

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2004



PREPARED REMARKS FOR

DENNIS HERRERA

CITY ATTORNEY OF SAN FRANCISCO

'SUNSHINE TRAINING INTRODUCTION'

CITY ATTORNEY'S
ANNUAL SUNSHINE TRAINING
HERBST THEATER, 401 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

GOOD EVENING -- AND WELCOME TO THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL SUNSHINE TRAINING, WHICH I'M PROUD TO CO-SPONSOR ALONG WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO SUNSHINE TASK FORCE.

I'M GOING TO KEEP MY OPENING REMARKS ESPECIALLY BRIEF THIS YEAR -- I KNOW WE'RE ALL ANXIOUS TO GET HOME IN TIME TO WATCH THE RIVETING CONCLUSION OF "10.5."

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DIDN'T WATCH PART ONE LAST NIGHT, IT'S A TERRIFYING MELODRAMA ABOUT AN EARTHQUAKE THAT HITS THE ENTIRE WEST COAST.

WHAT'S TERRIFYING, OF COURSE, ISN'T THAT IT COULD ACTUALLY *HAPPEN*. IT'S THAT THE GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA COULD BE PLAYED WITH EVEN *LESS* ACTING SKILL THAN OUR *REAL* GOVERNOR.

SERIOUSLY, I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR BEING AT THIS YEAR'S TRAINING.

I REALIZE THAT FOR MANY OF YOU, THIS TRAINING IS REQUIRED AS PART OF YOUR OFFICIAL DUTIES. STILL, FOR DOING YOUR PART TO ENSURE THE OPENNESS AND INTEGRITY OF OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, YOUR ATTENDANCE DESERVES OUR GRATITUDE.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO WELCOME MEMBERS OF THE NEWS MEDIA AND GENERAL PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE. EVEN THOUGH THIS TRAINING IS PRIMARILY GEARED TOWARD CITY EMPLOYEES AND OFFICIALS, WE FELT IT COULD ALSO BE USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE FOR THOSE WHO *COVER* CITY GOVERNMENT -- WHETHER THEY BE REPORTERS OR CITIZEN-ACTIVISTS.

BESIDES -- LAST YEAR, I GOT SUCH A GOOD REVIEW FROM THE ONE REPORTER WHO SHOWED UP, I DECIDED TO INVITE *EVERY* REPORTER THIS TIME AROUND.

TONIGHT'S TRAINING PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF MAJOR LAWS GOVERNING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS PUBLIC SERVANTS TO THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO -- WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO OPEN MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS.

TO PRESENT ON THESE SUBJECTS THIS EVENING, I'M VERY PROUD TO WELCOME TWO WELL-RESPECTED AUTHORITIES FROM MY OFFICE: DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEYS AMY ACKERMAN AND CLAIRE SYLVIA.

WHILE I'M CONFIDENT THAT YOU'LL FIND THESE PRESENTATIONS INFORMATIVE, THE LAWYER IN ME CAN'T RESIST MENTIONING THAT NO TRAINING CAN ANTICIPATE EVERY QUESTION THAT MAY ARISE IN A GIVEN SITUATION. AND EVEN THE BEST PRESENTATION IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE EXPERIENCED COUNSEL OF A TRAINED ATTORNEY ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF LAWS TO SPECIFIC CONDUCT.

FOR QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT ACTIONS YOU MAY PURSUE AS A PUBLIC OFFICIAL, I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTACT MY OFFICE.

IF THERE IS ONE GUIDING PRINCIPLE, HOWEVER, I THINK IT'S THIS: A PUBLIC OFFICE IS A PUBLIC TRUST. AS PUBLIC SERVANTS FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, OUR HIGHEST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO CONDUCT THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT IN A WAY THAT IS HONEST, OPEN AND RESPONSIVE TO THE CITIZENS WE SERVE.

I'M PROUD TO OFFER MY UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO ASSIST ALL OF YOU IN THAT ENDEAVOR, AND I HOPE YOU FIND THIS TRAINING HELPFUL TOWARD THAT END.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. NOW LET ME WELCOME,
DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY AMY ACKERMAN...