



West was the special agent-in-charge at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Criminal Investigation Division who had been probing alleged crimes committed by BP and the company's senior officials in connection with a March 2006 pipeline rupture at the company's Prudhoe Bay operations in Alaska's North Slope that spilled 267,000 gallons of oil across two acres of frozen tundra - the second largest spill in Alaska's history - which went undetected for nearly a week.

West was confident that the thousands of hours he invested into the criminal investigation would result in felony charges against BP and the company's senior executives who received advanced warnings from dozens of employees who worked at its Prudhoe Bay facility that unless immediate steps were taken to repair the severely corroded pipeline, a disaster on par with that of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill was only a matter of time.

In fact, West, who spent nearly two decades at the EPA's criminal division, was also told the pipeline was going to rupture - about six months before it happened.

In a wide-ranging interview with Truthout, West described how the Justice Department (DOJ) abruptly shut down his investigation into BP in August 2007 and gave the company a "slap on the wrist" for what he says were serious environmental crimes that should have sent some BP executives to jail.

[More...](#)