

TRANSCRIPTION OF [REDACTED] ON JUNE 26, 2007

- C This is Chuck Smrt and we are in a hotel in America Samoa and there are three other individuals in the room with me and I will have them introduce themselves.
- T Suase "Pooch" Ta'ase, Fagitua High School, head coach/vice principal/athletic director for Fagitua High School and the coach of Fagitua High School.
- S I'm Scott Donald, and I am the counsel for the California Scholastic Federation, San Joaquin Section.
- C Okay, Pooch, why don't you give me, what's your address?
- T My address is P.O. Box, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799.
- C What's the P.O. Box?
- T [REDACTED]
- C [REDACTED]. Okay, and how long have you been the head coach?
- T Uh, I got back here in 2000; ___ junior varsity for two years and varsities for the last four years.
- C You've been the head coach for the last four years?
- T For varsity and for the junior varsity was two years, so six years altogether.
- C Where you were before that?
- T I attended a small college in Utah, and from there I went to Louisiana Tech in Western Louisiana...Proud Bulldogs.
- C So, did you play for...
- T Yeah, I played on Louisiana under the guidance of Coach Gary Frogen (?) and now Jack McNeil over there at Louisiana Tech.
- C When did you first hear about players going to Franklin?
- T When I first heard about one of my players was in last year, [REDACTED], described it this past year and so forth when he was taken out from my own school. It was three years, back when Leone High School when I spoke with Francis Tuitele, that's when, was three years ago when I first heard about the recruiting going on. But, it didn't hit us, our side, until they took one of our own, [REDACTED], last year. They took two more this year: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
- C Did [REDACTED] play all three years; he played three years for you?
- T Yeah. He played all three years for us. He was a nose guard. It was hard stuff, we missed him when they took him. He was one of my best players and so forth.
- C Did he finish his junior year with you?
- T He didn't. They took him out on spring 2006, yeah. They took him out on the spring.

- C Do you remember what month he left here?
- T This was in February/March, because they had to get him into school and so forth.
- C What about [REDACTED]?
- T [REDACTED] left here around February 14. I remember that date because ___, oh February 10, I know it was February when they took [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
- C And what was those guys, that would have been February of 06 or 07?
- T 07, this year, yeah.
- C Who is they (who took them)?
- T It was Jeff Seumaala, the coach at Stockton. The reason I know is because when [REDACTED], he was down here for the All-Star Game, which was January, the All-Star Samoan Bowl, and I ask and he said it was Jeff Seumaala, a matter of fact, Jeff Seumaala came back in December and so forth and I guess that's how they got recruiting for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I believe Jeff Seumaala, when I looked up on the research, that he's a coach for Stockton for Franklin High School in Stockton, California.
- C Did you see Jeff here last year?
- T No, I hadn't seen Jeff. I don't think he will well seen by any of the coaches down here because I, you know, some of the coaches they have nothing good to say, you know, and so forth, so they say take off.
- C Did you talk to [REDACTED] about what he was doing and why he was doing it before he left?
- T Before he left, to make a long story short, the student didn't want to leave. I talked to both students, two of them literally say, coach, we don't want to go, but it's more of our parents pushing us and so forth. It's an opportunity, as they're saying it's a free ticket, as an opportunity for them to leave, you know, all paid for and so forth, and that's how the parents looked at it...it's an opportunity for their students, for their sons.
- C Did you ever talk to anybody at Franklin?
- T Oh, Principal Scott. That's when I received the 510 form and you know, I was reading through the 510 form and it directed me to sign and the principal to sign this 510 form, saying that these students were never influenced by anyone; it was their own free will that they left from their previous high school and attend Franklin Stockton High School. And that's the only reason why I called them is because it said if you have any questions, please contact this person, so I contacted this Scott Luin, the principal on the letter. I still have the letter and so forth.
- C So, which kid was that?
- T For [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. That's for this year, the last group.
- C Okay, you get that from the principal, how do you get that?
- T It was a letter mailed to us and so forth. This letter was mailed to us and so forth and it made us wonder why not do principal because I provided it to our principal. Why we didn't get a letter for [REDACTED], you know, but this letter was mailed to our Dean in the Department of

Education, you know, in care of Faguitua High School, and that's how it got to us, to my box at the high school.

C Okay, so you get the letter and so what do you do with it?

T I'm reading through it, and I was like this is; I had to sign here for this kid to participate. I was reading through it, I was like, I'm not going to sign this. It was making me a liar, you know, I'm endorsing this which I know is not right, you know. So, I brought it to our principal's attention and that's when he e-mailed. They just popped up on Google and he e-mailed CIF and Mr. Nelson replied back at the same time when I spoke with, got a hold of Pete Saco on it and so forth. We were both contacting Pete Saco, and I asked Pete Saco that's it boss, and so forth, so okay, we're on the right channel here then. You are the right people that we're trying to get some answers with this.

C So, now Nelson is superintendent?

S No. Nelson, I'll tell you who Nelson is...

C So, you sent it to who, you e-mailed who?

T Pete Saco. We starting exchanging e-mail and so forth. I also contacted him by phone.

S You're a principal, Mr. Sale? I said he contacted Mr. Nelson?

T Mr. Nelson and so forth, yeah.

S At the CIF?

T At the CIF. Because he was asking...

S ...high school district?

T Yeah. Because he was asking questions, you know, we just wanted answers and so forth, so.

C Okay, the form that you got, was that for both of those guys, for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], or one of them?

T It was for, I believe it was for [REDACTED]. I have copies of it and so forth. I have the original and so forth. It was for [REDACTED].

C So you never got one for [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]?

T Yeah, I never got one for [REDACTED]

C Did you call or e-mail Pete first? Do you remember?

T I probably called, I called him first, yeah. Then he said he was going to e-mail me just to check back on e-mails and so forth, yeah.

What I want to show you is something that is dated March 22, 2007. Why don't you go ahead and just read it out loud.

T Okay, this Suase Ta'ase from American Samoa. I was referred to you by Fred Jones at ___ High School concerning the matter at Franklin in Stockton, Franklin High School. I coach here at American Samoa Faguitua High School. Two of my students, student-athletes, this year were

paid either paid money for the whole trip that we can talk more about details on it. You can reach me at 684-258-1471 and in fact, I will try again tomorrow because of the hour difference. It's 12 right now, I think you guys are three hours ahead. Yeah, I really want to talk to you about this matter and so forth. I was referred by Fred Jones again, so if you give me a call, just now, I will try again tomorrow. Have a good day. Bye bye, that's me.

C That's you. Is that his e-mail then?

T I think that was, ___ a phone message that I left for him because me and him were playing phone tag also, so it was awhile before we got to talk.

C It says here, "I was referred to by Fred Jones". Who is Fred Jones?

T Fred Jones is one of the coaches that we met, we came in contact at the, you know, the football camp and so forth. I was just asking questions and so forth. That's why Mr. Fred Jones; I think we just said California and he just popped up Franklin High School, and I said, yeah, that's the high school. He was aware of it, yeah, because there's Samoan, yeah, they got one of our nose guards and so forth and so that's when I was referred to Pete Saco and so forth, that first contact, that had a better understanding of the matter.

C So, Fred Jones is a high school coach in California?

T Yeah, at Bakerville (?) High School. We came in ___ because it's one of the most competitive, we met at one game just this past summer camp, so we have become really good friends and so forth with Coach Fred Jones.

C Is there anybody on the island that is assisting Franklin?

T We believe, I believe it's the mother of this young man, Jeff Seumaala. I can't recall the name, but I know her name was in the newspaper, she is at the Human Resources at the EOB building.

C Why was her name in the paper?

T It just said her son is Jeff Seumaala and they had an article out. Her son is Jeff Seumaala and he coaches at Franklin High School.

C What was the article about?

T It was about [REDACTED], the first group that was taken out. That was three years ago, how he was getting a scholarship to San Jose State and it was through this coach, Jeff Seumaala, whose mother is here in Human Resources and you know the son of, and so forth, down here in American Samoa.

C Do you still have that article?

S I have a copy.

T Yeah.

C You do? Okay. You called people...

S Pooch, why did you suspect it was Jeff's mother who was the contact here?

T From our players and from [REDACTED]. The conversation I had with [REDACTED] before he left, he said it's a mother that's calling his parents to connect all the meeting and so forth, so before they meet,

stuff like that, to introduce their agenda and so forth, this is what we want from your son, and their main objective was we can give your son a better education, especially on SAT, which is you know to pass to qualify them for any colleges and so forth. And that's basically the selling point, you know. That's like a big hit to us because it makes us like we're doing nothing with our students. The last three years, I think I've sent kids to Division I, but looking back at all these three years, I don't think not one of those students were sent to a Division I college. But that's the selling points that we could give your son a better education.

S [REDACTED] told you this?

T Yeah.

S Did any of the other boys tell you anything similar?

T When [REDACTED] came back and so forth, I haven't had any conversations, well, I did, I called the mother, I asked what [REDACTED] doing and the mother, when the mother confronted me, ask why am I stirring up all this, and I asked the mother, you know, if you tell me now that your son's trip was not paid by these individuals, that yeah, it was, you know, paid, for a better opportunity. That's illegal, that cannot do that.

C How long was [REDACTED] there?

T [REDACTED] came back before March, yeah, and so forth.

C Did he come back before you sent this, before you left this message?

T It was part, around the same time, and that's when, after I talked with Scott, the Principal Scott, I called I think it was the next day that [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s mother called me. She was pretty upset you know, and she said well, why are you calling these people and using my son, saying that why you using my son's name and saying bad stuff about the school, which I know they were feeding her, the reason why your son came back and stuff like that. I was like, I did not use your son or anything, you know, I just had questions for the principal when I received this letter.

C So the chronology is, you get this 510 form, right?

T Yeah.

C And then you go to your principal?

T Yeah.

C And then you call, you call Pete, right?

T Yeah. After I got in contact with Fred Jones that he referred me.

C The principal called Nelson?

S He e-mails him.

C Okay. Now where does, did you say you talked to Stockton at some point?

T Yeah, I talked with, I spoke with Scott.

S That's Scott Luhn, right?

- T Scott Luhn, the principal.
- C At Franklin?
- T Yeah.
- S I'm just making sure that it's not me.
- C And tell me about that conversation?
- S The conversation I asked them some questions. I asked about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Not knowing Scott Luhn, not knowing that [REDACTED] was back home at our school, and I ask are these students participating, and he was like well, um, I told him I have a 510 form in front of me and I'm not going to sign any of this form because I know that these students were influenced by money and they were paid. But actually, what Scott gave me was, I'm not aware of any of this going on, that the parents were present to register the students into Franklin and that's why we accepted them. I said, well, I don't believe that's what's going on. I think there's more to that what's going on. He said, well I have no idea, but I will talk to my coaches and I know of one Polynesian coach, Jeff Seumaala, he'll talk to, but according to the principal, there was nothing going on, you know, there's nothing going on at Franklin. But then he asked, you know, I said, well, I know some people that, you know, want to get to the bottom of this and he was really frustrated. He wanted to know who was behind this, and I told him that's not important, you know. I don't think that's important who's, you know, that will be looked into this.
- C So, what happens next?
- T So, what happened next, that's when I got the phone call the next day from [REDACTED] parents, you know, that I was you know, saying a bad name about Franklin High School, using their son who returned back to American Samoa. I apologized to the mother. I said, you know, I'm sorry, but I think you're being misinformed here by Franklin High School.
- C So, by that time [REDACTED] has come back?
- T Yeah, he was back on our school campus.
- C So, the mom was calling you, mad at you, even though her son had returned?
- T Yeah. I think it's more of culture that came in because they probably looked at all these people did something for us, so it's our obligation to stick up for them and so forth. I think it's more of a cultural thing, you know, they did something, so...
- C So what happens after that?
- T So, after that, this is back in March and so forth, so, we had been exchanging information with Mr. Saco, Pete Saco.
- C No more conversations with anybody at Franklin?
- T Yeah, no more conversations, that was the only conversation I had with Scott Luhn.
- C And what about with [REDACTED] parents?
- T Yeah, well, I asked the mother, I said it will be better that, you know, instead of on the phone that she comes in with her husband and we'll sit down and talk this out and I'll explain to you

what's going on. But ever since that, they have never approached me, even try to come on campus.

C What about [REDACTED]? Have you talked to [REDACTED]?

T I spoke to him, that was during school, you know, and so forth. He said he just didn't like it, he wanted to come back to...that was one of the main question I ask him, but you are paid, you were paid to go, and he said, yeah, my airfare. According to, it's not like he was a criminal, you know, for them to, they see it has more of a opportunity, not a bad person, see opportunity, but I'm trying explain to the mother this is illegal. If anything, we're teaching our sons it's okay to do that illegal.

S Coach, one thing you said was you wouldn't sign the form because you felt that you would be made a liar. What did you mean by that?

T Yeah. Because I know that information, that they stated that, you know, that they were never influenced, which I know that was a lie, that they were influenced, that this any mother, this was not true. And that was one of the things I told [REDACTED]'s mom, and she was [REDACTED], I have the form, I said you know the form is sitting right in front of me and you signed it. You know in your heart that you're wrong, and she said, yeah, his airfare was paid. I was like, that's lying, that's false information.

C You said before you thought it was just [REDACTED]'s form.

T Yeah.

C Do you think you had [REDACTED]'s form?

T Yeah, I think I had [REDACTED]'s form, too, [REDACTED]'s form and [REDACTED]. I got to go look back over my five tickets. They mailed both of them. But the only one that I had a copy was [REDACTED], huh? If I don't have it, our principal does, because he made copies for his own self and so forth.

S Okay, that's it.

C Thank you very much.

C = Chuck Smrt
S = Scott Donald
T = Suase Ta'ase

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

California Interscholastic Federation

Report of a June 25, 2007, interview with **Time Tagomailagi**, assistant football coach at Samoan High School. This conversation was held at the writer's room at the Trade Winds Hotel. Present for the interview were Tagomailagi; Scott Donald, the legal counsel for the San Joaquin section of the CIF; and the writer. This was not tape-recorded. Tagomailagi provided the following information, although not necessarily in this order, as this summary is organized topically, as opposed to chronologically:

BACKGROUND

Tagomailagi stated that he has been an assistant football coach at the high school for the past five or six years. He currently is the head junior varsity coach.

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Tagomailagi indicated that ██████████ traveled to Franklin following the Christmas break last year (during the 2006-07 academic year). He talked with ██████████ and ██████████. ██████████ did not want to go. ██████████ said that his parents thought it would be a good move for him. ██████████'s father was just released from jail for criminal activities concerning procurement problems when he was a director of procurement for the government. ██████████'s mother also works for the government.

██████████ never said he was given anything. He has never talked to the family about this issue.

He did not know if anyone who might have been contacted by officials on behalf of Franklin.

He believed ██████████'s father (██████████) could be contacted at ██████████, while his mother (██████████) could be contacted at ██████████.

Charles E. Smrt
June 25, 2007