

1	(Choi) and Jieho Lee (Lee) (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Knighted Applicants"). ¹ Choi
2	and Lee were present at the hearing on behalf of the Knighted Applicants.

3 During the evidentiary hearing, Presiding Officer Jason Pope took official notice of the 4 following documents relating to the Fortiss Applicants: July 29, 2020, Commission's Notice of 5 Hearing and Prehearing Conference with attachment (A) Applications for State Gambling License 6 for Fortiss Applicants and (B) Bureau's Investigation Report; September 14, 2020, Commission's 7 Amended Notice of Hearing; September 25, 2020, Presiding Officer's Conclusion of Prehearing 8 Conference letter; January 15, 2021, Commission's Notice of Continued Hearing; May 12, 2021, 9 Commission's Notice of Continued Hearing; September 15, 2021, Presiding Officer's Conclusion 10 of Prehearing Conference letter; October 21, 2021, Commission's Notice of Continued Hearing; 11 December 1, 2021, Commission's Notice of Time Change of Hearing; the Bureau's Statement of 12 Particulars; Notices of Defense signed by Fortiss Applicants and; Presiding Officer's Order of 13 Hearing Consolidation.

14 During the evidentiary hearing, Presiding Officer Jason Pope took official notice of the 15 following documents relating to the Knighted Applicants: January 15, 2021, Commission's 16 Notice of Hearing and Prehearing Conference with attachment (A) Applications for State 17 Gambling License for Knighted Applicants and (B) Bureau's Investigation Report; May 12, 2021, 18 Commission's Notice of Continued Hearing; September 15, 2021, Presiding Officer's Conclusion 19 of Prehearing Conference letter; October 21, 2021, Commission's Notice of Continued Hearing; 20 December 1, 2021, Commission's Notice of Time Change of Hearing; the Bureau's Statement of 21 Particulars; Notices of Defense signed by Knighted Applicants and; Presiding Officer's Order of 22 Hearing Consolidation.

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During the evidentiary hearing, the Presiding Officer accepted into evidence the following 24 exhibits offered by the parties, all of which contain bates numbers and a Table of Contents that 25 separately identifies each document by exhibit and bates stamp number:

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1) Bureau's Exhibits 1 to 94, Admitted August 24, 2022;

¹ Despite consolidation of the Fortiss and Knighted Applications for evidentiary hearing, a 28 separate decision will be issued by the Commission for the Knighted Applicants.

1	2) Fortiss' Exhibits 1 to 266, Admitted August 24, 2022;
2	3) Fortiss' Exhibit 269, Admitted August 26, 2022;
3	4) Fortiss' Exhibit 267, Admitted August 30, 2022;
4	5) Fortiss' Exhibit 270, Admitted September 6, 2022;
5	6) Knighted's Exhibits 1 to 163, Admitted August 24, 2022.
6	At the conclusion of the hearing, the record was left open for submission of closing briefs
7	and potential extra documentary or testimonial evidence requested by the Commission.
8	In response to a request made by the Commission for additional documentation on
9	October 21, 2022, the Presiding Officer accepted the following additional exhibits into evidence
10	as administrative hearsay on November 14, 2022:
11	1) Bureau's Exhibit 95, comprising of the following document which is not included in
12	the Bureau's Table of Contents: (1) Infrastructure and IT/IS Maintenance Statement of
13	Work Presented by ADIM, dated April 4, 2013.
14	2) Fortiss' Exhibit 271, comprising of the following documents which are not included in
15	Fortiss' Table of Contents: (1) June 2021 Renewal with YellowFin; (2) June 2022
16	Renewal with YellowFin; (3) Commercial Lease Agreement between Fortiss and
17	Monument Properties-Prospect Park, LLC; (4) First Amendment to the Commercial
18	Lease Agreement between Fortiss and Monument Properties-Prospect Park, LLC; and,
19	(5) Second Amendment to the Commercial Lease agreement between Fortiss and
20	Monument Properties-Prospect Park, LLC.
21	The record was closed and the matter was submitted on November 17, 2022.
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1	FINDINGS OF FACT
2	I. BACKGROUND & PROCEDURAL HISTORY
3	A. BACKGROUND
4	i. Pertinent Background Regarding Fortiss
5	1. Fortiss was organized by Park in Nevada on May 12, 2004. In October 2004,
6	Fortiss was registered to do business in California. ² Fortiss provides administrative services in
7	the areas of management, recruiting, hiring, training, information technology, industry
8	certification, career development, human resources, accounting, assistance with state and local
9	licensing compliance, and legal services including contract, regulatory guidance, and litigation
10	management.
11	2. The current members of Fortiss are the Trust (99.5% interest) and Vasey (.5%
12	interest). Vasey is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Fortiss. Park is the trustee, settlor, and
13	sole beneficiary of the Trust and is the Manager and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Fortiss.
14	Emily Park, Park's wife, is the successor trustee of the Trust.
15	3. Park, through the Trust and Park West Casinos Inc. (PWCI), has an ownership
16	interest in multiple licensed gambling establishments in California. The Trust is the sole
17	shareholder of PWCI. Park is the CEO, Secretary, CFO, and Director of PWCI and Vasey is a
18	Director.
19	4. Fortiss also provides services to 23 of Park's owned entities, including PWCI, and
20	Fortiss is a percentage owner in three companies owned by Park which are not germane to this
21	decision. ³ Relevant to this matter is Park's interest in six cardrooms that contract with Fortiss for
22	services. These six licensed cardrooms are collectively referred to herein as the "Park
23	Cardrooms":
24	a. Parkwest Casino Sonoma ⁴ (PW Sonoma) is owned by Cal-Pac Sonoma, LLC, of
25 26	² Fortiss was originally registered in Nevada and California under the name of Service Quality Assurance, LLC. In November 2004, there was a name change to Fortiss Casino Resources, LLC, and later
26 27	the name changed to Fortiss, LLC. ³ Fortiss has a membership interest in Raspberry Consulting, LLC (99%), Ride Bus, LLC (1%),
27 28	and Monument Properties Rincon, LLC (1%), which are non-gaming entities. ⁴ PW Sonoma was previously known as the Casino 101. However, for the sake of clarity, it will be referred to as the PW Sonoma throughout this decision. 4
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1		which Park is the Manager and Vasey is a Director. PWCI is the sole member of
2		Cal-Pac Sonoma, LLC.
3	b.	Parkwest Casino Lotus (PW Lotus) is owned by The Silver F, Inc., of which Park
4		is the Manager and Vasey is a Director. PWCI is the sole shareholder of The Silver
5		F, Inc.
6	с.	Parkwest Casino Lodi (PW Lodi) is owned by the Lodi Cardroom, Inc., of which
7		Park is the Vice President, Secretary and Director, and Vasey is also a Director.
8		The Trust, Chris Ray, and Steven Snider are shareholders of the Lodi Cardroom,
9		Inc.
10	d.	Parkwest Casino 580 (PW 580) is owned by Casino 580, LLC, of which Park is a
11		Manager and Vasey is a Director. PWCI and April Gomez are the members of
12		Casino 580, LLC.
13	e.	The River Card Room is owned by The River Card Room, Inc. The Trust is the
14		sole shareholder of the River Card Room, Inc. Park is the CEO, CFO, Secretary,
15		and Director of The River Card Room, Inc.
16	f.	Parkwest Casino Cordova (PW Cordova) is owned by Cal-Pac Rancho Cordova,
17		LLC, of which Park is a Manager and Vasey is a Director. PWCI is the sole
18		member of Cal-Pac Rancho Cordova, LLC.
19		ii. Pertinent Background Regarding Knighted
20	5.	Knighted is a Third-Party Provider of Proposition Player Services organized in
21	California on	July 15, 2011. The current managing members of Knighted are Choi (95%
22	ownership int	erest) and Lee (5% interest).
23	6.	Knighted applied for registration in February 2012. The Commission issued a
24	registration v	alid March 29, 2012 through March 31, 2013, which has been consistently renewed.
25	7.	Pertinent to this Decision, Knighted provides third-party proposition player
26	services (TPP	PPS) to each of the Park Cardrooms with the exception of the River Card Room,
27	which is not c	currently operating.
28	8.	Fortiss also provides services to Knighted pursuant to an administrative services 5
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В.

1 agreement.

9. The arrangement wherein Fortiss contracts to provide administrative services to
 both Knighted and the Park Cardrooms, while Knighted also contracts with the Park Cardrooms
 for the provision of TPPPS, is referred to herein as the "Three-Party Relationship."

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PROCEDURAL HISTORY

i. Procedural History Applicable to Fortiss Applications

10. At the Commission's January 23, 2014 licensing meeting, the Commission
considered the application for renewal of the State Gambling License for PW Sonoma. The
Commission expressed concern that Vasey and Fortiss may have the ability to exercise significant
influence over the gambling operation of PW Sonoma and therefore should be required to apply
for licensure. Based on these concerns, the Commission agreed to extend the PW Sonoma license
so that the Bureau could further investigate Fortiss' and Vasey's role in the management of PW
Sonoma and report back to the Commission.

11. V

14 11. Vasey testified that in March 2014, Fortiss met with Bureau management to
15 address concerns expressed by the Commission at the January 23, 2014 meeting. Fortiss gave
16 Bureau management a tour of the operations and discussed how the service fee was determined
17 for the services Fortiss provides to Knighted.

18 12. At the April 22, 2014, licensing meeting, the Commission again considered the
application for renewal of the State Gambling License for PW Sonoma. The Commission
expressed concern with the Three-Party-Relationship and again considered whether Fortiss and
Vasey should be required to apply for licensure based on an ability to exercise significant
influence over the gambling operations of PW Sonoma. At the meeting, the Commission
ultimately voted to approve the PW Sonoma license without a condition requiring Fortiss and
Vasey to apply for licensure.

In February 2015 and November 2016, Vasey submitted applications to the Bureau
for a State Gambling License based on his role as a Director of the PW Cordova, PW Sonoma,
PW Lotus, PW Lodi, PW 580, and PWCI (Director Applications). Vasey testified that he
voluntarily submitted the Director Applications because he was becoming more involved in

1	Park's cardrooms.		
2	14. On October 20, 2016, the Commission considered the applications for renewal of		
3	State Gambling License for PW Cordova. The Commission approved the applications with a		
4	condition requiring Fortiss and Vasey to submit the Fortiss Applications based on the		
5	Commission's determination that Fortiss has the ability to exercise significant influence over the		
6	gambling operations of PW Cordova.		
7	15. In April 2017, Fortiss invited Bureau staff to the Fortiss headquarters for a		
8	presentation on the services offered by Fortiss and to discuss concerns raised by the Bureau		
9	concerning the Three-Party Relationship.		
10	16. On December 15, 2016^5 and August 9, 2017^6 , the Fortiss Applications were		
11	submitted to the Bureau, as directed by the Commission.		
12	17. On July 16, 2018, the Bureau submitted to the Commission a full background		
13	investigation report concerning Vasey's Director Applications.		
14	18. On October 18, 2018, the Commission approved Vasey's Director Applications.		
15	19. Monique Anquoe (Anquoe), Field Representative from the Bureau's Compliance		
16	and Enforcement Section, testified at the hearing. Anquoe testified that between April 2017 and		
17	May 2022, she worked in the Cardroom Owners Licensing Section of the Bureau's Licensing		
18	Division, first as a Staff Services Analyst, and then as an Associate Governmental Program		
19	Analyst. In 2017, Anquoe was assigned to conduct the background investigations on the Fortiss		
20	Applications.		
21	20. Anquoe testified that Park and Vasey were cooperative, responsive, candid, and		
22	transparent in providing information pursuant to her requests throughout the course of the		
23	Bureau's background investigation.		
24	21. On or about September 16, 2019, the Bureau issued its Initial Background		
25	Investigation Report for the Fortiss Applicants in which it recommended that the Commission		
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27	⁵ On December 15, 2016, the Bureau received the Fortiss Applications pertaining to the Fortiss Applicants' affiliation with PW Cordova.		
28	⁶ On August 9, 2017, the Bureau received Fortiss Applications pertaining to the Fortiss Applicants' affiliation with PW Sonoma, PW Lotus, PW Lodi, PW 580, and The River. 7		
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1	approve the Fortiss Applications with the following condition:
2	Within 30 days of the Commission's approval, Fortiss, LLC shall
3	terminate its Administrative Services Agreement with Knighted Ventures, LLC or Parkwest Casino Cordova, Parkwest Casino Sonoma, Parkwest
4	Casino Lotus, Parkwest Casino 580, and Parkwest Casino Lodi must terminate their contracts with Knighted Ventures, LLC.
5	22. On February 27, 2020, the Commission referred consideration of the Fortiss
6	Applications to an evidentiary hearing to be conducted as a Gambling Control Act hearing. The
7	Fortiss Applicants each submitted timely Notice of Defense forms requesting an evidentiary
8	hearing on the consideration of the Fortiss Applications and identifying Barry Lee and Randall
9	Keen of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips as their counsel.
10	23. On July 29, 2020, a Notice of Hearing was sent to counsel for the Fortiss
11	Applicants and the Bureau stating that an evidentiary hearing would be held before the
12	Commission by means of video conferencing using Zoom on November 9, 10, 12, 13 and 16,
13	2020, ⁷ and a prehearing conference would be conducted on September 22, 2020.
14	24. On or about September 16, 2020, the Commission received the Bureau's Statement
15	of Particulars, wherein it identified factors in aggravation and mitigation for the Commission to
16	consider as part of its consideration of the Fortiss Applications.
17	<i>ii.</i> Procedural History-Consolidation for Hearing with Knighted
18	25. On or about March 14, 2013, the Knighted Applicants submitted to the Bureau
19	complete Applications for Third-Party Proposition Player Services Licenses (Knighted
20	Applications).
21	26. Brian Gilleland, Manager II in the Licensing Section of the Bureau, testified that
22	he has worked for the Bureau for seven years. Gilleland was initially assigned to oversee the
23	investigation of the Knighted Applicants as a Manager I. When the Knighted report was
24	complete, Gilleland was an Acting Manager II and reviewed the final work product that was
25	submitted to the Bureau's Director for review.
26	27. On June 11, 2020, the Commission voted to refer consideration of the Knighted
27	Applications to an evidentiary hearing. The Knighted Applicants each submitted Notice of
28	7 The hearing was continued at the request of the parties. 8
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1	Defense forms requesting an evidentiary hearing on the consideration of the Knighted		
2	Applications and identifying Mark Holscher and Tammy Tsoumas of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, as		
3	their counsel.		
4	28. A prehearing conference was held on November 16, 2020 pursuant to a request		
5	made by the Commission's Executive Director to consolidate the respective hearings on the		
6	Fortiss Applications and Knighted Applications. The Fortiss Applicants, Knighted Applicants,		
7	and the Bureau presented their positions on the request to consolidate.		
8	29. On December 9, 2020, the Presiding Officer issued an order consolidating the		
9	evidentiary hearings on the Fortiss Applications and Knighted Applications to promote judicial		
10	efficiency and economy and to avoid imposing unnecessary burdens on the Presiding Officer and		
11	the Commission.		
12	30. On or about January 15, 2021, Commission staff sent to counsel for Fortiss,		
13	Knighted, and the Bureau a Notice of hearing identifying that the consolidated hearing would		
14	occur on June 28, 29, 2021 and July 1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 2021. ⁸		
15	31. On or about May 12, 2021, the Commission sent to counsel for Fortiss, Knighted,		
16	and the Bureau, a Notice of Continued Hearing providing that the consolidated hearing would		
17	occur on October 12, 14, 18, 19, 28, 29, and November 2, 3, 5, 9, 2021.9		
18	32. On or about October 22, 2021, Commission staff sent to counsel for Fortiss,		
19	Knighted, and the Bureau, a Notice of Continued Hearing providing that the consolidated hearing		
20	would occur on August 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, and September 1, 2, 6, and 7, 2022.		
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28	 ⁸ The hearing was continued at the request of the parties. ⁹ This hearing was continued at the request of a party. 		
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1		II. THE THREE-PARTY RELATIONSHIP
2	А.	FORTISS' CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PWCI AND PARK
3		CARDROOMS
4	33.	PWCI holds an ownership interest in each of the Park Cardrooms, with the
5	exception of 7	The River and PW Lodi. ¹⁰ PWCI and each of the Park Cardrooms have entered into
6	separate servi	ce agreements with Fortiss. Additionally, Fortiss is party to a lease agreement to
7	occupy office	space at PW Cordova.
8		<i>i.</i> Fortiss' Service Agreement with PWCI
9	34.	On May 1, 2012, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PWCI providing that
10	Fortiss would	assist management with periodic decisions and provide services in the areas of
11	accounting, h	uman resources, information technology, and advertising and promotion for a fixed
12	monthly fee.	
13	35.	On October 1, 2018, Fortiss and PWCI entered into a new agreement providing
14	that Fortiss w	ould also assist PWCI management with periodic decisions and provide services in
15	the areas of accounting, information technology, legal, and "other miscellaneous services as	
16	requested" by	PWCI for a fixed monthly fee.
17		<i>ii.</i> Fortiss' Service Contracts with Park Cardrooms
18	36.	On or about November 1, 2006, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PW
19	Sonoma to pr	ovide services in the areas of management, accounting, human resource, and
20	information te	echnology consulting services for a fixed monthly fee.
21	37.	On or about January 1, 2007, Fortiss entered into an agreement with The River to
22	provide accou	inting services for a fixed monthly fee.
23	38.	On or about June 1, 2008, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PW Lodi to
24	provide servic	ces in the areas of management, accounting, human resources, and information
25	technology fo	r a fixed monthly fee.
26	39.	On or about December 21, 2009, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PW Lotus
27	to provide ser	vices in the areas of management, accounting, human resources, and information
28	¹⁰ The	River's sole shareholder is the Trust. The Trust is one of three shareholders of PW Lodi. 10
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1	technology for a fixed monthly fee.
2	40. On or about February 1, 2010, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PW Cordova
3	to provide services in the areas of management, accounting, human resources, and information
4	technology for a fixed monthly fee.
5	41. On or about September 1, 2010, Fortiss entered into an agreement with PW 580 to
6	provide services in the areas of management, accounting, human resources, and information
7	technology for a fixed monthly fee.
8	42. On October 1, 2018, Fortiss entered into new agreements with PW Cordova, PW
9	Sonoma, PW Lotus, PW Lodi, and PW 580 for Fortiss to provide more extensive services. The
10	agreements for each Park Cardroom were substantially similar, and using the PW Lotus contract
11	as an example, allowed for provisions of the following services by Fortiss:
12	Business Services
13	 Assist management with periodic decisions Assist management with any capital improvement projects
14	Accounting Services
15	 Review of all accounting work prepared by in-house staff Process bi-weekly payroll utilizing KRONOS and ADP payroll services
16	 Preparation of monthly financial statements Co-ordinate and assistance with year-end audit by independent CPA firm Assistance with annual tax returns prepared by independent CPA firm
17	 Assistance with annual tax returns prepared by independent CPA firm Assist management with periodic financial decisions Assist and maintain Client insurance
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19	 Human Resources, Personnel Management, and Employment Relations Services Provide general HR consulting services
20	 Provide new hire background investigation, credit analysis, and drug testing
21	 Assist with post-employment benefits Assist with worker's compensation claims and unemployment claims
22	IT Services
23	 Support network infrastructure Help desk support
24	 E-Mail support Various hardware and software systems support Support Electronic Planing Pack ticket system
25	 Support Electronic Playing Book ticket system Support Player Tracking System
26	Advertising and Promotion Services Web and Craphia Design
27	 Web and Graphic Design Print, Radio, TV, and other Multimedia Advertisements
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1 2	 Legal Assist in preparing documents related to new contracts, amendments and renewal agreements Provide guidance with entity, owner, and employee state and local 		
3	 licensing laws Litigation support 		
4 5	• Additional miscellaneous services as may be specifically requested by Client to Consultant in writing from time to time.		
6	iii. Fortiss' Lease Agreement at PW Cordova		
7	43. Fortiss is also a party to a lease agreement for office space at PW Cordova. The		
8	rented space is used to house Fortiss' Human Resources Department, which consists of six		
9	individuals, including Fortiss' HR Director, Lisa Grewohl. Fortiss HR staff enter PW Cordova		
10	through the employee entrance in the back of the cardroom. Fortiss HR offices are located in the		
11	"back of the house," which is an area that is not accessible to the public. Fortiss HR and PW		
12	Cordova staff can access other "back of the house" areas, such as the employee training room,		
13	dining area, lockers, and restrooms. Only Fortiss' HR staff and PW Cordova managers have		
14	access to Fortiss' HR office when the entry door is closed by using their key cards.		
15	44. Non-management staff of PW Cordova do not have key card access to open the		
16	Fortiss HR office. However, when Fortiss HR staff are in the office, they have an "open door"		
17	policy for PW Cordova staff to meet at any time they have an HR issue. The doors to Fortiss'		
18	offices at PW Cordova have no signage to indicate that the office does not house staff of the PW		
19	Cordova. Further, the Fortiss employees do not wear uniforms or nametags.		
20	B. KNIGHTED'S CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PARK CARDROOMS		
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22	45. Knighted provides TPPPS to each of the Park Cardrooms with the exception of the		
23	River Card Room, which is not currently operating. Choi testified that Knighted currently		
24	services between 200 and 250 tables in California, half of which are at Park Cardrooms.		
25	i. PW Sonoma contract with Knighted		
26	46. Knighted first received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Sonoma for the		
27	period August 31, 2012 through July 31, 2014.		
28	12		
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1	47. Knighted also received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Sonoma for the		
2	period August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2016. This contract disclosed that on or about February 8, 2012,		
3	Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform administrative services.		
4	48. Every two years thereafter, the Bureau approved new TPPPS contracts between		
5	Knighted and PW Sonoma that included the disclosure that Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform		
6	administrative services.		
7	<i>ii.</i> PW Lotus contract with Knighted		
8	49. Knighted first received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Lotus for the		
9	period August 18, 2012 through July 31, 2014.		
10	50. Knighted next received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Lotus for the		
11	period August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2016. This new contract disclosed that on or about February 8,		
12	2012, Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform administrative services.		
13	51. Every two years thereafter, the Bureau approved new TPPPS contracts between		
14	Knighted and PW Lotus that included the disclosure that Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform		
15	administrative services.		
16	iii. PW Cordova contract with Knighted		
17	52. Knighted first received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Cordova for the		
18	period July 17, 2013, through June 30, 2015.		
19	53. A first amendment to the TPPPS contract between Knighted and PW Cordova was		
20	made effective on January 31, 2014, to add a provision that disclosed that or our about February 8,		
21	2012, Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform administrative services.		
22	54. Every two years thereafter, the Bureau approved new TPPPS contracts between		
23	Knighted and PW Cordova that included the disclosure that Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform		
24	administrative services.		
25	iv. PW 580 contract with Knighted		
26	55. Knighted first received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW 580 for the		
27	period April 10, 2012 to March 31, 2014.		
28	56. Knighted next received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW 580 for the 13		
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1	period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2016. This new contract also disclosed that on or about		
2	February 8, 2012, Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform administrative services.		
3	57. Every two years thereafter, the Bureau approved new TPPPS contracts between		
4	Knighted and PW 580 that included the disclosure that Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform		
5	administrative services.		
6	v. PW Lodi contract with Knighted		
7	58. Knighted first received Bureau approval to provide TPPPS to PW Lodi for the		
8	period January 20, 2014 to December 31, 2015. This new contract disclosed that on or about		
9	February 8, 2012, Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform those administrative services identified in		
10	an exhibit to the contract.		
11	59. Every two years thereafter, the Bureau approved new TPPPS contracts between		
12	Knighted and PW Lodi that included the disclosure that Knighted engaged Fortiss to perform		
13	administrative services.		
14	C. FORTISS' CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH KNIGHTED		
15	60. Choi testified that he hired Fortiss to assist Knighted because he knew that Fortiss		
16	operated with integrity and he could trust the people that worked there. Choi testified that Fortiss		
17	is the best in the industry and makes sure everything is aboveboard, clean, and accurate.		
18	61. Fortiss has been party to multiple contracts with Knighted. Each of the contracts		
19	were signed by Choi, as the Managing Member of Knighted, and Vasey, as the CFO of Fortiss.		
20	Additionally, each contract allowed for either party to terminate the agreement by giving the other		
21	party at least thirty (30) days' prior written notice.		
22	62. The first contract between Fortiss and Knighted became effective on February 8,		
23	2012 (First Contract). The contract, paragraph 1(a) provided that Fortiss shall render the services		
24	listed on Exhibit A:		
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2	 Accounting Services Review of all accounting work prepared by in-house staff
3	 Process bi-weekly payroll utilizing ADP payroll services
4	• Co-ordinate and assistance with year-end audit by independent CPA firm
5	 Assistance with annual tax returns prepared by independent CPA firm Assist and maintain Company insurance
6	 Human Resources, Personnel Management, and Employment Relations Services Provide general HR consulting services
7	 Hiring and recruiting services Provide new hire background Investigation, credit analysis, and drug
8	 Provide training for new hires and retraining for existing employees
9	 Maintain all employee benefit plans: i.e. medical, dental, vision, 401(k) Process post-employment benefits
10	 Process worker's compensation claims and unemployment claims
11	 IT Services Support network infrastructure
12	 Help desk support E-Mail support
13	 Various software systems support Hardware support
14	 Playing book ticket system support
15	 Assist with State and Local licensing and compliance Assist with entity, owner, and employee state licensing and badging
16	 Assist with local business licenses
17	• Assist with new contracts, amendments, and renewal
18	63. Additionally, paragraph 1(a) of the First Contract provided that "such fees shall
19	not be changed for a period of one (1) year, commencing on the date hereof and are intended to
20	allow Fortiss only to recover its costs and expenses without realizing any profit."
21	64. Paragraph 1(b) of the First Contract provided that Fortiss may provide "unusual
22	additional services not specifically addressed in Exhibit A. For such unusual or additional
23	services, if requested, Fortiss will be compensated in amounts determined based upon hours of
24	service rendered, if applicable, or in amounts otherwise agreed to by the parties and subject to the
25	terms of this Agreement."
26	65. The First Contract provided that Knighted would pay \$0 for the first four months,
27	which would thereafter increase beginning June 1, 2012 to a fixed monthly fee of \$20,000.
28	66. A first amendment to the First Contract (Second Contract) was effective August 1, 15
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1 2012 and increased the monthly fee to \$60,000 with all other terms remaining the same. 2 67. A new agreement was entered into effective March 1, 2014 (Third Contract). The 3 monthly fee remained the same, but two categories of services from Exhibit A under the category 4 of Human Resources were removed: hiring and recruiting services and provide training for new 5 hires and retraining for existing employees. 6 68. A first amendment to the Third Contract dated March 1, 2014, was effective on 7 July 1, 2014, increasing the monthly fee to \$100,000 with no change in services or terms (Fourth 8 Contract). 9 69. A second amendment to the Third Contract became effective on March 1, 2015, 10 and increased the monthly compensation to \$120,000 with no change in services or terms (Fifth 11 Contract). 12 70. A new agreement was effective on October 1, 2018, making changes to the fee and 13 services offered by Fortiss (Sixth Contract). The monthly fee in the Sixth Contract increased to 14 \$166,667. 15 71. Additionally, the provision in prior contracts allowing for the provision of unusual 16 or additional services was not included in the Sixth Contract. However, a new line item was 17 added to Exhibit A to the Sixth Contract, allowing for the provision of "[a]dditional 18 miscellaneous services as may be specifically requested by Client to Contractor in writing from 19 time to time." Miscellaneous services was not defined or limited in scope in the contract. 20 72. Additionally, the Sixth Contract added the following categories of services to the 21 contract: Accounting: Provide recommendations to management concerning periodic accounting 22 decisions; and Human Resources: Provide guidance for California employment laws and 23 regulations compliance. 24 73. The Sixth Contract also removed certain HR categories of services from the 25 contract: hiring and recruiting services; provide new hire background investigation, credit 26 analysis, and drug testing; provide training for new hires and retraining for existing employees 27 and; maintain all employee benefit plans: i.e. medical, dental, vision, 401(k). 28 74. Vasey testified that as part of the contract negotiations with Knighted, Fortiss 16 Decision and Order, CGCC Case No: CGCC-2020-0227-11A-F

1	performs a confidential internal calculation to determine its fee which it charges Knighted. The
2	fee is determined by asking Fortiss employees to estimate how much time they spend working for
3	each company Fortiss services. Those percentages are used to allocate the salaries to each
4	company Fortiss services on a pro-rata basis. Fortiss calculates its overhead based on its salary
5	allocation, then 17% is added to that figure for a profit margin before billing Knighted. The last
6	fee calculation was done in 2018.
7	75. In addition to Knighted, Fortiss also has service agreements with other companies
8	owned by Choi: Citadel of Florida, LLC; Elevated, LLC; Knighted Pastures, LLC; Knighted
9	Services; and Oakdale, LLC.
10	76. Choi testified that he has never seen a breakdown of how Fortiss calculates the
11	monthly service fee paid by Knighted, but he believes the amount is reasonable based on the
12	services provided.
13	D. SERVICES PROVIDED BY FORTISS TO PARK CARDROOMS AND
14	KNIGHTED
15	<i>i.</i> Services provided to Park Cardrooms
16	77. Vasey testified that he reports directly to Park in his role at Fortiss and the Park
17	Cardrooms. Vasey testified that Fortiss developed policies and procedures for each of the Park
18	Cardrooms and departments to follow to ensure there are controls in place to prevent cheating,
19	stealing, and improprieties. Vasey testified that he and Park follow the regulations to the best of
20	their ability.
21	78. Vasey testified that Fortiss provides leadership training to the Park Cardrooms to
22	ensure the General Managers (GM) have the tools and skills to implement these policies. Lisa
23	Grewohl, Fortiss' HR Manager, testified that Fortiss offers additional training, such as sexual
24	harassment training, OSHA training, and schedules responsible gaming training for Park
25	Cardroom employees.
26	79. Fortiss performs a wide array of HR services for Park Cardrooms, including
27	recruiting. Fortiss also conducts internal investigations for the Park Cardrooms on behalf of Park,
28	as the owner of the cardroom. Grehwohl is also responsible for a hotline for the Park Cardroom 17
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1 employees to call and report any concerns anonymously.

80. PWCI has a compliance committee that meets quarterly and includes Vasey, Park,
Grewohl, and Fortiss' general counsel, Jeffrey Van Wagner (Van Wagner), among others.
Contributors to the PWCI compliance committee include Tom Chan (Chan), Treasurer of Fortiss,
and Benjamin Walsh, Corporate Counsel for Fortiss. This committee conducts quarterly audits on
the Park Cardrooms. Grehwohl testified that if the quarterly audits conducted by the PWCI
compliance committee found any deficiencies, she would work with the cardroom GM to resolve
the findings.

9 81. Shaun Yaple (Yaple), former GM of PW Lodi and PW Cordova, testified that he
10 would submit all contracts to Fortiss for review, which would then be returned to him with redline
11 edits that he would accept. Vasey testified that Fortiss' attorney reviews all of the contracts
12 entered into by Park Cardrooms.

13 82. Vasey testified that the GMs of Park Cardrooms are in charge of everything inside
14 the facility, including hiring and firing. However, Yaple, testified that when he worked for PW
15 Cordova as the GM between May 2014 and December 2018, he would need permission from
16 Fortiss' legal counsel and HR prior to terminating the employees he managed.

17 83. Yaple also previously worked for Fortiss. Yaple testified that during the time he
18 worked for Fortiss in 2005, until he left the GM position at PW Cordova, he noticed changes in
19 the scope of services Fortiss provided to the Park Cardrooms. As Park purchased more
20 cardrooms, Fortiss would subsume any cardroom staff that left. For instance, Yaple worked at
21 PW Lodi for some time, and the cardroom had its own HR and accounting department when he
22 arrived. However, as those staff moved on, Fortiss took over those roles.

23

ii. Services Provided to Knighted

84. Vasey testified that Fortiss provides less overall services to Knighted than to the
Park owned entities it contracts with. Choi testified that over time, Knighted has brought more of
the work in house that was previously done by Fortiss, such as IT, HR and training.

27 85. Vasey testified that Fortiss provides accounting services to Knighted, collects
28 financial information, and produces financial statements. Fortiss also makes recommendations to

1 management on accounting decisions, such as how things should be depreciated, tax issues, and 2 accounting for contracts. However, Choi testified that Knighted has its own accounting 3 department with approximately six staff and a manager who ensure that proper accounts payable 4 receipts and other documents are sent to Fortiss to process the payments. Choi testified that 5 Fortiss assists with annual financial audits by providing auditors with access to Knighted's 6 financial records in Fortiss' possession. Lee testified that for accounts payable, Fortiss compiles 7 Knighted's bills and will scan and send them to Lee for approval. Then Fortiss processes the 8 payments.

9 86. Vasey and Choi testified that the IT services Fortiss provides to Knighted are
10 limited to providing tablets and ensuring the network is working for Knighted's electronic playing
11 book system, Horus. Choi testified that Knighted has two regional managers overseeing IT, with
12 approximately four staff members who are able to handle all of Knighted's other IT needs. Choi
13 also testified that if there are needs unrelated to Horus that Knighted's own staff cannot meet,
14 Knighted will retain an outside company, not Fortiss.

15 87. Choi testified that Knighted has its own HR department headed by a manager with
approximately 20 staff who provide a full range of services. Choi testified that there are no HR
services Knighted needs that its own HR staff cannot provide. However, Choi also testified that
Fortiss handles the payroll processing for Knighted through ADP. Vasey testified that Fortiss also
facilitates new hire background checks for Knighted through their contract with ADP. Grehwohl
testified that Knighted reaches out to Fortiss' HR department "once in a blue moon."

21 88. Choi testified that Knighted's Director of Organizational Development oversees
22 and provides leadership, management, and advanced development training. Additionally,
23 Knighted's Head of Training has a large staff and provides all of the games training that Knighted
24 requires. If Knighted requires any additional training, it will contract with an outside agency, not
25 Fortiss.

89. Regarding legal services, Vasey, Choi and Lee testified that Knighted uses outside
counsel for legal matters, but sometimes will seek advice from Fortiss' attorney on regulatory
compliance issues. Vasey, Choi and Lee testified that Fortiss' role in preparation of TPPPS

contracts is minimal, such as typing up boilerplate language, spell checks, and grammar reviews.
 Choi testified that Fortiss' attorney does not provide any assistance in contract negotiations or
 advise on contract terms.

4

5

E. CONCERNS RAISED BY BUREAU REGARDING THE THREE-PARTY RELATIONSHIP

6 90. Gilleland and Anquoe both testified that they are not aware of any other situations
7 in the California gaming industry where a cardroom and administrative services company like
8 Fortiss share a common owner, and the services company also contracts to provide services to the
9 cardroom and the cardroom's Third-Party Provider of Proposition Player Services. In the Bureau
10 Report, and at the hearing, the Bureau raised several areas of concern stemming from the Three11 Party Relationship.

- 12
- 12

i.

Fortiss' Power to Exercise Significant Influence Over Park Cardrooms and Knighted

14 91. The Commission previously determined that Fortiss had the power to exercise
15 significant influence over PW Cordova and thus directed the Fortiss Applicants to apply for
16 licensure on that basis. An area of concern regarding the Knighted Applications is that if Fortiss
17 also has the power to exercise a significant influence over Knighted, the Three-Party Relationship
18 may allow for violation of Section 19984, subdivision (a), and Knighted would not be compliant
19 with Section 19852, subdivision (i). Fortiss Applicants contend that Fortiss does not exercise
20 significant influence over either Knighted or the Park Cardrooms.

21

ii. Signature Authority of Tom Chan

22 92. The Bureau's Report on the Fortiss Applications raises as an area of concern that
23 Chan, Treasurer for Fortiss, had signature authority on Knighted's bank accounts.

93. In a June 9, 2020 letter to the Commission's Executive Director, Knighted's
attorneys represented that on April 29, 2020, Fortiss and Knighted instituted additional controls
regarding the release of checks in an attempt to alleviate the Bureau and Commission's concerns
regarding Chan's signature authority.

28

94. In or around September 2021, Knighted and Fortiss revoked Chan's signing 20

authority upon the recommendation of Peter Brown of Green Hasson Janks, LLP. Brown is an
 auditor retained on behalf of Fortiss and Knighted with the scope of engagement being an internal
 controls review and investigation specifically designed to address concerns raised by the Bureau
 and Commission.

5 95. Gilleland testified that because Chan is an employee of Fortiss, and ultimately
6 reports to Park, who also partially owns many of the cardrooms where Knighted provides TPPPS,
7 Chan's signatory authority on Knighted's accounts, while being employed by the owner of the
8 cardrooms Knighted contracts with, appeared to him to be collusive.

9

iii. PW Cordova Dealer Cheating Incident

10 96. Nathan DaValle (DaValle), Assistant Director of the Bureau's Compliance and
11 Enforcement Section, testified that he has worked for the Bureau for almost ten years. DaValle
12 stated that incident reports, by regulation, are due within five days of the cardroom having
13 information indicating a violation occurred. Incident reports can be submitted on a form provided
14 by the Bureau, or other written form that contains the required information.

97. On or about December 1, 2014, PW Cordova was alerted by representatives of
Knighted that there was a concern that there were irregularities in the dealing procedure for
Ultimate Texas Hold'em. GM Yaple began an investigation of Knighted's claims.

18 98. From December 1 to 7, 2014, GM Yaple and Security Manager Ryan Woodson
19 (Woodson) reviewed the video surveillance for the past 18 months to verify the claimed
20 irregularities. On December 3, 2014, Yaple met a Fortiss training consultant, to review video,
21 after which the consultant and Yaple were concerned with the dealing procedures of at least one
22 PW Cordova dealer.

99. On approximately December 8, 2014, Yaple, Casino Manager Jared Horstman
(Horstman), and Woodson met with the Fortiss training consultant and PW Cordova's security
consultant, Elijah Zuniga (Zuniga), to review their findings. They concluded that three dealers
were intentionally exposing the dealer's bottom home card to give a player an unfair statistical
advantage. Immediately after this meeting, Zuniga contacted Bureau Special Agents Yolanda
Sanchez (Sanchez) and James Rodriguez (Rodriguez).

1 100. On approximately December 8, 2014, Sanchez and Rodriguez met with Yaple, 2 Horstman, and Woodson at PW Cordova where they watched surveillance tape, discussed how 3 the cheating took place, and summarized the dates and times of each violation and the participants 4 in the cheating incident by name. Sanchez requested a copy of the surveillance tape and incident 5 report. However, these items were not provided, in part because PW Cordova needed to obtain 6 equipment with sufficient storage to copy the surveillance footage to, and because Horstman had 7 sent the draft incident report to Van Wagner, Fortiss' General Counsel, for review. 8 101. On January 6, 2015, Sanchez notified Yaple she would be at PW Cordova the 9 following day to review the three dealers' employment files, pick up the surveillance video and 10 the incident report. 11 102. On January 7, 2015, Sanchez was given an incomplete draft of the incident report. 12 Vasey spoke with Sanchez and told her that PW Cordova's final incident report was completed, 13 but due to the sensitive nature of the claims, the report was still being reviewed by Van Wagner 14 before submitting it. Vasey testified that Fortiss' attorney reviewed the report to consider HR 15 implications and Park's liability in anticipated employment litigation. 16 103. Due to the delay in providing the Bureau with a final incident report, the Bureau 17 issued a Letter of Warning to PW Cordova on January 7, 2015. According to the letter, PW 18 Cordova submitted the final incident report to the Bureau on January 10, 2015. 19 104. Yolanda Morrow (Morrow), Director of the Bureau, and DaValle testified that the 20 dealer cheating incident at PW Cordova was concerning because the incident report is typically 21 the Bureau's first indication that an incident occurred, and Bureau agents need the information to 22 start their investigation. If an incident report is withheld, or sanitized in some way, it can 23 compromise the Bureau's investigation. 24 105. Morrow additionally testified that when a designated agent or third party goes 25 beyond facilitating communications between an applicant and the Bureau, such as occurred in this 26 matter, it leads the Bureau to inquire whether licensure is required. Morrow further testified that 27 this incident and the nature of the Three-Party Relationship concerned the Bureau that there could 28 be potential violations that would not be reported to the Bureau as required. 22

1 106. Morrow also testified that it was Fortiss' involvement in the dealer cheating 2 incident that changed the Bureau's position regarding Fortiss' ability to exercise significant 3 influence over the gambling operations of Park Cardrooms. Morrow also shared these concerns 4 with the Commission at the licensing meeting on October 20, 2016, after which, the Commission 5 approved the PW Cordova application on the condition that Vasey and Fortiss become licensed. 6 Access to Financial Information for Non-Park Owned Cardrooms iv. 107. Knighted utilizes an electronic playing book system known as the Horus System.¹¹ 7 The Horus System is an electronic table management system which allows the collection and 8 9 entry of playing book forms using a wireless device or tablet. Also, this device is utilized to electronically enter playing book tickets into the database. In addition, it is used to open podiums 10 and tables. 11

12 108. Horus information is stored in a centralized database and application server, which
13 can be utilized by authorized persons to review data for audit and accounting purposes. Vasey
14 testified that the only financial data collected by Horus are Knighted's net wins and losses.

15 109. Knighted is required by regulation to maintain playing books. Knighted has opted
16 to use electronic playing books utilizing the Horus system. On March 15, 2019, Knighted
17 submitted an application for approval to the Bureau to use Horus electronic playing book system.
18 On August 27, 2019, the Bureau issued an approval for Knighted to begin using Horus effective
19 September 26, 2019.

110. Vasey testified that Fortiss conducts Knighted's accounting and has access to
almost all of Knighted's financial data. While it was alleged that Park does not have access to the
accounting system at Fortiss, he owns the company so he could ask for the information or obtain
access outright. Vasey also testified that he looks at financial information for all the companies
Fortiss services because he is involved with ensuring proper audits are done.

25

26

111. Morrow testified that the Bureau is concerned that Knighted shares revenue information with Fortiss because it enhances the danger of unsuitable practices in the operation of

¹¹ A report by Peter Brown of Green Hasson Janks, LLP noted that Horus was developed by and is owned by Holy Grail Gaming, Inc. (Holy Grail). Park is the majority shareholder of Holy Grail. Vasey testified that Park developed the Horus software.

1	the cardroom. Morrow expressed concern that the contract fee Fortiss charges Knighted could be
2	based on Knighted's TPPPS revenue rather than the actual value of the services provided.
3	112. Gilleland, testified that he believes there is an appearance of collusion based on
4	Park's access to information through the Horus system. Gilleland testified that it is concerning for
5	an administrative services company to have working knowledge of, and financial knowledge of,
6	both the cardroom and the third party that are supposed to be operating independently.
7	113. Gilleland and Anquoe testified that Knighted provides TPPPS to cardrooms not
8	affiliated with Park, leading to a concern that Park, as the owner of Fortiss, can access financial
9	information relating to Knighted's revenue at competing cardrooms.
10	ASSESMENT OF FORTISS' SUITABILITY AND QUALIFICATION FOR LICENSURE
11	A. FORTISS HAS THE POWER TO EXERCISE SIGNIFICANT
12	INFLUENCE OVER THE PARK CARDROOMS, BUT NOT OVER KNIGHTED
13	<i>i.</i> Fortiss Has the Power to Exercise Significant Influence Over The
14	Park Cardrooms
15	114. The Commission concludes that Fortiss must maintain licensure for each of the
16	Park Cardrooms it contracts with due to its ability to exercise significant influence over the
17	gaming operations.
18	115. Fortiss offers a full scale of services that the Park Cardrooms could not operate
19	without, including HR, accounting, IT, and legal services. Fortiss' legal services include guidance
20	with state and local licensing laws as well as Commission regulations, which is one of the most
21	important aspects of conducting compliant gaming operations.
22	116. Fortiss has the ability to manage policy and procedures at the Park Cardrooms
23	based on the common ownership, board members, and management team between Fortiss, PWCI,
24	and the Park Cardrooms.
25	117. Fortiss is also able to influence policy processes at the Park Cardrooms through its
26	role as a legal and HR advisor to PWCI and the Park Cardrooms. The May 2021 and October
27	2018 service agreements between Fortiss and PWCI provide that Fortiss "will assist [PWCI]
28	management in periodic decisions." The October 2018 agreement further added that Fortiss will 24
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assist management with periodic decisions in the specific areas of business services and financial
 decisions.

118. Fortiss developed policies and procedures for each of the Park Cardrooms and
departments to follow. Fortiss also trains the Park Cardroom staff to follow those policies and
procedures. Fortiss management contributes and serves on the compliance committees for PWCI,
including Vasey, Park, Grewohl, and Van Wagner. The PWCI committee audits the Park
Cardrooms and works to achieve necessary corrective action.

8 119. In addition to the overlapping management and ownership of Fortiss and PWCI, 9 Fortiss also has a physical presence at the PW Cordova through its HR Department. Fortiss' HR 10 Department located at PW Cordova is accessible to PW Cordova managers with access key cards 11 and there is an open door policy for PW Cordova employees to seek advice. Additionally, Fortiss 12 HR staff use the employee entrance and can access "back of the house" areas used by PW 13 Cordova employees. Fortiss HR staff do not wear uniforms or name tags to indicate that they are 14 not cardroom employees. These facts may lead to a perception that Fortiss' HR staff and PW 15 Cordova staff have the same employer.

16 120. Fortiss HR recruits and selects candidates for the Park Cardrooms to interview
17 when requested. Fortiss conducts investigations and receives hotline calls. While the evidence
18 varied as to how much weight Fortiss exerts over the HR functions of the Park Cardrooms, the
19 testimony of Yaple was particularly persuasive, as he is the only witness who does not rely on
20 Park for a paycheck. Yaple testified that when he was the GM of PW Cordova, he could not
21 terminate employees without approval of Fortiss HR and legal.

121. However, Fortiss' ability to exercise significant influence over the Park Cardrooms
does not negatively impact Fortiss' qualifications or suitability for licensure, because Fortiss does
not have the ability to exercise a significant influence over Knighted.

25 26

ii. Fortiss Does Not Have the Power to Exercise Significant Influence Over Knighted

27 122. Knighted contracts for several services from Fortiss that it does not currently
28 utilize. Knighted has brought most of its administrative work in-house, including IT, HR,

1 accounting, and training. Knighted is able to meet all of its training needs in-house, and most of 2 its IT, HR, and accounting needs. 3 The services actually provided by Fortiss are administrative in nature and do not 123. 4 indicate an ability to exercise significant influence over the operations. For instance, Fortiss 5 processes payroll, but it does not determine the wages set or the hours worked by Knighted's 6 employees. Likewise, Fortiss processes new hire background checks for Knighted, but has no 7 other involvement in the hiring or recruitment process. 8 124. There is no indication that Fortiss directs or influences policies at Knighted. 9 Knighted contracts with outside counsel for most legal services. Knighted does not share common 10 ownership with Fortiss. While Knighted occasionally contacts Fortiss' legal department, it mostly 11 uses outside counsel. Fortiss does not develop policies or conduct training for Knighted. Because 12 Fortiss does not have the ability to exercise significant influence over Knighted, the Commission 13 has no suitability concerns relating to Fortiss' power to exercise significant influence over the 14 Park Cardrooms so long as the Fortiss Applicants maintain their licensure. 15 B. THE COMMISSION IS SATISFIED THAT THE FORTISS APPLICANTS POSSESS THE REQUISITE CHARACTER, HONESTY, AND INTEGRITY 16 FOR LICENSURE 17 125. Park has worked in the industry since 2007 and Vasey since 2011. The Fortiss 18 Applicants have been thoroughly investigated in relation to their licenses. 19 126. The Commission instructed the Fortiss Applicants to apply for licensure, and they 20 did. The Fortiss Applicants have been transparent and cooperative with the Bureau throughout the 21 background investigation process. Fortiss even invited the Bureau to tour their operations in 2014 22 and again in 2017. 23 127. Further, the Fortiss Applicants have been forthcoming about the existence of the 24 Three-Party Relationship since 2012. The Park Cardrooms amended their TPPPS contracts with 25 Knighted to disclose the fact that Fortiss also provides services to Knighted. Further, the 26 existence of the Three-Party Relationship was ascertainable to the Bureau through the 27 applications filed by Fortiss and through the process to approve Knighted to use the Horus 28 system. 26

1

128. Choi testified that Fortiss operates with integrity, is the best in the industry and 2 makes sure everything is aboveboard, clean, and accurate.

3 129. The late submission of the incident report for the PW Cordova dealer cheating 4 incident caused by Fortiss is concerning, mainly because the delay was caused by Fortiss' legal 5 counsel, whom the Park Cardrooms and PWCI rely on for advice on compliance with gaming 6 laws. Also concerning is that while testifying regarding this incident, the Fortiss Applicants 7 expressed disbelief that the Bureau would take issue with a delay in the incident report rather than 8 expressing remorse or a desire to do things differently in the future.

9 130. Fortiss' failure to timely file the incident report in relation to the PW Cordova 10 cheating incident is strongly mitigated, however, by the fact that the cardroom's consultant, 11 Zuniga, contacted the Bureau about the incident, and PW Cordova management provided all 12 information required to be included in an incident report within the required timeframe. A draft 13 incident report was also provided within the required timeframe, which included the pertinent 14 information.

15 131. Regarding Chan's signatory authority, Fortiss allowed a change in policy 16 regarding the signature process for Knighted checks in attempt to alleviate Bureau and 17 Commission concerns. Ultimately, Chan's signature authority was revoked by Fortiss in response 18 to an auditor's recommendation in September 2021.

19 The Commission shares the Bureau's concerns regarding Park's access to 132. 20 Knighted's financial information. However, the Commission finds that there is no evidence that 21 any of the Fortiss Applicants have done anything illegal or improper with Knighted's financial 22 information. Additionally, there was no evidence offered that a collusive relationship currently 23 exists between Knighted and Fortiss.

24 133. Vasey and Park have implemented policies, procedures, and leadership training to 25 create a culture of compliance at the Park Cardrooms. Vasey's testimony that he and Park strive 26 to comply with regulations was credible. Based on the foregoing, the Commission is satisfied that 27 the Fortiss Applicants are persons of good character, honesty, and integrity.

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1 C. THE COMMISSION IS NOT SATISIFED THAT THE FORTISS APPLICANTS ARE OTHERWISE QUALIFIED FOR LICENSURE DUE 2 TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE THREE-PARTY RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, THESE CONCERNS CAN BE ALLEVIATED BY THE 3 **ISSUANCE OF A CONDITION** 4 134. The Commission is concerned with the Fortiss Applicants' qualifications under 5 Sections¹² 19856 and 19857 based on the Three-Party Relationship and in light of the prior 6 finding that Fortiss has the ability to exercise significant influence over each of the Park 7 Cardrooms. These concerns can be broken into three areas: (1) the perception of a collusive 8 arrangement; (2) the potential for violation of Section 19984; and (3) the potential for violation of 9 TPPPS contract provisions. 10 The Three-Party Relationship Creates the Perception of a Collusive i. Arrangement Between Fortiss and Knighted 11 12 135. The perception of a collusive arrangement between Fortiss and Knighted is 13 grounds for denial of a license, or imposition of a condition on a license, under Sections 19856, 14 subdivision (c) and 19857, subdivision (b). 15 136. Section 19856, subdivision (c), provides that the Commission shall consider 16 whether issuance of a license is inimical to public health, safety, or welfare, and whether issuance 17 of the license will undermine public trust that the gambling operations with respect to which the 18 license would be issued are free from criminal and dishonest elements and would be conducted 19 honestly. 20 137. Section 19857, subdivision (b), prohibits licensure when the Commission is not 21 satisfied that the applicant is a person whose associations do not pose a threat to the public 22 interest of this state, or to the effective regulation and control of controlled gambling, or create or 23 enhance the dangers of unsuitable, unfair, or illegal practices, methods, and activities in the 24 conduct of controlled gambling or in the carrying on of the business and financial arrangements 25 incidental thereto. 26 138. The perception that there may be a collusive arrangement between Fortiss and the 27 ¹² All statutory references refer to the California Business and Professions Code unless otherwise 28 stated. 28 Decision and Order, CGCC Case No: CGCC-2020-0227-11A-F TPPPS that services the Park Cardrooms, which Fortiss has the ability to exercise significant
 influence over, will undermine public trust that gambling operations are free from criminal and
 dishonest elements. It also poses a threat to the effective regulation of controlled gambling, and
 enhances the dangers of unsuitable and unfair activities.

The Commission's TPPPS contract regulations were designed to ensure that there
is a clear separation between the House¹³ and the third-party provider, with all financial
arrangements between the two outlined within the TPPPS contract which is reviewed and
approved by the Bureau, in advance of performing TPPPS.

9 140. CCR section 12272 requires that a TPPPS contract be disapproved if it undermines
10 public trust that the controlled gambling operations covered by the contract will be conducted
11 honestly, by reason of the existence or perception of any collusive arrangement between any party
12 to the contract and the cardroom owner type licensee or TPPPS business endorsee licensee or
13 otherwise.

14 141. While there is not a definition of "collusion" or "collusive arrangement" in the 15 Gambling Control Act or regulations, the Commission does not limit "collusion" to only secretive 16 agreements, as suggested by the Fortiss Applicants during the hearing. While a secret agreement 17 may be more likely to be collusive, the above Sections and regulation indicate that the type of 18 relationship which exhibits a collusive arrangement and prohibits approval of a TPPPS contract is 19 one that offers an unfair advantage to one or more of the contracting parties, damages public trust, 20 and enhances the likelihood of unsuitable or illegal practices in the conduct of controlled 21 gambling or in the carrying on of the business and financial arrangements of controlled gambling. 22 142. Fortiss shares ownership and management with, and has the ability to exercise a 23 significant influence over the Park Cardrooms. Knighted has a strong financial interest in 24 maintaining its TPPPS contracts with the Park Cardrooms. 25 143. There is a perception that Knighted contracts with Fortiss for a number of services

- 26 that it does not actually need. For instance, Knighted contracts with Fortiss for HR, accounting,
- 27

28 ¹³ "House" is defined in Section 19805, subdivision (j) as "the gambling enterprise, and any owner, shareholder, partner, key employee, or landlord thereof."

1 and IT services, despite having its own specialized departments that provide those same services 2 Based on the testimony of Choi and Lee, the services relating to contracts that Fortiss offers are 3 limited to spelling and grammar checks.

4

144. Additionally, when Fortiss and Knighted entered into the Third Contract in 5 August 2012, the price significantly increased even though two major categories of HR services 6 were removed from the contract: hiring and recruiting, and providing training for new hires and 7 retraining for existing employees. Similarly, despite the testimony that Fortiss provides minimal 8 legal services to Knighted, the contract fee increased significantly when legal services were added 9 to the Sixth Contract.

10 145. An additional perception is that Knighted may pay a disproportionate amount for 11 services based on a lack of accounting done to allow Knighted to quantify the time spent on the 12 services provided or the value of those services. Fortiss does not document the work performed to 13 Knighted or undergo a regular evaluation as to whether its services/costs align with the contract 14 price paid by Knighted. Fortiss will evaluate the contract fee using employee time estimates for 15 type of work performed per entity. The Second Contract, Fourth Contract, and Fifth Contract all 16 increased the contract fee despite there being no change in the terms or services offered. 17 Additionally, the Second Contract raised the contract fee after eight months, despite a provision 18 in the First Contract stating the price would not be raised for one year. While the Knighted and 19 Fortiss Applicants had a reasonable explanation for these increases due to an increase in

20 Knighted's business and number of employees, the perception remains that it is possible for 21 Fortiss to arbitrarily set and raise the contract price.

22 146. Additionally, Knighted relies on Fortiss for use of its electronic playing book 23 system and for related technical support. Half of the tables Knighted services are at Park 24 Cardrooms. Despite Knighted's reliance on its relationship with Fortiss to use the Horus system, 25 the service agreement can be cancelled at any time by Fortiss with only 30 days' notice. There is 26 no provision in the contract for Knighted to continue to use Horus outside of the administrative 27 services contract and sudden cancelation of the contract could be detrimental to Knighted from a

financial perspective. These factors lead to a clear perception that Knighted may be compelled to
 agree to and not question any contract fee Fortiss proposes.

147. When Knighted uses Fortiss' legal services, they are receiving advice from an inhouse attorney employed by Fortiss. Fortiss' ability to influence and advise as to regulatory issues
for both Knighted and Park Cardrooms, gives potential for advice to be given and decisions to be
made to benefit Park Cardrooms to the detriment of Knighted.

7 148. Finally, Fortiss can fully access Knighted's financial records, which gives Park
8 and Vasey access to financial information concerning Knighted's profits at other cardrooms that
9 Knighted contracts with that are competitors of Parks. These factors all lead the Commission to
10 conclude that a perception of collusion arises from the Three-Party Relationship and is a basis for
11 denial of a license, or imposition of a condition on a license, under Sections 19856, subdivision
12 (c), and 19857, subdivision (b).

13 14

ii.

The Three-Party Relationship Allows For Circumvention of Section 19984

15 149. Section 19984, subdivision (a) prohibits the House from having an interest in
16 funds wagered, lost or won. At the heart of this provision and the Commission's TPPPS contract
17 regulations, is a need for the Third-Party Provider to be owned and operated separately from the
18 House. The Three-Party Relationship creates the potential for circumvention of Section 19984,
19 subdivision (a) and is therefore grounds for denial or conditioning of a license under Sections
20 19856, subdivision (c), and 19857, subdivision (b).

150. The close relationship between Fortiss and Park Cardrooms (the House), with their
common ownership, management, and policy influences, may undermine the public trust by
creating a perception that Fortiss is part of, or an extension of, the House which would make
Fortiss' contract with Knighted a violation of Section 19984, subdivision (a).

151. Additionally, the Three-Party Relationship makes it feasible for Knighted to pay
Park Cardrooms (the House), through payments to Fortiss, for services that are not performed, to
overpay for services performed, or to pay for services that it does not actually need simply to
keep its access to Park Cardrooms. Park and Vasey's access to Knighted's financial information

also creates the potential for increases in the Fortiss and Knighted contract to be based on a
 comparison of Knighted's revenue versus the TPPPS contract fee agreed to and approved by the
 Bureau. While there are no findings that the parties are currently in violation of Section 19984,
 the situation is ripe for a violation to occur.

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iii. The Three-Party Relationship Enhances the Dangers of Unsuitable, Unfair, or Illegal Practices

152. Issuance of the licenses without conditions would enhance the dangers of
unsuitable, unfair, or illegal practices, or in the carrying on of the financial arrangements incident
thereto, by allowing for circumvention of Section 19984, as discussed previously, and the TPPPS
contract regulations, which is grounds for denial or conditioning of the Fortiss Applications under
Section 19857, subdivision (b), and also contributes to the Commission's conclusion that the
contract between Fortiss and Knighted is collusive.

13 153. CCR section 12270, subdivision (b)(14), requires a full disclosure of the financial 14 relationship between the cardroom business licensee and any licensee covered by the TPPPS 15 contract. Further, CCR 12270, subdivision (b)(21), requires that the TPPPS contract be a 16 complete expression of all agreements and financial arrangements between the parties. The 17 Three-Party Relationship allows for circumvention of these contract requirements because the 18 former and current contracts contain broad categories of services, including "unusual or 19 additional services" in the First to Fifth Contracts. Additionally, the Sixth Contract entered into 20 October 2018, allowed for the provision of "[a]dditional miscellaneous services as may be 21 specifically requested by Client to Contractor in writing from time to time." 22 154. Further, the contract fee changed at unspecified intervals, using a vague 23 methodology, and the contract services are not broken out by cost and there is not itemized 24 billing. The aforementioned circumstances enhance the danger of unsuitable practices, such as 25 payment of services that are grossly disproportionate to the value received, or are a work-around 26 for payments to Park Cardrooms that are not allowable under the TPPPS contract regulations.

27 155. Additionally, the nature of the Three-Party Relationship gives the Park Cardrooms
28 (the House) access through Fortiss to the Knighted's financial information and control over

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1 several aspects of Knighted's financial accounting and auditing. This also enhances the danger of 2 unsuitable or illegal practices, especially coupled with the fact that Fortiss also contracts with 3 other companies owned by Park and Choi, creating a feasible method to launder, misappropriate, 4 or move funds in a manner that was not contained in the TPPPS contract and approved by the 5 156. Bureau in advance. While there is no evidence that these practices are occurring, 6 the nature of the Three-Party Relationship enhances the dangers of unsuitable practices and thus 7 is prohibited. 8 D. THE PERCEPTION OF A COLLUSIVE ARRANGEMENT AND

D. THE PERCEPTION OF A COLLUSIVE ARRANGEMENT AND POTENTIAL FOR VIOLATION OF SECTION 19984 AND TPPPS CONTRACT REGULATIONS PRECLUDES RENEWAL OF THE TPPPS CONTRACT BETWEEN KNIGHTED AND PARK CARDROOMS ABSENT A CONDITION

12 157. CCR section 12200.9, subdivision (a)(1)(D), prohibits approval by the Bureau of a 13 TPPPS contract that undermines the public trust that the controlled gambling operations covered 14 by the contract will be conducted honestly, by reason of the existence or perception of any 15 collusive arrangement between any party to the contract and the holder of a state gambling 16 license, or otherwise. By virtue of the Commission's findings in this decision that the Three-Party 17 Relationship creates the perception of a collusive relationship between Fortiss and Knighted, and 18 enhances the potential for violations of Section 19984 and TPPPS contract regulations, future 19 TPPPS contracts between Knighted and the Park Cardrooms cannot be approved by the Bureau 20 absent compliance with the condition imposed in the order herein. 21 LEGAL CONCLUSIONS 22 158. Division 1.5 of the Business and Professions Code, the provisions of which govern 23 the denial of licenses on various grounds, does not apply to licensure decisions made by the 24 Commission under the Gambling Control Act. Business and Professions Code section 476(a). 25 159. Public trust and confidence can only be maintained by strict and comprehensive 26 regulation of all persons, locations, practices, associations, and activities related to the operation 27 of lawful gambling establishments and the manufacture and distribution of permissible gambling

28 equipment. Business and Professions Code section 19801(h).

1 160. In reviewing an application for any license, the Commission shall consider
 2 whether issuance of the license is inimical to public health, safety, or welfare, and whether
 3 issuance of the license will undermine public trust that the gambling operations with respect to
 4 which the license would be issued are free from criminal and dishonest elements and would be
 5 conducted honestly. Business and Professions Code section 19856(c).

6 161. The Commission has the responsibility of assuring that licenses, approvals, and
7 permits are not issued to, or held by, unqualified or disqualified persons, or by persons whose
8 operations are conducted in a manner that is inimical to the public health, safety, or welfare.
9 Business and Professions Code section 19823(a)(1).

10 162. An "unqualified person" means a person who is found to be unqualified pursuant
11 to the criteria set forth in Section 19857, and "disqualified person" means a person who is found
12 to be disqualified pursuant to the criteria set forth in Section 19859. Business and Professions
13 Code section 19823(b).

14 163. The Commission has the power to deny any application for a license, or to limit,
15 condition, or restrict a license, for any cause deemed reasonable by the Commission. Business
16 and Professions Code section 19824(b).

17 164. The Commission has the power to take actions deemed to be reasonable to ensure
18 that no ineligible, unqualified, disqualified, or unsuitable persons are associated with controlled
19 gambling activities. Business and Professions Code section 19824(d).

20 165. The Commission may require that persons who, in the judgment of the
21 Commission, has the power to exercise significant influence over the gambling operation, apply
22 for a gambling license. Business and Professions Code section 19853(a)(6).

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166. The Commission's directive that Fortiss seek licensure is within the Commission's specific authority under Section 19853. Conditioning a license was an appropriate method for the Commission to exercise its judgment and order Fortiss to apply for licensure based on its power to exercise significant influence over the Park Cardrooms.

27 28 167. The burden of proving qualifications to receive any license from the Commission is on the applicant. Business and Professions Code section 19856(a); CCR section 12060(i).

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Relationship.
Fortiss Applications are approved with a condition requiring severance of the Three-Party
not for the Three-Party Relationship, Fortiss would be qualified for licensure. Therefore, the
(b) and (c), based on the Three-Party Relationship. However, the Commission is satisfied that if
are qualified for licensure under Sections 19856, subdivision (c), and Section 19857, subdivisions
173. Based on the foregoing, the Commission is not satisfied that the Fortiss Applicants
the Three-Party Relationship.
imposition of a condition, and will also prohibit approval of a TPPPS contract between parties to
practices, and thus constitutes grounds for denial of associated State Gambling Licenses or
circumvention of Section 19984, and enhances the dangers of unsuitable, unfair, or illegal
Three-Party Relationship creates the perception of a collusive arrangement, allows for
172. Based on the findings in this decision, the Commission has concluded that the
honesty, and integrity for licensure.
171. The Fortiss Applicants have established that they have the requisite character,
respects qualified to be licensed as provided in this chapter. Business and Professions Code section 19857(c).
170. No gambling license shall be issued unless, based on all of the information and documents submitted, the Commission is satisfied that the applicant is a person that is in all other
Professions Code section 19857(b). 170. No gambling license shall be issued unless, based on all of the information and
carrying on of the business and financial arrangements incidental thereto. Business and Professions Code section 19857(b)
unfair, or illegal practices, methods, and activities in the conduct of controlled gambling or in the
regulation and control of controlled gambling, or create or enhance the dangers of unsuitable,
habits, and associations do not pose a threat to the public interest of this state, or to the effective
documents submitted, the Commission is satisfied that the applicant is a person whose reputation,
169. No gambling license shall be issued unless, based on all of the information and
honesty, and integrity. Business and Professions Code section 19857(a).
documents submitted, the Commission is satisfied that the applicant is a person of good character,
168. No gambling license shall be issued unless, based on all the information and

1	174. All documentary and testimonial evidence submitted by the parties that is not
2	specifically addressed in this Decision and Order was considered but not used by the Commission
3	in making its determination on the Fortiss Applications.
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1	NOTICE OF APPLICANT'S APPEAL RIGHTS
2	Applicants have the following appeal rights available under state law:
3	CCR section 12064, subdivisions (a) and (b) provide, in part:
4	(a) After the Commission issues a decision following a GCA hearing conducted
5	pursuant to Section 12060, an applicant denied a license, permit, registration, or finding of suitability, or whose license, permit, registration, or finding of
6	suitability has had conditions, restrictions, or limitations imposed upon it, may request reconsideration by the Commission. A request for reconsideration must
7	be: (1) Made in writing to the Commission, copied to the Complainant. The
8	Bureau may provide a written response to the Commission within 10 calendar days
9	of receipt of the request; and (2) Received by the Commission and Complainant within 30 calendar days of
10	service of the decision, or before the effective date specified in the decision, whichever is earlier.
11 12	(b) A request for reconsideration must state the reasons for the request, which
12	must be based upon either: (1) Newly discovered evidence or legal authorities that could not reasonably
13	have been presented before the Commission's issuance of the decision or at the hearing on the matter; or,
15	(2) Other good cause which the Commission may decide, in its sole discretion, merits reconsideration.
16	Business and Professions Code section 19870, subdivision (f) provides:
17	A decision of the commission after an evidentiary hearing, denying a license or
18	approval, or imposing any condition or restriction on the grant of a license or approval may be reviewed by petition pursuant to Section 1085 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure shall not apply to
19	any judicial proceeding held to consider that petition, and the court may grant the petition only if the court finds that the action of the commission was arbitrary and
20	capricious, or that the action exceeded the commission's jurisdiction.
21	CCR section 12066, subdivision (c) provides, in part:
22	Neither the right to petition for judicial review nor the time for filing the petition will be affected by failure to seek reconsideration.
23 24	will be alleeted by failure to seek reconsideration.
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1	ORDER
2	1. The Applications for State Gambling License for Fortiss, LLC, and its members,
3	Michael Vasey and the John H. Park Trust Under Declaration of Trust Dated July 18, 2012, John
4	Park as the Manager of Fortiss, LLC and the trustee, settlor, and beneficiary of the Trust, and
5	Emily Park as the Trust's successor trustee are APPROVED with the following conditions:
6	(1) Fortiss, LLC must cancel the administrative services agreement with Knighted
7	Ventures, LLC by December 31, 2023, which may be extended by order of the Commission upon a showing of good cause.
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9	(2) Fortiss, LLC must provide a report to the Bureau every 60 days on its progress in cancelation of the administrative services agreement with Knighted Ventures, LLC
10	and severance of the services provided, therein.
11	 No costs are awarded. Each side to pay its own attorneys' fees.
12	This Order is effective on February 27, 2023.
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14	Dated: $\frac{1/26/2023}{2000}$ Signature:
15	Paula LaBrie, Chair
16	C DocuSigned by:
17	Dated: 1/26/2023 Signature: Cathleen Galgiani
18 10	Cathleen Galgiani, Commissioner
19 20	DocuSigned by:
20 21	Dated: 1/26/2023 Signature:
21 22	Eric Heins, Commissioner
22	DocuSigned by:
23	Dated: 1/26/2023 Signature: William Liv
25	William Liu, Commissioner
26	DocuSigned by:
27	Dated: 1/26/2023 Signature: 14B4AD3B90F8462
28	Edward Yee, Commissioner
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