Analysis of Center for Medical Progress Videos

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Executive Summary

At direction of counsel to Planned Parenthood, Fusion GPS analyzed a series of videos recently released by the **Center for Medical Progress (CMP)** purporting to represent undercover sting operations against **Planned Parenthood**. Fusion GPS also commissioned experts to review the videos and conducted preliminary research into the CMP organization and its personnel.

Between July 14th and August 4th, 2015, CMP released a series of videos depicting Planned Parenthood staffers in conversation with CMP operatives posing as employees of a biomedical firm that procures fetal tissue for sale to stem cell researchers. The videos attempt to show that Planned Parenthood profits from the sale of fetal tissue, and, secondarily, that its doctors follow an abortion procedure that violates the so-called "partial birth" abortion ban. A thorough review of these videos in consultation with qualified experts found that they do not present a complete or accurate record of the events they purport to depict.

Each release by CMP contained a short edited video, between eight and fifteen minutes in length, that intercuts clips from the undercover recordings with other content, and a "full footage" video that claims to provide the raw, unedited footage of each interview. A video forensics expert, a television producer, an independent transcription agency, and Fusion GPS staff reviewed this material. While these analysts found no evidence that CMP inserted dialogue not spoken by Planned Parenthood staff, their review did conclude that CMP edited content out of the alleged "full footage" videos, and heavily edited the short videos so as to misrepresent statements made by Planned Parenthood representatives. In addition, the CMP transcript for the "full footage" video shot at Planned Parenthood's Gulf Coast facility in Texas differs substantially from the content of the tape.

At this point, it is impossible to characterize the extent to which CMP's undisclosed edits and cuts distort the meaning of the encounters the videos purport to document. However, the manipulation of the videos does mean they have no evidentiary value in a legal context and cannot be relied upon for any official inquiries unless supplemented by CMP's original material and forensic authentication that this material is supplied in unaltered form. The videos also lack credibility as journalistic products.

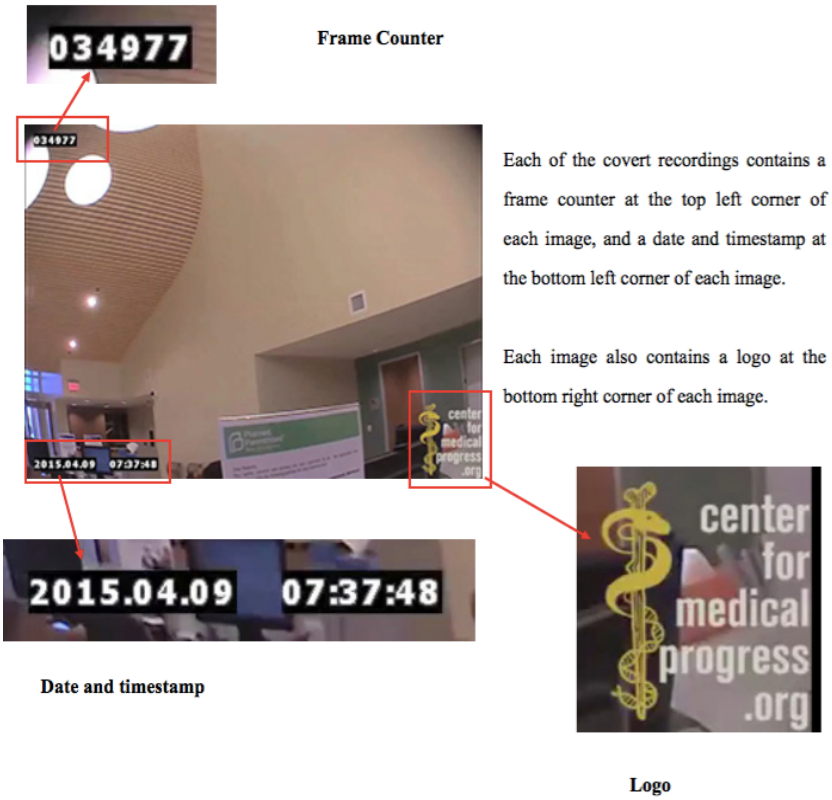
Video Analysis

Full Footage Video Analysis

Fusion GPS analysts reviewed all four of the "full footage" videos released by the Center for Medical Progress, totaling more than 12 hours of tape. This analysis did not reveal widespread evidence of substantive video manipulation, but we did identify cuts, skips, missing tape, and changes in camera angle. A forensic video expert, Grant Fredericks, reviewed segments of tape identified as suspicious during this preliminary review. This professional analysis revealed that the full footage videos contained numerous intentional post-production edits.

All four videos feature a younger man posing as "Robert"[1] and a middle-aged woman posing as "Susan," both of Biomax, a biological sample procurement company specializing in tissue for stem cell research. "Robert" displays detailed technical knowledge of abortion procedure, sample collection, and stem cell research. "Susan" claims to be the CEO of Biomax and appears to be focused on the financial aspects of tissue collection.

All four videos contain a frame counter and date and timestamp. Mr. Fredericks notes that the type of hidden cameras likely used to create these recordings typically allow users to encode the date and time prior to recording. Removal or manipulation of encoded timestamps and frame counters leaves evidence behind in the final video. Mr. Fredericks identifies "loss of significant time and image continuity" attributable to post-production edits. While many of these edits removed likely-irrelevant content from the beginning and end of the interviews, all four videos also contained intentional edits that removed content from the middle of the videos.



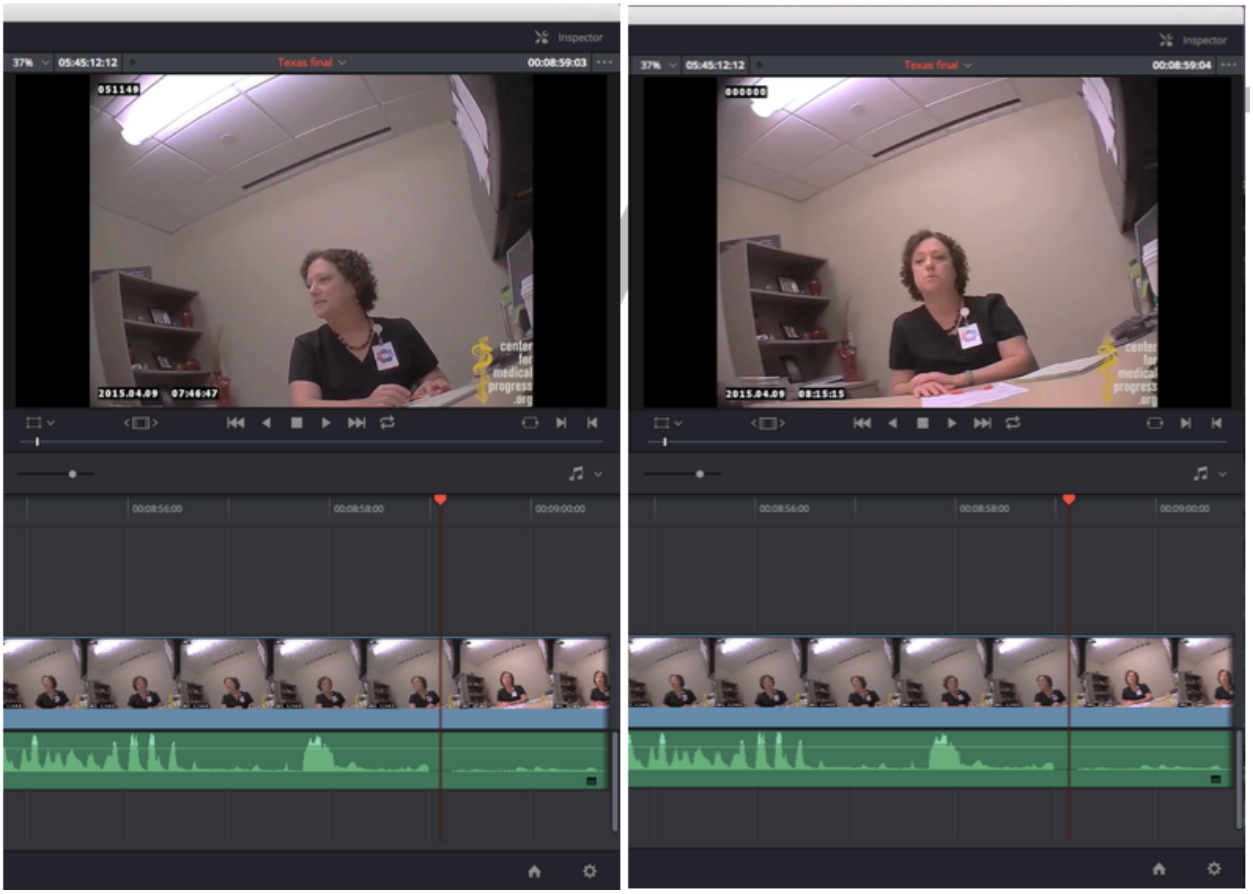
[1] In some videos, "Robert" uses the last name "Sarkis."

"Intact Fetuses 'Just a Matter of Line Items' for Planend (sic) **Parenthood TX Mega- Center" (hereinafter "Texas")**

This video depicts nearly six hours of conversation between Melissa "Missy" Farrell of Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast and "Robert Sarkis" and "Susan" of Biomax. The video also depicts Planned Parenthood lab facilities and shows tissue collected from aborted fetuses at various gestational stages.

The Texas video is likely the most substantially manipulated of the four full footage videos reviewed in this report. Mr. Fredericks' analysis reveals that "approximately 30 minutes" of the meeting are missing from the video shortly after the eighth minute of recording. The clock superimposed on the video skips from 07:46:47 to 08:15:15 from one frame to the next.

Lighting levels and the Planned Parenthood staffer's ID badge at 08:15:15 match the content in the short video that is missing from the full video, suggesting that the content comes from the missing excerpt. This gap also coincides with approximately 4000 words of dialog in the CMP transcript that does not appear in the video. We discuss the short videos and transcripts in detail below.



Left: Texas "full footage" video at running time 00:08:59:03. Right: Texas "full footage" video at running time 00:08:59:04 (note that running times are continuous and differ from timestamps).

About 30 minutes later, the camera's frame counter skips ahead 7,583 frames and the timestamp skips from 08:44:26 to 08:44:39. Mr. Fredericks concludes that "this is an edit caused by human intervention in a post-production environment." Mr. Fredericks finds a similar edit at 12:58:43 by the camera's timestamp, in which the timestamp on the following frame reads 13:50:18. He concludes that this too is a post-production edit resulting in the omission of nearly an hour of recording.

Mr. Fredericks also notes that audio is out of sync at various points within this recording, a common feature in edited video. Many segments of the video contain dialog spoken off- camera, but neither Mr. Fredericks nor Fusion GPS staff identified any evidence of audio manipulation within the video segments provided.

CMP's video editors overlooked identifying information contained within the Texas video. At 13:11:59 on the video's timestamp, CMP operatives can be seen handling a credit card that appears to bear the name "Brianna Allen." At 13:59:36, facial blurring introduced in postproduction to obscure interviewers and other individuals' identities briefly moves off of "Susan's" face.

Planned Parenthood VP Says Fetuses May Come Out Intact, Agrees Payments (hereinafter "Colorado")

Like the Texas video, the Colorado tape depicts "Robert" and "Susan" in conversation with Planned Parenthood staff, and shows footage of a lab facility and the fetal tissue contained therein. Mr. Fredericks identified numerous stops and starts in this tape.

The Colorado video's timestamp skips from 10:27:07 to 11:01:40, and the frame counter skips from 030742 to 041744. This edit, which Mr. Fredericks identifies as the result of human intervention post-production, results in more than 30 minutes of missing video. Similar edits omit two to three minutes of audio and video each at approximately 11:24:49, 11:36:47, and 11:41:44 by the encoded timestamp. Another edit at 12:35:50 omits 10 minutes of audio and video information.

At 11:45:46 on the video's timestamp, Mr. Fredericks identifies an edit that may reflect manual stoppage of the camera during recording. Oversaturation, blurring, and a change in camera angle prior to stoppage indicate the movement of a hand toward the camera lens. These effects also are consistent with the operator pushing a button to stop recording. The next image starts in the middle of a recording "packet" at 12:21:55, indicating removal of material recorded immediately after the operator resumed recording. CMP omitted the video immediately following camera stoppage from its "full footage" tape, which means the video does not constitute the full footage of this encounter.

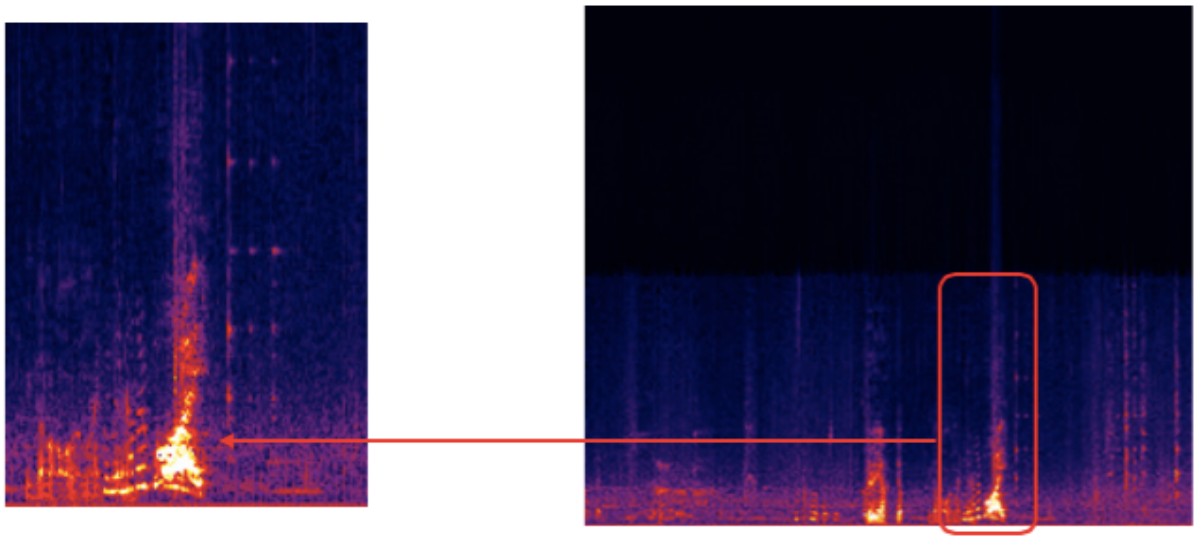
Planned Parenthood representatives asked Fusion GPS to analyze two segments of dialog in this video that were deemed to be suspicious.

The first segment, approximately an hour and 20 minutes into the video's running time, depicts Planned Parenthood staff off-camera saying a phrase that CMP claims was, "It's a baby." Fusion GPS analysts and independently contracted transcriptionists found this dialog to be unintelligible. Because of the poor quality of the recording, the compression of the file by Youtube, and the lack of access to the original file, it is not possible to enhance the sound sufficiently to determine what is being said.

Neither internal nor expert analysis found any artifacts of editing in or around this segment that would suggest the audio was inserted or manipulated using technical tools. Rather, Fusion GPS analysts conclude that this segment simply consists of incomprehensible background chatter picked up by the CMP operative's hidden camera. In our view, CMP created the purported statement, "it's a baby," either through transcription error or intentional fabrication.

Careful review by a number of analysts leads Fusion GPS to conclude that "it's a baby" would be an incongruent statement for the lab tech to make in the context of a lengthy and technical examination of human fetus specimens. In the period prior to this discussion, the CMP operatives and the Planned Parenthood personnel are inspecting a pair of human fetus specimens and engage in a relatively technical discussion of how to identify specific internal organs such as the liver and thymus. Suddenly declaring in the midst of this examination that the subject specimen is "a baby" simply makes no sense.

A second segment of dialog depicts a Planned Parenthood staffer allegedly saying "another boy" approximately two hours and 30 minutes into the video's running time. Again, neither internal nor external analysis found evidence that CMP inserted or manipulated this dialog post hoc. Mr. Fredericks found the audio spectrum to be consistent and continuous before, during, and after this dialog.



Audio spectrum showing a Planned Parenthood representative saying, "It's a boy" approximately two and a half hours into the Colorado tape's running time. This image shows no evidence of audio manipulation.

Although it is unlikely that this dialog was edited in, Fusion GPS finds that the statement lacks context and may have been elicited by CMP's own operatives, who engaged in elaborate efforts to bait Planned Parenthood personnel into using language that could be portrayed as incriminating or otherwise inappropriate.

The analyst says "*another* boy" despite the fact that there is no prior mention of the gender of fetal specimens at any other point in the videos or transcripts. Given that expert analysis found that more than 30 minutes are missing from the Colorado tape prior to this point we deem it likely that CMP deleted initial discussions of fetal gender, most likely by its own personnel.

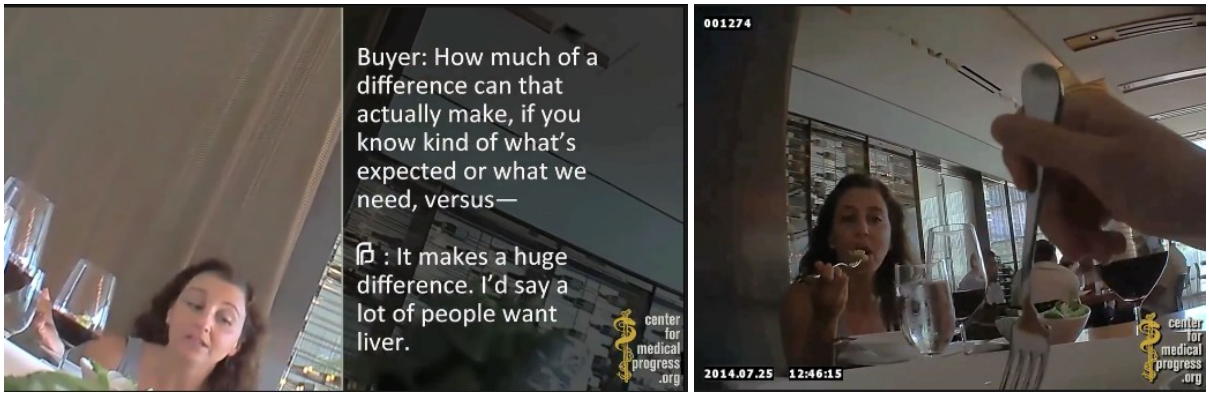
While CMP's undisclosed edits in the earlier portion of the Colorado tape make it impossible to know the broader context of the conversation that led the Planned Parenthood technician to say "another boy," the available tape shows that CMP operatives repeatedly attempted to bait Planned Parenthood staff into discussing the physiology of fetal specimens in lay terms. "Robert" asks, "Was that just the little bits of the skull?" "This is rib cage right here, right?" "This could be neural tissue, could it?" This is part of the pelvis right here, is it not? and many other questions that seem designed to elicit "soundbites" pertaining to fetal viscera. It is thus likely that the removed video contains dialog in which CMP operatives ask about the gender of a specimen.

"Planned Parenthood Uses Partial-Birth Abortions to Sell Baby Parts" (hereinafter "California 2014")

According to encoded timestamps on the CMP video displaying July 25, 2014 (and, in one segment, July 25, 2013), the California 2014 video takes place more than six months prior to the other recordings. This video portrays Deborah Nucatola, Senior Director of Medical Services for PPFA, at a lunch meeting with "Robert" and "Susan."

Mr. Fredericks concludes that "this video has been edited significantly." He identifies a change to the superimposed Center for Medical Progress logo left behind as an artifact of editing system error.

At 14:32:07 on the video's timestamp, the timestamp skips ahead four minutes and the date changes from July 25, 2014 to July 25, 2013. Mr. Fredericks identifies this as a change from footage recorded on one camera to footage recorded on a second device. One minute later, the time stamp jumps ahead by five minutes and the date stamp reverts to 2014, representing a shift back to the original recording device. Visual review of the short and long videos from both California interviews shows clear shifts in perspective from one camera to another.



Left: California 2014 short video at running time 00:03:02. Right: Same dialog in California 2015 "full footage" video (at 00:29:05)

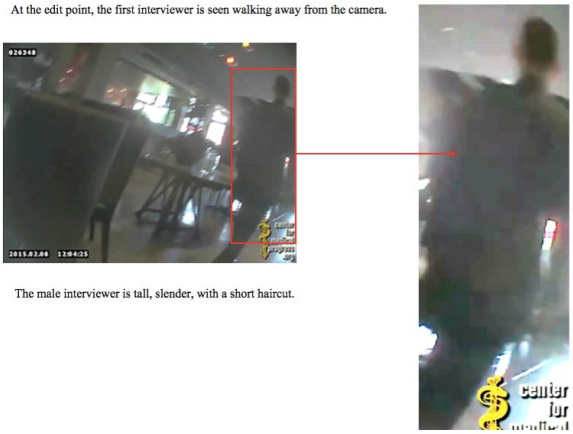
The California 2014 video also contains in-segment edits. The encoded timestamp skips from 4:38:06 to 14:41:08, representing at least three minutes of missing video.

It is not possible to estimate the extent to which CMP's undisclosed edits and cuts distort the meaning of the first California video. However, the blatant manipulation of this video renders it useless as "evidence" and means it cannot be relied upon in official inquiries as a credible record of events unless the record is supplemented by CMP's original unedited material.

Second Planned Parenthood Senior Executive Haggles Over Baby Parts Prices (hereinafter "California 2015")

This video, apparently recorded on February 6, 2015, depicts a lunch meeting between "Robert" and "Susan" of Biomax and Planned Parenthood representatives Mary Gatter (President of Medical Directors' Council for PPFA) and Laurel Felczer (Senior Director of Medical Services for Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley).

Like the California 2014 video, this video clearly shows that CMP edited together footage from two different cameras. The video's time stamp jumps backwards from 12:04:53 to 12:04:24 due to what Mr. Fredericks identifies as post-production insertion of tape from a second camera. The second camera used in the California 2015 recording takes longer segments of video, but is otherwise similar to the cameras used in other recordings.



At the point of this edit, the video briefly shows the male interviewer walking away from the camera. The interviewer physically resembles CMP founder David Daledin, though video evidence is insufficient to conclusively determine the interviewer's identity.

Footage of the male interviewer visible in the "California 2014" tape.

Short Video Analysis

Fusion GPS analysts and Mr. Fredericks reviewed CMP's short videos in conjunction with the "full footage" tapes and conclude that the short videos significantly distort and misrepresent the conversations depicted in the full footage videos. Mr. Fredericks notes that the short videos contain "edited conversations where some spoken words are eliminated and some spoken words are added out of context." The short videos of both the California 2014 and California 2015 interviews contain camera angles not visible in the corresponding "full footage" videos. The short video of the Texas interview contains video and audio that do not appear in the Texas "full footage" video.

Fusion GPS consulted with an experienced reality and documentary television producer, Scott Goldie, for an expert opinion of the editing techniques used in the short videos. Mr. Goldie identifies the use of ominous music, replays, color manipulation, "scratch" effects, strategic display of frame counters and timestamps, all chosen to create "gotcha" moments.

Mr. Goldie points out that in all four short videos, most of the dialog about compensation comes not from Planned Parenthood representatives but instead from CMP operatives posing as buyers:

[I]t's the "buyer" who is doing all the talking. The "buyer" states: "It's gold out there", "So beneficial", "change the procedure a bit", "financial gain", "I want you to be paid", "compensates", "financially helping you", "financial benefits", "grow the clinic", these are all leading statements voiced by the "buyer". But Farrell simply agreeing to these statements is enough to paint her in a bad light.

This is consistent with Fusion GPS analysts' assessment of the "full footage" videos. In all four interviews, CMP operatives repeatedly bring up compensation, often trying to bait Planned Parenthood representatives into making mercenary statements or naming a higher price for donated tissue. In the California 2015 video, the female interviewer explicitly tells Planned Parenthood representatives that the compensation that they requested for fetal tissue donation is "way too low." In the Colorado video, she tells Planned Parenthood representatives that she wants to pay "top dollar."

The short videos take a great deal of dialog out of context so as to substantively and significantly alter the meaning of the dialog contained in the long videos. For example, Melissa Farrell's statement about "diversifying the revenue stream" for her clinic in the Texas video occurs in the context of a conversation about expanding the services available to patients. In the California 2014 video, Dr. Nucatola's statement that Planned Parenthood wants to donate tissue "in a way that is not perceived as 'This clinic is selling tissue. This clinic is making money off of this'" precedes a discussion of the costs involved in collecting tissue.

Transcript Analysis

Fusion GPS contracted the services of an independent transcription agency, TranscriptionWing[2], to transcribe all four "full footage" videos and the corresponding short videos. This was an ordinary arms-length commercial engagement, and TransciptionWing was not informed of the purpose of the request nor of the ultimate client. Fusion GPS analysts then compared these transcripts to transcripts provided by CMP, and, in the case of significant discrepancies, to the videos themselves. All four transcripts by CMP contain substantive omissions, and the Texas transcript appears to be grossly edited.

The style, errors, and patterns of omission in the CMP transcripts lead Fusion GPS to conclude that CMP most likely transcribed the videos "in-house," rather than contracting transcription to an independent agency. This would also explain the significant discrepancies between the CMP transcript of the Texas footage and what appears on the tape. It appears that CMP transcriptionists reviewed an

[2] http://www.transcriptionwing.com/

earlier version of the Texas tape, or possibly that they transcribed recorded "packets" from the raw tape individually before CMP cut the "full-length" video together.

In all four transcripts, CMP omits the names used by its operatives, the company name Biomax, and dialog in which the CMP operatives offer their (presumably fictionalized) back stories. In the California 2014 transcript, CMP's version omits more than 670 words of dialog mostly pertaining to "Susan's" backstory. In the California 2015 video, "Susan" alludes to accidentally calling the male interviewer "David, which is his middle name." In the Colorado video, the male interviewer introduces himself as "David" before correcting himself to say that David is his middle name and that he goes by Robert. These apparent errors provide further evidence to bolster the suspicion that the male interviewer is, in fact, CMP leader David Daleidin. CMP omits all mention of the name "David" in its transcripts.

Many CMP transcripts also alter their operatives' dialog so as to make it seem less like they are baiting Planned Parenthood staff into making unethical statements. For example, in the Colorado transcript, CMP portrays its staff as consistently asking about specimens of a different gestational age than they actually request in the videos.

The Texas video transcript contains the most significant discrepancies. CMP's version of the transcript contains over 4,000 words of dialog that does not appear in the independent transcript or the video.[3] In this dialog, Melissa Farrell allegedly discusses her "a la carte" budget (a phrase she also uses elsewhere in the video) and she and "Robert" engage in a detailed discussion of intact fetuses and the use of medically-induced abortions. Some of this dialog appears to correspond with video used in the short, edited version of the Texas video.

At other points, the CMP transcript of the Texas video appears to omit dialog totaling over 4,000 words.[4] In this segment, apparent in the independent transcript and the video, Farrell asserts that Planned Parenthood will not collect tissue from minors or incarcerated people. Also in this segment, "Susan" asks if Biomax can offer participation bonuses to doctors, and Ferrell responds, "no way." Whereas the content that CMP inserts into its transcript serves to portray Ferrell as flexible regarding Planned Parenthood policies and regulations, the content it omits portrays her as committed to following ethical and legal guidelines.

The numerous errors, discrepancies, and omissions in the CMP transcripts render them useless as "evidence." They also cannot be relied upon in official inquiries as a credible text record of what is said in the videos.

[3] CMP transcript of Texas "full footage: video, pp. 5-15

[4] TranscriptionWing transcript of Texas "full footage" video, pp. 46-56 and pp. 113-115.