This is the print version of the Skeptical Science article 'Ben Santer rewrote the 1995 IPCC report', which can be found at http://sks.to/santer.

The consensus-building process of the IPCC

What The Science Says:
The IPCC operates by consensus. Ben Santer could not have and did not single-handedly alter the 1995 IPCC report. Accusations to the contrary are simply an attempt to re-write history.

Climate Myth: Ben Santer rewrote the 1995 IPCC report

"However, a single scientist, Dr. Ben Santer of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, rewrote the draft at the IPCC's request, deleting all five statements, replacing them with a single statement to the effect that a human influence on global climate was now discernible, and making some 200 consequential amendments. These changes were considered by a political contact group, but they were not referred back to the vast majority of the authors whose texts Dr. Santer had tampered with, and whose five-times-stated principal conclusion he had single-handedly and unjustifiably negated." (Christopher Monckton)

Citizen's Challenge has documented the actual events involving the statement in the 1995 IPCC report attributing global warming to human effects, as did the late Stephen Schneider in his excellent book *Science as a Contact Sport*.

What actually happened is that the scientific literature at the time clearly showed a number of 'fingerprints' of human-caused global warming, as Dr. Ben Santer showed. The Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti delegations - for obvious reasons - claimed this was 'bad science', and were joined by a few delegates from other small countries like Kenya. As a result of the disagreement, a Contact Group was held to negotiate the language that would eventually go into the report.

The Saudis and Kuwaitis did not even send representatives to the Contact Group - they were uninterested in discussing the science. A Kenyan scientist joined the group, which discussed the scientific evidence, and agreed that a clear human signal could be found in the observational data. When the Kenyan joined the group calling for this language to be included in the report, the Saudis and Kuwaitis finally dropped their opposition, and the language attributing global warming to human effects was added into the report (by consensus).

Santer was subsequently slandered by Frederick Seitz in an opinion-editorial published in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ). Seitz did not participate in the IPCC process in question, and yet originated this myth by accusing Santer of single-handedly re-writing the report. The IPCC chairman and co-chairmen subsequently sent a letter to the WSJ noting that Seitz's accusations were "completely without foundation."

It was not a matter of one scientist re-writing the IPCC report. That's not how the organization functions; it's a consensus document. As the first link above discusses, there are now many clear fingerprints of global warming, so why this argument 16 years ago is relevant to the science today is a mystery.

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Skeptical Science explains the science of global warming and examines climate misinformation through the lens of peer-reviewed research. The website won the Australian Museum 2011 Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge. Members of the Skeptical Science team have authored peer-reviewed papers, a college textbook on climate change and the book Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand. Skeptical Science content has been used in university courses, textbooks, government reports on climate change, television documentaries and numerous books.

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