

**The Grizzly Beat**  
**Transcript**  
**Interview with Sam Jojola**  
**July, 2016**

Louisa Willcox: This is Louisa Willcox and the Grizzly Beat. And we are here today with Sam Jojola, who worked for 25 years for the Division of Law Enforcement and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, protecting wildlife from poaching and trafficking in animal parts. Sam is here to share with us his experience and provide perspectives on the grizzly bear debate. So, how did you get interested in wildlife?

Sam: Well a lot of people ask me that. How did I ever get interested in that. And it always takes me back to when I was ten years old. I grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I saved up enough money to get my first set of binoculars and a bird book. And I began studying birds and learning bird calls and the types of birds. And I took a lot of notes. I took the temperature, the wind, the date, just everything. Whenever I'd see a particular bird or number of birds and then id them -- describe the behavior of what they were doing. I took notes like that for quite a few years, until I was probably about 14 or 15. That was one part of how I got interested in wildlife.

The other part was -- and today I still keep a life list although and having worked in a wildlife refuge in south Texas after I graduated from New Mexico state in 1981 -- it was one of the premiere areas for bird watching certain times of the year, because of the migrants coming up from Mexico into south Texas and eastern species of warblers and all the local birds that were just unique to that area. Things like been green jays, chachalacas, green king fishers, red billed pigeons -- birds that every birder would just give anything to have on their life list.

Aside from the bird watching, my dad would take me mule deer hunting every year. And my dad -- it was kind of his religious beliefs, he was a Pueblo Indian. I grew up -- he was from a little reservation south of Albuquerque, Isleta, New Mexico. And their beliefs -- they did that kind of thing, they engaged in that kind of activity. And I became very interested in wildlife from a combination of those two factors. Those two interests.

But the hunting part was a religious ceremony, it wasn't going out for trophy hunting. That's how -- I guess if you had to pin it on one thing, pinpoint one particular aspect of it, it would be the birding. Because I was very much -- I birded every day that I could, and built a lifelong interest in birding and studying birds.

L: Wonderful. So, how did you make the choice for a career in wildlife management and law enforcement?

S: Well, I have to go back to -- and I don't know exactly where it started. I guess my very first law enforcement experience was when I left the military in 1975, and I did some backpacking for a short period of time. And then couldn't find a job -- I could type 90 words a minute and I took this test -- and of course people said: "we've never had

anybody come in here do 90 words a minute with, like no errors, for the test. You should be able to get a position in any law firm here in Santa Fe." Well that never happened.

And the only available jobs at the time were at the state penitentiary in Santa Fe New Mexico State Penitentiary. That had nothing to do with wildlife, but that's how I started my interest in some type of law enforcement career. So the time that I was there was less than a year, but with all of that experience behind me -- years later, I didn't realize until many years later -- that that work in this penitentiary working maximum security, death row and shotgun patrol. And I learned so much from that. To me -- I put that experience actually above my degree for the kind of law enforcement that I did later on with Fish and Wildlife.

We were around a lot of dangerous people. I worked there in 1976, and in 1980 they had a huge prison riot where the inmates took over that prison, and there were 33 inmates killed. There it's a whole long story but fortunately I wasn't there, I was already in college at New Mexico State. But I gravitated towards that I was actually looking at Colorado State and Humboldt State, which had a great wildlife program, but I thought I would try New Mexico State University. They had a wildlife program there, and I just felt compelled very strongly about going into that field.

Initially I was more interested in conducting research and getting into the research field. But for other reasons that I can't really explain clearly -- other than I started thinking, the law enforcement programs seemed very interesting to me and I wanted to work for Fish and Wildlife no matter in what capacity. So my first position actually working with Fish and Wildlife was those two wildlife refuges that I mentioned from New Mexico, Bosque del Apache, Las Vegas wildlife refuge.

L: Sam, once you got into the wildlife law enforcement work in Fish and Wildlife Service, it sounds like you had some incredible successes -- and maybe you can share a story or two?

S: Yes, I had a lot of fun. And my career was a lot, a tremendous amount of work. And there were just so many great things that I worked with my colleagues with that I was able to -- the 1980s were a really great year for the Division of Law Enforcement.

And I had the fortunate experience to work with a gentlemen in Long Beach that had a tremendous background in military intelligence and we fed off of each other. We worked parrot smuggling investigations, we put body wires on people that were involved in illegal parrot trade. We worked together in tandem with another agent in that office who had an legal background that eventually got a law degree.

So there was a number of great successes in those years where we just -- he and I worked in together. I did the undercover work, he recognized I had the ability to do the undercover work. But he was a great organizer and orchestrator. I had a really great foundation for doing undercover work and large cases.

I've always looked at the illegal wildlife trade as a global issue. And being a global issue, you're able to focus on cases that really will have a meaningful impact. But it takes a tremendous amount of time and effort to do so.

L: What does it take to be an effective undercover expert?

S: You have to be-- I have to tell you that I had some great support along the way to do undercover work. I had supervisors that supported me with that. And I'll give you an example. One of the first cases I worked on was back in 1984-85. I worked a trophy hunting group out of -- the main character was operating out of Bakersfield, California. And they were hunting on tribal lands, Southern Ute Reservation and the Mountain Ute Reservation, and they were reports that Colorado Division of Wildlife -- I believe it was at the time -- and California Fish and Game, they were looking at this one guy from Bakersfield. They said: "there's no way he can get these huge trophy heads without doing something illegal."

So I spent three years working on that group. I spent the whole year shooting competition silhouette tournaments. I had another name -- had an alias -- I had a great cover. I worked for the phone company. I actually hung out with some people that I knew at the phone company. My former wife worked at the phone company. So I knew everything about the phone company: I had equipment, I was an installer repairman. That was my cover. I had corporate Olympics t-shirts from the phone company because I participated in it. I had coffee mugs, I had key chains, that kind of thing. That was a great cover. And if somebody wanted to check on me, well I had everything covered. And they did.

So after the first year, I just got to know who these people were, identify who all the players were, and then for the next two years after that -- it wasn't even my case. I was asked to do the undercover work by the case agent who was in Grand Junction, Colorado, and it was another district.

So I guess when you say -- you really have to get in the frame of mind. It really is like acting. That was it is, it's acting and you either have that ability or you don't. Some people have a lot of natural ability to do that, other people have to develop it. It's a big sales pitch. You've got to believe in what you're doing. But you also have to be meticulous and cover every single minor detail. Every detail to the nth degree. And sometimes I would check my cover to make to see if I could break it. Have someone check around to see if they would be able to infiltrate, and find out that I wasn't who I said I was.

L: So that never happened to you that anybody figured out that you were undercover?

S: Well they suspected -- this group after the second year, they started to look at me, because I was a newer person and I always played the "what if" game. I know this one particular time in that particular case somebody threw a newspaper right down in front of my feet at three in the morning when were ready to go out on an elk hunt and they said: "hey, look at this look at the headlines here." And what happened is, it was a poacher that

was related to one of these guides and outfitters that were somehow related -- it might have been a cousin. But they were busted by Colorado Division of Wildlife.

But there was no cell phone technology, they couldn't get the word to me, so I was out on my own working for days at a time with these people. And there was no backup, so most of the work that I did undercover work I did by myself.

L: Were you worried about your own safety? I mean this sounds really dangerous.

S: There again, because of the experience that I had working in the penitentiary, where there were people that had multiple life sentences, and I was around these people all the time. And generally the people that I worked on with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, they're white-collar criminals for the most part. Every once in a while you'd come across somebody that crossed over into crimes like rape, robbery, burglary, those kinds of crimes. And there was actually a gentlemen that wanted to be my informant that had like 4 or 5 page rap sheet, but I felt comfortable enough to be around someone like that, because I spent so much time around people like that. So I know they were trying to manipulate me, so you really have to pay attention when you're around the criminal element to ensure that you never cross that line and you never compromise yourself.

L: So you've gone undercover with Safari Club International?

S: Yes, I did. To really understand Safari Club and the trophy hunting mentality, I mentioned that first case that I worked on involving an illegal guiding operation out of southern Colorado. They had legitimate guiding operations, but they were doing illegal stuff at the time too, on a side thing. Not all criminals are engaged in illegal activity all the time. They also are engaged in legal legitimate activities. And some people, when they feel they can trust someone and take the short cut, they'll do so.

So I was able to work on a number of Safari Club International cases. And one I actually referred to another district. I had contacts that I developed through Safari Club, and some people were foreign contacts from Zimbabwe, South Africa, those kinds of countries. And there were people that sometimes they said, "you have to look at this person over here, you have to look at this guide and outfitting service over there," and I did so. And I was able to get relative success for some of the cases. But you really have to spend a lot of time in that circle of people before they can trust you to give you information.

I'll give you one example. There were five leopards that were seized in Denver -- and I can't remember the exact year, but there were imported from -- they were shipped from Africa into Denver. And the permits were all, they were CITES permits from Zimbabwe, but the leopards were killed in South Africa, they were smuggled into Zimbabwe -- but they had a permit from Zimbabwe that they paid for, because the original permits they had had expired. They were no good. So they had to get some other permits from somewhere and the guide, he might have been I believe as a South African guide, they got the permits and they paid 500 dollars per permit. And I had somebody give me all the details of the shipment, everything, of how the whole thing was going to come in. And

just, people that were in another country were passing this information on to me, and I'm over here. So it was great because I had like the details of the shipment and then when the shipment arrived, the wildlife inspectors for U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the agency knew what to look for. So in essence that case was a good successful prosecution

L: So Safari Club is a major force in the current debate over the delisting of Yellowstone grizzly bears, the removal of their endangered species protections, And Safari Club has been pushing for this, as other hunting groups have, because of the opportunity to hunt the grizzly bear. Can you share your thoughts on Safari Club's agenda and where you think this might go if they had their way?

S: Well, I have been around a number of Safari Club people, I've gone to a lot of conventions over the years. And I've got to listen to a lot of conversations. Some people help me, people with Safari Club and have been members for years. They helped me to clean up some of the problem areas where there alleged violations that we have to look into, and try and prove the case.

But I tell you the mentality, having been around trophy hunters and gone with them trophy hunting -- not the Safari Club guys in another country but here in the states -- there's a particular type of, when people get involved for example in mule deer hunting, there's some people that just have to have the largest. It's not enough just to have a trophy head that's listed in Boone and Crockett or Pope and Young. For some people, they're fanatic about it, they want to have the very largest, the number one head.

And what I see, like for example in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, it would be a very prestigious hunt to be able to hunt grizzly bears from that ecosystem, because it's kind of like: "hey this has never happened. They haven't opened it up before. This is a grizzly from the lower 48."

There are a lot of hunters that would pay a lot of money to hunt a grizzly bear in that ecosystem, and it's simply because of the recognition. It's kind of bragging rights.

It's unfortunate that a lot of times there's kind of all these gray areas of conservation where people decide: "well you know what, we're putting money into the economy here." And many times they do put a lot of money into these economies, but when it comes to the trickle down theory, where does it go? How much goes to conservation? There's a big debate about it. I know there's been some statistics that debunk a lot of the money in these African countries to where the money goes. How much money actually reaches the people in the village level per se?

So, that's what I see with the grizzly bear thing, the lower 48, to be able to get a grizzly bear from the lower 48. It's just like they had years ago they had a polar griz. That was on exhibit at one of the Safari Club conventions. It was a big draw. A lot of people wanted to see what a polar griz looked like. People would want to hunt something like that, if they were bear hunters.

L: Sam, you worked in the Northern Rockies region and are very familiar with what happens sometimes to grizzly bears, even under endangered species protections, with poaching and what not. What do you think might be the consequences of delisting at this point?

S: The thing that really stuck out in my mind is, and it kind of depends how it plays out. Once it's delisted, there's always the opportunity from these private interest groups to come in and buy large tracts of land, force the federal government through Congress to liquidate some of these large tracts of federal lands -- Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service land, these large areas where they can develop it for oil and gas, fracking, wind power, that's the big one. That's a big pet peeve with me, wind power because of the 12 billion dollar a year subsidy the taxpayers pay for that. There's so many opportunities for people can see development, or someone could come in, groups of multimillionaires and they can buy large tracts of land and have a hunting preserve set up, and have something like that.

Once a species is delisted or it's not protected -- one of the big issues I've seen recently, for example the wolverine, that whole thing with that wolverine that was M56 that found its way to North Dakota where the guy shot it and posted it on Facebook. There were no consequences for that -- although much to my surprise, this cattle rancher contacted somebody about the killing of the wolverine, but there are no consequences for that.

It's just -- when a species is not protected, you don't have the education for that species of the protection that it needs. It's just the states in my opinion are not always that well equipped to manage something like that and need the federal government.

I've proven that with the mining industry in Nevada, and the cases that I worked there, and the mining gold and silver mining industry there. The state was running those. They set up a voluntary reporting system for migratory bird deaths in the early 1980s. Well the industry had the impression that as long as they reported the bird deaths and did some proactive work -- but they didn't have to do near the amount that they should have been doing. As long as they reported the bird deaths they were off the hook.

Well when we started investigating them back in the 1980s -- we started putting cases together and got a federal prosecutor that went after the mining companies. Much to the credit for the mining companies they cleaned it up because there were consequences.

That's the bottom line in wildlife management, wildlife law enforcement: there has to be consequences for these illegal actions. And people just do not have the respect for grizzly bears that they deserve to justify any kind of hunt. They really don't. By and large, people are disrespectful of this magnificent creature, and people take the law in their own hands. It's just the way some types of people operate. And it's just the way, sometimes individuals feel entitled. And because they feel that the governments not going to do it, well they're going to take the law in their own hands.

L: So you worked for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 25 years and described just earlier, that the 80s when you were doing a lot of this work was the heyday of law enforcement. And it appears that it's somewhat diminished from what it has been. And the recent survey by the Union of Concerned Scientists showed that over 70 percent of the employees who work for the agency and responded to the survey are concerned about the excessive political orientation of today's leaders who they think are compromising the mission and the effectiveness of the agency. What are your thoughts on the problem and how would you address it?

S: That is an ongoing, well-documented issue of scientific misconduct. It's been ongoing for a number of years. There are many many examples of it that have been investigated by through PEER, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. You've got the PEER group and also the Inspector Generals' office. They've looked into allegations of this kind of misbehavior by high-level officials of scientific misconduct. And the thing that I see is, there's never been to the best of my knowledge a director for Fish and Wildlife Service that has a strong scientific research background. I've never seen that.

The one director that comes, in my mind, that I see that really has actually taken a stand for the grizzly bears was Jamie Clark recently, former Director of Fish and Wildlife. She made a very some strong impression with me, and I think with many others, about taking a strong stance to not delist. I think it speaks volumes. But there's so many other people that were in leadership positions years ago -- you don't hear anything.

I think it boils down to -- a lot for these people are political appointees, and they're swayed by outside forces, outside special interest groups. And I have to say one phrase and this is a phrase that I've always used is: "a lot of these political appointees, they're trading in their professional integrity for political expediency." And that's the number one thing that I see is: "do as I say, don't do as I do." It's blatant.

Some of these cases, it's blatant scientific misconduct in the past with other species, not with grizzly bears that I can see, but there's decisions made with grizzly bears in the last delisting that shows that they did ignore the science.

L: Yes absolutely.

S: But, people have to weigh in and ask: "when you have all these scientists speaking out that are asking" -- and it was ill conceived. The delisting was ill prepared. They didn't consult with the Park Service, they didn't consult with the Native tribes, Native American tribes that were involved, they were totally ignored. It was very poorly executed. They should have just canceled it right there, and gone back the drawing board and tried for another administration.

L: Well they're not done yet. The final decision is yet to come out so there may be a change of heart, hopefully with the new administration.

S: We can only hope. You see this over and over again. I've seen it over and over again -- and it doesn't matter whether its Republican or Democrat now. There seems to be so much political catering to special interest groups that don't have the best interest of the grizzlies over the long term to protect them.

L: Sam, you're also an actor these days and how does this, your current work as an actor connect with maybe your previous life as law enforcement agent for Fish and Wildlife Service?

S: Being an actor is the fun part nowadays. Because I don't have to worry about making a mistake that is going to be a costly mistake. And when I was "in character" in my career - - sometimes when I had this persona, I had this other name, I had this other job title -- I had to be that person for anywhere from a month to 6 months to four years, and be able to turn it off and on. And it was really full time acting type position.

You have to sell yourself. You have to pay attention. You have to like these people. You have to come across as being genuine and listening, being a good listener. That's what undercover work that I learned was all about. It's about being a good listener and listening, and understanding where the person's coming from. But also I used to collect intelligence on the people that I would work undercover on, so I'd get to know everything about them before I even met them. That allowed me to mold myself into a person that I knew they would like.

There's a lot of planning. I used to memorize license plates all the time. I played memorization games because, you have to remember when I started doing this work, you couldn't carry a tape recorder for a week and a half out in the woods, so you had to take notes. You had to pay attention. You had to write down these notes and hide them where no one else could find them. They don't do that kind of work anymore. They don't send agents out any more like that. It's actually kind of a liability to do that in this day and age.

But it's the acting part of it, it's very much -- I can relate to it so easily, because I started studying acting in 2010. And I took acting courses for like two years and found it to be very much like undercover work. You're getting in a role but the roles are shorter and they're more fun.

So in May 30, 2012 I joined SAG AFTRA, and on April 9 I had the first opportunity that I really had -- my first acting position as a SAG actor, and that was right alongside Al Pacino in the film Stand Up Guys. I was a prison guard escorting Al Pacino up to the gate where he met his partner in crime who was being portrayed by Christopher Walken. And it was at a moth balled prison in downtown LA.

It was actually kind of funny, because there were four people there that day portraying themselves -- we were portraying ourselves as prison guards -- and Fisher Stevens, who directed the Cove, asked: "where the guy that's the prison guard?" And I raised my hand. And he says: "when were a prison guard?" And I said, "1976." And he said: "perfect, that's the time frame for this film. So, I want you to be able to help our staff, make sure

that they get the uniforms right, the badges right places, the keys are in the right place for the prison." And so I did that. I helped everybody get in uniform.

We came back and then he said: "Sam let me ask you something. When someone gets out of prison -- and you worked at this prison, where you worked at this state prison -- and somebody was leaving permanently from the prison, would you let them walk up to the gate by themselves, or would you escort them?"

I said; "well they've been in prison for over 10 years, I'd escort them up the gate." "And then what? And I said: "then I'd shake their hand and I'd say 'good luck.'" He said: "that's what we're going to do, and were going to do it just like that."

So we did, we did a number of takes, and I got to walk alongside Al Pacino. And I learned so much by watching Mr. Pacino for the number of hours that I stood next to him to get that scene.

L: Why does good law enforcement for wildlife matter?

S: That's a really point -- and we have to look at wildlife law enforcement in global way now, because the world is getting smaller. And the exponential growth of wildlife trafficking has been high recently and it's been longer than we've realized to a number of terrorist groups in the middle east, Al Shabaab, that are involved from Somalia, that terrorist group. And there's reports that they're involved of trafficking of ivory. The Boko Haram in Nigeria. The Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. I'm told there's thousands of elephants being killed for their ivory tusks, and the value of ivory has gone up exponentially.

And unfortunately the European Union is not yet able to ban all ivory trade. And that needs to be explored. They need to pursue that, because the value of ivory now has gone up exponentially. The other reason it's important is because the transnational wildlife criminals are on the move globally, and have been for years now. It's a lot more sophisticated now. A lot of these transnational wildlife criminal syndicates have found it to be a very lucrative aspect of garnering illegal monies to fund their particular interests. And because the penalties, it's very difficult - the penalties are just not harsh enough, they really aren't.

In fact, when we investigated many of the wildlife crimes that we investigated here in the states back in the 1980s, we had pretty good penalties then. There was the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, which brought about some incredible sweeping changes in judicial system, that took away the ability of judges to be able to deviate, unless they had a written opinion, from sentencing guidelines. There was a chart that established sentencing guidelines for those charged, based upon the person's criminal history. So many points were added up and that would determine what kind of sentencing they got. So that dramatically changed things.

At the same time, Fish and Wildlife agents have to compete with cases with the DEA, the FBI, the IRS, the ATF for their cases. So when we go to the federal prosecutors that we go to, the U.S. attorney's office, we have to be able to sell ourselves, to be able to emphasize why these cases are important enough to justify.

L: So with grizzly bears, they could be caught up in an increasingly -- in this wildlife trafficking problem worldwide, as we're seeing economies in Southeast Asia improve. And so too is the pressure on wildlife parts used in traditional Chinese medicine. And one part of that medicine practice relies on the grizzly bear or bear gall bladder, which can fetch many thousands of dollars on the black market. We've seen the trade in gall increase in the US. And Alaska. What do you think would happen in protections were stripped for the grizzly bear in Yellowstone?

S: When you look at the big picture of bears across the world, there's eight species of bears in the world and of those eight, six are imperiled species and the six of the eight are imperiled and threatened with extinction. And when you look at it from that aspect, when you see those large bears from around the world, those large species of bears that are being impacted to that extent -- and much of it is due to a combination of things. But when you start looking at the illegal trafficking of bear parts and bear part products, that's a big unknown. It's so clandestine, it's very often difficult to detect.

And for example, a bear gall bladder, a grizzly bear gall bladder, is reported to go for 10,000 dollars for more, for a grizzly or a brown bear on the black market. The other problem that's compounding is that there are not enough agents. And there may be one agent in the whole U.S. right now, maybe two with Fish and Wildlife that is fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese. And no Korean agents that I know of -- I could be wrong. Historically we never had a single agent that could speak Mandarin or Cantonese back in the 80s or 90s -- that could speak it fluently.

L: You worked in Idaho and worked on cases involving illegal poisoning of wildlife including raptors. Do you have concern that such activities are still occurring today? And what are your thoughts, do you have thoughts about what the implications might be for grizzly bears?

S: Well, I did work up there like once on one particular case that I can say that I worked on up there. And I mentioned this before, and it involved -- they were putting out Temik. And they ended up -- the animal that was killed was a bald eagle -- and it was put out for either coyotes or grizzly bears. Those kinds of cases are very difficult to prove because generally -- and this is why it's so important to have grizzlies protected federally -- an animal can get poisoned, can go off in the woods and die -- and being able to test that animal, or test that particular animal, it just is would have to be a coincidence or somehow someone comes across it, finds it dead, and the carcass not sufficiently decomposed to where they can take parts of that and test it, and possibly determine the cause of death. But then you have to prove who did it.

Poisoning cases are very difficult to make. In Nevada when I worked in the mining industry -- it was easier there, because we knew what they poisoning was, it was cyanide with the mining industry. But when you're on large tracts of public land for grizzlies and other animals are about that somebody thought about poisoning -- the poison doesn't determine what animal is going to be killed, what animal is going to die, so it's a very problematic issue. You really can't put your finger, "oh there's going to be X number of probable poisonings." It's a very big unknown.

Because of that, that's why we have a federal forensic wildlife lab up in Ashland, Oregon, that is a premiere wildlife lab in the country, in the world actually. It's like the Scotland Yard of wildlife forensics. They're able to do a lot of very specific testing up there. The standards are like Scotland Yard standards, they're above reproach, and many of the states and in many foreign countries send samples there for testing for various issues involving wildlife trafficking. They do ballistics testing up there.

Another reason to have grizzly bears protected is to make sure that they have a federal nexus that would provide them the highest level of attention if there is indeed a type of poisoning or a shooting. I worry a lot about the indiscriminate shooting. There seems to be a very big propensity for that.

L: Indeed. It's increasing.

S: It's increasing, and having worked covertly on some of these rogue poachers -- getting inside the mindset of these people -- many of them operate very surreptitiously. It takes a great deal of time to catch someone like that, and covert operations are probably the best opportunity to do so. But unfortunately, it takes a great deal of time and commitment to be able to prove something like that. You're kind of so called "lone wolf " operators, people that are doing it, but not sharing that information with anybody.

L: Sam, after delisting of grizzly bears in Yellowstone, the states will take over the primary authority to manage them, not the federal government. Can you describe the basic difference between the enforcement of federal versus state laws and do you have concerns about the states' ability to prevent poaching after delisting?

S: States have the authority to regulate animals within their borders. And obviously the federal government can regulate wildlife when it comes to animals being killed illegally in one state and transported across state lines. That's why we have the Lacey Act, which was enacted in 1900, which is -- any kind of underlying state tribal federal or foreign law is used as the predicate for attaching whenever there's an investigation into a wildlife crime. And basically under the Lacey Act, it's unlawful to import export sell acquire purchase any fish or wildlife or plant that are taken, possessed transported or sold in violation of U.S., or Indian or tribal law, or interstate or foreign commerce. That involves plants; any kind of wildlife, wildlife product, but it also involves now any kind of illegally logged product of wood coming from some of these foreign countries that are imported into the U.S. That was amended in 2008, there was a special amendment because of the widespread illegal logging in these foreign countries.

But the state law -- states really do -- and the feds really need the states, and the states need the feds when it comes to managing the grizzly. They really do need each other to be able to do this effectively, because first of all, the limited number of bears that some experts say there's like 700 -- we really don't know how many there really are. Everything in biology and science -- it's like a lot of these things, are highly educated guestimates. And we need to err on the side of caution and should be more cognizant -- to work hand in hand with the states and not leave the federal government out of it. Because when it comes to jurisdiction and being able to prosecute some cases, there's certain cases sometimes where a case is politically charged, and states will defer to the federal government to investigate that.

I've personally witnessed it in a number of cases. One big game case that comes to mind when I was working in Nevada, and that involves some big game hunters from outside the state, in Pennsylvania, and the illegal guy was in Nevada. The state asking the federal government to investigate and help them with it. And it was going to be prosecuted in state court. But under the state, the DA, the rules in Nevada were: "you can't record any phone call conversation." But under federal law, with the proper case report and submission through the channels -- we had to get authority to do that, the federal government can do that -- but for some reason in Nevada that was prohibited. You couldn't do it under any circumstances.

They were going to prosecute these people in state court, but I taped the phone calls anyway because I had a feeling that this was going to be political -- and for some reason the District Attorney turned the case down. And the state officer I was working with said: "sorry we can't prosecute this in state court." There was some underlying reason the District Attorney dismissed the case.

And I took it to a federal prosecutor and he said, "Sam, you better have recorded these phone calls. I'm reading your reports, and I hope you recorded everything, because we need to have good evidence here." Well I recorded the phone calls anyway. Because even though the state law said you couldn't record them, I just didn't feel this was going to go into state court, and it didn't. It was dismissed completely, but because I recorded the calls, they took this case and they turned it into a Lacy Act investigation. And they ended up charging the hunters from Pennsylvania -- they seized these mule deer trophy heads that were taken illegally in Nevada -- and they charged the guide and outfitter for an illegal guiding and outfitting operation without a state license.

So that predicated the Lacy Act. The guide was involved in violating the Lacy Act because they did not have a state license, so they violated a state law. And so we used that as the underlying law to attach the Lacy Act to.

That's why the federal laws are so important. State laws are important as well, but they need to work in tandem. With the limited number of bears we have in the world and with six of the most imperiled bear species out of the eight, why take a chance when grizzly bears deserve everything that we can possibly do for them.