean they do get it if you can get them to think about it, but a lot of people are really detached from the natural world. And so, one of the things that I hope that I provide is that link into the natural world. You know, not a lot of people watch really scientific nature programs. Some people do. But the fact of the matter is, is that Cloud allows us a glimpse into a natural world and we don't even know that we've been drawn into it because he's a character in a story that we follow. He's a personality, it's like a family drama, and before you know it, you're into this story that is all about nature and all about natural cycles – lightning and grass and predators and prey – and I just so hope that, you know I think he has crossed some boundaries with some people here because they're not being – I hope that we have increased people's awareness and appreciation of wildlife without them even knowing it.

(TRACIE) What I was just about to tell you a second ago, and then we're going to have to wrap this up, what I was saying was you know, that's the way the circle of life is, that's the way nature is, "look, the world is hard," but, perfect example of all that – Meerkat Manor, on Animal Planet. You know, there are people who will not watch it because they say that-

(GINGER) Somebody might get killed.

(TRACIE) –somebody might get killed. And it's like you said, it's these characters, that people get involved in their daily lives, of an animal – a wild animal. They get involved as though they're watching *Days of Our Lives*, or *All My Children*. They get involved in it –

(GINGER) Exactly. And this new program is really quite Shakespearean in the drama of two step sons who are allowed to stay in their family groups for way too long, and maybe because of the intense predation and the number of bachelor stallions and the reasons that are beyond our knowing for sure, we can only surmise, but, and then these two sons turn on their fathers. You know, it's kind of a shocking, surprising, with two very different outcomes of course between Shaman and Cloud and Flint and Bolder, so you know, I think, the drama continues.

(TRACIE) It's just the way that things go.