IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING - CAO INQUIRY

beginning at approximately 9:15 a.m.
on May 28th, 2019
at Meridian City Hall
601 23rd Avenue
Meridian, Mississippi

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my chief, my boss, city council, mayor, CAO, and it's important for me to support what they do 110 percent of the time. That's the only way that we're going to be successful.

So the few contacts that I've had in regards to Mr. McAlister, whether directly or indirectly through my chief, I've had nothing but complete 110 percent support. You know, I really want to make sure that we adhere to what the pastor just said in the prayer, that everything we say and everything that we do is pleasing to God; and not only God, but also the citizens of Meridian.

We have a tendency to be drawn to controversy, drawn to negative things that are brought out about people, and so I want to kind of flip that a little bit and show my support to an administrator that a lot of times I don't agree with, but reality is he's still my administrator, and I'm happy to support him.

My mayor, we're totally in the opposite spectrums as far as political views, but, once again, he's my mayor, and I've got to support him 110 percent. And I'm going to continue to do that as long as he's the mayor.

The CAO is the same way, Mr. McAlister. I don't agree with everything that he does, but the
1 work environment.
2 MR. WHITTED: Well as far as I know --
3 MR. JOHNSON: You can't hear --
4 MR. WHITTED: -- there's no hostile work
5 environment, as far as I know, from Mr. Richie McAlister
6 or any other official of the City of Meridian. I just
7 find that, I mean, the truth needs to be told. People
8 don't want the truth, people that I had high respect for
9 and long respect for, because it don't go your way.
10 I have been a city council. I know a -- I know
11 how it goes. But we are making a reality show out of
12 Meridian, Mississippi. The City of Meridian,
13 Mississippi, has become a reality show. Each week,
14 month to month, it's something about someone trying to
15 tear someone down. Instead of trying to build this city
16 up, we're trying to tear this city down.
17 The infrastructure needs work, but, no, we
18 don't want to work on trying to get the infrastructure.
19 We want to try to work on trying to tear someone down.
20 We're going to go out and find --
21 MR. JOHNSON: What does this have to do with
22 Mr. Richie McAlister?
23 MR. WHITTED: Yes, he's a fine CAO.
24 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you.
25 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much, sir. Next

1 up, Mr. Glenn -- I can't see the name.
2 MS. HOUSTON: Barfield.
3 MR. JOHNSON: Barfield? Glenn Barfield.
4 (No response.)
5 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Jim -- Good morning.
6 MR. BRODERICK: Good morning. Good morning.
7 Council. I totally agree with everything y'all say
8 about --
9 MR. JOHNSON: Would you please state your name?
10 MR. BRODERICK: Oh, my name is Jim Broderick.
11 I have been a city employee for four years, and I
12 totally agree that there's a hostile work environment
13 around here right now, but I don't believe it's the man
14 you're talking about. I believe it's partially the
15 council at issue.
16 You know, when you bring out telling somebody,
17 hey, you know, let's cut this man's salary from $90,000
18 or whatever to zero, you set a precedent. So, say one
19 of y'all comes through our line where I work, and one of
20 us gives you guys bad -- you know, bad service, or you
21 just don't feel like we did something for you. What's
22 to say that you guys aren't going to come up here and
23 say, hey, look, let's just cut them by $5,000 because
24 they did something wrong. You're playing God with
25 somebody's money, you know.

1 Social media is horrible around here too. You
2 know, how do you put the game units stuff on Facebook?
3 Just a question. And I've got nothing but respect for a
4 lot of y'all. I really do. Councilman Johnson, I
5 consider him a friend. However, you know, things need
6 to change, and it needs to be one group.
7 How do you expect thousands of people out there
8 not to get along, when you seven people up here can't?
9 So I'm in support of CAO McAlister. He hasn't done
10 anything wrong.
11 I'll tell you guys a story that makes me
12 support him, and you guys talk about hostile work
13 environment. My first time my wife was in ICU, I was
14 sitting in a -- I went into one of the gas station to go
15 get a drink, and CAO McAlister was sitting in there
16 getting a couple of coffee. I didn't know him from
17 Adam. I didn't speak to him but maybe once, and that
18 was just to say hello.
19 He came and asked me how everything was going.
20 I told him what was going on at work. And he gave me
21 his card and told me if I ever needed anything at all,
22 to give him a call, and don't worry about this job; this
23 job will be here when I come back. It will be here no
24 matter what. Does that sound like a hostile work
25 environment?
The second time I was in there, he did the same thing. Councilman Johnson also did it (indiscernible). I can't say that the man has a hostile work environment. I believe that the hostile work environment goes both ways right now. I hope this is the end of it because this is like - like the previous gentleman behind me, this has become a reality show. It has become horrible. We're looked at as a joke right now. So let's finish this once and for all, get it over with. Whenever I say let's finish it, let's all go back to work and do what you guys are paid to do and he's paid to do - make the City of Meridian a better place to live. Thank you all.

MS. HOUSTON: Thank you.
Okay, Mr. Kevin Locke. Mr. Locke. Go ahead, sir.
MR. LOCKE: Good morning, Council.
MR. JOHNSON: Good morning. Would you please state your name?
MR. LOCKE: My name is Kevin Locke. I currently work at the public works department in engineering. I've been a city employee for 17 years, and I'm sick -- I'm sick of this -- I'm physically sick.

And I'm not saying that we're not doing that. It's how it's being done. It's being marginalized. It's systematic. It's deliberate. When I was hired, I was 802 for the qualities that I brought to the city. I'm not some rogue, disgruntled employee. And then this is -- We were saying about CAO McAlisther, this is really the mayor and the CAO. This is the administration, and from there how it bleeds down through the department heads to the division heads and to those who are shown preferential treatment. While others are trying to do their jobs, they can't. They don't know what their jobs are.
Mayor Bland, when you were first elected and first came to office, the employee council, we invited you to our first meeting (inaudible). We were all excited.

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Locke, could you please address the council, please?
MR. LOCKE: We were all excited, and it was very positive back and forth and thanked us for what we were doing for the city, what the employee council was doing. I'll talk about the employee council in a minute.
Back in October of 2015, Mr. McAlisther was the assistant to the mayor. I was called to his office from the planning department where I worked. And I guess because I was on the employee council, president at the time, he wanted me to know about something so that it wouldn't be an issue. So I went to his office downstairs, and he had all the files pulled up on his computer. I didn't know such a thing was possible, that from a remote location you can get into someone else's files. That's as the assistant - or, yeah, the assistant to the mayor.
That's fine. I'm good with that.

Next I was shown something, and I gave my word -- I gave my word, Richie - Mr. McAlisther, I'm sorry, three and a half years ago, I gave you my word when you told me, "Hey, Kevin, would you mind keeping the information about the personnel issues we discussed between you and I? We could run into some legalities, and I wanted to know what was going on beforehand. Thanks for briefing me on the tree process as well. Thanks, Richie."

"You've got my word," is what I replied. For three and a half years I haven't said anything about that situation. That individual no longer works for the city. All of whatever I say here can be corroborated, verified, the facts of it. And as a planner, we document. We document everything. So anything I say is
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1 backed up. This isn't an attack. This isn't a target.
2 I would say those of us who are on the receiving end
3 have been targeted for no reason. No reason.
4 Weapons of protection. The mayor talked about
5 the first line supervisor, the department heads, HR,
6 EEO, Civil Service, the mayor himself, the city
7 attorneys, every single one of those were
8 (indiscernible).
9 It's not the people in those positions. I
10 mostly have respect for most of them. I think they do a
11 good job. But it's the influence over those positions
12 and over the Civil Service. Most of this never gets to
13 a Civil Service. It never makes it there.
14 Have you ever tried to go before the Civil
15 Service, get your dates right? They meet once a month.
16 If you miss the window -- And when you do go, if you
17 appeal something, the CAO speaks against you. I didn't
18 think he had a right to speak. That's my opinion. The
19 city attorney never spoke up. Never spoke up. HR
20 sitting behind there never spoke up.
21 I will say the Civil Service Commission worked.
22 They allowed me to go forward with what I was turned
23 down for. But the levels of bureaucracy, the hypocrisy,
24 you can't -- every time you turn around to challenge
25 something, there's just another level, with EEO, HR.

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1 It's not the individuals.
2 Emails -- You send emails, and you never get an
3 answer. I've got examples of all that here. When an
4 incident happens, take it to EEO. Again, something you
5 don't want to do. We're supposed to be doing the work
6 of the city. We have more important things to do, but
7 it gets to the point where you have to say something.
8 If you don't, you're complicit and a part of the
9 problem.
10 So I went to EEO and explained what was -- what
11 was happening, the threats. And it's amazing to me that
12 all the people who were involved in these things no
13 longer work for the city. They are all gone. I was the
14 last one standing in our entire department. I've since
15 been transferred.
16 Walk in some of these departments sometime, and
17 you'll see what's really going on. You know, if we
18 can't acknowledge there's a problem, it won't be fixed.
19 There's a lot of problems. You have got a lot of good
20 employees that are so demoralized and just making 8 --
21 making 8 hours and go home.
22 They would leave if they could, a lot of them,
23 but it's the benefits of being in the municipality, the
24 retirement. If you're too close, you can't leave.
25 You're waiting to get your -- you're waiting to get your

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1 8 years so you can be vested. These are the reasons
2 that people stay.
3 But they are not -- A lot of them are not
4 allowed to do their job. They are dismissed. They are
5 put to the side. It doesn't fit whatever -- whatever is
6 going on. I don't know -- we don't know. Just visit
7 sometimes and see what happens.
8 Anyway, back to this EEO, I filed a report
9 that's informal. I didn't make a formal report. And
10 then I get a visit from the city attorney back at my
11 place of work, and we go through all of the things that
12 I said was happening in our department. And I'm told
13 that I take it out of context. I took what happened to
14 me and others around me out of context. I don't take
15 this stuff out of context.
16 So that's your level -- your level of
17 protection, your city attorney. They work for all of us
18 is what I was told, but yet kept telling me I'm taking
19 out of context what happened, instead of they'll look
20 into this.
21 The next incident I end up in my department
22 head's office with EEO, and they tell me I need to go to
23 Weems, just go to Weems. Why should I go to Weems?
24 There's nothing wrong with me.
25 "Well, just take some time off.

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1 I have no reason to take time off. I've got
2 work to do.
3 "You're taking time off, and we won't charge
4 you for it. Just go home." And I went home for a
5 couple of days, a vacation on the city. I appreciate
6 that.
7 Civil Service -- Yeah, it's not sour grapes.
8 The best person will get the job, but on five different
9 occasions here, each one is different, the rules change
10 depending on who is supposed to get the job. And it's
11 so bad that we can predetermine -- we can predetermine
12 who is going to get the job before it's even advertised.
13 It's not fair and impartial.
14 The mayor has no influence -- the
15 administration has no influence on this per our code --
16 per the Civil Service code book. But, first of all,
17 you're denied application because your five-year degree
18 doesn't qualify you. Where someone else may have a GED
19 and they do qualify, you're turned down on education.
20 Okay, I don't understand that. You go through that
21 appeal process. I told you how that went.
22 You take the test. You score a 100. Hey, this
23 is a good system we have here. Well, you still don't
24 get the job. It's predetermined, and we know it. I
25 won't name what the positions are out of respect for who

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1 did get the job. I don't have anything against my
2 fellow employees.
3 Another job comes open. I go through the whole
4 process. Apparently, the person that was predetermined
5 to get the job didn't want it because the other job just
6 disappears. It's never filled. And then the mayor in
7 one of his emails said we don't have to hire a new
8 manager just couple of days after that, we don't need to
9 fill that.
10 Here's another one. I go through the whole
11 process. Everyone is on the list. Someone is in there
12 acting. You've got a list to choose from. Make a
13 decision. Choose one of them so we have someone in the
14 acting position filling up that -- filling that position
15 when the one they came from is vacant, so it's now two
16 positions.
17 Another position -- I've been working for there
18 15 years. I know I was the most qualified. It's not
19 sour grapes; it's just the process what we're dealing
20 with. 15 years in that position. The test says 100
21 percent based on your relevant education and experience.
22 100 percent.
23 Well, you go to Civil Service, and it was a
24 split 70/30. The paperwork didn't say that, but I don't
25 know if they changed it. I already was notified of
1 occurring to, I wouldn't be here right now. I wouldn't
2 be here.
3 I've got another one. Fair and impartial, the
4 panel, three people I met and interviewed with. Two are
5 department heads. I wonder how that one is going to
6 turn out.
7 And so this is where the fun begins, MDA,
8 Mississippi Development Authority project. I believe we
9 have been doing these projects for years on this
10 particular project, a multi-million-dollar downtown soil
11 and water project for drainage. We got the project.
12 They called us and said, "Hey, you guys in planning, you
13 just finished one out in Bonita. We've got money left.
14 Can you take on another one?"
15 Absolutely, we can do it and do a good job. It
16 was money given to us. We're going through this
17 project, and there are a lot of folks leaving, retiring.
18 There is no city engineer. The man -- the planning
19 manager that worked for the city was brilliant. He was
20 brilliant. He has been run off. And you follow the
21 email trail, and just there it is. You see it. You
22 never knew what was -- you knew something was going on;
23 you just didn't know what. Well, now I know, and it
24 really infuriates me.
25 I mean, I just -- you know, it's easy to come
1 that.
2 So two people applied. I've been there 15
3 years. Out of common courtesy, would you not get an
4 interview? No, you don't get an interview. I'm saying
5 all these things because it's predetermined. It's
6 predetermined as if, if you're not the person for it,
7 you're not going to get it. And when you start asking,
8 hey, when do I get an interview, there's no -- here's
9 all the emails. It's just department heads, HR. You
10 ask about it, you get called into a meeting with HR, and
11 then you have another department head in there with you
12 asking what's the problem here.
13 There's no problem. I'm just asking -- I'm
14 just asking when do I get an interview. Well, the
15 position has been filled already.
16 Something else goes wrong that has to do with
17 employee files. I'll bring that up in a little bit. I
18 asked about if anybody reviewed my employee files.
19 Civil Service said -- or HR tells me I need to go to
20 Civil Service. I didn't go to Civil Service and ask
21 them did anybody review the file.
22 Weapons of nonsense by design. This is by
23 design. It's a pattern. That's what a hostile work
24 environment is. It's a -- it's over and over and over.
25 And, again, if I was the only person that was
| Page 22 | 1. systematically moved out. If you don't realize what
2. that planning division did, something is going to
3. implode.
4. In that same meeting we're claimed that we're
5. withholding information. This paranoia, you hear it
6. over and over, withholding information. Someone is
7. moving boxes. Someone is doing something. This sounds
8. petty, and it is, but when it's continuous every single
9. -- not every single day, it's -- you don't know if it's
10. going to happen every single day.
11. The planning manager that was keeping that
12. project going, killing himself, it was impossible what
13. he was doing. And to see someone so demoralized that
14. they put their head down, a professional who was
15. belittled, you know, I couldn't stand it. I lost it and
16. said something back. We had an altercation, but that
17. was -- at least we had some communication. We haven't
18. had that since.
19. So what was -- what were we required to do for
20. that meeting? We needed to get all of the records, all
21. of the grants, in its totality laid out by that Friday
22. at 2:00 o'clock. I don't know if you'll have ever seen
23. the records that go with a grant like that. It's --
24. it's an impossible undertaking. Was that by design?
25. You stay up until 2:00 in the morning printing

| Page 23 | 1. Where is this false narrative coming from? I know where
2. It's coming from. It's documented.
3. And after all this is done, if you're
4. interested in seeing any of this, these are the Cliff's
5. Notes the documents follow.
6. Richard -- Mr. McAlister came into that meeting
7. at the city attorney's office. He never sat down. He
8. stood there across the table, and he waved his arm and
9. yelled. If you have never experienced that, just it's
10. not something you want to experience. There's people
11. who no longer work for the city because of that, the
12. physical, in your face, leaning across the table
13. hollering that you don't know what you're doing. You
14. know, about 30 seconds of that, and most people will
15. snap. And I did. I did.
16. Now, again, this was witnessed by my boss, two
17. other department heads, and the city attorney. Someone
18. should have stepped in and said something, "Hey, we
19. don't -- we don't conduct ourselves like that." But it
20. went on, and the threat was, "I don't know what I'm
21. going to do with you, y'all, and the planning division.
22. I don't know what we're going to do with the planning
23. division."
24. So the threat was made, and here we are years
25. later fulfilled. Everybody is gone systematically --

| Page 24 | 1. emails, thousands and thousands of emails, and lay it
2. all out in the conference room as demanded for our
3. internal investigation. We did it. No one showed.
4. They make you do something, and there's zero follow
5. through. Zero follow through.
6. We're going to have this meeting. We're going
7. to have this meeting and get with you. Do this, do
8. this, do this over and over and over and over
9. again, and there is no follow through. It's all
10. documented here.
11. So we got it all laid out, killed ourselves,
12. and no one ever looked at it. I had to take pictures of
13. all the stuff we laid out there, it was so much. With
14. all the time we wasted doing that, and it was for
15. nothing except to make a point. "Who's the boss here?"
16. I missed my 50th anniversary celebration from
17. college for my 19th year, I missed it that following
18. Saturday for killing myself to get this done. Again,
19. this isn't just me. There are others who aren't here
20. who can't speak who have left, who have moved and have
21. left the City of Meridian, good people.
22. This trivial making light of our boards of
23. commissions. It's Mickey Mouse. Don't let these guys
24. get in your way, no roadblocks, I'm going to take care

2. Downtown trees -- We had a major project to
3. plant trees, almost $50,000. We were excited about it.
4. We had done something they hadn't done anywhere else in
5. the state. It's called (Indiscernible), leading the
6. state. They're looking at us for our forestry rights.
7. So here is our demonstration project and involved with
8. Arbor Day. It'll be a big event. Nope. I was told by
9. my department head who is going to get the bid, who is
10. going to get the quote.
11. So I said, "Well, you can say what you want;
12. I'm going through the process," and we did. The person
13. who ended up getting the job was offered to submit and
14. refused it. He wasn't interested; didn't have enough
15. time. And finally he's getting -- he got the job.
16. If you -- If you would like to see what
17. downtown could have looked like, I'll show you the trees
18. that were selected, how much would have been done with
19. that same money from a professional who questioned -- a
20. professional questioned what happened there, and then
21. you got followed on Facebook and called out.
22. Is that harassment, going after the person who
23. didn't get the job because he said something about you?
24. Ironically, the person who did get the quote turned
25. around and sued the city for additional work that wasn't
1 authorized. So we got a lesser project, paid more for
2 it, and got sued in the process.
3 And the good contractor is sitting out there,
4 and now the memos are, "We won't do any of this work
5 anymore. It's all going to be in-house." Well, we see
6 how that's turning out.
7 Going behind your back and talking about you,
8 setting the stage, creating who I am. I read these
9 emails, and I wonder, "Who is this person? Who is this
10 person?" You never get the opportunity to respond to
11 these emails. The game is is it goes out to the mayor,
12 the department heads, the city attorney, and select
13 council members. You're never involved in what you're
14 being blamed for constantly over and over and over
15 again.
16 This -- this narrative is created to get rid of
17 you, and you would never -- you never know what hit you.
18 You're not involved in it. You're blamed for it, but
19 you're not involved in it.
20 And for them to get with your coworkers who are
21 part of the team and -- and can talk about you, you
22 don't have the -- you don't get to be involved in the
23 conversation that involves you, but it goes to those
24 working around you who are part of the team. I don't
25 disrespect any of them, but what do they think about us

1 email saying that you need to provide me what you've got
2 on the new tree program. You've worked on it for a
3 year. You should have something to show. This is the
4 same plan that we're not supposed to be doing; it
5 doesn't exist. You can't have it both ways.
6 A meeting with the department heads about is
7 doing urban forestry, what is urban forestry, whose
8 roles are to be doing this -- this grounds maintenance
9 of these trees and these interstate. I was
10 transferred -- and, again, that's what I was hired
11 for -- transferred out for -- because of the abundant
12 urban forest, I was moved to public works.
13 Okay, I'm out of the way. Do what you want to
14 do. The work still goes on. You still do your job
15 because that's what we do. Get it approved through the
16 Tree Commission, which was its role to then get it
17 to the council. All that took place. It's harder and
18 harder to get these things done. Your volunteers on
19 your Tree Commission and Boards of Commissions, I can't
20 speak for them, but based on the attendance, it's hard
21 to get quorums.
22 They see what's going on. They are tired of
23 the games. Half of the Tree Commission left over all
24 the debacle with the downtown trees. But they don't
25 want to -- They don't want to cause any trouble, so they

1 when this is what they're being told and this is what
2 they read? And it's false.
3 There's nothing worse than to be charged or
4 blamed for something, and you didn't do it, and you
5 can't speak. That's why I'm here today. Again, there
6 are others who told me I was crazy. "Why would you do
7 this?" Because it's made me sick for three and a half
8 years. The harder you try, the more you get pushed
9 aside. My mama always told me I was hardheaded. I
10 guess she was right. But right is right, and wrong is
11 wrong, and what's going on is wrong.
12 The Urban Forestry Management Plan, again we're
13 going to create the story about the rogue employee out
14 there doing something on his own and write a grant for
15 $40,000. We have got a -- this is the plan that no one
16 is allowed to see. It exists. It's referenced on the
17 master plan.
18 But the years that go into that and the effort
19 that goes into that, the involvement of all the other
20 departments to make that happen, and but because of
21 who -- or I should say because I don't know why -- why
22 these things happen. It's not my role. I'm just
23 telling you it is happening. When you pick and choose
24 and make the story up as we go --
25 One time when the tornado hits, and then you get the

1 just step aside, and then nothing gets done.
2 Is that -- Is that by design? This isn't --
3 This is throughout. It's from the top down. When you
4 send this stuff through to the next level, and they
5 forward it but don't forward the whole story, forward
6 enough to say, "Okay, I've done my part, and I'm safe,"
7 because nobody dare challenge the CAO.
8 I've been told that's the -- I've been in the office
9 with the department head and said, "Look, I will go over
10 there, and I'll put my hands up and say whatever it is,
11 you win -- whatever it is, you win." But I've realized
12 reading these emails, it's all for naught. That's not
13 what's going on here.
14 So you go through this whole process to get to
15 where you can finally come before the council. And,
16 again, the emails go to the select few and tell the
17 story you want to tell and leave those out. They don't
18 know. They don't know what's going on. That's by
19 design.
20 If it was once or twice, I could understand
21 that. This is -- So you're going to hold off on
22 presenting this to the council. And you're supposed to
23 make a decision on it, and not going to be held by the
24 parameters that I set. I don't set parameters.
25 If it does come before you, though, it's
because I reached out to a council member yet again
7 telling -- telling that story. If something happens,
8 it's because I did it. Of course, I'm not privy to any
9 of this, you know. I guess I -- When I have dealings
10 with others in the city, you get looked at a certain
11 way, or they won't look at you at all.
12 So if it came before you, it was because I
13 snuck (sic) it to you. No, I went through the proper
14 channels. The Tree Commission approved it. Through the
15 department head it was supposed to come to you, not to
16 be set by the parameters that I set. Again, this was a
17 grant that you all approved and the city paid for
18 sitting on the shelf, not to be seen.
19 And I guess because I'm pushing too hard,
20 there's a project for me in regard to planting pine
21 trees in public safety and training. That's another
22 subject we'll get to. So we'll show him; we're going to
23 go plant some pine trees. On another note, who asked
24 him to do this? Why does he not feel the mayor and
25 president of the council should have any input into his
26 planning?
27 Again, this was a single event. Everybody was
28 brought together. But the story that's told
29 about the rogue employee. And when you look at the
30 dates chronologically of how this plays out, this is a
31 traveling to my state organization, not knowing why. No
32 one would tell me. Although the paper trail shows
33 department heads knew, no one would tell me. I had to
34 ask permission to travel.
35 I finally get denied travel, and I'll have to
36 attend on my own time, take a day off and in my own
37 vehicle to do city work. It goes to everyone that's
38 supposed to know, but not the person who is involved.
39 And I would say, you know, it's the CAO, but then the
40 email from the mayor says thank you -- thank you.
41 So the solid waste, whatever happened out at
42 the training facility, the emails blamed me for it.
43 I've never been out there -- oh, I'm sorry, I have been
44 out there, but nothing to do with some solid waste. How
45 am I blamed for that?
46 The city could get into some trouble, some
47 legalities, and myself and someone on the state board
48 that I was going to get blamed for it. Enough time goes
49 by, and I finally can travel again because they -- for
50 whatever reason, I could travel now.
51 Now, there's a lot of -- there's a lot of
52 little details here. If you don't live it, you don't
53 understand it, the jobs that are taken. They planted
54 the little pine trees out at the training facility.
55 We've got something for him to work on. I guess that's
1 -- this isn't a mistake. It's by design.
2 I guess when the department head was told to fire --
3 I'm sorry, figure a way to fire their (indiscernible)
4 and that didn't work, this is what happens.
5 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Locke, for the sake of time,
6 and also so we can get to the rest of the people that
7 want to speak, could you kind of briefly -- I don't want
8 to cut you off, but could you briefly --
9 MR. LOCKE: I'm doing whatever y'all want. I'm
10 here to --
11 MR. JOHNSON: Oh, we definitely want to hear
12 your statement.
13 MR. LOCKE: I realize that, at this point, when
14 I leave here today, things are going to be different.
15 MR. LINDEMANN: We're over halfway done with
16 the list. I would prefer that Mr. Locke have the
17 opportunity to finish.
18 MR. JOHNSON: How much more longer do you think
19 you have, Mr. Locke?
20 MR. LOCKE: I can condense it to about 10 more
21 minutes or 15.
22 MR. JOHNSON: Go ahead.
23 MR. LOCKE: I saved the best for last. The
24 next issue is solid waste -- having hazardous solid
25 waste dumped down at the training facility. I'm denied
1 like getting a bucket of paint and going and painting
2 stripes in the street. I'm a professional. They
3 planted the pine trees to keep me pacified.
4 And, again, all of this was approved and signed
5 by the mayor. And yet what -- what I did was wood chips
6 at Lakeview. Somehow wood chips at Lakeview turned into
7 a solid waste issue at the training facility.
8 Ironically, when I go to do my payroll, I was listed as
9 at the training facility. Is that a coincidence? How
10 am I at the training facility? I guess that's to mark
11 it publicly I work there and not at public works.
12 Transferred to public works prior to that.
13 Three incidents where I was taken to a remote location
14 in another building and said, This is where you're going
15 to be. Three department heads were involved in that
16 discussion. The reason being? So I wouldn't get hurt.
17 Richie can't see you. He doesn't want you there. He
18 doesn't want to see you working late. Someone will get
19 hurt.
20 Do you know how many times I've heard that
21 someone will get hurt? And, again, two or three of
22 those department heads don't work there anymore. The
23 first time the wastewater plant, the next two times at
24 the empty union station.
25 My first choice or the first was a broom
But Mr. McAlister will take care of this. I kept asking how did it get there. There was no way Waste Pro did it. Waste Pro won't tell me. I guess they have got a contract coming up.

The last thing with the employee council — got to shut down the employee council I guess is the intent or was the intent. You have a group who represented their fellow employees. And if there was an issue, we served as a mediator between the city council and the administration. And we had to rewrite those bylaws I guess because the previous councilmen showed too much interest in what we were doing just representing our fellow employees.

Shut us down. Had to go get with the city attorney to rewrite the bylaws. Well, that same evening, that was sent to the city attorney, and we rewrote them. We didn't get paid, therefore now there was an issue about compensation. That wasn't us. We didn't have a choice. If you went to the meetings, you get paid.

We read these newspaper articles about no one will do anything. Well, I have got it in a certain member's handwriting that, yes, he did. He was questioning it two years prior. But yet we're made out to be out — made out to be the bad guy. That's bad enough, okay?

There's an investigation that was started because of that. I'm assuming it was the benevolent fund. We closed that down when we found out it wasn't covered by the umbrella of the city. Gave that money away, most of it, and used it. Mr. Johnson, I believe we gave you $700 for your organization, money to shop for the cop. All legit.

But when you get investigators showing up at your office wanting to talk to you about what's going on, and you have no idea what's going on, someone — we know who — turned in to the state auditor — not that there was something with the stipend, but that an individual, me, alleging — alleging embezzlement. Embezzlement.

No one had the decency to tell me that. We're going to turn you in for embezzlement. I found out about it when I reviewed my employee file. All the paperwork back and forth, it's filed with HR and everyone else, and those who need to know know, but the guilty party, the accused, never knows about it. I've got to find out about it a year later I've been accused of embezzlement. Now I'm trying to get with the state attorney and find out what's going on. These are permanent records with the state. That's not harassment?

It's all here, and there's a lot more. I hate doing this. This is not me. This is not me. I have nothing to say in conclusion. I just hope that something changes. I hated that it came to this. This wasn't by choice. I appreciate your time, and if you need anything, as far as I know, I will be over at engineering upstairs. Thank you.

MS. HOUSTON: Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Who's next up?

MS. HOUSTON: Next we're going to have Mr. Anthony Dorman. Anthony Dorman? Last call, Anthony Dorman.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Kim. It's so good to have a vice president.

Ms. Julia Norman? Good morning.

MS. NORMAN: Good morning.

MS. NORMAN: How are you all?

MR. JOHNSON: Well.

MS. NORMAN: My name is Julia Norman, and I began my employment with the City of Meridian in July 2018. I do work directly with Richie McAlister during the course of my daily duties in the mayor's office. I am frequently present during Richie's meetings with
1 employees. I have access to his written email
2 communications. I have witnessed thousands of
3 interactions between CAO Richie McAlister and the City
4 of Meridian employees during the course of my
5 employment.
6 I have not at any time witnessed any action by
7 Mr. McAlister that could be described as a hostile work
8 environment. I enjoy my employment with the City of
9 Meridian, and I appreciate your consideration this
10 morning. Thank you.
11 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you.
12 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Avis Aycock? Good
13 morning.
14 MS. AYCOCK: Good morning. My name is Avis
15 Aycock, and I've been with the city about --
16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will you pull that mic
17 in a little bit?
18 MS. AYCOCK: I've been with the city for about
19 43 years, and I work in the computer department. I'm
20 here on behalf of Richie. I think he has done an
21 outstanding job. He has always been respectful to me.
22 He has always greeted me in the hallway, spoken with me.
23 I do not understand where the hostility is coming from
24 -- where y'all say it's coming from.
25 Now, like I said, hostility goes both ways.

1 aloud the two statements, one which is notarized, that
2 have been received.
3 MR. JOHNSON: I second.
4 MR. LINEDMANN: All right.
5 MR. JOHNSON: All in favor?
6 (Verbal response from council members.)
7 MR. THOMAS: I think we have an order. We need
8 to follow the order.
9 MR. JOHNSON: It gets this amended, correct?
10 MS. HOUSTON: Yes, you have to (inaudible).
11 MR. LINEDMANN: Should I read these, or should
12 I --
13 MR. JOHNSON: Go ahead.
14 MR. LINEDMANN: Okay. And then I'll pass these
15 along to be recorded in the minutes. And first was --
16 MR. HAMMACK: Is this notarized?
17 MR. LINEDMANN: One is notarized. This first
18 one is not notarized.
19 MR. THOMAS: If it's not notarized, we don't
20 know who wrote it.
21 MR. LINEDMANN: So I obtained this through
22 Kelvin McGruder's attorney where he interviewed a
23 witness who worked for the city and is no longer with
24 the city.
25 MR. THOMAS: Point of order. We're supposed to

1 And I think on both sides, you know, things are being
2 said and done that should not be said or done. And also
3 it needs to be spoken out that we -- that some of us,
4 not all of us agree with Kevin with his employee council
5 stuff saying that he speaks for all of us because he
6 doesn't speak for me.
7 I speak for myself, and I say Richie has been
8 doing a good job with this administration. And that's
9 all I've got to say.
10 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.
11 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you.
12 MR. LINEDMANN: Mr. President, we had a couple
13 of written statements, but do we want to hear from
14 anyone who showed up today who didn't sign up to speak?
15 MR. JOHNSON: Is that legal?
16 MR. HAMMACK: I think you have in the order
17 they had to sign up by 5:00 o'clock.
18 MR. LINEDMANN: I would like to put that in the
19 form of a motion that we amend the agenda to allow
20 anyone who showed up here today -- to allow them that
21 would like to speak, if I can get a second for that.
22 MR. JOHNSON: Did anyone come here to speak as
23 well who did not sign up on the list? Is there anyone?
24 MR. LINEDMANN: All right. I would like to
25 make a motion that we accept into the minutes and read

1 discuss present employees.
2 MR. HAMMACK: Mr. McGruder has a lawsuit
3 pending against the city as well.
4 MR. THOMAS: Plus there's a lawsuit pending
5 that Mr. McGruder is involved in against the city. I
6 don't think it's proper from a --
7 MR. LINEDMANN: This is related to the --
8 MR. THOMAS: -- legal perspective to discuss
9 something from a person who has a lawsuit against the
10 city and no longer works for the city.
11 MR. LINEDMANN: This is related to the former
12 grounds superintendent, and if a majority of the council
13 would like, I will go ahead and read this.
14 MR. THOMAS: I think you're totally out of
15 order.
16 MR. LINEDMANN: "Scott Crenshaw was hired as
17 the grounds superintendent" --
18 MR. THOMAS: Whoa, whoa, whoa.
19 MR. JOHNSON: Hold on for one second.
20 MR. HAMMACK: It's legal that he reads it. I
21 don't know that you considered it, but I would caution
22 you against it.
23 MR. LINEDMANN: "Scott Crenshaw was hired as
24 the grounds superintendent in 2015. Mr. Crenshaw was
25 802 waived by Mayor Bland. In the summer of 2015,
Chuck Butler was verbally threatening Scott Crenshaw at the Sammy Davis Softball Complex. Mr. Crenshaw informed Percy Bland and Chuck Butler that the ball fields were not playable because of the rain and the shape of the fields. Percy and Chuck Butler met with Mr. Crenshaw at Sammy Davis. Mr. Crenshaw stated again that the fields weren't able to be played on because of the rain and the possible damage to the fields. Chuck Butler went into a rage and verbal attack against Mr. Crenshaw in the presence of Percy Bland. Chuck Butler threatened Mr. Crenshaw by using extreme profanity, informing Mr. Crenshaw, ‘I will shove a baseball bat up your ass until it comes out of your mouth.’

Not one time did Percy Bland intervene with Chuck Butler on behalf of Mr. Crenshaw, nor did Percy apologize to Mr. Crenshaw for his behavior. Richie McAlister scheduled a meeting with Mr. Crenshaw at City Hall about issues at Planet Playground and what Richie perceived to be interference. Mr. Crenshaw asked Kelvin McGruder to be in attendance at the meeting as well. Chrisie Walker was also in attendance.

Richie starts off with a full-blown tirade against Mr. Crenshaw for no apparent reason. Richie is man. He will get over it."

"Mr. Crenshaw did not get over it. He contacted McGruder and said he was in disbelief that Percy had not reached out to him and upheld Richie’s unprofessional behavior. Crenshaw was devastated, and after speaking with his wife, delivered his resignation the next day."

"No employee deserves this type of treatment. This is one of many examples of the administration not protecting their employees from mistreatment at the highest level of management and allowing a hostile work environment to be tolerated."

MR. HAMMACK: I beg your pardon. Who signed that statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: That one was not notarized, but this next one is.

MR. HAMMACK: Who gave the statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: That was obtained by Kelvin McGruder's attorney.

MR. HAMMACK: Who gave the statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: That would be - I believe his attorney is Joseph Denson.

MR. HAMMACK: Who gave the statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: I'm not the attorney, so I can't tell you who was interviewed to produce that.

MR. HAMMACK: So you have read something into the record that you don't know who gave the statement, and you are offering it as the truth in that statement, correct?

MR. LINDEMANN: I can't speak to the facts. I'm only reading what's presented.

(Simultaneous speakers - Indiscernible.)

MR. HAMMACK: But who gave the statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: This is written by -

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He said his attorney.

MR. LINDEMANN: I'm not the attorney who interviewed whoever would have been involved in it.

MR. HAMMACK: Who was interviewed to give the statement?

MR. LINDEMANN: If you would like me to guess. I would say Mr. Crenshaw and Kelvin McGruder. But I was not the interview - I was not the attorney who did the interview. How could I possibly know that? I'll turn now -

MR. MCALESTER: Mr. Attorney - Mr. Attorney, this that was just read, the entire action is recorded. We do have multiple witnesses that were in that meeting. I will provide you the recording of what actually happened in its entirety.

And that statement right there is not true or
1 correct. It is completely false as to what was said and
2 the demeanor of that meeting. Mr. McGruder was in
3 attendance, and I will be providing you with a recording
4 of that meeting.
5 MR. HAMMACK: All right, if council accepts it.
6 MS. HOUSTON: I would like to have it marked.
7 If he's got something --
8 MR. LINDEMMANN: I agree we should accept that.
9 MS. HOUSTON: It needs to be fair.
10 MR. THOMAS: So you want to enter into the
11 record something an attorney sent you that you don't
12 know who he talked to?
13 MR. LINDEMMANN: Well, as well as the recording
14 that might relate to anything that was mentioned in that
15 statement. That way, we have both sides.
16 MR. THOMAS: You don't have the sides. An
17 attorney can write anything they want.
18 MR. LINDEMMANN: Now, this statement here is
19 notarized, and it was submitted by Katherine
20 Higginbotham. She is an account clerk in Finance and
21 Records.
22 It reads, "I regret that I am unable to attend
23 the special council meeting on 5-28-19 at 9:30. My
24 granddaughter is graduating on that date from high
25 school on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. I'll make this as

1 own determination as to whether to hear it.
2 MR. LINDEMMANN: Okay.
3 MR. JOHNSON: Do you feel it is, Mr. Lindemann?
4 MR. LINDEMMANN: Absolutely.
5 "I was carrying mail from the second floor to
6 the human resources offices on the first floor to use the
7 postage machine. The two were standing facing each
8 other when I entered the stairwell. They backed away
9 from each other, and the mayor asked me what I was
10 doing. I told him, and he asked me what was in my hand.
11 I told him the mail, and he repeated himself over and
12 over."
13 "I started descending the stairs with the mayor
14 following in behind me with Stacey beside him. He was
15 so close that I could feel his breath, and he started
16 saying, 'What did you say?' He repeated this, and I
17 replied. I was truly scared."
18 "A couple of days later, there were gunshots
19 fired in front of my home. I called the police, and
20 they arrived approximately 45 minutes later. The lady
21 officer apologized and told me that she had asked
22 permission from Chief Lee, and he would not give it
23 right away."
24 "After the shots, I saw a black Tahoe back up
25 into a dead-end road. Several days after this happened,

1 brief as possible without detailed information. These
2 statements are to the best of my knowledge true and
3 uninfluenced by outside sources."
4 "My first knowledge of the affair between Percy
5 Bland and Stacey Thompson came when I went into the
6 north emergency stairwell. I was carrying mail from the
7 second floor to the" --
8 MR. THOMAS: Point of order. I think we're
9 here to discuss Mr. McAlister, not the mayor.
10 MR. LINDEMMANN: We're here to discuss a hostile
11 work environment per the order.
12 "I was carrying mail from the second floor to
13 human resources almost on the first" --
14 MR. JOHNSON: One second, Mr. Lindemann. One
15 second.
16 MR. LINDEMMANN: The order reads that we are
17 here for discussion of a hostile work environment.
18 MR. HAMMACK: The order reads that the council
19 is initiating an investigation into a hostile work
20 environment. It doesn't say anything about
21 Mr. McAlister.
22 MR. LINDEMMANN: Okay.
23 MR. HAMMACK: But if the council believes what
24 is being read is in connection with or in relation to a
25 hostile work environment, then the council can make its

1 I was walking my dog, and a black Tahoe pulled up beside
2 me, rolled down the window, and said nothing. I told
3 him to leave me alone, that I was just walking my dog.
4 He rode off."
5 "I was hit by a coworker, and then she slapped
6 her hand over my mouth when I cried out. I was in my
7 work cubicle. Another employee came out, and I told him
8 what had happened. At that point, I was crying. He
9 told me not to tell him, just go upstairs. That meant
10 to the EEO officer. I did go upstairs and talked to
11 Chrissie Walker, and nothing was done about this."
12 "On a more recent occasion when Ralph Newman
13 worked with us, the employee that hit me approached me
14 with her hands in fists. She came at me and then
15 noticed Ralph and backed off. If it were not for him,
16 she would have hit me. She was aggressive in coming at
17 me."
18 "This was reported to Stacey Thompson. I told
19 her that there was a witness, and she said that she did
20 not need his statement. Ralph went to her office after
21 several weeks of waiting to be called and gave his
22 statement. Nothing was done, so I called the EEOC. The
23 only heading that they could assign to my case was age
24 related. That was unproven and case dismissed."
25 "During the EEOC case, I was moved to Union
Station, and the employee that hit me got a raise. I asked for a meeting with Chrissie Walker so that I would be able to ask her a few questions. I put the questions in an email to Chrissie, and she became very angry. "When I was moved, I was told that my job duties could stay the same, that I worked only for Finance and Records. When I got to Union Station, the employees there started telling me what my job duties were out there. Laura Carmichael was told that I was coming out there to help them. "During my meeting with Chrissie, I was told that I was out there because of the EEOC documents; there would be no pay increase nor title change. I would do my work for Finance and Records and then for Community Development as a professional courtesy. "I asked if there would be money for a car to go back and forth to City Hall. They did assign me an old truck that had been used to take prisoners to sites. The truck smelled so bad from sweating and throwing-up men and women that I got sick. The truck was cleaned and used until it was taken away from me to be used in planting flowers around town. "At one point, Richie McAlister came to Union Station, and I asked him how long I would be out there. He said that that depended on me. My supervisor came to Union Station and told me to go to the public works garage and work. I went to this location where the employees thought I would become the new storekeeper. I had no training and was thrown into a job that the man before me went blind and was unable to train me. He later committed suicide. "I was now responsible for three locations. I was still being told that I would work at City Hall, Union Station, and the garage. Again there was no pay increase, and I had to use my own car. After several months, I was given a $2.25 raise. I have taken and passed the test for storekeeper but have not been given the title nor any additional compensation for travel. "I split my time between the storekeeper spot and City Hall spot. I am no longer required to go in to Union Station. I must mention that I do have audio of the meeting with Chrissie Walker and Laura Carmichael signed and notarized by Katherine Higginbotham. MR. HAMMACK: The record should reflect, council, that Ms. Higginbotham I think first still has an EEOC complaint pending against the city. UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She had one complaint which was a -- she had a right to sue letter but never filed suit. She had a second complaint that she filed concerning some of those allegations. That second suit was withdrawn (indiscernible) by Ms. Higginbotham.

MR. JOHNSON: Do you have anything else, Mr. Lindemann?

MR. LINDEMANN: Those are the only statements I received.

MR. JOHNSON: We're going to go to council --

MR. MCALISTER: Mr. President, will I get a chance to speak?

MR. JOHNSON: Oh, sure thing, if you want, yes.

MR. MCALISTER: Relating to Mr. Locke's accusation in stating that I was behind some of the things that he stated, I would like for you all to just sit here and listen for just a second.

(Audio played.)

MS. HOUSTON: We can't understand it.

MR. MCALISTER: Ma'am?

MS. HOUSTON: Maybe pull it away. It was just distorted.

(Audio played.)

MR. MCALISTER: What you're hearing here is a recording of a former department head taking Mr. Locke for a ride in which he did try to put him in a broom closet. He tried to move him around. What you will hear at the end of that recording and what you all will see is you will hear me tell Mr. Partridge, "Be really careful with what you're trying to do right here," you know. And he tells me, "You be careful. Kevin Locke, he's out to get your ass." And I said, "All right. I mean, whatever."

I got -- but there are other recordings that -- For example, what Mr. Lindemann read right there, that is completely false. That is not what happened. The other statement that was made here by Mr. Locke where he said that I came to his office -- And I finally told him never mind, I would handle the bags, and I walk out.

When you listen to the recording, I am whispering to him because I don't want him to say that I created a hostile work environment. What you will hear me say is, "Kevin, you're not getting written up. You're not in trouble. I'm trying to do you a solid here. Someone has filed a complaint that you are dumping construction materials. The City of Meridian is paying for the tonnage."

And then he goes to his receipts and he shows me where he says he has it worked out with Waste Pro. I then tell him, "Since you have it worked out, I trust you, Kevin, we'll go ahead and get it done." It was dumped at City Hall because no one then can say that it was taken to the landfill and then Kevin Locke could be at fault about defrauding the taxpayers.
1 Mississippi Development Authority from the director of
2 compliance. He did not say, "Mr. McAllister, when would
3 be a good time for you to meet next week?" The letter
4 stated, "You will be meeting me and my team at 10:00
5 o'clock on Wednesday. You need to be there." From that
6 point there, they said that our information was not
7 being kept the way they need it to for compliance.
8 With that, I apologized to the man. I did. I
9 said, "I'm sorry. This is a big project. Our folks
10 don't really handle a lot of big projects like this."
11 From there the discussion came up about the potential
12 for the federal inspector general to look into our
13 federal grant.
14 With that we had all emails and correspondence
15 and paperwork pulled and timelines out. Mr. Locke did
16 put all that information together. Luckily enough, the
17 federal inspector general did not show up. But we were
18 more than prepared for him to. Once again, Mr. Locke
19 was not written up.
20 So when it comes to hostile work environment,
21 I'll tell you, I've worked in hostile work environments.
22 I have worked in construction where people say they are
23 roofers, and you put them on top of a roof only to find
24 out that they are deathly afraid of heights and they
25 weren't a real roofer, and you have to fire that
1 Mississippi at the time worked for Mississippi Power, a
2 memorandum agreement was signed, and we received wood
3 chips from a vendor that was working for Mississippi
4 Power. Those wood chips were then brought to City
5 Hall - not to City Hall, but to various city
6 facilities. It was a good idea. They were going to use
7 that for mulch, mulch we wouldn't have to pay for.
8 But what no one would ever know is that, if you
9 grind up a tree and you stockpile it, it becomes
10 nonhazardous solid waste.
11 The reason Mr. Locke's travel was at the time
12 was stopped at the time was because we thought we may
13 be going into litigation with the Professional Arborist
14 Association of Mississippi who buried those wood chips.
15 Mr. Locke was not written up for that because he knows
16 trees. He's exactly right.
17 But even though he knows trees, I don't
18 understand how anyone, him included, could ever think
19 that wood chips are counted as nonhazardous solid waste.
20 To me, that was crazy. He was not written up.
21 The employee council issue, yes, there's a copy
22 of what transpired. He was not written up. Since I
23 have been the chief administrative officer, Mr. Locke
24 has not been written up.
25 Dealing with MDA, we received a letter from the

1 individual. You're nice about it, but it is what it is.
2 There's a difference between a hostile work
3 environment and being a leader and moving things through
4 the pike and getting it done to the best of our ability.
5 I think there has been a lot of innuendo and allegations
6 and accusations.
7 My family has been through a lot these past
8 three months. I thought my wife was going to have a
9 miscarriage whenever she found out that I had my pay
10 taken away and my benefits. Luckily enough, she's okay.
11 But the constant harassment I've been - I have
12 the body camera footage, Mr. Lindemann, where you and
13 another individual twice in eight months have tried to
14 have me arrested. I don't understand where we're going
15 with this or why we're going there with this.
16 We care about roads, bridges, creating jobs,
17 opportunity, making a better life for those that come
18 after us. I know that this gig right here will not last
19 forever. I know that. But I'm going to keep trying as
20 hard as I can to do something good and worthwhile for
21 those that come after us.
22 I've read the attacks from people's pages. And
23 I'll tell you, I'm not scared to have someone write
24 things about me that aren't true. I'm not scared of
25 videos to be put out and to make me feel like I should

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1 be intimidated. I will not walk away. I have not done
2 anything wrong. I have not done anything illegal. I
3 have not created a hostile work environment, and I stand
4 by that.
5 I stand by this man (indicating) because the
6 day that you're talking about from that statement, I was
7 with him. I was with him, and we were walking out.
8 Saying that she felt the breath on the back of her neck?
9 She was one flight of stairs below us. She had a
10 handful of mail. And I never heard what she had said
11 until just now. It's -- it's character assassination.
12 But you have got to understand these people
13 have families. Right now when you Google search my
14 name, there's stuff in there where you're saying I've
15 stolen 2 million dollars, that I'm creating hostile work
16 environments.
17 And you said in one of your podcasts,
18 Councilman Lindemann, you said, "I'm too young to have a
19 past. I'll have a past one day." Well, right now
20 you're creating your own legacy. And I know you may
21 want to be a social media star, but there are
22 repercussions for this down the road, and that is you're
23 going to have to one day go ask for a job, and someone
24 is going to have to be willing to hire someone that is
25 willing to read out a document where they don't know

1 the city council as part of the --
2 MR. LINDEMMANN: I make a motion that we accept
3 those recordings, as well as to reach out to
4 Ms. Higginbotham when she returns from her trip to
5 receive the recordings that she mentioned in her
6 statement.
7 MS. HOUSTON: I second.
8 MR. JOHNSON: All in favor?
9 (Verbal response from council members.)
10 MR. JOHNSON: Ayes have it. Mr. Mayor, do you
11 have anything?
12 MAYOR BLAND: Yes. I'm sorry for everyone,
13 especially the taxpayers, that are here today for this.
14 I'm glad that the employees got a chance to communicate
15 to you all that we have several levels of chain of
16 command to deal with. We have between 500 to 550
17 employees. I have to make decisions every day on who
18 gets sometimes a job and gets promoted.
19 Everyone does not like their role. Everyone
20 does not like the fact that when they do interview for a
21 job, even if they've interviewed great for a job, there
22 are several other people that also have the opportunity
23 to get that job. The department head has got a tough
24 decision to make.
25 Out of 500 to 550 people, we have listed one or

1 where its origins are.
2 You said, "I assume it came from this person."
3 You just read that into the record like it was truth,
4 like it was gospel, like it's the King James version,
5 and you don't know where it came from. That's not fair
6 to the City, to the citizens of Meridian, or for the
7 employees that work here.
8 I apologize that we have to be here today, but
9 I stand by what I've done. I have it documented. And I
10 do have pretty good intuition when I think someone is
11 trying to maybe come back one day and say that I said
12 something that I didn't, and I document it.
13 If I meet with an employee, and it seems like
14 it may be a personnel issue, that conversation is
15 recorded. I'm a part of that conversation, and I tell
16 them generally, "This conversation is being recorded."
17 But I hate that that's the world we live in, but today
18 reaffirms that world.
19 But I'm glad over the last three and a half
20 years that I've thought maybe one day I would have to
21 stand before you and answer for my actions in the past.
22 I stand behind every decision. Thank you.
23 MR. HAMMACK: Mr. President, the council needs
24 to make a determination as to whether to accept into the
25 record the recordings that Mr. McAllister will offer to

1 two people today that have not, to me, communicated a
2 hostile work environment, but some type of unhappiness
3 and displeasure or being disgruntled by being a city
4 employee. In any business, I don't care if you have 7
5 employees or 10 employees or 100 or 500, you're going to
6 have people that are unhappy with their role or their
7 job or the direction that their business or organization
8 or agency is going. I'm sure we have more than those
9 two.
10 I'm just here to come here to tell you guys we
11 have got to get past today. Richie McAllister will
12 continue to be the CAO of the City of Meridian, and
13 we're going to have to work together.
14 In regards to what Mr. Locke said, we're going
15 to move forward in a way that gives him an opportunity
16 so we can go back over again what his role currently is
17 with the city, what his role will be in our future
18 commitments that we have out there, and we'll work
19 forward with him.
20 As far as Ms. Higginbotham, I never had a
21 chance to communicate with her anywhere, Mr. Lindemann.
22 She never met me in a hallway somewhere to feel my
23 breath or any of those things. But I will say that we
24 have internal things that are going on that we can't
25 communicate. She has been moved from one location to
1 another because allegedly someone pushed her in the
2 back, which we found not to be true.
3 And when you say things that people have told
4 you or hearsay that you have no idea if they're true or
5 false, you really need to think about that. You really
6 need to think about what you're saying and who is giving
7 you the information.
8 We have active -- We have active lawsuits going
9 on with two department heads that I've terminated,
10 period. The department heads, as everyone can see, work
11 over here and serve at the will and the pleasure of the
12 mayor, and they have a role to do with the city. The
13 CAO, the department heads, they give advice to the
14 mayor, but at the end it's my decision as CAO - CEO of
15 the city what direction we go.
16 So I know that there are some people that don't
17 work here anymore that are unhappy because they don't
18 work here anymore, but at the end of all that, I'm the
19 one who has to make the decision to keep them or let
20 them go. So I'm asking you as the CEO as the executive
21 part of this formal government and asking you as the
22 legislative branch of this government to let us work
23 together because we have wasted a lot of people's time
24 today with this two-hour meeting.
25 I'm so glad that the people, all these

1 all-employee email, he did not respond.
2 We have heard that there are all these avenues
3 for employees to go and, you know, make their grievances
4 heard, but we also know through emails that have been
5 published that the EEO officer doesn't keep those in
6 confidence. We know that. They forward the complaints
7 to the mayor's office. That is a fact.
8 We know from hearing from current employees who
9 have spoken and delivered statements, and we'll find out
10 more when we hear these recordings, that HR isn't the
11 best option. And like Mr. Locke said earlier, it's not
12 because of the individuals in HR; it's because of the
13 pressure they get from the top.
14 We know that the department heads can't really
15 look out for their employees because, as we are so
16 frequently reminded, they serve at the will and pleasure
17 of the mayor. So at the end of the day, they do what
18 they are told, or they have to risk losing their jobs.
19 We have heard from employees that vehicles that
20 are in the mayor's executive fleet have followed them
21 home away from their job. We also heard from a majority
22 of the city council who have stated publicly that the
23 same thing has happened. And we act like that's normal,
24 that someone should have the authority to dictate that
25 city taxpayer-funded vehicles going and following

1 employees, got a chance to communicate to you all. And
2 no matter what business that you are in, if you have
3 between 500 and 550 people, and at the end of all of
4 this that we've been going over for three or four months
5 you have two people that are not happy with their role
6 or have something that they have said to have been
7 created a hostile work environment, you know, those are
8 pretty good percentages. And I'll take them, and I'll
9 take the work that this administration and my team are
10 doing.
11 But I'm asking you guys -- This city can't move
12 unless we move together. And as far as I see it, the
13 seven of us are going to have to continue to work
14 together, and there's no way around it, for the next two
15 years. And we'll deal with 2021 when it comes, whoever
16 wants to deal with 2021, but I'm here to work for the
17 people. Thank you.
18 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Lindemann?
19 MR. LINDEMANN: I would completely reject the
20 idea that we have heard from everybody here today
21 because we couldn't even get an employee sent out -- I
22 mean an email sent out to every employee about this.
23 Many people around the city didn't even know this
24 meeting was happening today or that they had to sign up.
25 And when I asked the mayor would he send out an

1 someone to see where they're going and who they're
2 talking to. And we act like that's normal. That is a
3 hostile work environment.
4 If not for just those two employees, who I
5 would love to know, by the way, out of the nine people
6 who signed up, how each of those nine found out about
7 this meeting here today because again --
8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: They've got it on
9 the news.
10 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Yes, it was on the
11 news.
12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes, it was on
13 the news and (Indiscernible).
14 MR. LINDEMANN: And everyone knows that the
15 overwhelming ratings reach, you know, how many
16 thousands? How many employees were watching the news
17 that one night when it was on there?
18 (Several people speaking simultaneously -
19 Indiscernible.)
20 MR. JOHNSON: Order. Order. I find it really
21 funny that when -- (Indiscernible). I just want that to
22 be noted.
23 MR. LINDEMANN: That's a very good point. We
24 all know about the impersonation of a police officer
25 that is going on every single day, but we act like it's
normal. And that's coming from the mayor's executive
2 fleet, vehicles that were assigned to a department head
3 that are now assigned to a building inspector that has
4 blue lights on it and was even documented in a WTOK
5 interview, since we want to talk about news coverage.
6 But if you want to understand from the
7 council's perspective what this hostile work environment
8 looks like, you really have to look in a few places.
9 You could look in Facebook where there have been fake
10 pages created to edit my picture and attach bongs and
11 GIFs and memes about me to paint this picture that I'm,
12 you know, just not a credible person, or attacks at my
13 fellow council members created — manufactured through
14 this fake page that the CAO is behind.
15 And you could look at his emails because they
16 are available through the public records request that
17 you could do. And you have that right as a citizen.
18 You can read that all sorts of disparaging comments are
19 made about employees, they are made about council
20 members, and everything from being called a lunatic to
21 another employee to comments being made in reference to
22 something a council member may or may not have done in
23 which they are attempting to get them in some sort of
24 trouble with the ethics commission.
25 And you mentioned me and another citizen going

scores when they do an oral exam that's in front of an
2 examination board of people picked who almost entirely
3 serve at the will and pleasure of the mayor, and those
4 same people who get the low test scores will get an
5 interview over someone who got a higher test score.
6 We recently had a licensed architect apply for
7 a building code official position. Not only did they
8 get the lowest score on that oral exam in front of a
9 handpicked person, but the person who got the second
10 lowest score got an interview -- a follow-up interview
11 over someone who had a higher score.
12 These things go on, and you won't hear about it
13 because the employees won't come forward. I'm not
14 saying that people we heard from today -- I believe
15 there are people who have had nothing but good
16 interactions with the administration. But it's so much
17 easier to press your employees not to show up and not to
18 say anything than it is to pressure them to show up and
19 say something positive. This was stacked from the
20 beginning.
21 But that's over, and we can move on, and we
22 could conduct closed-door investigations as was
23 previously suggested. If we don't do that and y'all
24 just want to move on, I understand. But I'll close with
25 this because, while all this chaos goes on and has been

after you legally trying to get you arrested, while you
2 stood right there at that podium and pointed out the
3 exact same statute that claims that people up here
4 were guilty of something you, yourself, have done. Of
5 course, that's just hypocrisy, and I'm not surprised by
6 it.
7 And surely I'm not the only council member who
8 has received late-night text messages at 11:30 at night,
9 just harassment, just blatant -- just messing with me
10 before a work session, trying to get into my head. And
11 it's amusing, if nothing else, if not sad really.
12 I don't think that this was what any of us had
13 in mind when we talked about an investigation. We
14 talked about an investigation a year ago. I went back
15 and looked, and I think it was June 1st of last year we
16 talked about doing an investigation.
17 There are so many documents that can be
18 requested and payroll records. If you want to just
19 start with Civil Service, you could go downstairs as a
20 council member and read through the correspondence they
21 received, and you would know so much about how things
22 don't even get looked into when employees file some sort
23 of correspondence with Civil Service. They don't even
24 get looked into.
25 You could see that people who get low, low test

for two years just in the time that I've been around --
2 And it didn't take me long to begin to realize that,
3 even if I couldn't put my finger on it from the
4 beginning. But while all this chaos goes on, you have
5 to figure, if it's even 20 percent loss of productivity
6 in the city because of management, that's 5 million
7 dollars a year. And we talk about budget woes.
8 But if we just ignore very real management
9 issues while they are out telling people to track each
10 other down with Tahoos and use $80,000 of taxpayer
11 vehicles to act like they are FBI agents and give people
12 the power to be police officers when they are convicted
13 felons, then it's 5 million dollars wasted. Just think
14 about that.
15 MS. HOUSTON: Good morning, everybody. Again,
16 we appreciate those who have come out today. The
17 purpose of what we were here -- I've heard several
18 things and a few attacks against the three of us who
19 voted to move forward with this, but just for the
20 record, it was never our intention to be some kind of
21 witch hunt. And I've expressed this to the mayor.
22 My concern was that there were people calling
23 me and saying things. And as I have said in this
24 microphone over and over again, it's hard to fight
25 battles for invisible people. So we provided this
Again, I appreciate all of you all coming, but it is a serious thing for people to feel like they can't communicate, and that hurts our work and progress. So if we could just try to do those things and provide that environment, I think we all can move forward better together.

MS. JOHNSON: Thanks everybody for coming. I noticed the chief wanted to say something. So,

Mr. President, I'm going to yield my time to the chief.

CHIEF DUBOSE: Thank you. This hostile work environment issue that you are dealing with, you know, I don't know what goes on in City Hall, and I don't know who feels they are in a hostile work environment or what. That's not what I'm about to address. What I'm about to address is this impersonation of a police officer.

At the last council meeting, the comment was made not only by yourself but by a member of the audience that someone was impersonating a police officer, and it was on WTOK. I went back and researched WTOK's website, and the only thing I found was an inspection individual and Ms. Carmichael sitting at a table initially discussing a crackdown on cars and junk stuff in the neighborhood. And the story was done by Andrea Williams.

MR. MCALISTER: We have now verified three times about the vehicle in question. The vehicle in question does have white and red safety lights on it, the same as all other executive vehicles.

MR. THOMAS: I think it's interesting that we had this meeting the day after Memorial Day. It's a privilege to live in a country where we can have public hearings where people can voice their opinion.

About one and a half million people, citizens and non-citizens, gave their life in their duty to this country to give us the opportunity to have meetings like this. Whether we like them or don't like them is not the point. The point is, as a citizen of the United States of America, I'm privileged to live in a country where we can have people express their opinions and have meetings like this.

Again, the question is not whether you like it or don't like it. In other countries people never have the opportunity to voice their opinion concerning a public official or anyone else.

It's a sad day for Meridian, but, again, I'm glad we're living in a country where we can have this type of meeting when people can issue statements without consulting people, when people make accusations and aren't required to bring up the facts to back those up. We all have our opinions of what's right and what's wrong.

Again, I thank the people for coming. I thank the people here who've sat and listened. But, again, I'm thankful that we can even have this opportunity.

MR. JOHNSON: I don't believe it's a sad day for Meridian, nor do I believe that this meeting was a waste of time. Mr. Kevin Locke spoke up. And if he had been the only person that said anything, that's fine, but he has some closure for today. And you don't
1 yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, it has. I've seen it personally with myself.
2 CHIEF DUBOSE: Okay.
3 MR. JOHNSON: And when I go have these certain communications with people, you notice these things. And it's not as if they are trying to hide. You see it blatantly. Ma'am?
4 MS. HOUSTON: Never mind.
5 MR. JOHNSON: So pretty much just to move forward, I know we hear a lot of talk from people saying, you know, what we're doing as a council is damaging the city, and we can't get any jobs to come here. I don't know of any jobs for the last 30 years, and we haven't been in these seats but only two. So it's not us that's making these issues.
6 I think the EMBDC is working real well to try to get some jobs here, and I really appreciate that. And we are building communications with one another to move this city forward, but in order to do that someone has to communicate. And with this hearing (indiscernible) bottom line.
7 You guys can sit there and make those ugly statements that this council is being very arrogant or whatever the case may be. I disagree. You have a council that's at 20, 30, 40, 50, Dr. Thomas is 21, but...
1. You guys go on TV (indiscernible) as it relates to
2. Mr. Lindemann (indiscernible) means nothing. He's a
3. smart young man. (Indiscernible).
4. So is it going to be you guys really just
5. communicating with this council to see what we're going
6. to get done because ain't no one -- in all this, no one
7. said anything about the eight or nine killings that just
8. happened within the last two months. Nobody. In the
9. black community, there has been about nine to ten
10. killings and a lot of crime going on in our community,
11. but no one is speaking up on that.
12. But everybody in (indiscernible) let's support
13. this person, but nobody wants to talk about the
14. killings. Nobody wants to come up with a solution or a
15. (indiscernible) saying have we not brought a solution
16. to the council and see what we can do moving forward.
17. Ms. Rita Jackson is working pretty hard to get
18. some community neighborhood watches. But where are we
19. as it relates to the city where some of us live in these
20. high-crime areas? Where is the help for those
21. individuals? No one talks about that. We only talk
22. about what we want to talk about or who we want to
23. support, but I don't see a lot of the support made here
24. today coming in our neighborhoods. I don't see them
25. trying to figure out a way to help this education system

---

1. that's failing for our young men and women. I don't see
2. none of that.
3. But we're here to try to hurrah some things up
4. that's really useless. And I hate that it had to resort
5. to coming here, Mr. Richie, because I know that you and
6. your family have been through some tough times within
7. these few months. But our job as council is to be a
8. voice; not for someone to shut us up from that voice.
9. It's senseless.
10. So moving forward, I hope that we can act or
11. get along somehow for the betterment of the citizens of
12. Meridian. With that being said, I guess this meeting is
13. adjourned.
14. (Off the record.)
## PUBLIC HEARING
### CAO INQUIRY
#### TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2018 @ 9:15 A.M.

**PLEASE PRINT**

**IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK:**

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Chris Reed</td>
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<td>2. Oliver Whitted</td>
<td>City of Meridian Manit. Superv.</td>
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<td>3. Glen E. Bazard</td>
<td>City of Meridian Public Works</td>
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<td>4. Jim Broderick</td>
<td>City of Meridian Account Clerk</td>
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<td>5. Katie M. Ramsey</td>
<td>City of Meridian Street Dept</td>
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<td>6. Kevin M. Locke</td>
<td>Senior Planner Public Works</td>
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<td>7. Anthony Dornan</td>
<td>Shop Supervisor Public Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Julia Norman</td>
<td>Assistant to the Mayor/Executive</td>
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<td>9. Avis Aycock</td>
<td>Computer Programmer</td>
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This statement is presented in regards to my witnesses' account of employees being harassed and belittled under the direction of Richie McAlister and Percy Bland.

Scott Crenshaw was hired as the Grounds Superintendent in 2015. Mr. Crenshaw was 802 waived by Mayor Bland. In the summer of 2015, Chuck Butler was verbally threatening Scott Crenshaw at Sammy Davidson Softball complex. Mr. Crenshaw informed Percy Bland and Chuck Butler that the ball fields were not playable, because of the rain and the shape of the fields. Percy and Chuck Butler met with Mr. Crenshaw at Sammy Davidson. Mr. Crenshaw stated again that the fields weren’t able to be played on because of the rain and the possible damage to the fields. Chuck Butler went into a rage and verbal attack against Mr. Crenshaw, in the presence of Percy Bland. Chuck Butler threatened Mr. Crenshaw by using extreme profanity, informing Mr. Crenshaw, “I will shove a baseball bat up your ass, until it comes out of your mouth.” Not one time did Percy Bland intervene with Chuck Butler on behalf of Mr. Crenshaw, nor did Percy apologize to Mr. Crenshaw for the behavior.

Richie McAlister scheduled a meeting with Mr. Crenshaw at City Hall about issues at Planet Playground and what Richie Perceived to be interference. Mr. Crenshaw asked Kelvin McGruder to be in attendance at the meeting as well. Chrissie Walker was also in attendance. Richie starts off with a full blown tirade against Mr. Crenshaw for no apparent reason. Richie is raising his voice and using profanity toward Mr. Crenshaw about his involvement in Planet Playground. Mr. Crenshaw finally responds, “What are you talking about?” Richie accused Mr. Crenshaw of trying to get a revolution started in North Meridian to get parents to come before the council demanding they fix Planet Playground. Mr. Crenshaw was confused and stated, “You have your facts wrong, I only went to Planet Playground to inspect it at the request of McGruder and I met some people there who said they were willing to help and has some resources available through Mississippi Power.

Richie Continued belittling Mr. Crenshaw to the point that Mr. Crenshaw was red in the face and almost in tears as he stumbled with his responses. McGruder told Richie, enough is enough and asked Mr. Crenshaw to stand down and for Richie to allow McGruder to deal with Mr. Crenshaw.

Mr. Crenshaw asked after the meeting for McGruder to contact Percy Bland and explain to him his disbelief and his offense to how Richie handled the situation and his belittling and domatic approach. Percy Bland never reached out to Mr. Crenshaw, nor did he reprimand Richie. McGruder voiced his displeasure to Percy and Percy replied, “Mr. Crenshaw is a grown man, he will get over it.”

Mr. Crenshaw did not get over it. He contacted McGruder and said he was in disbelief that Percy had not reached out to him and upheld Richie’s unprofessional behavior. Crenshaw was devastated, and after speaking with his wife, delivered his resignation the next day.
No employee deserves this type of treatment. This is one of many examples of the administration not protecting their employees from mistreatment at the highest level of management and allowing a hostile work environment to be tolerated.
I regret that I am unable to attend the special council meeting on 5/28/19 at 9:30. My granddaughter is graduating on that date from high school on the MS Gulf Coast. I will make this as brief as possible without detail information. These statements are to the best of my knowledge true and uninfluenced by outside sources.

1. My first knowledge of the affair between Mayor Percy Bland and Stacy Tompsoon came when I went into the North Emergency Stairwell. I was carrying mail from the second floor to the Human Resources Office on the first floor to use the postage machine. The two were standing facing each other when I entered the stairwell. They backed away from each other and the Mayor ask me what I was doing. I told him and he ask me what was in my hand. I told him mail and he repeated himself over and over. I started descending the stairs with the Mayor following in behind me with Stacy beside him. He was so close that I could feel his breath as he started saying, what did you say. He repeated this and I replied. I was truly scared. A couple of days later there were gun shots fired in front of my home. I called the police and they arrived approx. 45 min later. The lady officer apologized and told me that she had ask permission from Chief Lee and he would not give it right away. After the shots I saw a black Tahoe back up into a dead end road. Several days after this happened I was walking my dog and a black Tahoe pulled up beside me, rolled down the window and said nothing. I told him to leave me alone that I was just walking my dog. He road off.

2. I was hit by a co-worker and then she slapped her hand over my mouth when I cried out. I was in my work cubical. Eugene Perry came out and I told him what had happened. At that point I was crying. He told me not to tell him just go upstairs. That meant to the EEO Officer. I did go upstairs and talked to Crissie Walker and nothing was done about this.

3. On a more recent occasion when Ralph Newman worked with us Shannah Beasly approached me with her hands in fist. She came at me then noticed Ralph Newman and backed off. If it were not for him she would have hit me. She was aggressive and coming at me. This was reported to Stacy Thompson. I told her that there was a witness and she said that she did not need his statement. Ralph Newman went to her office after several weeks of waiting to be called and gave his statement. Nothing was done so I called the EEO. The only heading that they could assign to my case was age related. That was unproven and case dismissed.
DURING THE EEOC CASE I WAS MOVED TO UNION STATION AND SHANNA GOT A RAISE. I ASK FOR A MEETING WITH CRISISS WALKER SO THAT I WOULD ASK HER A FEW QUESTIONS. I PUT THE QUESTIONS IN AN E-MAIL TO CRISISS AND SHE BECAME VERY ANGRY. WHEN I WAS MOVED I WAS TOLD THAT MY JOB DUTIES COULD STAY THE SAME THAT I WORKED ONLY FOR FINANCE AND RECORDS. WHEN I GOT TO UNION STATION THE EMPLOYEES THERE STARTED TELLING MY WHAT MY JOB DUTIES WERE OUT THERE. LAURAL CARMICHAEL WAS TOLD THAT I WAS COMING OUT THERE TO HELP THEM. DURING MY MEETING WITH CRISISS I WAS TOLD THAT I WAS OUT THERE BECAUSE OF THE EEOC DOCUMENTS. THERE WOULD BE NO PAY INCREASE NOR TITLE CHANGE. I WOULD DO MY WORK FROM FINANCE AND RECORDS AND THEN FOR FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A PROFESSIONAL COURTESY. I ASK IF THERE WOULD BE MONEY OR A CAR TO GO BACK AND FORTH TO CITY HALL. THEY DID ASSIGN ME AN OLD TRUCK THAT HAD BEEN USED TO TAKE PRISONERS TO SITES. THE TRUCK SMELLED SO BAD FROM SWEATY AND TROWING UP MEN AND WOMEN THAT I GOT SICK. THE TRUCK WAS CLEANED AND I USED IT UNTIL IT WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM ME TO BE USED IN PLANTING FLOWERS AROUND TOWN. AT ONE POINT, RICHIE MCALISTER CAME TO UNION STATION AND I ASK HIM HOW LONG I WOULD BE OUT THERE. HE SAID THAT THAT DEPENDED ON ME.

EUGENE PERRY, MY SUPERVISOR, CAME TO UNION STATION AND TOLD ME TO GO TO THE PUBLIC WORKS GARAGE AND WORK. I WENT TO THIS LOCATION WHERE THEY EMPLOYEES TOUGHT I WOULD BECOME THE NEW STOREKEEPER. I HAD NO TRAINING AND THROWN INTO A JOB THAT THE MAN BEFORE ME WENT BLIND AND WAS UNABLE TO TRAIN ME. HE LATER COMMITTED SUICIDE. I NOW WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR 3 LOCATIONS. I WAS STILL BEING TOLD THAT I WOULD WORK AT CITY HALL, UNION STATION AND THE GARAGE. AGAIN THERE WAS NO PAY INCREASE AND I HAD TO USE MY OWN CAR. AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS I WAS GIVEN A 2.25 RAISE.

I HAVE TAKEN AND PASSED THE TEST FOR STOREKEEPER BUT HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN THE TITLE NOR ANY ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR TRAVEL. I SPLIT MY TIME BETWEEN THE STOREKEEPER SPOT AND CITY HALL SPOT. I AM NO LONGER REQUIRED TO GO TO UNION STATION.

I MUST MENTION THAT I DO HAVE AUDIO OF THE MEETING WITH CRISISS WALKER AND LAURAL CARMICHAEL.

KATHRYN HIGGINBOTHAM
ACCOUNT CLERK FIANCE AND RECORDS
COUNTY OF LAUDERDALE
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

KATHRYN HIGGINBOTHAM, APPEARED BEFORE ME THIS THE 24TH DAY OF MAY, 2019, AND PRESENTED THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING DOCUMENT.

PATRICIA H HARBOUR
NOTARY PUBLIC

[Signature]

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
COUNTY OF LAUDERDALE
NOTARY PUBLIC
ID # 69936
Commission Expires May 22, 2023
February 20, 2019

Mr. McAlister,

On the morning of February 1, 2019, you came to my office at the Engineering Division of Public Works, and quizzed me about working at 3651 23rd Avenue. I acknowledged that I had been working on a private job at stated location. Without explanation, you told me I would need to get with Waste Pro and pay for disposal of debris located at the Brookshire lot.

As you may recall, I was perplexed as to what you were talking about. I was not aware of a Brookshire lot, nor any debris issues. You explained that I was working as a contractor, and that I was in noncompliance concerning my construction debris. Again, I was not sure what you were talking about.

You told me that construction debris that I had generated was noncompliant and is located at the Brookshire lot near the old Police Station. I replied that all construction debris that I generated was picked up by Waste Pro. You repeated that the debris was noncompliant. I explained that I had coordinated with Waste Pro concerning my construction debris and that it had already been picked up. You asked for details about who I talked to at Waste Pro, as well as when the construction bags were picked up. I pulled my construction folder and answered your questions. You finally told me “never mind” and that you would handle the bags of debris. That concluded our encounter, and you left the office.

I was in disbelief with your insinuation and what had just transpired, so much so, that I drove over to the Brookshire lot to verify for myself. To my surprise, there were the last of the four bags I put out for pickup; I assumed Waste Pro had taken them to the landfill approximately two weeks prior. At no time prior to this encounter was I contacted by Waste Pro or a city compliance officer concerning noncompliant construction debris. Also, when I inquired, no explanation could be provided by Waste Pro.

As of today, the bags were still at the Brookshire lot. I’m stillled puzzled that the construction debris that I coordinated for pick up with Waste Pro to be disposed at the landfill somehow ended up there. So that there is no misunderstanding, please provide an explanation as to the circumstances that led to my construction debris ending up on city property.

Respectfully,

Kevin Locke

3803 23rd Avenue
Richie McAlister

From: Kevin Locke <kevinlocke555@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 9:10 PM
To: Richie McAlister
Subject: Construction debris
Attachments: debris.pdf

Please see attachment.

Thank you,
Kevin

--
Fortress Shield II | Report SPAM
Deposition of:
Kevin Locke

September 23, 2019

In the Matter of:

Audio For City Of Meridian

Freedom Court Reporting
877.373.3660 | calendar-al@veritext.com | 205.397.2397
AUDIO RECORDING TRANSCRIPTION:
"KEVIN LOCKE CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS MEETING"
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

* * * * * * * *

TRANSCRIPTION OF AN AUDIO RECORDING,
transcribed by Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter,
on September 24th, 2019.

* * * * * * * *
(Audio recording begins as)

SPEAKER ONE: Hey, you doing all right?

SPEAKER TWO: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER ONE: Hey, man. You got a minute?

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah.

SPEAKER ONE: Let me holler at you real quick.

SPEAKER TWO: Okay.

SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible) 3651.

SPEAKER TWO: 3651.

SPEAKER ONE: 23rd Avenue.

SPEAKER TWO: Oh, the house, yeah.

Yeah.

SPEAKER ONE: Somebody called and complaining about building materials.

SPEAKER TWO: Okay.

SPEAKER ONE: Just -- to dump them at City Hall.

SPEAKER TWO: Okay. They did what now?

SPEAKER ONE: Dumped it at City Hall.

SPEAKER TWO: Dumped?

SPEAKER ONE: The building materials.

SPEAKER TWO: I don't know what you're talking about.

SPEAKER ONE: In tarps wrapped up paper (inaudible) paracords.

SPEAKER TWO: Okay.

SPEAKER ONE: Just call Waste Pro (inaudible) and get them dumped and (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: And you say they dumped them at City Hall? I have no idea what you're talking about.

SPEAKER ONE: All right. In front of the house, you had a bunch of plaster and stuff.

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: Just got to call Waste Pro and get it picked up (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. I talked to Waste Pro.

SPEAKER ONE: Yeah.

SPEAKER TWO: And they picked it up.

SPEAKER ONE: You might want to call Waste Pro and get them to pick up the building materials from City Hall, the plaster that was going to go to the landfill. (Inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: The insulation with some plaster on top.

SPEAKER ONE: Yeah.

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah.

SPEAKER ONE: Rather than it getting dumped and we pay the (inaudible), you need to call Waste Pro and get them to pick it up.

SPEAKER TWO: I already did that.

SPEAKER ONE: Not last week's amount. That's got (inaudible). And just call and tell them to pick it up and throw it away.

SPEAKER TWO: Who? Who's place?

SPEAKER ONE: Right in front of Brochure's - Brochure's lot.

SPEAKER TWO: What is it doing out there?

SPEAKER ONE: See, you don't have a dump trailer. You don't have a dump -- a dumpster, I'm assuming.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: I'm trying to do you a solid. I'm just telling you to pick them up. Just call Waste Pro and tell them to pick it up and charge it to me.

SPEAKER TWO: I already took care of all this with Waste Pro.

SPEAKER ONE: Okay. I'm talking about your fill materials from last week.

SPEAKER TWO: What was in -- wrapped up in plastic?

SPEAKER ONE: Plaster, insulation --

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: -- demo materials.

SPEAKER TWO: That was all taken care of. I coordinated that with Waste Pro.

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2 (Pages 2 - 5)
SPEAKER ONE: Okay. So you've already got it picked up?
SPEAKER TWO: Right.
SPEAKER ONE: At the Brochure's place?
SPEAKER TWO: They picked it up from the job site.
SPEAKER ONE: From the job site?
SPEAKER TWO: At 3651.
SPEAKER ONE: No. This is different. No, they said they didn't get called. Because I called them. I was trying to figure out where it was. They called the City office and they said we have construction materials that are getting dumped. And the guy said the boom truck was rocking on it. And he said it was wrapped up and they thought it was a leaves -- it was leaves.
SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.
SPEAKER ONE: It wasn't. It was construction materials.
SPEAKER TWO: Right. But that was all coordinated through Waste Pro.

SPEAKER ONE: Oh, well, it wasn't coordinated on what they have at City Hall.
SPEAKER TWO: You keep saying City Hall. I don't know what the City Hall is.
SPEAKER ONE: So rather than dumping it at the landfill, they brought it to City Hall because there was a complaint filed against you.
SPEAKER TWO: This is nonsense.
SPEAKER ONE: I said, This is nonsense.
SPEAKER TWO: I'm just telling you to pick it up. I'm not writing you up. I'm not giving you a warning. I'm just --
SPEAKER TWO: I mean, I'm just going to go back to Waste Pro and, say what's going on. I coordinated this with --
SPEAKER ONE: Who did you coordinate with?
SPEAKER TWO: (Inaudible).
havent had time to come talk to you.

SPEAKER TWO: Right. But I
coordinated with them, when they would
pick it up and how much it would be. And
they said there's an open account there,
that I could have four bags. I said, This
is construction material that I'm being
paid to do. How much to pay them to pick
it up? They said there's an open account
there. If you put four bags out, they'd
pick it up as --

SPEAKER ONE: The open account's at
the house, though.

SPEAKER TWO: What's that?
SPEAKER ONE: The open account's
(inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: Okay.

SPEAKER TWO: 3651.

SPEAKER ONE: 3651. Open account.

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: And it was on this
date? All right. And they told you four

bags. Well, good.

SPEAKER TWO: Four bags.

SPEAKER ONE: Because they picked
up -- the guy said -- that came by, they
said, We've got this construction
material. We've got a complaint called.
I didn't know what the hell was wrong. I
was like, what do you want. I thought it
was the City's construction stuff.

SPEAKER TWO: No. (Inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: We had a job going and
I said, Well --

SPEAKER TWO: (Inaudible) it was
$700 on the dumpster for all the shingles
and all the debris.

SPEAKER ONE: From the -- how long
ago did you talk to her on the four bags
that you could give them?

SPEAKER TWO: That's been -- it's
been in the last --

SPEAKER ONE: Because all I'm going
to do is I'm going to call them and say,
look, you told this individual that was
working there that he could have four
bags.

SPEAKER TWO: I went over there
and --

SPEAKER ONE: -- he had dumped two
bags prior. You need to be able to get
him to come pick these other two bags up.

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. The fact that
they went anywhere besides -- besides the
landfill -- that's my never-ending project
over (inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: That's an old house.

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. I think
we're -- let's see when I started that
phase.

SPEAKER ONE: Did you get, was it
four (inaudible) bags? Four bags a month?

SPEAKER TWO: Oh. Four bags --
let's see. Well, four bags every two
weeks. And let's see. I probably have
about dozen bags (inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: All right. So you're
good. You're good.

SPEAKER TWO: (Inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: Listen. You got two
bags in the last two weeks. That ain't
counting down the other bags they said
they we may (inaudible). You made one
other pickup. A pickup here and it was
two bags before that. That's three weeks.
So that means you ought to be able to
get -- drop two more bags out there with
the sign out. Four bags every two weeks?

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: You're good. Just --

SPEAKER TWO: (Inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: I'm just going to go
on and dump it -- since this is already
paid for, I'm just going to go ahead and
dump that in the dumpster I've got beside
(inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: See, there's no reason
why it was not picked up and went straight
to the landfill. And before I did the
project, I walked over here because I had
a -- I had a account already with the

4 (Pages 10 - 13)
dumpster. And I said I've got insulation.

   SPEAKER ONE: Yeah.

   SPEAKER TWO: And there'd be some
   other residual mixed in with it, and how
   much I piled off at one time, how much to
   just pick it up with the boom truck. And
   they said, Is there an open account. I
   said, It's an open account but that's the
   homeowner of the contractor.

   SPEAKER ONE: Right.

   SPEAKER TWO: And I said, I need to
   pay for this. And I talked to three of
   the ladies and then the manager, whatever
   his name is.

   SPEAKER ONE: Rodney?

   SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. And they said
   that if it was an open account, they could
   pick the bags up. And I said -- I said,
   I'm a contractor. I need to pay for this.

   They said --

   SPEAKER ONE: She's already got an
   open account at this location.

   SPEAKER TWO: At the location.

1  SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible).

   SPEAKER TWO: And they said, Put
   four bags out and they'll pick it up. I
   said, How big -- how big of a bag. And I
   said, These are, you know, these big
   insulation bags. And I said, there'll be
   some residual (inaudible) --

   SPEAKER ONE: You're -- you're in a
   (inaudible) now. You broke your Army out
   on them bags tying them at the corner.

   Paracord them up.

   SPEAKER TWO: -- keep them from
   dumping. And, you know, I figured in the
   disposals for the project.

   SPEAKER ONE: Just be wary of
   neighbors.

   SPEAKER TWO: Oh, I know.

   SPEAKER ONE: No. You're good. All
   right. Look. She already had that in
   that account, four bags every two weeks.

   They said that was -- they picked up two
   bags before but that was three weeks ago.

   This happened, I think, week before last?

   SPEAKER TWO: I started (inaudible).

   SPEAKER ONE: You're good. So -- so
   what I'm getting out right now is it's
   already paid for and it was already worked
   out with them. I'm just going to get
   the -- the City, when they come back
   through there with the boom truck --

   SPEAKER TWO: Yeah.

   SPEAKER ONE: -- I'm going to have
   them put that in our dumpster beside --
   beside the police station.

   SPEAKER TWO: Okay.

   SPEAKER ONE: All right.

   SPEAKER TWO: That was 5, November,
   and we started that -- started that day
   (inaudible). It was over like a two-month
   period.

   SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible) whole bag.

   SPEAKER TWO: That we had a couple
   of bags and everything else. And just
   stuff goes in a regular trash bag.

   SPEAKER ONE: I'm going to get them
to dump in the small dumpster then beside
   the P.D.

   SPEAKER TWO: All right.

   SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible).

   SPEAKER TWO: Oh, they're doing
   good. They're going to be -- Chris will
   be here Tuesday to prepare his report.

   And he's starting to Kia. He's going to
   send me the speaking points. So I'll send
   that to you and Hugh. They do have one
   question about a light they're putting up
   over at Union Station. Laura had a
   question about (inaudible) so I'm going to
   meet with her and -- and may just leave
   the same globe and change the light --

   SPEAKER ONE: Ballroom.

   SPEAKER TWO: -- (inaudible).

   SPEAKER ONE: Okay.

   SPEAKER TWO: And leave the fixture
   the way it is.

   SPEAKER ONE: You already know what
   they're going to say? You feel good about
   it?

   SPEAKER TWO: Oh, yeah. I mean,
it's all a -- just a feel good.

SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible) between us, I mean, everybody (inaudible) work.

You know what I'm talking about? That's right. Don't worry about nothing.

SPEAKER TWO: All right.

SPEAKER ONE: It's between me and you. Thank you.

(End of audio recording.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
TANGIPAHOA PARISH

I, Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter, hereby certify that I transcribed the audio recording contained herein and that pages 2 through 18 contain a true and accurate transcription, to the best of my ability, of the proceedings on the audio/video recording.

I further certify that I am neither kin nor counsel to any of the parties to said cause nor in any manner interested in the results thereof.

This the 24th day of August, 2019.

Jennifer S. Ayers, Court Reporter

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Deposition of:
Bunky Audio Recording

September 23, 2019

In the Matter of:
Audio For City Of Meridian

Freedom Court Reporting
877.373.3660 | calendar-al@veritext.com | 205.397.2397
AUDIO RECORDING TRANSCRIPTION:
"3/30/17 BUNKY MDA LANDSCAPING QUOTES - KEVIN
LOCKE PERSONNEL ISSUE - COPY"
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

* * * * * * * * *

TRANSCRIPTION OF AN AUDIO RECORDING,
transcribed by Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter,
on September 24th, 2019.

* * * * * * * * *
(Audio recording begins as
follows:)

SPEAKER ONE: So they met with Kevin
and Kevin got a quote from them. He
remembered to turn his silent quote in.

SPEAKER TWO: Uh-huh.

SPEAKER ONE: It's an open quote.
And he says, This is too high.

SPEAKER TWO: Uh-huh.

SPEAKER ONE: We needed to
(inaudible) some off.

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: Right after that, you
called me. We came over here and we
called Eric.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible). Me and
you talked to Eric and said, Eric, we want
you to handle downtown. Take care of
downtown.

SPEAKER TWO: And so you threw them
other quotes out?

SPEAKER ONE: The quotes are -- I
mean, we've gotta (inaudible) because
Kevin (inaudible) said they was too high
(inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO:  Mm-hm.
SPEAKER ONE:  So I said, okay. He
said, Eric Stubbs (phonetic) never turned
in one. I said, okay. So you know, we
said -- he told me, he said, let Eric take
care of downtown.

SPEAKER TWO:  Mm-mm. I thought --
you got two quotes already, and you said
they were $50 apart and you were going to
go get a third quote from Eric, even
though it fell underneath the $50,000
threshold.

SPEAKER ONE:  Right. So we came
over here and met with Eric. Eric was
going to go get the plans, give us a quote
and do downtown. So I said, okay. So
Eric come back on (inaudible) with a quote
that he had. I said, Eric, you've got to
be under what these other quotes are. He
said, Well, tell me what they are. I
said, No. I said, You just -- so again I said, Eric, I need another quote. And Eric says, I'll take care of that.

So we come back, he was under that (inaudible) quote (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: So you ended up getting four quotes then, right?

SPEAKER ONE: I really got four quotes. So Eric was lower than all of them.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: So I sent them -- and I brought them two quotes over here this morning to each of them. I said, (inaudible) Eric Stubbs and here's this other one, Smith something.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm. You bring him them other two quotes you had?

SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible). So I had them two quotes. So I took them to Eugene, and Eugene sent them to Bill. So Bill calls me, he says (inaudible) something (inaudible) right with this. I
said, well let me tell you exactly what
happened. But I went on and told him, I
said, I got these other two quotes, but
they're going to be higher than what
Eric's are.

Send them to me. I said, They're
higher than what Eric is. So I said, all
right, we'll scan them and send them to
you. So he says, I'll take care of this.
That's what Bill said.

SPEAKER TWO: All right. Well, he
just wrote back ten minutes later.

SPEAKER ONE: He needs to throw them
other two quotes just completely out and
just use the ones from Eric and that Smith
guy. That's -- he don't need to work with
them other two (inaudible) and just
(inaudible). Now, who sent this to the
State Auditor (inaudible)? What's his
name? Robbie?

SPEAKER TWO: I don't even know.

SPEAKER ONE: Because the figure in
the state audit is the exact figure that
Ronnie bid on, to the P. $45,055. So all
he's got to do, bill's got to write and
say here it is right here. It wasn't
(inaudible) that sent this shit. It was
Robbie (inaudible). Had to have been with
that exact quote.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm. But on top of
that other quote, I remember -- I remember
getting a -- it was a PO that we said
absolutely not because on top of that, it
was $13,000 worth of trees that the City
was going to have to purchase, and he was
bidding on labor. The quotes were for
labor this whole time.

SPEAKER ONE: Well, what -- what
Kevin told me, he said, that's about $600
to dig a hole to put a tree in. He said,
we ain't going with that. That's what
Kevin said. Next time I (inaudible) he
said next time, he said, you know, labor
might not be that high. So he done talked
to Robbie and was working things out.
They tell him, he said, No, that's too
high.

So Bill needs to handle that part. So let me tell you what's going on now.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: I take Kevin riding with me yesterday. I said, Kevin, come ride with me. We're going to -- I want to show you something. So we rode down to Union Station. I said, Kevin, this is your new office.

What do you mean?

Kevin, you've asked to work on Urban Forestry. You and I and Hugh and Kelvin (phonetic) have met the effort. We want you to manage the trees, our forests and stuff like that. You know him. He was happy about doing this.

I want you to come back to work with us.

So he says, Well, I don't like this. I said, Well, I understand that, Kevin, but I'm assigning you down here.
SPEAKER TWO: Did you talk to Will about it before you did anything?

SPEAKER ONE: No. I called Will when I got back and said, Will, this is what's going on. I said, Kevin wants me to put something in writing. And I said, I'm not for putting something in writing because I don't have to. I'm not transferring any work. It's just geographically, I'm moving him. That's still under me down there at Union Station. I'm just looking (inaudible).

Kevin comes to see me this morning after he's over here for two hours with Stacey upstairs.

SPEAKER TWO: I thought he was upstairs.

SPEAKER ONE: Two hours with Stacey upstairs.

SPEAKER TWO: Oh, he's got him a problem now.

SPEAKER ONE: So he comes to me a while ago and says, I'm not going to Union
Station unless you give me something in writing. I said, All right. Sit right there, Kevin. So I brought Laura in so she could be a witness.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: So I said, Kevin, as Director of Community Development, I am directing you to go to Union Station to an office down there to work on Urban Forestry. I said, Are you denying that request? He says, I'm denying that, if you do not give me a letter telling me I'm going down there. He said, I've been advised to get a (inaudible) letter from you. I said, Thank you, Kevin. He gets up and walks out.

I called Will.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: I called Will on Sunday when I got back from lunch. (Inaudible). So Will says to not do it. But me, okay, I've asked you to, I am requesting that you go to Union Station to
work on Urban Forestry. That's it.

SPEAKER TWO: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER ONE: Take your ass down there. Now, what else can you (inaudible)? I've looked in every civil service (inaudible). They don't say if I'm don't change this title, if I don't reduce this pay, lower his rank whatsoever, I can put him where the hell I want to now.

I brought Maurice (phonetic) up from Union Station and put her in a office down there and I didn't give her a letter. Now, a union contract for the firefighters, if you move them from station to station, you have to give them a letter with (inaudible) --

SPEAKER TWO: Right.

SPEAKER ONE: -- days notice. So Kevin's playing a game now.

SPEAKER TWO: Well, I (inaudible).

SPEAKER ONE: Ain't that stupid shit?
SPEAKER TWO: Man, it's like high school.

SPEAKER ONE: So I'm waiting for Will to call me back.

SPEAKER TWO: All right.

SPEAKER ONE: But I'm just (inaudible) the letter said, okay, here they moved to Union Station or I'm asking you to transfer to Union Station or I'm directing you to work in an office at Union Station in Urban Forestry. That's it. Make it short and sweet. Don't give him a lot of stuff because we're (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: Man, been a hell of a day.

SPEAKER ONE: It's been a hell of a fucking day. Yesterday was like that too, so.

Maurice is pissed because I asked her to help me out in co-enforcement because she just don't have enough to do managing Union Station there (inaudible).
So she said that she had another job. She ain't going to be able to do it. So I'm trying to help her find another job. I don't -- we don't need a Union Station manager. Laura can do that just like (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: It's actually in a plan, the plan or job description.

SPEAKER ONE: Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

SPEAKER TWO: So I feel -- feel good about it. I mean, I knew we are good on everything with the quotes beforehand. Your fellow meets the $50,000 threshold. You've gotten quotes for the City paying $13,000 for the trees. They were only 50 apart. Showed some collaboration. You then took out the $13,000 for the trees. Got two quotes.

SPEAKER ONE: He said he would never let it go through if it wasn't (inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: And you went and got
two quotes with trees and landscaping
material included, which still fell
underneath the $50,000 threshold.

SPEAKER ONE: The $50,000 threshold.

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah.

SPEAKER ONE: And that's all
handled. So you don't need to worry about
them other two things.

SPEAKER TWO: Okay.

SPEAKER ONE: They're out of it
because Kevin come to me and said, That's
too much money. We don't need to deal
with this. So I'm good with that.

SPEAKER TWO: All right.

SPEAKER ONE: Bill just needs to
handle that. But I'll just wait to hear
from Will before I do something with
Kevin.

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. Make sure you,
you know, protect yourself.

SPEAKER ONE: Because we're running
(inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: Make sure it's
straight.

SPEAKER ONE: (Inaudible) he ain't after my ass. (Inaudible).

SPEAKER TWO: Nah. One of them things, man.

SPEAKER ONE: Well, what's going to happen with him, we're going to end up suspending him, and then we'll terminate (inaudible). What's he going to say when I hand him the letter? I still ain't going?

SPEAKER TWO: I don't know.

SPEAKER ONE: You ain't working here no more (inaudible).

What else is going on?

SPEAKER TWO: Three Foot's going good.

SPEAKER ONE: They have a meeting this morning?

SPEAKER TWO: Yeah. Got Bobby and Joey Signs (phonetic) from the Governor's office wanted an update. He said he'd call so I don't know if he it got pushed
back. But Joe (Phonetic), Ellen
(phonetic), Hensley (phonetic), they are
moving offices. But folks from the
Natural Resource Network are going to talk
to them, as well. So they're going to
talk to her and then the Governor's office
is going to work from the top down with
the Trump Administration. So he was
briefed about that. Looks like it's going
to, you know --

SPEAKER ONE: Yeah.
SPEAKER TWO: -- they'll approve it
slowly but surely.
SPEAKER ONE: All right, brother.
SPEAKER TWO: Hang in there, man.
SPEAKER ONE: Well, I'll let you
know (inaudible) when I talk to Will.
SPEAKER TWO: All right, brother.
SPEAKER ONE: All right.
SPEAKER TWO: Thank you, man.
SPEAKER ONE: All right.
(End of audio recording.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA
TANGIPAHOA PARISH

I, Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter, hereby certify that I transcribed the audio recording contained herein and that pages 2 through 15 contain a true and accurate transcription, to the best of my ability, of the proceedings on the audio/video recording.

I further certify that I am neither kin nor counsel to any of the parties to said cause nor in any manner interested in the results thereof.

This the 24th day of August, 2019.

[Signature]

JENNIFER S. AYERS, COURT REPORTER
AudioTranscription

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4 AUDIO RECORDING TRANSCRIPTION:
5 "SCOTT CRENSHAW, McGRUDER"
6 DECEMBER 17, 2019
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11 TRANSCRIPTION OF AN AUDIO RECORDING,
12 transcribed by Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter,
13 on December 17, 2019.
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(Audio recording begins as
follows:)

MR. CRENSHAW: I'm sorry.
(Inaudible). I apologize.
ATTORNEY1: Nice to see you, man. You good?

SPEAKER: How are you?

ATTORNEY1: Grab my notebook here.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

ATTORNEY1: All right, guys. All right. We're still -- still dealing with the Planet Playground and the problems associated with it. And I wanted to ask you, Coach, you -- you haven't talked to anybody? In talking to you yesterday, you said that you didn't talk to -- to any women? You didn't speak to anyone about the Planet Playground?

MR. CRENSHAW: Two people.

ATTORNEY1: Okay.

MR. CRENSHAW: McGruder gave me a homework assignment, and it was to help the youth's -- he told me that you had a plan for Planet Playground and you needed some assistance in getting some materials. And so my homework assignment was this, to call Lowe's and find out how much per cubic yard it would be for ADA playground materials. So I did that at 8:15 yesterday morning.

Number two, he told me to go out to Planet Playground. And so I went out there at 9:05 yesterday, and he told me to count the number of poles out there. I
counted 62. Okay. But some of them are cut short, but I counted 62.

ATTORNEY1: All right. We'll -- we'll deal with that in a second.

MR. CRENSHAW: But no. This has got to be -- this has got to be -- you've got to hear this.

ATTORNEY1: Okay.

MR. CRENSHAW: Okay? And so at 9:15 I called McGruder back and said, I counted 62 poles. He said, Call the guy from Community Connection, whose affiliated with Mississippi Power and tell him that we would like to know how to get 62 poles donated. And so I called this man named Richie Down (phonetic) and said, we're trying to do a Planet Playground. What do we do to get 62 poles?

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: And he said, I'll have to go to the Gulfport office. And I said, Okay. Hung up the phone. Okay?

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: Told McGruder it was (inaudible). So I went back to the office. Went to two ball fields. And then at approximately -- and I wrote down the time. I got a phone call at 10:30 yesterday from a woman by the name of
Diane Quick. And she called me and said,
I am tired of all this, the Planet
Playground. What are you going to do to
fix it?

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: Now, why she called

me, I don't know.

ATTORNEY1: Right.

MR. CRENSHAW: And so here's my
response to her. I said, I am not at
liberty to say I'm the grounds
superintendent.

ATTORNEY1: And that's exactly what
you said to her?

MR. CRENSHAW: That's exactly.

ATTORNEY1: Okay.

MR. CRENSHAW: And here's -- and
here's what else I said to her. I said,
There's three people that you need to
call.

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: My boss, Kelvin
McGruder (phonetic), the CAO, Richie
MCAilster (phonetic), and your councilman.
And I asked who her councilman was. She
said, Dr. George Thomas (phonetic).

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: I said, that's what
you need to do. And she called Kelvin
McGruder yesterday afternoon and verified everything I just said.

ATTORNEY1: Okay. All right. This is your text message yesterday: We'll be there with McGruder. Wanted me to call. Need to know what this is about. I did not call Mississippi Power. I sure did not meet with any women. I did what McGruder asked me to do. Call me Richie, if you can.

All right. Now, that says right there you didn't meet with any women.

MR. CRENSHAW: No.

ATTORNEY1: But that's not what you're telling me now. You're telling me now you did speak with two women but.

MR. CRENSHAW: Wait a minute. There's a difference between speaking on the phone and meeting.

ATTORNEY1: Yesterday you said, I didn't talk to anybody --

MR. CRENSHAW: Don't cross my words.

ATTORNEY1: -- I did not call anybody from Mississippi Power. That's what you said.

MR. CRENSHAW: I did what he told me to do.

ATTORNEY1: You didn't write that
and tell me that yesterday. When I called
McGruder and I said, McGruder, did you
send Crenshaw to go talk to anybody at
Mississippi Power. You said, No, I did
not.

MR. McGruder: You said, Did I know
Mr. Crenshaw would ask me (inaudible)
Mississippi Power (inaudible).

Attorney1: Okay. And you said no?

MR. Crenshaw: I did not (inaudible)
(inaudible crosstalk).

Attorney1: Okay. All right. Okay.
All right. So this is where we're at
right now. George Thomas came by
yesterday, and he said that he'd got a
call from a lady. And she was calling him
to let him know that they were about to
create a Facebook page called Moms for

Planet Playground. She had spoken to
Scott Crenshaw, and she said that you told
her that Richie McAlister was keeping you
from realizing your vision and addressing
the park.

MR. Crenshaw: That is not true.

Attorney1: Okay. So Dr. Thomas is
lying, there?

MR. Crenshaw: No, he's not lying.

She might've said that.

Attorney1: Okay.

MR. Crenshaw: But I didn't say
that.

ATTORNEY1: Let's move on to something else. Talked to Eddie Kelly (phonetic), President of Mississippi Power yesterday. He calls me back this morning after he talked to Richard Denim (phonetic). He's -- Richard Denim states that he went and spoke to him and requested around $300,000. He then negotiated it down to 120. And when it didn't get to that money, it came down to

you seeing if they would come and speak to the City Council to try to get us to move forward.

Now, that's the President of Mississippi Power. But that's -- that is the conversations that have taken place between the President of Mississippi Power, Vice President of the Council, and that's where we're at right now. But --

MR. CRENSHAW: You want to answer this one, McGruder?

MR. MCGRUDER: I don't believe that --

ATTORNEY1: Okay.

SPEAKER: -- (inaudible) building (inaudible) to come and get Russell (phonetic) out and helping with the Planet Playground and the Community (inaudible).
ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

SPEAKER: He had (inaudible). We knew that it would take about that much. That's was -- that was (inaudible).

ATTORNEY1: Well, then you mean

y'all never sent $300,000 to them?

MR. CRENSHAW: Here's what happened right there. I'm going to tell you exactly what happened. McGruder wanted me to schedule a meeting with a designer from Shreveport from Planet Recess. So he came up and met with the Parks and Recreation with McGruder and myself in a meeting. And so McGruder asked him, said, How much would it cost to build a playground and fix all the playgrounds in Meridian? I'm just sitting at the meeting supporting my department head. And the man said $300,000. And then -- and then McGruder said, well, we don't have $300,000. So he said, well, is there anybody who would -- in the business community here who would maybe want to donate, you know, a part of that on (inaudible) just donate (inaudible).

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: And so McGruder -- we agreed. He said, Call Richie and see if
AudioTranscription

this if Ms. (Inaudible) would want to get
involved with this. So at this point, I
didn't know that you were involved or
anybody else. Me and him were just
meeting. And so I called Richie and said,
You know, we want to do this but we want
to do this as a community project and let
everybody, you know, get involved.

ATTORNEY1: So you did tell him
$300,000.

MR. CRENSHAW: So here's what I
said, he said, how much would it cost.
And I said, well, the designer said
$300,000. And I said, I don't have any
control over the (inaudible). You know,
you do. Make any contacts you want. So
he calls me back and said he called this
person that you just said and said that
they spent all the allocated money for
this year for charitable work, that they
can't do it. And I said, well, okay. And
that's it.

ATTORNEY1: All right. Let's go

back to the text message here. We'll be
there with McGruder. Need to know what
this is about. I did not call Mississippi
Power. I sure did not meet with women.
And did what McGruder asked me to do.

In there when it says Didn't meet
AudioTranscription
with Mississippi Power, didn't speak to
any women, that -- that doesn't sound like
the same thing what I'm hearing today,

though.

MR. CRENSHAW: Mm-mm. And see --
ATTORNEY1: And this is your text
message we're reading right here.

MR. CRENSHAW: Well, let -- let's
just get one thing straight.

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: Now, I'm going to
swear to tell the truth, man to man.

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: Number one, I'm a
Christian. I'm a preacher of the Gospel
of Jesus Christ.

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: And I hold my
integrity more than I hold my life.

ATTORNEY1: Mm-hm.

MR. CRENSHAW: I don't lie, and I
don't twist the truth.

ATTORNEY1: Okay.

MR. CRENSHAW: The truth is this,
when I got to our customer service meeting
yesterday, I got a call from McGruder.
And he said that you accused me -- and I
don't like that word accused.

ATTORNEY1: All right.

MR. CRENSHAW: So --
ATTORNEY1: That's the other thing too. The conversation ends right here. I didn't accuse. I requested a conversation. Now you're saying accused. Did I accuse him or did I ask you.

SPEAKER: Asked me.

ATTORNEY1: That's exactly right. Now you're saying accused. The conversation ends right now. We'll discuss this later.

(End of audio recording.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA
TANGIPAHOA PARISH

I, Jennifer Ayers, Court Reporter, hereby certify that I transcribed the audio recording contained herein and that pages 2 through 14 contain a true and accurate transcription, to the best of my ability, of the proceedings on the audio recording.

I further certify that I am neither kin nor counsel to any of the parties to said cause nor in any manner interested in the results thereof.

This the 17th day of December, 2019.

<%18420,Signature%>
JENNIFER S. AYERS, COURT REPORTER