

FROM Robert Samuel White

TO [Volunteer Services Lead]; [Park Supervisor]; [Park Manager]; [Program Manager];
Director Lisa Sumption

CC Deputy Director JR Collier; Interim Director Stefanie Coons; OPRD Commissioners;
Governor Kotek; [Kotek Campaign Chair]

DATE March 4, 2026, 10:43 PM PT

SUBJECT **March 5, 2025**

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On March 5, 2025, [Park Manager] and [Park Supervisor] sat across from a gay volunteer at a public picnic table for 62 minutes.

He was unpaid.

He had no union.

He had no HR access.

He had no recourse.

He had no one there to protect him from what was about to happen.

So he
recorded it.

[0:00] [Park Manager] opened with praise. "You've been doing a great job at the Welcome Center." A lost and found drum. Procedures followed correctly. He listed what I had done right before the coercion began.

He did not mention the double shift. I did. I brought up working the hours alone, staying past my shift to help a woman find a campsite. He confirmed it and moved on.

A great job. And yet here we are. That is how this meeting began. Softening before pressure. False goodwill before coercion.

[0:44] "I care about this place."

He said: "That's good. That's what I mean. I think all of us do."

A volunteer who cared about the park. That is who they sat across from at that table.

[1:24] [Park Manager] asked if there was anything I wanted to discuss before he began. I told him I'd like to hear what he had to say.

I said nothing. I let him talk. I was already on guard.

That is what it looks like when someone walks into an ambush and knows it.

Note: Three weeks later, [Program Manager] opens her call the same way. This is a pattern. It will be documented.

[1:49] [Park Manager] frames the meeting as a support structure. His role as park manager, he said, was to set people up for success. To provide expectations. To help volunteers navigate.

This is the frame they will use later to justify what they did. Not a coercive meeting. Not retaliation for documentation. A routine expectations conversation with a volunteer who couldn't meet them.

That framing is on tape. So is everything that follows it.

Note: [Program Manager] will directly reference this meeting as when expectations were set.

[2:53] [Park Manager] told me he had seen correspondence from me that led him to believe I felt unsupported. And then — in the same breath — that he had seen things from me that were not supportive of the crew.

He had a list. Talking points. A single piece of paper in front of him. He looked at it often.

This is the moment I knew with certainty. This was not a support meeting. This was not about expectations. This was an ambush.

[3:29] "Okay. I'm listening."

[3:52] His first observation: that I had expressed dissatisfaction with multiple members of the crew. Himself. [Park Supervisor]. [Volunteer Services Lead]. [Park staff]. [Park staff].

I told him directly: I don't agree with that.

He did not engage with my disagreement. He acknowledged it and steamrolled past it.

That is not a conversation. That is a verdict being read.

[4:39] I explained. I told him I had never criticized him. Never criticized [Park staff].

He stopped me: "You don't have to agree with it."

He was not there to find out what was true. He was there to deliver a predetermined conclusion. My disagreement was irrelevant. My corrections did not count.

That is on tape.

[5:11] [Park Manager] described his first confrontation with me directly after the original incident with [Park Supervisor] as a normal conversation. The kind he would have with anybody. He said it didn't sit well with me. He said they rectified it through email.

This is where he begins building his cover. He is not describing what happened. He is constructing a narrative in which I am someone who cannot handle normal management conversations. Someone who has issues with staff. Someone who keeps needing to be corrected.

He is laying the foundation. Everything that follows will be built on it.

That first confrontation is already documented. What it actually was is already in the record.

[5:33] [Park Manager] stated his second observation: that there was a trend. That when someone gave me guidance or feedback, I interpreted it as them not trusting me or thinking me incapable.

He stated this as fact. It was a fabrication. It is on tape.

He then said I had requested a certain ranger not lead my orientation.

That is not what happened. I spoke to [Volunteer Services Lead]. I told him [Park staff] was condescending toward me in every interaction. [Volunteer Services Lead] told me [Park staff] would train me. I took him at his word.

I reported what [Volunteer Services Lead] told me. [Park Manager] reframed that as me making demands.

[6:18] "My understanding with that is that [Volunteer Services Lead] was saying that he would look into it — it wasn't like a guarantee."

I told him that was not what happened. He pushed back. I told him again. That is not what happened.

I had to say it multiple times before he acknowledged it.

A park manager, on tape, requiring a volunteer to repeat the truth several times before moving on. Not because he didn't hear it. Because the lie was more useful to him than the truth.

[6:26] He then says "this isn't an argument." Twice.

That is what you say when the truth is inconvenient and you need to move past it. Not because the matter is settled. Because he needed it to be.

I say nothing. Because I'm not arguing. I already knew the tape would show exactly what this was.

[6:38] "That's all we could ask for."

But.

He acknowledged I had done exactly what was asked of me. I attended the training. No issue. Great. Awesome.

And then immediately pivoted to use my documentation of [Park staff]'s condescension against me.

"That's all we could ask for" lasted one breath.

[6:59] [Park Manager]'s evidence that I had a problem with [Park staff]: that [Park staff] had said "I'm here to support you" and repeated it multiple times over the course of an hour.

I told him directly — that wasn't the main point. I navigated [Park staff]. I didn't have an issue with [Park staff]. [Park staff] was easy to navigate.

The problem was that [Volunteer Services Lead] lied to me. That is a fact.

They came to that table with [Park staff]'s name on a list. What they had was a ranger who over-explains. What they tried to build from it was evidence of a pattern. That is what they were doing. Making something out of nothing to fill a case that wasn't there.

[7:33] [Park Manager]'s own account confirms it. [Park staff] was out sick. [Volunteer Services Lead] came to [Park Manager]. [Park Manager] told [Volunteer Services Lead] — regardless — [Park staff] was doing the orientation.

[Volunteer Services Lead] knew. [Volunteer Services Lead] told me [Park staff] would train me.

[Park Manager] is on tape confirming that [Volunteer Services Lead] made a commitment he had no authority to make and no intention of keeping. And then both of them used my response to that lie as

evidence against me.

It is on tape. [Park Manager] put it there himself.

[8:13] [Park Manager] said he heard nothing from [Park staff] that suggested he was unsupportive. That [Park staff] was just offering help.

I said he was very polite. Because he was. I had no problem with [Park staff].

That is on tape. The person they were using as evidence against me was someone I just described as very polite.

[8:36] [Park Manager] keeps pressing the same non-issue. I say: "Look, I don't know what you want me to say. I have already said — I navigate him. Like I do everybody."

There was nothing left to argue. I had described [Park staff] as polite. I had said I navigated him easily. I had explained exactly what I reported to [Volunteer Services Lead] and why. I had confirmed [Volunteer Services Lead] made the commitment. I had attended the training without complaint.

There was no problem with [Park staff]. There never was. They brought him to that table anyway.

[9:12] Nine minutes in. The only thing we had discussed was [Park staff].

I had called him polite. I had said I navigate him like I do everybody. I had said I don't know what you want me to say. I had confirmed I attended the training without issue.

And [Park Manager] looked at all of that and said: "So I understand you have a conflict with [Park staff]."

He was not listening. He was not there to find out what was true. He had a narrative and he was going to deliver it regardless of what I said.

That is on tape. Nine minutes of it.

[9:22] "It sounds like you have an understanding of maybe what some triggers are for you."

My self-awareness — my ability to recognize a dynamic and navigate it professionally — reframed as a psychological liability. A trigger. Something to be managed.

I disagreed. I told him I wouldn't call it a trigger. I recognize the way [Park staff] talks to me. I don't think he's conscious of it. I navigate it. That is not a trigger. That is a professional handling a situation.

He heard that and said: "Fair enough."

Then kept going.

[10:36] I gave him the actual examples. "Don't get your hopes up" — said twice, about the schedule, unprompted. A guest situation I had to escalate, where I called everyone including [Park staff], and when he arrived he described the entire call log back to me like I hadn't just done it myself.

That is what condescending looks like. Not a conflict. Not a trigger. That.

[Park Manager]'s response: that's just [Park staff]. [Park staff] loves communication. [Park staff] likes to overcommunicate.

Ten minutes of my time at that table to arrive at: [Park staff] is being [Park staff].

I already knew that. I said that. I navigated it. That was never the point.

The point — the only point — was that [Volunteer Services Lead] lied to me. That is what I came to that table having documented. That is what never got addressed. Not once. Not ever.

[12:12] [Park Manager] told me I needed to handle [Park staff] differently. Have a conversation with him. Be more direct.

I told him: I say "we're good, [Park staff]." That is direct. That is appropriate. That is exactly what you do when someone is overcommunicating and you need to close the loop.

His response: it's not what you say, it's how you say it.

I am a volunteer. I am navigating a condescending ranger by saying "we're good" in a pleasant tone. That is the correct response. That is the professional response.

And I named it directly: "You guys don't like it when I'm direct."

He did not answer that. He pivoted to how I was saying it.

They put the responsibility for [Park staff]'s behavior on me. On tape.

[12:52] To illustrate his point about tone, [Park Manager] — a park manager, in a meeting with a volunteer — used the phrase "shut the fuck up."

His example for how I should communicate with [Park staff]: the difference between telling a camper to shut the fuck up and introducing yourself politely.

I had said "we're good, [Park staff]."

That is the comparison he made. On tape. Thirteen minutes in. Still discussing a non-issue with a ranger I called polite, navigated professionally, and never had a conflict with.

[13:18] I told him I had already been thinking about how to address it with [Park staff] myself. I had been working on it. Unprompted. On my own time.

That is who they were sitting across from at that table. Someone already doing the work they were pretending hadn't been done.

[13:51] [Park Manager] spent two minutes explaining paraphrasing.

To a volunteer he had just called quick. Someone he said got it immediately.

He was explaining basic communication technique to someone who didn't need it, in a meeting that had nothing to do with [Park staff], fourteen minutes in.

[14:29] I told him again. I have never had a confrontation with [Park staff]. Every interaction has been respectful.

He said: that's good.

I said I was not his normal volunteer. I said it because I was trying to explain myself to someone who had already decided who I was. I was trying to find a way in. Any way in.

There wasn't one. Fourteen minutes. Still [Park staff].

[15:11] [Park Manager] pivoted to my emails. That was the real issue.

I explained it directly. I have been a freelancer my entire life. Email is how I communicate. I document. I put things in writing. I knew this was different in a state agency context and I was actively trying to adapt. I had even been trying to talk to [Volunteer Services Lead] instead of emailing.

I was telling them I was adjusting. I was meeting them where they were.

That is on tape.

And those emails — the ones they hated — are the reason this archive exists.

[15:20] [Park Manager] told me the emails weren't the issue. That communication was good. That communication was healthy.

I stopped him. "Do you really mean this?"

He said he did.

Remember that. Because for the next forty-five minutes he will say the opposite. He will use my emails as evidence of a pattern. He will reframe every communication I sent as threatening, inappropriate, destabilizing. He will build a case on them.

You cannot set expectations when both things are true at the same time. You can only use whichever version is most useful in the moment.

That is what this meeting was. On tape.

[15:45] [Park Manager] claimed the emails showed I distrusted [Volunteer Services Lead] because [Volunteer Services Lead] had shared information with management.

I told him I had no idea what he was talking about. I told him that wasn't in the emails. He insisted it was. I told him again — it's not in there.

He had no emails in front of him. He had a handwritten piece of paper.

He kept going. "I believe that word was used in regards to [Volunteer Services Lead] and being able to trust him."

I told him again. It's not in there.

"Fair enough."

He said fair enough and pivoted — not because he was convinced, but because he couldn't produce what he was claiming existed. He didn't have it. He never had it.

That is on tape.

[16:29] When I pushed back and he couldn't produce what he was claiming, it destabilized him. He

pivoted — grasping — to the CC on the email to [Volunteer Services Lead].

I explained it immediately. I had learned from another volunteer coordinator that anything even slightly negative automatically goes to the supervisor. I knew [Park Supervisor] would receive a copy. I CCed her directly so she wouldn't think I was hiding something.

That is transparency. That is professionalism.

His interpretation: "I know I can't trust you with information [Volunteer Services Lead], so I'm going to give it to the people who are going to see it anyway."

That is a characterization. Not a fact. Not what I said. Not what I meant.

I apologized anyway. I had said nothing wrong. I had done nothing wrong. I apologized because that is what you do when you are alone at a table with two people who have already decided who you are and you are trying to survive the meeting.

That apology is on tape. So is everything that produced it.

[17:34] [Park Manager] said as a manager he was thinking — this is an issue. Sam doesn't feel he can trust [Volunteer Services Lead].

I corrected him. I'm not escalating. I'm informing. I was trying to prevent something.

And then I laughed.

Because I knew. I had watched them reframe everything I did from the moment I arrived. I knew exactly what he was doing with that email. I had known when I sent it. I CCed [Park Supervisor] because I knew she would see it anyway and I refused to let it become something I was hiding.

And here he was, doing exactly what I had tried to prevent, with the very email I had sent to prevent it.

That is on tape.

[17:52] I told him: I am a very direct person. I mean what I say. You do not have to read subtext into anything I write. And I explained how people attach emotions to plain words that were never there.

He started to agree but then a lightbulb went off in his head and he used it to pivot.

[18:59] [Park Manager] took what I had just said and turned it into his next point. Words have inflection. Bolded text has tone. Could be perceived as negative. Could be perceived as threatening. Twenty-five exclamation points.

[Park Supervisor] spoke for the first time.

One word.

"Tone."

That is all she said. That is all she needed to say. She had been silent for nineteen minutes. Watching. And the one word she chose was the one that would be used to reframe everything I had ever written.

She knew exactly what she was doing.

[19:17] [Park Manager] ran with it. Tone. Threatening tone. Twenty-five exclamation points.

I stopped him.

"Let's get to the real issue here."

I don't trust [Volunteer Services Lead]. He has not given me any reason to trust him. I have laid out why. And because of that I had to do something to make sure he could not ruin my future.

That is why I sent the email. That is why I CCed [Park Supervisor]. That is why I documented everything. Not because I was difficult. Not because I had triggers. Not because I couldn't navigate [Park staff]. Because [Volunteer Services Lead] had lied to me, betrayed my confidence, and I had to protect myself.

I named it. Out loud. To their faces. Nineteen minutes in.

That is the moment they understood I was not going to be managed out of what I knew. That is the moment this meeting became something else entirely.

That is on tape.

[19:49] I told [Park Manager] there were a lot of reasons — meaning he didn't have the full story. He had what [Park Supervisor] had given him. He had what [Volunteer Services Lead] had reported back. He had a handwritten piece of paper.

He barely had anything.

He responded by implying I thought I had a future with [Volunteer Services Lead].

I said no. Then I said no again. With a short laugh. Because the implication registered.

[20:07] [Park Manager] told me I held the highest responsibility for ensuring the disruption to my future didn't happen. That is why we were there.

Then he said: it's not about [Volunteer Services Lead] at all.

I had just named the real issue. [Volunteer Services Lead]. The lie. The betrayal. The reason I had to protect myself. I had handed him the substance of everything that had happened.

He pivoted to bolding text.

That was the moment I knew. They were never going to engage with what actually happened. They couldn't. Because the moment they engaged with it, the meeting fell apart. The narrative fell apart. Everything [Park Supervisor] had built fell apart.

So they went back to bolding. On tape.

[20:30] [Park Manager] tried to get me to admit that bolding words was evidence of threatening tone. That I understood words had inflection. That I had used that inflection deliberately.

I told him: I absolutely wanted to make a point.

He said: so we're on the same page.

We were not on the same page. I bolded words to make a point. That is what bolding is for. That is not a threat. That is not hostile tone. That is emphasis.

He took a plain act of written communication and tried to turn it into a confession. On tape.

[21:15] And there it is. Twenty-one minutes in. After agreeing that words can be misinterpreted by anyone, in any direction — [Park Manager] delivered his demand.

Only have conversations with park staff that don't result in threats or demands.

I never made a threat. I never made a demand. Not once. Not in any email. Not in any text. Not at any point during my time at that park.

He stated it as fact. He had no emails in front of him. He had a handwritten piece of paper.

That accusation is on tape. So is the fact that he could not produce a single example of it.

[21:31] [Park Manager] listed his examples. Requesting help getting a job somewhere else. "I am prepared to fight this." "I will not let you stand in my way."

Those are not my words.

I told him: I never made a demand.

He said: gotcha. Understood. So it should be easy then.

I said: absolutely. I've never made a demand.

He moved on as if the matter was settled. It was never settled. He had made accusations he could not support and reframed my denial as compliance.

On the video, my foot is tapping hard. The camera is in my lap. I know exactly what he is doing. I am managing my energy. I am staying in that seat. I am not giving him what he needs to use against me.

That is what it looks like to survive a coercive meeting while recording it.

[22:40] [Park Manager] reminded me he was the park manager. Fifteen years in the agency. Half of that in management. He had seen everything. He knew the disciplinary processes. He knew HR.

He was not sharing his résumé. He was making sure I understood the power differential before saying what came next.

My foot is still tapping hard.

[23:17] After reminding me of his fifteen years. After invoking disciplinary processes and HR. After establishing exactly where the power sat at that table.

He told me to chew glass and swallow it.

Not in those words. He framed it as wisdom. As something that had made him stronger. More resilient. A better person. He was offering me a gift.

But the message was not about growth. The message was: endure what is being done to you. Do not resist. Absorb it. That is what success looks like here.

He said this to an unpaid volunteer. With no union. No HR access. No recourse. After twenty-three minutes of unsubstantiated accusations.

[Park Supervisor] sat beside him and said nothing.

It is on tape.

[24:38] I didn't react. I gave him nothing.

He had just told me to chew glass and swallow it. He was watching for a response that he could use. He didn't get one.

So he pivoted. Positive intent. A story about a camper with a beat-up Ford Ranger. Dents. Spray paint. Looked suspicious. Turned out to be a paid camper just moving across the country.

He told that story because I hadn't broken. Because the glass hadn't worked. Because he needed to find another way in.

On tape.

[26:30] Then another story. If [Park Supervisor] has something stuck in her eye and makes a face — assume positive intent. If [Park Supervisor] cusses under her breath — assume positive intent. She's just having a bad day.

He used [Park Supervisor] as his example.

The same [Park Supervisor] who was sitting at that table in silence. The same [Park Supervisor] whose dismissive text message in the first week of February had started all of this. The same [Park Supervisor] who he was now asking me to extend unlimited benefit of the doubt to.

[27:06] I told him: that is my default position with people in general.

He said: that's good.

He had spent seven minutes telling me to assume positive intent. I told him I already did. He had nothing to say to that.

[27:33] I gave him the example he had been circling for half an hour. [Park staff]. I don't think [Park staff] is out to get me. He's just being himself. I understand that. I navigate it.

That is positive intent. That is exactly what he had spent seven minutes asking me to demonstrate.

I had been demonstrating it the entire time.

[27:54] [Park Manager] asked me to take them at their word. I told him I take everyone at their word. I also hold them to their word.

That landed. He felt it. Because the only reason we were at that table was that I had held [Volunteer Services Lead] to his word and [Volunteer Services Lead] hadn't kept it.

So he scrambled. Suddenly I was fixating. Holding onto something. The [Volunteer Services Lead]-[Park staff]-[Park staff] training thing. Maybe that's what I was referring back to. Maybe I should be frustrated with [Park Manager] instead of [Volunteer Services Lead]. He would take responsibility. It was fine.

He was protecting [Volunteer Services Lead]. He was also trying to reframe accountability as fixation. As if holding someone to a commitment they made was a character flaw that needed to be managed.

I had just demonstrated in four sentences exactly why I was at that table. He spent the next thirty seconds trying to make that my problem.

[28:49] [Park Manager] confirmed it himself. He told [Volunteer Services Lead] absolutely not — [Park staff] was doing the training.

[Park Manager] made that call. [Park Manager] overrode it. And nobody told me.

I showed up to that orientation not knowing. Because [Park Manager] had made a decision that affected me directly and it was never communicated to me. He just acknowledged that on tape.

And then spent twenty-eight minutes using my response to that decision as evidence against me.

[29:08] I told him: I understand your point of view on this. And I went and did the training.

He said: that's great. That's perfect.

[29:16] [Park Manager] asked me to stop sending follow-up emails. Keep communications professional. Work related only. Employee issues come directly to him.

He had just confirmed he made a decision that was never communicated to me. And his response to that was to tell me to stop documenting it.

No follow-up emails. No written record. Bring it to him directly — the park manager who had just spent twenty-nine minutes demonstrating he would not engage with the substance of anything I raised.

He was not setting expectations. He was telling me to stop creating a paper trail.

[29:52] Thirty minutes in, [Park Manager] told me for the first time that [Volunteer Services Lead] had no supervisory authority whatsoever. That [Park Supervisor] and [Park Manager] were the ones who gave performance evaluations. The ones who could dismiss me.

I told him: this is something I didn't know. I'm sorry. I truly treated him like my direct supervisor because that is what I was told he was.

I had been reporting to [Volunteer Services Lead]. Communicating with [Volunteer Services Lead]. Taking [Volunteer Services Lead] at his word. Because every structure I had been given pointed to [Volunteer Services Lead] as my direct supervisor.

Apparently none of that was true. And nobody told me until thirty minutes into a coercive meeting.

"If we do dismissal — it's not [Volunteer Services Lead] doing a dismissal. It's [Park Supervisor] or myself."

He said that casually. As a statement of fact. As information.

It was a threat. And it is on tape.

[30:28] [Park Manager] confirmed it. That made sense. Could be a misunderstanding. [Volunteer

Services Lead] was just day-to-day operations. Scheduling. Putting people in slots. Not actually supervising anyone.

I told him: I treated you two as fairly off limits. I didn't go to [Park Manager] or [Park Supervisor] because [Volunteer Services Lead] was presented to me as my direct supervisor. I operated within the structure I was given.

I was not wrong. I was never told otherwise. Not until this moment. Thirty minutes into a coercive meeting designed to punish me for exactly that.

[32:36] Back to taking them at their word. Back to assuming positive intent. Back to letting it go.

[Park Manager] acknowledged I had reasons to distrust [Volunteer Services Lead]. He said it himself. And then asked me to let it go.

I told him I had seen [Volunteer Services Lead] the day before. It was cordial. Professional.

He said: good.

I had already let it go. I was already doing the thing he was asking me to do. I had been doing it. While sitting at a table where two people were using everything [Volunteer Services Lead] had taken from me to build a case against me.

[33:48] [Park Manager] told me the expectation was professional interactions with all staff. Cordial. Respectful. Wave goodbye. Say good to see you.

I told him: I have been professional to everybody. Every single time.

He said: if you're already doing them it should be easy.

That is the entire meeting in one exchange. Every expectation he set — I was already meeting it. Every behavior he described — I was already demonstrating it. Every accusation he made — I denied and he could not prove.

He spent thirty-three minutes telling me to be who I already was. While accusing me of being someone I never was.

[34:32] [Park Manager] looked at his paper. There was something on it he wasn't ready to say yet. He chose instead to talk about the red book.

The logbook at the Welcome Center. Notes and poems and drawings. Keep it work related. Tissue paper requests. Change fund problems.

[35:30] I told him: we talked about not doing doodles and I stopped doing doodles. I do leave messages telling people to have a good day.

He said: gotcha. Fair enough.

I had already corrected the behavior he had raised a month earlier. Immediately. Without argument.

I took pictures of every page of that book. There are no poems. There are no doodles. There are messages telling people to have a good day.

That is who they were building a case against.

Note: [Program Manager] would make this accusation also, after I had already confirmed to [Park Manager] it was false.

[36:20] [Park Manager] told me he had become aware of non-work related emails and texts to park staff. He said I had sent a poem to [Volunteer Services Lead].

I told him: it's a poem about my love for the ocean.

He said he didn't need an explanation.

I offered one anyway. Because the poem had context. Because it was sent to a volunteer coordinator I was asking for help finding future placements. Because it was an explanation of why the coast mattered to me and why I was asking for his support.

[Park Manager] didn't want the explanation. He had already decided what the poem meant. He had already used it to build a picture of someone with inappropriate boundaries, unprofessional relationships, unstable communications.

It was a poem about the ocean. Sent to someone I was asking for help.

He didn't need the explanation because the explanation didn't fit the narrative.

[37:46] I explained it. I love my time at the Welcome Center. I want to find other placements where I can do that work. I'm trying to get into parks with welcome centers. I asked [Volunteer Services Lead] to contact other volunteer coordinators on my behalf. I sent the poem so he would understand how much it meant to me to be on the coast. What brought me here.

[Park Manager] said: that's good.

I told him directly: it wasn't a demand. It was a request. I wanted him to understand what I was trying to do. That's all.

He acknowledged it. Then told me [Volunteer Services Lead] didn't actually do that kind of thing anyway.

A volunteer coordinator who doesn't help volunteers find placements. A poem about the ocean reframed as an inappropriate communication. A request for help reframed as a boundary violation.

Note: [Program Manager] would weaponize this poem also.

[39:13] [Park Manager] told me the best way to get future placements was to do a kickass job where I currently was.

I was doing a kickass job. He had said so himself at 0:00. Great job at the Welcome Center. Procedures followed correctly. Double shift. Stayed an hour past to help a woman find a campsite.

I held my ground. I told him I knew other volunteer coordinators who were willing to help me find placements. I asked directly: you don't think that's inappropriate, do you?

He said: no, it's related to work.

He couldn't call it inappropriate. Because it wasn't. So he buried it in advice about doing a good job — advice that was irrelevant to a volunteer who was already being told he was doing a great job.

[39:58] [Park Manager] circled back to my word choices. That I write differently. That I'm more direct. That "requesting" reads differently than "asking." That maybe it was interpreted differently than I intended.

He had spent forty minutes telling me my communications were the problem. Now he was applying that framework to a poem about the ocean and a request for a referral.

This is the machinery. Take a plain act. Find a word in it. Attach a meaning that wasn't there. Hold the person responsible for the meaning you attached.

I had already explained what the poem meant. I had already explained what the request was for. He didn't need the explanation. He needed the pattern.

[40:39] [Park Manager] described how my emails could be received. Mixed in with non-work related content. Followed up with documentation. He was struggling to articulate it.

I told him: I'm trying to follow you here.

I was trying to understand what he was actually accusing me of. I was asking him to be specific. He couldn't be. Because there was nothing specific. There was only a feeling — that my emails made people uneasy — and he was trying to build

a policy around a feeling.

[42:05] "It's kind of that eating glass a little bit."

He used it twice. The first time to tell me to endure what was being done to me. The second time to frame what he was doing to me as a gift. Imagine framing abuse as a gift.

[42:18] I stopped him. "I think you don't want to actually say what you're about to."

He had been looking at that paper. Circling something. Building toward it for forty minutes. I knew what it was. I called it out directly.

He backed down. "I'm not following you." "I don't know what you mean."

I told him: I think we're about to find out.

He backed down again. Retreated to the poem. Context. How things can make people feel uneasy.

He had something on that paper he couldn't say to my face when I challenged him to say it.

This might be the only time [Park Manager] did something smart in that meeting.

[43:04] But it only lasted a beat. [Park Manager] retreated to the poem. That without context, a poem sent to a supervisor could be interpreted differently from a professional workplace lens. That a follow-up email expressing dissatisfaction could make it look like something else entirely.

He was building a picture. A gay volunteer who sent a poem to his male supervisor. Who then documented his dissatisfaction. Who set a boundary. Who created a paper trail.

He couldn't say what he was implying. I had already told him I knew what he was about to say and he had backed down. So instead he constructed the picture piece by piece and left the interpretation hanging in the air.

Note: I have shared that poem with many people. It's just a poem. Written by AI. Long before Honeyman.

[44:02] [Park Manager] listed his evidence. [Park Supervisor]'s text in the first week. His own visit to get to know me. Every other week an instance. Consistent throughout the month. Issues with everyone.

I stopped him. Why are we going back to this?

Because that is what he had. That is the entire case. A text message with [Park Supervisor] that we had already resolved. A visit from [Park Manager] that I had already documented. A poem about the ocean. Bolded words. A CC on an email.

And underneath all of it — unspoken, sitting on that piece of paper — the insinuation about the poem and [Volunteer Services Lead] that he had already backed down from when I challenged him to say it to my face.

That is the case they built against a gay volunteer on public land.

That is what forty-four minutes of this meeting had produced.

[44:22] [Park Manager] said every other week there was an instance. A pattern. Consistent throughout the month.

I told him: you said all the rangers. You're bringing up what happened with [Park Supervisor] in the very beginning. I'm just not tracking what you're saying.

He offered specific examples. The first was [Park Supervisor]. The second was his own visit.

His own visit happened the same day as the [Park Supervisor] confrontation. It was not a separate incident. It was an escalation of the same incident. And we were supposed to have reset.

He took one day. Split it into two data points. Spread them across a month. Called it a pattern.

That is the full case. On tape. With a handwritten piece of paper and no emails.

[44:42] His two examples. [Park Supervisor]. Then himself — he came down just to talk, to get to know me, to understand me.

"Why are we going back to this?"

That is the first time heat enters my voice on that recording. Because that visit was not a friendly introduction. It is already documented. It is already in the record. And he was standing there describing it as a casual conversation while I was sitting across from him knowing exactly what it was.

He backed down immediately. I'm sorry. I just thought you wanted examples. We don't have to revisit them.

He had nothing. And when the heat entered my voice he folded.

[45:10] He asked if we were good moving on. I told him I had put it so far behind me I had applied for a job here.

That application went in after the reset. After the day that was supposed to be behind us. I was not running. I was not retaliating. I applied for a permanent position at the park where I was being told I had a pattern of problems.

That is not the behavior of someone causing disruption. That is the behavior of someone who believed the reset was real.

[Park Manager] said: that's good.

Then went back to his paper.

[45:30] [Park Manager] described [Park Supervisor] asking about my plans at the welcome center. I told him: just a miscommunication. Nothing bad happened.

He said there had been a consistent miscommunication since I got there. Then he constructed a narrative — that my understanding was that [Park Supervisor] had purposely asked about my plans because she knew I had applied for the job — and landed on it with real heat:

"That is absolutely false. That is the most false thing I've ever heard."

I said: well, I never said that.

He said it was in my emails and texts.

I told him — dismissively, because the claim was absurd: "No. I never said anything like that. It's not in any email or text, [Park Manager]. It's not."

He said: that's how it was received.

I asked: from where? What are you talking about?

He had no emails. He had no texts. He claimed they existed. I told him they did not. He retreated to how it was received.

He did this earlier in the meeting. Claimed words existed in my correspondence that did not exist. When I pushed back he said fair enough and moved on.

This time he had real heat behind it. This time it was about [Park Supervisor].

[Park Supervisor] sat beside him and said nothing.

[46:29] [Park Manager] said [Park Supervisor] could talk about it probably.

And [Park Supervisor] spoke. For only the second time in forty-six minutes.

She said she had interpreted my email withdrawing the job application as a response to her asking about my plans. That I had withdrawn because of something she said.

I told her directly: I didn't provide a reason in that email. I never made it an issue with you.

I said: right?

She agreed.

She had just confirmed she invented the interpretation. I had never said it. It wasn't in any email. It wasn't in any text. She constructed meaning from a withdrawal email that contained no reason — and brought it to this table as evidence against me.

[47:27] I told [Park Manager]: this is news to me.

Because it was. I had never said what they were describing. I had never made it an issue with [Park Supervisor]. And now I was sitting at a table being told that my silence — a withdrawal email with no reason given — had been interpreted as an accusation.

[Park Manager] jumped back in. Words have meaning. We established that. They get interpreted.

I named it: "That's meaning that other people are assigning to things that are not there. You're making me responsible for other people's thoughts."

He asked: would it be fair to say that sometimes the way you're feeling is exactly the same way we're feeling?

I told him: that is so vague I don't know how to respond to that.

[48:34] I turned to [Park Supervisor] directly. I told her I completely let it go. I told her I liked her.

She said: okay.

One word. The same person who had just confirmed she had been carrying an interpretation of a withdrawal email for weeks. Who had never said anything to me directly. Who had let it sit and fester — to use [Park Manager]'s word — and brought it to this table instead.

I told her I liked her. She said okay. That is on the tape.

[48:48] [Park Manager] kept going. This wasn't a bullet point. This was feedback. Communication is hard. If Sam doesn't know he can't change. A sliver under the skin. If you don't squeeze it out it festers.

I told him: I never said what you're saying. You're making me responsible for something I did not do.

He said: words get interpreted in ways that weren't intended. That's not what you were intending. But that's how it was received.

Then he argued that the same theory could be applied to my interactions with park rangers.

I told him: what you're saying is applicable to everybody all the time.

He agreed. This is how absurd the meeting had become.

[50:10] I turned it around on him.

I told him: what you just said to me is that somebody didn't take what I did as positive. We can flip this around, [Park Manager].

He said: positive intent until proven otherwise.

I told him: I'm not getting that benefit of the doubt.

Silence. Then: I see where you're coming from. I may not be able to help you with that.

That is the admission. Fifty minutes in. He had spent the entire meeting demanding I extend grace I was never given. Demanding I assume positive intent from people who had demonstrated the opposite. Demanding I take them at their word after [Volunteer Services Lead] had proven his word meant nothing.

And when I named it — when I held the mirror up — he told me he may not be able to help me with that.

He confirmed it. On tape.

[50:35] [Park Manager] stumbled. "I may not be able to help you with that. All I can do is provide feedback of how it's feeling from our perspective."

He was losing his footing. The admission was right there — that he had never given me the benefit of the doubt. His words were falling apart.

[Park Supervisor] stepped in and attacked. You could hear it in her voice. Anger.

She went back to the first of the month. The text message. She had been blindsided.

This is the incident. The one that started everything. The one that was supposed to be behind us. The one we reset. The one I put so far behind me I applied for a job there.

Fifty minutes into this meeting — after [Park staff], after the emails, after the poem, after the job application, after the glass — this is what she came back to. The only thing they ever had.

I told her I hadn't said anything about her. To anyone. She mentioned [Park staff]. Then I remembered. I owned it immediately because there was nothing wrong with it. Of course a volunteer who was navigating a situation with their supervisor would talk to a park ranger about it. That is professional and appropriate.

I told her: I really thought we put this to rest.

She said: we did. We did.

Two months of escalation. A coercive meeting. Fifty minutes in.

We did. We did.

On tape.

[52:01] I apologized to [Park Supervisor] again. I truly had put it to rest.

[Park Manager] stepped back in.

I told him: it was 6 in the morning. I had already apologized. Twice. I had already told them it was behind me. I had applied for a job there. And I was still having to account for a text message from the first week of February.

[Park Manager] took it and turned it into his conclusion: positive intent until proven otherwise. The first of the month — proven otherwise. So when someone says it's over he puts a stick in it. But it's really hard to believe it's over.

They would not drop it. No apology was enough. No reset was real. Fifty-two minutes in and we were still here.

[52:42] [Park Manager] said similar things were happening every other week. The same pattern. Over

and over.

I told him: I'm going to need examples.

He said he had provided them. Lots of emails and texts.

Those emails and texts were never produced. Not once in this meeting. The only specific incident anyone had named — in fifty-two minutes — was the text message from the first week of February.

That was it. That was every other week. That was the pattern.

[53:12] [Park Manager] said the "until proven otherwise" thing started with the very first interaction with [Park Supervisor]. That you can't just say it's all over.

I told him: I learned from it.

What I meant was not what he heard. I had learned exactly what kind of place this was. What kind of people I was dealing with. If I had known from the start what I know now — I would have kept my mouth shut. I would have never sent that email. I would have absorbed it and said nothing.

That is what I learned.

[Park Manager] heard compliance. He said: maybe.

[53:27] I told him: assume positive intent with me please.

He said they were trying. But once you're proven otherwise — it's hard to say it's always sunny.

I told him: I liked [Park Supervisor] so much I applied for a job here.

Someone who had decided these people were the enemy does not apply to work alongside them permanently. I applied because I believed in the reset. I believed in the park. I believed in the work.

[Park Supervisor] said: I thought it was great that you applied.

Everything that happened before this meeting, during it, and after it tells you exactly what that sentence was worth.

[53:58] I told him: I just don't see the issue.

He said he was trying to explain how things come across.

I told him: I feel like that text caused a spiral that never stopped.

He said: we agreed to do a reset.

I said: YES.

The shock in that word is on tape. Because the reset was supposed to mean something. Because I had believed it. Because I had applied for a job there after it. Because I was sitting at that table fifty-four minutes in and nothing had ever actually reset.

He said he thought they had reset — but similar issues kept arising. He had tried to provide examples. He didn't want to revisit them.

He claimed a pattern. Couldn't name it. Wouldn't revisit it. And called that feedback.

[54:56] I told him: you won't have to worry about emails from me. I understand that's the big issue here.

[Park Manager] confirmed it. Non-work related emails and texts — that's one of them. Working with all staff.

Then I went through it myself. Never had a poor interaction with any ranger. The guests liked me. The volunteers liked me. Every interaction with every ranger had been positive. Minus the text message with [Park Supervisor] at the very beginning. I cannot think of a single other situation.

I laid out his entire case for him. Because I already knew what it was. And I knew how thin it was.

[56:05] [Park Manager] said he appreciated me talking with them. That these conversations suck. But unless he talked about it I had no way of knowing.

I told him: I just want to be treated fairly.

He moved past it without acknowledgment. Kept going. Articulating his observations. His perspective. Sometimes supervisors and employees disagree. That's okay.

I told him: I am here with the best intent. I am here to do a very good job. I am not here to cause problems for you.

He said: that's good.

I had just asked to be treated fairly. He ignored it and told me that's good.

[57:57] [Park Manager] was telling me about his role helping people be successful. Rangers becoming directors. Park hosts becoming ranger assistants.

He was doing his “offering to be a mentor” routine I’d seen before. After an hour of abuse.

I told him: I genuinely wanted to have a future here at Honeyman. But I don't think that's possible anymore. I just want to get my time over with. I wish things had been different. I do. But they're not. I'm just going to do my job this month and move on.

I said: I wish that was a future that we had.

Note: [Program Manager] would falsely claim I had no intention of leaving Honeyman. They all knew otherwise.

[59:31] Then came the exit pressure.

[Park Manager] told me — four times in the final two minutes — that I didn't have to feel obligated to stay. That if it didn't feel right he would never expect me to stay. That life is too short. That he'd had

jobs that didn't work out. That I shouldn't feel required or obligated in any way.

I told him: I don't feel obligated. I'm here by choice.

Sixty-two minutes. That is how it ended. Not with accountability. Not with resolution. With a park manager telling an unpaid volunteer — four times — that he could just leave if he was uncomfortable.

After everything that preceded it, that was not pastoral concern.

That was pressure to leave in the middle of a commitment I had made, with a full year of other state park commitments lined up, that would end in less than a month if they'd just left it alone.

But they couldn't. They wouldn't. The next three weeks would show us that.

He recorded it. They punished him for it. They put the punishment in writing.

You have three weeks before the anniversary of that meeting.

And in several ways that one is actually worse.

You should not have made me do this twice.

The third time will be in front of a jury.

Robert Samuel White

Former Oregon State Parks Volunteer

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