

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF REED AND MARLENE MCCLUSKEY, PART 2

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER

IN SONORA, CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 7, 2020

ORAL HISTORY 2017-01-116_PT. 2

KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIBED BY RUTH SENSENIG

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok, this is Karen Brewster and Reed and Marlene McCluskey continuing on, on what did we say it was, January 7, 2020. Just had a nice break. So um, Reed, I wanted to ask you about the lease-back program. We kind of skipped over that, and I know that was a big part of what you worked on. So can you talk about that a little bit?

REED MCCLUSKEY: On arrival there at the park, I know there'd been some mention -- Clay must have mentioned on the phone when I talked to him about the job, but it wasn't -- I wasn't at all familiar with the historic leasing program. And so, it didn't really sink in, I don't think, until I arrived. And when someone on the staff there said, "Oh, that file cabinet in your office, that's all the leasing stuff." And it was a two-drawer file cabinet, and it was just packed with individual file folders on all these leases. [00:01:06]Well, you know, I began to research that, study that. Study the -- the legal underpinnings and see -- read the leases themselves. There were summary documents that Bruce Reed had done up. And it became apparent to me that Bruce, with his military background especially, apparently was very fond of having standard -- standardized correspondence set up for certain recurring events involving the less -- the leases. And so, on -- in digital records, I started to find a lot of those -- those records, as well. But most of it was actually hard copy, printed out. [00:01:55]And as I began to get out on the street and visit some of those locations and meet some of the -- the current lessees, introduce myself and then talk more about, you know, what they were doing, how they were doing it, and so -- I mean, it -- it became more and more apparent that, ok, the expectation here is that there will be continued income stream for the park to use for the purposes of maintaining these buildings and anything related to that. And by that time, I think the income stream was supporting things like regular fire sprinkler testing that's done annually, not just on the leased buildings but on all the park buildings that were in the Historic District. Uh, that was a big deal. [00:02:46]But were all of the tenants meeting the limitations, uh, restrictions placed on them? Um, in some cases, yes. Some cases, no. You know, I'd try and -- try and approach some of those things carefully and not upset anybody's apple cart. What I would routinely tell both the staff, our staff and tenants, at various times is that I recognized, and everybody on the staff should recognize and act like they recognize that, while it's not our responsibility to make sure that the tenants are a success, that they're financially, you know, well off, it's certainly incumbent on us to make sure that

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we don't do anything to, you know, mess them up. It's like, we don't want to stand in their way. We want them to be a success, because that's the only way they're going to be able to pay their rent. That's the only way they're actually going to be able to help preserve the building and occupy it the way we want. [00:03:56]But there were pretty strict limitations on what they were supposed to be able to do. And routinely, I would get requests, I'd field requests from various tenants, to make changes. They'd want to make changes in what they were selling, but more often it was how they were actually displaying goods for sale. I want to put racks here. I want to -- gee, can I take this wall out? No, you can't take that wall out. You know, it's like, can I -- can I put in new lighting here, or, you know, I want to put in track lighting, or I want to, you know, display these in the windows or things like that. In some cases, it would be things like, I want to bring in a new safe. Can I bring in, you know, because I've got all this jewelry I want to put in. And the oh, well no, that safe is going to overload the floor here. You know, and they wouldn't have known that. They don't -- and it's like, they would've just, I think, pushed the limits, many of them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:04:54]REED MCCLUSKEY: But I always felt like, gee, this is -- this is the best thing that we have going here. There were nine leases at the time, and that was probably the most we ever had. Or nine leases at one time. It was probably, I want to say, maybe a total of ten thousand square feet under lease, which isn't all that much, except that on average at that point it was probably about four dollars a square foot. So you were looking at about forty thousand dollars. Or no, I'm sorry, it was more than that. Ten thousand square feet. We were bringing -- even -- even then, it was more like a quarter million a year in total lease revenues, and it went up from there. And that was money that stayed in the park budget. Never went to Washington, never went to Anchorage. It wasn't somebody else's to dole out to us later. It stayed -- it was -- these were in park accounts. And so, it could be used in ways that appropriated funds were never available to us to use.

[00:06:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Now, you said you used it to put back into maintaining the buildings.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The sideboards were placed on us by the, um -- the legal authority and the National Historic Preservation Act amendments, I'm going to say, of 1983, but I'm not sure of the date. But, in any case, the sideboards said, yes, you can -- you, agency, if you declare a structure to be surplus to government needs, but it's an historic structure and you want to preserve that structure, you keep the structure, you keep the property, you can lease it out under certain conditions. Most of the time, it has to be a competitive opportunity. And then, you can -- you can use that money to preserve historic properties within that district. [00:06:58]Now, that meant that those sideboards were wide enough to allow the park at times to extend assistance in some fashion to private property owners within the Historic District. And that's where Grant Crosby, at times, was in town or brought into town in order to act as nothing more than a consultant to a private property owner. I don't think the property owners were aware of that, how that was working. They just knew that, "Gee, can we have, you know, this historical architect come visit?" "Oh, yeah. We can do that." Um, I don't think we went so far as to pay for improvements to someone else's property, but, you know, it got them things at times.

[00:07:46]KAREN BREWSTER: Could you -- could you use the money for buying other properties, or for -- ?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Couldn't use it for buying property. What we could do is we could hire painters to paint buildings. Or we could hire someone like Roy Nelson, if he worked on plumbing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, if he was working on the restoration crew or something like that. I mean, you could use money for someone like that. We bought scaffolding. You know, we bought paint.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We bought, you know -- it's like, you could send people to training.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or you said the sprinkler systems and things like that.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Sprinkler systems. You know, again, contributes to the preservation of the building. Anything like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

[00:08:27]REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, the sideboards are fairly wide, but it was used within the park. And I think we might have got as high as, I want to say \$325,000 on an annual basis, because, obviously, what was happening was that rents were escalating. And that became an issue, as well. We had two buildings that were under fifteen-year leases. Long-term leases. And in -- in those cases, uh, hadn't really built in escalators. And so, Jeff Brady was among those that for fifteen years, the rent that was set, got set, was more or less the rent that he paid --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- at the end of his fifteen-year lease. By which time, the cruise industry had taken off. All the surrounding properties, you know, were -- were much more expensive. Probably double or triple what he was paying on a square-foot basis for that property. And he was worried about that, I think, you know, as rightfully so. I think Casey McBride, who had the place next to him, --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- was in the same circumstance. And we all kinda held our breath.

[00:09:44]Um, one of the -- one of my jobs was to order the appraisals that were needed in order to set the stage for the Request for Proposals, the RFP's. So I would write up the -- the RFP's, place the advertisements in various newspapers, and then receive the proposals. I would normally, actually well before that, would draft the leases. I would start with the last lease, the one -- anything that was -- the most recent edition of a lease. Start with that and then customize it to a particular building so it was particular to the address and the square footage and the permissible uses and so on. And then, working closely with a realty, or rather a concession specialist, Jill Morgan normally, or Kevin Apgar in the regional office, working with -- closely with them to review the draft lease. We would normally bounce it back and forth between the two of us until we were satisfied. Then it had to go to the, um, our solicitor. So DOI (Department of Interior) solicitor would be the final review. Normally, it would be three of us in a conference call. Um, seldom actually physically together in the same place. We'd settle on a final lease, and that's what would be advertised in the RFP.

[00:11:17]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, that's advertising for businesses who might want to come in and lease that building?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Exactly. And -- and the appraisal established the minimum acceptable rent. And so, there was very -- little or no latitude to do anything other than tell people, you gotta be willing to pay at least this much. You can offer more, if you want. If you -- if you think it'll --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did any --

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- win out the competition, you can offer more.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did anybody ever offer more?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, and in fact, at one point, we had someone offer, I don't know, half again or --

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- even more than what the base was. The problem was that when you looked at his financials, couldn't figure out where that money was going to come from. It was like, what? There's nothing in here about financing your start-up costs and those first --

[00:12:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Did they think tht they were going to make so much money by selling their products that --

REED MCCLUSKEY: We -- well, there's that. But I think in that, in this one particular case, I thought, I think there's someone else involved in this who's a silent partner.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they're not saying anything about him, and they're not -- and they're not -- certainly not pointing out where that money -- And so when we said, "Gee, it doesn't look like there's any financing to this. Are you sure?" He was like, "Uhh." So it was like, ok, that one gets set aside, and we go on. [00:12:46]And I -- I really emphasized to individuals that expressed an interest in leasing, I'd say, "You can come into my office, sit down. You can ask me any questions you want. Um, you know, what goes out in the public advertisement, I really can't add to that. I can clarify if you don't understand some things in here." Had to be very careful about that. But I would tell them, we're not -- we're not only interested in money. The evaluation criteria, and they're laid out in the RFP, there's like half a dozen criteria, and one of those is going to be compatibility with the historic scene. Compatibility with the preservation goals for this building and the Park Service. Those are really important to us, almost more important than the money. It was like, so -- and so, you need to understand that this is going to be important, what you propose to do here, you know. And I wanted to say, "If -- if you propose to set up a blacksmith shop in one of these places with a hearth, and you're going to, like, forge horseshoes or whatever you're going to do here, ok, not a winner." It's like --

KAREN BREWSTER: In old wooden buildings, yes.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. Yeah. In old wooden building, no. It's not going to -- yeah. I said, that's an extreme example, but give you an idea. And the same was true, if you want to propose to do a café or, you know, a hot dog stand or whatever. If you're gonna be needing to store food, heat food, dispose of food, it's like, you know what, none of those are really going to fly either. And that's stated outright in the -- you know, so.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But the -- so printing stacks of the RFP's. I would send out to have all the printing done. Receive those, and then, initially, those are all mailed. And, of course, today it's all electronic.

[00:14:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Now, who set the rent?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, the -- the minimum acceptable lease rate --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- was established by independent contract appraisal. So I would deal directly with the realty office in Anchorage, in the regional office in Anchorage. I would just submit a request for an appraisal for a particular property. Give 'em all the details. And they would then arrange the contract, um, with a private appraiser. It varies. I don't know that it was maybe once or twice, anyone other than Horan & Company, or originally it was Horan & Corak, out of Sitka. And nobody else seemed to want to travel to Skagway. And I learned later, oh, well that's because Horan was also the City of Skagway's assessor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So they had the contract to do the assessor's work for the city, and so they were willing to piggyback.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And, of course, it helped them from the standpoint that they were always looking for rental information, you know, lease information, and we were paying them to go out and --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and they already -- they sort of knew the local market. I mean --

REED MCCLUSKEY: They knew the local market, and they -- they kinda knew who to tap, who would talk to them about -- who would be a landlord that would divulge their rents.

[00:16:07]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So were Park Service rents comparable to private renting?

REED MCCLUSKEY: They -- that was the requirement. That was -- the appraiser, what they were doing was trying to determine the most comparable properties for which they could determine rents, and with confidence. Their concern, obviously, was often, gee, you can't use less than arms-length transactions. If it's a landlord renting to a friend, they have to discount those. The issue that I had was that I felt that the appraisers were doing us a disservice by reducing, in some cases eliminating altogether, potential proposers, potential renters, by virtue of comparing us directly to every private property out there without adjustment. My suggestion then was, if I'm -- if I'm a jeweler, and I talk to a landlord, and this landlord tells me I can change anything I want in here. Lighting, I can put in drop ceilings. I can put in new flooring, and I can put in mirrors, and, you know, and jewelry cases galore and safes in the back, and -- and that's considered comparable to a park property where there's limited floor loading. No, you can't change the lighting. No, you can't knock out walls. We're not going to let you do all of these things that you want to do. That's not comparable. There needs to be -- there should be an adjustment. I said, and our purposes are best served by having the greatest, um, variety of proposals --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- from which to choose, because we have these other selection criteria that we want to apply. [00:18:06]And so, if you -- if you set the minimum -- normally an

appraisal is trying to establish the best market rate possible for somebody to rent something or sell something. 'Cause you never -- you could never raise the price.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But you could always lower it, right. Well, we can't lower it. You're setting the -- you're setting the floor.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And we've --

KAREN BREWSTER: The minimum?

REED MCCLUSKEY: We can't even negotiate anything less than that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So I said, I know this is not an exact science, and you really should be working in this range. And if there's a range, you should be here.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the middle.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like -- no, at the bottom.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, at the bottom.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like, if this is your range, this is what we want to know, is this one here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:18:50]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: But remember, one of the renters, Sue Rappleye --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: -- said that the rent that the Park Service had set at was too high. She couldn't make a profit. And she actually offered less.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And she --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: To -- to make the point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. And, of course, I had to do exactly what I told her I would have to do before she even submitted it. She said, "Well, can I submit a proposal and offer less than the minimum?" And I said, "You can. Nothing to prevent you from doing that. However, I cannot -- we can't consider it. I can't even -- legally, I can't consider it. We just have to return it to you saying, thanks, you don't meet the minimum requirements, even if there are no other bidders."

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We just have -- if there are no other bidders, and that happened to us a couple of times. If there are no other bidders, then we have to go back to their appraiser, pay them another five thousand dollars and say, "Uh, try again."

[00:19:55]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Can you come up with a lower minimum?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, we've just established, by opening it to the market, that the figure you came up with isn't the right figure.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's not valid. And so, now -- and, of course, they save face by saying, "Well, if I do another appraisal, it will be at a different time. And because it's a different time, see, it's not exactly the same. So if it comes out at a different level, well, that's because -- "

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: " -- circumstances have changed."

[00:20:28]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, did you have to do that? I mean, you did --

REED MCCLUSKEY: We did. More than once.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- and did they come back with a lower -- ?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Sure. They can't do anything other than that. They have to --

KAREN BREWSTER: And then you were able to lease it?

REED MCCLUSKEY: And then we would turn around, and we'd open it up again. In one -- in one instance, we received -- we received one proposal, and that was for the combined advertising of Pantheon-Red Front -- and Red Front together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Very first time. It was not finished on the interior. It was just down to the stud walls. We stopped our rehab, or construction at that point, stopped at that point and said, the new proposer can finish the interior.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Finish wiring, finish the -- ok. So we get one proposal, and the proposal was from Alaska Fur Gallery. And uh, their proposal was so poorly crafted and so sketchy on the finances and other factors that Jill Morgan and I both recommended that we reject this as not acceptable and move on. And, basically, we were going to have to go and get another appraisal, and we were going to have to go back out. And her supervisor, Chief of Concessions for the region, Kevin Apgar, overrode us with the approval of the superintendent at the time. And we ended up with Alaska Fur Gallery for the next ten years and fought what amounted to a non-stop battle to get compliance and to get rents. Ten years.

[00:22:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Ten years. Were all the leases written for such long terms?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, almost any business operator will tell you, it's location, location, location. You've heard that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And if they're going to set up in a particular location, they don't want to think that they can only be there for a year or two or three. They want to know they're going to be there for a period of time. And so effectively, the shortest lease we ever issued was for five years. And I think we did that a couple of times. And even then, it was dicey business for the tenant. It wasn't -- I think in one case, they were happy it was only five years because it really wasn't a winning deal for them, and they -- and they did not attempt to renew. [00:23:10]There is no such thing as -- I'm sorry. There's a renewal, and that's another thing I would have to tell 'em. There's no such thing as a renewal. What there is is a, ah, an opportunity to compete again for another lease if they so desired. So if a tenant had been there for, like Jeff Brady had, for fifteen years, and said in year fifteen that, gee, I'd really like this to continue, then they had to put together a proposal, do their -- give us their best shot and hope that their proposal carried the day. That they would, um, win the evaluation, the competitive review. [00:23:57]And, normally, the evaluations are done by a panel of three individuals. Normally, I would be one. So I would be the park representative, and then we'd have two others normally from outside the park. Typically, one person from the concessions office, it would be Jill usually, and then we'd have one other, normally concessions specialist from another park or someone along those lines. So you'd have three people that would then evaluate those, give each a score,

and then make a recommendation to the superintendent and the regional Chief of Concessions, and they'd make a selection.

[00:24:44]KAREN BREWSTER: So how did you evaluate? How did you decide for the ones that you put forward?

REED MCCLUSKEY: The selection criteria were stated in the RFP, and so, some of those I've already --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- shared with you. One of them is, how much rent would you like to pay?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, so that -- that was a factor. And you just assigned a score to various levels there. Among the factors were the experience, the burden of experience that an individual might have in the enterprise that they were going to undertake. Do they have any creds?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Do they know what they're doing? You know, I mean, are we speaking from experience, or this is just kind of a wild guess. This would be great.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:25:29]REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, we had somebody propose one time, they were going to sell aromatherapy pillows from one of the locations. They were going to be great. And their only experience was in operating a small, like a candle shop, in New Orleans or someplace like that. It was like, um, ok, thank you.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For that. Yeah, that one didn't -- didn't succeed. We've had -- we had some that threw money, but the rest of the proposal was really poor. We had some that ignored the limitations on the use of the space. [00:26:05]Uh, some that -- I think we usually included the period of operation. We really wanted to encourage someone to operate on a year-round basis.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I mean, that would have been ideal for town. You know, have something that isn't otherwise available in town. Everything else shuts up. Well, uh, there was usually a token effort to say, "Gee, we'll stay open until the middle of October." You know, which is past the end of the cruise season. Or a couple of times, they'd say, "Gee, we'll be open limited hours until after Christmas." And one of the tenants is still doing just that, as far as I know. Very limited, intermittent, but their -- their merchandise there is the kind of thing that people might want to pick up. You know, they carry toys for kids and things like that that there might be a market for locally. And they'll arrange to open on weekends, you know, before Christmas. Up until Christmas, things like that. But, generally, uh, we realize that the market's being driven entirely by cruise ship traffic, so.

[00:27:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Now were there some businesses that, like, let's say they had that ten-year lease, but they didn't last ten years? I mean, ten years is a long time for a business that's very much tourist-oriented.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I don't think there was anybody that folded before the end of their lease.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: However, the -- I made reference to the one party that was glad that theirs was only five years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We actually negotiated our way to an arrangement that allowed them to finish out their lease on the first floor. It was -- it was two floors, so upstairs and down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they discovered pretty quickly that nobody was -- there were no customers going to go upstairs. It just wasn't going to happen.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And even their using the second-floor space as quarters or as back-stock storage you know, that there were limitations there. We wouldn't let them use it as quarters unless they put in, um, I think they had to put in a restroom, a small kitchen.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Kitchenette kind of an arrangement. Well, that would've meant wiring and plumbing changes. It would've cost quite a bit. They weren't going to be able to do that. And so, they just didn't have the need for it. [00:28:39]Recognizing that, that was about the time we were suffering growing pains in the park and needing more office space. And again, the prerequisite for any of these leases is that the space be declared as surplus to government needs. Well, if you've got growing pains, and you don't have room for staff, it kind of undermines that argument that these are surplus. We're just leasing them because we want the money. So in this case, knowing that resources folks were champing at the bit for more space. This was after Theresa had taken over the division and they were adding more staff, um, I think we ended up with Elaine up there. Might have. In any case, what I did was approach the tenants and say, "Would you be agreeable to, uh, an arrangement whereby we basically take back the second floor, and make a corresponding adjustment in the lease rate based upon the values assigned in the appraisal." And uh, they were very happy to hear that. It was like, "Oh yeah, that would be really -- 'cause our rent would go down." I said, "Yes. And we can split the utilities, and we'll just take the, you know, electric rate." You know, it was one meter for the --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And we'll -- we'll divide that in two and yeah, they were very happy to - - so that was one that I think saved -- saved a tenant.

[00:30:16]KAREN BREWSTER: So why did that one be -- why was that one five years, where ten or fifteen was more standard?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Their -- their proposal was for five years because they weren't really certain they -- they weren't as confident, I think. I'm really kind of surprised that Jeff and Casey bid fifteen years right up front.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Changes in the regulations. The implementing regulations for the leasing program, at one point made it explicit that the leases needed to be as short a period of time as would be practical for the intended use. And so, you really were going to have to justify something more than ten years. I mean, we were able to argue successfully that, you know, letting people propose anything from five to ten years in duration, we wouldn't have to jump through these hoops more often than we really wanted to have to do that. [00:31:26]These came -- these renewals came in waves, in part because of the

way that they were advertised initially. And so, that -- those first few years for me, it was a lot of work because there were leases that were coming up, and then Red Front and Pantheon were being completed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We wanted to lease those. [00:31:47]And we did have issues with other properties. Like, in the alley, Miss Kitty's -- well, it was leased to Sue Rappleye as Miss Kitty's Buttonhole in the alley. She did -- I would tell people, I said, "Sue -- Sue has done everything to make that place a success except stand out in the alley naked to -- to draw folks back into the -- into the shop here."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: She would do anything. I mean, she parked a Model A out there JJ had, and mannequins were put up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, the feather boas and, you know, yeah, it was everything that -- and it just -- she just wasn't making enough. When it got to the point where I couldn't -- I couldn't do anything more than I had done. Wasn't really permissible for me to tell an appraiser how to do their job. I went as far as I thought I could in suggesting where our, the public's best interest lay and making the case for them. This is how you articulate why this makes sense. This is what we -- and they would -- they would dutifully listen, nod, smile, and say, "Ok well, we'll be back in touch." And it would be the same as always. It would be and here's what's comparable. [00:33:14]More and more, this was very disappointing for me, through time they found fewer comparables in other businesses.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they were using Park Service buildings with earlier leases as comparables.

KAREN BREWSTER: That doesn't seem right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Isn't that the snake swallowing its own tail?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, that doesn't seem right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: No, it doesn't seem right. And here I am being told, "Well, they have professional standards they have to meet. They can't listen to what you're telling them to say." And then, they're feeding us our own leases as --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like, ok, I'm having a problem with this. [00:33:48]The way the government contracts for appraisals is that it's done by the lands office. And once the draft appraisal is submitted in fulfillment of the contract, it doesn't come -- it wouldn't come to the park, it would go to a -- a review appraiser, a government review appraiser who would review it to see that it met industry standards, professional standards, before they would give it the go-ahead. Once that -- once that was on, then it would be transmitted to the park, and I would finally receive the appraisal and say, ok. [00:34:25]Um, and occasionally I would have a request for -- Someone -- very rarely, someone might ask to see the appraisal. They were pretty -- we were always pretty tight-fisted with the appraisals.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because it had a lot of information provided by other landlords.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And other properties. It was kind of like, well, I wouldn't just outright say no, but I'd say, you know, what is this about, I'd just kind of -- but, similarly, I would occasionally get requests from people who would want to know, how much are these rents? How much are people paying for them? What busi --

KAREN BREWSTER: My neighbors paying?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Who are the tenants? Who are the lessees? And how much are they paying? [00:35:10]Occasionally, I'd get a request from Dimitra.

KAREN BREWSTER: Lavrakas.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Lavrakas. At -- working for the Skagway News, as a reporter for the Skagway News, and she would say, "Gee, can I get a copy of your sheet that shows, you know, all of the tenant information and the lease rates, and, you know, expiration dates and all that?" And I would say, "Well, I -- you know, I -- this is not something that the tenants want me to advertise. They don't want the government to advertise, want to trumpet how much they're paying in rent." I said, "I'll tell you." I said, "I'd be happy to tell you because it's public information." It's not -- you know, it's like -- but, but I would stop short of photocopying the whole thing and handing it off.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Knowing that's what would appear in an article in the paper. And that's a local paper, sits out in the supermarket and the, you know, it's like all over town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And tenants had actually told me, if people think I'm paying -- if my potential customers think I'm paying a lot in rent, they're going to think that my prices are inflated on account of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:36:18]REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, don't go -- the last thing in the world they wanted were interpreters, park interpreters, standing out in the street in front of their business, trumpeting how much rent we were collecting.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: From a particular place. So I had to caution the -- the seasonal interpreters against doing just that. I said, "It's -- it's a great idea to tell people that, you know what? This is a great partnership arrangement, and it is helping to preserve these buildings without having to spend government-appropriated funds to do it. Isn't that a great thing?"

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. It's a program that pays for itself. So it's --

REED MCCLUSKEY: It helps to pay for itself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's never gonna be -- [00:37:00]But, it's like, this is a great deal because the city -- I said, the city collects property tax from the tenant.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, from the tenant?

REED MCCLUSKEY: The city collects sales tax from the tenant on the lease on what they pay for the lease.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they collect sales tax from the tenant on the sale of their own goods out of the store. So the city's collecting three ways on that -- on that property right there.

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KAREN BREWSTER: On the property.

[00:37:33] REED MCCLUSKEY: And here's the kicker, there's something called payments in lieu of taxes, PILT monies. Ok? P-I-L-T. Administered by the US Forest Service, typically based upon how much federal lands are within a particular tax jurisdiction. You recognize you got all these federal lands, it's drying up money for the local tax. So there's payment in lieu of taxes. So -- so these were all government-owned properties. Guess what? They contribute to the PILT monies. So that's federal money.

KAREN BREWSTER: So the PILT monies go to the city?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

[00:38:11] KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah, I was wondering how you -- how you respond to an often-stated comment about, well, this is, you know, the federal government competing with local business?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh-huh. In this case, the buildings themselves, the -- the people of these good United States have, and this is where I would kind of try and pull the punch, but the people of these good United States have paid on average, about a million dollars apiece to restore or rehabilitate each of these historic buildings.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Some higher, some lower. But let's say it's an average of a million apiece to bring them from a wreck.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Which is where they were. To where they are now. That was the ultimate in urban renewal for Skagway. Skagway was on the cusp of seeing more -- a few more cruise passengers in the 60's, '70's, but it was still pretty -- there was a lot of grey wood buildings around there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: People didn't want to risk their money on these old buildings.

[00:39:30] And I said, the infusion of millions in capital is what put this commercial district back on its feet. It put the railroad back in operation, in my view.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The railroad cast off the headquarters, you know, the depot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And the headquarters building as white elephants. They were about to knock 'em down. They were gonna destroy 'em, get rid of them, because they were just a big liability. It was a money pit. And they're right. They were right. It was -- totally was a -- it was a money pit. But once those buildings were done and others started to come to life, other private building owners said, "Wow. This -- this is working." I mean, people are -- there's more foot traffic here. And they could turn around on the strength of the government investment and go in and get their own loans and get their buildings started to be put back together. So I'm sure people like Jan Wrentmore.

KAREN BREWSTER: The Red Onion.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Red Onion, um, and what, Tim and --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: David Present.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Oh, David Present.

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[00:40:41]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Which is another thing, because you were talking about how the appraisers were setting their price for the park buildings based on the market, but what was happening was, it was going the other way, too. So it was a circle.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So David Present was then setting his rates what the Park Service were. And they were all artificially high, so at least one renter that we know of told him, "Well, I'm going to go see what the rent is over here at the Park Service." In order to get him to come down on his rent. And they were playing off --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, she came in to see me.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Renters.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It was classic, you know. "Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm going to put in a proposal." She made all the outward signs, whatever. And you realize, oh, we never saw a proposal from -- well no, she was able to negotiate a much better rent from David Present.

KAREN BREWSTER: From somebody else.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I thought, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It works. Yeah, it works both ways.

[00:41:37]KAREN BREWSTER: You know, it certainly was a complaint in the beginning that they thought for private business was going to be somehow affected by the Park Service leasing their buildings.

REED MCCLUSKEY: If -- if someone had, let's say, was running a grocery and thought there would be a competing grocery, you know, right next door, I mean, you could totally see that. And to some degree, that argument will always hold water, because somebody's going to be in one of our buildings that's selling tchotchkes. They're -- they look an awful lot like the tchotchkes next door. And that's why these aren't concessions. People will ask occasionally, well, how come these aren't concessions? You know, well, concessions law takes up a whole bookshelf, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's enormous. I mean, the laws governing concessions in National Parks, mammoth by comparison.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Really difficult to administer. Very expensive to administer. And what's more, instead of just rents, Park Service takes rents plus twelve percent of your gross.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like, thank you very much. You know, it's like -- things like that.

[00:42:58]KAREN BREWSTER: And in the lease, you don't -- lease-back program, you don't take anything from their profits?

REED MCCLUSKEY: I don't know anything about their profits. I don't -- yeah, we don't get a cut of anything they make or don't make. It's entirely on them to pay their expenses. Now, what they're paying for is insurance on the property, naming the government as additional insured. Ok. So that's a good thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They're paying for interior upkeep, maintenance. They gotta keep it clean. They got to keep everything in operating condition. We pay for the operation or the maintenance of the heating plant and the sprinkler system, because those will burn the building down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Or not. Um, but if they -- they have a plumbing leak, that's their responsibility. Inside the building is the tenant. [00:43:48]Outside the building, the shell of the building, the outside, that's on us, and we use their rent money to maintain that. We give it a pressure wash at the beginning of the season, you know, and so on. So um, so we maintain the outside, but they're -- they're paying utilities, they're paying insurance, they're paying maintenance, and they're paying the property tax. And they're paying sales tax. And not just the sales tax on their sales, sales tax on the rents.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, the city's not losing a dime, and, in fact, they're making more than they would on another private property because of the PILT monies. [00:44:36]Um, and uh, there are very -- pretty strict sideboards on how they can display wares.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That are always difficult for the tenants to accept. "What do you mean, I can't put neon lights in here, or whatever?" What do you mean, I can't, you know, put -- I mean. And it's the jewelers, I think, that have the biggest heartburn, because they want to see everything sparkle. And we say, "No, you can't use five thousand Kelvin -- "

[00:45:06]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. There -- there -- I also have heard expressed the feeling that it seems like all of Skagway is jewelry stores, not that they're all the Park Service buildings.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, in general, that there's too many jewelry stores.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I could never openly express a bias against jewelry stores. It would've been unfair to anybody that was in the jewelry business.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you took whatever proposals you got, whether -- ?

REED MCCLUSKEY: We did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And had to. There was nothing inherently wrong. However, having said that, what I would point out is that they can't -- we got to the point where we wouldn't let them change any of the interior lighting. You want dazzling lighting inside your case, displaying -- then it has to be case -- in-case lighting or something that is part of the casework. It can't be hardwired, built into the building. Because that just means more holes in walls, more wiring runs, more changes, you know. And so, it's not good for the long term preservation of the building, and it certainly doesn't contribute to the historic scene. Um, if you want to bring in a three-ton safe, it's probably not going to work.

[00:46:35]KAREN BREWSTER: So those restrictions kind of help limit that maybe a jewelry store wouldn't put in a proposal?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes. And quite frankly, to be perfectly honest, that was part of my objective. Was to say, I hear the complaint from everybody that there's too many jewelry stores. Who needs another jewelry store here? Do we really want kind of a cheesy-looking jewelry store in here, or would we like something more like Jeff Brady's

bookstore? I would openly point to potential bidders, and I would say -- or visitors, and I would say, "This epitomizes, you know, what we like to see."

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I mean, look. He came -- the décor is consistent with the period. Yeah, he's got electronic equipment in there, I know that. You know, I'm not going to get too overboard on this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But a lot of his titles are interpretive materials.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, they're historic -- either novels or picture books, history pieces, great stuff, ok. And he's got office -- the office upstairs for the newspaper he's publishing out of the offices upstairs. This is great, you know. The copier services in the back room everybody in town needs. That's very useful to everybody. This -- I mean, this provides a lot of services that people really rely upon.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Not every -- I said, not every business is a bookstore.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:48:08]REED MCCLUSKEY: The primary complaint that Marlene pointed out earlier that was leveled against Alaska Natural History Association sales areas inside the park buildings was that we were unfairly competing with them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because they were selling books, too. And they didn't want to see crossover in the titles, because it would hurt their sales. And that complaint was coming from Jeff Brady, via Steve Hites, to the superintendent and had the desired effect.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It was in the run-up to the end of Jeff's lease that he became most concerned about that. And I understand, I get that, but, you know, how many people go into every shop? That's what I would submit to you is that people pick and choose. They go into this one or that one. They do -- I went into the visitor center. I didn't go into the bookstore. You're not gonna -- not everyone goes everywhere.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Not everybody sees every nook and cranny, and so, you know, are there t-shirts all over? Yes. Um, thankfully, I don't think we're selling too many t-shirts, although I don't know anymore.

KAREN BREWSTER: In ANHA?

REED MCCLUSKEY: In the Alaska Geo Store across the street now.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I'm not sure.

[00:49:27]REED MCCLUSKEY: That used to be the trail center, of course, across the street, in the little blue building, the Itjen House.

KAREN BREWSTER: It used to be Martin Itjen's house at some point.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes. Although it lived somewhere else.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:49:40]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: How many buildings were taken out of the leasing program?

REED MCCLUSKEY: So -- so what was the Itjen House is now Alaska Geo, but they're, I'm sure, still not paying rent.

KAREN BREWSTER: But is that --

REED MCCLUSKEY: I shouldn't say that. I suspect they're not paying rent.

KAREN BREWSTER: But that's a Park Service building?

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's a Park Service building.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Could've been rented, but never was.

[00:50:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And the Mascot would be one that hasn't been leased?

REED MCCLUSKEY: It was never leased. That one was always an exhibit, and then had storage upstairs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And the lab in the back. So the ones that she's -- she's asking about are the ones that at one point were under lease, and the Park Service, in the years after we arrived and in some cases, since we've -- since I've retired.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That have been removed from the leasing program. They're no longer being leased.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Would be Itjen, probably. You'd have to ask about Alaska Geo's occupancy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, and then Pantheon Saloon, which is where now the Park Service has the Junior Ranger Activity Center.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: For very limited hours, I noticed this last summer.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Always, yeah. It's a staffing thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And then, upstairs is the --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um.

KAREN BREWSTER: Curatorial --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Upstairs of Red Front is the curatorial. Actually, the back of the -- yeah, so. And that's never been under lease.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Those -- so the first floor space there. And then --

[00:51:15]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Boss.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Let's see.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Boss Bakery.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Boss Bakery. The Boss Bakery building, which is now the trail center, Chilkoot Trail Center.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And the Verbauwhedes, uh --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Miss Kitty's was --

KAREN BREWSTER: But the Verbau --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Verbauwhedes Cribs building.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: In the alley behind Verbauwhedes' store.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Is where Miss Kitty's was. Where Sue had a place.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:51:43]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I've talked to the descendant of Verbauwhedes in -- he lives in -- what's that little country?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Liechtenstein?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Luxembourg, I think?

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And he has a casino. They did very well from the money that Verbauwhedes made there in Skagway, running whores.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, is that what Verbauwhedes did?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, and it took a lot of digging before I found that out. And, actually, I was talking to him in French, and so Buckwheat (Robert "Buckwheat" Donahue) got very jealous and told me I couldn't talk to him anymore because I was speaking French. 'Cause he didn't understand.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: But it was kinda fun to --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

[00:52:28]REED MCCLUSKEY: It's not uncommon to have had a cigar store, candy, you know, smokes or whatever, up front, and then in the back was, you know, the other stuff.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: In this case, had been a connected building, I think, at one time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So that was the cribs in the alley. So that's now the ranger, the protection ranger's office.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Is in that building where the cribs -- where Sue used to have her store.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So that's really the third one, if you don't count Itjen House.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:52:57]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Which -- they had the Parks Canada in there, but Parks Canada never really paid rent.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The -- the issue with our relationship with the Parks Canada, and this is a whole 'nother, kind of subject. I don't know if -- As far as leasing goes, you know, it was -- it was an almost an everyday affair for me to spend some amount of time on some aspect of the leasing. At one point, I actually even got a -- kind of an offer of bribery, in my office one winter. We were advertising, might have been Red Front, and it must have been, like, December or January, that a guy showed up in my office. Heavy, like, Brooklyn accent, and he -- he wanted to know, he wanted to talk about the leases, and, you know, I mean, this place here. And he wanted to know all the details, and, you know, I'm talking through my usual spiel. I'm sitting at my desk in uniform, and uh, and then he -- he wanted to know, we got to a certain point, you know, it's like well, how much is -- how much is the key money?

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KAREN BREWSTER: The what? The key money?

REED MCCLUSKEY: The key money. And I -- and I, yeah, I had the same reaction. Well, I'm not sure what you -- I mean, we supply the keys for the, you know, the building here. I'm thinking, is that what you mean? But, you know, I don't know what that means. And -- and he said, "You know, the key money. So -- so I could occupy right away. So I could just occupy. I could just, you know." And I said, "Well, that's not actually the way it works. You know, I've been explaining that -- you know, here's the request for proposals, and you have to -- " And he's -- he's like, "Oh no, I need to know what the key money. Well, how much to -- how much to, you know, just move in?" It's like, oh, the key money. I said, "Well, welcome to Alaska. And welcome to the National Park Service. You know, no, that's not the way it works here." If I -- if I really wanted to be a pisser about it, I suppose I would've just said, "Did you just offer me a bribe?"

[00:55:17]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, if you'd been a different person, you could've said, "Oh yeah, here." And then you pocket that, and then you give him -- that would be what a corrupt person would've done.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, that --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: But there's no way to get around the three-person committee.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They would've -- they would've known that the language to use to, yeah, whatever, to finesse their way to a --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, here you go. There's the key.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That's what he was asking for.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And I thought, "Wow. Ok." That only happened once.

[00:55:44]KAREN BREWSTER: Did you enjoy doing this leaseback work?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes, I did. Um, I hate to say it made me the big man on campus, but sometimes that's the way it felt, because people would be ushered into my office who were hat in hand, you know, wanting to know what's -- how does this work? You know, Mr. Mc -- you know, the, uh -- One of the managers of a jewelry store that we had eventually as a tenant, and for ten years as a tenant, came to know him fairly well, always called me Mr. Reed. Uh, he was an Indian man, and got to know him, you know, on a more than cursory basis in some ways, but never a gee, come and visit me at home kind of thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, it was like, so yeah, he'd tell me about how things were going in his personal life and vice versa, but I also knew that he taught me more about how that jewelry business works and what -- and how it worked for them than anybody else. I would watch him sometimes. [00:56:52]I usually made a practice of, at least once a week, sometimes more often, stopping into each of those and talking to the manager. Coming in and in the process of talking to them doing a quick --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- just look-see inspection. Walk around, sometimes upstairs. And just so that they knew that this was not an unusual thing.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I would come by, look around, talk to them. Oh, these extension cords, they really can't be here. This is kind of -- you know, this is something you need to deal with. And in talking to them, you know, you get to know them better and better. I would -
- I would call the Klupars probably something more like friends now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Even though they made me tear my hair out sometimes. Very creative people. Always trying to do something or get away. It seemed -- it felt like to me that they were always trying to get away with a little extra. I would say, "No, can't do that."
[00:57:56]So yes, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the complexities of it. I enjoyed dealing with the, um, the legal end of it, writing contracts and reviewing those with -- with the government attorney. And then the satisfaction of seeing that process through to an award. In the case of, uh, Greg and Billi Clem, who are still tenants of one of the Park Service leases there, um, I was so -- I was so happy for them that their proposal actually beat out the few others that were, you know, in competition. It was a very difficult space to occupy. It was not a really attractive space for hot competitors. But um, they are local folks, and they want to sell tours, they want to sell trinkets, they want to sell toys for kids. They want to, you know, it's like -- I mean, and they're the ones that remain.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And do limited hours on through into the Christmas season. And I've always thought, well, that's probably the closest thing we came -- you know.
[00:59:17]Let's see, when Casey's -- Casey (McBride) did not finish out his lease, his last -- his second lease. He had a fifteen-year lease, and then he signed another ten, and then, at some point decided he was going to retire and negotiated an assignment of his lease, a reassignment to, what, Kathy and --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Chris Wassman.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, Kathy and Chris Wassman. And they do, uh, ivory jewelry and carvings of various kinds. They've got a great shop, and it's really interesting. People dig it. It's very popular. But it's -- it's ideal for them, because it's in the smallest square foot space on first floor that we have under lease.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, so they, it's the most efficient for them.

[01:00:14]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, you had briefly mentioned the Historic District Commission. And I'm just wondering how much interaction you had with them, 'cause they're the ones who set those standards about how the signs look and the colors of the building and all that.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The tenants had to come to us with their sign proposals, and receive NPS approval before they submitted to the Historic District Commission. So HDC was -- was secondary review. In our -- in our book, it was like, we don't want you sending things to HDC without it being approved by Park Service first, because we always felt our -- our review was going to be a little more strict in terms of signs. But because Karl was our representative initially on the HDC, the expectation was that they were going to be pretty close. And so, I would have to say that generally I was called to an HDC meeting to be present to speak on behalf of the landlord.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: In the role of the landlord. That's really about the only time. So -- so that was my role, was to stand up and say, "Why yes, the landlord has approved the submission that's made to you now." And so, it's for you, you know -- for them to review.

[01:01:37]KAREN BREWSTER: So it was mostly between the tenant and the -- and HDC about what happened?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right. And my role was merely to say, to affirm, that we've reviewed it, and it's ok with us.

[01:01:49]KAREN BREWSTER: And the HDC covers all buildings in the Historic District, not just Park Service ones?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Correct.

KAREN BREWSTER: It includes privately owned businesses?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes. And -- and, um, even their -- their guidelines, their rules, evolved through time, as well, as you'd expect. You know, it depends on the make-up of the HDC. But, you know, I never had -- I didn't really have a regular cause to go before HDC.

[01:02:25]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, so anything else about the leaseback program before we move to the next topic?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, one thing I would add is that Parks Canada -- those matches all ticked off.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Oh, yeah. Sorry.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There was talk when I first arrived, I think Clay Alderson had thought maybe that leasing to Parks Canada, leasing Itjen House to Parks Canada for the trail center operations was the way we might go. But I think what we hit on instead of that was something more like an MOU, with them paying their way in terms of utilities and some kind of a -- some kind of a token payment to the Park Service. So we negotiated a way to something that -- that filled that need.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um.

[01:03:28]KAREN BREWSTER: So Parks Canada, you were -- couple times you've mentioned, talking about your -- the relationship with Parks Canada on the larger scale.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: You want to talk about that?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Their organization was somewhat different than ours. It's not directly analogous, position for position or park for park. Um, because the office in Whitehorse had jurisdiction over all the units within the Yukon and BC and Northern BC, so the Chilkoot, whereas our office was just Klondike. But in 1998, that was the year that the centennial proclamations, declaring the establishment of Klondike Gold Rush International Historical Park were signed by Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. So and they were parallel, but not necessary duplicate, but parallel proclamations, issued at the same time to coincide with a -- an organized ceremony to be held at lakeshore and Bennett. The one hundred or was it two hundred, trying to think.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I didn't know that that -- I --

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REED MCCLUSKEY: Might have been -- You know, I don't remember the exact number now. [01:05:02]It was either one or two hundred invited guests were trained from Skagway to Bennett for that ceremony. First Nations representatives there, as well. Mounties in uniform. Us in our dress uniforms. The Parks Canada employees, and so, lots of photos taken. And it was a great "Hand Across the Sea" kind of thing. But it was really more, I think, intended to be symbolic of, you know, gee, we've got this trail that begins in the US, ends in Canada, and isn't this wonderful? And we're all kind of on -- you know, we're singing from the same page. [01:05:47]The significance of those proclamations still, I think, challenges anybody in park management. Not quite sure how thick that ice is. How far out can you go on that before it begins to crack, or, you know, it's like, "Ok, how much can we do on the strength of this?" And as far as I was concerned, this gave us a great deal of latitude. I won't say cover, but, you know, latitude to work hand-in-glove with Parks Canada in insuring that our visitors, because they were -- you know, they would -- ours and theirs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:06:30]REED MCCLUSKEY: Our visitors were attended to and the resources protected. And so, Tim and I, you know, were all on board to -- and I think this predates my time there, so they'd probably been doing this already, annual start-up training, rough terrain rescue, and travel. Joint training between the Canadian wardens and the park rangers was held. The first at Sheep Camp, and then the next year would be at Lindema. Based out of, you know, those locations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And then the next year back, so we just exchanged it back and forth. Different, very different snow conditions, terrain, and so on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But the objective being the same is that, you know, to introduce the staffs to one another, have -- force them to work together, to communicate. You know, to compare equipment. [01:07:30]And we were setting up new repeater facilities and authorized them to operate on our radio frequencies. We probably didn't have any authority to do that, but we would just tell 'em, just do it. And, you know, because it made sense. On the morning report -- we instituted a morning report where we'd hear from each of the backcountry stations into headquarters, whatever they had to report. Report in, what are you planning to do today? Where are you going to go? What are the trail conditions? What are the snow conditions like? And so on. And all that was done on our radio frequency and on into the trail center in town that was staffed jointly by Parks Canada and NPS. [01:08:15]So I supervised the -- the NPS staff, and we had, depending upon who you were talking to on the Canadian side, one of two different supervisors as primary, first-line supervisors. So I was dealing with either their Chief of Interp, I guess you could call him, or their Chief Ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: And was Christine Hedgecock the chief ranger?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Oh, no.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Glenn Cuban (sp?), when I first arrived there, and Dan Verhall pretty much the whole time that I worked there. Glen was replaced by different individuals through time, but Dan Verhall and I really became the -- the primary go-betweens on a regular basis. On the phone to one another pretty frequently. And, eventually, when we

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were forced by a directive from our regional director to institute fees for the campground in Dyea, which we had not done previously, and for the US side of the Chilkoot Trail, which we had not done, Canadians broke ground on that years before we did.

[01:09:34]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Before we can go any further, I wanted to make one note about that -- that party that they had there at Bennett to celebrate.

KAREN BREWSTER: The -- the cen -- the international park?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. The Park Service and Parks Canada put together a big, bronze plaque to commemorate that event.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And they handed the plaque over to White Pass to put it up, but they never put it up. And the only reason I know that is that the office that I worked at, at White Pass, I saw this bronze plaque. I said, "What's that?" And Tina said, "Well, you know, White Pass had no intention of ever putting that up, so." You know, they didn't like Park Service or Parks Canada, really, so there it sat. And then after she quit and I left, who knows what ever happened to that plaque.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you never got it put up even though you worked for White Pass?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Well, it wasn't my job to -- I was just an assistant. But it was, yeah, that's -- that's the point. There was nobody put in charge to put that plaque up, so.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's just another example of, what is this, and how does -- who's really in charge?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There's no one --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, and White Pass had no love for the Park Service at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Or Parks Canada, so they --

[01:10:50]KAREN BREWSTER: And you were working for -- so Tina was head of public relations? Tina Cyr?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Uh --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Marketing.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, she was marketing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Marketing.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And so, she worked six months there in Skagway, and I was her assistant full time. And then in the wintertime, she went down to Seattle, or they'd go skiing, and so she needed somebody there just to open the mail and stuff, so I worked half time then in her office in the winter time. That was after ANHA, when she stole me away from ANHA, so. [01:11:23]Um, but anyway, that was -- there was a woman by the name of Glenda Choate, who was the historian for White Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I worked with her some. She had tons of records that were in the red building, sometimes called the white building. It's on -- along the track just before you get to the railroad dock along there. And one half of that was just filled with all of her notes and books and all kinds of historical materials from White Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And she was trying to organize that. And then we met on the -- on the ferry to Juneau once, and on the way, you know, she -- she wasn't feeling well. And I

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remember we got a motel together 'cause we said, "Oh, let's get a motel." And I left real early in the morning, and I flew, and I hadn't seen her. And it turned out that she ended up going to the hospital and had cancer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And died soon after.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. It was really weird. [01:12:28]And she told me a bunch of secret stuff, you know, about Skagway and people. And, you know, it was amazing. She had an amazing array of stories. I don't know if you ever were able to interview her.

KAREN BREWSTER: No. I know her name, but I don't know --

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: She may have been interviewed by somebody else in the past.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Oh, I -- yeah. Yeah. It was amazing. She -- and she had file cabinets there in my office, and that's where that plaque was, right next to it, so she knew about it, but I don't know. You know, it was kind of like, physically moving that thing. It was so huge. It must have weighed a hundred pounds. And, you know, neither -- nobody in the administrative offices could even lift it. And so, it would've been for, like, the maintenance of way or Ed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Or somebody to put that up, and they had no use for anyone in --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: There was this huge schism in White Pass between the people that worked on the train and the people in the office.

[01:13:28]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Now, since we're talking about history, you do this -- or you have been doing this history blog, a Skagway history blog?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, "Skagwaystories.org." And there's like seven hundred stories or something there. 'Cause when I worked for the city during the winter, I had very little to do. Buckwheat was very, uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: So you worked for the Visitor Convention Bureau?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: For the City of Skagway, and so I kept the visitor center open throughout the winter. And so I looked for a project, and that was the project that I did. I did the blog, which was a story every day. And, generally, I would -- after I put together the, um, the database, then I could look at -- I could change it to the day. And so, like for instance, for July 25th, when it was July 25th, I'd look and see, well, what happened on this day? And sometimes it would be an event. Other times it might just be somebody was born. And then I would look up about that person, and then I would write about that one person on that day. So a lot of times it would start out, "On this day, July 25, 1840, so-and-so was born. Mr. Verbauwhedes, you know, ran a thing." [01:14:47]And so, that's how people would find me, relatives.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Descendants of these people. And I get one, usually one a week, still.

KAREN BREWSTER: Really?

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MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, because I talked about so many different people, and very often they'll say, "Oh, I just saw your story. What else do you have on my great grandfather?" And I have to tell 'em, "You know, I don't even remember writing that at all." And I would generally on each story, I'll put a note as to where I got the information.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And sometimes I didn't 'cause I don't remember -- didn't remember to do it. But it was just kind of a daily thing that I did, and it was kind of exciting to do that.

[01:15:28] REED MCCLUSKEY: So Arlen was her webmaster, essentially, and he set it up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right, your son.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, he set me up.

REED MCCLUSKEY: He set her up, and so there's no commercial, there's no advertising.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There's no commercial aspect to it.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So Arlen pays. He has a domain, and it's on that domain, so he --

[01:15:44] KAREN BREWSTER: So you started it for the City of Skagway, and then you just kept doing it on your own?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I started it, yeah, for the city. Not so much for the city. I actually started it so that, uh, some of the stories that the interpreters and the guides were telling were way off base. I mean, you know, they would talk about people that had done, you know, church work. And then they would say, "Oh yeah, this was a whore that was running, you know, this." I mean, it would be like, so -- and that really annoyed me, you know. So I thought, "Ok, well, I need to have these short stories." So they're short, couple paragraphs, that straighten out the story about this person so that if a tour guide wanted to write just ghost stories, he could read all the ghost stories. Or there's one section just about the Gold Rush Cemetery.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: You know, who's buried there and the history of those.

[01:16:41] REED MCCLUSKEY: Most of those have a picture attached to them.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Mm, yeah, they have some kind of a picture.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Unless it has no picture related. And a lot of times, relatives have sent me pictures.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, cool.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I've posted them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. [01:16:54] Now you said you looked up in some database. What was it?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: That was the database that I put together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Which is what? A database of what? Of these stories?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Of stampedeers.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: No, the database was the -- I did -- was it 3700 people or something? That was the combination of the death index, the 1900 census, the 1910 census, the 1920 census, the 1930 sentence -- census. All of those censuses, the death, and then the birth records, as well as, um, records regarding the cemeteries, um who, you know, were there. There was, um, lots of lists that I found in books, online, and old

newspapers. There was photos with attributes underneath. There was one picture that I just recently got that was in Carcross, in the little visitor center there, of several Sikhs that were working on the White Pass Railroad, and I posted -- I actually just took a picture with my camera, posted that and said, "Who knew? "

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:18:09]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: You know, unusual things like that. I don't have any names for those. And then, there was even a story about Samoans. No, not Samoans, from New Zealand. Māoris that came, a group of, I think it was a group of thirty Māoris that came and climbed the White Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: You never hear about that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I had a number of names, and I tried contacting a university professor to say, "Can you tell me if these names are of Māori names or not?" And they both shied away. They said, "Well, we really can't tell."

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: But, anyway, so those were all on this database, this Excel database that I have.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: It's huge. And it had all of that information. Like I said, the Park Service printed it out at one point.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And that's what they use when people come into the desk, which they do every day, and say, "My great-great-grandfather came, and his name was Joe Blow." And they say, "Well, let's look it up under B. There he is."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: You know, and they'll have a little bit of information, which I found and put together.

[01:19:10]KAREN BREWSTER: That's a huge amount of research that you must have done.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Well, I did it every day. That's what I did.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For years.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: For years, 'cause I had no other -- no -- absolutely no other duties. Buckwheat wouldn't give me anything else to work on.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You were supposed to answer the phone.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Well, the phone rang, maybe twice a day.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And, uh, I mean, I wanted to coordinate events, but he didn't want me to do anything like that, because he wanted to get a second position, you know, to kind of build the kingdom there. And so that never happened.

[01:19:42]KAREN BREWSTER: We should say, it's Buckwheat Donahue -- Donahoe. How do you?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Donahue.

KAREN BREWSTER: Donahue.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Robert Carlin Donahue.

KAREN BREWSTER: He was head of the visitor center or --

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MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: He was the, um --
REED MCCLUSKEY: Convention and Visitor Bureau director.
KAREN BREWSTER: Something.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So he was the director, yeah.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I ran the visitor center downstairs. So he was upstairs in his office.
[01:20:01]KAREN BREWSTER: So are you still adding to the Skagway stories?
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I do, occasionally. Not as much. I used to do it every day.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So I have to admit, I only do it, maybe once a month, if that. I should do it more often, but.
KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you're retired.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: But, I can look at the, uh, the numbers. What's it called, the graphic numbers. And I get thirty people a day.
KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Oh, for the stats of -- ?
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, the stats. I -- I can look at it, and thirty people a day look at my blog. It's amazing.
KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I mean, thirty isn't a lot, but it's better than a poke in the eye, so.
[01:20:43]KAREN BREWSTER: So, I'd say, yeah, you did a lot of work then with sort of the tourism side, between -- with ANHA and then the Visitor Convention Bureau.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, so I worked for the city there for seven years. Um, and then, when I -- I retired, like the day after I made my seven years, because I wanted out. But uh, in the summertime, it was very busy, obviously, so I supervised, you know, three or four people behind the desk. And then, I had my little corner there, which is still where Wendy is now. And pretty much, that's all we did was, you know, make sure the bathrooms were functioning and hand out, you know, brochures.
KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's a lot of talking to people.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, and so that's why Scott Home worked for me.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Charles, um, I can never remember his last name. He's still there. Though he's not doing very well. Uh, Dimitra.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Um, and various other people that would kind of come and go, you know.
[01:21:43]KAREN BREWSTER: Did you enjoy working with the tourists?
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. Yeah. You know, it was -- it was interesting. You know, if I needed to, I'd work behind the desk, and -- and, you know, tell people stories. Most of the time, I'd find out where they were from. You know, people love to talk about themselves. And, you know, and it was very interesting. I always was able to relate where they were from or what they were doing to something that I had visited or knew about.
KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.
MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And so, yeah. [01:22:18]And, occasionally, we'd have people come in, year after year, and they would bring me artifacts. They brought me some

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amazing artifacts. For AB Hall, like, a flag that had flown there, and they had -- they brought me membership cards for the Arctic Brotherhood.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I had those framed. They've taken them down now. I think they don't go with the interior, the way they want it, put it in the back. And some of the more valuable things, I ended up loaning to the Park Service from the city.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Um, but actually, they -- I mean, I could've taken them with me, because I heard that they were giving the, um, display cases in the back of AB Hall, and that's where I put a lot of those artifacts. So I don't even know what happened to them, but.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe they're in the City Museum with Judy (Munns).

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: It's possible that some of that stuff may have gone over to Judy.

[01:23:13]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Um, so did you like living in Skagway in the small town?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: No. I grew up in LA, and I had a lot of, you know -- You live in a city, and you have a lot of options, and especially in Southern California, you have sun, you know, all the time and freedom to go and do things. And uh, I mean, I worked different jobs, and then, you know, working certainly helps take your mind off the fact that it's cold and dark, and you can't really exercise 'cause there's no place to go. And then they -- they kind of improved the rec center, so that helped some. Um, and -- but in general, yeah, I'd have to say that all four of us were suffering from depression and from lack of Vitamin D, and I think that contributed to the depression.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And when you're so depressed, you don't even tell each other. So Reed and I and the boys were each depressed in our own way and dealt with it in different ways. And, you know, looking back on it, we recognize it now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: At the time, we just felt angry.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So, I wouldn't do it again.

[01:24:29]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I mean, you guys lived there for a long time.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: We did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Under those conditions, other people might have left.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Well, we couldn't, because Reed was locked into his job, so.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I was wearing the golden handcuffs.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So until he could retire, we couldn't leave, and so that made it really -- really kind of tough. But, you know, I have to say that, um, you know, the friends that we made there are the only friends, really, that we have, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And so, we see them as they come through. They'll stay with us. When we go up there, we visit with them. It's odd, but when you live in a small town, you get to know almost everybody. I mean, especially because Reed and I worked at different -- he worked, you know, in different -- the fire department.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And Chamber of Commerce. And I worked in the police and ANHA and Park Service, and --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Presbyterian Church at one point.

[01:25:28]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Then we had the school, you know, so we had -- we had connections with so many different organizations that we got to know a lot of people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and I was thinking, yeah, having kids in school.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: You got to meet other families, probably?

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Oh, that more than anything else, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, I mean, 'cause the boys would bring home other kids, sometimes for study nights or whatever, and yeah.

[01:25:53]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So how is it that you were locked into the job? You couldn't get a Park Service job someplace else?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, because of the disconnect with my law enforcement past.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, right. Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I could no longer apply for any other ranger job with law enforcement.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So those were -- those were closed to me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I didn't have a history or background, a professional at my grade level in anything else in the Park Service. I mean, I could have done any number of different things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But I wasn't going to be in a position to compete effectively in any other field. And then, if you look at concessions, which is maybe -- would've been the closest one, the opportunities would've been more or less Anchorage.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: San Francisco, Denver. I mean, you know, a big city somewhere. And I just -- I couldn't see that moving, uprooting us and moving us from Skagway to Anchorage, into that regional office, was actually gonna be an improvement.

[01:27:02]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And when we retired, they would not have paid for a move back to the Lower 48. They would've paid for a move back to Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And we had a lot of junk.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And, actually, wouldn't even have done that. Wouldn't even have done that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So as it was, not only were we locked into Skagway, that's sort of my view of it is that in order to maintain the pay level.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And there's more complexities to that, as well, which I won't go into here. I don't think we have time, but, um -- but in order to do that and at the time of retirement, had a limited window during which we could see a paid move --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- back to the Lower 48.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Which was a really big deal. If you live in one place and one house for fifteen years, you collect a lot of stuff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And I -- we kicked out a lot of stuff. Gave it away, sold it cheap in town. Did, I mean, a lot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And we still had -- we still had nine tons of household goods leave Alaska with us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And came south here. And we've sold some since then. We've gained some more back. But, you know, we're kind of collectors.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So here we have -- those are -- those are big factors for us in deciding when and where we go somewhere.

[01:28:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. Um, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Chilkoot Trail and your responsibilities and duties of that. You mentioned the morning reports and working with the Canadian wardens. But as Chief Ranger, what kind of responsibilities did you have regarding the trail?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, Tim Steidel was my right-hand man for, I mean it was -- he was the primary go-to for anybody for Chilkoot Trail operations. There's no doubt of that. And Tim and I, thankfully, hit it off right from the start. We had a very similar perspective on the nature of park ranger work, the broad view of skill sets that we want from, and we especially saw eye-to-eye on what the backcountry rangers were. What role, what purpose, that they served. Who we wanted to hire. [01:29:27]And so, while Tim would do the hiring, would do -- you know, we'd go through the applications and do the selections, I trusted that he was looking for and we were filling positions that were generalist ranger positions. Among the last, I might add, in the Park Service, it seemed like, because they weren't intended to be strictly interpretive. They did some interpretive work. They certainly weren't law enforcement certified or trained, but they were meant to be our eyes and ears on the trail for enforcement purposes. They were there for educational purposes, preventative pur -- and so on. So we really wanted somebody who was -- kind of viewed themselves as a public safety ranger. And that's what Tim hired, were public safety rangers. And we loved that. [01:30:17]The problem was that the system was squeezing us more and more. We really weren't able to continue to do that. And when it came time to -- we had to make a decision we were going to hire protection seasonals, the challenges of trying to get those individuals certified and qualified and -- and finally able to receive a law enforcement commission, sometimes it would be mid-summer, late summer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: And what's the point?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I just spent a lot of money that didn't really return anything. In one case, we actually got to the middle of the summer, and by that time, nobody trusted the individual with a commission, even though he -- we got to the point where we could've given him one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We actually instead terminated him, like, let him go. People were scared to have him around.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We didn't want to hand him a gun.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:31:14]REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, so, it became more and more challenging, and we, I think, shifted more and more to the idea that we're going to have to hire permanent, subject-to-furlough. Invest more in fewer positions, fewer individuals.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So it was an evolutionary process there, as well, but thankfully, Tim and I again seemed to really see eye-to-eye in how things worked. [01:31:37]Uh, preventative search and rescue is also known as PSAR in the business. And that's -- that was the primary role and function, in my view, of the trail center, the trail center operations, the trail permitting, and the backcountry facilities along the way was to prevent, um, the need for rescues. And, thankfully, we kept them really to a very -- a remarkably small number, the number of people that had to be flown off.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I was surprised at how -- it could have happened a lot more often than it did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so a lot of what we did was prepare. I worked with Tim at one point. I said, you know, we -- our plan was, we'll put a rescue cache at the scales, because if somebody's gonna get injured, that's probably where it's going to happen. They're going to need to be flown off from there, but the weather may not allow. And so, they may have to bivouac there for some time. We want a cache there that a ranger can arrive to, pull food, heat, shelter, out of. Got that set up. [01:32:48]We also had an area cleared in kind of the gravel bar area of the river, um, near Canyon City.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: As an emergency helispot, because again, we have very few areas where you could actually bring a helicopter in, and that was one. Finnegan's Point and the gravel bar.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We figured if the river's down enough, we could land in, you know, have somebody land in there. But, of course, when I say we, it's TEMSCO helicopters. [01:33:18]Those kinds of rescues typically were staffed by the fire department. So a fire department EMS volunteer would board the helicopter in Skagway, fly to the site, meet the ranger who had called them in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: And then transfer the patient, individual, to the care of the fire department employee, and they'd be transported back on the helicopter. They'd get charged by TEMSCO and they get -- and at the clinic for their ambulance trip, and so on. So it wasn't cheap, but it wasn't costing us. [01:33:56]And our role was just to call them in and then to have them flown off. In some cases, that meant in the middle of the night getting a radio call from a visitor who'd gone lame and broken into the summit warden station. "Hello, hello. I need help." And, you know, for us to scramble someone from Sheep Camp. At least once, I remember just holding my breath, because it was well after dark. We had a ranger who had legs like tree trunks. The guy was amazing. And he made a forty-five-minute run from Sheep Camp to the summit warden station.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, my God!

REED MCCLUSKEY: In the dark. Amazing individual.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: He basically provided initial care for this person, stabilized, made an assessment, called that out. You know, we made arrangements for the next morning for a helicopter evacuation. That, of course, meant coordinating with customs on both sides.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause it was on the Canadian side?

REED MCCLUSKEY: On the Canadian side. You have to contact a Canada Border Services agency office, and the US Customs, both. So, and you know, they've gotta know what's going on, give their approval. And the weather's got to cooperate. [01:35:15]And TEMSCO's got to free up a helicopter. Now remember, TEMSCO's here to serve tourists.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: To fly tours. That's the money.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They don't -- Sure, they're going to get paid for their flight, but they'll lose money in the proposition for that helicopter to be out of the -- so they were always kind of like, "Ok. Do we have to?"

[01:35:40]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, were there times where they couldn't go 'cause of weather?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Sure. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Then what?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Then you have to -- you hope that you've got somebody bivouacked somewhere where they've got shelter and somebody's there to provide -- make sure they, you know, heat, like water, food.

KAREN BREWSTER: You never had anybody die up on the trail?

REED MCCLUSKEY: No, thankfully, knock on wood.

[01:36:00]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Did Karl Gurcke tell you about his appendicitis thing?

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't remember.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: He -- you know that a few years ago, he -- they couldn't fly out of Skagway, and he diagnosed himself as having appendicitis, so he got on the ferry, and he ferried to Juneau, and then he took a taxi to the hospital. And --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Karl's -- Karl's self-rescue.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: He had an appendectomy, and he didn't tell anybody.

KAREN BREWSTER: And he made it?

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MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: Oh, yeah. Yeah. He's still here.

KAREN BREWSTER: He's lucky -- no, but I mean, it didn't burst enroute?

REED MCCLUSKEY: No.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: What happens with -- my son had an append -- appendicitis, and it -- it doesn't actually burst. It starts to dissolve, and the more it dissolves --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Disintegrate.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: The more infection fills your --

KAREN BREWSTER: The peritoneum.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And uh, so then it takes a while to flush all of that bad stuff out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: So that's why.

[01:36:59]REED MCCLUSKEY: We had -- we had circumstances where somebody had come over the summit, over the Pass there. They passed the warden station, and there's a, you know, you saw, normally, a snow-covered slope.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That leads right on down to Crater Lake there. Well, you know, at a certain time, you've got a crust of ice on that. And -- and at least once, maybe twice that I can recall, somebody'd slip on that and slide, high speed all the way down, and hit the rocks at the bottom.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, God. This is why I took cleats with me.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So -- so that's -- that's a circumstance -- the instructions provided to our staff, and thankfully, similarly on the Canadian side, was that, um, do not hesitate. If you receive a call, or if we receive a call, we will dispatch you. Do not res -- do not hesitate to cross the border for an emergency call like that. I said, the only thing you can do wrong is hesitate or fail to respond to that. And yiu should be the first responder there. Because no one's going to care which side of the border that person is on.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:38:13]REED MCCLUSKEY: If you're the -- if you're the closest person, you get there first, and when the Canadians can muscle -- muster sufficient forces that they can relieve the emergency, they can take over, then you can -- you can withdraw. And, similarly, we had times when the Canadian wardens would make the run down to Sheep Camp in response to someone that, you know, had become injured or ill, and we didn't have somebody available.

[01:38:41]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And now, would TEMSCO fly up and over and rescue somebody in Canada?

REED MCCLUSKEY: With, um, our -- what we would do is call -- We would confirm Can -- you know, that Parks Canada says, "We don't have a warden nearby." Or we knew -- Or they were making the call for the evacuation. As long as Parks Canada, you know, made the call, said, "Yes, this is what we want to have happen," then we would call the Canada border services agency, and the border station on each side of the border, saying, "We have an emergency call, a need for evacuation. We have staff on scene." And once they gave their thumbs up, and we could launch, we could tell TEMSCO, you get your fire department volunteer on board and make the flight, then they could make the evacuation back to Skagway.

[01:39:35]KAREN BREWSTER: Because the -- Parks Canada didn't have access to a helicopter --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- on their side?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, they -- they did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Where would be the closest?

REED MCCLUSKEY: They did and had done that. They were under some pressure, I suspect, you know, for political reasons as much as anything else. Under the right circumstances, the expectation would be that they would call in a helicopter from Whitehorse. But it was a -- it was a longer delay.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, if the nature of the emergency were such that somebody needed immediate care. If it was more serious, they knew the wrong thing to do would be to wait for -- yeah, you know, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, as you said, the cha -- the -- the Golden Staircase, that summit climb, is most likely the place where someone's going to get hurt.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Not always. I mean, someone has a heart attack, they could have it anywhere on the trail, but --

[01:40:31]REED MCCLUSKEY: Sure, yeah. We were most fortunate, it seemed to me, because we took -- on both sides of the border, we took great pains, and you experienced this personally, to drive home the whole bear -- safe travel in bear country. You know, just relentlessly. And then having staff in the backcountry on both sides to re-emphasize those messages.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Meant that we really had very few circumstances where people did stupid things and, you know, left their can of tuna out on the picnic table.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Or, you know, that kind of thing where they lured an animal in with -- it just -- it happened very rarely. [01:41:12]Occasionally, people were bluff-charged, and there were big scares. You know, the rangers would respond with a shotgun. So we would keep shotguns and ammunition in both of our backcountry stations. Same at Lindeman. And it, you know, that meant that the protocol was to have two individuals respond, uh, if at all possible. One loaded with less-than-lethal rounds and the other with lethal rounds, you know, to haze a bear.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they were successful at hazing occasionally. It's very difficult to do, as you probably know, because you've actually got to catch the bear doing something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For it to mean anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. And uh, and so that's the hard part, and it usually didn't happen.

[01:42:01]KAREN BREWSTER: I mean, my hike on the trail this last summer, the only time we saw a ranger on the US side was at Sheep Camp.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: Right, ok.

KAREN BREWSTER: And the -- on the Parks Canada side, maybe there was somebody at the summit in the shelter where you'd go in, I don't know, in the cabin. Happy Camp --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Oh, was there somebody at Happy Camp?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Oh. Well, they might have been on their way to the warden station or just hiked on back down --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, they were --

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- to Happy Camp from the warden station.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe. I mean, they were there overnight, so um.

[01:42:32]MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: I'm going to go to bed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

MARLENE MCCLUSKEY: And I made your bed.

(break in the recording)

[01:42:38]REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, it seemed to me, was one of the most delightful discoveries that I had on arriving here because I guess I -- I, like so many others, really didn't understand the dynamic landscape, the scope and the length and the fact that it was a destination backpack trip.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For a couple thousand people a year. Uh, I just became enchanted by that and really worked hard to try and make sure that we had open relations with Parks Canada. [01:43:11]Um, when we began the business of the joint -- jointly issued backcountry permit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was going to ask you, was -- You -- did that happen during your tenure?

REED MCCLUSKEY: It did. And under duress, if you will, the regional director said, "Why aren't we charging fees for that? The Canadians are." It's like, uh, you know, 'cause it's a pain in the butt. Which it is, collecting fees at any time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So the plan was to make this one-stop shopping. One permit, one reservation, one fee. You know, it's like, you don't have to -- not this business of call this office for that one and then coordinate for that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We knew it could turn into a nightmare. [01:43:52]We also knew that the Canadians were way ahead of us in this game. They'd been doing it for a few years, so they had some of the infrastructure already together, you know. So it only made sense in my book to say, can we piggyback on this in such a way -- will you collect our fees for us, and, basically, you know, twice a year remit those back to us. You know, just partition out --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- what you think is ours. And we had to agree on each year what those would be.

KAREN BREWSTER: What percentage?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because they were charging them in dollars Canadian.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh.

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[01:44:34] REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, what we -- what I would have to do is do a, um, a cost comparison by calling other parks, doing online research, basically just finding out, hey, what are other -- what are other backcountry permits for backcountry use run? And then, we'll try and set ours in that realm using a comparable fee. Being cognizant of the fact that the combined fee is what people are going to see. It's not just the one versus the other. So um, each year, I would do that, and then I would call Dan Verhall, and I'd tell him, "Ok. A, this is what we want to see for our part of the fee for this year." Secondly, he and I would have to agree on the fixed rate of exchange.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That they would program into their cash registers and what they would use. So basically, how would they take US currency, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because, of course, that changes minute to minute, second to second, practically. We -- they couldn't deal with that. We couldn't deal with that. I said, so --

KAREN BREWSTER: You just picked a range?

[01:45:49] REED MCCLUSKEY: Each January, Dan and I would get on the phone and, you know, put your finger in the air and say, "I kinda think, let's -- " And we would just --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We would more or less arbitrarily set an agreed upon exchange rate.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And once we agreed on that on the phone, Dan would act on it, move forward. We would usually put that into -- I would put that into a -- a Memorandum of Call.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Or something along those lines, that would then be signed by the superintendent, acknowledging and then copying the Canadians so, ok, we're all -- this is -- we've huddled.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: This is what we've agreed on. [01:46:34] When we first proposed doing this, the regional Chief of Administration, what was his name? Tom? God, what a kick in the pants he was. He tells me, he says, "Well, I don't know that that's going to work. You're not going to be able to do that. What happens when the first super patriotic weenie complains about the fact that he's going to be charged for a backcountry permit in the US in dollars Canadian?" You know And I said, "Tom, just let us try it." It's like, I have a feeling that people get it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They're not gonna want to do this twice. And they know they're going into Canada.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like, I think -- I think it'll work. And he just threw up his hands and kind of said, All right, fine. Knock yourselves out." He says --

KAREN BREWSTER: It's on you if it doesn't.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's on you, yeah, exactly. It's on you if it doesn't work. [01:47:34] And, thankfully, it worked famously. I don't think we ever had a complaint from anybody.

They were -- everybody was -- anybody that wanted to backpack the Chilkoot, that was a pretty select group.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It was a pretty select group of people that said, "I am in this. I want to do this. And I'm really happy that I only have to call one office."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, in the winter, they could call Parks Canada. In the summer, they'd call the trail center. They'd get one of our staff members. Didn't matter which agency. And it was a little -- kind of a little odd that at times, it was just our staff in the trail center collecting dollars Canadian for --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- for a backcountry permit in the -- yeah. And, thankfully, people seemed to approve. They seemed to approve of this cooperative approach. A venture that, you know what, we're working towards the same goal. We're using more or less the same methods. We're just coordinated.

[01:48:31]KAREN BREWSTER: I mean, it is -- does seem a little odd when you're hiking the Chilkoot, to call Parks Canada.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. And I think that in the off-season, you know, when -- like you did.

KAREN BREWSTER: In the winter, right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You call -- you call in January or February or whatever, and you say, "Oh, hey, I want to -- " Wait a minute. I'm starting in the US. Why am I --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- calling Whitehorse?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, to -- and I'm talking to someone whose English is --

KAREN BREWSTER: Who has a French accent.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes, who has a French accent. [01:49:00]Well, um, thankfully, again there seems to be a really strong desire on the part of all the staff to give a thorough measure of service, and so we just really haven't had anybody, you know, kind of throw down on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And say, gee, I can't live with that. You know, we really need you to --

[01:49:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and it is also interesting that in, you know, the current age, there's no website to go sign up to get your permit. You have to do it by telephone.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I think you'd get more pushback on that now. I mean --

REED MCCLUSKEY: If -- if people thought that there were, you know, a way to do that, I imagine, you know, they'd probably push harder. Maybe they are pushing harder, and I'm just not aware of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But from the perspective of the staff wanting to really understand that you understand what it is you think you're going to be doing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I think the telephone connection does that better than just having someone sign up on the --

[01:50:10]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And I can say, as a hiker who found the logistics very complicated.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Of where to go and stop, and then connecting with the train.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Having somebody have it all figured it out for me.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Was way easier than if I'd had to figure it out on a website.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes. I think -- I think you're right. And that's why I would, if anybody asked me, I would say, no, don't -- don't convert to some automated system. That will create a lot of havoc. You won't know how, you know, how that will express itself.

[01:50:48]KAREN BREWSTER: I mean, maybe once the woman who's on the other end of the phone retires and isn't there, 'cause she was so good.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe then? She only could be replaced by an automated system, I don't know.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Our -- our practice was to try and ensure that the individuals that answer the phone, if at all possible, because it's not always possible, but if at all possible to have those individuals be veterans of hiking the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That they've at least done it once, so that when they spoke to somebody on the phone, they could speak with the confidence and assurance.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That ok, I know what I'm talking about. I've actually seen it, and I'm not just blowing smoke.

[01:51:38]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. And now, your experiences on the trail. Did you get to experience it?

REED MCCLUSKEY: I got to hike the trail, but not really fairly, I guess is what I'd say. Because I stayed in the backcountry stations when I would hike the trail. So I would carry a pack, I would carry my supplies, um, but I didn't necessarily have to carry a sleeping pad, as a for-instance.

KAREN BREWSTER: Or a tent?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Or a tent.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right. Exactly. So you know, it was not the same experience by any stretch, but I could see the trail from end to end. I could actually see what the facilities were like. I could talk to the staff on the Canadian side as well as the US side and say, "Gee, this is -- " And really get a better -- a much better notion as to, um, athletically, what does this demand of people. You know, this -- between these two camps.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Or, you know, what's it like getting to the train, you know, on time.

[01:52:37]KAREN BREWSTER: So did you do it once every year?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Once a year, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That's what I tried to do. I'm sure I didn't hit every year, but one year, let's see, one or two years, I actually took one of my sons with me. And, in general, if I hiked it, then my counterpart would hike it. So the chief ranger on their side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So the two of us would go together.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So it wasn't just me. And, usually, it would be, like, Tim, and Glenn, myself, never Dan Verhall. So um, so maybe the three of us. [01:53:19] Sometimes the superintendents on both sides.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The general superintendent on the Canadian side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And the US -- on the US side, the superintendent. So sometimes we'd have a group of three. One time, we had a Department of Interior individual, Cal, what was his name? He and his wife came along. You know, that was -- that was kind of a VIP trip, I guess you'd call it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, so it -- it -- the purpose and function, the way it operated, it varied from year to year. Occasionally, it would be just myself and another ranger to maybe do the US side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:54:06] REED MCCLUSKEY: I remember getting from Sheep Camp to the summit warden's station, halfway up the Scales, up -- up above the Scales.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: The fog and the rain had got to the point where I realized that -- normally, I would hike in shorts.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: 'Cause you're generating so much heat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And I got halfway up and realized, I'm -- even doing this, I'm not generating enough heat. I'm getting really cold.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And I remember pulling on the rest of my pants and like trying to -- thinking, you know, this could turn really, really bad really fast.

KAREN BREWSTER: So you learned what the hikers experience?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, yeah. You know, and I -- and then I turned around and came --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you hiked back down?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Came back down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But, you know, carrying a day pack.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Not a full-on -- [01:54:54] And recognizing that, ok, trying to do that in the rain and the fog, coming down that slope, if you had any weight up high, like backpackers typically do.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Phew. That's not safe. And it's during those traverses, into and out of, at times, that I concluded and still strongly feel that anybody that is trail running, regardless of whether they are very careful about choosing the weather in which they run, which they always say, gee, you know, I wait until this time of year, and it's so wonderful. You know, and then I watch the weather. They're hanging it out so far, they're asking -- they're asking for a debilitating injury or a bear attack. I mean, that's my take on it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like, how -- how it hasn't happened is --

KAREN BREWSTER: Knock on wood that it won't.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, knock on wood. So --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I think --

[01:55:52]REED MCCLUSKEY: It was a wonderful experience, and the Canadians were terrific to work with. Sometimes we -- our biggest challenge was just arranging for housing for the Canadian.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: In Skagway for the summer.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, somebody working the -- um, the getting the payments from Parks Canada was not difficult at all. They cut a check twice a year, and then we would just deposit that.

[01:56:17]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you had said, I think it was before we were recording, about your first view of the trail.

REED MCCLUSKEY: My first view of the trail was -- was on my very first day on the job. And I was told to hustle down to TEMSCO Helicopters, which at the time was only a block from the headquarters.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And not in its current location. But it was on Broadway, on the south side of the tracks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There's a little house where tour sales are done now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um-hm. Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That was the TEMSCO office.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And behind that, the open field behind that, is where the helicopters were landing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, as the helicopters would come in to make their -- their -- their sweep and land, the rotor chop would vibrate the windows there in the office. It was quite the circus.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:57:12]REED MCCLUSKEY: But they said, "Run on down to TEMSCO. Meet John Warder, Chief of Maintenance there. And he's going to fly the trail, spring pre-opening. He wants to see how much treefall there's been. He wants to see if any bridges have been damaged. He wants to look at the footings at one particular bridge. And you should go

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along with him and check it out." So I jumped in the helicopter. It was a cloudy -- it was an overcast day. Typical spring. And not too windy, but flying up at a fairly low elevation, because John wanted to see as much as he could see from the -- that was a flight unlike I think one that I ever made up the trail after that. And -- and then, Warder had the pilot land near this suspension bridge, um, and -- and in so doing, I realized we just made a full-power vertical landing. Straight down through the tree canopy to the gravel bed of the -- the creek bed, the river bed there.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's not very wide.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Not very wide.

KAREN BREWSTER: Those openings.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And -- and big cobbles in the -- in the bed there. And eroded stream bank. [01:58:41]And -- and it took him about four or five, maybe six tries, testing, slowly allowing the weight of the helicopter to compress the gravel under -- and then he would not be satisfied. He'd only be partially set, and then lift off a foot, shift over a few inches, and then drop down again and then allow the weight of the helicopter to -- until he was finally, after about the fifth or sixth time, satisfied that it would support the helicopter if he allowed the full weight of the helicopter to come down to rest and to allow the engine to cool and then shut down. I thought, this is my first -- my first visit to the Chilkoot Trail by helicopter, and in circumstances that were pretty demanding.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For any helicopter pilot.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That was very impressive.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I would say, he was a good pilot.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

[01:59:40]KAREN BREWSTER: And so, the trail crew itself, that was all under Chief of Maintenance? You were not supervising them?

REED MCCLUSKEY: The -- the trail maintenance crew was under the Chief of Maintenance, and they had a separate backcountry cabin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I'm not sure if you had an opportunity to see that. If you leave the Canyon City cabin --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: When you start, very soon you get to a nearly --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, like, vertical.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It's like a switchback.

KAREN BREWSTER: Switchbacks up, right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: At the top of that, if you break away from the trail --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- and head about, uh, 150, 200 feet out into the trees and a little further up.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There's another cabin.

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KAREN BREWSTER: I don't think I noticed it.

REED MCCLUSKEY: There's another cabin there, and that's the trail maintenance crew cabin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Huh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And they were pretty careful not to, like, beat a trail to it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because they really didn't want people showing up there.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

[02:00:37] REED MCCLUSKEY: 'Cause um -- so it has a -- a helicopter landing deck there at that cabin.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. For all their supplies?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Supplies coming in. The annual airlift of supplies into each of those backcountry stations was a pretty substantial affair. Normally, each of the employees was given the opportunity to buy -- anybody that was going to be stationed in the backcountry could buy as many groceries as they thought they could afford and that would keep. They would pack those into nets, boxes into nets, and those were then flown by, you know, sling-load.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Into each of those two stations. [02:01:25] At the same time, usually, not always, but then any lumber loads, gravel loads, you know, any other materials that were being flown up. So that flight, those supply flight days, were big deals, you know, mobilizing everybody in maintenance and in the ranger crew. And as you'd expect, the concern was always about loads being secured well, flying well, safe operations beginning to end. Normally, we'd have individuals standing by at each of those locations as ground -- basically, landing zone managers, and the same down at the TEMSCO end. [02:02:14] And we learned a very valuable lesson one day when I was at the town end for loads outgoing, and we had a big net load on a trailer. And they had just got some new cargo nets, very long lead lines.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They weren't really quite familiar with. And standing under the helicopter, doing the hookup on this. When the helicopter started to lift on this, one of those leads wrapped around one of my legs.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, no.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And as the load came off the ground (smacking hands together) and the line slapped against the load, it pinned my leg --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. (gasp)

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- up against the load. And there was no one on the ground watching. And so, I got lifted off the ground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, my God.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I got lifted completely off the ground before the helicopter pilot, looking out, realized that I was dangling from --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, my God.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- his load. And he gently put me back down, and I walked away from the load and then said, "Ok, you can go now." And ever after that incident, I said, "We will have two individuals on the departure location."

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[02:03:48] REED MCCLUSKEY: We also -- Scott Logan actually came up with a -- it's a brilliant idea, very simple. Went over to the hardware store and bought an inner tube for a wheelbarrow.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: A small inner tube. And would slide that as a choker down there on those lead lines.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And hold it tight to the load. It was a -- so it was a good preventative measure there. And then we added a spotter on the ground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Phew.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, in radio communications with the pilot. It's like, ok, if anything goes wrong, we've got somebody who's watching.

[02:04:22] KAREN BREWSTER: So you -- you weren't able to untie yourself, because you were -- the pressure from the line going up?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Correct. The -- the -- my leg was -- was pinned, was wrapped and pinned.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And I'm now upside down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, I see.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And just hanging. So there's no -- there's no untying yourself.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I sort of had this vision of somehow becoming disentangled somewhere over Dyea, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: You would've just ended up --

REED MCCLUSKEY: I'd be out there --

KAREN BREWSTER: In the avalanche --

REED MCCLUSKEY: Slide Cemetery.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what I was going to say. Just drop you off in the Slide Cemetery.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, exactly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Man, that sounds scary. [02:05:02] Um, one thing we haven't talked about which I want to ask is the Seattle Unit.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Just, you know, because you were in the administrative end. How much connection was there, if any, between Skagway and the Seattle Unit?

REED MCCLUSKEY: There were attempts. There were attempts at that, and, certainly, I'd say varying degrees of success. To the best of my knowledge, the superintendents made an effort, ordinarily, to make a visit of some kind. I have to -- I have to admit, I never actually visited the Seattle Unit. I occasionally might be on a conference call with others where someone from the Seattle Unit would be on. [02:05:48] Primarily, it came up, at least in my experience, relative to discussions about, what does the International Historical Park mean? What did we want it to mean? What -- where is this going? And so, I don't know that I ever felt like we answered that well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I think it was like, well, we're not really sure, and there's no funding, and nobody's really suggesting we change all the maps in the country and officially

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change the name of the -- it just -- it was -- I -- as I mentioned earlier in our conversation, I took it to mean that we had a license to do things with Parks Canada.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That otherwise might have been viewed as a lot more sketchy. Joint communications, joint operations, fee collection. You know, coordinating publications. Jointly paying for this map.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We -- we paid for part of the press run. The Canadians would pay for the other part of the press run.

[02:06:57]KAREN BREWSTER: But the Seattle Unit was not involved. Were they part of the international park?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes. It's part of the -- and you could say that to some degree, they were kind of on the same footing as Dawson was viewed as part of the same story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Tells the other end of the story, right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, are they actually part of the -- ? Well, not really.

KAREN BREWSTER: They're not really physically connected.

REED MCCLUSKEY: No, and -- and is there really a boundary --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- of the international historical park that -- Well, we don't have a boundary map.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Per se. Um, this graphic that I showed you here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: If you look closely, you'd find, you know, it's marked "International Historical Park."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Ok. But it, of course, focuses on the Chilkoot Trail Unit.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Of --

KAREN BREWSTER: And the White Pass Unit.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, and on the Canadian side, Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Of Canada. That's the full name.

[02:07:57]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. So yeah, I mean, the fact that the Seattle Unit was in a different region.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Did that complicate things?

REED MCCLUSKEY: That didn't -- it certainly didn't help. Um, you know, not having -- not having had occasion in my work to kind of force me into that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I think if -- if the park organization chart had stayed as simple as it was when I first arrived there, it'd have been very different.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: It would've been more like, oh, you know, there isn't really anybody else to champion this. The superintendent, really, is the one that needs to champion this. And I think there were efforts made to do just that, but --

[02:08:41]KAREN BREWSTER: I would've thought that the interp staff on both parks -- that the historical staff and the interpretation staff, that's where the collaborations would have, could have happened.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I agree. And I think that that's what I had to conclude was that my focus was on operations, and, you know, that -- this is not part of our operational scope.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: This was -- this is telling the story.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And if you're one of those that tells the story, you know, you're going to include those -- those pieces.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You can't -- you can't help it.

[02:09:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Um, there was something that I just thought about that now I forgot. Um, you might have something that you wrote down.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Well, I think we covered -- we covered a lot of, uh, I guess I -- one thing I wanted to mention, in reference to Chilkoot Trail operations. A remarkable thing. When I first arrived, the first few summer seasons, one of the trail rangers was a woman named Nancy Schave. And Nancy was a truly remarkable person. She's very giving person. And a Skagway Volunteer Fire Department, uh, advanced EMT with the fire department, and she'd respond to every incident that she could, you know, I mean, anything that came up. But working for us, she worked at Sheep Camp. So she would go up, just like the backcountry rangers always did.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And would go up to Sheep Camp, but she was in her mid-fifties.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And here I arrived in my early forties, and I knew that ok, well, I'm not working at the level I used to, and she's in her mid-fifties. And, you know, that's a --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: That's a heck of a hike to Sheep Camp. And then from Sheep Camp to the summit, which is typically what you want to see the rangers have to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's what the rangers did.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: They did, yeah.

[02:10:56]REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, you know, what it became apparent, well no, she's not actually doing that every day. And she's not even doing that every other day. She's staying mostly in Sheep Camp and waiting, you know. She would talk with hikers and do interpretive programs, and pick blueberries and make pies, and, you know, make people - - she was a hospitality -- because she was -- she -- her view of the job was somewhat different than ours, and yet, she was an advanced EMT.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We didn't employ her as an advanced EMT, so we didn't authorize her to perform at that level. And so, if something happened on the trail, she almost immediately defaulted back to her certification and training for the fire department.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Over my objections. 'Cause I'd say, "You know, this isn't -- this isn't part of your position."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. But once you're trained in that, that's your first responder instinct taking over, probably.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yes, and she felt that it would be an abandonment of the patient.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: If she didn't perform to the full level of her other training.

[02:12:03]Well, so there was an inherent conflict here. And then, the helicopter at times would arrive, and she would leave with the helicopter, because as an advanced EMT, she couldn't turn her patient over to a basic EMT.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So if the helicopter arrives with a fire department volunteer at a lower certification level, she would get on board and leave her duty station in the backcountry.

KAREN BREWSTER: At Sheep Camp.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And she'd -- at Sheep Camp, and she'd be -- I'd find her in town, and she would have accompanied the patient in on a private helicopter that was not an NPS flight. And she was in her NPS uniform. And I was like, my hair would curl. It was like, "Aahh, Nancy, you -- this -- this is, you know, like, violates every legal underpinning. You're -- you're -- if something goes wrong, you will be deemed to be working outside of the scope of your employment, and you better darn well hope that the City of Skagway is there to catch you." You know, that they will come to your defense.

KAREN BREWSTER: As the EMT?

REED MCCLUSKEY: If there's a legal challenge. If there's anything that goes haywire. I mean, yeah. You're -- you're not working within the -- [02:13:22]And so, there was a -- it was always this tension, and she would just kind of brush it off. It's like, "I'll do what I need to do." And I thought, you know, you are just a force to be reckoned with. So her husband, Frank Wasmer, was also a captain on the volunteer fire department. Worked for the City of Skagway, and -- and just like everybody else in town, wore two, three, four different hats. And that was part of my introduction to, ok, you've got to figure out how to work with this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, figure out how to make it work. Eventually, Nancy had for personal reasons decided she wasn't going to come back finally one summer, and said -- told us as much in the spring. Said, "I'm not going to be able to work this summer." And Tim and I said, "Oh, that's so terrible, Nancy." And secretly, inside, of course, we were both doing handsprings because we were thinking, "Aahh. Ok." We -- nothing bad happened.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: As account of this. We'd escaped with -- you know. [02:14:35]As a side note, Nancy later proved to everyone the value of the EMS system that she helped put in place in Skagway. When her heart stopped in the theater in the park headquarters.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Whoa.

REED MCCLUSKEY: At Christmas. Not Christmas Day, but Yuletide.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, they have that Yuletide celebration.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Right. So during Yuletide, you know, it was a screening of the movie there, and everybody from town was in there. It was like, it was packed. And Frank sitting next to her realized that she'd gone unconscious, and they realized that very quickly, got her on the floor. Her heart had stopped. She'd stopped breathing. The AED unit that we had at the front counter was whisked up. Same with the oxygen cylinder. Volunteers stepped forward. People went to work there. The call went out. Ambulance arrived. Other fire department volunteers scooped her up, into the clinic. You know, I mean, by that time, they defibrillated her, got her heart started again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Into the clinic, and, eventually, stabilized and off to Juneau. And lo and behold, all good.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And she lived a few more years after that, but has since passed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, yeah. She was -- she was -- she was quite the dynamic force on the Chilkoot for many years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, wow. That's a great story. Saved by her own EMS system.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

[02:16:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, there was something else I was going to ask. Um, so you retired in 2012?

REED MCCLUSKEY: At the end of 2012. So yeah, I worked the full year, essentially. I had the great good luck, I considered it good luck, good fortune, to have the opportunity to actually meet and train my replacement. I say train. It was really more orient.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And uh, Vickie McMillan had worked elsewhere in the region, the regional office, and was selected to replace me. And I think there was an understanding at the time that almost no one else in the region knew anything about the leasing program. And so, the decision was made to actually bring her down before my retirement about a month or so, maybe month and a half, and for us to be able to spend as much time as possible to kind of brief her on that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Try and bring her up to speed. So that was actually kind of fun, 'cause I had never seen that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Almost anywhere else. It's -- it's a luxury in some ways.

[02:17:38]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. I -- why did you choose to leave in -- had you done so many years of service and you were done? Is that -- ?

REED MCCLUSKEY: By that time, I'd completed thirty-five years of creditable service. Actually, I think I it was credited for something more than that, because I had a year of unused sick leave. Um, and so when you look at, ok, the -- the annuity that that would have yielded, you know, that was a reasonable time to retire. It for me was -- you could

call it an early retirement. I certainly could have worked longer, but I was fifty-seven. And Marlene was very definitely ready to --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, it sounds like she was ready to leave.

[02:18:27] REED MCCLUSKEY: And -- and it was her retirement date that defined when we left town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Because in order to achieve the minimum annuity under the State of Alaska systems, you had to work seven years, and that's what she would have in the end of the May of 2013. So we stayed another five months.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And by that point, I was getting a lot of pressure on the Park Service side. If you want a paid return move to the Lower 48.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, you better do it now.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah, you gotta do it now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, you know, it wasn't really any choice to hang out any longer. [02:19:07] And we've been back and forth, um, pretty much every year.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: For some period of time since then.

KAREN BREWSTER: Because you said you still own property there.

REED MCCLUSKEY: We still own property there. We have friends there that we need to go and see, we need to hang out with. And it is important for us to, you know, spend a little bit of time with the rental property. Sharon Bolton, uh, who I met when I first started working at the Chamber of Commerce. She has a little accounting business there in Skagway. Bolton Cabin is there at 15th and State Street. It's quite a fixture. Always smells like cigarette smoke on the inside. But I mention her because she's managing our rental units there now, and that's made it possible. It's really actually worked out quite well for us, so I've been happy for that. [02:20:06] This last spring when we went up, when we arrived, uh, I think it was Deb Boettcher that said, "You need to meet Kili, the new AO, who's arrived here. You should meet him. He's -- and he's down working at this little grocery store." I said, "What? It's like, didn't you say he was working for the park?" "Yeah, no, but he's also moonlighting at the groc -- at this little grocery store." It's like, "Ok." So I walked on in and introduced myself, said, "Hi, howdy." Offered -- said, "If you want to get together sometime and chat, I'd be happy to do that. If you have any questions, you know, if you're new." He's new to the Park Service and new to the leasing program especially. And he did, eventually, call me and say, "Yeah, if you want to spend some time, you know, we'll chat and walk the street and point at things." Which we did. [02:21:12] I gave some help to another individual on his staff who was scratching her head over some of the leasing calculations. So I spent a few hours with her. Personal friend, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Laura Maybe, works on the staff. Uh, and had an opportunity to meet the new superintendent whose name escapes me now, but uh, and seems like a great chap. [02:21:34] A question he had for me, and since we're kind of running out of other things, you asked about land acquisition. And yes, the park did acquire during my tenure, a

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housing unit. And uh, we also set up a scheme to sublease, if you will, I don't know how else to put it, from Customs and Border Protection, quarters on Dairy Drive on the north end of town, you know, off this Klondike Highway. They were surplus to Customs needs at the time. They'd had, like, I don't know, eight or ten units put in, and they had three of them vacant, and we took all three, and we said, yeah, this will be great. I -- I had to talk the superintendent, Jim Corless, into doing this. He had great misgivings about it because he knew that Customs could take them back at a heartbeat.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, if they need 'em, they change staffing. I felt that we were so desperate for housing that that would be a good thing, whatever we could get.

[02:22:40]And -- and then, because I had regular dealings with individuals in the lands office in Anchorage because of my past experience in other parks and land acquisition programs, I found out that they had -- they had money available. Another project in another park in Alaska had been canceled, and that land acquisition money was fluid. And we went shopping. And uh, for a while, I was the most popular guy in town because everybody that wanted to sell a house --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- beat a path to my door. And then we would -- Scott Logan and I would go out. Usually it was the two of us, and we'd go through a place, and/or we'd bring other staff with us if we thought it was worth looking at.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[02:23:23]REED MCCLUSKEY: And, you know, it was a -- there were a lot of old shoes that weren't really worth a second look, and we could figure that out pretty fast. And then, two homes that we decided were -- were promising enough and worth enough that it made sense to spend the money to have appraisals done on those two.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And ended up buying what now the park, I think they probably still refer to it as the Cedar House, up at 20 -- 20th and Alaska. No, 20th and Main Street. Um, that is a three-bedroom, two-bath, attached garage. And if I'm not mistaken, I think that's where the superintendent's living now.

KAREN BREWSTER: It sounds like that might be a superintendent's style of house.

[02:24:16]REED MCCLUSKEY: And -- and the question he posed to me, the superintendent this last spring was, "Gee, do you know anything about that?" And I said, "Why, yes. You know, I ramrodded the purchase of that." And we got our hands slapped, because apparently, we didn't ask permission of the Washington office in the right way at the right time. But in any event, it worked. And he said, "Well, was that purchased as the superintendent's residence?" And I said, "Absolutely not. It was purchased with the idea of turning three bedrooms into three seasonal units." So, I mean, quarters for at least three, if not four or five. Probably not six 'cause one of the bedrooms was too tiny. But um, yeah. We were really -- I mean, that was the idea, it was going to be seasonal housing. And he -- he seemed a little disappointed to hear that. I think there's some -- some hard feelings about how housing's been assigned out.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But that was a good thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: That we were able to add to the housing stock.

[02:25:23]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I just have -- I know it's getting late.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you're probably exhausted. But just some sort of summary overview reflective questions. Looking back at your time in Skagway, um, what you think are your biggest accomplishments? Or that you're most proud of accomplishing?

REED MCCLUSKEY: I always felt that because there was really no one else on the staff who could have and -- and -- and ever really did manage the leasebacks, that was really my biggest, my greatest legacy, if you will, to the park --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- was to say, ok, we -- we built on what I found when I arrived there, and we tried to manage it to the best end effect for the park. It wasn't always -- I mean, it didn't continue to grow. It didn't even stay the same size. It shrank. But it shrank in response to the park's needs and without steamrolling the tenants. [02:26:35]So I always tried to be kind of their champion in the face of the park staff sometimes forgetting that these are private business operators who really -- they -- it's a different ship.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: They run a different ship. And so my job was to -- to be there for -- to translate, if you will, to the two sides there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[02:27:00]REED MCCLUSKEY: So, you know, I don't think that you could -- I would point to anything else. Perhaps the, what I felt was always a famously good relationship with Parks Canada and the staff from top to bottom at Parks Canada. Great people, and -- and I thought that we did a fine job of -- of accommodating each other's needs and always maintaining our focus on public safety.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: You know, and communications. So those two things are probably the stand-out in my mind. [02:27:39]Improving the relationship with the townsfolk and the Dyea residents in particular, um, you know, I think everybody had a hand in that. It wasn't, you know -- and if everybody hadn't been working on it, --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- it wouldn't have improved.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So, but I -- so I lent my hand to that, but that wasn't just me.

[02:28:00]KAREN BREWSTER: What about frustrations or challenges?

REED MCCLUSKEY: The primary frustrations were with the, um, decision made at the regional office to use Skagway as a training park for new superintendents. And I think that -- and, ultimately, you know, I mean -- Mike Tranel would be an example of a tremendous success. You know, he wasn't there one, two, three years. He was there for several years, and made a huge, positive impact. That -- if that had happened repeatedly, that kind of thing, I'd be fine. I would view it very differently. But we had a number of years where we suffered on account of it. And we meaning the whole staff.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Suffered. And those -- and the records of the region would bear me out.

[02:29:01]KAREN BREWSTER: Are there any things that you, um, I sort of say, regrets. But things you wish you could have done that you were not able to do in your years there?

REED MCCLUSKEY: I was ambitious enough that I would've liked to have been the one in charge.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah. I mean, that's the obvious one, the natural one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I felt that I had the prior experience, the breadth of knowledge. In the end, I'd probably have to say I didn't have the right temperament, and so, it wasn't going to happen.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: And maybe -- maybe ultimately, that was for the best. You know, we have no way of knowing that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: But I would've loved to have had the opportunity.

[02:29:49]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, you mentioned -- so what was your temperament? Or do you have a particular managerial style that -- how you operated?

REED MCCLUSKEY: I think there was a time when I had a much more volatile temper. And so, between a temper and I hate to say, I suffer fools poorly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Um, you know, I would get in people's faces. You're not doing your job. It's like, and for some people, that was just -- did not work.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

REED MCCLUSKEY: So I think if I'd been more adaptable. If I'd been more flexible. I'd had a better understanding of when to relax and rest in the -- in confidence in the role and not struggle with it, I think it would've worked a lot better. So in retrospect, I look back and I think, you know, things went much more smoothly when I did just that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Relaxed on that and said, "Ok. I'll do the best with my job, and not worry about upward climbing."

[02:31:16]KAREN BREWSTER: And what about relationships with your staff. How was that?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, some good, some not so good. Um, and again, some of it to do with like-mindedness. You've already heard me --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: -- talk about some where we were very copacetic. Evelyn Meyer, who was in administration from before my arrival to after my departure from the park, the entire tenure that I worked there, she was working in administration, as an administrative tech, I think originally. And then she promoted as a budget technician. She was a jack-of-all-trades in administration. She had the answer for almost anything that came up. She had some insight into how things had worked before, who to go to. And what I'd say is that Evelyn and I thankfully seemed to work together smoothly, and I relied on her tremendously. And while there needed to be two of her in order to actually do everything that she needed to do, and that was the suffering that I could see was that her desk would just pile high. And it was this -- there were just too many lines plugged in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

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REED MCCLUSKEY: And so, uh, I could see that, ok, this was -- for all of us was just -- the complexity was increasing more and more. But I don't think that park would ever have run as well as it did, and certainly not for me in administration without her. Top of the -- top of the list.

[02:33:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. So looking back on your Park Service career, what -- how do you reflect back? Glad you worked for the Park Service? Wish you'd chosen a different path? Proud of your service? I don't know. I don't want to put --

REED MCCLUSKEY: I made -- I made some enemies, and powerful enemies, very early on in my career by being a young hothead. Not recommended. Not a good thing. And when I say powerful enemies, when you see an agency like the National Park Service that is -- has jurisdictions across not only the fifty states, but territories, as well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Geographically tremendously diverse. I don't know how many time zones. Ok. Huge. Ok. It's a very small organization for covering so much ground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Really tight organization. So if you have someone that, you know, can change the course of your career, they can do -- they can do an amazing amount of damage. So the advice as always is, mind your manners.

[02:34:43]KAREN BREWSTER: But are you proud of your career, the work you did?

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, I -- I love the fact that I worked in so many different kinds of places. Um, that I made substantial contributions to the -- the operating and the planning for operations for those parks. Um, but probably more than anything else, I like the fact that I have a lot of interesting stories. I just need to find new people to tell them to.

[02:35:16]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you had a captive audience here, that's for sure. I've enjoyed it very much. Um, that's sort of a good place to wrap it up, I think, for tonight. Unless you have anything else.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I think you're right. No, no.

KAREN BREWSTER: You wanted to say. I know you had taken some notes of your own.

REED MCCLUSKEY: I -- I used these to just to make reference to, remind me of certain names.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Uh, and some of the -- some of the things I didn't want to lose track of altogether. But I think we've --

KAREN BREWSTER: We've gotten them.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Ticked 'em off, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: All right.

REED MCCLUSKEY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, thank you very much. It's been a long day.

REED MCCLUSKEY: What a delightful experience.

KAREN BREWSTER: Good, thank you.