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TRANSCRIPTION OF RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

Ron Brean

September 26, 2012  
Sacramento, California

Investigation of Department of Parks  
and Recreation - Financial Irregularities

Interviewed by: Thomas M. Patton  
Deputy Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General  
State of California

Transcribed by: Penina Wolicki  
eScribers, Inc.  
October 3, 2012  
New York, New York

(SA201210710)

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1 MR. PATTON: Okay, so it's 3:09 p.m.  
2 Thomas M. Patton, Deputy Attorney General;  
3 Michael Madsen (ph.), investigator, is with  
4 us. And Ron Brean, B-R-E-A-N -- and you -- is  
5 on the phone and understands we're recording  
6 this, agrees to that.

7 Correct, Mr. Brean?

8 MR. BREAN: That's correct.

9 MR. PATTON: And I see from the  
10 organization chart, that some time ago, you  
11 were with the Parks Department.

12 MR. BREAN: That's correct. I spent  
13 thirty-five years with Parks.

14 MR. PATTON: Oh, you were thirty-  
15 five years with California Parks. Okay.

16 MR. BREAN: Um-hum.

17 MR. PATTON: So I assume you must  
18 have started, then, out somewhere in the  
19 field, because I only see your name in the  
20 headquarter organization chart for a brief  
21 period of time. Maybe I'm wrong. Why don't  
22 you walk --

23 MR. BREAN: You're right. I was --  
24 I was -- I started as a seasonal employee, and  
25 then I was field ranger and went through

1 various locations. I was a District  
2 Superintendent for a number of years, and then  
3 I became a field division chief, and from  
4 there, a Deputy Director.

5 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you went from  
6 a field division chief to Deputy Director.

7 MR. BREAN: Right.

8 MR. PATTON: And you were a Deputy  
9 Director for which area?

10 MR. BREAN: For a brief period of  
11 time, I was Deputy Director for Admin. And I  
12 finished my career as a Deputy Director for  
13 Operations.

14 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you were  
15 Deputy Director for Admin -- where was that?  
16 What years was that? Do you remember?

17 MR. BREAN: 2003, I believe it was.

18 MR. PATTON: Okay. That sounds  
19 right. And then for Ops, what, the next year?

20 MR. BREAN: Yeah.

21 MR. PATTON: Okay. And then you  
22 retired after -- in what, the end of '04 or  
23 something?

24 MR. BREAN: That's right.

25 MR. PATTON: Okay. And I understand

1 you're now the Mayor of Yachats, Oregon?

2 MR. BREAN: That's -- it's  
3 pronounced [Ya-hots], but that's correct.

4 MR. PATTON: [Ya-haz]?

5 MR. BREAN: [Ya-hots].

6 MR. PATTON: But it's spelled  
7 Y-A-C-H-A-T-S.

8 MR. BREAN: Well, you know how it  
9 goes. When it's a foreign language, in this  
10 case a Native American language, it gets  
11 shifted around a little bit from what we're  
12 used to.

13 MR. PATTON: All right. Well, I'm  
14 glad I spelled it. Yachats, Oregon. Sounds  
15 fun.

16 So tell us, what we've been looking  
17 at, I think -- it sounds like you have seen  
18 some of the newspaper reports.

19 MR. BREAN: Right.

20 MR. PATTON: We're looking at --  
21 there was already an investigation by the  
22 Parks Department with our office's help on an  
23 issue relating to purchase of vacation leave  
24 time. That's all been investigated and  
25 written about. That's not what we're

1 investigating now.

2 MR. BREAN: Um-hum.

3 MR. PATTON: What came to light near  
4 the end of that investigation was that there  
5 were some monies, particularly we're looking  
6 at the State Parks and Recreation Fund --  
7 there was a disparity in what the budget  
8 office at Parks was reporting to the finance  
9 department and what was being reported through  
10 the accounting office to the controller. The  
11 budget side was not using the same year-ending  
12 fund balance, and they were off by -- you  
13 know, over the last few years, it's been  
14 twenty million or more.

15 The disparity started back in -- you  
16 know, in the late part of the 90s and was  
17 discovered, I think, around 2002 or so --  
18 2001. It was starting to be looked at by the  
19 budget officer and accounting officer.

20 And we were just wanting to know,  
21 did anybody in those positions ever mention  
22 this to you?

23 MR. BREAN: No. And I mentioned  
24 earlier that it's baffling to me. Freeda  
25 Luanne Dunne (ph.) was the accounting lead at

1 the time, and Becky Brown was the budget  
2 chief. And I was under the impression that  
3 they were working together on those  
4 reconciliation numbers, and that everybody was  
5 satisfied -- both finance and the controller.

6 MR. PATTON: So did -- so did you  
7 ever have any discussion with them about  
8 reconciliation work that they were doing?

9 MR. BREAN: If I did, it was  
10 relatively superficial. As you know from a  
11 previous discussion, I was only in that office  
12 for about a year. And then I went back to  
13 what I knew best, which was field operations.

14 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

15 MR. BREAN: So let's see, Tom Domich  
16 was the deputy there -- deputy admin chief,  
17 for lack of a better term. And between  
18 discussions with him and Becky and Freeda, and  
19 a few of the control agency folks, I was under  
20 the impression that not only were  
21 reconciliations being done, but they were  
22 mandatory until everybody was satisfied. So  
23 that's why I said earlier that I was baffled  
24 how the situation could occur with that much  
25 money being left on the table in the first

1 place and what the motivation would have been  
2 to leave it on the table in the second place.

3 MR. PATTON: Okay. All right.  
4 Well, I appreciate you taking time. I  
5 basically wanted to find out, you know, if  
6 anybody had ever informed you that there was a  
7 discrepancy that they weren't able to  
8 reconcile and in fact hadn't in the various  
9 reports.

10 MR. BREAN: No. No way. I'd have  
11 been all over that, hoping that there was  
12 money that I could solve some problems with.

13 MR. PATTON: And I think Michael has  
14 a question.

15 Have you stayed in contact with any  
16 of these people from Parks?

17 MR. BREAN: A few people I'm still  
18 in contact with, you know, people that I  
19 fished with and so forth. But from the  
20 headquarters assignment, Dick Troy I get  
21 together with every once in a while. He was  
22 the Ops Chief one iteration before me. But  
23 really no one else from headquarters.

24 MR. PATTON: All right. So none of  
25 these people in admin services: Becky Brown;

1 Freeda; none of those people?

2 MR. BREAN: No, I haven't seen them  
3 since I retired.

4 MR. PATTON: And Tom Domich, same?

5 MR. BREAN: No.

6 MR. PATTON: Okay. All right.

7 Well, we -- yeah, a number of people -- you're  
8 not the only one baffled by why this would  
9 have occurred. But that's sort of been our  
10 mission to try to find some answers to that.  
11 And we expect to have this wrapped up pretty  
12 soon. We're in the final stages, now of just  
13 touching base with --

14 MR. BREAN: Okay.

15 MR. PATTON: -- with managers from  
16 the -- from a decade ago.

17 MR. BREAN: Yeah.

18 MR. PATTON: And we'll have a report  
19 out probably within the next not more than  
20 about two weeks, by about the middle of  
21 October. And --

22 MR. BREAN: That'll be good. I  
23 mean, it's -- having spent as much time as I  
24 did there, and knowing the people who were so  
25 dedicated to the mission of that department,



1 the sooner it gets settled and put to bed, the  
2 better it is.

3 MR. PATTON: Yeah, I agree with  
4 that. So I wanted to let you know, you'll be  
5 able -- you will be -- and that will end up  
6 getting publicly released. So it won't be  
7 very long from now that you'll be able to then  
8 see what the reports indicate. And a lot of  
9 audits are being done too. The final audits  
10 may take a little longer, but our report will  
11 come out sooner than later.

12 MR. BREAN: Good.

13 MR. PATTON: All right. I really  
14 appreciate your time, Mr. Brean.

15 MR. BREAN: No problem.

16 MR. PATTON: And we're going to  
17 conclude this at 3:16 p.m.

18 (Off the record at 3:16 p.m.)  
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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE  
Ron Brean interview on 9-26-12

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  )  ss.  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO        )

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submitted by Heidi Webb at the California  
Department of Justice, in Sacramento,  
California.

                  I have subscribed this certificate  
at New York, New York, this 3rd day of  
October, 2012.

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Penina Wolicki  
eScribers, Inc.

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[tom - york]

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