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TRANSCRIPTION OF RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

Elsie Brenneman

October 31, 2012

Sacramento, California

Investigation of Department of Parks &
Recreation - Financial Irregularities

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

Transcribed by: David Rutt,
eScribers, Inc.
November 11, 2012
New York, New York

Job No. CA1556931

PAGES 1 - 9

ELSIE BRENNEMAN

1 MR. PATTON: It's 11:55. We're on
2 the record now. Thomas M. Patton, Deputy
3 Attorney General, speaking. Michael Mattson
4 is with us, M-A-T-T-S-O-N. He's an
5 investigator, special agent, with the
6 Department of Justice. And we have Elsie
7 Brenneman.

8 And will you say and spell your last
9 name?

10 MS. BRENNEMAN: Elsie Brenneman,
11 B-R-E-N-N-E-M-A-N.

12 MR. PATTON: And you are the Budget
13 Officer at Parks.

14 MS. BRENNEMAN: Correct.

15 MR. PATTON: And it is Wednesday,
16 October 31, 2010. And we are at Parks
17 headquarters at 1416 9th Street. And Elsie,
18 we've talked with a couple of people. We
19 wanted to -- we were asking some questions
20 relating to whether or not any records from
21 the budget office have been eliminated, and
22 we -- as you know, you accompanied us and we
23 looked at what are referred to as Becky
24 Brown's file cabinets, and I just looked in
25 three of the five, four-drawer, wooden file

1 cabinets which are chock-full of all kinds of
2 files and historical information.

3 What I've been told -- in fact, you
4 tell us. As far as I can tell, has anything
5 ever been removed from any of Becky Brown's
6 file cabinets?

7 MS. BRENNEMAN: Not that I'm aware
8 of. Everything that she had in her file
9 cabinets should still be there. I have not
10 instructed or I have not removed anything from
11 those file cabinets.

12 MR. PATTON: And you've taken over
13 the office that she used to occupy?

14 MS. BRENNEMAN: Correct.

15 MR. PATTON: And then after her,
16 Manny Lopez occupied it?

17 MS. BRENNEMAN: Correct.

18 MR. PATTON: And then Cheryl Taylor.

19 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yes.

20 MR. PATTON: And then you?

21 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yes.

22 MR. PATTON: In that order? Okay.

23 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yeah, I believe so.

24 MR. PATTON: Do you know of anybody
25 removing any -- eliminating, tossing out any

1 of the files Becky Brown had assembled?

2 MS. BRENNEMAN: Not that I'm aware
3 of. I mean, when I was hired and went into
4 the office that she previously occupied, all
5 five of those cabinets were in that office.

6 MR. PATTON: Okay.

7 MS. BRENNEMAN: And after I came on,
8 we moved them over to the empty cubicle on the
9 other side, the cap outlet side.

10 MR. PATTON: Okay. Which is where I
11 just looked at them.

12 MS. BRENNEMAN: Exactly.

13 MR. PATTON: Now, we heard that
14 there was, after you came in -- you started as
15 a Budget Officer when?

16 MS. BRENNEMAN: In February of 2011.

17 MR. PATTON: And we have heard that
18 there was some sort of a clean-up day.

19 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yes.

20 MR. PATTON: What can you tell us
21 about that?

22 MS. BRENNEMAN: We did a clean-up
23 day because, again, all those files that were
24 in that cubicle that we were just in were
25 previously in the budget office in cubicles,

1 the staffs' cubicles on shelves over there.
2 And so we did what we call a clean-up day, and
3 it was really just to move everything over to
4 the other empty cubicle and to eliminate
5 duplicates.

6 MR. PATTON: Okay. And is that the
7 direction -- did you coordinate and --

8 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yeah, we talked with
9 the staff about what we wanted them to go
10 through. We wanted them to clean out their
11 offices, you know, because -- and when I got
12 there, everybody literally had stacks of --
13 piles of paper on their desks. All their file
14 cabinets were completely full. We were
15 shifting assignments, and so they had to
16 transfer documents to, you know, another
17 analyst, and so we really wanted them to go
18 through and look to see if there was any
19 duplicates. If we had information in a binder
20 or in a file that we were moving over to the
21 empty cubicle, then they didn't need to keep
22 an extra copy in their offices or vice versa.
23 And so we asked them to go through their files
24 and --

25 MR. PATTON: When you say "we asked

1 them", who was in charge of giving the
2 direction for this?

3 MS. BRENNEMAN: I was. I did.

4 MR. PATTON: Okay. So the royal
5 waiting.

6 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yeah. It was me.

7 MR. PATTON: Okay.

8 MS. BRENNEMAN: Well, the manager --
9 the other manager in the office that works for
10 me, we were coordinating that together.

11 MR. PATTON: Who was that?

12 MS. BRENNEMAN: Rachele Manges.

13 MR. PATTON: Okay. And so your
14 direction was to get rid of duplicate files.

15 MS. BRENNEMAN: Um-hum.

16 MR. PATTON: Did -- was anything
17 else -- any other kind of records eliminated?

18 MS. BRENNEMAN: Not that I'm aware
19 of. I mean, we told them if there was
20 something that was going on with projects or
21 we needed to keep information, then it was to
22 be kept; it wasn't to be eliminated. All of
23 Becky Brown's file cabinets were not touched.
24 We didn't even go through any of that
25 information --

ELSIE BRENNEMAN

1 MR. PATTON: Okay.

2 MS. BRENNEMAN: -- in those wood
3 file cabinets that you referred to.

4 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you weren't
5 even directing staff to eliminate old
6 historical files, old records that --

7 MS. BRENNEMAN: Nope. We went
8 through -- like for example, we have a lot of
9 reports that the department does, their
10 planning reports, the five-year capital outlay
11 reports. There was multiple of those in the
12 office, and so we made sure we had one set,
13 one copy for each year, and we tossed the rest
14 of them or recycled them. So it was really
15 getting rid of duplicates.

16 MR. PATTON: So that was your focus
17 and directive was to eliminate duplicate
18 files.

19 MS. BRENNEMAN: Yes.

20 MR. PATTON: Okay. And then what I
21 just saw, you were showing me there are banker
22 boxes with budget documents, files going back
23 to -- you're not even sure how far back they
24 go. We saw as far back as '95-'96.

25 MS. BRENNEMAN: Right. Yeah.

1 There's a lot of boxed files over there that
2 we haven't gone through. Those were boxed
3 before I got here.

4 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you've never
5 given -- you've never started trying to
6 eliminate records that may be lying around
7 that are far beyond any record retention
8 schedule; you focused just on trying to get
9 rid of duplicates.

10 MS. BRENNEMAN: Just getting rid of
11 the duplicates. I mean, we had -- anything
12 that was budget development, we were keeping.

13 MR. PATTON: Okay. That's all I
14 wanted to know.

15 We're going to go off the record at
16 high noon.

17 MS. BRENNEMAN: All right. Thank
18 you very much.

19 (End of audio)

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Elsie Brenneman interview on 10-31-2012

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COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO)

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 I have subscribed this certificate
at New York, New York, this 12th day of
November, 2012.

David Rutt
eScribers, Inc.

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& 1:10	best 9:12	d	focus 7:16
1	beyond 8:7	david 1:19 9:21	focused 8:8
1 1:25 9:11	binder 5:19	day 4:18,23 5:2 9:17	foregoing 9:11
10-31-2012 9:3	boxed 8:1,2	department 1:10	four 2:25
11 1:21	boxes 7:22	2:6 7:9 9:14	full 3:1 5:14
11:55 2:1	brenneman 1:5 2:7	deputy 1:14 2:2	g
12th 9:17	2:10,10,14 3:7,14	desks 5:13	general 1:14,16 2:3
1416 2:17	3:17,19,21,23 4:2,7	development 8:12	getting 7:15 8:10
2	4:12,16,19,22 5:8	directing 7:5	given 8:5
2010 2:16	6:3,6,8,12,15,18 7:2	direction 5:7 6:2,14	giving 6:1
2011 4:16	7:7,19,25 8:10,17	directive 7:17	go 5:9,17,23 6:24
2012 1:7,21 9:18	9:3	documents 5:16	7:24 8:15
3	brown 4:1	7:22	going 6:20 7:22 8:15
31 1:7 2:16	brown's 2:24 3:5	drawer 2:25	h
8	6:23	duplicate 6:14 7:17	headquarters 2:17
8 9:11	budget 2:12,21 4:15	duplicates 5:5,19	heard 4:13,17
9	4:25 7:22 8:12	7:15 8:9,11	heidi 9:13
9 1:25	c	e	high 8:16
95 7:24	ca1556931 1:24	e 2:11,11	hired 4:3
96 7:24	cabinets 2:24 3:1,6	eliminate 5:4 7:5,17	historical 3:2 7:6
9th 2:17	3:9,11 4:5 5:14 6:23	8:6	hum 6:15
a	7:3	eliminated 2:21	i
ability 9:12	california 1:8,17 9:6	6:17,22	information 3:2
accompanied 2:22	9:13,15	eliminating 3:25	5:19 6:21,25
agent 2:5	call 5:2	elsie 1:5 2:6,10,17	instructed 3:10
analyst 5:17	cap 4:9	9:3	interview 1:1 9:3
anybody 3:24	capital 7:10	empty 4:8 5:4,21	interviewed 1:13
asked 5:23,25	certificate 9:2,16	escribers 1:20 9:22	investigation 1:10
asking 2:19	certify 9:10	everybody 5:12	investigator 2:5
assembled 4:1	charge 6:1	exactly 4:12	irregularities 1:11
assignments 5:15	cheryl 3:18	example 7:8	j
attorney 1:14,15 2:3	chock 3:1	extra 5:22	job 1:24
audio 8:19 9:12	clean 4:18,22 5:2,10	f	justice 2:6 9:14
aware 3:7 4:2 6:18	completely 5:14	fact 3:3	k
b	coordinate 5:7	far 3:4 7:23,24 8:7	keep 5:21 6:21
b 2:11	coordinating 6:10	february 4:16	keeping 8:12
back 7:22,23,24	copy 5:22 7:13	file 2:24,25 3:6,8,11	kept 6:22
banker 7:21	correct 2:14 3:14,17	5:13,20 6:23 7:3	kind 6:17
becky 2:23 3:5 4:1	county 9:8	files 3:2 4:1,23 5:23	kinds 3:1
6:23	couple 2:18	6:14 7:6,18,22 8:1	know 2:22 3:24 5:11
	cubicle 4:8,24 5:4	financial 1:11	5:16 8:14
	5:21		

[literally - york]

l	order 3:22 outlay 7:10 outlet 4:9	s	transfer 5:16 trying 8:5,8
literally 5:12 look 5:18 looked 2:23,24 4:11 lopez 3:16 lot 7:8 8:1 lying 8:6	p	s 2:4 sacramento 1:8 9:8 9:14 saw 7:21,24 schedule 8:8 see 5:18 set 7:12 shelves 5:1 shifting 5:15 showing 7:21 side 4:9,9 sort 4:18 speaking 2:3 special 2:5 spell 2:8 ss 9:7 stacks 5:12 staff 5:9 7:5 staffs 5:1 started 4:14 8:5 state 1:17 9:6 street 2:17 submitted 9:13 subscribed 9:16 sure 7:12,23	u
m	pages 1:25 9:11 paper 5:13 parks 1:10 2:13,16 patton 1:13 2:1,2,12 2:15 3:12,15,18,20 3:22,24 4:6,10,13 4:17,20 5:6,25 6:4,7 6:11,13,16 7:1,4,16 7:20 8:4,13 people 2:18 piles 5:13 planning 7:10 previously 4:4,25 projects 6:20	t	um 6:15
m 1:13 2:2,4,11 manager 6:8,9 manges 6:12 manny 3:16 mattson 2:3 mean 4:3 6:19 8:11 michael 2:3 move 5:3 moved 4:8 moving 5:20 multiple 7:11	q	taken 3:12 talked 2:18 5:8 taylor 3:18 tell 3:4,4 4:20 thank 8:17 thomas 1:13 2:2 three 2:25 told 3:3 6:19 tossed 7:13 tossing 3:25 touched 6:23 transcribed 1:19 9:11 transcriber's 9:2 transcription 1:1	v
n	questions 2:19		versa 5:22 vice 5:22
n 2:4,11,11,11 name 2:9 need 5:21 needed 6:21 never 8:4,5 new 1:22,22 9:17,17 noon 8:16 nope 7:7 november 1:21 9:18	r		w
o	r 2:11 rachele 6:12 really 5:3,17 7:14 record 2:2 8:7,15 recorded 1:1 recording 9:12 records 2:20 6:17 7:6 8:6 recreation 1:11 recycled 7:14 referred 2:23 7:3 relating 2:20 removed 3:5,10 removing 3:25 reports 7:9,10,11 rest 7:13 retention 8:7 rid 6:14 7:15 8:9,10 right 7:25 8:17 royal 6:4 rutt 1:19 9:21		waiting 6:5 wanted 2:19 5:9,10 5:17 8:14 we've 2:18 webb 9:13 wednesday 2:15 went 4:3 7:7 wood 7:2 wooden 2:25 works 6:9
o 2:4 occupied 3:16 4:4 occupy 3:13 october 1:7 2:16 office 1:15 2:21 3:13 4:4,5,25 6:9 7:12 officer 2:13 4:15 offices 5:11,22 okay 3:22 4:6,10 5:6 6:4,7,13 7:1,4,20 8:4,13 old 7:5,6			y
			yeah 3:23 5:8 6:6 7:25 year 7:10,13 york 1:22,22 9:17 9:17