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The recorded meeting of TARA TRAHAN

REPORTER'S PAGE

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I, [REDACTED], Certified Court Reporter, in and for the State of Louisiana, the officer as defined in Rule 28 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and/or Article 1434(B) of the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure, before whom this proceeding was taken, do hereby state on the record:

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That any words and/or names which could not be verified through reference material have been denoted with the phrase "(spelled phonetically)."

1 TAPED STATEMENT OF TARA TRAHAN:

2 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

3 Q Okay. Today's date is January 21st. It's  
4 approximately 3:39 p.m. My name is Trooper Mike  
5 Washington with Louisiana State Police. We will  
6 interviewing, what's your title Tara?

7 A Executive Director of Compliance.

8 Q Executive Director of Compliance, Tara Trahan or  
9 Trahan?

10 A Trahan.

11 Q Trahan. Okay. I apologize. And I have here  
12 Sergeant Preston Savoy; he'll be sitting in on  
13 the interview. But before I interview you,  
14 Tara, since this is a criminal investigation,  
15 I'm gonna have to read you your rights. Like I  
16 said, you're not under arrest or anything, but I  
17 have to read you your rights. Because this is a  
18 criminal investigation and I don't know what  
19 you're gonna tell me. Okay?

20 A Okay.

21 Q You have the right to remain silent. Anything  
22 you say can be used against you in court or  
23 other proceedings. You have the right to talk  
24 to a lawyer for advice before questioning and  
25 you have the right to have a lawyer present

1 during questioning.

2 You have the right to a lawyer's advice and  
3 the presence of a lawyer even if you cannot  
4 afford to hire one. In such a case a lawyer can  
5 be appointed to represent you.

6 If you decide to answer questions without a  
7 lawyer present, you still have the right to stop  
8 answering questions at any time. Do you  
9 understand your rights?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Are you willing to answer questions at this  
12 time?

13 A Yeah.

14 Q Okay. Have any threats or promises been made to  
15 you or has any pressure of any kind been used to  
16 get you to answer questions or to give up any of  
17 your rights? Meaning, are we forcing you to --

18 A No.

19 Q -- participate? Okay. We just need you to  
20 print your name and sign. I don't know if you  
21 want to use this --

22 A Right here where it says person's name?

23 Q Yes.

24 A Print?

25 Q Print and sign.

1 A Okay.

2 Q Okay.

3 A That's it?

4 Q Yes, ma'am. And I'll sign it and we'll get you  
5 to sign. All right. All right, Tara, we're  
6 going to go ahead and get started. For the  
7 record, can you state your full and your title,  
8 your position here?

9 A Tara Trahan, Executive Director of Compliance.

10 Q How long have you been here?

11 A Close to twenty years.

12 Q Okay. What are some of your job duties?

13 A I ensure that the casino is compliant in all  
14 tribal, state and federal laws and regulations.

15 Q Okay. Do you --

16 A That sums it up.

17 Q Do you have an immediate supervisor?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Who is that?

20 A Mr. Patrone.

21 Q Okay. So you answer directly to -- is it  
22 Anthony Patrone?

23 A Anthony, yes.

24 Q Okay. Yeah, if you could state the complete  
25 name for the record so -- Okay. Well what we

1           have here is we are doing a criminal  
2           investigation regarding some bonuses that were  
3           paid out to people who may not have been, or  
4           person, who was paid, who may not have been  
5           authorized to receive it. And we think you may  
6           have some information to -- it was actually  
7           O'Neil Darden.

8       A     Okay.

9       Q     Who received some bonus money, moneys and he was  
10          ineligible because first of all he's not an  
11          employee here. If I'm not mistaken he's the  
12          current chairman --

13      A     Uh-huh (affirmative response).

14      Q     -- of the tribe. And so we received a complaint  
15          and that's the nature of the complaint. But  
16          your name was implicated because I know you  
17          answer directly to Mr. Patrone. So we just want  
18          to know what did you know about this whole  
19          scenario?

20      A     What did I know?

21      Q     Yes.

22      A     I didn't think he was paid the bonus. I got  
23          information that he didn't want the bonus. It  
24          was talked about but I thought he wasn't paid.

25      Q     Okay. Who talked about it?

1 A Well the first thing I've heard about it was  
2 from Montie and Anthony. They asked my advice  
3 on how to go about paying O'Neil his bonus. And  
4 they just asked my advice on how can we do that  
5 because he's not an employee so we can't pay him  
6 through payroll like we would any other  
7 employee's bonus.

8 So, you know, I was told that he worked  
9 three quarters of the fiscal year. So he worked  
10 through July. He was employed as a casino  
11 employee for the fiscal year. Which is the time  
12 that the bonus was based on. And he didn't  
13 leave tribal employment. So he was eligible to  
14 receive three quarters of the bonus.

15 Q Who told you this?

16 A Montie and Anthony.

17 Q Okay. They have any documents supporting that  
18 or --

19 A No. Not in that conversation. Anthony did tell  
20 me that he approved it through the council  
21 though. The tribal council was aware of it and  
22 they approved it. I don't think that's ever  
23 been done before.

24 I mean, that, you know, having someone leave  
25 casino employment and then go directly into

1 tribal employment, I don't think that's ever  
2 been a situation that's happened before. So  
3 it's kind of new. And, you know, what do we do  
4 in this case.

5 And then of course, you know, understanding  
6 that whatever we do here sets a precedence for  
7 any future occurrences that, you know, where a  
8 person would leave casino employment and go  
9 directly into tribal employment and would they  
10 still be eligible for the bonus.

11 And, you know, the tribal council I was told  
12 approved it and decided that, yes, they would be  
13 eligible. They asked me my advice on how we  
14 could go about paying it. My advice was just to  
15 have the tribe pay his bonus through his normal  
16 payroll procedures through the tribe. And then  
17 we, just then in turn reimburse the tribe for  
18 it.

19 And I left that conversation with, you know,  
20 that's a good idea, let's do it that way.

21 Q Okay. Are you -- were you aware of -- did you  
22 participate in the process of O'Neil being re-  
23 employed by Cypress Bayou Casino?

24 A Re-employed?

25 Q Yeah.



1 A No.

2 Q Okay. So you have no idea about him being put  
3 on the books as an active employee so that he  
4 can be eligible for the bonus?

5 A No. No. No. To say he was again an employee and  
6 now he's eligible?

7 Q Yeah. Well he's a chairman. He's been the  
8 chairman for how long? Six months, five months,  
9 I don't know.

10 A Since, yeah, since July.

11 Q Since July. Okay. From my understanding he was  
12 made to be re-employed with Cypress Bayou Casino  
13 for a few days. So that they can -- so that he  
14 could be eligible to receive the bonus, is what  
15 --

16 A No. That wouldn't be why he was -- not to be  
17 eligible.

18 Q Otherwise he's not in the system. I mean,  
19 there's no way you can pay him.

20 A Exactly, you couldn't pay him through payroll.

21 Q Right.

22 A And you can't pay him through accounts payable  
23 because then it wouldn't be taxed as wages. You  
24 would have to pay it through payroll so that  
25 money could be taxed as wages. That's the only

1 right way to do it. If you pay it through  
2 accounts payable then it just becomes, you know,  
3 as though we were paying a vendor or something  
4 like that.

5 Q So you all --

6 A We couldn't do it that way. But, no, I don't --  
7 the purpose for his re-employment, if that's  
8 what you're talking about, wouldn't be so that  
9 he we be eligible. It would just be so that he  
10 would have -- we'd have an avenue to pay it.  
11 But I didn't -- no, I don't know.

12 Q Okay. So what you're telling me as a council,  
13 and you are a tribal person, member, right?

14 A Right.

15 Q Okay. And I'm sure you -- I know you have  
16 family on the -- who's familiar with the tribal  
17 council? So you're telling me there's nothing  
18 illegal about O'Neil, who is not employed, in  
19 being able to receive a bonus?

20 A Do I think it's illegal?

21 Q Yeah.

22 A I -- I don't know if I can --

23 Q Well what I'm asking you is, I mean, what is the  
24 ordinance? Does the ordinance support the  
25 council members like your mom and different

1 people, can you guys, can they receive bonuses  
2 is what I'm --

3 A No. They're not tribal -- they're not casino  
4 employees. They didn't work within that fiscal  
5 year that that bonus was earned.

6 Q I don't know -- well, I mean, we'll have to look  
7 at the --

8 A You know an example would be someone who didn't  
9 work here a full year. So someone who was here,  
10 you know, say started employment in July.

11 Q Uh-huh (affirmative response).

12 A There's cases that can be made that you weren't  
13 here for the full year so you're not entitled to  
14 the entire bonus but you worked here for a  
15 quarter of it or a half of it or whatever, you  
16 know, you would then receive --

17 Q So that standard is used for all people who fit  
18 that criteria is what you're saying? Is that  
19 what's -- I mean, do you do that for everyone or  
20 is this just a one time occurrence for O'Neil?  
21 This something that's been done in the past?

22 A Oh, no, that's been done.

23 Q Oh, so people who work --

24 A People would receive partial bonus, yeah.

25 Q Bonus? Okay. So --

1 A Now the criteria for bonus is that you are  
2 employed for a year.

3 Q Uh-huh (affirmative response).

4 A Well I think we did change that. And that all  
5 went through the tribal council. And I'm not  
6 positive of the rule, but I want to say there's  
7 a six month requirement and a year requirement.  
8 I think it's different levels.

9 Q Uh-huh (affirmative response).

10 A I'd have to look at it again, but something like  
11 if you were employed for six months of the year,  
12 then you're eligible for this much, if you were  
13 employed the whole year you're eligible for the  
14 hundred percent. And then there's also  
15 different break downs with full time and part  
16 time employees. And then there's, you know,  
17 employees with disciplinary action would be  
18 disqualified and, you know, it's a whole list of  
19 criteria. I don't really know it off the top of  
20 my head but that bonus --

21 Q Yeah.

22 A -- breakdown or whatever, you know, the --

23 Q Okay.

24 A -- policy of whatever went through tribal  
25 council.

1 Q Because I know you got a tribal code and ethics.

2 Are you familiar with any of that stuff?

3 A Not really.

4 Q Okay. If I'm not mistaken current tribal  
5 employees or council members are -- I don't  
6 think they're eligible to receive bonuses.

7 A Tribal employees?

8 Q Yeah.

9 A No, they're not.

10 Q Well then --

11 A No, they're not casino employees. And they, you  
12 know, anybody who wasn't --

13 Q I understand --

14 A -- employed by the casino at all wouldn't be  
15 eligible.

16 Q Because I'm trying to understand, is that  
17 standard? You're saying because he worked in  
18 2015 for a period of time --

19 A He worked three quarters of the year --

20 Q Right.

21 A -- right.

22 Q And he is eligible for the bonus?

23 A Yes. That's my understanding of it.

24 Q Based on what policy? Do you have that policy?

25 A No, I don't have it.

1 Q Oh, okay. Because I had some conflicting --

2 A Now --

3 Q -- information.

4 A -- if he had worked three quarters of the year  
5 and then left employment with the tribe  
6 completely and went and worked for Haliburton or  
7 whatever, no, he wouldn't be eligible. My  
8 understanding is he's eligible because he worked  
9 three quarters of the year and he didn't leave  
10 tribal employment. He's still employed by the  
11 tribe. The tribe meaning the casino or the  
12 tribe. You see what I'm saying?

13 Q I understand it but I --

14 A The casino employees are tribal employees too.

15 Q I mean, if you can provide me the documentation.  
16 I never seen it. I heard -- this is the first  
17 time I heard that. I'm not questioning you but  
18 I just never -- the paperwork I had is that if  
19 you're current -- it doesn't mention anything  
20 about a previous casino employment. But it said  
21 if you're current tribal council member or  
22 chairman or whatever you cannot receive that  
23 type of payment or gratuity.

24 A I've never read that. I don't know.

25 Q But we'll look at it. I'll try to request some

1 more information maybe from some of the tribal  
2 people. I mean, he's like -- I guess he would  
3 be equivalent to, I guess, your mom, per se.

4 A As a tribal employee?

5 Q Tribal employee.

6 A Right, right.

7 Q And you said she's not authorized to receive  
8 bonuses or anything like that?

9 A Well no. As a tribal employee she wouldn't be  
10 because she didn't work in that year that the  
11 bonus was earned at the casino.

12 Q Okay.

13 A Whereas he's different because he did.

14 Q Okay. So, okay. I understand that. So if we  
15 know he's eligible then why would it be  
16 necessary to go through all the red tape to give  
17 it to him? Why we didn't just cut a check and  
18 hand it to him?

19 A Where?

20 Q No, I'm just saying. What I'm telling you --

21 A That's the problem. Where could we cut a check  
22 and hand it to him. We can't cut the check  
23 through accounts payable like we pay all of our  
24 vendors because bonus money is considered wages,  
25 right?

1 Q Uh-huh (affirmative response).

2 A So it has to be taxed as wages through the  
3 payroll system. So if we paid it through  
4 accounts payable, that's not right. So it had  
5 to be paid through payroll so that it could be  
6 taxed as wages. That's where --

7 Q You know how it was paid to him?

8 A I didn't know it was paid to him.

9 Q Okay. So you're saying it was not paid to -- or  
10 you're not aware --

11 A No.

12 Q -- one way or the other?

13 A I thought it wasn't paid to him.

14 Q Okay.

15 A That, you know, it was all discussed. How are  
16 we gonna make this happen, he's eligible so how  
17 are we gonna make this happen. And my  
18 suggestion was to have the tribe pay it through  
19 his payroll there that way it's taxed as wages  
20 and we just reimburse the tribe for that.

21 Q I mean, you're saying so -- but you never seen  
22 any paperwork? It's just hearsay is what you're  
23 saying? Between the CFO, Montie and --

24 A Yeah, I --

25 Q I mean, have you seen any paperwork --



1 A No.

2 Q -- corroborating that it's legal to do that or  
3 did they make you --

4 A Legal to?

5 Q To pay O'Neil a bonus.

6 A That he was eligible for it? No, I didn't see  
7 any paperwork.

8 Q All right.

9 A It was just explained to me that he would be  
10 eligible because even though this has never  
11 happened before --

12 Q Yeah.

13 A -- this is a new case --

14 Q So you never --

15 A -- and --

16 Q -- seen it happen before?

17 A No.

18 Q Okay.

19 A No. He, you know -- but I was told that the  
20 council approved this situation and then, you  
21 know, of course going forward it would have to  
22 be that way because --

23 Q Were you told by a council? The council members  
24 told you that?

25 A No.

1 Q That they approved it?

2 A No. Anthony told me --

3 Q Okay.

4 A -- that the council approved it.

5 Q Okay.

6 A He had a meeting with the tribal council. I  
7 wasn't there. And the, you know, the council  
8 voted to approve that situation. The situation  
9 being if you leave casino employment and go  
10 directly into tribal employment and you're still  
11 employed by the tribe that you would be eligible  
12 for some percentage of whatever the bonus was  
13 that year. Based on however long you worked in  
14 that year.

15 Q But you don't have any paperwork to support --

16 A No.

17 Q Okay -- that assertion?

18 A No.

19 Q Okay. Because I'm getting -- I got a different,  
20 a difference of opinion so that's why I'm -- I  
21 mean, as far as I know, from my research, and  
22 looking at the tribal documents and casino  
23 policy I don't see where he qualified to receive  
24 it. I mean, unless you can provide me with  
25 other paper, with some type of documentation.

1 A Yeah, I mean, I don't know that there was  
2 documentation. The documentation is probably  
3 the minutes of the council meeting, I'm  
4 thinking.

5 Q Yeah.

6 A I mean, that's, you know, where the council  
7 approved that that happened.

8 Q Uh-huh (affirmative response).

9 A You know, the bonus structure has changed --

10 Q Yeah.

11 A -- over the years. It changes all the time. I  
12 mean, we decide all the time that, you know, one  
13 change or another and then that goes to the  
14 council. They look at it again and that bonus  
15 structure's approved.

16 So now this is the current bonus structure  
17 and then, you know, you might change again next  
18 year and the year after that. This situation  
19 where he was a casino employee for part of the  
20 year and then went directly into tribal  
21 employment hasn't happened so it wasn't in the  
22 policy. But it was approved by the council to  
23 be in the policy. I didn't see the paperwork  
24 that it was. But it was approved by the council  
25 so I'm assuming there's some documentation

1            somewhere, minutes of the meeting or whatever  
2            when they approved it.

3        Q     Okay. So they approved it but and then later on  
4            they changed their mind about it? The reason  
5            why I say that because you say they approved it.

6        A     Yes.

7        Q     But from my understanding this complaint  
8            originated from there.

9        A     From?

10       Q     Because they disapprove of it. The council,  
11            some council members.

12       A     That's not what I was told. Oh, no, I was told  
13            the council unanimously --

14       Q     I mean, I haven't interviewed them yet but I'm  
15            just telling you --

16       A     Right.

17       Q     -- preliminary --

18       A     No, I didn't hear that anyone disapproved of it.

19       Q     Well why do I have you in this office? Somebody  
20            disapproves of something. Because --

21       A     I don't know.

22       Q     -- that's why we launched an investigation. So,  
23            I mean --

24       A     I don't know.

25       Q     Yeah, because we didn't do it. Somebody, you

1 know, had a complaint over there. And it had to  
2 be a council member, I would imagine. I don't  
3 know which one. But --

4 A I guess you'll have to ask them.

5 Q Okay.

6 A As far as I understood, the council approved it.

7 Q Okay. Well I know they approved the -- I know  
8 there was a resolution with Anthony and I think  
9 a pay raise for Anthony Patrone. I know -- I  
10 don't know if O'Neil was a part of that  
11 resolution that was presented but I know that  
12 was approved.

13 A Uh-huh (affirmative response).

14 Q If I'm not mistaken. At least allegedly because  
15 I can't say for certain because I haven't seen  
16 any paperwork. So --

17 A I'm sure there's some paperwork. I'm sure of  
18 any council meeting there's some documentation  
19 of what was approved there and, you know, what  
20 wasn't. I don't have that but --

21 Q Okay.

22 A -- I'm assuming that definitely exists.

23 Q Okay. Let me look over this to make sure. You  
24 got anything, Preston?

25 MR. SAVOY:

1                   So all of this is just between  
2                   conversation between you and Anthony about  
3                   giving O'Neil --

4     A     And Montie.

5                   MR. SAVOY:

6                   -- and Montie?

7     A     Uh-huh (affirmative response).

8                   MR. SAVOY:

9                   Was there an email exchange or just  
10                  verbal conversation?

11     A     I didn't get any emails on it, no. It was a  
12                  conversation.

13                  MR. SAVOY:

14                  So -- because the ordinance says that  
15                  if you're a council employee or tribal  
16                  employee and you're no longer working at the  
17                  casino you cannot get a bonus. So they went  
18                  back and revised that, to your knowledge, to  
19                  change it to where he can get it because he  
20                  worked three quarters of the year?

21     A     Did they go back and revise the policy? I don't  
22                  know. I don't know. I've not seen that on  
23                  paper. But I just know that I was told that  
24                  council approved that change.

25                  MR. SAVOY:

1                   But you had conversation with O'Neil?

2   A    No.  I never talked to O'Neil.

3                   MR. SAVOY:

4                   So it was approved for him to get his  
5                   bonus or his partial bonus.  But he didn't  
6                   accept or he didn't receive it, do you know?

7   A    That's what I was told later.  The conversation  
8                   that I had was, hey, why don't we have the tribe  
9                   pay it through payroll because he's employed by  
10                  the tribe now.  And that way, like I said  
11                  before, it goes through payroll, it's taxed as  
12                  wages and then we just reimburse the tribe.  
13                  After that I heard that he said, I don't want  
14                  it.  I'll refuse it.  I refuse it now.

15                  MR. SAVOY:

16                  Is there any reason why?

17   A    I have no -- changes, I don't know.

18   BY MR. WASHINGTON:

19   Q    I don't think that's true.  I mean, I'm just --

20   A    That O'Neil said he doesn't want it?

21   A    I have no evidence to confirm that.  I mean,  
22                  there's a lot of stuff -- and that's why I'm  
23                  telling you.  I mean, a lot of stuff circulating  
24                  around.  I mean, I'm not -- all I can you tell  
25                  you, I have no information to confirm that

1           assertion.

2    A       I don't have any either.

3           MR. SAVOY:

4                       My question is, why would that  
5                       conversation even originate? Once he was  
6                       elected as a chairman, he left, he took  
7                       office in July.

8    BY MR. WASHINGTON:

9    Q       Yeah, why? What's the need?

10           MR. SAVOY:

11                       He took office, he left casino  
12                       employment and took the chairman's position.

13    A       Uh-huh (affirmative response).

14           MR. SAVOY:

15                       So he knew he would probably be  
16                       foregoing this bonus because he's an elected  
17                       official now with the council. So he's not  
18                       eligible.

19    A       I don't know if he -- I don't know if it was  
20           even thought of. I have no idea. I mean, the  
21           conversation happened at the time we were paying  
22           bonuses out to every employee. You know?

23           MR. SAVOY:

24                       Right.

25    A       At the time we were paying, we were paying all



1 the bonuses out. They were issued as checks and  
2 at that same, might have been even the same day  
3 or something, we said -- that conversation with  
4 Anthony and Montie happened where --

5 MR. SAVOY:

6 Did you get a chance to review the  
7 list, the initial list of bonuses or people  
8 that were eligible for bonuses?

9 A I didn't get a list but I sign off checks.

10 MR. SAVOY:

11 Okay. And O'Neil wasn't in there?

12 A No.

13 MR. SAVOY:

14 Okay.

15 A No.

16 MR. SAVOY:

17 And then that was later brought up --

18 A No, we actually gave hard copy checks, hard  
19 checks, paper checks to employees. We didn't do  
20 it through direct deposit like we do the rest of  
21 the payroll. So it's, you know, a different  
22 feeling, I guess. You actually get the money in  
23 your hands versus getting just some stub that  
24 says it was deposited in your account. It's,  
25 you know, more of an emotional deposit for

1 employees to actually --

2 MR. SAVOY:

3 Right.

4 A -- put money in their hands. That's why the  
5 checks were cut.

6 MR. SAVOY:

7 How long after that did the  
8 conversation come about for O'Neil to get --

9 A It was probably the same day that those bonuses  
10 were being distributed.

11 MR. SAVOY:

12 And you were approached by who? How  
13 did that -- y'all was in a meeting or they  
14 came to your office, approach you about it?

15 A It was in Montie's office. Montie and Anthony  
16 were in Montie's office and I walked by and they  
17 said, come here for a second, we have a question  
18 for you. And it was, you know, how do you think  
19 we could get this done. And that's where I left  
20 it.

21 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

22 Q You basically advised them on how to do it?

23 A I gave my opinion on how we could do it, you  
24 know, how can we facilitate this happening.

25 So yeah, I was just asked my opinion or my,

1           you know, how do you think we could do it.  And  
2           I gave my opinion.

3   Q       Did you ever follow up to see if it was  
4           accomplished?

5   A       No.  I didn't have to though because I was just  
6           told that he wasn't going to do it.  So, okay,  
7           never mind, that's all, you know, all for  
8           nothing.

9   Q       You were told that immediately after --

10  A       No.

11  Q       Okay.  It was a short period of time?

12  A       No.  It was some time later.  I'm not sure how  
13           long.

14  Q       Okay.

15  A       You know, probably -- more than a few days.  It  
16           was probably weeks, I would say.

17           MR. SAVOY:

18                   Who was leading that conversation about  
19           that?

20  A       Who asked the question?

21           MR. SAVOY:

22                   Yeah.

23  A       Both of them, equally, I mean --

24  BY MR. WASHINGTON:

25  Q       I'm trying to figure out why was it necessary to

1 -- why was that a priority to give him a bonus?

2 A Why was it a priority?

3 Q Yeah.

4 A I don't know if it was a priority. It was  
5 discussed because we were giving out bonuses.  
6 I mean, it was, you know -- We did those all  
7 employee meetings in Rox. And that's when we  
8 handed out the bonuses.

9 So if attend the meeting you got your bonus  
10 in your hand that day. It was like the end of  
11 the week, like, a Thursday and Friday. And if  
12 you didn't come Wednesday, Thursday, one of  
13 those days, toward the end of the week. And if  
14 you didn't come to the all employee meetings and  
15 hear the updates, then you had to wait until the  
16 following Monday, the next week, before you, you  
17 know.

18 It was an incentive for people to come to  
19 the meetings and do that, you know, nice thing.  
20 It's Christmas time. We are gonna put this  
21 money in your hands if you come and listen to,  
22 you know. Like a little pep rally, you know.

23 Q Were there any other persons issued or were  
24 there talk of any prorated bonuses issued to any  
25 other people besides O'Neil?

1 A I don't remember if this year we had any.  
2 There's lots of special considerations in  
3 bonuses. It's not a black and white kind of  
4 thing, you know. It's not, you know, there is  
5 the policy that says here's what you have to do  
6 to be eligible. But there's gray areas in there  
7 too.

8 And that's always been on a case by case  
9 basis. Certain ones are approved for, you know,  
10 for example, departments that ran half the year  
11 without a director and supervisors or managers  
12 may have stepped in to those positions.

13 So, you know, they were eligible for a bonus  
14 at this level but because they filled in higher  
15 positions or whatever, that's just an example,  
16 then we would, you know, bump that bonus up a  
17 little bit. Just to, you know, compensate  
18 someone for the extra work that they did.  
19 There's lots of cases like that. Lots of gray  
20 areas.

21 I don't remember if anybody's bonus was  
22 prorated this year but I remember cases where,  
23 you know, it may have been this year or last  
24 year. I don't know. They all blend together  
25 but where someone may have worked, may not have

1           been employed the whole year, but they were here  
2           some of the year or most of the year and maybe  
3           they got half of it because they made some real  
4           contribution, so --

5           MR. SAVOY:

6                         So who sets the bonus amount? Who does  
7           that?

8   A       We kind of do it as a committee. We all sit  
9           down together and go through them, kind of case  
10          by case, you know. People will bring up, you  
11          know what, so and so really stepped up and I  
12          think they should be considered for the next  
13          level bonus or, you know, the manager level  
14          bonus or whatever.

15                 And then we sit down as committee and  
16          discuss it and say, yeah, we think that that's  
17          good and then that final list gets submitted to  
18          the tribal council for approval.

19       BY MR. WASHINGTON:

20   Q       Okay. And the council has the final approval?

21   A       Uh-huh (affirmative response).

22   Q       The tribal council?

23   A       Yeah.

24   Q       Okay. Anything else you want to share? Like I  
25          say, it's an ongoing investigation and I know it

1 involves several people. So it's not just one  
2 person. Or it could be more, I don't know. But  
3 I'm privy to certain information that I can't  
4 share, but there is some criminal conduct we  
5 think going on. So we just want you to know,  
6 without calling any names.

7 Because, I mean, we have access to the  
8 totality of the circumstances and the evidence.  
9 So just be mindful of that, I mean, because  
10 information gets back to us. So I just hope --  
11 I know you're close to some of these people.  
12 And they may be your supervisor, I don't know.  
13 But I'm just -- but if they start asking you  
14 questions and stuff and, I mean, if it gets back  
15 to us that you're in some way impeding this  
16 investigation, we're gonna suspend your license.  
17 I just want you to know that.

18 I mean, so -- I mean, that's not a threat  
19 but I'm just trying to be honest. Because I  
20 know -- I've been here a long time and I know  
21 you know that I know a lot of people, you know.  
22 And so, but if you have questions or concerns in  
23 the future feel free to call one of us.

24 A Well, I mean, yeah. I mean, I know you guys. I  
25 trust you and -- you know.

1 MR. SAVOY:

2 Yeah, I know historically a lot of this  
3 stuff has been petty, a lot of the cases.  
4 This is a significant investigation so I  
5 know the -- kind of, the culture is kind,  
6 you know, kind of minimize things that go on  
7 around here. But this has a little more  
8 legs than what traditionally happens around  
9 here or have happened in the past, so --

10 A I don't understand how, how it's a criminal  
11 investigation though?

12 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

13 Q Well it's certain -- when you're a public  
14 official, some stuff is different. Like, I  
15 mean, you cannot walk in here and give me five  
16 hundred dollars or a thousand, ten thousand  
17 dollars.

18 A Uh-huh (affirmative response).

19 Q I mean, I can't take -- that's called a bribe.  
20 I mean, you can call it a bonus but, and the  
21 intentions may be good. But if I take it, you  
22 know what I'm saying? That's -- that's not  
23 acceptable. I could be -- you've got an ethics,  
24 laws and everything else so they could charge me  
25 with a crime, malfeasance in office and all



1 kinds of stuff.

2 So it's similar when you are in that  
3 position too. And I'm just using that as an  
4 example. I don't know which direction the  
5 investigation -- and we got some other stuff  
6 going on too.

7 Because, I mean, if you got people  
8 destroying evidence and doing this then that's  
9 an indication that it may be an accident or it  
10 may be criminal. We have to make that  
11 determination based on the totality of what, of  
12 the information. So that's why I say it's not  
13 just -- it's a whole lot of stuff we're looking  
14 at.

15 MR. SAVOY:

16 It's still early.

17 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

18 Q Yeah.

19 MR. SAVOY:

20 Everything has a --

21 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

22 Q And it's still early. Like I said --

23 MR. SAVOY:

24 -- lot of people to interview. Because  
25 you have a conflict in stories and conflict

1                   in understandings.

2   BY MR. WASHINGTON:

3   Q     Right.  So everybody got their own  
4           interpretations, I mean, so I interviewed you so  
5           I got to get some of these tribal people to see  
6           what they tell me.

7   A     Uh-huh (affirmative response).

8   Q     You know?  And so it's still early on but it is  
9           a criminal investigation, so.  And it may, you  
10          know, they may eventually -- they could charge  
11          someone or they could deny certifications, take  
12          administrative actions, I don't know.

13                 But -- because I don't know which way the  
14                 investigation will take me, you know, take us,  
15                 so.  We don't know until we start -- you know,  
16                 we got to talk to a few more people.

17                 Because I'm hearing -- you're saying one  
18                 thing but other people are saying something  
19                 different in terms of whether or not the council  
20                 approved this or what.  So I mean -- so I got to  
21                 talk to some of these people personally to see  
22                 what's going on.

23   A     Yeah, I mean --

24   Q     Right.  So that -- so it's still early --

25   A     I wasn't --

1 MR. SAVOY:

2 And everything's documented, so it's  
3 gonna --

4 A Yeah.

5 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

6 Q Yeah, that's why we record everything. I mean,  
7 I'm not trying to hide anything.

8 MR. SAVOY:

9 -- be discovered.

10 A Now whether the council approved it is easy to  
11 find out. I mean, ask the council first and  
12 then what's the documentation that they approved  
13 it is the next thing, you know.

14 BY MR. WASHINGTON:

15 Q I mean, you've been here long enough, Tara, I  
16 mean I'm not the -- you know this place is  
17 imperfect. Some of that, you know, in an  
18 operational sense so I'm not --

19 A Yeah. I --

20 Q Yeah, you know what I'm saying. I shouldn't  
21 have to tell you that. You been here longer  
22 than --

23 A I don't think any place is perfect.

24 Q Right.

25 A There's definitely areas that can be worked on,

1           you know.

2       Q     So we have issues -- right.  And the -- we'll  
3           hopefully -- yeah.

4       A     Any place.

5       Q     But I appreciate you taking the time out.  If  
6           you don't have anything else to share, I mean,  
7           unless you, like I say you call us, Preston or  
8           I.

9                       MR. SAVOY:

10                               Or if something comes up later just get  
11                               in touch with Mike.

12       BY MR. WASHINGTON:

13       Q     And if I need anything else, because I mean I'm  
14           gonna talk to some of those people so if I need  
15           some further clarity or understanding or  
16           whatever then we'll consult you.  But I  
17           appreciate you taking the time out and we're  
18           gonna go ahead and conclude this interview at  
19           4:13 p.m.

20                                       (AUDIO CONCLUDED)

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I, [REDACTED], Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Louisiana, do hereby certify the transcript of the digital audio recording purported to be the statement of TARA TRAHAN as conducted by Mike Washington, on the 21st day of January, 2016, as hereinbefore set forth in the foregoing 36 pages, was prepared and transcribed by me or under my personal supervision, and is true and correct to the best of my ability and understanding; that I was not present during the recording of the purported statement and therefore cannot verify the identity of the participants in said proceeding; that I am not related to counsel, I am in no manner associated with counsel for or any of the interested parties to this matter, and I am in no way concerned with the outcome thereof.

This 19th day of December, 2016, Lafayette, Louisiana.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[REDACTED]

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