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ESKIMO KILLS MARKED POLAR BEAR

Lacking Knowledge of Marked Bear He Killed Angers Eskimo

Barrow, Alaska
March 29, 1968

Dear Editor:

You probably have never received a mad letter from full blooded Eskimo so here's one...

You see, yesterday my Cousin Roxy Oyagak and myself went out hunting. We went out about 25 miles off Barrow, thought we catch some seals.

We didn't expect to see a polar bear since half a dozen or so little planes and a helicopter are flying for polar bears.

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Hunter Didn't Know He Killed Marked Bear...

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Luckily we saw one on the shore ice so we caught him. I thought for a while we caught a spotted bear and it turned out to be one of white man's doings.

We did not know they were tagging and marking polar bears at this time because they did not put any public notice. This time of the year here at Barrow polar bears start roaming around so Eskimo hunter have a chance to get one for food.

Before I go any further, here's why I'm mad at a white man doing to an animal we are hunting for food at this time of year.

You see they drugged this certain bear three days ago before we caught him. When we butcher the bear the meat looks different to me. The meat was pink and blue in some places.

We haul every meat and skin home to feed our families and friends who are hungry for polar bear meat. So I thought to myself I better find out about the meat before I feed my seven kids. I went to a store to use a phone. I phoned A. R. L. (Arctic Research Laboratory: editor) about our spotted polar bear we caught. A lady answered the phone, then a man.

I told this man we caught a marked polar bear No. 11, big mark on his back. I asked him if it's alright to eat it and the answer was NO. This two letter word "no" really broke my heart in two. He then came to the village to see us and told us we better throw the meat away or he could throw it for us.

I told him we Eskimos never throw any fat meat away. I asked him again if we could have the meat be tested in lab for food because we really need meat at this time. He again said no. So what could we do but throw the good meat away

after we hauled it home from 20 miles off village.

Mr. Rock, if I had cooked this meat without phoning, I could have my whole family in hospital or kill them. Or if Roxy and myself decided to eat some out on the ice, we could have drugged ourselves or get real sick way out on the ice.

It is a dangerous game white man are doing to us. At least they could have put public notice so we know the meat is not fit to eat.

The skin right now is not worth \$2.00 because that big dye mark on back of the skin. I also asked him what to use to clean the mark out and he said he didn't really know. He said taxidermist might take it out for us so we could sell the skin.

Both of us are out of job at present and we don't have that kind of money to have it washed out.

Now you see why I am mad the skin won't sell and throw the good fat meat away. Right now, good skin of polar bear cost selling price from \$27.00 to \$30.00 a foot here at Barrow. To me it just not right to throw a good fat meat away especially if you have seven full blooded little Eskimos who like meat instead of white man food.

Mr. Rock, I wish somehow they could correct this doing before it's too far gone.

You could print this letter if you like.

Yours Truly,
Victor Koonalook
P.O. Box 433
Barrow, Alaska