

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: LISA PAGE

Friday, July 13, 2018

Washington, D.C.

The above matter was held in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 1:40 p.m.

Mr. Somers. Let's go on the record.

Good afternoon. This is a transcribed interview of Lisa Page, a former assistant general counsel at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Chairman Goodlatte and Chairman Gowdy requested this interview as part of a joint investigation by the House Committee on the Judiciary and the House Committee on Oversight and Government reform regarding decisions made and not made in 2016 and 2017 by the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding the 2016 Presidential election.

Would the witness please state her name and the last position she held at the FBI for the record?

Ms. Page. Lisa Page. I have always been an assistant general counsel at the FBI, but the last informal role I held was as special counsel to the Deputy Director of the FBI.

Mr. Somers. Thank you. I want to thank you for appearing here today. My name is Zachary Somers, and I am the majority general counsel on the House Judiciary Committee.

I will now ask everyone else who is here in the room to introduce themselves for the record, starting to my right with Art Baker.

Mr. Baker. Arthur Baker, investigative counsel, House Judiciary Committee majority staff.

Mr. Parmiter. Robert Parmiter, chief counsel for crime and terrorism, House Judiciary majority staff.

Mr. Breitenbach. Ryan Breitenbach, senior counsel, House Judiciary majority.

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Mr. Gowdy. Trey Gowdy, South Carolina.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Sheila Jackson Lee, Houston, Texas, Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Ratcliffe. John Ratcliffe, Texas.

Mr. Jordan. Jim Jordan, district, Ohio.

Mr. Nataro. John Nataro, associate general counsel, FBI.

Mr. Wellons. Paul Wellons, associate general counsel FBI.

Ms. Bessee. Cecilia Bessee, acting deputy general counsel FBI.

Mr. Jeffress. Amy Jeffress, counsel for Lisa Page.

Ms. Kim. Janet Kim, House Oversight Committee minority staff.

Mr. Hiller. Aaron Hiller, House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Hariharan. Arya Hariharan, House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Adamu. Marta Adamu, OGR majority.

Ms. Wasz-Pipen. Lyla Wasz-Pipen, House Judiciary minority.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Susanne Sachsman Grooms, House Oversight minority.

Mr. Apelbaum. Perry Apelbaum, House Judiciary Committee majority.

Mr. Nadler. Jerry Nadler, vice ranking member of Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Raskin. Jamie Raskin, Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Dalton. Jason Dalton, FBI congressional affairs.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Illinois, Oversight.

Chairman Goodlatte. Bob Goodlatte, Virginia, Chairman of House Judiciary Committee.

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Mr. Biggs. Andrew Biggs, Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Buddharaju. Anudeep Buddharaju, House Oversight majority.

Ms. Green. Megan Green, House Oversight majority.

Mr. Gohmert. Louie Gohmert.

Mr. Perry. Scott Perry, Pennsylvania, Fifth District.

Mr. Gaetz. Matt Gaetz, Florida, House Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Somers. The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure do not apply in this setting, but there are some guidelines that we'll follow that I'll go over. Our questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions first for an hour and then the minority will have the opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time.

We usually go back and forth in this manner until there are no more questions and the interview is over. However, given our late start time today and the witness' willingness to reappear to resume this interview on Monday, our plan is to do two rounds for the majority and two rounds for the minority today, and we'll pick up again on Monday.

Mr. Jeffress. Just to be clear, we're willing to stay all afternoon this afternoon if we could finish today and would prefer that.

Mr. Somers. Okay. We'll see where we get at the end of the first two rounds.

Although a subpoena was issued for Ms. Page's appearance, Ms. Page, through her attorney, has agreed that we'll proceed with today's session as a voluntary transcribed interview. We anticipate that our questions will receive complete responses. To the extent that Ms. Page declines to answer our questions or if counsel instructs her

not to answer, we will consider whether we need to proceed under our subpoena.

Typically, we take a short break at the end of each hour of questioning, but if you would like to take a break apart from that, please let us know. As you can see, there is an official reporter taking down everything we say to make a written record so we ask that you give verbal responses to all our questions. Do you understand that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Somers. So that the reporter can take down a clear record, we will try to do our best to limit the number of Members and staff directing questions at you during any given hour to just those Members and staff whose turn it is. It is important that we don't talk over one another or interrupt each other if we can help it.

Both committees encourage witnesses who appear for transcribed interviews to freely consult with counsel if they so choose, and you are appearing with counsel today. Could counsel please state her name for the record?

Mr. Jeffress. Amy Jeffress.

Mr. Somers. We want you to ask our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible so we will take our time. If you have any questions or if you do not understand one of our questions, please let us know. If you honestly don't know the answer to a question or do not remember it, it is best not to guess. Please give us your best recollection, and it is okay to tell us if you learned the information

from someone else.

If there are things you don't know or can't remember, just say so, and please inform us who, to the best of your knowledge, might be able to provide a more complete response to the question.

Ms. Page, you should also understand that, although this interview is not under oath, you are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. Do you understand that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Somers. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand this?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Somers. Witnesses who knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements. Do you understand this?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Somers. Is there any reason that you are unable to provide truthful answers to our questions today?

Ms. Page. There is not.

Mr. Somers. Finally, I'd like to note that, as chairman of the Judiciary Committee stated at the outset of our first transcribed interview in this investigation, the content of what we discuss here today is confidential. Chairman Goodlatte and Chairman Gowdy ask that you not speak about what we discuss in this interview to anyone not present here today to preserve the integrity of our investigation. This confidentiality rule applies to everyone present in the room

today.

That's the end of my preamble. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Mr. Jeffress. I would just like to state on -- with respect to your last point, that if we understand that confidentiality has been violated by any media reports of what takes place today, we will consider ourselves to be released from that confidentiality provision and hope you understand that.

Mr. Somers. Okay. The time is now 1:45, and we'll get started with our first round of questions.

Mr. Gowdy. Good afternoon, Ms. Page. My name is Trey Gowdy. I'm from South Carolina. I'm on the Judiciary and Oversight Committee. I want to ask you about some texts that have been attributed to you, but I want to give you an opportunity to follow along as we identify them. I'm going to try to do it by date, but one thing that I have learned in the course of this investigation is sometimes the dates don't sync up. So, if there's ambiguity about the date, then I'll give you the first phrase of that text, that way your attorney can identify it.

Ms. Page. Do you have a --

Mr. Gowdy. I want to start with one dated November 1, 2015. It's a text that you sent to Special Agent Peter Strzok: And I hope Paul Ryan fails and crashes in a blaze of glory.

Do you recall that text?

Ms. Page. I do not.

Mr. Gowdy. Do you dispute that you sent that text?

Ms. Page. Not at all.

Mr. Gowdy. What did you mean by "fails"?

Ms. Page. I don't recall the text, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Could you review it and see if that refreshes your recollection?

Ms. Page. If you can give me the text in the context surrounding it, that would help, yes, please.

Mr. Gowdy. Sure.

Ms. Page. I don't know. I don't know. Sorry. My guess is I was watching the news about something. And I don't know what was happening in November of 2015, but my suspicion is there was some policy issue that I disagreed with, and that was my statement. But I really do not know.

Mr. Gowdy. Would it refresh your recollection to know that that was 2 days after he became Speaker of the House?

Ms. Page. Certainly.

Mr. Gowdy. And when you wrote "fails," what did you mean by "fails"?

Ms. Page. I couldn't tell you.

Mr. Gowdy. Out of the universe of options of what you could have meant by "fails"?

Ms. Page. I don't know precisely what I was thinking about, sir. I presume -- I really don't know. I can't take a guess at it. If there was a particular policy proposal or a particular objective that he had as Speaker, if there was something about a statement or a speech or

something that he was saying that I was referring to, but I don't have the context for the rest of it, so I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. How about "crashes in a blaze of glory"? What'd you mean by that?

Ms. Page. I don't have a better answer, sir. I'm sorry. I just don't recall precisely what I was referring to.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. How about we move to February 24 of 2016? And, again, my date may be different -- wouldn't be different by more than a day than yours.

Ms. Page. February 24, 2016? I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. February 24, 2016, is a page that you would have sent to Special Agent Peter Strzok, and it begins, "One more thing." I'll wait until your counsel lets me know if she's got that pulled up.

Ms. Page. Oh, she's not pulling them up. I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. You're not pulling them up?

Mr. Jeffress. I'm taking notes.

Mr. Gowdy. You don't have -- do you have a book of the text -- of your text?

Ms. Page. I do not, no.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, why don't we stop for a minute and let that happen so we're not --

Ms. Page. Thank you. That would be helpful. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. February 24, 2016, a page that begins, "One more thing."

Ms. Page. Ah, yep. I see it. Yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Could you read that for us?

Ms. Page. Sure: One more thing. She might be our next President. The last thing you need us going in there loaded for bear. You think she's going to remember or care that it was more DOJ than FBI?

Mr. Gowdy. Who would be the "she" in the "she might be President"?

Ms. Page. Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Gowdy. What did you mean by "the last thing you need us going in there loaded for bear"?

Ms. Page. So, as I discussed at length in the IG report, there's a great deal of context here that needs to put this in context. And, in fact, there are easily a half dozen emails and other text messages all sort of surrounding this timeframe.

Pretty early on or actually right around this time in the investigation, almost every interview had been conducted the way FBI interviews are regularly conducted, with two agents, maybe a prosecutor or two, but it -- generally two agents and one or two prosecutors.

And as soon as the planning started to begin to interview some of the more high-profile witness, not just Mrs. Clinton but also Huma Abedin, Cheryl Mills, Jake Sullivan, and her sort of core team, the Department wanted to change the sort of structure and the number of people who were involved.

And the FBI did not agree with that. We thought this is the way we normally do things. This is the way we -- this is the way -- as

you well know, sir, as a prosecutor. I was a prosecutor for 6 years as well -- a more effective interview is conducted with a smaller group, and you build a better rapport, not -- this lovely body notwithstanding.

And so we felt strongly that there should only -- we should maintain the same procedure that we had maintained, which was two prosecutors, two agents, and this represents kind of the middle of a fight that had been happening preceding this date and following this date about how many personnel should be present for these high-profile interviews.

Mr. Gowdy. Who specifically at the Department advocated for a different way of interviewing what you refer to as high profile?

Ms. Page. David Laufman. David Laufman.

Mr. Gowdy. Anyone else?

Ms. Page. No, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Gowdy. And if I understood the context of your answers, at least someone at the Bureau, maybe you, but someone at the Bureau questioned why you would treat some witnesses differently from the way you treated other witnesses?

Ms. Page. No. Actually, the whole team. To the best of my knowledge, everybody at the FBI felt that we should proceed with the higher profile interviews, including for Mrs. Clinton, in the same way that we always had.

David Laufman felt strongly that he needed to be present for these higher profile interviews. And so that then cascaded: Well, if he's

going to be there, should we have Pete or someone else sort of higher ranking than the sort of line agents and line prosecutors who were conducting the investigation.

And then, once we started talking about including David, then the U.S. Attorney's Office also wanted to participate in the interviews, although they had participated in virtually none by that point. And so then the U.S. Attorney's Office was pushing to have the AUSAs, who were participating in the Clinton investigation, also participate.

And so now, all of a sudden, we were going from our standard two and two to this burgeoning number of people. And this text reflects my frustration that we should be doing things the way we always do things, and that we should not kowtow to the Department's desire to add people who are not necessary and who were not necessarily going to add value to these interviews.

Mr. Gowdy. How many interviews were conducted in the way that you think would have been different from an operational norm?

Ms. Page. I don't know for sure. I'd say a half dozen or less, but I am just sort of guessing.

Mr. Gowdy. Of the half dozen or less, did you send text or emails worried about the perception of treating that interview differently, or was it just the one when you referred to she might be our President?

Ms. Page. No. This was an argument that pertained to all of them ultimately. So this was not unique to her. Again, this is just sort of a sort of snippet in time, but we had multiple -- and I think it's reflected either in other texts or in other emails -- multiple

conversations and lots of back and forth and a great deal of frustration in which I was largely advocating the team's interest to keep it at two and two with the Deputy Director.

And George Toscas from the Justice Department was advocating for why he felt David Laufman should be there, and now the U.S. Attorney's Office is a partner, and so we need the two prosecutors who are actually doing all the work because they're the ones who have the substantive knowledge. But if David Laufman comes, how do we now exclude a higher ranking, you know, senior AUSA from the eastern district of Virginia who's involved.

And so it was sort of a back and forth that continued for possibly a week on this topic. And it pertained -- again, it was -- it came up first in the context of scheduling Jake Sullivan's interview, is my recollection, although I'm not positive. But I think he was the first one. And that's what sort of triggered the larger discussion.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. Two questions, but I'll let you take them in order. I wrote down David Laufman's name and then you introduced a name George Toscas.

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Was it Laufman or Toscas that was advocating for the interviews to be done differently?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. I should be more clear. It was Laufman. My understanding is that it was David Laufman who was the section chief of the -- then it was called the counterespionage section at the Justice Department. He was the -- he was the one who first said: I feel like

I need to be there.

George Toscas is his boss, and so David Laufman was a low enough -- was of a rank -- as you well know, the FBI is quite hierarchical. And so Dave Laufman was of a rank that he would not have been calling the Deputy Director to advocate for his position personally.

So he went to his boss, George Toscas, whom Andy McCabe has had a long relationship with because George has done counterterrorism and Andy did counterterrorism. And so David went to his boss, George Toscas, to further advocate for the position that the Department was -- that David Laufman wanted to take for two -- for, excuse me, for a greater number of prosecutors.

Mr. Gowdy. For those of us who might be inclined to side with your position that you should treat all interviews the same, what was the argument that you should treat certain interviews differently?

Ms. Page. Well, the one David posited, and this is -- I did not hear it personally, so this is secondhand to me. But what I understood David's argument was, was that he was the section chief over this investigation, so he was sort of the -- ostensibly the person running it, although he did not really have day-to-day involvement in the investigative activity, and that he would one day be in the room with Loretta Lynch and she would turn to him and sort of ask his view on the sort of credibility of the witnesses and otherwise and that he felt it was -- he had a responsibility to be present in order to be able to answer -- answer whatever questions were expected of him by

senior-level people at the Justice Department.

Mr. Gowdy. And so the text -- I don't know if it's right after that. It's also dated February 24 -- from you to, I guess, then-Deputy Director McCabe and another of your employee -- begins having a larger number. You see that one?

Ms. Page. I don't because I'm guessing it's probably on another set. If you wouldn't mind reading -- I know it just changes by like one or two lines, so if you wouldn't mind just reading it, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Having a larger number in the room is not operationally necessary and that this is as much about reputational protection as anything.

Ms. Page. Got it. Yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Can you see how someone might read that text to be that the interview itself was kind of perfunctory and the interview itself was about reputational protection?

Ms. Page. I don't see it that way, sir, no.

Mr. Gowdy. How do you see it?

Ms. Page. Well, in part because I make the reference to sort of operational necessity, that doesn't go at all to the perfunctory nature. And this wasn't -- this argument, although here we are just talking about Hillary Clinton, this is just a snapshot of this one particular text. The broader argument was with respect to all of the sort of higher profile witnesses, and so what the -- what we're arguing is let's be reasonable here. I don't -- there's no operational necessity for it, and, furthermore, it's not the right optic. It's

now how we do things. It's not an optic because she's going to be President. It's an optic because we, the FBI, don't really like to come marching in, you know, loaded for bear or guns blazing or any other sort of turn of phrase that you want to use where it's not operationally necessary.

So, if you're executing a search warrant, you're going to come with a bunch of dudes. If you're trying to conduct an interview, it's not really appropriate to come with an army full of -- notwithstanding my friends here -- an army full of lawyers and agents.

Mr. Gowdy. Drawing on your background as prosecutor and as counsel for the Bureau, what is operationally necessary about having other potential fact witnesses attend an interview?

Ms. Page. I do not know. I would agree with you that it is not typically appropriate or operationally necessary to have fact witnesses attend the interview.

Mr. Gowdy. Do you know whether any potential fact witnesses attended the interview -- we'll start with Secretary Clinton?

Ms. Page. It's my understanding that both Cheryl Mills and, I think, Heather Samuelson attended her interview.

Mr. Gowdy. Who made the decision to allow them to be present?

Ms. Page. Somebody at the Department. I do not know whom.

Mr. Gowdy. And when you say the Department, you're distinguishing the Department from the Bureau?

Ms. Page. Yes. I'm sorry. I will always call the Bureau the FBI or the Bureau, and the Department the Justice Department or the

Department.

Mr. Gowdy. Were potential fact witnesses allowed to sit in in any of the other universe of interviews where things were done differently?

Ms. Page. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Gowdy. So the best of your knowledge, it was only her interview where potential fact witnesses were allowed to sit in?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. Now, as a former prosecutor, I am sure that struck you as being highly irregular?

Ms. Page. We all at the FBI disagreed with it. And I recall both lawyers for the FBI calling to -- calling over to the prosecutors, and I am certain that Pete called over to the prosecutors to say, "This is BS," I'm sure is probably how he would have phrased it, like why are they attending. And the answer that we received back was that they did not have the -- they didn't see a legal basis to exclude them from the interview because Secretary Clinton was representing them as her lawyers.

Mr. Gowdy. Had she been interviewed in a compulsory setting, would she have been allowed to have fact witnesses present?

Ms. Page. I don't think that makes a difference. Well, I'm sorry. Do you mean like in a grand jury?

Mr. Gowdy. Yeah, like a grand jury.

Ms. Page. In a grand jury, she wouldn't have anybody present.

Mr. Gowdy. Right. Including your lawyer.

Ms. Page. She would not be permitted to have any lawyer present; that's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. Right.

Ms. Page. Right.

Mr. Gowdy. Do you know who at the Department would have made the decision to allow potential fact witnesses to be present?

Ms. Page. I do not, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Who would be the universe of folks that would have the authority to do so?

Ms. Page. I presume -- so the reason I hesitate is because I don't know -- I know who the two line prosecutors were who we worked with regularly. I'm sorry. Oh. I worked with the two -- I know who the two line prosecutors were who were sort of responsible for the day-to-day investigative activity. I do not know whether they made those decisions on their own or whether they consulted their superiors, which would have been David Laufman and George Toscas again. I just don't know.

Mr. Gowdy. I want to go to March 3, 2016. Well, actually, let me ask you, Secretary Clinton was interviewed on July --

Ms. Page. I think 2nd, I believe so.

Mr. Gowdy. -- 2. Do you recall when Attorney General Lynch recused herself?

Ms. Page. Either right before or right after. I don't remember exactly.

Mr. Gowdy. Would she have been still making the decisions on the

case? Would she have still not been recused by the time these conversations take -- took place about who could and could not be present?

Ms. Page. Oh, oh, oh. So -- well, two things. I guess, first, I am not sure she ever formally recused herself. She sort of, I think, did a half step, which I think she's been criticized for, which was that she didn't fully sort of step away from the investigation following the tarmac incident. She said that she would defer to the sort of judgment of the career prosecutors. So I don't -- I wouldn't -- we can call that a recusal if that's how you want to frame it, but I don't know that that legally would be considered one.

I really do not know. This case was unusual in that most of the high-profile matters that I have been a part of during my services as Mr. McCabe's counsel required fairly regular meetings with high-level Justice Department officials and so it was not uncommon to be briefing the Attorney General, and certainly more likely the Deputy Attorney General or the PADAG about the status of certain investigations.

And in this investigation, I do not believe that the FBI ever provided a substantive briefing other than very, very early in the investigation before I was working for the Deputy Director and before Andy McCabe was the Deputy Director.

So I actually can't answer any questions substantively with respect to what kind of briefings and what Loretta Lynch or Sally Yates or other high-level Justice Department officials knew and when because we were not really privy at all to what sort of briefings and who was

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delivering them and what the substance was of them.

Mr. Gowdy. I'm going based on memory here because I don't have the text in front of me, and if you don't recall it, then we'll get somebody to pull it up for us. But I have in the vague recesses of my memory a text you either sent or received that referred to Loretta Lynch as something other than a profile in courage.

Ms. Page. Yep, I remember that one.

Mr. Gowdy. Would that have been in connection with her decision to recuse herself?

Ms. Page. Right. So that was in -- that was in response to the tarmac episode. And as I said, also from memory, so this may be off a little bit, but my recollection is that she represented publicly that she would defer to the judgments or the recommendations of the career prosecutors. And I think my text said something to the effect of: It's a real profile in courage since she knows no charges would be brought.

At this point, this is late -- or early July, and so that does represent a presumption on my part. I do not have knowledge, actual personal knowledge that she knew no -- knew charges -- that she knew no charges would be brought. But every single person on the team, whether FBI or DOJ, knew far earlier than July that we were not going to be able to make out sufficient evidence to charge a crime. And so that was my supposition, but I don't actually know that she knew that.

Mr. Gowdy. I think one thing that folks sometimes struggle with is when that conclusion is reached and how many interviews are left

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to be conducted before that interview is reached, and in particular, how many substantive interviews are left, like, for instance, including the subject.

Ms. Page. Uh-huh.

Mr. Gowdy. So how could you know before you talk to the subject that the subject would not say something inculpatory during the interview?

Ms. Page. Chairman, I certainly take your point. I imagine you've probably had this experience too. At a certain point, when you have examined exhaustively every sort of avenue that you can with respect to available evidence, right, there's only -- if you have found nothing beyond testimony, right, beyond somebody saying, yes, I did this wrong or no, I didn't do this, it's challenging to be able to then confront a witness and try to -- despite whether you think that there was -- let me take a step back.

So the primary look in this investigation was mishandling of classified information, right. And so what we were looking for in particular was some indicia of knowledge that she knew these particular communications shouldn't be traversing the server she set up, that they were, in fact, classified, that there was a sort of purposeful -- or, you know, an intent to mishandle classified information.

And so, when -- by the point -- and I can't give you a precise date but, you know, March, April, Mayish, right, in the sort of early spring, when the bulk of -- the bulk of the investigative activity with respect to forensics, with respect to interviews of people who set up

the servers, like all of the people who you might think are not so closely connected to Secretary Clinton, that if there was something nefarious there, you might actually be able to find it, by that point, we simply did not see anything.

And so she's a very sophisticated woman. Cheryl Mills, Jake Sullivan, these are very smart, very savvy, you know, Washington players. They will all have highly competent counsel. So I don't think there was a strong expectation that the witness interviews were going to provide contrary evidence that we had uncovered -- evidence contrary to what we had uncovered to date.

Certainly, it's possible. It doesn't mean that it's not possible. But without being able to take a document and say, "Ma'am, how do you explain this, you know, this suggests X, how can you possibly say that this was the problem," there wasn't a strong expectation that the interviews were going to change the sense of the team, which was that there would not be a prosecutable case.

Mr. Gowdy. What element, in your judgment, was missing from making the case potentially prosecutable?

Ms. Page. Well, I am not super comfortable without looking at a statute right now. I'm sorry. I don't know if somebody has it, only because I don't want to misspeak. But I can say broadly: I think we all agreed -- rock on. Nice work. Thank you. One second, please.

Is it F? I can't remember.

Mr. Parmiter. Yes, F.

Ms. Page. So I should also say, I don't sort of formally work

in counterintelligence. I was -- when I was a prosecutor I did organized crime work so I did not do national security work. And so I am, like the further -- I am a lawyer, but I am not an expert in this area at all. But --

Mr. Gowdy. Well, I may -- can ask you a question that will make it easier.

Ms. Page. Sure. Thank you.

Mr. Gowdy. Director Comey said what was missing was intent.

Ms. Page. Right.

Mr. Gowdy. IG Horowitz said what was missing, in his judgment, was knowledge. And it strikes me both of those would be of interest when you're interviewing the subject. The subject might actually be uniquely well positioned to address those two missing elements. So does it refresh your recollection at all that it might have been intent or knowledge?

Ms. Page. I think both are absolutely the case, but, again, it goes back to the point I made earlier, which is she will also know that intent and knowledge are the sort of two critical elements in order to prove this case. And to the extent that she at least knew all of the emails that were, you know, produced from her server -- and, you know, I have no idea what sort of defense work her -- she and her team at Williams & Connolly were doing, but these are fairly sophisticated attorneys, and so it's absolutely the case that a witness might say something that would speak to intent or knowledge.

But the general thinking was that this witness was going to be

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sufficiently well prepared, that an error to the -- I mean, again, I can't say whether she had the intent or not. I have no evidence. I cannot point to any particular -- so I don't want to be unfair to the Secretary either.

I cannot point to anything with respect to what the team uncovered that spoke to her having an intent to mishandle classified information. I think it was not smart, but I don't think that it was -- it's my personal opinion, I don't -- I can understand why the judgment of the team was that this was not a prosecutable case.

And I guess, if I can just -- we didn't really do any background, but if I can do one tiny second on that.

I stand in an awkward position with respect to this investigation because I'm not formally on the team, the Midyear team, with the investigative people who are looking at the evidence every day and meeting every day on their -- you know, to team up and see what the next steps are. So I'm -- I don't have the sort of substantive knowledge that Pete or the other agents or the other attorneys or Jon Moffa (ph) would have because I'm not involved in the day-to-day decisionmaking; I'm not involved in the day-to-day uncovering of evidence. I am not reading every 302. I'm actually not reading hardly any 302s. I'm working for the Deputy Director. And so what the information that I have that I'm sharing now is largely information that's -- that I'm gleaning from meetings with the Deputy Director or the Director, you know, sort of the weekly or whatever tempo we were at at any period of time, updates that the Director and the Deputy

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Director were receiving.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. I want to switch over to March of 2016. It's a text from you to Special Agent Peter Strzok.

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. What's the date, sir? March --

Mr. Gowdy. March 3rd, 2016.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. "God. Trump is a loathsome human."

Ms. Page. I see that.

Mr. Gowdy. What did you mean by that?

Ms. Page. I don't recall.

Mr. Gowdy. What does the word "loathsome" mean?

Ms. Page. Well, obviously, I know what that means. But I guess my point, sir -- and let me look because I did have -- ah. So this helps. So what is occurring, my belief, is, is that we are watching a Republican debate, and so this is us watching and sort of texting each other during the course of the debate. And I have absolutely no idea what particular thing was uttered that I was responding to, but -- and this is also the one, I will say, that, you know, in which, you know, genitalia size is discussed. So I don't know whether that is a reflection of that or some other sort of shocking and outlandish thing that I thought did not fit the candidate for Presidency. But that is what that's a reflection of.

Mr. Gowdy. One day later on March the 4th, there is a text from you to Special Agent Strzok: Poor Kasich. He's the only sensible man up there.

What did you mean by "up there"?

Ms. Page. I think -- my guess is, on the podium with the other -- I am not sure the dates are right. I have no --

Mr. Gowdy. Could it have been a debate when he was the only one that, in your judgment, was sensible on a debate stage?

Ms. Page. Yes. That's my -- I don't know why the date is different, but you totally cannot rely on the dates the way these things get pulled. But, yeah, my guess is that it is -- they are all on the debate stage. This is a reflection of my saying, like, he's a sensible man, and this is a shame.

Mr. Gowdy. Let's flip to May of 2017, May the 9th of 2017. This is actually a text from Special Agent Strzok to you. And it begins: And we need.

Mr. Jeffress. Did you say 2017?

Mr. Gowdy. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Page. Oh, sorry. May 8, you said, sir?

Mr. Gowdy. I have it down as the 9th, but it may well be the 8th. It begins, "And we need."

Ms. Page. May 9.

What am I missing here, Amy?

Okay. I don't have it. If you can read it to me.

No, it's not. This is the gap period, right, the December to May 17th or 18th or something like that.

It's not in this book, sir, but go ahead.

Mr. Gowdy. I'm happy to read it to you.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. "And we need to open the case we've been waiting on now while Andy is acting."

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Who is Andy?

Ms. Page. Andy is Mr. McCabe.

Mr. Gowdy. And this is, what, a day after Director Comey has been fired?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. What is the case that you could not open when Jim Comey was the Director but you might be able to since Andy is acting?

Ms. Page. You're misreading that text, sir.

Mr. Jeffress. Do you need to consult with FBI counsel?

Ms. Page. Yeah. Let me -- may I consult with counsel momentarily?

Mr. Jeffress. There may be instructions on whether or not she can discuss this case.

Mr. Gowdy. Okay.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Thank you, sir.

I've been instructed by FBI counsel that what I can say is the decision to open the case was not about who was occupying the Director's chair.

Mr. Gowdy. Pardon me? Sure.

Mr. Breitenbach. Can you inform us what the rationale is for a

former employee consulting an FBI lawyer on whether there is guidance on answering a question from Congress?

Ms. Bessee. Sure. The guidance is based on the fact that the information she is testifying about is related to FBI information, FBI investigations. And the information that she's also testifying about she has been privy to as an FBI employee. So it is not her personal information. She would not have gleaned that information but for the fact she was an FBI employee at the time and it involves FBI equities.

Mr. Breitenbach. Do you have any legal basis for making that decision?

Ms. Bessee. When FBI --

Mr. Breitenbach. Meaning, is there a regulation or a statute that you can point to on whether --

Ms. Bessee. I'm not sure I can point to a regulation or statute. But whether you are current or former FBI employee, as part of the process of becoming that employee, you sign -- you -- when you get your clearance you sign nondisclosures for the accesses that you get. And based on that, whether you're current or former FBI employee, you cannot -- and the Touhy rights as well.

Mr. Breitenbach. And the what?

Ms. Bessee. Touhy rights. The Touhy ex rel. Ragen case also refers to that. And I'd have to look at it to be able to quote to you. We can get that at some point, but that's what I can tell you right now.

Mr. Gowdy. If we start citing case law, you're going to lose most

of the Members of Congress.

Mr. Meadows. So, excuse me, Mr. Chairman, how long does this last? I guess, how long do you actually provide counsel to previous employees, I mean, in perpetuity?

Ms. Bessee. Yes. As long as it relates to FBI information and FBI cases.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. We'll try it again.

This is from Special Agent Strzok to you: And we need to open the case we've been waiting on while Andy is acting.

You, I think, if I understood your answer correctly, you've been authorized by the Bureau to tell us that that case was not contingent upon who the Director of the FBI was?

Ms. Page. That is correct.

Mr. Gowdy. Which you would have to have a lot of creativity to be able to read that text and reach that conclusion?

Ms. Page. I completely understand that. And if I was able to explain in more depth why the Director firing precipitated this text, I would.

Mr. Gowdy. Did it relate -- this is May of 2017. Did it relate in any way with the Russia investigation, the potential collusion between the Russian Government and/or others in the Trump campaign?

Ms. Page. Yes. I don't see what, I mean -- yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, then I'm sure you can appreciate the curiosity of not just Members of Congress but anyone wanting to know why something could not be done when Jim Comey was the Director, but yet the pathway

might be easier with Andy McCabe?

Ms. Page. Right. So it's not that it could not be done. So the next -- let me look at it more closely. Where was it, Amy?

Mr. Gowdy. I think it says: Waiting on.

Ms. Page. Oh, here it is. So it's not -- and this is a very important distinction. It's not that it could not have been done. The "waiting on" -- again, you have to understand that this is a -- was a -- this case had been a topic of discussion for some time. The "waiting on" was an indecision and a cautiousness on the part of the Bureau with respect to what to do, whether there was sufficient predication to open.

Mr. Gowdy. Why would Andy be less cautious than Comey?

Ms. Page. Sir, all I can tell you is that the occupant of the seat was irrelevant. I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, I got your answer, but just help me square it with the text: And we need to open the case we've been waiting on now while Andy is acting.

Was that a fear that someone other than McCabe would eventually be put into that slot?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry, sir. May I consult with counsel again?

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Sir, I'm sorry. I've been instructed by FBI counsel that I cannot answer that question at this time.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, that leads at least some of us to conclude that it may have been an obstruction of justice case. And the fact that

Comey was actually fired would have, in some people's judgment, added to the salience of an obstruction of justice case. Can you say whether or not that's what it was?

Ms. Page. That's a reasonable inference, sir, but I cannot, sort of, confirm that that's what we are referring to.

Mr. Gowdy. Was there an active obstruction case going on at the time Comey was fired?

Ms. Page. I think that goes to the particular investigative interest that we had in the Russian collusion case starting at the end of July through this time period, and I can't answer that question at this time, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. I think Comey was actually fired on that day.

Ms. Page. He was fired on May 9th. But whether this text -- again, just given the UTC and the way these are translated, this is either the 9th or the 10th, would be my guess. But it was -- he was fired at night on the 9th, so --

Mr. Gowdy. So the firing of Jim Comey was the precipitating event as opposed to the occupant of the Director's office?

Ms. Page. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, other than obstruction, what could it have been?

Ms. Page. I can't answer that, sir. I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. Is there anything other than obstruction that it could have been?

Ms. Page. I can't answer.

Mr. Gowdy. Was it a bank fraud case?

Ms. Page. I really, actually, honestly, can't answer.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, on down, I think I see a text, "We need to lock in," and it's been redacted, "in a formal, chargeable way soon." You see that?

Ms. Page. I do, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Who's the "we"?

Ms. Page. "We" is the FBI.

Mr. Gowdy. Now, does the Bureau consult with the Department or U.S. Attorney's Offices before it locks in charges?

Ms. Page. Yes, but that's not what this text says.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, no.

Ms. Page. Oh.

Mr. Gowdy. We're going to get to that in a second.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. "We need to lock in," redacted, "in a formal, chargeable, way." Do you consult with the Department or U.S. Attorney's Offices before you charge someone, other than those who commit a crime in your presence?

Ms. Page. We cannot charge someone. We require assistance by an AUSA or the Department in order to bring charges.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. And this is before Special Counsel Mueller was appointed?

Ms. Page. Correct.

Mr. Gowdy. What U.S. Attorney's Office or division of the

Department were you working with on this case?

Ms. Page. The counterintelligence section. I believe the Eastern District of Virginia was also involved, but I'm really not certain. I'm pretty sure at this point they were, but I can't be 100 percent positive.

Mr. Gowdy. What's "a formal, chargeable way" as opposed to an informal, chargeable way?

Ms. Page. So I don't -- I don't -- that's not the turn of phrase that I read. What this is suggesting -- I don't actually know who we're talking about, to be honest with you, so I'm speculating a little bit because I don't remember what this text was about. But my suspicion is, we have either been interviewing some witness or have been getting kind of closer to some target, either we've already had interviews or we haven't. I just don't remember who we're talking about.

And so we are -- to me, we need to lock in so-and-so means like: Okay, we need to get them probably under oath like in a grand jury or, you know, with the 1001 admonition in advance of the interviews so that we have a chance to charge a false statement to the extent a false statement is made during the course of the interview.

And so what "a formal, chargeable way" means is -- and, again, I don't know who we're talking about, but rather than just have an FBI interview, which is maybe not with a -- not with the mindset toward wanting to be able to charge based on the interview, that what this is suggesting is, like, we need to start thinking about locking in whomever in a way that might be able to support charges.

Mr. Gowdy. Now, that portion of the text, is it from you or from Special Agent Strzok?

Ms. Page. I have no idea. I never know who this is.

Mr. Gowdy. I think it may be from you, but I stand to be corrected.

Ms. Page. I don't have any basis to challenge you, but honestly, they change each set of text and everything, so I'm really not certain. Let's see.

Mr. Gowdy. It begins, "We need to lock in."

Ms. Page. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it looks like it's me, yes.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. What would the purpose of that redaction be?

Ms. Page. Well, I didn't make it, so I don't know. My guess is that that represents an individual who is either a subject of the Russia investigation or otherwise a witness or something, and so, therefore, it's being redacted, but I don't know.

Mr. Gowdy. If you're talking about locking in someone's testimony, I guess what I'm trying to understand is, I could see if you said in a formal way, a formal setting, interview, grand jury. It's the word "chargeable" that I'm struggling with.

Ms. Page. So my suspicion, again -- and I don't know because I don't remember who we're talking about, but my suspicion is that we have somebody who we think is lying. Again, I'm just guessing. And so, to the extent we want to be able to charge them for lying, we need to lock them in in a formal way, in a way in which we will be able to

support those charges. But I am just speculating because I do not remember who we're talking about.

Mr. Gowdy. Is that response connected to his text, "And we need to open the case we've been waiting on"?

Ms. Page. No. No, it is not. That I am confident in.

Mr. Gowdy. How are you confident in that?

Ms. Page. Because -- I'm sorry. I don't know how to answer the question without going more into the content of the prior text, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. I'm sure I'll have colleagues that will come back to that. I want to go to August 15, 2016. It's a text from Special Agent Peter Strzok to you. It begins, "I want to believe."

Ms. Page. August, I am sorry, 10?

Mr. Gowdy. I have it down as August 15.

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. I'm just not hearing you. Sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. "I want to believe" is how it begins.

Ms. Page. Yep.

Mr. Gowdy. I want to believe the path you threw out in Andy's office, dash, that there is no way he gets elected, dash, but I'm afraid we can't take that risk. It's like an insurance policy in the unlikely event you die before you're 40.

And that was Agent Strzok to you. Is that right?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. All right: I want to believe the path you threw out in Andy's office.

Did you understand the "you" to be you, Lisa Page?

Ms. Page. I'm sure that it is.

Mr. Gowdy. And Andy would be whom?

Ms. Page. Andy McCabe.

Mr. Gowdy. Is there any chance he could be any other Andy?

Ms. Page. No, I don't think so.

Mr. Gowdy. How long did this conversation last?

Ms. Page. I have no idea.

Mr. Gowdy. Do you recall anyone else being present?

Ms. Page. I imagine that there were. Typically a meeting -- Andy and I would have certainly had meetings individually, but because FBI is as hierarchical as it is, the way -- it would have been unusual for Pete, who at this point was probably still a section chief, to have been in a meeting without at least his superior, his boss, or even his boss' boss. That's just how we operate. We tend to bring the whole chain of command.

Mr. Gowdy. What do you make of the dash?

I want to believe the path you threw out in Andy's office, dash, that there is no way he gets elected.

What does that clause "that there is no way he gets elected" modify?

Ms. Page. So I'll be honest: I don't remember -- and this was -- I don't remember precisely this event or this meeting. And, in fact, I went back, and some time ago looked at a calendar and there was nothing on the calendar that there was sort of a formal meeting. But I know sort of the sentiment that this text is meant to reflect,

if I can explain that.

Mr. Gowdy. Sure. I just want you to keep in mind we are 15 days into a then-nascent counterintelligence investigation.

Ms. Page. Yes. Yes, I understand that.

Mr. Gowdy. If that helps put it in context.

Ms. Page. It definitely does. So, upon the opening of the crossfire hurricane investigation, we had a number of discussions up through and including the Director regularly in which we were trying to find an answer to the question, right, which is, is there someone associated with the campaign who is working with the Russians in order to obtain damaging information about Hillary Clinton. And given that it is August, we were very aware of the speed and the sensitivity that we needed to operate under.

And so we had sort of quite regular conversations about trying to balance getting the answer as quickly as possible, right, because if the answer is this is a guy just being puffery at a meeting with other people, great, then we don't need to worry about this, and we can all move on with our lives; if this is, in fact, the Russians have coopted an individual with, you know, maybe wittingly or unwittingly, that's incredibly grave, and we need to know that as quickly as possible.

And so what this text reflects is our sort of continuing check-in almost with respect to how quickly to operate, what types of tools to use, trying to be as quiet as possible about it because we knew so little about what -- whether this was true or not true or what was going to

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come, because this is, as you said, so nascent in the investigation, and then ultimately trying to balance that against my view, in this case, which was we don't need to go at a total breakneck speed because so long as he doesn't become President, there isn't the same threat to national security, right.

So, by which, I mean if he is not elected, then, to the extent that the Russians were colluding with members of his team, we're still going to investigate that even without him being President, because any time the Russians do anything with a U.S. person, we care, and it's very serious to us. But if he becomes President, that totally changes the game because now he is the President of the United States. He's going to immediately start receiving classified briefings. He's going to be exposed to the most sensitive secrets imaginable. And if there is somebody on his team who wittingly or unwittingly is working with the Russians, that is super serious.

And so what this reflects is my saying, he's not going to be elected. So let's not burn -- I think this, in particular, was whether we use certain investigative methods which might be -- sorry. I'm trying to balance the instruction that I've given with respect to investigative step and -- but wanting to be forthcoming.

Mr. Gowdy. I think we know what you're getting at.

Ms. Page. Okay. Okay. So -- so, anyway, so this reflects: Let's be reasonable, let's not, you know, throw the kitchen sink at this because he's probably not going to be elected, and so then we don't have quite as horrific a national security threat than if we do if he

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gets elected.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. I want you to hold that thought for a second.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. The counterintelligence investigation was initiated on July 31.

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Gowdy. How many witness interviews were done between July 31 and August the 15th?

Ms. Page. I don't know that answer. I do know -- I mean, I'm allowed to say this now, right?

Ms. Bessee. Yes.

Ms. Page. Okay. Sorry. I know that there [REDACTED] I'm aware of [REDACTED] certainly between --

Mr. Gowdy. I'm aware of [REDACTED]. Are you aware of [REDACTED]

Ms. Page. I'm aware of [REDACTED], sir.

Mr. Gowdy. When is the [REDACTED]

Ms. Page. I'm not allowed --

Mr. Gowdy. What was the date?

Ms. Page. I'm not permitted to say, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Was it [REDACTED]

Ms. Page. No, it was not. [REDACTED] but before -- I don't remember now, but [REDACTED], yes.

Oh, I don't know the date, sir. I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. Chairman Goodlatte wanted to know why you can't

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provide us with the date of that interview?

Ms. Page. I don't recall the precise date. I just -- my recollection is that there is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I just don't know the date.

Mr. Gowdy. Was the interview done [REDACTED]

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Gowdy. Are you aware of [REDACTED]

Ms. Page. Well, almost [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], so --

Mr. Gowdy. With respect to the origination of this case, are you aware of [REDACTED]?

Ms. Page. No. No.

Mr. Gowdy. So we're referring to [REDACTED]. It's just a question of whether [REDACTED]?

Ms. Page. My --

Mr. Gowdy. Let me ask you this: Was it -- is the [REDACTED]?

Ms. Page. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I do not know if it [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I just don't know. There are --

Mr. Gowdy. Is it a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

Ms. Bessee. I think we need to -- may we confer with our client, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Gowdy. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Sir, I've been advised by FBI counsel that because that starts to get into [REDACTED] that question, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Did the interview take place in the United States or somewhere else?

Ms. Page. I can't answer that, sir.

Mr. Gowdy. Why is where the interview took place protected?

Ms. Page. My guess is because [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr. Gowdy. Well, right now, we're within the United States and outside of the United States. Those are two pretty big categories.

Ms. Bessee. Mr. Chairman, I would instruct the -- I'm going to instruct her not to answer because it goes into sort of what's under the purview of the special counsel in terms of whether it's gathering, looking at the evidence they looked at, whether it's gathering evidence, whether it's talking to sources. That all goes into what investigative methods that the special counsel is looking at, so I will instruct her not to respond.

Mr. Gowdy. Well, I've tried to be really careful not to go into the substance of these interviews. I'm trying to establish a chronology. We have a conversation about an insurance policy on August 15, and Ms. Page has walked us through the analysis that there was a weighing and balancing of whether or not President Trump was likely to win. And I would like to engage in a weighing and balancing

of whether or not he was likely going to be inculcated in their investigation. So I don't know how I can do that without having some conversation about what information existed.

Ms. Bessee. And --

Mr. Gowdy. I mean, I didn't author this text. It's not mine. And if you're discussing -- and her answer clearly discussed whether -- his prospects for a successful campaign and whether or not he would be elected President. I think it's fair to discuss the prospects of a successful investigation.

Ms. Bessee. And while I understand what you're looking to get at, Mr. Chairman, it also still goes into what the special counsel -- in terms of what the special counsel is looking at in their investigation. They look at the evidence gathered, how evidence is gathered. All of that still impacts the special counsel --

Mr. Gowdy. How does the location of an interview impact Special Counsel Mueller's ability to investigate a matter?

Ms. Bessee. That -- I am responding in a way based on the guidance we received from the special counsel. There -- equities are involved here. So that would be something that you would have to discuss further. But based on the guidance we've been given by the special counsel, that would impact their investigation itself.

Mr. Gowdy. All right. I'm sure I'll have colleagues who will want to follow up on that. I think I'm about out of --

Mr. Parmiter. Can we just note for the record that the objection to these questions is contrary to what we understand to be House of

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Representatives policy. So we would, you know, take issue with you not answering those questions, just to note for the record at this point. I'm sure we're going to run into this again.

Mr. Gowdy. I want the record --

Mr. Jeffress. What policy are you noting?

Mr. Parmiter. I'm speaking of discussions that have been held at the highest levels of this body over the last couple of days. I know we don't recognize, you know, testimonial privileges. You know, we're not asking questions that are substantive in nature that pertain to the ongoing investigation. As Chairman Gowdy just pointed out, we're asking about locations of interviews. We're asking about dates. We're asking about things like that. We're not asking substantive questions.

Mr. Gowdy. Just so the record is clear -- although it usually is, and you don't usually have to say "for the record," so I won't -- if witness Page's answer includes an analysis of the likelihood of a successful campaign, it is not unreasonable to also ask whether or not it was a factoring in of the likelihood of a successful investigation.

Ms. Page. Sir, my -- I'm sorry.

Mr. Gowdy. Pardon me?

Ms. Page. I was just going to clarify, if maybe it would help, my answer does not -- would not speak to an analysis with respect to -- the question, was it in the United States, or was it [REDACTED] doesn't speak to an analysis with the respect to the success or not of the Presidential campaign. I don't know if that helps at all, but --

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Mr. Gowdy. No. What I was getting at is when we were going over the text of this insurance policy, I thought there was a debate as to whether or not he was likely to get elected.

Ms. Page. Well, the only reason that debate is relevant is because we, the team, again, like sort of through Director Comey, were trying to decide how aggressive or not aggressive, or do we burn sources or not burn sources or do we use X tools or Y tools, and all of that was based on the likelihood -- not based on the likelihood of success but was being weighed against the likelihood of success.

As I sort of explained, if he is not going to be President, then we don't need to burn longstanding sources and risk sort of the loss of future investigative outlets, not in this case, but in other Russia-related matters, in other --

Mr. Gowdy. I am with you. I followed that answer. But I am equally sure you can follow the analysis that if there is a paucity of evidence, that that also would influence your willingness to burn sources and use investigative techniques that are likely to be detected by people who are not our friends.

Ms. Page. I totally agree. But by this point, at, you know, the 15th, there -- it is at the -- literally the very beginning. So there is, in fact, a paucity of evidence because we are just starting down the path to figure out whether the predication is true or not true, and who might ultimately be somebody who, if true, would have been in a position to receive the information.

And so my only, sort of based on counsel's advice, hesitation to

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answer the "where was it" question is that the answer would call for -- the answer would -- has the potential to reveal a substantive investigative equity.

Mr. Gowdy. Which I don't want to do. And I appreciate the fact that if you're talking about one witness, some could consider that to be a paucity of evidence on the 15th, which necessarily means there would be a paucity of evidence also on August the 9th.

And I'm looking at a text that you sent to Special Agent Strzok: Trump's not ever going to become President, right? Right?

And then the agent who originated this counterintelligence investigation who is a point of contact, who drafted the initiating document responding: No, no, he's not. We'll stop it.

Ms. Page. Right. Well, so, that's a different sort of context, which I'm happy to explain. The one thing I'll note, I just think it might maybe alleviate some concern, the reason that Pete opened it is that it was a Sunday. So the reason he's both the originator and like the approver is because it was a Sunday, and so there's nobody around.

Mr. Gowdy. July 31st was a Sunday; you are correct.

Ms. Page. And so he went in because we were like, holy cow, this is a big deal, and we're all very stressed about this. And so I think we learned about the case on a Friday or Thursday or Friday. I can't remember now. I can do the math, but -- I'm a lawyer.

Mr. Gowdy. 28th.

Ms. Page. Thanks.

Mr. Gowdy. You learned about it on the 28th.

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Ms. Page. Right. Thank you.

And so, for what it's worth, there was just nobody else around, so -- but -- did you want me to speak to the other text?

Mr. Gowdy. Yeah. I mean, I think you understand what our concern is.

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Gowdy. I do understand weighing and balancing what investigative tools to use. That requires, in your judgment, an analysis of whether or not the candidate's likely to succeed. In my judgment, it also requires -- there was some conversation about whether or not he was going to prevail.

Ms. Page. I definitely agree with you, Chairman, but I don't want to leave the impression that that was sort of the factor. This is, again, just one single snapshot, one meeting of which we are having almost daily meetings, given the sort of seriousness of the threat. And so it's not accurate to say that the determining factor on what we did was whether or not Donald Trump is going to become President. You asked me what's the context for this text. That's the context for that particular text, but that's not the determining factor.

Mr. Gowdy. I did not mean to suggest --

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Gowdy. -- that that was the singular factor that you were using. But by the same token, nor would you singularly rely on a CHS in a prosecution or investigation.

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Gowdy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So there's a paucity of evidence and there's a paucity in some people's minds of a successful campaign. And I'm looking at texts about insurance policies and stopping a Presidency.

Ms. Page. Right. So let me start with the first thing you said first. Which is the -- it's true you would -- it's very unlikely that you would [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[2:44 p.m.]

Ms. Page. It's more than sufficient to open an FBI investigation, because, of course, all you need, particularly to open a preliminary investigation -- although, I think this was opened as a full -- is an allegation, essentially.

So any kind of -- and I don't remember the exact standard, maybe one of my FBI friends can remind me -- but for a full you need an articulable -- oh, my God, I've been gone 2 months and I forget. Anyway, sorry, I digress, my apologies.

Regardless, at a week's time it is entirely common, particularly in a counterintelligence investigation, that you would only have -- you would have a small amount of evidence, certainly -- but opening an investigation based on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Gowdy. We're out of time.

[Recess.]

Ms. Jackson Lee. We're back on the record.

Ms. Kim. We're back on the record. The time is 2:55.

Ms. Page, thank you for being here. My name is Janet Kim. I'm a counsel for Ranking Member Elijah Cummings for the House Oversight Committee.

Our members have some questions for you, and then we'll progress to questioning by the staff.

Ms. Page. Sure thing.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Thank you. And my only haste is because I have to catch a plane that does not wait.

Ms. Page. No problem.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And let me thank the staff very much, and Mr. Raskin, who will proceed afterwards.

Ms. Page, you watched, by any chance, the hearings yesterday that were televised --

Ms. Page. I did.

Ms. Jackson Lee. -- with Mr. Strzok?

Did you have anything that you disagreed with him on?

Ms. Page. Oh, gosh. I mean, that was a long hearing. So, no, not off the top of my head, no.

Ms. Jackson Lee. What is your thought about the representation of political bias that impacted the prioritization between the Clinton and the Russian investigation?

Ms. Page. So bias had nothing to do at all with respect to prioritization. If by what you mean is in October, so the Weiner laptop versus -- I mean, as I tried to describe with the majority interview, ma'am, there is simply no greater threat than what the Russians pose to the United States.

They are -- they have as an objective, as you well know, the sort of dismantling of the Western alliance and dilution of democratic ideals.

And so the notion that a Russian was offering assistance to a Presidential campaign was incredibly grave to all of us. And with all

due respect to the Clinton investigation, the possible mishandling of classified evidence 3 years prior, for which we had yet to see any evidence, and for which we didn't necessarily expect that, even with the sort of revelation of the Weiner laptop, there were certain things that ultimately made us interested.

But if you were weighing resources with respect to which poses a graver threat to national security, which is more, frankly, important, there is no doubt -- at least in mine or anybody else's mind that I know -- that the Russia investigation posed an incredible threat to national security, and whether we got into the Weiner laptop simply did not.

Ms. Jackson Lee. I'm sort of going to weave back and forth in a number of different questions.

Did you know Mr. Baker?

Ms. Page. Jim Baker?

Ms. Jackson Lee. Yes.

Ms. Page. Yes, I do.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Was he the source of the salacious dossier?

Ms. Page. The source? No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You can affirmatively say that he was not?

Ms. Page. Yes, I can.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You know that there's been representation by Republicans that he was?

Ms. Page. No, I did not.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And so you're saying that he was not?

Ms. Page. He was not, no.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You advised Mr. Comey during the presentation of his first statement about Mrs. Clinton?

Ms. Page. I was one of the members in the room, yeah, who discussed it with him, yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Are you aware about the change in language to -- from gross to --

Ms. Page. Gross negligence to extremely careless?

Ms. Jackson Lee. Yes.

Ms. Page. I am, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And what was the purpose of that?

Ms. Page. So that came relatively soon after he provided his original draft to the team to review. So this is, I suspect, sometime in May.

It was ultimately the conclusion of some very experienced counterintelligence lawyers, also in consultation with the Justice Department, that -- well, let me take a step back.

It was our understanding that we did not -- we neither had sufficient evidence to charge gross negligence, nor had it ever been done, because the Department viewed it as constitutionally vague. And so when we saw the term gross negligence in the Director's --

Ms. Jackson Lee. Statement.

Ms. Page. -- early draft, we were concerned that that would be confusing to leave it in there, because it was our understanding that we did not have sufficient evidence nor the sort of constitutional basis

to charge gross negligence.

And so what we actually did, we didn't actually change gross negligence to extremely careless, we removed the gross negligence language. Extremely careless had already appeared in that draft, and we moved that draft up earlier in the -- I'm sorry, moved that paragraph up earlier in the draft.

And so it looks like it was essentially a substitution, but, really, it was just an omission of the word gross negligence because we thought it would be confusing, because it has an actual legal term.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You had both two functioning attorney generals, Loretta Lynch and Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates. As counsel, why would you allow Mr. Comey, a police officer, to make that presentation? Did you not -- what did you counsel him?

Ms. Page. Honestly, we all felt that we were more credible than the Justice Department to close this investigation out. And so it was in genuinely good faith. And I honestly did not anticipate the criticism, although I understand the criticism as I sit here today.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Well, do you regret not counseling otherwise?

Ms. Page. I'm not sure, ma'am. We all in very good faith thought that the integrity of the FBI and the independence by which we operate would give greater confidence to the American people that this investigation was done fairly, because it was, and it was an amazing team, and they worked incredibly hard.

And the closer we got to sort of the intense political process, the less credible we felt--we, the whole team, really--felt that the

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Justice Department, being led by Democrats, would be to essentially absolve the Democratic candidate.

And so the intent was really quite earnest and genuine. And so, while I appreciate the criticism, I really don't -- I don't know what I would do again. I mean --

Ms. Jackson Lee. Let me just give you this final question and then I'm going to go into another series of questions.

You're talking about two seasoned prosecutors, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Yates, could have even written their statement.

Ms. Page. It's not at all about their capability. They are both absolutely enormously capable. It's really about perception.

And so I think that the Director's view -- and again, I'm speaking for him, so it is an awkward position to be in because he's a pretty good speaker -- but the perception I think was that, look, she is -- she was so -- she is so loathed, she is a very polarizing figure, Secretary Clinton, and so we all knew it was 100 percent consistent and universal that she was -- there was not a prosecutable case.

And we, the FBI, thought that that message was more credible coming from the FBI, who is independent and is not a political sort of body, in the same way that the Justice Department is being headed by political appointees who have closer relationships with the White House.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Well, I think you have determined that that didn't work.

Ms. Page. It has not been fun, ma'am.

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Ms. Jackson Lee. The perception of the FBI is lawenforcement inside the Justice Department, and the Director is not a Cabinet appointee. And so they are not considered equal to a Cabinet appointee.

Ms. Page. Agreed.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And in essence it is like a mayor and a chief of police in a higher level.

So what was intended for good did not turn out well. And so I was just wondering whether there was consultation to sort of vet what would have been the best approach.

Ms. Page. Yes, there was.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Would it not -- and I'll make this is the last one -- could you not perceive the Attorney General and the FBI Director standing together, Attorney General making the first announcement and the FBI Director then making a followup?

Ms. Page. We certainly could, and it was among the various things that we discussed.

With all due earnestness, I don't honestly have the sense that the Attorney General was ultimately disappointed, because it really did let the Justice Department off the hook.

Everybody talks about this as if this was the FBI investigation, and the truth of the matter is there was not a single step, other than the July 5th statement, there was not a single investigative step that we did not do in consultation with or at the direction of the Justice Department.

And so the reality is this has turned into the FBI investigation of Secretary Clinton, but it was, in fact, a joint investigation, as most are.

And so I certainly agree that the intent backfired, but it is my firm belief that it was done in good faith.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Let me quickly go to these questions.

Are FBI agents allowed to have personal political affiliations?

Ms. Page. Yes, they are.

Ms. Jackson Lee. When the FBI staffs a politically sensitive investigation -- for example, a public corruption case -- does the FBI consider the personal political persuasion of its agents in making those staffing decisions?

Ms. Page. Absolutely not. That would be highly inappropriate.

Ms. Jackson Lee. When the FBI puts together a team of investigators is the consideration ever, "I need a couple of Republicans or a couple of Democrats"?

Ms. Page. No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Does the FBI ask about the political affiliations of its own agents as they are employed or as they are promoted to another position?

Ms. Page. That's illegal and impermissible, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. In fact, it is explicitly forbidden for the FBI to ask about political affiliations when staffing investigations, correct?

Ms. Page. Correct.

Ms. Jackson Lee. How do FBI agents know not to let political bias interfere with their political work?

Ms. Page. Because it is our identity. It literally pervades everything we do. It is not -- and I appreciate that this maybe just is -- feels weird, because you are political people and sort of this is your identity, but both at the Justice Department, where I started my career, and at the FBI, where I ended my public service for now, duty and institutional value is paramount. That is what we all think about. And that is our -- what you feel personally or politically is irrelevant.

And if I might say one more thing. Many of us in law enforcement really dislike the subject of our investigations, right. We are not keen on pedophiles and fraudsters and spies and human traffickers. We, in fact, detest many of them.

And if you were to pull the text messages of agents investigating, you know, people who are engaged in child exploitation or human trafficking, I'm quite certain you would find quite harsh language. And that is fine.

What would be impermissible is to take that harsh language and to act in some way that was illegal or against the rules. And we don't do it. And if somebody did do it, they'd be crushed.

Ms. Jackson Lee. So the inspector general's report, which indicates although they were uncomfortable with the various engagements and texts, but their summary dealt with their lack of being able to discern bias, you are wholeheartedly saying that you were both

investigating the Clinton investigation, and if the Russian investigation had proceeded in full force, it was going on, that you could have likewise -- two different people were impacted by it -- you could have likewise been unbiased.

Ms. Page. Absolutely ma'am. And I would note --

Ms. Jackson Lee. Continuously unbiased?

Ms. Page. Unquestionably. I would note, too, in the inspector general report, that it specifically highlighted in multiple places that Pete and I, in particular, were consistently the most -- advocating most aggressively to take the most aggressive steps with respect to certain investigative steps with respect to Secretary Clinton.

Ms. Jackson Lee. In your time at the FBI and Justice Department, have you seen evidence of anybody applying political bias in the investigation of any subject matter?

Ms. Page. I have.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And in what instance?

Ms. Page. I'm aware of senior executives telling people on the Clinton team who are anti-Clinton that they had to get her, that they were counting on us to get her.

Ms. Jeffress. Can you clarify whether it was the senior investigator --

Ms. Page. I'm sorry.

Ms. Jeffress. The senior executives who were anti-Clinton or the people they were talking to.

Ms. Page. No, no.

So I am aware of senior FBI officials talking to subordinate FBI officials on the Hillary Clinton investigative team who unquestionably had anti-Hillary sentiment, but who also said: You have to get her or -- again, I don't have an exact quote -- but like we're counting on you, you know.

Ms. Jackson Lee. How would you respond to that? How would an investigator respond to that? That's their superior.

Ms. Page. My guess is they just probably parried and said: Just follow the facts, ma'am/sir. It's a challenging place to be put in, I would say.

Ms. Kim. I'm sorry, I just want to clarify.

The people with the bias, were they the senior executives or were they the people on the investigative team?

Ms. Page. Sorry. They were the senior executives.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Okay. Do you have their names?

Ms. Page. I do.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And what are they?

Ms. Page. My understanding, and I was never a personal witness to this, but this is what I've been told, was that at various times Sandy Kable (ph), who was an early executive on the case, as well as Randy Coleman, who at one point was the AD of the Counterintelligence Division, had both made comments to that effect.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Thank you.

Let me move quickly to the Russian investigation. And thank you very much for your patience.

And thank you, staff.

I just have some quick places that I wanted to finish at.

Let me indicate that in a Wall Street Journal article -- and, of course, it has been many places, but that's what I'm holding right now -- these are texts that might have been sent to you or were sent to you. And, of course, it's the F the cheating MF Russians -- he text in late July -- b-a-s-t-a-r-d-s, I hate them. That is from Peter Strzok.

Do you remember receiving that?

Ms. Page. Vaguely, yes.

Ms. Jackson Lee. What would you -- how would you explain that?

Ms. Page. The Russians are quite possibly our most threatening, most hostile, most fierce, and successful foreign adversary. This is a government that assassinates journalists and human rights activists and political dissidents and a government which has been humiliated by the success of America around the world, and whose singular objective is to weaken the Western alliance and to do so by cheating and stealing and lying and corruption, and to do so so as to regain prominence on the world stage. And so I really hate the Russians.

Ms. Jackson Lee. So a further one that said: F'ing, conniving, cheating savages at statecraft, athletics, you name it. I'm glad I'm on Team USA. That captures --

Ms. Page. That's it.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And would that motivate any bias in the investigation of a particular issue dealing with the Russians?

Ms. Page. No. As I sort of said earlier, we dislike a lot of the folks that we look at. And so while saying that I'm biased against Russia would sort of be funny, the question is ultimately, do you follow the rules? Does your feeling, does your sort of personal sentiment, ultimately impact the activities and the actions that you take. That, to me, is what a bias is.

Ms. Jackson Lee. I'm going to go quickly through these questions. Thank you.

We now know the Russian investigation began before the election, in July of 2016, but no news of that investigation regarding President Trump's campaign leaked out to the press. Were you aware of this investigation before the election?

Ms. Page. Yes, of course.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Did you leak that there was such an investigation?

Ms. Page. I did not.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Approximately how many FBI officials were aware of this investigation before the election?

Ms. Page. Oh, gosh, employees, sort of writ large, that's a very hard thing to say, because I don't know really the size of the team. But 30, 40.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And with those 30 or 40, did any leak come out before the election regarding the Russian investigation?

Ms. Page. Not my knowledge.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Would you attribute that to the rules of

protocol, but also the oath and the behavior of FBI agents?

Ms. Page. Both of those things, ma'am, but also a sense of fairness, because we did not know what we had. And it would have been highly inappropriate to -- while we all had had and still have incredibly damning information which could have been released, even without having the full picture, right, bits and pieces without the full context could certainly have been damning, but that's not fair. And that's not how the FBI operates.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Are you aware of any FBI officials leaking information about this investigation before the election?

Ms. Page. Not to my knowledge.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Did you make any disclosures about this investigation to the press or the public before election day?

Ms. Page. No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Why not?

Ms. Page. For the reasons I just said. It's both impermissible and would be patently unfair.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Thank you.

How do you think a disclosure to the press or to the public would have impacted Donald Trump's electoral prospects?

Ms. Page. That's not mine to speculate on, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Well, on the basis of the information, would it have been damaging? Would have it have been major?

Ms. Page. I would -- yes, I would suspect so.

Ms. Jackson Lee. If someone at the FBI was trying to stop Donald

Trump from being elected President, yourself or Mr. Strzok or others, do you think they could have publicly disclosed that his campaign was under investigation for potentially colluding with Russian Government actors?

Ms. Page. That's what you would think.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You're saying yes?

Ms. Page. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. But to your knowledge, no one at the FBI did disclose this fact publicly, correct?

Ms. Page. No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Would you consider this strong evidence that there was not a deep state conspiracy at the FBI to stop Donald Trump from being selected -- elected?

Ms. Page. Yes, ma'am. That and the fact that this is an extraordinary conservative organization. So the notion that there's a deep state conspiracy about anything is laughable.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Okay. Let me give you two more. Any -- and strong evidence that you personally were not trying to stop Donald Trump from being elected President? You were not personally --

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. I didn't understand the question.

Ms. Jackson Lee. You were not personally trying to stop Donald Trump from being President?

Ms. Page. Oh, no.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Okay. So I would just match that with the actions of Director Comey in the fall of announcing that new operations

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or new investigations for Mrs. Clinton. Do you see how they're juxtaposed together? Would you -- could you make the same argument there with that statement of Mr. Comey?

Ms. Page. I certainly understand that perception, you know. I happen to know Director Comey quite well. I have been in innumerable meetings with him over the course of my career. He's not a political person. There is absolutely not any doubt in my mind at all that his decision, whether you agree with it or not, was not done for political purposes, but was done because he felt that that was what he was obligated to do in light of his earlier statement closing the investigation so publicly.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Okay. And finally, did you remember the Director Comey decision to disclose in March 2017 the existence of an investigation into the Trump campaign? Do you remember that?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Ms. Jackson Lee. And do you know what led him to do so?

Ms. Page. I don't remember exactly. My recollection is that there were already -- there were lots of articles at this point about the Russian investigation, if I'm not mistaken. So it was increasingly -- there was sort of increasing attention in the news that there was a -- some sort of Russian collusion investigation going on.

And I can't really remember -- if there was a precipitating factor, I don't remember what it was. But I do know that we obviously went to the Justice Department. Dana Boente, current FBI general counsel, was, of course, the acting DAG at the time, and the decision

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to do so was done in consultation with and with the permission of the Justice Department.

Ms. Jackson Lee. I know that there will be further questions pursuing this. Thank you so very much for your questions.

Ms. Page. You're welcome, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson Lee. I yield. Thank you.

Mr. Raskin. Ms. Page, when did you join the FBI?

Ms. Page. In 2012, September or October. I can't really remember right now.

Mr. Raskin. Before that, you were working where?

Ms. Page. I was a prosecutor at the Justice Department.

Mr. Raskin. Got you.

When did you become special counsel to the Andrew McCabe, the Deputy Director?

Ms. Page. Well, I was his special counsel first when he was the executive assistant director over the National Security Branch. So that would have been in approximately September of 2014.

He then was promoted to be the assistant director in charge of the Washington field office in -- about a year later, September 2015. And so when he became ADIC, I went back to working more line-type cases.

And then when he was promoted, he was promoted to associate -- associate Deputy Director? -- in, I think, August of '15. I have my dates wrong, I think. I'm sorry, I think I might be off by a -- yes, I'm sorry.

He becomes EAD in about July of 2013. I joined his team in

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September of 2013. He becomes ADIC in September 2014. He becomes ADD September 2015. And then in February of 2016 he becomes the Deputy Director and he asks me to join his team as his special counsel.

Mr. Raskin. When were you staffed to the Midyear Exam investigation?

Ms. Page. So immediately. The investigation had already been ongoing. It had been opened the prior July. Mr. McCabe did not have any supervisory authority over it until he became the Deputy Director.

And so in February of 2016, when he became the Deputy Director, that's when I started getting substantively involved in the investigation.

Mr. Raskin. And what was your role?

Ms. Page. So I am his sort of counsel. And so in all things, both on the Clinton investigation, but in other matters as well, I served as both a sounding board with respect to, you know, assisting in his decisionmaking.

I think one of my more valuable contributions, or at least I hope, was sort of ensuring that he had the most complete and accurate information before he made decisions.

One unfortunate downside to the -- at least in my view -- the hierarchical nature of our organization is that it is -- the information flow, as it goes up the chain, is only as good as each of the links in that chain. And so it is sometimes the case, and also given the fact that our EADs and our ADs have such enormous jobs and they have such an extraordinary amount of responsibility, that they

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can't possibly know everything they need to know.

And so I made it my job to know as much as I possibly could about the things that were going -- that were coming to the deputy so that I could provide effective counsel.

Mr. Raskin. Were there other Office of General Counsel attorneys who reported directly to Director -- Deputy Director McCabe?

Ms. Page. No, sir. Just the general counsel, Jim Baker.

Mr. Raskin. Got you.

Ms. Page. But no other line attorneys.

Mr. Raskin. Got you.

Okay. So I wanted to turn to the question of the fact that there were no leaks about the Trump-Russia investigation before the election.

Were there special steps undertaken to make sure that nothing went out or was it just the general background?

Ms. Page. No, I would say it's both. I mean, we all understood the extraordinary sensitivity of this case. And so we are always careful, obviously.

Mr. Raskin. Yeah.

Ms. Page. But we just were more careful. I don't -- I can't say that -- and perhaps there were, in fact, actual steps that were taken, although, as I sit here today, I can't think of any.

Mr. Raskin. Yeah.

Ms. Page. We just made sure that people who did not have a need to know did not know what we were investigating.

Mr. Raskin. So I'm just interested in how you reconciled, either

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you personally or the office, reconciled taking precautions to make sure nothing leaked out about the Russia investigation with the posture that Director Comey had about the Clinton investigation.

Specifically, the original statements where he went into great detail discussing the case and what he viewed as her moral, if not legal, culpability.

Ms. Page. So I can't really speak to the latter question with respect to sort of the depth of detail that he went into, but what I can say, I think they are very different situations.

Secretary Clinton, the fact that Secretary Clinton's investigation was well-known and very public. That wasn't our doing, but it was from -- for quite some time it was known that she was under investigation.

So the notion that you would not have said anything when the investigation was closed is foolhardy, because of course the fact that we were closing it without prosecution is something that I certainly think she would have wanted to have done and was necessary.

As I said to Ms. Jackson Lee -- and I say this simply because I have personal knowledge of the discussions and the thinking behind making the statement -- it was genuinely done in an effort to ensure the American people that we had been independent and fair.

And I do think that he, and we, probably overestimated the credibility that we could carry by simply cloaking sort of the FBI mantle around: We did this, and we're the independent people, and we don't really care who's in power, and this is why.

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And so I think the depth of his statement was very much meant to reassure, you know, here is what we did, here is why we did it, you know, here is what we found, so that the American people were confident that this was not a politically motivated investigation one way or the other, and --

Mr. Raskin. So then were you surprised by the level of political reaction that --

Ms. Page. I personally was, but I'm not a political person, so maybe I shouldn't have been.

Mr. Raskin. Well, do you think that then the decision in October to go ahead and make another statement several, I guess, days before the election was an attempt to compensate for the original decision to go forward with that --

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Ms. Page. No, I don't. I think that a couple -- I mean, and these are just my personal views, I think there were a couple things were operating.

I do think that the fact that we were going to execute a search warrant, I do -- this is, again, my view, and I can't speak for Director Comey or others, I do think the fact that we were going to execute a search warrant and that it was going to be executed in New York, necessarily played a factor in the decisionmaking.

We were going to to have less ability to keep it quiet. We were very good during the Clinton investigation, and we were very good during Russia, because it was our team. And we had picked the people purposely. Everybody understood the gravity of the situation. This is now executing a warrant in a different district and necessarily relying on a different field office to effectuate that warrant.

And so I do sincerely think there was a concern that the fact of the execution of the warrant would leak and that without the context of, again, Director Comey's explanation, it would be as unfair, if not more unfair, I can't make that calculation, but it would be as unfair to let that stand without further explanation because then the speculation could run wild about what it was, and why, and all of that.

And so I do think that that played a role in his decision to speak, to do it. Although I would say -- I'm sorry -- if I can say one more thing, I was not present for that meeting so I was not personally in the room during the course of the discussion in which the Director decided to send a letter to Congress.

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So this is based on sort of my understanding both of subsequent meetings and from talking to others on the team.

Ms. Hariharan. Just to quickly clarify, are you referencing -- when you say another field office and team, the New York field office?

Ms. Page. Yes. Yes. That's where the Weiner laptop had originally -- the original warrant had been executed.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. I just have a few questions and then I'm going to excuse myself.

What kind of decisionmaking authority did you have with the MYE investigation?

Ms. Page. No decisionmaking authority. None, sir.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. So you were not in charge of scheduling the witness interviews?

Ms. Page. No, no.

Mr. Raskin. No? Or negotiating immunity agreements.

Ms. Page. I was not in charge of anything.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. Let's see, was this investigation designated as sensitive investigative matter?

Ms. Page. I'm sure that it was.

Mr. Raskin. Well, what is that?

Ms. Page. It just adds additional sort of notice requirements to the Justice Department, a SIM, as we call it, involves both sort of, you know -- I can't remember the particular categories. I can't believe the amount I've forgotten about the FBI already. I can't speak

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to the specific categories, but in general, like, you know, political corruption-type case or SIMS.

Mr. Raskin. Did you play a role in designating it as such?

Ms. Page. Oh, no, no, that's just by policy. It's a perfunctory thing, to be honest with you. It doesn't really have a lot of meaning.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. And what's a headquarter special?

Ms. Page. That's not actually a thing. It's sort of a loose term. The difference is that with respect to the Midyear investigation, it was actually Mark Giuliano, the prior Deputy Director, decided that he wanted the case run out of headquarters as opposed to at a field office, which is where investigations are typically run.

And so it is my understanding that Giuliano and the then-counterintelligence director, which would have been Randy Coleman, decided to run it out of headquarters. In part to keep it close, I think, and to, you know, it does sort of keep fewer people in the hierarchy out of the investigation. Because when you have it in the field office you have whoever is running it, the case agent, all the way up through their chain, then you cross over to headquarters and then you have all the way up the headquarters chain.

Mr. Raskin. You mean it keeps more out of the --

Ms. Page. It keeps more people out of, sort of --

Mr. Raskin. Got you.

Ms. Page. -- the reporting chain.

Mr. Raskin. But, presumably, it would not change any

investigative decisions --

Ms. Page. It does not. It has no impact on that.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. All right. And was it the FBI's or the DOJ's decision to designate it an unknown subject? Do you know anything about that?

Ms. Page. I don't. That would have happened before I was involved in it at all, because it was opened in 2015. So that would have been -- it wouldn't have been Pete either. I don't remember who was leading it at the time, but I don't know who made that decision.

Mr. Raskin. Got you. What was your involvement briefing senior DOJ leadership?

Ms. Page. On Clinton?

Mr. Raskin. Yeah.

Ms. Page. To my understanding, it never happened or it only happened once.

Mr. Raskin. Once with?

Ms. Page. Before I was involved in the investigation. But I think Director Comey has talked about, I think in hearings, earlier on meeting with AG Lynch -- early in the investigation, maybe August of '15 or September of '15 to talk about it, and that's where the sort of famous, you know, call it a "matter" comes out of.

But to my understanding, that's the only briefing that ever occurs with respect to the Clinton investigation.

Mr. Raskin. Did any political appointee at DOJ issue orders on how to conduct the investigation?

Ms. Page. I don't know. I suspect so, but, again, this was very unusual, in the sense that we had almost no contact with the people who we normally have contact with at the Department.

Mr. Raskin. Yeah. Okay. Let me just ask you one final question, which has been troubling me from the beginning about the search for evidence of intent. And forgive me because I'm a law professor by training. And when people are using this phrase here, they're looking for evidence of intent of what?

Ms. Page. To mishandled classified information.

Mr. Raskin. Okay.

Ms. Page. So I think Director Comey, and I don't have his statement in front of me, but I think does sort of the best job of, in his July 5th statement, of distilling the types of mishandling cases that typically get charged. And sort of in general, you're talking about either extraordinary number of clearly marked classified documents or somebody who otherwise has a nefarious interest in having those documents. Like these are the types of intents that we tend to look at.

Mr. Raskin. Yeah.

Ms. Page. When somebody, you know inadvertently --

Mr. Raskin. You're looking for some kind of nefarious or corrupt intent to hide something?

Ms. Page. Correct, correct.

Mr. Raskin. Okay. So you're not looking for an intent to violate the law, but you're looking for an intent to do an act which

is in violation of the law's central command.

Ms. Page. That is correct.

Mr. Raskin. Got you. Okay. Thank you. And I'll turn it back to the staff now.

Ms. Kim. Thank you so much.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. KIM:

Q Ms. Page, I want to return to something that you just told Mr. Raskin. You said that you suspected that political appointees at DOJ may have issued orders on how to conduct the Midyear investigation?

A I guess that's not fair. I don't know. I sincerely do not know what kind of briefing schedule -- so this is what I, this is what I do know. I do know that at least John Carlin, for example, who is a political appointee was kept abreast of the sort of investigative activity that was going on. And the only reason I know this is because when there was conflicts between us and DOJ, John might call over to -- John Carlin might call over to Andy McCabe, and sort of make his team's pitch, and then Andy would, you know, sort of the back and forth would go on.

So it is clear that John had, was getting some sort of briefing, but he was not, it was, it never occurred by the FBI, which is, in my view, atypical.

Q So are you aware of who Mr. McCabe's direct counterpart on this investigation at DOJ was?

A So it would have been John. John Carlin is the person who

would have most -- he is not necessarily like -- we care about hierarchy at the FBI, so --

Q I understand?

A -- so he is not necessarily, like, on the same level, but to the extent there were -- when issues came up, it was either John Carlin or George Toscas who would have, who would have reached out to Mr. McCabe.

Q The reason I'm on this point is that numerous witnesses have confirmed to us that George Toscas, a career prosecutor, was in charge of the day-to-day operation of DOJ on this investigation. And that Carlin and other political folks above him had briefings certainly, so they had knowledge but didn't have input in the investigation.

Does that comport with your knowledge?

A I don't know.

Q So do you have -- put another way --

A I don't have --

Q Do you have any personal knowledge of John Carlin, Loretta Lynch, Sally Yates, or other political appointees at the DOJ issuing orders on how to conduct the Midyear investigation?

A I have no personal knowledge of that.

Q Thank you.

Ms. Hariharan. Hi. I'm Arya Hariharan. I work for Ranking Member Nadler of the Judiciary Committee. I just wanted to quickly before I hand it back to Janet, quickly followup on two names you mentioned when Congressman Jackson Lee was speaking.

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Peter Strzok testified yesterday that the -- or when did he testify -- not yesterday.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q Peter Strzok when he met with us for 11 hours on June 27th, he said that the Midyear investigation had been opened out of the FBI headquarters by then-Assistant Director Coleman, and I believe at the time chief of counter espionage section Sandy Kable. Is that your understanding?

A That's my understanding, yes.

Q And so when you mentioned that they had expressed some anti-Hillary Clinton bias, can you give us a sense of when you heard that information or who told you?

A Pete told me. But when, I really -- they were no longer in, I guess, I do not -- yes, I know this for sure.

They were no longer in a position of authority over the Clinton investigation, right, so it was not, to my knowledge -- and I could be wrong about this -- but it was not while they occupied the roles of section chief or AD, which makes sense to me, because they no longer have any sort of supervision or authority over the course of the investigation.

And so the comment as was told to me was, as I sort of described already.

Q So just to be clear, when --

A But I don't remember -- I'm sorry -- but I don't remember

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when they each respectively took different jobs.

Q So just to be clear, when Mr. Coleman and Mr. Kable made those statements, they were no longer -- they no longer had a supervisory role over the Clinton email investigation?

A To the best of my recollection, yes.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Ms. Page, I would like to turn back to the specific text messages.

I'm so sorry, actually, let's keep on this Coleman cable point for a second.

You said that you have heard it from Pete Strzok, is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Do you remember if Pete Strzok heard it directly from either Mr. Coleman or Mr. Kable?

A That's my understanding.

Q That he directly heard anti-Hillary Clinton sentiments from Mr. Kable and Mr. Coleman?

A I believe so, yes.

Q And what was the timeframe in which he heard these comments?

A I don't know. I don't recall at all. I just know it was -- my belief is that it would have occurred after both were -- neither was -- neither was in a position of authority over the investigation any longer.

Q But at this point Mr. Strzok was still involved in the Midyear investigation, is that correct?

A Correct. He was, whenever he started, I think August-ish, August, middle of August of 2015, he stayed on the investigation until its completion.

Q And during his time on the investigation, he was given instructions or encouragement from Mr. Kable and Mr. Coleman that the FBI should, quote, "get her," "her" being Hillary Clinton?

A I don't know if I would characterize that as instruction. I would characterize it as their sentiment. I don't know.

Q And are you aware of Mr. Kable or Mr. Coleman making similar remarks to other investigators of the Midyear team?

A It is possible they could have, to Jon Moffa, but I don't know.

Q So it is possible that Mr. Moffa was also given this encouragement by Mr. Kable and Mr. Coleman?

A I don't know. I know that during the course of the investigation, lots of different people on the team would get messages of distaste or dislike of Secretary Clinton. That's just -- who, when, by whom? I have no idea. But she is not a particularly well-liked figure among some corners. That's sort of a self evident statement, I suppose. And so, but I don't have any, I don't have any personal or more detailed information than that.

Q And you earlier made an observation that the FBI is generally a politically conservative organization.

Is it your observation that this political conservatism manifested itself in distaste or dislike of Secretary Clinton at the

FBI?

A I can't really speculate about that.

Q Okay. What is the basis for your understanding that the FBI, especially headquarters, is a politically conservative place?

A It is just, it is law enforcement. It just, that's just generally, I mean, I'm speaking in gross generalities, so I'm sort of uncomfortable treading in this ground right now. But in general, I think if you had to choose between left leaning or right leaning, the FBI as an organization is right leaning.

Again, I would stress unquestionably that I do not think that that impacts our work, right. What we are is apolitical, independent of the personally-held political views of any of its members. But if you were going to try to categorize it as an institution, it is a law enforcement organization. It is, generally speaking, more conservative.

Q And what about your understanding that members of of the Midyear team were receiving this external input from people not on the Midyear exam team that they should be getting her or they should --

A So I don't want you to make too much of this. This is sort of smack talk, right. I mean responded to the question that Ms. Jackson Lee asked because that was the truthful answer, if I ever heard of anybody in particular exerting sort of bias trying to direct the investigation. And that is the answer.

But with respect to sort of the talk that various members of the team might have sort of gotten or heard or whatever, it is just not,

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again, atypical from investigating a particularly heinous, you know, child predator, and saying, like, you better crush that guy.

So, I don't want to make too much of it, because I don't want it taken out of context.

Q Certainly. And I just want to make it clear for the record then your statement about the smack talk specifically about the Midyear case is based on your general recollection of conversations with your colleagues on the Midyear team?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And in fact, did that smack talk influence the actions taken by the investigators on the Midyear team?

A No.

Q So in your opinion there, was no political bias manifest in the investigative decisions made by the Midyear team?

A This was one of the proudest investigations I've been a part of. Everybody worked incredibly hard, incredibly independently, knowing every step would be sort of -- every investigative step would be scrutinized. And I can unequivocally say that no bias entered into any action that was taken. And I think that that's validated by the inspector general's report as well.

BY MS. SHEN:

Q Hi. My name is Valerie Shen, and I work for Ranking Member Cummings, Oversight Committee.

Just one quick followup. So, I believe just earlier you said that, you confirmed Mr. Strzok's testimony was that Assistant Director

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Coleman and Section Chief Sandy Kable were part of opening the Clinton email investigation part of Washington headquarter staff, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And we just talked about how in no way would you believe that that would influence fair investigative decisions, as part of the official action despite the anti-Clinton sentiments that were communicated to you, is that correct as well?

A Yes, I think that's right, but can you ask that question again.

Q Sure. I'll rephrase. So despite being involved in the opening of the Secretary Clinton's email investigation and having --

A You're speaking of Mr. Coleman and Mr. Kable now?

Q Mr. Coleman and Mr. Kable.

A Okay.

Q And the -- what was communicated to you as their anti-Clinton sentiments that they expressed, you don't believe those sentiments would have impacted their official actions as part of her investigation?

A I don't think so, but I wasn't around in the -- I don't think so but I was not, I was not there at the beginning of the opening. So I don't have any personal knowledge of that either.

Q As a general matter, if FBI agents had expressed anti-sentiments against the target of their investigation or I guess the subject of their investigation, would you view that investigation as tainted?

A No, that's the point I keep trying to make, which is, like, we don't like a lot of the people we investigate. In fact, we mostly don't like the people we investigate.

We don't like drug dealers. We don't like pedophiles. We don't like fraudsters. We don't like spies. We don't like terrorists. I mean, we don't like them. Right? We are law enforcement, and so we mostly think they are gross and loathesome.

So the fact that in this case this is the, you know, either political people as opposed to pedophiles is mostly immaterial. We don't like people who commit crimes.

Q So, for example, some are making the allegation that Mr. Strzok, as he was part of the initiation of the Russia interference investigation, which was now been folded into the special counsel's investigation, is your sentiment the same for that, that Mr. Strzok's participation in the initiation of the special counsel's initial investigation and despite some of the anti-Trump views that he expressed on a personal basis should not taint the special counsel's investigation?

A I have no doubt in my mind. We are all entirely capable of holding personal political views and putting our duty to be fair and to follow the rules above all else. That is what defines the FBI.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Thank you. As I previewed earlier, I would like to return to the text messages that --

A I love the text messages.

Q -- you discussed with the majority earlier. As a general matter, when you communicate by text, do you generally spend a great deal of time perfecting your word choice?

A No. The only thing I really care about is spelling, because misspellings drive me nuts.

Q So are they quick ad hoc communications or are they designed to be precise communications --

A No.

Q -- into which intent should be read?

A They are quick and ad hoc.

Q Thank you. And to be clear, the inspector general did interview you about your text messages after that?

A Yes, I was interviewed by the inspector general eight times over, like, 36 hours about my text messages and an innumerable number of other topics.

Q So his conclusion that, quote, "our review did not find documentary or testimonial evidence that these political views directly affected the specific investigative decisions" unquote, was based on eight different interviews with you?

A That unquestionably, not just with me, but with virtually every single person who had any involvement whatsoever in the entire investigation, and an intense review of the investigative steps we in fact did take such that they could determine that there was no step which was as a result of bias.

Q Excellent. Thank you.

Earlier Mr. Gowdy discussed with you a text message in which you stated, quote, "he's not ever going to become President, right? Right." And Mr. Strzok responded, quote, "no, he's not, we'll stop it."

Do you remember that text?

A I do.

Q What was the context for your initial text to Mr. Strzok?

A So it is a week prior. I was incredibly upset by the candidate Trump's attack on the Khan family. I thought it very -- honestly it was very much that, it felt like that could have been my family.

[REDACTED] This is is a person who's, you know, very much to me the American dream, right. Somebody came here, raised their family here, his son volunteered to serve our country and was killed. And the notion that they were now being criticized, not just criticized but, you know, belittled and demeaned, I was incredibly bothered by, honestly.

I myself almost joined the military and instead decided to enter public service. And so I was really, really bothered by it. And the sort of lack of sort of both dignity and decency for a family who had lost a child, regardless as I have two young kids and I cannot imagine anything worse, but lost a child to, you know, in service to our country.

And so I was, I was upset. I was quite upset. And so honestly, I don't have a particular recollection of the text, but I think he was

just trying to comfort me.

Obviously, it is well known that we were in a relationship, and I think -- I don't remember what particularly prompted the, "he's not really going to become President." My guess, I think it was late at night, and so I think my, since there's practically nothing out there that's not known about me, I read like the news on my phone at night. And so my guess is that I had read something that sort of bothered me, and so I sort of shot out this flippant, like, this is not really going to happen, right?

And that this was just an attempt to just sort of comfort, although, it is sort of empty words but.

Q I'll note that you said empty words.

Mr. Strzok's text back to you has been interpreted by some as "we, the FBI, will stop Donald Trump from becoming President."

Can you give me your read on whether or not that's a plausible interpretation?

A I mean, that's just not us, number one, and number two, we didn't in fact. Right? We took no steps. We took no effort.

As we've already discussed, I think with the majority, we have and still have information which would have been damaging, particularly if the purpose was to insinuate. You don't have to have an actual -- as is well the case, you don't have to have an actual fact, you have to have an insinuation. You have to have something suggestive.

So you don't have to prove anything if what you're trying to do is undermine. And we took absolutely no step to do so.

Q Thank you. I would also like to turn to the August 15, 2016, text message that Mr. Strzok sent you. I think it is famously known as the insurance policy text?

A Oh, okay.

Q Can you explain how you understood Mr. Strzok's analogy to an insurance policy?

A So it is sort of similar to the question I was answering for Chairman Gowdy. He's making an analogy here so my suggestion is, let's not, you know, throw the baby out with the bath water, let's sort of be a little bit more cautious with respect to our investigative steps because if he's not President, this plays a less of a threat to our national security.

And he is saying, no, we have to, you know, do what we have to do in order to get to the bottom of this because it is like an insurance policy. There is no actual insurance policy. He is making an analogy. It is like an insurance policy in the unlikely event you die before you're 40.

I have insurance. I don't expect to die any time soon. I hope that I don't, but I have life insurance. Unlikely. I'm 38, but you get it in the unlikely event that you die young.

Q So to your knowledge did Mr. Strzok have an insurance policy to prevent Donald Trump from becoming President?

A No.

Q In fact, the FBI did have a potent way to affect its electoral chances by leaking the information out of context that the FBI had

gathered as part of the investigation, isn't that right?

A That's -- yes.

Q It would have been improper but that was at that time the FBI's disposal?

A Yes.

Q And to your knowledge, neither you nor Peter Strzok nor anyone else in the investigation leaked any of that information?

A Quite the contrary.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q All right. So we only have a couple more minutes. I'm going to try and breeze through this. Some of these will seem kind of basic just because it is for the purpose of getting it clearly on the record.

A Sure.

Q So what is the FBI's policy with respect towards agents commenting publicly about an ongoing criminal investigation?

A So we're not permitted to.

Q And what are some of the possible negative consequences if that policy is violated?

A I mean, it's one, comes from fundamental fairness, but certainly during the investigative stage, you might foreclose investigative possibilities if the subject or witnesses or others are aware of the existence of the investigation.

Q So, I think it is fair to say that you're familiar with the IG's report on the FBI's handling of the Clinton investigation and the

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fact that it was highly critical of the Department from departing from that -- excuse me, of Director Comey from departing from that protocol and commenting publicly about an ongoing criminal investigation?

A I am familiar with it.

Q So if you were to answer similar questions in a manner involving an ongoing criminal investigation, you are potentially then, one, violating the Department of Justice's policy, and would put yourself at risk for an IG investigation if you were still employed by the Bureau?

A That's true. Although, I would just sort of distinguish that when Director Comey spoke it was a closed investigation, so I don't think the analogy is quite perfect, but I understand your point.

Q To quickly go back to some of the questions that we heard earlier and that have been sort of floating around in both in our hearings and in other interviews, I want to go back to confidential human sources.

And when testifying before Congress the FBI Director Wray, he explained how important protecting confidential human sources are, quote, "the day we can't protect human sources is the day the American people start becoming less safe." End quote. Do you agree with Director Wray?

A That is it a, yes that is a -- yes.

Q So it's fair to say that when Director Wray was talking about revealing these sources, it would make America less safe. And I understand you were not in the counterintelligence division for that

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long or --

A I've never been in the counterintelligence. I'm a lawyer.

Q Your general understanding, from working at the FBI, how dangerous would it be to reveal the identity of a confidential human source?

A I mean it is just, it is -- I cannot tell you how devastating it is to all of us, honestly.

Q And so --

A Sources are one of the back bones of our work and it is exactly -- we tell people come to us with your secrets and we will keep them secret and safe. And frankly worth noting we have done a pretty poor job of doing that and it makes me quite concerned about our ability to effectively protect America moving forward.

Q So this would also include perhaps a disclosure of their location or --

A To the extent their location would make the source identifiable, yes.

Q Or when perhaps they've met with the FBI?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how does this affect the ability of the FBI to recruit or retain human sources?

A I mean, as I said, it is incredibly damning. It is a huge step to decide to come to the FBI and rat on someone else or share secret or sensitive or in the case of counterintelligence another country's secrets, right. I mean, that is an enormous ask that you make of

another person. And you do it in part, often not of, you know, sometimes it is a financial motivation, sometimes it is patriotic, there are variety of reasons that people choose to become sources but it's a heavy burden that we ask our sources to take and when we cannot protect their identities, I could certainly understand people hesitating before they came back to us.

Q All right. Thanks. I think we're going to go off the record now. It is 3:56.

[Recess.]

[3:56 p.m.]

Mr. Ratcliffe. Go back on the record at 3:56. Ms. Page I'm John Ratcliffe from Texas. We had a chance to meet before the start of your deposition here. I'm going to go back, try and get back to where Chairman Gowdy left off. We were talking about July 31st and the opening of the Russia collusion investigation. But before that, I want to cover a couple of things that I'm not sure anyone has asked.

First of all, I know there was some question about you getting access to FBI documents that delayed your appearance before our committee. Have you had access to all the documents you needed at the FBI?

Ms. Page. I cannot make the representation of all, and I don't mean any disrespect to my former FBI colleagues. But I have had access to documents. It cannot possibly be all of them, but I know they are trying their best.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. I'm just trying to confirm on the record you don't feel like you're impaired in terms of your ability to answer questions?

Ms. Page. No, I don't think so. I have certainly not had the opportunity to review all of the ones that they have provided to me, but to the extent I can't answer, I will tell you.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay, great. Other than your lawyers, did you speak with anyone to prepare for this interview?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. All right. Did you watch Peter Strzok's

testimony yesterday?

Ms. Page. Most of it, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Have you reviewed a transcript of Peter Strzok's prior testimony?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Ratcliffe. When was the last time you talked to Peter Strzok?

Ms. Page. We ran into each other when I was leaving the FBI on Tuesday night. He was coming into the FBI. And we were both with our counsels and were in the sort of vestibule of the FBI where people enter and leave. So it was sort of: Hey, how you doing? How do you think? Great, you know.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Just a passing meeting?

Ms. Page. Correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. When was the last time you had a substantive conversation with him about anything?

Ms. Page. Oh, it's been a very long time.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Can you give me a timeframe? At least a year, more than a year?

Ms. Page. A substantive conversation about like the matters before us?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yes.

Ms. Page. Yeah.

Mr. Ratcliffe. To the best of your recollection.

Ms. Page. Yeah. I don't know. A yearish, but I'm -- that's --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay, fair enough. I want to go back to one of

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the things you said, and I wrote it down. We were talking about the Hillary Clinton email investigation, and you said: Everyone at the FBI and the DOJ involved knew far earlier than July that we were not going to be able to make the case against her.

Do you remember saying that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And you talked about the reason being that there was -- and I don't know if I got this exactly, but you said there was -- we couldn't find any indicia of knowledge that she knew that these shouldn't be traversing her server, evidence of intent, of an intent.

Ms. Page. That's mostly right, sir. It's really -- the problem really is, in a mishandling case, you have to sort of show that malign intent. And with respect to what she was doing, you know, her claim -- and was not one that we could ultimately rebut -- is: I didn't know it was classified; we were trying to execute our job.

You know, when we bring mishandling cases, it's people who are often hoarding classified documents, bringing them home when they're marked, and they know that they shouldn't. Often it's somebody who we suspect of spying that we simply can't make out a case of.

And the -- you know, the ability to prove -- like that would obviously be her defense. And the ability to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that she, in fact, you know, intended to handle classified information in a way that was not permissible was just not possible.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And that's -- I think, when you talk about

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intent, that's certainly true under part of 18 793(f), but it sounds like you all just blew over gross negligence.

Ms. Page. We did not blow over gross negligence. We, in fact -- and, in fact, the Director -- because on its face, it did seem like, well, maybe there's a potential here for this to be the charge. And we had multiple conversations, multiple conversations with the Justice Department about charging gross negligence.

And the Justice Department's assessment was that it was both constitutionally vague, so that they did not actually feel that they could permissibly bring that charge, and also that it had either never been done or had only been done once like 99 years ago. And so they did not feel that they could sustain a charge.

And, in fact, one thing I will note is that the Director asked the Department to pull for him a record of every mishandling case that had been brought in the last like 30 years.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I saw that. I saw a series of emails about that. But my question, the question I had was: He requested all of those in the June 2016 timeframe. He wrote his memo, what we've referred to as the exoneration memo, on May 2nd of 2016. So he made the request to look at the cases to see the cases weeks after he'd already written a draft ruling out gross negligence.

Ms. Page. That's right. Well, no, no, no. So we should clarify a couple things. So the cases were about mishandling, not about gross negligence. So the 30 years back were really about like: Show me the types of mishandling cases that we do bring.

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So it's true I think the Director had a sense already like, well, we can't make out garden variety 793(f). And so let me challenge my own views on this, could you please produce -- like let me see what kinds of cases we brought and sort of the facts that surrounded those cases. And so that's what that pull was.

Separately, you know, we had multiple conversations with the Justice Department about bringing a gross negligence charge. And that's, as I said, the advice that we got from the Department was that they did not think -- that it was constitutionally vague and not sustainable.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So let me if I can, I know I'm testing your memory, but when you say advice you got from the Department, you're making it sound like it was the Department that told you: You're not going to charge gross negligence because we're the prosecutors and we're telling you we're not going to --

Ms. Page. That is correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- bring a case based on that. Who at the Department was telling you that?

Ms. Page. Richard Laufman is my understanding.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Mr. Parmiter. Sorry, did you mean David Laufman?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. Richard Scott. No, no, that's my fault.

Mr. Parmiter. Thank you.

Ms. Page. Sorry, sorry. Probably David Laufman too, but --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Have you still got those text messages in

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front of you? If you turn to June 30th.

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. Which year, sir?

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm sorry. June 30, 2016. I'm trying to get back to July where we left off. But there was one text message from Peter Strzok to you: Just left Bill -- I assume that's referring to Bill Priestap -- He changed President to another senior government official.

Ms. Page. Yep.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Do you see that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So, obviously, I know you didn't write that text. It was sent to you, but we've all noticed there were different drafts of that exoneration memo. It originally said the President. Then it said senior government official. And then it disappeared altogether.

Tell me what your recollection was about why that was important to take that out of the -- what ultimately became Jim Comey's July 5th public statement?

Ms. Page. I don't really recall. I don't remember a lot of attention spent on this. I think it was Bill's -- would you remind me what this was in reference to? Was this about --

Mr. Ratcliffe. This was in --

Ms. Page. No, I know that. But I just can't remember what the -- why Bill was concerned that highlighting the President or senior government official was sensitive, and I just -- I don't know if anybody has the -- if anybody has the July 5th statement.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. I don't know. That's what --

Ms. Page. No, no. If --

Mr. Ratcliffe. That's what I'm trying to find out.

Ms. Page. If we can come back to it, if someone wants to pull the July 5th statement. I just want to see where it was in the statement, and that will help I think refresh my recollection.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Fair enough. We can do that.

All right. So getting back towards the start of the Russia investigation on July 31st, before that, on July 26th, you sent a text to Peter Strzok, July 26, 2016. You said: Yeah, it is pretty cool, blank.

It looks like: Blank just has to win now. I'm not going to lie. I got a flash of nervousness yesterday about Trump.

I assume that that's -- you're referring to Clinton has to win now.

Ms. Page. I'm sure that's right, but I just haven't found it yet. I'm sorry. July 26, you said? July. I'm in June, I'm sorry.

Mr. Ratcliffe. July 26, 2016.

Ms. Page. Do you have a page number that might get me to it faster? Like the DOJ production number, I don't know if you have it.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I don't. I have a summary of it.

Ms. Page. That's okay. Amy, can you help me find this? The "now she just has to win." I'm literally not seeing it. Yeah, it is pretty cool.

Mr. Ratcliffe. July 26.

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Ms. Page. Oh, I found it. I'm sorry. Oh, mine says 27th. I'm sorry. That's why.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, it may be the 27th.

Ms. Page. No, no, no. I don't -- that's fine.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What is the context of that, if you can recall?

Ms. Page. So I just take from the context here, we are watching Secretary Clinton receive the nomination.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. He is -- I know he was sharing it with

██████████ And so it was I think sort of a particularly momentous moment that a woman was being nominated.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And I'm just -- I mean, I don't think it's any big secret. I'm trying to -- and I think you've made it clear. I mean, you wanted Hillary Clinton to win and nervousness about Donald Trump. You're not a fan of Donald Trump.

Ms. Page. That's true, except that I'm not really a fan of Hillary Clinton's either. Given -- truthfully. I mean, given a Trump-Clinton race, yes, I was supporting Clinton, but I was not a particularly big fan of hers.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So the response from Peter Strzok to your text is: We've got to get the memo and brief and case filing done.

Ms. Page. Uh-huh.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What does that relate to? What memo, what brief, what case filing?

Ms. Page. So I think that the memo is a reference to we -- we

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in the Department decided to write a closing LHM is what we call it, a letterhead memorandum.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right, a summary of 302s.

Ms. Page. A summary of essentially the investigation. So, typically, when you close an investigation, you would do some sort of summary document.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. But because this one was actually quite complicated from a forensic standpoint, you know, we had done an extraordinary amount of forensic investigation. And so we wanted to sort of put in one place: Here is what we did in -- you know, in an exhaustive way. And so it was a -- and we also wanted to be -- we wanted it to be like as error-free as humanly possible, because we understood that the case would get scrutinized. And so the -- I'm not sure what the brief is, to be honest with you. Oh. I'm not really positive. But the memo and -- I don't see the text, but was it memo, brief, and what?

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm sorry. The case filing.

Ms. Page. Oh. I think that's just like closing it up. Like closing up the file. Like getting all those sort of i's dotted and t's crossed. But the memo I think is a reference to the LHM.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. The date of this was July 26, July 27. It's also -- as we've talked about, this is right in the timeframe where you --

Ms. Page. We don't know about it yet.

Mr. Ratcliffe. The opening of the Russia investigation. You

don't know about it yet, because the date that you know about it is July 28.

Ms. Page. I think the 28th, correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right. Okay. So that being the case, look at the text right before that on July 24. There's a series of texts, actually, between you and Peter Strzok where you talk about FISA Judge Contreras and the fact that he would have to recuse himself on espionage FISA cases, given his, quote, "his friend oversees them," end quote. What was the context of how that came up?

Ms. Page. I mean, that was just -- I didn't -- I knew that he had -- had been friends with Judge Contreras for some time. I didn't know that he was a FISC judge. I just knew that he was a judge on the D.C. District Court. And I had been on Wikipedia to sort of look for FISC judges for some reason, I don't remember why. And I saw him. And so -- although I don't have the text in front of me, but that I'm sort of exclaiming like, oh, I didn't know Rudy was a judge, right, or was on the FISC. And he said yeah. And I just thought like it would be neat to meet him because he -- I wanted to know his friends, he wanted to know mine. I mean, it was really more of a personal interest.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. And, again, I don't have it in front of me, but my recollection is I asked like: Well, does he know what you do?

And he said: Well, he knows like I'm an agent, but I'm not sure that he has sort of detailed knowledge about the sort of types of work I do.

And he expressed his concern that it would be inappropriate to know what he did because of the potential risk that a matter that Pete was supervising or for a matter for which he was seeking a FISA --

I mean, I should be more precise. In the position that Pete held, he actually doesn't really have any role at all in the FISA process, so -- but he would be supervising investigations for which a FISA might be sought.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. And so his point was simply, you know, would this cause him to have to recuse if there was a matter on which I was on. And, again, you see me saying, I don't actually think so, but it was really just --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So is it your testimony that this exchange was not related to or prompted by a discussion about any potential FISA relating to the Russia investigation?

Ms. Page. Oh, no, no.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So that gets me back to where Chairman Gowdy left off on July 31st. And I want you to look at the text that Peter Strzok sent to you that says, quote: And damn, this feels momentous because this matters. The other one did too, but that was to ensure we didn't F something up. This matters because this MATTERS, in all caps, period. So super glad to be on this voyage with you, end quote. Do you see that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What do you recall about when you received that

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and --

Ms. Page. So this is -- we are now opening the Russia collusion investigation. And I agree wholly with the sentiment, to be honest with you. The Clinton investigation was whether she mishandled classified information. That's important. It matters, but it does not matter like a person associated with a Presidential campaign receiving and potentially accepting, which we didn't know, obviously, but the risk that somebody had received and accepted an offer of assistance from Russia, which I view as our sort of most treacherous adversary. So this one was a more significant, more concerning investigation and unquestionably one which was more threatening to our national security.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And I thought I heard you earlier, I thought I heard you say, in talking about this being on a Sunday, that it had just happened, and you were stressed.

Ms. Page. I think all of us were -- yes, I can -- I can confidently say that the very small group of us who knew about the predication were all very concerned.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So, as I read this, though, and I realize this is Peter Strzok, but when he says this matters because this matters, so super glad to be on this voyage with you, it doesn't sound like he's stressed. It sounds like he's happy. If you're super glad, he sounds like he's happy.

Ms. Page. That's a personal comment, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What's that?

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Ms. Page. That's a personal comment.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I don't know what you mean. Explain that to me.

Ms. Page. That's a reflection that, okay, the Midyear investigation is over, right. So he's going back to kind of his day job. I'm going back to my day job. And now we have a new investigation, which will necessarily involve regular contact.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So a week later, on August 6th, you texted Agent Strzok about the candidate Trump's criticism of the Khans, and you stated: Jesus, you should read this, and Trump should go F himself.

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And his response to that was something and F Trump.

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. That same day, you sent a text to Peter Strzok that says: So this is not to take away from the unfairness of it all, but we are both deeply fortunate people and maybe you're meant to stay where you are because you're meant to protect the country from that menace.

Do you find that?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. Is it on the 8th too? Yes, I see it.

Mr. Ratcliffe. On the 6th.

Ms. Page. Yes, I see it. Yes, I do. Yes, I do. I'm sorry. Yes, I see it.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So, when you said, "Maybe you're meant to stay where you are because you're meant to protect the country from that

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menace," who is that menace?

Ms. Page. The menace is Donald Trump.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And so, if you're telling Peter Strzok that he's meant to protect the country from Donald Trump, who is a menace --

Ms. Page. Although --

Mr. Ratcliffe. I don't know how to read that other than you --

Ms. Page. No, no, no. Well, I think that it is, but I think it's in the context of -- well, I'm not certain, to be honest with you. I think it's Donald Trump. But the reason I'm hesitating is because this is so close in time to the opening of the Russia investigation that the concern that we all had that there was a member of his campaign colluding with Russia was so great that I'm not -- I'm not 100 percent positive that I can split those --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, I'll tell you why it's really important, because you're right; it is so close to the opening of the Russia investigation. And so, if a week after the Russia investigation is open, you and Agent Strzok are talking about protecting the country from a menace, if you're meaning it's Donald Trump, I don't know how to read that other than you have prejudged him.

Ms. Page. So you are misunderstanding, sir. I have -- at the time that we opened the investigation, I don't have any reason to believe that it is Donald Trump himself who was colluding with the Russians. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There was absolutely no preconceived belief or feeling at all that it was Donald Trump himself. We took quite deliberate steps, and we were very judicious in deciding who we would open on and what criteria we would use in order to open those investigations in order to determine who might have been in a position to receive this offer, if it was even true.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, I appreciate that. But I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. These are your words, and so I'm asking you what they mean because this is really important. And the way I read this is an FBI lawyer a week after this case is opened is saying you, speaking to the FBI agent who is the lead investigator in this nascent investigation, you are meant to protect the country from that menace. And the only way an FBI agent can protect the country from a menace who is a Presidential candidate is to ensure that he doesn't become the President.

Ms. Page. I can understand the reading of that, sir. But what I am trying to tell you is that there is -- it is -- I understand that "menace" is a very loaded word, but this is a sort of singular flash in time.

I think the other thing that's important to understand is the meant to stay where you are is because he was considering putting in for another job. And so this is really in the context of a conversation

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we had for days or weeks about whether to seek a promotion to another job versus to sort of stay where he is. And the -- can I -- may I --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah, sure you can.

Ms. Page. And the truth of the matter is, and I am quite confident that people who have worked counterintelligence would say this, Peter Strzok is the best counterintelligence agent in the FBI, certainly in a position of management.

And so the notion that he would take a different position and leave open a management position which would necessarily be filled by somebody less qualified is also reflected in that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Are you finished?

Ms. Page. I am.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I didn't want to cut you off. I appreciate the context for the part about whether he's meant to stay where you are. I'm more concerned about you're meant to protect the country from that menace that you believe is Donald Trump, especially when it's followed up with the next text that you send to him on August 8th, Trump's not ever going to become President, right, right, to which he has responded, no, no, he's not, we'll stop it.

So you're meant to protect the country from the menace of Donald Trump. He's not going to become the President, right? No, we'll stop it.

And these texts are being exchanged with the lead investigative agent a week after he has opened the investigation into the Russia collusion matter.

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Ms. Page. I completely understand that. I will say sort of two things in response. The first is I know this person very well. And so, while I completely understand how, after the fact and with the little snippets that a text message represent, I understand wholly why you and others would interpret it that way. I sincerely do. But I know this person, and I know myself, and I know the sort of integrity and the investigative quality that we both bring to work. And that is ultimately what that represents.

And then certainly with respect to the "he's not going to become President, right," I don't know whether you were here when I was discussing it with the minority staff. But I was very deeply affected by the -- by the harshness and the cruelty that I felt that Donald Trump exhibited toward the Khans. I felt like it was there but for the grace of God go we. I am an immigrant --

██████████ the same as the Khans are. I very seriously considered joining the military before I decided to enter public service. And I was unbelievably appalled that anyone, let alone a Presidential candidate, would insult the family of a slain servicemember. It's inappropriate, and it's disgusting. And it remained with me for quite some time.

And so, yes, I sent the, you know -- and, again, I don't know whether -- as I said earlier, before I fall asleep, I sort of read; it's when I catch up on the news. And so my strong suspicion is that I was on my phone; I read something about it. I was upset and bothered, and so I made the "he's not really going to become President, right"

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and "no, we'll stop it" was simply an attempt to comfort me.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, I can appreciate the emotion and opinion that you have regarding that event. I'm sure a lot of people in the country may have felt that way, but those people were not in a position to influence the outcome of an investigation. There was only one lead investigator in the country on this investigation, and the way this reads, you asked him whether or not -- well, you asked: Donald Trump's not ever going to become President, right?

And he responds: No, no, he's not, we'll stop it.

That sounds like a promise from someone who's in a position to keep a promise.

Ms. Page. And it's not. And I completely understand the interpretation, but I would also, frankly, point you to the fact that not a single action was taken that would evidence that we attempted to stop it. There was no leak of the investigation. As I've said multiple times, we had then and continue to have information which certainly would have been damaging, and particularly so during the run-up of a Presidential election. That's just not who we are.

And I understand that perhaps for people whose job is politics, it strains credulity that you would not be dominated or motivated by politics, but we are dominated and motivated by fidelity to our institution. And that is the FBI, and we do things the right way at the FBI.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, and I appreciate the explanation, and I hope you can appreciate the job that we all have, which is to ask you

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about the things that you said and the things that he said, and that you are two people at the center of a very important investigation that, unlike the rest of the country, were not in a position to influence the outcome.

Ms. Page. I do understand that, sir. But honestly, having a view, even a strongly held view, even a virulent view as to who would be best President does not mean that it makes me -- does not mean or make me biased in my work.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Let me move on to a text message on September 2nd of 2016. It's a series of texts that you exchanged with Agent Strzok. And at one point you text him: Yes, because POTUS wants to know everything we are doing.

Ms. Page. Oh, yeah. I don't see where it is, but I know what it is, yeah.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And do you know the context of what it is?

Ms. Page. It is. This is in the context of --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, first of all, so is POTUS, I'm assuming that's --

Ms. Page. President Obama.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- President Obama, okay.

Ms. Page. Yes. So this is in the context of the -- take a step back. In August -- oh, this is going to call for a classified answer. I'm sorry. Can we --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Do you need to confer?

Ms. Page. I don't think this is a classified space.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. Sorry.

Mr. Ratcliffe. It's not.

Ms. Page. I think I can answer it.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm just trying to clarify --

Ms. Page. It's not about the Midyear investigation, if that's the question. It has to do with Russia. It does not have to do with the Clinton investigation at all.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. It does have to do with Russia, the Russia investigation?

Ms. Page. No, not the Russia investigation. It has to do with the broader look at Russian active measures.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. All right.

All right. Let me move ahead to May 18th of 2017, which is, to put it in context, is either the day of or the day after Bob Mueller has been appointed special counsel.

Ms. Page. The day after, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. The day after. And Peter Strzok texted you and said, quote: For me and this case, I personally have a sense of unfinished business. I unleashed it with the MYE. Now I need to fix it and finish it.

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Ms. Page. I don't have it in this set. Can I -- sorry, I don't know why, but -- maybe I do. May 18th you said, right? Can I have one second, please?

Sorry about that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did you find it?

Ms. Page. I did, yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. What is your recollection of the context of you receiving that text message?

Ms. Page. So it was -- I had been asked to join the Mueller team by that point, and he was probably the -- one of the likely candidates to join, to the extent he would bring sort of all the institutional knowledge of the investigation to date.

By the same token, my view was, if you are going to rise in the organization, you need to stay where you are and do your time. So the FBI is very hierarchical and very sort of box checky with respect to promotion. And that we had had, again, many conversations discussing whether he should join the team or whether he should sort of stay in place and then seek the next promotion.

And so the sort of -- there's a great deal of texts which sort of precede it, because I was also quite -- I was hesitant to join. In fact, I initially said that I did not want to join the team.

And so this is sort of one of the many reasons I think reflected in these texts about whether or not to join the team. And I do think that he felt -- we all felt a great deal of concern that when the director sent the October statements -- not the statement, the October

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letters in the Hillary Clinton case, that we had affected the election.

And it's not because of who won or who didn't win, but because that is like the worst possible place for the FBI to be in. And I know all of my friends on the team, all the people that I talked to really continued to carry a lot of -- trauma is too strong a word. I can't really think of a better one right now. But just a lot of weight about whether we actually impacted an American election.

And so that is really what I think this is a reflection of. He very much participated -- you know, he participated in the decision to send the letter to Congress about the reopening of the Midyear investigation. And so I think that this is sort of a reflection of like just that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, given the timing of it, though, the start of appointment of a special --

Ms. Page. Right. But that's because of the opportunity to essentially -- had Director Comey never been fired and a special counsel not been necessitated, he would have stayed as DAD in the Counterintelligence Division. He would have done it for another whatever, 6, 8, 10 months. He would have been eligible to be, you know, promoted to an SAC somewhere, and then he would have gone on his merry way.

The problem is, with the appointment of special counsel, now there is a new sort of job opportunity which is not career-enhancing, because it doesn't matter if it's high-profile or if it's like interesting, the FBI cares about box checks. So you do all you want on some special

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project, if you have not done sufficient time in this box, the likelihood of you getting promoted is quite slim.

And so the only reason that, you know, he's confronted by this choice and the timing of the choice is because the director has been fired and DAG Rosenstein has appointed Bob Mueller as special counsel.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. But, again, and I realize these aren't your words. I'm asking you, though, if you have any knowledge. It's -- given the timing and that Bob Mueller has been appointed special counsel and given the context that you've given that you thought that you may have affected the outcome, when Peter Strzok says, now I need to fix it and finish it, a person reading it might come to the conclusion the fix it means fix the outcome, change the outcome, stop Donald Trump, finish it.

Ms. Page. I understand that. I don't have a better -- I don't have a better explanation than the one I've given.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So that same day in the consideration of this, he texts you and says: "You and I both know the odds are nothing. If I thought it was likely, I'd be there, no question. I hesitate, in part, because of my gut sense and concern there's no big there there." What's he talking about?

Ms. Page. So I think this represents that even as far as May of 2017, we still couldn't answer the question -- sorry. Can I consult with counsel? I'm sorry, I need to consult with FBI counsel for a moment.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

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[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Ratcliffe. You said you still couldn't answer the question.

Ms. Page. So, yeah, I'm going to have to like rephrase my answer a little bit. It's a reflection of -- and I'm sorry, I'm not trying to be cagey. I'm just trying to stay within the confines that I've been given.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, let me ask you this: Do you know whether or not Peter Strzok was talking about the fact that, as the lead investigator of the Trump-Russia investigation, he didn't know -- or that he knew that the odds were nothing and that he had a concern that there was no big there there regarding any collusion between Trump and --

Ms. Page. No, I don't think so. I think it's a reflection of us still not knowing. I guess that's as good as I can answer. That it still existed, because we were -- it was still an active investigation. It still existed in the scope of possibility that there would be literally nothing, probably not nothing nothing, as we probably knew more than that by that point.

But in the scheme of the possible outcomes, the most serious one obviously being crimes serious enough to warrant impeachment; but on the other scale that, you know, maybe an unwitting person was, in fact, involved in the release of information, but it didn't ultimately touch any senior, you know, people in the administration or on the campaign.

And so the text just sort of reflects that spectrum. And I think the sort of unfinished business to me really just reflects who Pete

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is, which is he's a leader. He cares about Russia in particular, it has in many ways dominated his career, and wanted to finish out the investigation, whatever the outcome.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, based on that answer, though, it does sound like, as the lead investigator, you took it to mean he was saying the odds are nothing and, as the best counterintelligence agent, he had a gut sense and concern that there's no big there there.

Ms. Page. I'm sorry, what's the question?

Mr. Ratcliffe. With respect to any collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Ms. Page. Right. And so he is the best investigator. So if someone is going to find it, it's going to be him.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But at that point --

Ms. Page. That's not out of animus; that's out of I hate Russia.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But at least at that point, he had a concern that there wasn't anything there.

Ms. Page. I mean, we -- it was -- I'm sorry, I'm not supposed to talk about the sufficiency of evidence, so that's why I am weighing my words carefully.

Let me do it this way: Investigations are fluid, right? And so at various times leads are promising and leads fade away. And so I can't -- I can't answer more his sentiment with respect to this particular text, but certainly at this point the case had been ongoing. We didn't have an answer. That's obvious. And I think we all sort of went back and forth about like what -- what the answer was really

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going to be.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. But in describing those terms, the lead agent said he had a gut sense and concern, a concern that there's no there there, a concern that I'm not going to find anything.

Ms. Page. Right. But that's --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did he want to find something?

Ms. Page. No, no, no. That speaks to -- again, this is all in the context of do I stay or do I go, right? And so if this is going to fizzle out and be a nothing, then I shouldn't sort of sacrifice my sort of long-term career prospects. If it's going to end in impeachment, that's kind of a big deal. I mean, put aside who it is, put aside how we feel about it. You know, that's monumental. People who are on Watergate are still known as somebody who was on Watergate.

And so that's not sort of taken with respect to the, you know, feelings about Donald Trump. It's about being on an unbelievably kick ass team and being a part of, you know, something impressive. Sorry. I probably shouldn't have --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Four days later, another series of text messages are exchanged, and at one point Peter Strzok responded to a text from you and said: God, I suddenly want on this, you know why.

Ms. Page. Oh, lord. If you're asking me why, I have no idea. I'm sorry. We talked about this for days on end. So I really couldn't tell you what he was thinking in that particular moment.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. Is there more context there? I don't --

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Mr. Ratcliffe. No, I don't. I'm just asking you. It sounds like he's saying, you know why I suddenly want on the Mueller investigation.

Ms. Page. I'm sure 18 months ago I did, but I have no idea right now.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. One last question. What was the -- obviously, you left the Mueller investigation team at some point in time. Give me the circumstances about why.

Ms. Page. Sure. I -- so I participated in the first briefing for Bob Mueller upon sort of giving him an overview of like here's what we got. And at the end of the briefing, he went to Mr. McCabe, who at the time was the acting director, and said, who was that woman? And he said, that's Lisa, she works for me. And he said, I want her on the team. And Andy said, okay.

And so he came to me and said, Bob wants you to join the team. And I said, I don't want to. And he said, well, you don't say no to Bob Mueller. And I said, you know, one, Andy was acting director and so I wanted to sort of stay by his side; and, two, I have young children at home and the prior sort of 18 months working for Andy were the most fulfilling of my professional career, they were unbelievably demanding. And I --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So -- and these text messages -- so the point I'm really trying to get at, the text messages had not become public.

Ms. Page. No, no, no. I'm -- 30 seconds, I'm going to get there.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. You bet.

Ms. Page. So I was very hesitant to join the Mueller team, because I had already worked two incredibly demanding years with Andy and I wanted a life back and I wanted to parent and be home and be around. And so I went to Bob Mueller to talk to him about it. And so, as a compromise, I offered a 45-day detail.

And so I joined his team for 45 days to sort of help them stand it up, with the understanding that he wanted me, he wanted me full time. He -- he, you know, thought I had something to add. But at the end of the 45 days, I just -- you know, I just -- despite, you know, it being an impressive crew that he assembled, wanted a life back.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Thank you.

Mr. Jordan. Thank you, John.

Ms. Page, I just want to understand some basics. Did you report directly to Mr. McCabe or did you report to Jim Baker and then had some kind of special arrangement? How did it work?

Ms. Page. I reported directly to Mr. McCabe. I stayed in close touch with Jim Baker. I mean, we worked together very, very closely, but I would say I considered --

Mr. Jordan. Was it a special arrangement? I mean, you're part of the general counsel, part of the FBI General Counsel Office, but it was a special arrangement where you worked directly for Mr. McCabe?

Ms. Page. Essentially, yes. I -- in the minority testimony, I had worked for Mr. McCabe when he was the Executive Assistant Director for the National Security Branch. So when he took that job on, it was

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shortly after the Snowden disclosures. Things were crazy busy, in terms of intelligence community reforms. And so he asked me at that time -- this is in September of 2013. He asked me to sort of join his -- his staff as counsel to kind of help support him through that, because it really fell in his bucket.

And so it was already an arrangement that we had had before. And so when Andy -- when Mr. McCabe became Deputy Director in February of 2016, he asked me to sort of join in the same kind of arrangement that we had had previously.

Mr. Jordan. And did that mean that your actual physical office was somewhere different from where the normal FBI General Counsel Office was?

Ms. Page. That is correct. It moved a jillion times, just because of the way space moves, but ultimately yes.

Mr. Jordan. Did you provide any information to reporters, journalists, or media personalities about anything related to the Trump-Russia investigation --

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. -- in 2016, 2017, or 2018?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Did you ever interact with the press?

Ms. Page. In my official capacity at the FBI? A couple of times, yes.

Mr. Jordan. And can you tell me who you interacted with and when those occurred?

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Ms. Page. So there's the one that's the subject of the IG investigation or the IG report about Mr. McCabe that I'm not -- I don't think I should get into here. It's a criminal referral now.

And then I was asked --

Mr. Jordan. So you can't -- are you saying you don't want to tell me when or who or neither?

Ms. Page. No, no. So it's the -- it's the -- it's the Devlin Barrett Washington Post in the late October timeframe.

Mr. Jordan. I know which within you're --

Ms. Page. Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, I was obviously involved in that. And then in early 2017, I was asked to -- so the Clinton case was sort of over and there were a number of outlets who were seeking to write like the comprehensive story of the Clinton case.

And so Mike Kortan, who is the head of public affairs, was engaging with a number of them to kind of figure out who would sort of tell the big story. And then there were a number of other outlets that were doing it anyway. And so I worked with Mike on, I don't know, two or three maybe Clinton stories.

Mr. Jordan. Did the press ever -- I'm sorry. Did the press ever approach you and give you any information?

Ms. Page. Not that I recall. I don't think so.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. I've just got a list of names I want to run past you and ask if you've communicated with any of these individuals.

Did you ever communicate with Christopher Steele?

Ms. Page. No.

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Mr. Jordan. Richard Dearlove?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you, sir.

Mr. Jordan. Richard Dearlove.

Ms. Page. No.

Ms. Jeffress. Can we just consult for one moment?

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Jeffress. Go ahead.

Mr. Jordan. Joe Mifsud?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry?

Mr. Jordan. Joe Mifsud. Joseph Mifsud.

Ms. Page. Joseph Mifsud, no.

Mr. Jordan. Alexander Downer, have you ever talked with him?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Have you ever talked with Glenn Simpson?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Have you ever visited or talked with Nellie Ohr?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Jordan. Can you tell me about those conversations and when they took place?

Ms. Page. Yes. Bruce Ohr was my first boss at the Justice Department.

Mr. Jordan. I was asking you about Nellie, but you can talk about Bruce as well.

Ms. Page. I have to get to Bruce -- I have to get to Nellie through Bruce.

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Mr. Jordan. Got it, okay.

Ms. Page. Because the only time I've ever spoken to her was in the context of a summer barbecue that Bruce held for the office in, I don't know, 2011 maybe, summer of 2011.

Mr. Jordan. So were you pretty close with Bruce Ohr?

Ms. Page. No. He was my boss. It was for the whole office.

Mr. Jordan. Bruce Ohr had it for your office?

Ms. Page. So I was a prosecutor at the Justice Department from 2006 to 2012.

Mr. Jordan. Okay.

Ms. Page. And that entire -- for almost that entire time, at least until maybe early 2000 -- or middle of 2012, Bruce Ohr was my supervisor.

Mr. Jordan. Got it.

Ms. Page. He was the chief of the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, and I was a line prosecutor. And so in the --

Mr. Jordan. You worked for Bruce Ohr for how long, again, I'm sorry, Ms. Page?

Ms. Page. He was in that position for I think 5 of the 6 years that I was there, I think.

Mr. Jordan. Okay.

Ms. Page. Maybe 5 and a half, I don't know. So in that -- in that context, he had -- you know, he would have like a summer barbecue for his --

Mr. Jordan. Got it.

Ms. Page. -- staff and employees, and so I met Nellie at that.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. Did you ever talk with Cody Shearer?

Ms. Page. Who?

Mr. Jordan. Cody Shearer.

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Did you ever communicate with Cindy Blumenthal?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. How about Victoria Newland in the State Department?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. All right. I want to ask you a little bit about travel. Did you travel much with your current -- with your time at the FBI working for Mr. McCabe, did you travel abroad much?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Jordan. Did you travel abroad any?

Ms. Page. Abroad, once.

Mr. Jordan. And where to?

Ms. Page. [REDACTED].

Mr. Jordan. And what were the dates of that travel?

Ms. Page. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr. Jordan. And that was for official business?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Jordan. Can you tell me what you did in [REDACTED] while you were there in early [REDACTED]?

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Ms. Page. I can't do that, sir. I'm sorry.

Mr. Jordan. Pardon?

Ms. Page. I can't -- on advice of FBI counsel, I can't go into that detail.

Mr. Jordan. You went to [REDACTED] in early [REDACTED]. Did anyone travel with you, anyone else from the FBI?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Jordan. Who? Did Bill Priestap?

Ms. Page. Bill Priestap did not.

Mr. Jordan. If you can tell me who. Want me to guess?

Ms. Page. So I'm trying to count the right number of people. It's either four or five others, but all are GS-15s or below so -- except for Pete. I'm sorry, Pete was there, but --

Mr. Jordan. Peter Strzok and then four or five others?

Ms. Page. No, no, no. Me, Pete, and three others, I believe.

Mr. Jordan. And can you give me their names?

Ms. Page. I cannot, sir.

Mr. Jordan. And why can't you?

Ms. Page. Because I've been instructed that GS-15s and below, we're not providing those names.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. And that was the only time you traveled to [REDACTED]?

Ms. Page. That is correct.

Mr. Jordan. All right. I want to just give you something that I brought up with Mr. -- with Mr. Strzok yesterday, if I could. This

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is an email that you and he exchanged back and forth. If we can pass that down. I've got several copies there. I don't know if you've been labeling exhibits, if the staff has or whatever, so I don't know what number or letter this would be.

If you could just take a look at that, Ms. Page. Are you familiar with this email exchange from January 10th, 2017?

Ms. Page. I mean, I have no recollection of it, but I see it before me.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. So I just want to read what Agent Strzok sent to you. He says: Comparing now. The set is only identical to what McCain had. It has differences from what was given to us by Corn and Simpson. And the subject line is: BuzzFeed is about to publish the dossier.

Do you know who Mr. Corn or -- do you know who Corn and Simpson are?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. I'm super confused from where we all landed on this yesterday, because it went round and round. Can FBI counsel tell me what the parameters are on this?

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. I do know the names Corn and Simpson, yes.

Mr. Jordan. You know their first names?

Ms. Page. Glenn Simpson, David Corn.

Mr. Jordan. And that's who this is referring to, this email?

Ms. Page. Yes, I assume so.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. Can you just tell me, because I didn't quite

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get this square yesterday. It looks to me like in this particular email that there are a couple versions of the dossier, at least parts of the dossier. There's the set that BuzzFeed is about to publish which, according to Mr. Strzok's email, is identical to what was given to the FBI by Mr. McCain, Mr. McCain's staff -- Senator McCain's staff, I should say. And then there's this other one that you're getting from David Corn and Glenn Simpson, which is the dossier, but different. Is that how you read it?

Ms. Page. I think so, but honestly, I didn't have a ton to do with it, so I don't -- that seems right to me, but I really don't know, because I wasn't really substantively involved with this.

Mr. Jordan. Have you read the dossier? Did you read the dossier while you were working on this case at the FBI?

Ms. Page. So let me -- I guess I just want to clarify. I know that the press has called the sort of set of reporting that -- that was released on Buzzfeed and other outlets the dossier. What we have are a set of reports from a source, obviously now well-known.

Mr. Jordan. Yes.

Ms. Page. So I did read some, but not all of the reports that we received from Christopher Steele.

Mr. Jordan. When was the -- when did you first read the reports from Christopher Steele?

Ms. Page. I think we got them on the team in mid -- in mid to late September. So --

Mr. Jordan. That's the first time you'd read them?

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Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Jordan. Mid to late September. Okay, thank you. I know we're out of time, but I did want to circle back with one. Do you communicate -- did you communicate with anyone at the State Department on any type of regular basis or on any basis in the course of this investigation?

Ms. Page. In the course of Russia or Midyear?

Mr. Jordan. Both, but mostly Russia is I guess what I'm focusing on.

Ms. Page. No, no on Russia. On Midyear, I had a couple of conversations, I don't know, I'd say three or fewer, where we were trying to get classification decisions out of the State Department in order to sort of finalize certain things. They were very slow in kind of going through the classifications needed so that for us to make an assessment about whether there was classified information or not.

And so I was on probably one or two or three at the absolute most conference calls with people at State, but that's the extent of it.

Mr. Jordan. And you don't recall the names of individuals you spoke with in?

Ms. Page. Not right now, no.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. I think we're out of time, but thank you, Ms. Page.

[Recess.]

[5:20 p.m.]

Ms. Kim. We're going back on the record. The time is 5:20.

Ms. Page, I'd like to return to the text messages. For each one that I'll return to, I will try to introduce it as an exhibit.

So I think this is actually the first formal exhibit we're introducing in three rounds of questioning. So I'll mark as exhibit 1 a text message from July 21st, 2016.

[Page Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q It's about: I have no idea how destabilizing his Presidency would be.

So I'll direct you to the text, eight texts from the top. It's where you text Mr. Strzok an article link with the title, "Donald Trump Sets Conditions for Defending NATO Allies Against Attack." And you attached your personal comments, quote: "This is really shocking."

Can you explain this text?

A Yes. So I don't remember the article, but just based on the context of the -- on the message here, you know, it's essentially talking -- I mean, the sort of whole notion of the NATO alliance is an attack on one, it's an attack on all. And so the prospect of in any way diminishing or diluting that alliance is extraordinarily concerning. And so, obviously, I'm just quite shocked by the prospect of what I presume is explained in this article.

Q You spoke earlier about your general experience dealing with

Russia, the country, as a threat. Can you explain in that context why the NATO alliance is important?

A I mean, the NATO alliance is one of the sort of primary forces which holds Russia in its sort of hegemonic-seeking, you know, pursuit of dominance in check.

Q So in your view, would it be a major diplomatic shift for a candidate to state that he would impose new conditions for defending NATO allies against attack?

A Yes, very much so.

Q So around 10 minutes after you sent that article, you texted Mr. Strzok another article link. It looks like it is entitled, "How Donald Trump Picked His Running Mate." And you also appended a personal comment here, quote: "This campaign is like watching a train wreck happen over and over and over again."

So let me just give you the context for that article. It was published on July 20th, 2016, in The New York Times. I think the most widely publicized excerpt from that article reads: Donald Trump wanted to make a senior adviser to John Kasich an offer nonetheless. Did John Kasich have any interest in being the most powerful Vice President in history? When Kasich's adviser asked how this would be the case, Donald Jr. explained that his father's Vice President would be in charge of domestic and foreign policy. Then what, the adviser asked, would Trump be in charge of? Quote, "Making America great again," unquote, was the casual reply.

Does it concern you that Donald Trump Jr. was offering Vice

Presidential candidates the portfolio of domestic and foreign policy so the President could focus on making America great again?

A It represents a certainly different model for how the executive branch is typically run.

Q I think that's an accurate statement.

So then I think, let's turn back to your text exchange with Mr. Strzok. He responded to these articles, quote, "Trump is a disaster. I have no idea how destabilizing his Presidency would be."

Can you explain to me how you understand Mr. Strzok's text?

A I mean, I think it is in large part a reference back to the sort of conditions for defending NATO allies. As I said, I mean, NATO represents one of the sort of primary checks against Russian expansion of power. And so changing conditions for NATO is destabilizing to the world order, and I think that's entirely what his text message reflects.

Q So, again, what did you understand would be destabilized through Mr. Trump's potential Presidency?

A The world.

Q The world. Thank you.

[Page Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q The next text that I'd like to discuss with you is what I'll introduce as exhibit 2. It's a March 3rd, 2016, text exchange. You talked about this briefly. It's from the evening of March 3rd, 2016, when FOX News hosted a Presidential primary debate with the four

remaining candidates.

I'd like to read you a CNN article published about that debate.

A Okay.

Q It's entitled, "Republican Debate Turns Early." It was published the very next day, on March 4th, 2016. And it reads: Donald Trump opened the GOP debate here by boasting about the size of his genitals. He responded to recent comments from Marco Rubio in which the Florida Senator joked about the size of Trump's hands and said, you know what they say about men with small hands.

On the debate stage, Trump stretched his hands out for the audience to see, then insisted that the suggestion that, quote, "something else must be small," unquote, was false. Quote, "I guarantee you there's no problem," unquote, Trump said to howls from the audience at the FOX debate.

Do you remember this moment from the debate?

A I do.

Q And do you remember what your reaction was to this subject being discussed at a Presidential primary debate?

A I mean, it's just not the dignity befitting a candidate running for President. And to be clear, I am not a particularly prudish -- obviously, I use plenty of harsh language, but it's just beneath the dignity of the office.

Q So four texts down on the exhibit I gave to you as exhibit 2, you said, "God, Trump is a loathsome human."

Do you think this comment from Mr. Trump might have been part of

what you're responding to in saying he was loathsome?

A It certainly may have been. I don't know. I mean, we are essentially like live texting, for lack of a better description, and so I don't know whether it was that reference or some other thing that I found offensive. But it's entirely possible that it's that.

I think this might have also been the one where he like engaged in like personal name calling, and I'm just not a -- I'm not a fan of bullying. I think it -- I -- and so the notion that you would also have somebody who essentially bullies opponents, you know, disagreement is one thing.

So it could have been that, too, but I'm just speculating at this point.

Q Thank you.

I think there's a quote that we can discuss, engage with more directly that seems to be more directly on this topic.

So four texts from the bottom of the page, you said: Also, did you hear him make a comment about the size of his -- I'm assuming that is dick -- earlier? This man cannot be President?

Were you stating that you personally intended to take official actions to stop Donald Trump from becoming President?

A No.

Q Were you stating that the FBI should take official actions to sabotage Donald Trump's Presidential campaign?

A No.

Q What did you mean?

A Well, and also to be clear, there is no investigation at this point.

Q That's correct.

A This is -- so there's -- there is nothing. Nothing exists. This is just a reflection of my personal, private opinion that this person does not have the fitness to hold this office.

Q And in clarification, you did not mean at this -- at this point, the Hillary Clinton investigation was open. Is that correct?

A That's correct, yes.

Q But you were not evincing any kind of determination to help Hillary Clinton at the cost of Donald Trump, were you?

A No. And at this point, Donald Trump is also not the candidate. And as I sort of stated earlier -- no. I'll just leave it there. No.

Q Thank you.

There has been much made of a comment from Mr. Strzok, I think four texts above that one. It's the one where Mr. Strzok wrote: God, Hillary should win 100 million to zero.

A Right. So that has to actually be taken in context of the prior text.

Q Yes.

A And so, I mean, this is not particularly kind, but we're just making fun of him, right, because he's calling the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Environmental Protection.

And so, yes, this is probably snobby and snarky of us, but it's simply like, great, the dude's running for President and he doesn't know what the name of one of his Cabinet agencies is.

And so the "she should win 100 million to one" is not like his personal view. It's just this guy doesn't know government. He doesn't know the name of an organization that he's going to be in charge of. This should be an easy defeat.

So it's not necessarily about like him personally. It's just -- I mean, I guess it is -- but it's a reflection of him not knowing the name of the EPA.

Q Got it. Thank you.

[Page Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q I'd like to turn to a February 13th, 2016, text exchange. We'll introduce it as exhibit 3.

So the third text on this page is where you wrote Mr. Strzok, quote: "I'm no prude, but I'm really appalled by this. So you don't have to go looking, in case you hadn't heard, Trump called him the P word." I believe by "him" you're referring to Senator Cruz. "The man has no dignity or class. He simply cannot be President."

And in that text you said Mr. Strzok will link to a New York Times article from February 16th, 2016, entitled, "With a Slur for Ted Cruz, Donald Trump Further Alienates Voters."

Do you remember this text?

A I do.

Q Were you or are you a personal political supporter of Ted Cruz?

A No.

Q So when you wrote that you were appalled by Donald Trump calling Ted Cruz a vulgar name, were you expressing a personal political view or were you just expressing your anger at a Presidential candidate using a slur at a public rally?

A I mean, it's both a slur and it's a -- again, a slur sort of that's beneath the dignity of the office. I mean, my hope for all Presidential candidates, irrespective of party, is that it is somebody who you can have your children look up to and for whom you can simply say, even where you disagree, that this is a person who's doing their best and trying their best and is a good person. And I think that there is no place for slurs and just bullying, which is what this reflects.

Q Republicans have taken the quote "he simply cannot be President" out of context and use it to suggest that you intended to stop Mr. Trump from becoming President. Can you explain what you meant by "he simply cannot be President"?

A It's just my view that -- like how could we possibly -- again, we, as a country, not we, the FBI, that -- I would have had -- I wanted somebody whose demeanor and decorum I could be proud of.

Q And you were expressing that view that someone using polarizing and demeaning rhetoric against his opponents shouldn't

assume our Nation's highest office?

A That's correct.

Q And you were not expressing the desire or intent to take official action against Donald Trump?

A Well, there's not even -- yes, that's correct in all cases. But for what it's worth, there's not even an investigation open with respect to collusion in his campaign at this point.

Q Thank you.

I'll turn now to an August 6th, 2016, text message. This is the text message where you talk about "that menace."

So I think you mention this in passing, but I just want to explore a little bit more. In this exchange, front to back, you are discussing whether Mr. Strzok will be getting a promotion. Is that correct?

A Not getting a promotion, but sort of staying in place long enough in order to be eligible for a promotion.

Q Got it.

And if you look on the second page, I believe, the top message says: And maybe you're meant to stay where you are because you're meant to protect the country from that menace.

You were --

A Do you have that article that follows? I didn't actually notice ever that I'm referring to something.

Q Yes. The article is about -- it's an op-ed about how Trump's enablers will finally have to take a stand.

A No, I see that from the title. But do you have any idea what

the content is?

Q I believe it is talking about the fecklessness of the Republican Party in standing up to the candidate.

A Okay.

Q Would it be helpful to see that article to discuss this?

A No, it's okay. I just wasn't sure if it would sort of trigger any further memories about what I was really thinking. But it's not a big deal.

Q Okay. Well, if it helps, on Monday we can show you the article.

A Okay.

Q I think that's fine.

But, you know, I think you were coming on multiple interpretations of the word "menace," and I just wanted to give you an opportunity to state conclusively for us, did you mean the menace was Donald Trump? Was the menace the fact that Russian attempts at collusion could then result in access to the Oval Office? Can you explain to us a little bit what you mean?

A I really can't do a better job than I tried earlier, honestly. I don't -- I'll look at the article, maybe it will remind me of something, over the weekend.

But it's -- look, it's clear I was not particularly fond of him for all the reasons that I've already described.

But there is no question in my mind that the risk and the possibility that somebody -- like, look, in the -- not the very worst

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case scenario, but in the middle worst case scenario you have someone affiliated with his campaign -- let's assume that the candidate himself is unaware, which is a perfectly reasonable assumption -- but you have somebody affiliated with his campaign who is working perhaps purposely with the Russian Government.

And that is an incredibly terrifying prospect, particularly if it was somebody close, particularly if it was somebody who might be -- who might take official position, you know.

So I don't -- I don't really have a better -- a better explanation at this point. I'm sorry.

Q No. That's very clarifying. Thank you.

The text two texts below that one says -- it's from Mr. Strzok -- it says: Thanks. It's absolutely true that we're both very fortunate. And, of course, I'll try to approach it that way. I just know it will be tough at times. I can protect our country at many levels.

I think this is still in the context of Mr. Strzok discussing whether he will pursue promotion or not. Can you explain what you meant Mr. Strzok to mean by protecting our country at many levels?

A So I'm not -- I mean, I'm not totally sure. I just -- I think that we are both kind of reflecting in general on how fortunate we are. We both have jobs that we absolutely loved with our whole heart, that literally both of us were the kind of people who never -- you know, occasionally have a bad day -- but like I have never not liked going to work. Like the FBI is an awesome place, and he feels the same way.

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And so I think that this is just a reflection of like, there are no bad choices here. You know, there is no wrong move. You are good at what you do. You will do well wherever you are.

I don't -- I don't know that I see it as particularly tied to the Russia investigation. I just think it's like: You're going to do good. You're good at what you do. Like, he worries. He overthinks. And so I think that this is just a like, you know, an attempt to sort of -- there are no wrong choices here.

Q Yes. So that's whether he remains in his current position or he does something else to try to get a promotion?

A Correct.

Q At either level he would be doing something he loves?

A The country is winning because he is protecting it from foreign threats.

Q And in the next text you say: I know it will too, but it's just a job, it's not a reflection of your worth or quality or smarts.

Does that add any context to what you were talking about?

A Yes. So, right, we're both smart, hardworking people, but we both have a lot of self-doubt. And so this is a reflection of -- and not to intrude too much in his own personal business -- but this is a reflection of like: Do I put in for it? What if I don't get it? And like, you know, just like sort of the insecurity that comes, I think, with taking a chance at something that maybe is a little bit of a reach.

And so this is me just trying to sort of remind him that like a job is a job, you are good at what you do, it doesn't matter whether

you get this or not. You are still -- you know, it's not a reflection of your worth or your quality or your smarts.

Q That makes sense. Thank you.

[Page Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q I'd like to introduce a text message that I will label as exhibit 5. It is from May 3rd, 2016 -- May 4th, excuse me.

So on the evening of May 3rd, 2016, you and Mr. Strzok apparently texted about the events of the day, which was that Ted Cruz had dropped out of the Republican primary, which made Donald Trump the presumptive Republican candidate.

Sixth text from the bottom you wrote, quote, "And holy shit. Cruz just dropped out of the race. It's going to be a Clinton-Trump race. Unbelievable."

About a minute later Mr. Strzok responded, in the text second from last, "Now the pressure really starts to finish MYE."

Can you tell us what you understand this statement to mean?

A Yes. So the Director was -- you know, certainly by May, the Director was very clear that like he wanted this case finished as far out as possible from the sort of political process as possible. And so we knew equivocally, you know, he wanted it done before the conventions, you know, to the greatest extent possible. If it wasn't possible, it wasn't possible.

But he wanted us out of the political process. He wanted it done.

He wanted it resolved so that people could make their decision knowing what we had found with respect to her. Of course, we never in a million, zillion, jillion years could have anticipated that -- you know, what would come. But we -- he wanted us out of the sort of active political process that was happening.

And so now it's a two-party race, right? Before -- while there's still candidates and there's still primaries that are sort of going on, you know, it's obviously still the political process, but like now we have a contest.

And so it very much for the whole team kind of upped the pressure to like, we've got to get this -- like now we have a two-party race now. Like the pressure really increases to finish this investigation.

Q So the pressure comes from the fact that the general election campaign essentially started --

A Correct.

Q -- when Ted Cruz dropped out.

A Correct.

Q And can you also remind me of where the investigation was at this stage in May 2016? You stated earlier that in this timeframe --

A I mean, we had not seen sufficient evidence to be able to charge Secretary Clinton with anything at this point, and so the challenge was we still had investigative work to do. The work that was left was not necessarily of a kind that we thought was going to change the determination.

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But like nobody -- just to be clear, like nobody had a closed mind. This is not like the Pete and Lisa show about Hillary Clinton. This is every single -- there are four case agents, there are a slew of analysts, there are five prosecutors. I mean, so this is not -- this is the collective assessment of every person on the team.

And so we just were -- again, it was just a reflection that like we want out of this. So far there's not anything that's going to suggest that we are going to be able to charge her with anything, and so we've got to do this right but we've got to do this fast. So now like we need to close all the loose ends that are sort of hanging.

Q So you're not talking about pressure to stop taking valid investigative steps or pressure to come to a certain conclusion. Is that correct?

A No.

Q And you're not talking about pressure to curtail the investigation in any substantive way?

A No.

Q Did you ever feel that the FBI had to compromise on its investigative strategy because of the timing?

A No.

Q And in your view, did the FBI take all necessary and prudent steps it needed to in this investigation?

A Yes, definitely.

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[Page Exhibit No. 6

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q I'd like to direct you to the next text message, from July 1st, 2016. I'll mark it as exhibit 6.

So I believe you discussed this with the majority earlier. I'll direct you to the seventh text on the page, where Mr. Strzok wrote to you: "Holy cow, NYT breaking Apuzzo" -- I assume by "Lync" he means "Lynch" -- "will accept whatever rec D and career prosecutors make. No political appointee input."

Now, this text was several days after the June 27th meeting between Attorney General Loretta Lynch and former President Bill Clinton on the tarmac of the Phoenix Airport. To the best of your understanding, was this text about Loretta Lynch's announcement on July 1st that she would accept the recommendation of the FBI and the career prosecutors in this case?

A Definitely, yeah. Our phones are terrible, and they auto correct constantly, usually with fake words. So "Lync" is pretty good.

Q Mr. Strzok and you in this exchange both expressed displeasure about the timing of this announcement. So he wrote, two texts down from the one that I just referred to, he said: "Timing looks like hell. Will appear choreographed."

Can you explain what that concern was?

A Yeah. So we, the FBI, know that the Director is making a statement in 4 days. Obviously, the Justice Department doesn't know

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this. And so this is a reflection of us like, ugh, her -- number one, her saying this makes it look like -- you know, the whole purpose of us doing this on our own was to be independent and to show like we're not -- you know, we know the Justice Department agrees with us because we are lockstep every step of the way.

So it's not as though -- I guess that is a point I didn't really clarify earlier -- it's not as though we are usurping the role of the Justice Department in making a prosecutorial decision, because we know the Justice Department is going to agree not to prosecute, because we have worked in tandem with the Justice Department at every single step at every part of the investigation.

So it's not really fair -- yes, it's obviously atypical for him to have made the statement on his own, but I really disagree, especially at the time the sort of commentary that it was like a usurpation of a prosecutorial function, because he wasn't usurping anything.

Number one, he was saying, we -- you know, it's our recommendation that there's no prosecution. And, in fact, he was giving the Justice Department cover by saying no reasonable prosecutor would bring this case.

He is literally saying they're not being sleazy, political scumbags by not bringing this, me, Jim Comey, with all my, you know, in all my glory, I'm telling you no reasonable prosecutor would bring this case. I mean, it was really designed to insulate the Justice Department, not sort of usurp some righteous authority.

So back to your question, what he's saying is like, ugh, this makes

it sound like we are in some way working with or working in tandem with respect to the July 5th statement, because, again, we know the statement's coming, the Justice Department doesn't. And so that's what that's a reflection of.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Earlier you were discussing with the majority the back and forth between DOJ and FBI about what statute to charge under. You just told me that no reasonable -- as Jim Comey said, no reasonable prosecutor would charge under this case. Do you remember if the Justice Department explicitly ordered or directed the FBI not to charge under the gross negligence statute?

A It doesn't really work that way. You're sort of framing it in too formula way. We had multiple conversations about whether the facts and the evidence gathered to date was sufficient to make out a charge of gross negligence and, more importantly, to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that she was grossly negligent in her handling of classified material.

And the Justice Department's explanation was that both, A -- and, again, there might be more depth to this, but this is just all I know, but that it was -- that the statute was constitutionally vague and had only been charged once, either not at all or once in like 100 years. And I had a B, and I don't remember what it is now. But, more importantly, I think, you also have to be sort of reasonable and thoughtful about what we're talking about here.

You better have a super airtight case if you are about to charge a presidential candidate with anything, you know. It doesn't really matter what we're talking about. And so the prospect of bringing a charge even if potentially you had the elements, which I'm not certain that we did, but even if you had the elements on a statute that has

either never been tested or is -- the assessment of the Justice Department is that it is potentially an unconstitutional statute, which is why it hasn't been charged, that's just -- I mean, nobody would do that.

Q So I think that's helpful. I just want to understand then, so it wasn't the Justice Department giving any kind of formal or informal order to the FBI not to charge under gross negligence?

A But you're misunderstanding. We don't charge anything. The FBI does not bring charges.

Q Understood.

A So the FBI investigates a case and then refers it to the Justice Department for charges. So if something was going to be charged, it is the Justice Department who decides to charge that.

During the course of an investigation, the Justice Department might be advising the FBI that I think that we'll be able to make out a, you know, wire fraud case, so these are the types of evidence to look for. Or we might be able to make out a terrorism case and so we need to have the person say this or whatever.

But so, you know, that sort of back and forth consultation happens, but the FBI does not bring charges. The Justice Department brings charges, and it was the Justice Department's assessment that they did not have -- whether they had -- I don't know whether they had evidence or not of gross negligence but that gross negligence was not available as a statute to bring because it's -- of its constitutional vagueness and its untestedness in court.

Q I understand that. Let me try this another way maybe.

A Okay. Sorry.

Q So let's say it had been a 50/50 shot whether the gross negligence statute should or should not be applied. Let's say it was a closer question than the one that was at hand here.

A Okay. Based on the evidence?

Q Based -- maybe we're talking about a different statute that sometimes it's brought and sometimes it's not. In Jim Comey's opinion, in the opinion of Jim Baker, in your opinion, in the Office of OGC's opinion, it had been a sound statute to bring the case under.

A Okay.

Q But the Department of Justice had simply disagreed with the FBI. Does the FBI have the ability to recommend charges?

A The FBI has the ability to recommend charges.

Q Yes.

A The FBI has no ability to bring charges or to require or force charges to be brought, right. So just to like use a hypothetical so we're not talking about something confusing. We are investigating a wire fraud case -- wire fraud is not a good example. We're investigating a bank robbery. The FBI thinks that Susie is the bank robber. We're not great. It's -- the evidence is kind of close because Mary was there too, and they look pretty similar and whatever. There's other evidence that suggest it's Mary or Susie. We feel like it's Susie, we want Susie charged, we go to the Department, we lay out all the evidence. If the Department doesn't think they can prove that

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Susie committed the bank robbery beyond a reasonable doubt, that case ain't getting brought, doesn't matter what the FBI does.

Q That makes sense. And I apologize for sending us into the fantasy land of hypotheticals.

A No. No. That's okay.

Q But let me just bring it back here. I think the allegation at hand is that the Department of Justice may have instructed the FBI that it had no intention of charging under a valid statute. Was that the case --

A Oh.

Q -- in the case of the gross negligence statute?

A No.

Q No.

A No. Sorry.

Q In fact, it was an antiquated statute not in use that the Department of Justice believed was constitutionally vague -- unconstitutionally vague. Is that correct?

A That's correct. Sorry.

Q Okay. No. No. That's all I wanted to say. I feel like earlier there was a colloquy where maybe questioners were left with the impression that the Justice Department had abandoned a valid bridge.

A Oh, no, no. I don't -- it is my view -- and, again, I'm speaking for the Justice Department, which is a dangerous thing to be doing. It is my belief that the Justice Department did not believe

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that gross negligence was an available statute because they regarded it as unconstitutionally vague.

Q Understood. Thank you.

So returning then to this text message, when Mr. Strzok wrote to you that timing looks like hell, did he mean that the Department of Justice and the FBI were precoordinating about Director Comey's statement?

A They were not.

Q And you wrote about seven messages from the bottom of the page: Yeah, it's a real profile in courage since she knows no charges will be brought. Were you expressing the fact that Loretta Lynch had some kind of knowledge of the draft that Jim Comey was coming up with?

A No. No. No. This is not a reflection of the draft at all. This is, as I described, I think, with the majority earlier, this is a reflection of my presumption that at this late stage of the investigation where everybody on both sides knows that there are few, if any, investigative steps to take that surely the attorney general knows that there is going to be a recommendation for no prosecution in this matter.

And so I don't -- again, I don't have actual knowledge of that. It is a text message. It's not designed to be a full colloquy of my -- entirety of my knowledge. But it is just a reflection of that fact that we're at the end of the investigation. She knows nobody is going to be charged. So instead of just sort of -- well. I don't know -- that's enough, I think.

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Q Sure. So did you mean -- to be totally clear, did you mean that AG Lynch had directed, ordered, or otherwise interfered with the FBI to order that no charges be brought against Hillary Clinton?

A No.

Q I'll introduce the next text.

[Page Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q It's Exhibit 7. August 5, 2016, text about a meeting. Let me direct you to about halfway down the page, a little below halfway down the page. Mr. Strzok wrote to you, quote: And hi. Went well. Best we could have expected other than, redacted, comma, quote, the White House is running this.

Next text you stated --

A Yep.

Q -- or, sorry, next text he stated, my answer, well maybe for you they are. And in response to these texts you wrote, yeah, whatever, re the White House comment. We've got emails that say otherwise. Do you remember what this meeting was about?

A I do. But a further explanation will call for classified information, so we should table that, please.

Q So any further discussion of this text will call for classified information?

A It is about -- again, like the last time, it is about the broader intelligence community's investigation of Russian active

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measures.

Q And not about the specific Russian collusion investigation?

A Definitely not. I mean, that's a reflection of like the White House is running this. My answer, well, maybe for you they are, right. We are thinking about our counterintelligence investigation --

Q I see.

A -- which the White House isn't touching, right. I'm not sure the White House knows about it because that's not how the FBI works. They are talking about the broader Russian active measures sort of intelligence assessment and sort of work that was going on among the sort of large intelligence agencies, and so that's the sort of difference there.

Q Thank you. I think that's the level of detail we needed.

A Okay. Okay. Great.

Q And just to clarify, so then also the September 2, 2016, text -- I won't introduce this, but it's the one where I think Mr. Strzok was helping prepare Director Comey for his meeting with POTUS where POTUS wants to know everything we are doing. Again, that was about the broader IC effort --

A Yes.

Q -- not about the specific Russia collusion investigation?

A That's correct. Although I think it's me who said that, but, yes.

Q Thank you.

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A And the "we" is like a collective we. Like, we FBI, other agencies, et cetera. I'm not sure it's -- it's the entire intelligence community, right.

Q Yes.

A The President wants to know what's up from all of us, not like what the FBI is doing.

Q Yeah. Got it. Thank you.

Let's return or let me introduce a text you've already seen before. I'll mark that one as Exhibit 8.

[Page Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q It's the one about I unleashed it with MYE. Now I need to fix it and finish it.

If you could turn to the third page actually. So it's double-sided, so if you -- yes. On the third page, four texts down, Mr. Strzok wrote: Who gives an F? One more AD like, redacted, or whoever. An investigation leading to impeachment, question mark?

A Right.

Q Can you explain how you understood that text?

A Yeah. So this is all -- I mean, I hope that you have read the whole rest of the excruciating detail, only because you can see both of us are going back and forth about whether or not to join the Mueller team, which, as an aside, I will simply say, if we were desperate to take down Donald Trump, we would both be there and active and wouldn't

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have hesitated at all.

And yet, all of these texts reflect a genuine sort of indecision about what was best for us individually, what was best for us in the context of our respective families, what was best for us professionally. I mean, like that is what these pages of texts all reflect for each of us and for different reasons, ultimately.

But, again, this is the sort of same thing. This is in the context of like -- again, and above you'll see -- if you don't mind, I would like to sort of go back a little bit --

Q Certainly.

A -- to the top of the page. This is me to him: You shouldn't take this on. I'm referring to joining the special counsel team, right. You shouldn't take this on. I promise you, I would tell you if you should. And then he's trying to convince me about why I should stay. And then he says: Why not, re me? He says the quote -- the text you just read. And I say, let's just talk about it later, but that doesn't work obviously.

But the point is, again, he's trying to sort of now give the counter point again, which is okay, so I become another -- you know, I stay in place to get my next promotion. And so now I become another AD, you know, the sort of assistant director, the head of a division, you know. Okay. That's fine. But as I described earlier, an investigation -- it doesn't say which may lead to impeachment. Obviously, we had no idea. There's no preconceived notion here. There's no determination because we've talked ad nauseam about the fact

that we still don't know what's going on at this point.

So, yes, it's a shorthand. The words which may or could or possibly should be there, but it's just a stupid text. And so an investigation leading to impeachment is simply saying like, that's a momentous thing. That doesn't happen a lot in American history. We're both nerds. We're both, you know, patriots. Being a part of something like that is cool. And in the same way that I said people who are on Watergate are still known as Watergate prosecutors whether they were, you know, the clerk who made the copies, like you're on Watergate. And so that is all that that is a reflection of.

Q Understood.

And then it's, in fact, shortly after that text that -- and I'm sorry to give you these like odd numbers. But six texts from the bottom, Mr. Strzok again is taking the other side now. So he's like: The odds could be nothing -- the odds are nothing. If I thought it was likely, there would be no -- I would be there no question. I hesitate in part because of my sense and concern there's no big "there" there.

I guess, taking those two together, do you take them to mean that he is inspecting the entire spectrum of different outcomes the case could have?

A Yes. This is -- this whole series of texts represents ambivalence for both of us, for a variety of reasons, including personal ones, which are obviously evident in here and so there's no reason to hide it. But, right, like we can't work closely on another case again.

I obviously want you -- I've already joined the team, but I obviously want you to do what's right for you.

I don't necessarily intend to stay, but, of course, I'm also torn, as I've already sort of described, because it is, you know, an enormous honor to be asked and to be a part of something sort of that's quite historic. On the other hand, I really want to go home and be a mom and sort of not be gone all the darn time.

And so the whole -- you have to keep it in the context of the entire series, which you actually have before you, which is like, yeah, I suppose that's right, but, God, we're a good team. Is that playing into your decision to your advice to me? And I'm saying, no, not at all. I just think we're both ready for a change truly.

You know, and then he goes to, well, then it's about the different realistic -- you know, this is just reflex ambivalence. This is not about wanting to get Donald Trump or -- I mean, it is purely our own sort of personal choices and what is best for us, and as friends, trying to support each other in weighing what is -- what would be best for each of us, both personally, professionally, and all the other things I already said.

Q Thank you for going through the text messages with me. I know that must not have been very pleasant.

A This is nothing.

Q No. You know, many of these texts have been used as political fodder or evidence accusing the FBI of being biased and corrupt, accusing you and Mr. Strzok personally of being bias and

corrupt. Can you just -- I'd like to give you the opportunity to directly respond to anything you think is missing for the record.

A Excuse me.

Q Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q And, again, let me just explain myself. I understand this is very emotional. I understand this has been an extraordinarily public trial before the IG report even came out, and I am so sorry for everything you've gone through.

I would just like to give you the opportunity to put on the record anything that you would like to put on the record because I don't think you've been given that chance. I don't think that's an opportunity that people in your position get.

A No, it's not. This has been obviously the worst year of my life. I have unquestionably made mistakes, but those mistakes reflect my personal life and having bad judgment. But we have both been committed to the defense of this country for our entire careers, both of us.

So we have been caught up in politics, and I understand that that happens, and certainly, if I had this to do over again, I wouldn't write this shit down in my personal -- in a work-related text message. But we have not been treated fairly.

What matters is our actions. Our personal views, regardless of what they are, are irrelevant. What matters is what we do. And over

and over and over and over again, there is absolutely nothing that anyone can point to to suggest that we ever took any step that was inappropriate. And, in fact, with all fairness, you all have my every sentiment before you. It's not like we held back in here.

So if there was something to find, you have every single email we have ever exchanged. You have all of these text messages. There is nothing to find here. We did a good job on both cases, and we did it the way the American people would expect us to do it.

If you have more questions, you can go. It's fine. It's fine. Don't worry about the time let's just do it.

Q Off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. KIM:

Q I also want to give you a chance to respond to another allegation that was made extremely publicly yesterday. Republicans have been making the general point that an affair can be a blackmail risk, a national security risk, and have speculated about whether you and Mr. Strzok posed a national security risk because of the fact of your relationship could be used to coerce or blackmail you. Would you like to respond to that allegation?

A I mean, it is untrue because we have always put our country first. And so we are well trained. We can recognize an approach. Any attempt at compromise would not have been successful.

Q And, in fact, there was no such attempt at compromise?

A No.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q Okay. So let's just go back a little bit to your time with the special counsel's investigation just, again, to clarify for the record. You had mentioned you were there for about roughly 45 days. As much as you can in this context, you know, generally describe your responsibilities on the team would be helpful.

A Yeah. So they were super fluid because the team didn't really exist. It was quite limited at that time. And so my -- I think -- I can't say that I had a formal role that was being discussed at length sort of if I was going to stay. I was having a number of conversations about what role I would take because I didn't necessarily want to be a prosecutor again, although that was available to me if I wanted to. And I went back and forth on that too, frankly.

But so largely, you know, I brought institutional knowledge with me, and I brought who and how the FBI works with me. Obviously, both Bob Mueller and Aaron Zebley also had sort of extensive FBI experience, but things change and people change, and sort of the getting things done at the Bureau piece of things, having worked for the Deputy Director and that's, you know, sort of what I helped him do as well.

I sort of largely played that facilitative role and, again, kind of helped bridge the -- excuse me, bridge the gap and transition between what we as a team knew and the evidence that we had gathered to date on the collusion investigation and sort of imparting that knowledge to the new special counsel team.

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Q And in part, is it fair to say that, you know, since it had just started, no one really knows what they had, so what they needed in terms of personnel was still up for grabs?

A No. I wouldn't say it had just started, right, because it had been ongoing at this point for 8 or so months. But, yes, it was being consolidated in a way that was actually going to make it more efficient in some ways. And at this point, from the beginning of the year through the appointment of special counsel, the case had been somewhat bifurcated in an attempt to sort of relieve so much responsibility, in part, on Pete, because he was a DAD running these massive other national security programs and sort of, you know, responsible for this investigation, although not so much responsible for the day-to-day.

And so there was an effort to sort of split up the responsibility of the Russia collusion investigation from January until the appointment of Bob Mueller. And so while that might have lessened the workload, it also made for greater inefficiencies because now you have two people kind of working different targets but needing to sort of coordinate.

And so the point being is I'm not sure I helped necessarily with personnel so much as sort of these are the buckets as we see them. These are the sort of -- these are the subjects. These are the types of crimes. These are the sort of things that we're looking at and sort of help them stand that up.

Q So, I mean, so it's fair to say though that you

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weren't -- didn't have like decisionmaking authority --

A No. No.

Q -- because it was still very -- even though it was still very fluid?

A I didn't have decisionmaking authority full stop.

Q Okay. So part of the reason for asking that is, you know, there have been accusations levied against both you and Mr. Strzok that your -- the perception of bias in your text messages has affected the outcome or -- and infected the Mueller investigation, and we just want to give you an opportunity to respond to that.

A Well, so it didn't. But I think it -- actually an important thing to note is that -- and I think it came up yesterday. Although, I don't really remember now -- initially Pete was not brought over as the senior executive to run the investigation. Another individual was, and that was not successful. It was not a good match with Mr. Mueller. He did not really have the sufficient counterintelligence background to be effective.

And so in part because I think Pete's superiors wanted him to stay in place, wanted him to sort of do his time in that so that he would be eligible for the next job and he could sort of move up the career ladder, and in part reflecting Pete's own desire, as I sort of talked about the ambivalence back and forth, he stayed at the FBI for, I don't know, about maybe the first month of the special counsel actually. And when the person that they brought over was just determined to not be the right fit, everybody resorted back to the logical conclusion, which

was to bring Pete back over to the special counsel.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Do you know the dates or the approximate dates when you joined and left the special counsel's investigation?

A So, yeah. He -- Mr. Mueller asked me to join on the 18th, so 18th or 19th-ish. And it was 45 -- I mean, maybe not to the day, but to the Friday or the Monday-ish, 45 days from there were my dates, so end of June or something like that.

Q And this may sound like an elementary point, but to your knowledge, has the special counsel's investigation had an outcome? Has it come to its conclusion?

A Well, they've had a lot of indictments, but I don't know what the outcome is. I don't know what a conclusion looks like, so I'm not really -- I can't really speculate as to that answer.

Q So what would you say to allegations that you or Mr. Strzok tainted the outcome of the special counsel's investigation?

A It hasn't happened yet.

Q I think that concludes our round of questioning for today. Thank you so much.

A You're welcome.

Mr. Somers. I think I just want to thank the witness for her appearance today. And I also want to -- we're going to hold this open and resume this transcribed interview on Monday. We believe that the start time will be 2:00, I think. But we want to keep the transcript open and just resume so I don't have to read the preamble all over again.

Mr. Jeffress. Can it be understood she has -- she must stop at 6:00 p.m., so could we start earlier given that or --

Mr. Somers. Let me take that back and see if we can start earlier.

Ms. Page. Maybe a little bit later, but not 11:00. I can't go until 10:00, and I can't go until like 8:00. I'll go but I just -- if we can start earlier, that would be better, if possible.

Mr. Somers. I'll take that back and see what we can do. Do you have a restriction on how early we can start?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Somers. I know we can't get the transcript of this until --

Mr. Jeffress. We just want it to exist. We don't need to review it. We can start whenever you all want to start.

Mr. Somers. I'll take that back and see what we can do.

And I'll just note to the Department, just because the chairman asked me to, that he continues to be frustrated by the assertion of the -- or not allowing the witness to answer questions about the beginnings of the Trump Russia investigation, that he believes it goes against the long established position of the House of Representatives that in congressional proceedings committees are not required to recognize unconstitutional privileges. I just want to note that for the record. I'm sure there will be continuing discussions between the chairman and the Department about these objections.

And with that, we'll stand in recess until Monday at a to-be-determined time.

[Whereupon, at 6:19 p.m., the interview was concluded to be

reconvened on Monday July 16, 2018.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing_____pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: LISA PAGE - DAY 2

Monday, July 16, 2018

Washington, D.C.

The above matter was held in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 11:02 a.m.

Mr. Baker. Okay. The time is 1 minute past 11:00 a.m. on July 16th, continuing from Friday's session of the transcribed interview of former FBI attorney Lisa Page.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. BAKER:

Q Good morning, Ms. Page, and thank you for agreeing to come back for a second session of questioning. A lot of ground was covered on Friday, so I want to clean up a couple of areas that I had questions on. So I might jump around a little bit. I'm going to try not to be repetitive from what you've already answered.

But I wanted to clarify, at a very basic level, sometimes in the media's reporting you've been referred to as an FBI agent. In the truest sense of the word, as an agent relates to a principal, you are an agent of the government. But in FBI parlance, is it correct to say that you're not an 1811 series investigator special agent?

A I am not.

Q You are, in fact, an attorney and were assigned to the General Counsel's Office.

A That's correct.

Q Okay.

You started to get into a little bit on Friday and you articulated the best you could that -- I think you opened the door as to the different types of investigations or how an investigation is opened. It's my understanding there's three basic types of investigations: There's an assessment. Then it moves to predicated investigations,

where you then have preliminary investigation and you have a full investigation. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And my understanding of the different types of investigations is, on one end of the spectrum, it's how that case is opened, how maybe credible the information is or how vague the information is. And then on the other end of the spectrum, it's what type of investigative techniques can be employed in that type of investigation. And --

A I wouldn't agree with respect to the substance of the information. It's not whether it's vague or credible or not. It's really an assessment -- and, again, I don't have the standards in front of me, but each level of, sort of, investigative permission affords different levels of tools available.

And so, to the extent you have more information or to the extent the information comes from a particularly credible source, it means that you can open a full investigation and -- but really the distinctions between -- certainly between a preliminary investigation and a full are a little bit of dancing on the head of a pin. I mean, these are very, sort of, nuanced, subtle. Any credible allegation is sufficient for the FBI to open an investigation and take action for -- to sort of generalize broadly.

Q But the assessment would be kind of the lower, a very initial -- the information maybe not even relating to a violation of criminal law or national security; it could be proactively -- to

prevent or to develop information about something the FBI is tasked to investigate?

A That's correct. I don't really want to -- I would hesitate to go down this path too carefully because there are multiple different types of assessments and different divisions have actually different authorities with respect to assessment, and I am by no means an expert on that. So without having the DIOG in front of me, I would not really be comfortable --

Q Sure.

A -- answering specific questions about --

Q Sure.

A -- what we can do at what level.

Q But at a very basic level, the assessment is kind of the lower tier. You're limited in the types of investigative techniques you can use in the assessment when you compare that to one of the predicated types, either the PI or the full.

A That is correct.

Q Okay. When you're talking about a PI or a full, I talked briefly about, you know, the one standard to open on the one end, and then the other end, when you have a PI or a full that's properly opened, those are the types of investigations where you can use the more sophisticated investigative techniques. Is that correct?

A They're not always sophisticated, but you can use more tools.

Q Certainly more than you could in the assessment.

A That's correct.

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Q And then one of the most sophisticated techniques would be a court-ordered Title III or a FISC-ordered FISA?

A That's correct.

Q And those techniques, even though they're authorized by the FBI's manual of -- that deals with compliance -- I believe it's referred to as the DIQG, domestic investigative operations guidelines, even though you're working with a validly opened, predicated investigation, when you get to those really extreme, sensitive techniques, the ones that are really intrusive, it's not just the FBI that decides or somebody in the FBI that decides, hey, we're going to use this technique. Is that correct?

A That's correct. With respect to both of the two you describe, both the Title 3 wiretap and a FISC order, not only do you have vast approvals within the FBI itself, both of those tools require high-level approval at the Justice Department. And, of course, with respect to a FISA order, the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, him or herself, has to approve that.

Q Okay. And then so, not only are there multiple approval levels for those type of techniques within the FBI, the Department of Justice also has approval requirements for that at the highest levels, but also there's court approval required for those. Is that not correct?

A Of course.

Q So it's fair to say that not one person in the FBI decides, hey, we're going to do this sophisticated technique, electronic

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surveillance of some sort, in a vacuum. There are levels outside the FBI and even outside the executive branch.

A That's correct. Certainly, the more intrusive the technique becomes, the greater supervision over that technique that the FBI has and the more approval levels, both within and outside the Department, will fall.

Q There are in many places in the FBI, I believe, opportunities for people that believe that compliance is not being adhered to -- there's many opportunities for people to report compliance concerns. And I believe this DIOG that we referenced has specific requirements for a supervisor that opens a case, if he's concerned the compliance isn't being met, there's opportunities to report if you believe that something is not being adhered to, either in the opening, the reporting, or the use of techniques in an investigation. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q If you can -- I don't think this would be classified; if it's not, don't answer -- what is an IOB violation?

A It's not that it's classified; it's that I don't want to misspeak.

Essentially, if there is a compliance violation associated with the activity that the FBI conducts while wearing its intelligence community hat, so it would presumably be classified, but it would be in the conduct of not a criminal investigation but a classified investigation, to the extent there's an error, for example, an

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overproduction, you know, we -- this is just for example's sake: We issue a national security letter. We receive back information which is beyond that which we're permitted to obtain pursuant to a national security letter. If that were to be uploaded into our, sort of, primary database, that would be an overproduction, and that would need to be required to the IOB.

So it doesn't necessarily speak to the severity or the nature of the compliance incident, but compliance incidents involving the activity we conduct on the intelligence side, on the classified side of the work we do is reported to the IOB and often to other entities depending on whether it pertained to a FISA order or something else.

Q Thank you. That's very helpful.

So, outside the confines of any particular investigation, there is a mechanism and there are people responsible to receive and look into compliance issues.

A Oh, yes.

Q Okay. During your employment with the FBI, specifically your role with Midterm or the Russia investigation, are you aware of any compliance issues that were raised or even to the level of an IOB violation?

A Not during the period of time in which I was on either investigation, no.

Q Had you heard about --

A I have since heard -- can I consult with counsel? I'm sorry.

Q Absolutely.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Thank you. Upon consultation with FBI counsel, I'm either -- I'm not sure whether the answer would call for a classified answer or whether I would be permitted to answer the question fully. But I can say, during the period of time that I was involved in both the Clinton email investigation and the Russia investigation, I am not aware of any compliance incident or event requiring reporting to the IOB.

BY MR. BAKER:

Q Okay. So, during your tenure or at another time, there -- without the specifics of the violation, the mechanisms for reporting compliance issues, including IOB violations, was not stymied, stifled --

A Oh, no, no. They exist. Yes.

Q Okay. And they would be complied with, as far as you know.

A Yes.

Q Okay. The FBI --

A I guess I would note, too, that the Department of Justice plays a significant oversight role with respect to what gets reported to the IOB or to the FISC. And so, again, it's not an issue that exists solely within the FBI's purview to determine but is often identified by the Department of Justice and then the FBI would follow up with an IOB or other notification as appropriate.

Q And would it be correct to say, in addition to that mechanism, the FBI has their own internal audits of those techniques. The

National Security Law Branch and others, the Inspection Division, conducts random inspections of the files that were used to utilize those sophisticated techniques.

A That is correct, yes.

Q Okay.

The FBI, by its very motto, "Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity," subscribes to very high ideals. They also have a core value -- a list of core values that certainly is not intended to be exhaustive, but what they indicate in the fewest words possible to sort of be the essence and the heart of the FBI: rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States; respect for the dignity of all those we protect; compassion, fairness, uncompromising personal integrity and institutional integrity; accountability by accepting responsibility for our actions and decisions and their consequences; leadership by example, both personal and professional.

Do you believe that everyone, to the best of your knowledge, associated with Midyear Exam and the Russian investigation upheld the FBI's core values?

A I think so, yes.

Q And do you believe based on your experience as an attorney -- and your role of an attorney, if I'm not mistaken, would be to advise the investigators and other members of the team on legal issues, what they could, what they couldn't do, and potentially compliance issues as well.

A So that is the role of an attorney. I wouldn't agree that

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that was necessarily my role, because I was not on the -- as I described, I think, on Friday, I was not on the team in the same way that the other, sort of, members of the investigative team were. I was really -- I was supporting the Deputy Director, so I was, in a way, a liaison between the team and, sort of, executive management at the FBI.

So I wouldn't say that my role certainly in any day-to-day capacity was to provide legal advice to the team.

Q So, in your role as a liaison from the Deputy's office to the Midyear team, what was your role as a liaison? Did you attend meetings? You relayed information back?

A I did. Both of those things. As I think I described on Friday, part of the value that I tried to add to the Deputy Director's office was to ensure that he had the most complete information possible at all times. And so I definitely stayed abreast of the investigative activity. To the extent there were disagreements or frustrations with the Department or areas where there might -- where a disagreement or other issue might ultimately rise to the Deputy Director's level, I tried to stay abreast of those as well, keep him sufficiently informed.

Q And while you were assigned attorney adviser, special assistant, what was your title in the Deputy's office as an OGC rep?

A Counsel or special counsel to the Deputy Director.

Q Were you -- I mean, you're answering to the Deputy. You're still a part of OGC technically, though, right?

A Yes. I am a part of OGC. I'm still a lawyer. I'm still, you know, to the extent relevant, covered by the attorney-client

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privilege. But my role is to support the Deputy Director. But, to that end, I was in regular, if not daily, contact with the general counsel to sort of ensure that our efforts and information was in sync.

Q But you're not giving legal advice to the Deputy per se.

A We're sort of splitting hairs. I may have been, depending on the issue. My role was not necessarily to tell him, this is permissible, this is impermissible. That is really what OGC was there to do. He might ask me, you know, what do you think, and certainly that might result in the conveyance of legal advice. But he has an entire division devoted to that type of activity. I was there more to help him make decisions and, sort of, apply judgment to what it was we were looking at.

I also, because of the unique position, had a macro view of the entire organization. And so I sort of tried to help connect dots that may have seemed otherwise disparate but might ultimately have a relevance with respect to whatever particular issue was in front of us, not just in the Clinton investigation.

Q And if something came your way in this assignment that related to legal advice, you certainly had the resources of the General Counsel's Office to reach out to or to incorporate in a decision on whatever the legal issue might be.

A That's correct. And, in fact, that is what I did. So, to the extent -- just as an example, if the Deputy Director was reviewing a FISA and he had a question about the sufficiency of the probable cause, he might ask me my opinion, and I might give it, but, at the end of

the day, it would not stop there. We would return it to the General Counsel's Office. He would consult with Mr. Baker or the deputy general counsel or whomever had the substantive information necessary and would get the, sort of, final legal determination from the Office of General Counsel.

Q So the way the General Counsel's Office is set up, it's not a lot of general practitioners. It sounds like there's a lot of very specific specialists. You have national security law people that would know answers to FISA-type questions. You have criminal lawyers that would maybe know answers to just general investigative techniques.

So you would kind of coordinate where a particular question that the Deputy might have might be properly referred to in the General Counsel's Office.

A That's exactly right, yes, and to other divisions as well. To the extent it was not a legal question that came up but simply, you know, the Deputy wants more information about this operational plan, I might also reach back into a substantive division to pass that information along.

Q Okay.

You mentioned in your role as a liaison you would go to a lot of meetings, frequent meetings, and report back to the Deputy. Was there disagreement, dissension at these meetings on any particular path to take, either investigatively or prosecuting?

We talked a little bit Friday about the decision to or to not charge in specific statutes. There was this issue of Mr. Comey

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drafting this press release and then releasing -- doing the press release and then letters to Congress.

Was there dissension in meetings about any of these controversial topics, or was everybody, yes, we agree with this? How did that work?

A That's a very broad question. If you are talking specifically about the Clinton email investigation --

Q Okay.

A Is that --

Q For now.

A Okay. So certainly there are, you know, 8 or 10 of us who made up sort of the core group of people who met with Director Comey. There was -- I wouldn't say dissension, but there was the benefit of that group and the comfort that we all with each other, and, in fact, the kind of culture and environment that Director Comey tried to foster absolutely allowed for disagreement, and we were all quite comfortable, I think, expressing our views.

And to the extent somebody said we should take X step and somebody disagreed, it was entirely common for that group of individuals to openly disagree with one another, to do so in front of the Director, in the hopes that the best answer would sort of rise to the top.

Q And is that how it ultimately was decided? Is that how a decision was decided? There was discussion, there was consensus, the best decision rose to the top? Was there ever a vote and just simple majority --

A This is the FBI. It's not a majority rule. The Director

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would make an ultimate decision. So, no, I am not aware of anything ever being based on majority vote. It's the Director's -- he leads the organization. He's the one who'd ultimately be accountable for those decisions.

But the people that I worked with and that group of people who would regularly meet with the Director all unquestionably felt free to voice their views.

Q Do you recall Director Comey ever taking a position that was contrary to the consensus of the group?

A I wouldn't say "consensus." I don't think that that's a fair statement. I was not present for the meeting in October when he decided to send -- to notify Congress of his decision to reopen the Clinton email investigation, but I am aware that there was disagreement among the team. There was not a consensus that everybody agreed it should be done. People had different views about whether we should and whether we shouldn't and the timing of it if we did in the first place. And ultimately it was Director Comey's decision to make.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q Could we back up for a second? Art asked a pretty compound question. Was there dissent, disagreement, however you would characterize it, with investigative techniques on the Midyear Exam?

A Investigative techniques? That's a really broad question.

Q Whether a search warrant should be used?

A Oh. So this was before I was involved in the investigation,

but it's my understanding -- it's not a disagreement within the FBI, but there were lots and lots and lots of disagreements between the FBI and the Department.

Generally, I can't think of anything in particular that would have been FBI-specific with respect to, like, this agent wants to take step X and this agent -- somebody else wants to take step Y.

But, certainly, my understanding is, at the outset of the investigation -- again, I was not personally involved, but there was a great deal of discussion between the FBI and the Department with respect to whether to proceed, obtain the server which housed the bulk of Secretary Clinton's emails, pursuant to consent or pursuant to a subpoena or other compulsory process.

Q And was that dissent between the FBI and the Department?

A That's correct. Yes.

Q And what was the FBI's preference?

A To obtain it pursuant to compulsory process.

Q The server?

A I'm sorry?

Q The server?

A The server, yes. Sorry.

Q And how about -- were there any other disagreements between the Department and the --

A Oh, my gosh. I mean --

Q -- FBI on investigative techniques?

A Yes, all the time. In a vacuum, it's hard to just come up

with them off the top of my head.

Q Was the FBI being told that it couldn't use certain investigative techniques by the Department?

A "It couldn't use." Not -- I'm trying to think of specific examples. I'm sorry. Not that -- to the extent there would be a disagreement, I don't think it would ever be quite that strident. I think it would be the view of the Department that it was strategically advantageous.

Oh. Well, so here is an example. We had -- but this is not about the type of process to obtain, but there were, I think, months of disagreement with respect to obtaining the Mills and Samuelson laptops.

So Heather Mills and -- Cheryl Mills and Heather Samuelson were both lawyers who engaged in the sorting. Once it had been identified that Secretary Clinton had these emails -- I'm guessing it's pursuant to the FOIA request, but I don't really know -- she -- well, our understanding is that she asked her two lawyers to take the bulk of the 60,000 emails and to sort out those which were work-related from those which were personal and to produce the work-related ones to the State Department.

They did so. That 30,000 is sort of the bulk of the emails that we relied on in order to conduct the investigation, although we found other emails a jillion other places.

We, the FBI, felt very strongly that we had to acquire and attempt to review the content of the Mills and Samuelson laptops because, to the extent the other 30,000 existed anywhere, that is the best place

that they may have existed. And notwithstanding the fact that they had been deleted, you know, we wanted at least to take a shot at using, you know, forensic recovery tools in order to try to ensure that, in fact, the sorting that occurred between -- or by Mills and Samuelson was done correctly and --

Q Sorry.

A No, that's okay.

Q It was -- is that -- for lack of a better term, is it usual to rely on the target of an investigation to provide evidence against the target?

A Well, that happens. That's not uncommon. I mean, in white-collar cases in particular, issuing subpoenas to the target, even though -- particularly if it's, like, a corporate target, that's certainly a way to do it.

You're misunderstanding a little bit, though, because that sort and all of that activity took place before there was a criminal investigation. So that activity is what -- the testimony that we received, the, sort of, evidence we received, is that the State Department reaches out to Secretary Clinton when they discover, "We don't have your emails on a State Department system. Do you have your emails?" And the answer is, "Yes." And the State Department, rather than the State Department itself conducting that analysis of whether or not there was -- or whether these emails were work-related or not, deferred to Secretary Clinton to do that.

So this long precedes any FBI investigation or any FBI

involvement.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q But didn't you say that months went by before you made the determination as to whether to access those laptops --

A No. I'm sorry.

Q -- though consent or through --

A Yes.

Q -- compulsory process?

A But that's -- so we have to -- we're talking about two different events here.

Back in 2013 -- I don't remember when -- this is before there was any FBI investigation. When there is first an inquiry by the State Department into why do we have no Secretary Clinton emails that go to Secretary Clinton herself, that precipitates Mills and Samuelson conducting this sorting activity and producing to the State Department, here are the emails which are work-related. Produce them to FOIA, produce them to Congress, wherever they went. I have no idea. We had nothing to do with this -- we, the FBI.

Skip ahead to February/March of 2016, right? The criminal investigation has now been open for 6 or 7 months. We discover that -- we discover these facts, right? These facts were not known to us. We don't know how she first did the sorting for the State Department. We discover these facts.

We go to the Department and say: We need to get these laptops. We need to try to get in them and review them and see if, in fact, there

are other emails which either are work-related or, potentially -- what we were really looking for -- other emails which would speak to, you know, give some indicia of her intent with respect to why she set up this server and whether it was intended to mishandle classified and all of that.

That back-and-forth starting February/March-ish of 2016 and going through, I'd say, June of 2016 is the disagreement I was referring to. So that's a disagreement between us, the FBI, and the DOJ with respect to why we needed to get these laptops and how to get these laptops.

And what the FBI believed -- and there's copious texts about this because it was a, sort of, ongoing argument -- was that we had to at least attempt to get them. Even if we were unsuccessful, even if a court determined that they were attorney-client work product or opinion work product, which is what the Department was concerned about, we couldn't credibly close the investigation without having tried to get into these laptops and to have reviewed -- see if any additional emails could be recovered and to question Mills and Samuelson about how they engaged in that sort in order to see whether it seemed righteous and, you know, proper or whether there was anything, kind of, nefarious or questionable about it.

The Department's view for months was that we would not be able to get into them, a court would not, sort of, grant us access, so we shouldn't bother trying. And that was a source of -- I wouldn't say constant conflict but regular conflict every time it came up. Because

quite early on we started pushing the Department to reach out to Mills' lawyer and -- Mills and Samuelson's lawyer to sort of start the process of trying to get into these laptops, and the Department was very reluctant to do so for the reasons that I've described.

Q So you had the opportunity, then, conceivably, to execute a search warrant -- if you're using the timetable you had mentioned -- back in February of 2016. You could have executed a search warrant and obtained those --

A Well, not without the Department, right? The Department has to -- we cannot on our own, the FBI cannot execute a search warrant without approval from the Justice Department.

Q So was the Department pushing back on obtaining compulsory process to obtain those laptops? Because months, you say, go by. I mean, in your timetable from February to June, what is that --

A Ish. Let me just be --

Q -- 4 to 5 months? Four or 5 months passes before you are able to gain access to those laptops.

A To the best of my recollection, yes. It's either February or March. I just want to put a little bit of hedge in it, because I'm not 100-percent certain.

But I know that the conversations about whether to obtain the laptops and how to obtain the laptops is one that is ongoing. It is one that ultimately rises to the head of the OEO, the Office of Enforcement Operations, which is the unit at the Justice Department who would have to approve a warrant on a lawyer -- because, of course,

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these were all lawyer laptops. It rose to that individual, it rose to George Toscas, over the course of this 3 months or so.

But, yes, there was an ongoing disagreement about whether there was utility to obtain the laptops and, if so, how to obtain them.

Q So, in your experience, what may happen when a subject of an investigation is aware that the FBI is attempting to obtain evidence yet the FBI does not obtain it and months pass? What are the possibilities?

A Obviously, there's the risk of destruction of evidence. I will note, however, that it's my recollection that those laptops had been sequestered by Mills and Samuelson's lawyer. So it's not -- I don't believe that they were in the possession of Mills and Samuelson once we, sort of, started raising this question with the Department. It's my recollection that the Department informed Mills and Samuelson's lawyer that we had an interest in these and that she took possession of them.

Q So destruction of evidence. Can you imagine any other possibilities if you fail to obtain the evidence and the subject is aware of it?

Ms. Jeffress. I'm not sure what the question is.

Ms. Page. Yeah, I'm not sure. I'm sorry.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q Any other possibilities in the -- in terms of a subject being aware that evidence is attempting to be obtained by the FBI yet the FBI does not obtain that compulsory.

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A I think destruction of evidence is the big one.

Q And you were never aware that destruction of evidence occurred?

A Not to my knowledge, no.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q Okay. Then the second part of Art's question was disagreement about prosecutive techniques between the FBI and DOJ. Were there any disagreements about techniques for prosecution?

A No, because nobody thought that the evidence could sustain a prosecution. So --

Q What about, sort of -- I guess, what about impaneling a grand jury? Was there disagreement about whether a grand jury should be impaneled?

A A grand jury was impaneled.

Q But was there disagreement prior to the impaneling about timing?

A Oh. I'm not aware.

Q What about discussion about the statutes that should be charged or could be charged?

A No, I don't think so. I mean, it was always fairly self-evident that we were looking at mishandling statutes. And, again, the evidence was just never there to sufficiently support, really, a prosecution. I mean, I think they even looked at Federal Records Act violations -- they, meaning the Department -- and there

was never sufficient evidence to support any criminal prosecution under any statute.

Mr. Breitenbach. Was a grand jury impaneled for the purposes of the email investigation?

Ms. Page. Yes. That's my understanding.

Mr. Breitenbach. Okay.

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. Can I consult with counsel for a second?

Mr. Breitenbach. Yes.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Sorry.

Mr. Breitenbach. Are you aware of whether evidence was ever presented to the grand jury in terms of adjudicating a decision?

Ms. Page. Well, wait. "In terms of adjudicating a decision."
Are you --

Ms. Bessee. Can I address?

So I will instruct her not to answer any questions that go into the process of the grand jury.

He can rephrase the question, but if it goes into the process of the grand jury, you will not be able to answer.

Ms. Page. Well, why don't I answer -- I can't speak to whether any -- what activity was conducted before the grand jury. I can answer that no case was presented to the grand jury because that would have been an abuse of the grand jury.

The Department is required to at least believe that you have probable cause in order -- probable cause that a crime has been

committed. I'm sorry, that's not true. The Department's rules require that to present a case before the grand jury you have to have a reasonable belief that the case can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. And we did not have that belief with respect to the Clinton email investigation.

And so we would not have put the case before the grand jury, essentially presented all of the evidence that we had collected to date, because, it's my I assessment -- although, again, this is just me, personally, talking based on my prior experience as a prosecutor, not with respect to what was conducted in this investigation. But it's my assessment that that would've been an inappropriate use of grand jury, because the prosecutors putting in that evidence would not have believed that there was a crime to be charged.

Does that make sense? That was a little bit tortured.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q Yes. But, as the FBI, did you make a recommendation or not as to whether to present it to a grand jury?

A I don't know.

Q So it would've been the Department --

A So let me clarify one thing. The grand jury was used to obtain evidence. Right? So there are certain things, for example, like a subpoena of records, which would require the impaneling of a grand jury and using tools before the grand jury in order to obtain evidence. That occurred.

I am not, both substantively and also on advice of FBI counsel,

in a position to discuss what type of evidence was obtained by the grand jury.

What I can say is that I do not believe there was ever any disagreement with respect to whether we needed to ask the grand jury to return an indictment. It would have been inappropriate to have presented all of the evidence collected, whether by grand jury subpoena or any other tool -- consent, search warrants, testimony, you know, of other witness, interviews of witnesses. It would not have been appropriate to ask the grand jurors to return an indictment or to review the weight of the evidence where we did not believe that that case was prosecutable.

Q But was that the FBI's decision to make?

A No, it was the Department's decision to make. It was the decision made by the Department.

Q At the end of the day, you're saying it was the decision of the Department --

A Yes.

Q -- prosecutors not to present this to the grand jury for an indictment.

A That is correct, yes.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. PARMITER:

Q Can I ask a couple of additional questions regarding, sort of, the internal discussions and what was discussed?

Was there ever, in your experience, any discussion at any of the

meetings involving Midyear about whether the act of setting up the server itself was problematic or whether that showed any level of intent?

A I don't know.

Q But you were never -- you never experienced anything like that.

A I don't recall being present for a conversation like that. But, also, to the extent it may have occurred -- this investigation was opened in July of 2015. I don't become involved in it until February of 2016. So, to the extent there were questions about that, they may have been resolved before I was involved.

Q Okay.

How often, in your experience, does the FBI Director or the Deputy Director in the course of their ordinary duties access or review or, you know, have dealings with classified information?

A Every single day.

Q Every day. Okay. So what -- by being on a private server, would you agree classified information is not in its proper place?

A By being on any unclassified system, whether private or government, classified information should not have traversed it. That's correct.

Q So, given your answers to both of those questions, do you think that, you know, assuming the Deputy Director or the Director had set up a private server of their own, just hypothetically, to, you know, transact government business, all of their business, would you say it

would be inevitable that classified information would pass over that server?

A No, sir. So, at the FBI and at the State Department, we have three separate systems for each level of classification. So whether that system existed at the State Department or whether it existed on somebody's private server, inevitably if there was -- if it was somebody's private server, lots of unclassified government business would traverse that system in the same way it does for, you know, the FBI's unclassified system or the State Department's unclassified system, but there's nothing inevitable about whether or if classified information would traverse that unclassified system.

That certainly may happen occasionally on the FBI system, on an unclassified FBI-run system. It's called a spill. It's an inadvertent, sort of, passage of classified information on a system in which it doesn't belong. But the same is true if you're dealing with Top Secret information and it traverses the Secret side; that's also a spill.

So it's sort of indistinguishable whether the system itself is classified or unclassified, only in that it's not authorized to handle classified information.

Q So would you -- so, okay. So is your answer is that if, you know, a Cabinet Secretary or the FBI Director was using a private server to conduct all of their business that it's not inevitable that classified information would pass through that server?

A If they were using it to conduct every single thing they did.

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But it's not -- my understanding is that the Secret side was used for Secret business and the TS side was used for TS business. So if every single thing they did --

Q That's at the FBI, though, correct?

A Even at the State Department, it's my understanding. I mean, it was a much more cumbersome system, in part because the principals are constantly all over the world so the access to these other classified systems is less readily available and so it's, sort of, more cumbersome, it's, sort of, harder.

But if the question is, if every single thing that the FBI Director -- if all of the FBI Director's business was conducted on an unclassified system, whether FBI-run or privately run, then, yes, it is true, there would be classified information there.

But those facts as you presented them are not my understanding of what occurred, obviously, either at the FBI or at the State Department.

Mr. Meadows. Can I ask one clarifying question, Lisa?

It appears, based on documents that we have, that there was a conscious decision in the MYE to go down one avenue in terms of prosecution or potential prosecution, and that is with the retention of classified information on a private server, not the disclosure of classified information.

And, based on the documents we have, it looks like everybody focused on the retention but no one ever pursued the disclosure. Why was that made?

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Ms. Page. I --

Mr. Meadows. And would you agree with that characterization?

Ms. Page. I'm not positive. That's the thing that I hesitated about. So I'm not sure that I -- those were really activities that would have been handled at a lower level than I was involved in. These would have been the discussions --

Mr. Meadows. Right. In most of the documents, the caselaw that they were looking at only dealt with retention, which, actually, disclosure is a bigger deal from a national security threat. And yet it didn't appear that anybody looked at that, based on the documents we've reviewed.

Ms. Page. So my guess -- and this is -- I'm speculating here just based on my knowledge of what the statutes require -- is that disclosure requires intent. And so, particularly when we charge disclosure cases, it's often in the context, for example, of a media leak. Right? It's somebody who had possession of the information and disclosed it to somebody who was not authorized to have it. That's what those disclosure cases look like.

And what was occurring on Secretary Clinton's server is all people who were righteously entitled to the information and who had a need to know it and who were using that information in the execution of their duties, but it was occurring on a system that wasn't appropriate for it. So I think that's why the focus was on retention.

Mr. Meadows. And one more, and then I'll yield back.

We have information from the inspector general of the

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intelligence community that, I guess, initiated this entire investigation -- they were the ones that came before you -- that there were anomalies that would suggest that there was copies of every email going to a third party.

And I know you heard that in the hearing the other day, but we've had substantial conversations with them. Is this news to you today?

Ms. Page. It is. When I heard it in the hearing, it was -- maybe I had heard it one other time just with respect to, like, news things, but it was completely baffling to me.

Mr. Meadows. Yeah. So --

Ms. Page. I don't understand at all what that's a reference to. I do know that we gave the server -- again, I'm not a technical person, so this is going to be a little bit tortured here --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- but that we took exhaustive efforts to look at whether there were any other intrusions, whether there was any exfiltration --

Mr. Meadows. And you're saying they found none.

Ms. Page. Correct -- whether there was any exfiltration of data and --

Mr. Meadows. Well, we know that some -- but it was basically in the IG's report on how that came to pass.

So, I guess, why would the investigative team not have had multiple interviews with Mr. Rucker, who brought it to the FBI's attention originally?

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Ms. Page. I --

Mr. Meadows. Because, according to the IG, you never interviewed him and never interviewed them other than the initial conversation that brought it. Why would that have --

Ms. Page. So I can't speak to that, because I don't know whether he -- I'm relying on your representation that he was not interviewed, but I also don't know whether he ever came to the FBI during the pendency of the investigation and provided that allegation. If he had --

Mr. Meadows. Well, that was the whole reason it was opened up, is my understanding, was him coming. They get it, they come to the FBI. And so you're saying that's not the case?

Ms. Page. I don't -- I am really trying --

Mr. Meadows. Or that's not your understanding?

Ms. Page. That's not my understanding.

Mr. Meadows. So how did this whole MYE start if it wasn't from the --

Ms. Page. No, no.

Mr. Meadows. -- inspector --

Ms. Page. So my understanding -- and this is -- I am way out on a limb here, because this is not stuff I was involved in. But my understanding is that the IC IG did refer the existence of the server to the FBI, but that was because of the existence of classified information on that server, not because of any anomalous activity, not because of potential intrusion activity. Because it's not my understanding that the IC IG conducted any sort of forensic analysis

like that.

My understanding is that, once it was made evident during the course of, I think, the FOIA production or maybe the production to Congress that there was some classified information which existed on a private email server, it got referred to the IC IG for those purposes, not related to intrusive activity.

Mr. Meadows. So what you're telling me, it would surprise you to know today that, if there were anomalies, that the inspector general's forensic team found those before it was referred to the FBI?

Ms. Page. That's correct. I'm not sure --

Mr. Meadows. Would that -- if that is indeed the fact, would that be a major concern to you?

Ms. Page. It would be a concern that we didn't know that or that that wasn't part of what they told us when they made the referral, but less so, sir, honestly because our forensic investigators are so phenomenal that, notwithstanding whatever the IC IG may or may not have conveyed, I know we looked extensively at this question.

Because that was a serious question. And to the extent that a foreign government or even a criminal outlet had had access to Secretary Clinton's private email server, that would have been something we cared very much about. And it's my understanding that there was no evidence that would have supported that kind of conclusion.

Mr. Meadows. I yield back.

BY MR. BAKER:

Q Regardless of how phenomenal forensic investigators might

be, is it still possible that an extremely sophisticated foreign intelligence service could penetrate a server, could extract documents, could do a number of things without leaving a single forensic footprint?

A It's pretty -- I mean, everything is possible, but it's unlikely. I think Friday's indictments are revelatory of that. You don't get better than the GRU, and yet we have identified by name the people involved in the DNC hacking. So I think it's quite unlikely.

Q Okay.

Are you -- following up on what the Congressman was saying, are you familiar with a private entity, privately financed, using private forensic resources, for lack of a better word, went looking for some of the emails from Secretary Clinton's server, her network, and, in fact, found at least one document on a foreign server?

A I don't know what you're referring to, no.

Q Okay.

Mr. Breitenbach. We were produced information indicating that Mr. Strzok had indicated in an email that at least one Secret email was accessed by a foreign party. Are you aware of that?

Ms. Page. That may be true. I'm just not personally aware of that.

BY MR. PARMITER:

Q I believe on Friday, in discussing the statute that you were discussing, I believe, with Congressman Ratcliffe -- it was 793(f) of Title 18 -- you had said that that statute was deemed by DOJ to be

unconstitutionally vague. Is that correct?

A No. The "gross negligence" that -- the "gross negligence" standard in 793(f), it was their assessment that it was unconstitutionally vague, yes.

Q Were you involved in discussions about, you know, its vagueness?

A I don't believe I was, no.

Q Do you have any idea of why they believed it was unconstitutionally vague?

A I mean, I presume they looked at caselaw in which it had been applied. I really don't know. I mean, I'm -- I am confident that it was based on their own, sort of, research in consultation with others, but I don't have personal knowledge about what the Department did in order to come to that conclusion.

Q Okay.

Speaking of -- so did you do or did the OGC do their own evaluation of the statute, or did you just rely on DOJ's assessment?

A I don't know. I did not.

Q Okay.

A I can tell you that.

Q Speaking of caselaw, are you aware whether or not that statute has been used in military prosecutions or the frequency with which it was used in civilian prosecutions? I know you had said once in 99 years, but --

A I think that there -- this is straining my memory now, but

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I think that there may have been one UCMJ, Uniform Court of Military Justice --

Q Code of --

A -- Code of Military Justice -- thank you -- one UCMJ case in which it was charged, but, again, if my memory serves -- so I may get this wrong, but if my memory serves, the defendant in that case had actually engaged in far more nefarious and suspicious activity, and so it was a plea down to that, right? So if you're pleading to something, then you don't really need to worry about -- I mean, if it's unconstitutional, it's still unconstitutional.

But it was not the case -- again, my recollection is that it was somebody who had a hoard of classified information and then, when confronted, tried to destroy the classified information -- sort of, again, the indicia of knowledge and criminal intent that you will sometimes see.

So, if I'm not mistaken, there was one UCMJ case, but I think that's it.

Q So, speaking of a hoard of classified information, do you mean information that had been -- that was hard copies of physical documents?

A Hard copies and I think even, like -- if I'm remembering right, and I could be mixing this up with another case, but, like, a thumb drive of classified information that they were not authorized to have. So both hard copy and digital classified documents.

Q Do you believe --

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[Phone ringing.]

Ms. Page. Go ahead, please.

BY MR. PARMITER:

Q Just, you know, your own perspective on this, do you believe that -- what would be more vulnerable, classified material on a computer server where it's not supposed to be or hard copies of classified material at someone's house?

A Well, if you're talking about more vulnerable to a cyber attack, then obviously you need a computer in order for that to occur.

Q Okay.

Do you -- sort of, going further down the line of, you know, whether 793(f) in particular and the "gross negligence" standard in particular are unconstitutionally vague, I mean, do you think that DOJ views that as sort of a dead statute that won't be charged anymore?

A I do.

Q Are you aware whether or not --

A I mean, just the "gross negligence" part of it. I don't have it in front of me to -- but -- and, as I said last week, I'm by no means an expert.

Thank you. Go ahead.

Q So are you aware of whether or not the Bureau ever sought or obtained any sort of compulsory process, whether it's a search warrant or something else, on the basis of 793(f) in particular?

A I think so, but that would not have to have been the "gross negligence" prong. I think they could have relied on the second prong

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of --

Q On (f)2 right there --

A Right.

Q -- as opposed to (f)1?

A Yeah. And, again, I don't know what basis -- I shouldn't have answered that question. I am speaking out of turn. I do not know what statutes were alleged to the extent the Department sought compulsory process. I have no idea, so I shouldn't answer that.

Q Okay.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q If we were to tell you, though, that the search warrant was predicated on 793, is that something that would be normal, to base a search warrant and predicate a search warrant on a statute that the Bureau is being told is unconstitutional?

A You're misunderstanding. So 793(f) has two parts to it. The second part -- so the first is, okay, whoever being entrusted with having lawful possession or control of any document relating to the national defense, one, through gross negligence permits it to be removed or, two, having knowledge of the same, that it has been illegally removed, shall be fined -- blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

So there would be nothing inappropriate for them to rely on the second prong of 793(f), which is regularly charged and is a perfectly common statute with respect to mishandling cases. There would be nothing inappropriate with respect to relying on the second prong of 793(f), in my view.

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Q What are some of the factors that might rise to the level of "gross negligence," in your opinion?

A I don't know. I have done absolutely no research or review of this. I'm not in a position to answer that.

Q Did Mr. McCabe ever ask you that as his lawyer?

A He did not.

Q Do you know whether Mr. Baker ever conducted any independent analysis on the factors that might have met a "gross negligence" charge?

A I don't know.

But, at the end of the day, this is the Department's determination. I mean, it is up to the Department to determine whether or not we have sufficient evidence to charge a case. So, even hypothetically, to the extent the FBI thought, you know, we have infinite evidence to support charge A, if the Department disagrees, the Department is going to have the final determination because they are the prosecutors. So --

Q But if the FBI is not aware of the particular factors that might be available in meeting that standard, then how would it know whether to recommend to the Department to obtain any type of prosecution based on that standard?

A I mean, the FBI has to -- necessarily has to rely on the Department's assessment of what's legally supportable under the law. So there's nothing inappropriate about that sort of reliance.

I'm not saying that no research was conducted. I'm saying that I personally didn't do any. And to the extent it was conducted, I'm

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just not aware of it as I sit here today.

Mr. Meadows. So let me ask you a clarifying question. Because I think this was an unusual case where Loretta Lynch, the AG, said that she was going to be independent of it and that she was going to leave it up to the FBI.

So, if you did no research and from a "grossly negligent" standpoint, how would you make the decision to prosecute or not if she was being independent of that?

Ms. Page. So, sir, I think that what she said was that she was going to leave it up to the career prosecutors, not up to the FBI. So, when she did her, kind of, half-recusal, she said that she was going to defer to the recommendations of the career prosecutors in the case.

Mr. Meadows. So what you're saying is that she halfway recused herself but not really because there was other DOJ officials that were weighing in on that?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry, I should have been more clear. I can't speak to the recusal and whether it was appropriate or inappropriate or necessary --

Mr. Meadows. No, but your characterization --

Ms. Page. Oh, okay.

Mr. Meadows. And I agree it's a half-recusal. Because, at this point -- so are you saying that it was prosecutors at DOJ that made the decision on the "grossly negligent" versus "extremely careless" narrative?

Ms. Page. No.

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Mr. Meadows. Or was that the FBI?

Ms. Page. No, no, no. So, I'm sorry, I understand your question now.

With respect to whether a charge could be sustained under the "gross negligence" statute, that's a determination made by the Department.

With respect to Mr. Comey's July 5th statement, when he -- in his first draft of the statement back in May, he used the word "gross negligence." I don't know whether he used it intending to rely on its legal definition or not.

With respect to the statement, we, the FBI, felt like it would be confusing and misleading to use the word "gross negligence" when the information that we had received from the Department was that there was no charge sustainable under the "gross negligence" statute. And so we, the FBI, omitted the "gross negligence" words in his press conference statement and moved up the paragraph that already contained the "extremely careless" language into a different spot in his speech.

Mr. Meadows. So, Lisa, why would you change that within 2 days of -- you know, you admitted the other day, on I think it was May the 4th, where you said now there was real pressure to get the politics out of it. And then we know within days that it was changed in what we call the exoneration letter. So why would that have changed at that particular point? Do you see how it looks bad?

Ms. Page. I do. But -- so it's the -- that's just when we had -- we, the whole team, had received the draft. Right? So the

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Director -- and I don't remember the exact date --

Mr. Meadows. But you received the draft before the text message that says, oh, my gosh, now he's the nominee. And so you had actually received it. We've got documents --

Ms. Page. Is that right? I just don't remember the dates exactly, sir.

Mr. Meadows. And so receiving -- it was not after that. You got that, and then all of a sudden within 48 hours it's changed. And as a reasonable person, you look, well, there's this statement and then all of a sudden it was changed. And you're saying that that had nothing to do with it?

Ms. Page. Yeah, I don't -- I'm not sure I'm totally following you, sir. I'm sorry.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. Well, I'll be clear --

Ms. Page. I'm sorry.

Mr. Meadows. -- because I want you to follow.

Ms. Page. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mr. Meadows. And you know that I've appreciated your willingness to help.

When you said that we had to get politics out of it and you changed --

Ms. Page. The pressure. I think what I said was that --

Mr. Meadows. -- the pressure ramped up.

Ms. Page. -- now that it was a two-person race -- I'm going to try to find the text itself. But now that it was a two-person race,

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the pressure to finish it had sort of increased.

Mr. Meadows. Right. So the memo was May 2nd.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. Your text message that we've got to clear this up was May 4.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. And then we know it was changed by May 6. And that's a real problematic timeframe that would indicate that all of a sudden we've got to get this cloud from over, you know -- -

Ms. Page. Oh, I see.

Mr. Meadows. -- Hillary Clinton and we better change -- and it's just -- it looks suspicious.

Ms. Page. I see what you're saying, sir. I don't know if this is reassuring at all, but the decision to change the statement, to omit the "gross negligence" language from the statement, was actually not either me or Pete's recommendation. It was another lawyer. I don't know if this is any consolation, but --

Mr. Meadows. Yeah. We've got the email chains. So who was the other lawyer?

Ms. Page. I'm --

Mr. Meadows. That's a closed case. You should be able to tell us.

Ms. Page. I have been told by the FBI that people, other than myself, who are GS-15s, we're not, sort of, providing that.

Mr. Meadows. So you're saying this is someone lower than a GS-15

that made that kind of decision?

Ms. Page. Well, it's not a decision; it's just legal advice, right? So there were a group of us --

Mr. Meadows. You're saying someone lower than a GS-15 make a legal decision --

Ms. Page. No. It was a GS-15. It's not lower than. It was a GS-15. So we had received --

Mr. Meadows. So was it Ms. Moyer?

Ms. Page. We had received the draft of the statement. A group of us had gotten together in order to consolidate our comments so that we were not providing back to the chief of staff to the Director four separate drafts that they had to now reconcile.

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. So the four of us got together. We were sort of reviewing it, sort of, step by step. And the recommendation was: I don't think that we should use this phrase, "gross negligence," because it has an actual legal term.

And it was our collective understanding that the Department did not think that -- and we agreed -- that there was not sufficient evidence to support both "gross negligence" and that, more importantly, it was not a sustainable statute because it was unconstitutionally vague and never charged.

And so we, really, sort of, as a collective but on recommendation of counsel, removed that language and moved up the "extremely careless" paragraph.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Ms. Page, let me ask you a question. How well do you know Jim Comey?

Ms. Page. How well do I know Jim Comey?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah.

Ms. Page. I mean, he's not my personal friend, but I've been in a lot of meetings with him.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did any of the other folks that you're referencing in connection with making the change have more prosecutorial experience than Jim Comey?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Ratcliffe. As someone that knows Jim Comey, is he a person that chooses his words carefully?

Ms. Page. He is, yeah. But I --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Would he throw around a term like "gross negligence" not really meaning gross negligence?

Ms. Page. In this case, I actually think so, sir, but only because it's a term that obviously he was familiar with in the statute, but as DAG I am certain he would not have ever seen such a case. And the truth of the matter is 793(f) is not necessarily a particularly controversial statute; it's one that's used with some regularity. And so I'm not sure, as I sit here today, how familiar with the detail and the specifics of 793(f) he would have been.

So my guess is he's trying to use a term that makes sense, that has sort of a commonsense feel to it, which "gross negligence" does and obviously appears in the statute. But it was sort of our assessment

that to use that phrase, because it does have a legal meaning, but then to not charge gross negligence, as we knew it was not supportable, would just be confusing.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But you knew it was not supportable because the Department of Justice told you that it wouldn't be supportable.

Ms. Page. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So you accepted that as the basis for which you wanted to make that change?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Meadows. I think we're out of time, but one last question real quickly.

So you made that determination without having interviewed the last 17 witnesses and Ms. Clinton?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir, because the legal determination wouldn't have been affected by the factual -- the facts, sort of, that may have come out of those investigations, right?

So let's assume things are going swimmingly and, in fact, all 17 of those witnesses admit, "We did it, it was on purpose, we totally wanted to mishandle classified information," gross negligence would still have been off the table because of the Department's assessment that it was vague. We would have other crimes to now charge, but gross negligence would not have been among them.

Mr. Meadows. Thank you.

[Recess.]

[12:10 p.m.]

Ms. Kim. We'll go back on the record. The time is 12:10.

Thank you for being here, Ms. Page.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. KIM:

Q Where you left off that discussion with Mr. Meadows, I just want to read you back testimony that you gave last week and see if that is responsive to the question.

So you said it was the FBI team's understanding that, quote, "we neither had sufficient evidence to charge gross negligence nor had it ever been done because the Department viewed it as constitutionally vague."

Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And so you said that: When we saw the term gross negligence in the Director's statements, we were concerned that it would be confusing to leave it in there because it was our understanding that we did not have sufficient evidence nor the sort of constitutional basis to charge gross negligence.

Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q And so you said what you actually did was you didn't change the language. You -- and this is me directly quoting you. "We didn't actually change gross negligence to extremely careless. We removed the gross negligence language."

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Extremely careless had already appeared in that draft, so it was Director Comey's language, was it not?

A That's correct.

Q And we moved that draft up earlier -- we moved that paragraph earlier in the draft.

So it was not a substitution. It was simply an omission of the phrase gross negligence because the legal team believed it would be confusing.

Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Thank you.

Ms. Page, there have been some other representations made about your testimony last week already in the press.

I think one representation that has been made to the press is that there was an inconsistency in the way that you read a text versus the way that Mr. Strzok explained the text.

I would like to read your testimony about that text to you. The text I'm talking about is the "menace" text?

A Okay.

Q So you stated when you were confronted with the text: "Well, I'm not certain, to be honest with you. I think it's Donald Trump, but the reason I'm hesitating is because this is so close in time to the opening of the Russia investigation that the concern that we all had was there was a member of his campaign colluding with Russia was so great that I'm not -- I'm not 100 percent positive that I can split

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those."

Do you recognize that as your testimony from last week?

A Yes.

Q Mr. Strzok, when asked about that same text, stated: "Sir, my understanding of the word 'menace' and the use of 'menace' was the broad context of the Government of Russia's attempts to interfere with our election. To the extent those allegations involved credible information that members of the Trump campaign might be actively colluding, I see that as a broad effort by the Government of Russia. So I don't think you can tease it apart, sir, but it is inaccurate to say that it just meant Mr. Trump."

Given those two statements, would you agree with the characterization that those two were incompatible statements?

A So I think that we're trying to say the same thing. He probably said it more artfully. But, again, because this text is coming so close in time and it involved my both feeling about my personal distaste for Donald Trump as a person, but also my now concern because of the predication we had received which would open the investigation, I think that what we are saying essentially is consistent.

And ultimately, it's his -- you know, this is sort of -- whatever I intended may not have been ultimately what he perceived. So it's hard to say that there is an absolute truth with respect to that -- that statement.

I guess the other thing I would say -- well, I guess that's sufficient.

Q And, Ms. Page, I think in beginning that colloquy on Friday, you said you weren't certain. So that suggests to me that maybe you don't remember precisely what you intended.

Is that correct?

A I do not. And I think I also said that -- I'm clearly referring to an article or an op-ed that, I guess was about other GOP leaders who weren't standing up to the President and my frustration about that.

So I don't know to the extent that that was also informing what I was thinking about, but I have, as I sit here today, can't tell you concretely because it was just a sort of flash in time.

Q Understood. Thank you.

And then one more thing. You were asked on Friday again about the Christopher Steele dossier and how it came to the FBI.

I believe you claimed that you were not really involved with how the dossier came to the FBI so you weren't clear on its providence. Is that correct?

A No, that is not correct. I am very clear about its providence.

Q Oh, you're very clear about its providence?

A How we received the reports from Christopher Steele, yes, I am very clear about how we received those.

Q Certainly. So are you also clear then as to whether Bruce Ohr gave those dossiers to the FBI?

A This is in the category of things that I can't answer.

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What I can say is when we first received the set of reports that are commonly referred to as the dossier, that initial -- our having obtained those documents initially, did not come from Bruce Ohr. They came from Christopher Steele through his handler to the FBI.

Q Understood. Thank you.

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q I just want to -- good morning.

A Good morning. Please go ahead. I'm sorry.

Q I just want to go back quickly to the discussion about the differences between the DOJ and the FBI on compulsory process and just general legal or investigative differences that may have existed during the Midyear investigation.

So generally speaking, when there were disagreements between the FBI and DOJ on how to seek evidence, what was the DOJ's position, as far as you can characterize? Like in the sense would the FBI generally want to pursue a more aggressive stance and DOJ was more conservative, and is that common in investigations overall?

A Yes. That is true with respect to this investigation. I think that even the IG found that the FBI consistently wanted to take more aggressive steps in the Clinton investigation.

It's hard to characterize, you know, two enormous institutions of many tens of thousands of people monolithically. But certainly in the counterintelligence realm, the Department tends to be quite cautious and quite conservative.

Q And in the case of the Midyear investigation, do you think

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the career prosecutors that disagreed on pursuing a more aggressive stance, this was based on legitimate legal differences of opinion or was it something on a -- was there a political bias involved or --

A I'm not aware of any political bias.

Q In the inspector general's report, on page 79, I'm just going to quickly read the quote. Quote: "Despite the public perception that the Midyear investigation did not use a grand jury and instead relied exclusively on consent, we found that agents and prosecutors did use grand jury subpoenas and other compulsory process to gain access to documentary and digital evidence. According to the documents we reviewed, at least 56 grand jury subpoenas were issued, 5 court orders were obtained pursuant to 18 USC 2703(d) orders, and 3 search warrants were granted," end quote.

Were you part of any of the decisions to issue one of the 56 grand jury subpoenas?

A I was not, no.

Q Or the 2703(d) orders?

A No.

Q Were you part of any of the decisions to issue the search warrants?

A I don't think so.

Q Generally speaking, can you speak to why the FBI advocated for the use of compulsory process in this case?

A I can't really --

Q Or before.

A Yeah, I can't answer that question in the abstract. So, I mean, if there's a specific example you want me to speak to, I can try, but --

Q So, again, it's just -- we're trying to understand what the difference between DOJ's approach to the case versus the FBI's approach. And so, again, in your experience, was the differences based on legitimate legal arguments or a strategic argument?

A I'm sure that's true, yes.

BY MS. KIM:

Q So let's take from the abstract to the specific. So I think you were talking about the culling laptops and the server, the decision whether to pursue those through compulsory process or to obtain those through consent agreements.

In your interactions with Department of Justice personnel, were their arguments that those should be pursued through consent processes governed by what you saw as differences of opinion from you that were legitimate and grounded in legal justification?

A Yeah, I would say so. We -- what I personally found frustrating is the Department would sort of make a determination that -- part of the argument was that we would not be able to obtain the laptops pursuant to compulsory process, which I -- as to my own personal experience -- disagreed with. I thought that we would be able to. Maybe there might be strategic reasons not to, there might be other reasons not to.

But I disagreed sort of foundationally that it would not be

available to us because we would not be able to make out the standard, or to be able to pierce attorney-client privilege, or more likely, in my view, there was a disagreement about whether it was -- the sorting activity conducted by Mills and Samuelson was opinion work product, which is quite protected under the law, versus some other privilege.

And so the frustration was in their sort of unwillingness to explain their reasoning. They sort of, for many -- for some time -- simply stated, as a matter of course: We can't, and we won't be able to.

And it was my view that that was not the case. And I did my own research with respect to that topic because I was frustrated. And so we had sort of an ongoing back and forth about that.

But, yes, it was grounded in, you know, legal disagreement ultimately.

Q And was it the subject of rigorous and vigorous debate?

A Yes.

Q Extensive debate where you were free to express your point of view?

A Yes.

Q And extensive debate where the DOJ did eventually express its point of view about its strategic justifications?

A Yes.

Q And do you have any reason or evidence to believe that those strategic decisions were based on improper considerations, including political bias?

A No, I do not. I have no reason to believe that.

Ms. Hariharan. Did any of the senior political leaders of the DOJ intervene at all in the decision to seek or not seek compulsory process?

Ms. Page. With respect to that decision, yes.

So this was very much a -- we were at very much a standstill for a considerable amount of time. And it's my understanding -- I know for sure that Mr. McCabe had multiple conversations with George Toscas on the topic because we all, including up through the Director, just agreed that we could not credibly end this investigation without having attempted to obtain those laptops and search them.

And we were sort of not making progress trying to explain or convince the Department prosecutors, the line prosecutors involved in the investigation, of this feeling. And even though we kept invoking the Director, and we would sort of say, like, we are not going to close this thing until we have tried to get this, they didn't see it as useful.

They didn't think it was going to change the outcome of the investigation, which we agreed with. We didn't have a reason to think it would change the outcome of the investigation.

It wasn't about thinking that for sure there would be different evidence in those laptops. It was about our credibility to be able to say that we ran down every sort of necessary investigative lead.

And so because we had sort of reached a stalemate a number of times on this discussion, I know that it was elevated to certainly the Deputy Director and George Toscas.

If I'm not mistaken, I think that even the Director may have had a conversation with Sally Yates, the DAG, about it, but I'm not positive. If it occurred it's in the IG report, but I don't recall exactly.

BY MS. KIM:

Q So that call seems to be DOJ expressing at the highest -- or excuse me -- the FBI expressing at its highest levels the decision to pursue a certain investigative step and convincing the Department to come along with the FBI's reasoning. Is that accurate?

A Not its legal reasoning, but its strategic reasoning, yes.

Q That's -- yes. Thank you.

Are you aware of any instances where it went the other way, where the FBI wanted to take strident action but a senior political official at the DOJ had to talk the FBI down in the Clinton email case?

Let me try to -- let me try -- you look puzzled, so I mean --

A Yeah, I --

Q Let the record reflect you look puzzled.

A Okay.

Q Let me try to explain a little bit more clearly what I mean.

I think the concern here is that there was a Democratically led political DOJ in charge of an investigation where a prominent Democrat was the subject and target.

Are you aware of any instances where senior political leaders at the Department of Justice intervened to counsel or order the FBI to not seek a compulsory process?

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A No, not to my knowledge.

Q So you are not aware of Loretta Lynch or Sally Yates intervening to stop the FBI?

A No, not to my knowledge.

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q Okay. So I just want to move on to just sort of general questions about the FBI's investigative techniques. And I know some of these -- this was somewhat addressed earlier, but just to clarify a couple things.

On May 18th, 2018, President Trump tweeted, quote: "Apparently the DOJ put a spy in the Trump campaign. This has never been done before. And by any means necessary, they're out to frame Donald Trump for crimes he didn't commit," end quote.

Are you aware of any information that would substantiate the President's claims that the DOJ put a spy in the Trump campaign?

A No.

Q Does the FBI place spies in U.S. political campaigns?

A Not the current FBI.

Q Are you aware of any information that would substantiate the President's claim that DOJ is out to frame him?

A No.

Q In your experience -- and this goes back a little bit to our discussion on Friday about contacts with human informants -- does the FBI use spies in any of its investigative techniques?

A We call them sources. They're not spies exactly, but --

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Q Can you, as much as -- again, understanding you were not a counterintelligence official -- can you explain for the record the difference between a human informant as the FBI specifically uses that term and sort of the layman term that is often used in the media of a spy?

A The spy is somebody acting on behalf of a foreign government in order to collect intelligence against that government.

So, you know, a spy is commonly, you know, discussed with respect to like an individual who is acting on behalf of a foreign government -- say, like Russia or China or, who knows, Iran -- and is in the United States trying to collect information in order to advance its country's goals.

A confidential human source is somebody who has access to information which may be relevant to an FBI investigation or may, him or herself, have engaged in criminal activity and has agreed to cooperate with the government and collect additional information with respect to the criminal activity he or her was -- he or she was engaged in.

Q Have you been involved in any investigations where the FBI did not follow the established procedures on the use of confidential human informants?

A Me personally? Not to my knowledge.

Q Have you ever been involved in a DOJ or FBI investigation conducted for political purposes?

A Never.

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Q Have you ever been involved in a DOJ or FBI investigation that attempted to frame U.S. citizens for crimes they did not commit?

A No, ma'am.

Q Have you been part of any investigation where the FBI or DOJ used politically biased, unverified sources to obtain a FISA warrant?

A No.

Q Are you aware of any instances where the FBI and DOJ manufactured evidence in order to obtain a FISA warrant?

A Never.

Q Are you aware of the FISA court ever approving an FBI or DOJ warrant that was not based on credible or sufficient evidence, in your experience?

A No, not to my knowledge.

Q Are you aware of any attempts by the FBI or DOJ to intentionally mislead FISA court judges in an application for a FISA warrant by either omitting evidence or manufacturing evidence?

A No, ma'am.

Q Are you aware of any instances at the FBI and DOJ of an investigation failing to follow proper procedures to obtain a FISA warrant?

A No.

Q I'm going to quote the President when I say this. On May 20th, 2018 he tweeted: "I hereby demand and will do so officially tomorrow that the Department of Justice look into whether or not the FBI/DOJ infiltrated or surveilled the Trump campaign for political

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purposes and if any such demands or requests were made by people within the Obama Administration!", exclamation point, end quote.

Does the FBI conduct investigations to frame U.S. citizens for crimes they did not commit?

A No, ma'am.

Q Then at a political rally on May 29th, 2018, the President again stated, quote: "So how do you like the fact they had people infiltrating our campaign?" end quote.

Did the FBI or DOJ ever investigate the Trump campaign for, quote, "political purposes"?

A No.

Q Did the FBI or DOJ ever, quote, "infiltrate or surveil," end quote, the Trump campaign?

A No.

Q To your knowledge, did President Obama or anyone in his White House ever, quote, "demand or request," end quote, that the DOJ or FBI, again, quote, "infiltrate or surveil," end quote, the Trump campaign for, quote, "political purposes"?

A No, ma'am.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I just have a couple of quick questions for you.

First of all, I know that we covered this a little bit, I think, on Friday, but can you talk a little bit about your role on the Clinton investigation? How did you view it? And what was kind of the limitations on your authority?

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Ms. Page. So, as I have tried to describe, I'm not on the team with respect to -- so the team is comprised of the following: case agents, like line agents who are doing sort of the day-to-day investigative activity, line analysts engaged in the same activity, a supervisor, forensic people, I think a forensic accountant, cyber people, support staff, and then, up the chain, sort of more senior FBI agents supervising the investigation.

I am none of those people -- lawyers, of course -- I am none of those people. My job was to support the Deputy Director in all the activity that the Deputy Director supervised.

So we're talking today just about the Clinton investigation and the Russia investigation, but, of course, I assisted the deputy with all of the responsibilities, save for limited ones like HR and budget and sort of personnel-type matters, all of the activities for which he was responsible. So that would be any number of investigations at any given time.

And with each of those I played both sort of a sounding board-type of role, to sort of discuss my opinion or his view as to what particular step we should take or whether we should, you know, brief the White House or Congress or X-activity or Y-activity.

So at a very high-level kind of macro-decisionmaking on all manner of activity, but also to stay kind of with my ear to the ground on the topics that would sort of come before him.

So, for example, if there was a meeting that was going to be held about a particular cyber operation or some type of activity, I might

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reach out to the program managers who were responsible for that activity in order to get a sense of what this is, why is it coming to the deputy, is there a conflict, is there a disagreement --

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Got it.

Ms. Page. -- you know, was he going to be deciding something, so that we had a little bit of preparedness for the topic that was coming to him.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Got it.

So just so I understand it, basically you don't have any supervisory role --

Mr. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. -- with regards to this investigation? You're not a member of the team on this investigation, correct?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You don't have a supervisory role, certainly.

Ms. Page. I do not have a supervisory role or a decisionmaking role.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And what percentage of your overall time was spent on this investigation?

Ms. Page. Oh, my goodness.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. If you just had to ballpark it. Probably a minimal amount, wouldn't you say?

Ms. Page. No, it wasn't minimal, but it wasn't the majority either. Gosh, I really -- I have -- I cannot speculate --

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Mr. Krishnamoorthi. So less than 50 percent of your time.

Ms. Page. Yes, that's fair.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Okay. So let's say, let's say that you had these political views expressed in your text messages -- and you can see why people would be concerned about that. And let's say you wanted to railroad this investigation a certain way.

Ms. Page. The Clinton investigation.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. The Clinton investigation in a certain say, and you wanted your political views to actually translate into biased actions. It seems to me that you had no opportunity or ability to do that because you had no supervisory role on this investigation team, you weren't a member of this team. Even if you wanted to, you'd have to go through your Deputy Director McCabe to do anything in terms of taking action. Is that right?

Ms. Page. That's fair, sir. I guess --

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. So -- go ahead.

Ms. Page. I guess the other thing I would flag is that I think -- I mean, obviously you, the public, many have tens of thousands of my texts. I think there are, I don't know, maybe two or three total in which there's anything favorable said about Hillary Clinton at all.

And the note -- the fact that before July 28th when we received the predicated information for the Russia investigation, the fact that I didn't care for Donald Trump is not particularly relevant to me with respect to the investigation we were conducting on Hillary Clinton.

The two of them had nothing to -- you know, my opinions on him

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had nothing to do with whether or not she in fact handled -- mishandled classified information.

You know, I don't -- I don't -- what's been frustrating and what has sort of strained credulity to me is that the sort of pejorative texts about Donald Trump that I make before July 28th are just my feeling about him personally and don't really have any bearing with respect to how I feel about Secretary Clinton.

So it just -- anyway, it just strikes me as how I feel about Donald Trump doesn't really have any bearing with respect to whether or not Secretary Clinton mishandled information. And the reality is, as I've sort of said, I wasn't particularly fond or favorable toward Secretary Clinton.

And during the course of the investigation, you know, as we've discussed a number of times, both Pete and I were regularly the people advocating for the most aggressive course of action with respect to the Clinton investigation.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And what would be, in your view, kind of the best example that would show that you took that type of approach?

Ms. Page. It was true certainly with respect to the laptops that we've discussed. I mean, we were -- we were -- sort of adamantly fought the need to get those laptops, which Secretary Clinton's people were adamantly fighting us sort of not to obtain, and the Department did not want us to obtain those.

Let me -- I'll have to think about other examples, but there's, I think, two or three that -- at least I discussed with the IG in the

past, that where we sort of disagreed with the Department. And it was Pete and I sort of advocating the more aggressive position against Secretary Clinton.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Got it. Okay. If you guys want to take it. Thank you.

Ms. Page. You're welcome.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Ms. Page, Republicans have repeatedly raised questions about why the FBI did not provide the Trump campaign with a defensive briefing about Russians attempt to infiltrate the campaign.

We understand from public reportings that senior officials from the FBI gave a high-level counterintelligence briefing to the Trump campaign after he became the presumptive Republican nominee in July 2016.

In that briefing we also know that FBI officials reportedly warned the Trump campaign about potential threats from foreign spies and instructed the Trump campaign to inform the FBI about any suspicious overtures.

Did you have any involvement in giving these briefings to the Trump campaign?

A I was not present for the briefings to the Trump campaign, no.

Q Did you receive readouts from the briefings?

A I did.

Q Is it true that senior FBI officials warned the Trump

campaign as early as July 2016 that Russians would try to infiltrate the Trump campaign?

A I don't recall that specifically, but I don't have any reason to disagree with you.

Q Would the briefing have touched on how the campaign should react to offers from foreign nations to interfere in our elections?

A I don't think a briefing would have been that specific. I think we would have -- as is the case in a typical defensive brief -- I think that we would have flagged if you encounter activity which you believe is suspicious, particularly from threat countries, that they should notify the FBI.

Q To your knowledge, did the Trump campaign report any contacts with foreign officials during this briefing?

A I'm not sure.

Q So are you aware of the Trump campaign reporting contacts between George Papadopoulos and Russian officials?

A Oh, no, I don't believe that occurred.

Q Do you recall the Trump campaign reporting the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting with senior campaign officials including Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner, and Paul Manafort?

Mr. Bessee. So I will -- sorry -- I will instruct the witness not to answer anything that goes into the special counsel's equities and the ongoing criminal investigation. So that would impact that particular --

Ms. Kim. Thank you.

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Ms. Page. Thank you. Sorry.

Ms. Kim. Two weeks after this briefing, on August 3rd, 2016, Donald Trump Jr. reportedly met at Trump Tower with an emissary who told Donald Trump Jr. that the princes who led Saudi Arabia and the United Emirates were eager to help his father win election as President.

To your knowledge, did Donald Trump Jr. report this offer from the Saudis and the Emiratis to the FBI?

Mr. Bessee. Again, anything that goes into the ongoing criminal investigation or anything that impacts that, the witness will not respond to -- will not be able to respond to those questions.

Ms. Kim. Thank you.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Ms. Page, can you explain generally the national security implications for a political campaign concealing or failing to report foreign contacts or offers to interfere in our election?

A Well, this is -- I'm not sure it's a commonplace occurrence. But speaking generally, an effort to affect an American election is obviously a quite serious one, regardless of -- voting and the democratic process is obviously sort of a foundational backbone to what makes America America.

So any effort by a foreign power to intercede or intervene in any way is of grave concern. It would be even more so if it was in fact true that a political campaign was working with a foreign power in order to affect an American election.

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Q And again to your knowledge, a defensive briefing of this nature would have involved general instruction to report outreach from target foreign countries to the FBI?

A I'm sorry, I don't -- I have to take issue with the nature of your question.

You're suggesting that a defensive briefing with respect to an involvement or an intrusion into the American election may have taken place and I don't think I have answered that question.

What I have answered is that I am aware that a defensive briefing with respect to foreign powers and what foreign powers may -- how foreign powers may try to contact you -- collective -- your campaign collectively, now that you are the presumptive candidate, and how you should handle that.

But I don't think I have answered a question with respect to a defensive briefing about interference in an American election.

Q That is fair. Thank you for clarifying.

And in a general defensive briefing about general foreign threats, is there a general guidance given that foreign threats should be reported to the FBI?

A Yes.

Q Thank you.

I think that leads us to -- leads us well to the question of why the FBI, particularly the counterintelligence officials at the FBI who were working both on the Midyear investigation and on the Russia collusion investigation, were prioritizing the Russia collusion

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investigation in the September/October timeframe.

The inspector general's report was not favorable to Mr. Strzok in this regard. It characterized his prioritization of the Russia collusion investigation as perhaps indicative of some kind of political bias.

I think you were there. You saw Mr. Strzok's workload. And you were intimately familiar with both investigations.

Do you have a general response to that finding by the inspector general?

A I do. I am honestly baffled that they would find such a thing. And I do believe that they did the best they could to conduct that investigation fairly. And I cannot understand, particularly in light of what I know I said to them, I cannot understand how they could reach that conclusion.

What we were dealing with at the outset was -- this is now, you know, October. This is a month before the election. And I can't speak to whether we were any closer to determining whether there was in fact collusion, because I'm precluded from doing so right now, but we are still looking very seriously at whether our most threatening, most hostile foreign power was engaged in -- was working with an American political candidate or members of that candidate's team to affect the outcome of an American election.

It is an unheard-of investigation, in the first place, in the counterintelligence realm. Russians engage in all manner of nefarious activity, but this was a new height in terms of brazenness -- if

true -- in terms of brazenness.

And with respect to how threatening that would be -- again, if it were true -- the notion that there might be more emails that have not previously been seen that existed on Hillary Clinton's email server just simply don't even enter into the realm of the same room of seriousness.

The Clinton investigation involved activities that had taken place 3 years prior. It's an entirely historical investigation. Even if -- even if there had been dispositive evidence which revealed -- I don't know what -- even there, which would be a very serious allegation, in my assessment, and I think in the assessment of the Counterintelligence Division, they still don't even come close to the threat posed if Russia had co-opted a member of a political campaign.

So that alone is really baffling to me, that they equated the sort of two investigations.

Furthermore -- and this is based on my own personal knowledge -- almost as soon as we discovered that there may be these additional emails, that was assigned to people who were not involved in the Russia investigation.

So it would not have been Pete's responsibility in the first place to have engaged and conducted that investigation. He's the lead of it. He's not the one who's going to go to New York. He's not the one who's going to, like, do the forensics on it, like.

And so it made, in my mind, perfect sense what he did, because he called on people who had been on the Clinton investigation, who were

not on the Russia investigation, to follow up and find out what the facts were, whether it was worth our while.

Because I will say, it's not as though every time there was any allegation that there might be a new email that lives, you know, in Peoria, not every one of those was -- necessitated investigative activity.

The only reason that this one ultimately got our attention, and this only occurred, to my recollection, later in October, is because of the volume of the emails which potentially existed on Mr. Weiner's laptop.

At the time that we first got the information, I'm not aware of that having been told to us. I don't recall in late September, early October, when I first found out by the Weiner laptop, I don't recall being told that it was, you know, tens of thousands of Hillary Clinton and Huma emails.

We knew that there were many tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of emails on Mr. Weiner's laptop, but it's not -- my recollection is that it's not until later into October do we actually learn that, no, no, these actually might be relevant and from a relevant timeframe.

Ms. Hariharan. Can you describe the extent of the overlap between folks who were on the MYE team and folks who were on the Trump-Russia team? Because, you know, it's reported as if they are the same.

Ms. Page. They are not the same. What is the same are the sort

of senior people. And that makes sense because there are fewer people who are in a senior position who could supervise the investigation.

So you have to understand, like, for example, in the Counterintelligence Division, there are three DADs, there are three deputy assistant directors, one of whom is analyst, so not an agent, not somebody who you would expect to run an investigation, and then there are two other ones. One was Pete and one -- I'm not sure when it was filled, but was open for a short period of time.

So with respect to the personnel writ large, almost everyone below Pete and Jon Moffa in the Counterintelligence Division in terms of the agents who were working on the Russia investigation, almost all of them -- I think all of them, in fact -- are different from the line-level agents and analysts who worked on the Clinton investigation.

And this was in part, too, because everybody was exhausted. We had worked incredibly hard and as fast as we possibly could on the Clinton investigation. And the truth of the matter was, those of us who were on Clinton and who stayed over for Russia all just really couldn't believe ourselves that we had to sort of gear up again, you know, 3 weeks after being finally done with Clinton and finally being able to get back to all of our day jobs, that we were sort of gearing back up again.

So it's only -- really it's the people that met with Jim Comey. Those are the only people that were really the same with respect to both teams. So it's the same general counsel, the same deputy general

counsel, me, Mr. McCabe, Dave Bowdich.

The EAD for National Security Branch changed, but that was just because of regular personnel turnover. Bill Priestap was the same. Pete was the same. Jon Moffa was the same.

But other than that, all of the rest of the personnel were, to the best of my knowledge -- there could have been one or two -- but all of the rest of the personnel on the Clinton team and the Russia team were different.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Was there anything about the timeframe in which the Weiner laptop was processed that seemed unusual to you? So that's to say, would it have been unusual for imaging and processing that kind of data to take more than a few weeks?

A No, it happens all the time. And especially with a laptop that was as voluminous as Mr. Weiner's was, the forensic work and the processing and the imaging regularly crashes and stops and has to be done again.

I don't know precisely how long it took, but the notion that it took a week or 2 as being unusual -- particularly, because it was not a priority the case for the New York field office -- I should -- let me take that back.

There was nothing about it that necessitated an exigency to the New York field office. This was a potential child exploitation case but, again, I don't think that there was an allegation that there was ongoing exploitation.

And so I don't know how the New York field office chose to prioritize it with respect to all of the other work that they were doing, but there's nothing about it, to me, that stands out as necessitating, you know, an emergency, you know, imaging.

Q Did you personally observe any evidence suggesting that Mr. Strzok was prioritizing the Russia investigation at the cost of the Hillary Clinton email investigation reopening?

A Well, I mean the answer is we were prioritizing the Russia investigation because it was more important and more serious. But I wouldn't say that it was a zero-sum issue because he didn't neglect the Clinton investigation. He assigned it to the people who would appropriately have to handle it.

Q Yes. Are you aware of any evidence that Mr. Strzok or anyone on the Midyear investigation team was trying to bury the existence of the Weiner laptop or the data found therefrom?

A No, not at all.

Ms. Hariharan. Are you aware of any evidence that Mr. Strzok prioritized because of his political biases or was it because of just how serious the Russia investigation and how grave a threat it was?

Ms. Page. It's the latter. It's because the Russia investigation was a serious threat to the national security. Whether there are additional classified emails on a laptop that didn't belong to Secretary Clinton just, in my view, did not rank in the same way.

BY MS. KIM:

Q And I just want to be clear of the nomenclature. When we

talk about the Russia collusion investigation in this timeframe, candidate Donald Trump is not the subject of that investigation. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q I believe that's what Director Comey has publicly stated.

A [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

So it was a very narrowly scoped, very discrete investigation, because we understood the gravity of what it was we were looking at, and we were not going to take a more extreme step than we felt we could justify.

Ms. Kim. I think we're okay going off the record at this point for a lunch break until 1:30.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

[1:30 p.m.]

Mr. Parmiter. Let's go back on the record. The time is 1:30 p.m.

BY MR. PARMITER:

Q And, Ms. Page, I just had a couple of followup questions from things that were discussed in the first hour.

You had mentioned that charges -- it had been determined that charges were not sustainable under 793(f)(1) in particular. I'm just curious whether there are elements of that statute that were not satisfied in the case or was it just the gross negligence issue --

A I think --

Q -- that led to that conclusion?

A Sorry.

I think that it was both. But honestly, I'm not positive as I sit here today. Because if the statute is unconstitutional, it doesn't matter if you have all the evidence in the world, you can't bring that case.

So I think that I have said -- and I think that the minority staff read back to me -- a comment that it was both insufficient evidence and unconstitutionally vague. And I guess I'm not certain about the first point, about insufficient evidence, because it doesn't really ultimately matter what the evidence shows if the statute is -- is not constitutional.

Q Okay. But, I mean, would you agree that, you know, the Secretary of State is someone who's lawfully entrusted with classified information and that a private server is not the place -- if classified

information is stored on anything other than a classified server or system, it would be out of its proper place?

A That is correct, sir.

Q Okay. To your knowledge and in your experience, did DOJ ever inform you of any other statutes that are unconstitutionally vague?

A In the history of my being at the FBI and DOJ?

Q Do you recall any --

A I'm not positive, to be honest with you. I mean, the truth of the matter is the counterespionage section at the Department, as I think I've said, is just conservative by nature and cautious by nature, very much to the frustration of the FBI.

And I've certainly been present with a number of meetings in which they didn't want to prosecute or they didn't want to bring charges on totally unrelated investigations, but didn't -- couldn't necessarily articulate what was insufficient about the evidence or -- so, I mean, this is -- I guess what I'm trying to say is this is a little -- it's a somewhat institutional fact as well. But whether other statutes were vague, I just don't remember.

Q Okay.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q Do you remember any discussion of whether the Logan Act could be charged?

A With respect to Secretary Clinton?

Q With respect to anybody.

A On the Clinton investigation, I don't remember a discussion

of the Logan Act.

Q On the Russia investigation?

A I am privy to conversations about the Logan Act in the Russia investigation.

Q Was it allowed to be charged?

A I don't think it's been charged.

Q My question is whether -- you were told that the gross negligence part of --

A Oh, I see what you're saying.

Q -- 793 could not be charged. I'm asking whether you were told --

A Yes.

Q -- that the Logan Act could or could not be charged.

A So I -- okay, so let me see how I can answer this.

There were discussions about the Logan Act with the Department and similar concerns, not about the constitutionality of the statute, but about the age and the lack of use of the Logan Act. I did participate in conversations with the Department about it being an untested statute and a very, very old one, and so there being substantial litigation risk, not unlike, although this comparison was never made, but not unlike the gross negligence statute.

This would -- this would be a -- a risk, a strategic and litigation risk, to charge a statute that had not sort of been well-tested.

Q But the gross negligence part of 793, that was a clearly it couldn't be charged versus a -- I think you just described it as a

litigation risk with respect to the Logan Act?

A With respect to gross negligence, that is correct, sir. I'm sorry, that it could not be charged or should not be charged, because it was -- I think it's both. It was not constitutional but also untested, which goes to the question about its constitutionality, I think. So I think they're somewhat intermingled, those two, with respect to gross negligence.

Mr. Parmiter. Mr. Meadows.

Mr. Meadows. Thank you.

Lisa, I'm going to go over a few text messages. None of them are personal. And so I just want to really try to get some clarification from you.

I probably have read more text messages that have been published and nonpublished, and even on some of the redacted words that originally were redacted that you may be able to help me get a good understanding of what's there.

So early on, in August -- well, first off, is there a difference, from an FBI's perspective, of a confidential human source and a confidential informant? Because I read the FBI manual, and it seems like one gets treated one way and another gets -- but from your perspective, they're one and the same?

Ms. Page. I -- the term that we use for it is a confidential human source. A more, I guess, layman term would be an informant. But to my knowledge there is no distinction with respect to the rules which govern a source's activity. These are one and the same.

Mr. Meadows. Because one of the things I was reading indicated that I guess when we have confidential human sources that we pay there's a whole litany of things that the FBI and DOJ have to go through on those confidential human sources that we actually pay.

Are you aware of that?

Ms. Page. I think there are -- I'm not sure there -- I'm not sure about that, sir. There are certainly rules with respect to paying a source, but the -- with respect to opening a source and how you handle a source and the admonitions that you provide a source, those are the same regardless of whether a source is paid or not.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. In a text message back and forth between you and Peter Strzok shortly after he returned [REDACTED], there was an article that came out and it was "Inside the Failing Mission to Save Donald Trump From Himself."

And in the redacted portion, it says: But see, this article so rings true that then I think that the confidential human source was [redacted] is wrong is [redacted].

Were you aware of any time where you felt like you questioned the confidential human source, as this text would indicate?

Ms. Page. Can you, do you mind, could you --

Mr. Meadows. Yes. It would have been on the August 13th of 2016, at 13:22:29, or 27, I guess. You're going back and forth talking about 302s with the State Department and --

Ms. Page. So are we talking about Clinton then it sounds like? August --

Mr. Meadows. Well, I don't -- the Clinton investigation would have been over with at that point.

Ms. Page. That's true. I'm sorry, sir, the date again?

Mr. Meadows. It would have been August 13th of 2016. It was about 2 weeks after Russia opened.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. Russia opens. Peter Strzok travels [REDACTED]. Peter Strzok [REDACTED]. And you're going back and forth, apparently mad because the State Department says, you know --

Ms. Page. So we're talking about two different things. So the State -- let me just take a second and look at this.

So there's no debate. So this is me. I'm sorry, so a couple texts up, this is Pete: Hey, read the email I just sent. I did not include OPA or OCI in the distro. I'm responding, I don't know what the email is, but: There's no debate. I'm going to forward to Kortan. God, it makes me want to tell State to go F it.

So we're talking about Clinton now. And what I suspect we're talking about is needing -- you know, there's still things that we need. I don't know whether it's -- whether we're producing in FOIA or what we're talking about. But there, I think --

Mr. Meadows. Then you switch, I guess, to the confidential human source.

Ms. Page. Yes, I think that's right. So then: Yep, you think we would have -- you think we should have commented if only to rebut State's expectation of interagency coordination crap.

I think that there was like a press conference or something that we were pissed about that State was essentially saying, like, maligning the FBI. This is normal interagency, you know, kind of --

Mr. Meadows. Right, right.

Ms. Page. So the same thing with the next one.

Mr. Meadows. So it is right after that where you talk about not believing the confidential human source, or believing that --

Ms. Page. Is that what that -- so I don't know what that --

Mr. Meadows. Yeah. In the redacted, it says, I think -- and I'll give you the redaction -- that [REDACTED], the other redacted word.

So I guess the question becomes is, at any point did you question whether [REDACTED], as this text message would indicate?

Ms. Page. So I think we're constantly questioning ourselves, actually. I don't know --

Mr. Meadows. This would have been very early on. So you've had [REDACTED], and almost immediately you're questioning whether [REDACTED].

Ms. Page. So I think that's exactly what you want us to be doing, right? So I don't know what this article says and I don't know what is prompting the thinking, but we constantly want to be testing our own assumptions and testing [REDACTED].

Now, [REDACTED], with respect to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. So it's not a matter of [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED], right. That was sort of not in question with respect to --

Mr. Meadows. Just that they had made the wrong assumption.

Ms. Page. Or that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], right? Are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], or is the [REDACTED].

Mr. Meadows. So typically --

Ms. Page. That's the question that we're trying to answer. And so --

Mr. Meadows. Right. So there was some question back and forth at this particular point between you and Peter Strzok on whether [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. And in doing that, how do you [REDACTED]?

Ms. Page. That's the investigation, sir. That's precisely what the investigation was designed to do. And so the entire objective -- and I really do hope to convince you guys that we did things the way that the American people would want us to do them.

We get this predication that suggests [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and we take these very discrete steps to figure out is this true and, if so, who could be in a position to have received this information.

And so -- but we're constantly challenging our own assumptions. And so we're taking investigative steps in order to try to figure out, okay, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]? A Russian can't just like [sound of knocking] knock on the door of any old stranger and say, hi --

Mr. Meadows. Let's hope not.

Ms. Page. I would hope, right? That's unlikely to be productive. So you look to see are there [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

And so, again, not knowing what I was thinking at the time or what the article says, it wouldn't strike me as inappropriate at all, in fact, quite the contrary. We are constantly, is this all just puffery or is this real?

Mr. Meadows. So was this the only time that you feel like you [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]? Was this a single time?

Ms. Page. I can't remember any other particular time, but I didn't remember this one so --

Mr. Meadows. But you're saying that it normally happens on a pretty regular basis, so you go back and forth. So this would not be out of the norm to say, well, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ms. Page. That is the point of the investigation, to try to get to the bottom of it, sir.

Mr. Meadows. So let me go a little bit further then. In looking at this review, very early on, without getting into the specifics of the actual investigation, there were a number of briefings that were

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occurring. How many Crossfire Hurricane briefings were you involved with?

Ms. Page. Briefings for whom, sir? I'm sorry.

Mr. Meadows. Well, how many briefings were you involved with that were outside the -- that had outside players beyond the FBI or DOJ?

Ms. Page. None.

Mr. Meadows. All right. So there were never any briefings that you attended where there was other intelligence officials part of the briefing outside the FBI and DOJ?

Ms. Page. Not about the Crossfire investigation, sir. So there's two things operating at this time. I certainly participated in preparation sessions for the Director when the Director would either be going to the White House or maybe have a call --

Mr. Meadows. Right. We've got that. I think we've talked about that before, because I think early on, August 5th, there's maybe the first original what we called at that time the Russia investigation briefing that happened. Peter Strzok comes back [REDACTED], makes it just in time for you to have that. There's a briefing that occurs on August 8th.

And then there's a briefing with Denis McDonough at the White House where Jonathan Moffa and others attended. Were you aware of that?

Ms. Page. I'm sure you're right. I was aware of the briefings that were occurring at the White House. But those were not about the

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Crossfire. To the best of my knowledge, those were not --

Mr. Meadows. So they had nothing to do with any potential collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign? That was never mentioned?

Ms. Page. Not to my knowledge. It was always about the Russian active measures effort.

Mr. Meadows. All right. And so if that's, indeed, the case, at some point it changed. At some point, there were other people outside the FBI and DOJ that were involved with that. And so I'm going to direct your attention a little bit later.

Because on August the 25th, there's a text message going back and forth where I think it talks about the fact, you know, what are you doing after -- and it's redacted -- the [REDACTED] brief. And it's August 25th at 19:30:56.

Ms. Page. I see that. But mine's redacted. What does it say?

Mr. Meadows. Yeah, yours is redacted. But it says: What are you doing after the [REDACTED] brief? And so that [REDACTED] brief you're saying was an internal brief within the DOJ and FBI?

Ms. Page. Oh, yes, within, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. Meadows. Because it's the same day that Director Brennan is briefing Harry Reid, is why I ask. And so what you're saying is you were unaware that Director Brennan was briefing Harry Reid that same day?

Ms. Page. I had no knowledge of that, no.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. All right. So if you're looking at a brief,

typically who would you brief?

Ms. Page. So we had regular updates for the Director and the Deputy Director. I'd say certainly every 2 weeks, but possibly even more frequently. We had sort of standing sort of update meeting for either the deputy --

Mr. Meadows. Similar to you did during the MYE --

Ms. Page. Correct.

Mr. Meadows. -- and you're doing that now. And so you do those. And those briefings were intended for the Director or the Deputy Director to do what?

Ms. Page. To stay abreast of what we had found to the extent we -- it allowed for a regular tempo, so that if we had a question about an investigative step or really just to sort of stay abreast of what we were doing and what we were learning.

Mr. Meadows. So because of the critical nature, you know, as you characterized it earlier, you believe that this was more important than the MYE in terms of its potential.

When you were doing those briefings with the Director and the Deputy Director -- and the minority were talking about the defensive briefings -- to my knowledge, and it's been -- we've looked to try to find anything other than what I would say the normal defensive briefing that you do for candidates, where you say, by the way be careful, change your passwords, you know, this is what you look for.

Did any of that brief that you ever did for the Deputy Director or Director end up in a detailed defensive briefing for at that point

candidate Trump?

Ms. Page. I don't believe so.

Mr. Meadows. And if it were critical, especially in light of some of the individuals and because Donald Trump was not a subject of your investigation, and you were taking it seriously, who would have made the decision not to do a defensive briefing, to say, "Hey, by the way, you may have someone that's really getting contacted by a foreign entity and you may want to be aware of it"? Who would have made the decision to either tell the candidate or not tell the candidate?

Ms. Page. That's a good question. I don't recall it ever coming up.

Mr. Meadows. So you're telling me it never came up to -- something this important, it never came up to tell the potential candidate that they might have a problem with somebody talking to the Russians?

Ms. Page. So that's right, sir, but that's because we didn't know what we had. So typically, when we have a defensive brief, we have pretty unassailable evidence. [REDACTED]

Mr. Meadows. Right, and I don't want you to.

Ms. Page. No, no, no, I won't, but --

Mr. Meadows. Because it's been characterized sometimes that I do, and I don't want you to go into that. I guess --

Ms. Page. No, but --

Mr. Meadows. So you're saying you didn't have a conclusion. You

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didn't have a specific --

Ms. Page. Right. So typically what would happen is if we had much more unassailable evidence -- or much more frequently is you would have an individual who was already known to the United States Government as suspicious in some way and associated with a hostile foreign government.

So we already know that, you know, Joe is of a concern to us. Once we see Joe starting to reach out to a Member of Congress or starting to reach out to a candidate, you know, to the extent we know what Joe is saying or what Joe might be doing, that's when we would probably flag for that individual: You need to be aware that so-and-so may not be what they seem.

In this case, we don't know what we have. So it's not to say that we never would have gotten to a place where we might have done that, depending on how -- what the evidence demonstrated, but certainly at this stage, but even later in the investigation, my personal view is I don't think that it would have been appropriate to do.

Mr. Meadows. So under your personal opinion, there was never enough evidence to do a defensive briefing with specific targets? And I don't want to put words in your mouth and I see you smiling, so I don't -- but that's what I'm getting to.

I mean, at some point you have to have enough "there" there, I guess, to quote someone else, to be able to suggest that there would be a defensive briefing, and you're saying that that defensive briefing never took place because of a lack of specificity.

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Ms. Page. No, not exactly, sir. You would want to know for sure what you had in front of you.

Mr. Meadows. So you wouldn't want to falsely accuse somebody?

Ms. Page. You wouldn't want to -- well, you would want to know -- you would want to be able to say: We believe that so-and-so is, you know, an agent of a foreign power or we believe that so-and-so may be working with, you know, a hostile foreign source.

Mr. Meadows. And so that did not happen prior to November 8th of 2016 at least, because you would have done a defensive briefing, based on --

Ms. Page. Not -- there's no -- no, sir. There's no hard-and-fast rule. I don't -- I don't -- I don't want to leave the impression that once you meet X criteria a defensive briefing occurs. This is fluid and happens at the sort of discretion and judgment of senior counterintelligence officials and, frankly, the deputy or the Director himself with respect to certain high-level individuals.

It's -- I'm -- I'm -- I'm a little constrained. I feel a little constrained in terms of what I can say. Let's try to speak hypothetically.

One of two things might lead you not to conduct -- multiple things might lead you not to conduct a defensive briefing. One of them might be insufficient evidence.

Mr. Meadows. Which is what you said at least at this date, you had insufficient --

Ms. Page. Certainly in August, I would agree with that. A

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couple weeks in, we don't know what we have. I think that that's fair.

On the opposite spectrum, it might be inappropriate for investigative reasons to provide a defensive brief.

Mr. Meadows. But that would only be if Donald Trump was the subject of your investigation.

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Meadows. I mean, at what point -- so I guess take it from my standpoint. As a Member of Congress, if I'm inadvertently having contact with somebody, of which I have contact with Russian diplomats on a weekly basis many times, and I assume every one of them want to do us harm. I mean, so --

Ms. Page. You should, sir.

Mr. Meadows. -- for the record --

Ms. Page. I agree with you totally.

Mr. Meadows. -- I want to make sure that I assume every one of them wants to do harm to us.

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Meadows. So in doing that, at what point would you reach out and say, you know, Mark, by the way, you may want to be -- this -- I mean --

Ms. Page. So the reason I am trying to tread lightly here is I don't think that Donald Trump would need to be the subject of the investigation in order for us to make a decision that a defensive briefing is not appropriate.

But there are certainly gradations shy of subject which, if

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true -- and I'm not suggesting that they are true -- but if hypothetically, and I truly mean this in the hypothetical, if we thought that Donald Trump is not the subject, we're not suggesting that he's the person in touch with Russia, but maybe the evidence suggests that he knows that his people are in touch with Russia.

Mr. Meadows. But to be clear for the record, there was no evidence that suggested that.

Ms. Page. I am not speaking with respect to the evidence at all.

Mr. Meadows. I just want to make sure we're clear for the record.

Ms. Page. I am making no statement with respect to the evidence we had. I am speaking hypothetically.

Mr. Meadows. So let me go back, because one thing gets really concerning. So you give a brief on August the 25th. Director Brennan is giving a brief. It's not a Gang of Eight brief. It is a one-on-one, from what we can tell, a one-on-one briefing with Harry Reid at that point.

And it becomes apparent, based on your text messages and based on Director Comey's emails, that you all are aware that that conversation took place.

Were you aware that Director Brennan had a briefing with Harry Reid and that you expected a letter from Harry Reid?

Ms. Page. I take your word that I was.

Mr. Meadows. Well, no, I don't want you to take my word.

Ms. Page. I just don't -- I remember Harry Reid sending a letter, like I remember that happening sometime during the course of this

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investigation. But I do not have any recollection if I knew -- we had regular Crossfire briefs of the entire team for the Director. I do not recall the Director telling us that Brennan was planning to brief Harry Reid that day and --

Mr. Meadows. No, no, I'm not saying that he knew that he was planning to brief him, but that once he briefed him, because it appears that certain elements of what is now referred to as the dossier were communicated to Harry Reid, based on that letter, because --

Ms. Page. I have no knowledge of that. We didn't have the reports yet.

Mr. Meadows. So -- and I know. According to other testimony, apparently you didn't actually physically get the documents until mid-September. Is that correct?

Ms. Page. That is correct, sir.

Mr. Meadows. So on August --

Ms. Page. Not just physically. Even electronically, like --

Mr. Meadows. So on August 30th -- but you were aware of it prior to that?

Ms. Page. No, sir. No, sir.

Mr. Meadows. So what you're saying is, is that you had no knowledge of these potential unverified memos prior to the middle part of September in your investigation?

Ms. Page. That is correct, sir.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. So on August 30th, you and Peter are going back and forth, and you go, "Here we go." If you'll look at 9:44:50

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on August the 30th, you go, "Here we go." And it's referencing "Harry Reid Cites Evidence of Russian Tampering in the U.S. Vote and Seeks FBI."

Now, what happens is, and what I guess gives me a little bit of concern is, if you drop down, that if you drop down to the same day, August 30th, 9:45, it says: "The D" -- which I assume means Director -- "said at the a.m. brief that Reid had called him and told him that he would be sending the letter."

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. So you get a brief that says, well, we got the letter, but it's almost like it's a coordinated effort between Harry Reid and the FBI Director, because obviously, he's briefing you.

Ms. Page. I -- I don't see -- so, again, this is just my personal experience. We just don't really deal with the Hill that much.

Mr. Meadows. No, I know you don't, but --

Ms. Page. No, no, no, but even the --

Mr. Meadows. So what you're saying is you don't recall ever being briefed that a letter was coming from Harry Reid?

Ms. Page. Not until -- this is the morning brief that this is a reference to, so I must have attended the morning brief. And so this is me just saying, yeah, the Director said we're going to be getting a letter. But no, I'm not aware --

Mr. Meadows. Well, indeed, you did get a letter that got published very quickly in The New York Times, and that was kind of the start of much of that.

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You know, here's the other concern, because I guess Peter Strzok sends an email to Bill Priestap that same day, with you carbon copied, and it says: "Unfortunately, this will politicize things but was unavoidable, I suppose."

So, I mean, obviously it's going back and forth.

Ms. Page. So my view on that is exactly what the FBI always is, which is, no offense, politicians are involved, right? Like --

Mr. Meadows. None taken.

Ms. Page. We want to do this in secret. We want to do this the way we do it. I don't know what Harry Reid was told or why or what the purpose of Brennan -- you know, this is way out of my pay grade. But like that's not how we want to proceed. We do things effectively when they're in secret. And so I think that that, you know, it's unavoidable, I guess, is, you know, well, these things happen, but not on our watch.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. So let's -- taking you at your word, then I guess what concern I have is why would Director Brennan be aware of things that the FBI was not aware of at this particular point when it actually would potentially involve, according to Peter Strzok's word on January 10th of 2017, an unverified salacious set of memos?

Ms. Page. So I don't understand why you're saying this -- whatever is in the -- whatever occurs between Brennan and Reid, I don't understand what the relationship to the dossier is. That's what I'm not following.

Mr. Meadows. So the dossier apparently was mentioned. In fact,

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we have documents that would suggest that in that briefing the dossier was mentioned to Harry Reid and then obviously we're going to have to have conversations. Does that surprise you --

Ms. Page. Totally surprises me.

Mr. Meadows. -- that Director Brennan would be aware of --

Ms. Page. Yes, sir. Because with all due honesty, if Director Brennan -- so we got that information [REDACTED]

Mr. Meadows. We do know there are multiple sources.

Ms. Page. I do know that. I do know that the information ultimately found its way lots of different places, certainly in October of 2016. But if the CIA as early as August, in fact, had those same reports, I am not aware of -- I'm not aware of that and [REDACTED]

Mr. Meadows. So you say "our source." Is your source, is that because he was working for you?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Meadows. Well, I mean, how could he be -- is he exclusively your source?

Ms. Page. I don't know. If the CIA has -- had Mr. Steele open as a source, I would not know that.

Mr. Meadows. So if we're talking about sources and we're looking at sources, were you aware at the point that there was ongoing

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communication with other players, i.e., Fusion GPS and others, as it relates to this confidential human source?

Ms. Page. I didn't follow your question, sir. Are you asking was I --

Mr. Meadows. Were you aware that Christopher Steele had conversations or multiple conversations with Fusion GPS and others outside of just working special intel for you?

Ms. Page. No, no, no. So let me try to be more clear.

As of August of 2016, I don't know who Christopher Steele is. I don't know that he's an FBI source. I don't know what he does. I have never heard of him in all of my life. So let me just sort of be clear.

When the FBI first receives the reports that are known as the dossier from an FBI agent who is Christopher Steele's handler in September of 2016 --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- at that time, we do not know who -- we don't know why these reports have been generated. We don't know for what purpose. We don't know -- we know that this is a reliable source who has previously reported on other things. We know who he -- I don't know who he is personally. We know his history --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- such that we know him to be reliable. And I think we know that he's a former intel person.

But we do not know, to the best of my recollection, why these reports have been generated, what they're for, what they're -- why they

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have sort of come to us, other than here's a reliable source and here are some things that he has gathered.

Certainly between --

Mr. Meadows. So you don't know whether it's a coordinated effort to get you those documents or not at that point in September?

Ms. Page. Coordinated by whom, sir?

Mr. Meadows. Anybody, other than a confidential human source saying, "Listen, I've got reason to be concerned and bring it to you."

[REDACTED] It could have been coordinated by Fusion GPS. You don't know.

Ms. Page. At the time that we received the documentation, no. What we have is the preexisting relationship with the source and the reliability of his prior reporting.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. So on October 16th and 19th, there's a couple of text messages. I want to read them to you, because it's actually text messages between you -- you won't have them in your book.

Ms. Page. Oh, okay.

Mr. Meadows. Because I actually got these from a different source. And so I'm asking you to see if you remember those so you can help authentic them. But apparently it's a text message between you and Mr. McCabe.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. And it says: "Just called. Apparently the DAG now wants to be there and the White House wants DOJ to host. So we're setting up a time now. We very much need to get Cohen's view" -- which

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we believe is probably Deputy Director of the CIA Cohen, David Cohen -- "before we meet with her" -- and by the "her," I think it's Sally Yates at that point, we're trying to put this all together. "Better have him weigh in before this meeting. We need to speak with one voice if that is, in fact, the case." That is October 14th.

And then on October 19th, it says: "Hey, can you give me a call when you get out. Meeting with the White House counsel is finally set up and I want to talk about the timing things."

Is that --

Ms. Page. Are those about Russia?

Mr. Meadows. That was my question.

Ms. Page. Oh, I'm not sure, sir. I'm not certain that it is, to be honest with you, but I'm not sure.

Mr. Meadows. All right. Because it's just a couple of days before the FISA application.

Ms. Page. Oh. There would be no need to go to the White House or give any sort of briefing about the FISA. So if that's the timing concern, I don't think that it's related, would be my guess.

Mr. Meadows. All right. So, as we look at this, one of the concerns that I have is that there seemed to be a whole lot of chatter back and forth in terms of between the FBI and the DOJ being at odds in terms of -- and by "odds" what I mean is, you know, I guess pushing back against George Toscas and some of the others in terms of some of the opinions, based on text messages and emails.

Ms. Page. On Russia?

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Mr. Meadows. On Russia.

Ms. Page. I don't know that I agree with that assessment. The only source of frustration, really the only source of frustration that I can recall, at least in the time that I was most heavily involved in the Russia investigation -- so this is from August to really the end of the year, till December of 2016 -- was the sort of speed or lack thereof with respect to getting the FISA initiated. I mean, that was a source of frustration. But I don't recall other -- other controversies or other disagreements or other issues.

Mr. Meadows. Yeah, because I think -- and the reason why these dates on the other text messages that I ask are critical, because there's an email from Peter Strzok to you on October the 14th. And that's where, you know, we've got to keep the pressure, hurry the F up and --


Ms. Page. Yeah, right. And that was definitely happening, but the White House doesn't have anything to do with that.

Mr. Meadows. And so the Stu, I haven't heard back from Stu, is that Stu Evans who --

Ms. Page. That is correct.

Mr. Meadows. So why was there a push for a FISA warrant coming from you guys and potentially less than expeditious on the -- I mean, what's your perception of why that was? Obviously, it was important enough for Peter to send you an email.

Ms. Page. Well, we sent a lot of emails.



[REDACTED]

But separate from that, this again goes to kind of cultural differences between us and DOJ. So DOJ is necessarily going to be a little more handwringing and a little more apprehensive and a little more cautious.

Mr. Meadows. And why is that?

Ms. Page. Just the institutional differences between us, honestly. I mean, we're the investigators, we're hard-charging.

Mr. Meadows. The fact that they were opening up a FISA warrant on a U.S. citizen that might be attached to a --

Ms. Page. Well, almost all FISA warrants are on U.S. citizens.

Mr. Meadows. That's correct, but that might -- you didn't let me finish --

Ms. Page. Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Meadows. That might be attached to a Presidential campaign.

Ms. Page. Well, he was no longer with the Presidential campaign. But your point is taken. Certainly, this was one that, if leaked, was going to get attention.

And so I'm not necessarily even criticizing them for their handwringing. I'm just saying we had an operational reason that we wanted to get this thing up quickly with respect to the subject himself, and the Department is always going to operate with less alacrity.

Mr. Meadows. So is Stu Evans, is that his primary responsibility, was processing FISAs?

Ms. Page. So he is the head of the Office of Intelligence. The

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Office of Intelligence is the organization within the Department that writes the FISAs, that takes them to court. So he is the -- he's a DAAG, a deputy assistant Attorney General, and he is the person in charge of the entire FISA process for the Department.

Mr. Meadows. So I guess the question -- and this is my last series of questions -- I guess the question I would have then is, going back to August 10th, there's text messages back and forth between you and Peter that would say, I remember what it was, Toscas already told Stu Evans everything. Sally called to set up a meeting. You already knew about the campaign individual. So there's conversations happening on August the 10th already --

Ms. Page. But that's not about a FISA. That's not about a FISA at that point, I don't think.

Mr. Meadows. But it was about the campaign, because it's redacted.

Ms. Page. Right.

Mr. Meadows. I mean, it was redacted.

Ms. Page. So what that reflects, because I remember that, because we were -- we were so concerned about the fact that we were opening this investigation and we were so concerned about leaks that we were literally individually making decisions about who to tell and who not to tell, because we were trying to keep it so closely held.

We had told George Toscas, because he's sort of the senior-most career person in the National Security Division.

None of us had told Stu Evans, and I don't think any of us intended

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to tell Stu Evans until which time we would actually need something from him. And so that text is a reflection of frustration, that like, great, George told Stu. That's not what we would have done, because we were trying to keep it so close-hold.

So I don't think it has anything to do with an actual FISA. It was more that more people are learning about this investigation and we are trying to keep it as tight as possible.

Mr. Meadows. And so what you're saying is when the Director briefed the White House 2 days prior to that, on August the 8th, or prepared for it, actually briefed him on the 10th, that it had nothing to do with any campaign. Even though George Toscas and Stu Evans knew about it, it had -- I mean, there was no mention of this at all at any time?

Ms. Page. Sir, I would be shocked. I would truly be stunned to discover that the Director had briefed the President on the substance of our investigation or even the existence of our investigation. I would be -- I can't say it didn't happen, I wasn't there, but I would be stunned to discover that. That is just not how we --

Mr. Meadows. So when did it happen? Ultimately never?

Ms. Page. I don't know. I honestly don't know. And to be honest with you, I guess I should clarify.

I think it's entirely possible that the Director himself never briefed the White House about this. He just did not have that kind of -- not relationship, that's not the right word. That's just not how he viewed us institutionally. I cannot speak to whether the

Department ever briefed the White House about it.

Mr. Meadows. I'll yield to John.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Ms. Page, I do want to follow this line of questioning about the FISA application and try and determine when you were first aware of or there was a discussion of a possibility of a FISA warrant in connection with the Trump-Russia matter from a timing perspective. Do you recall?

Ms. Page. Maybe a month before we got it, possibly. I'm not positive.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So the dates, the date of the FISA application, October 21st of 2016.

The reason I'm trying to find out is we know that the predicated information that opened it was July 31st. We know on August 8th, we've talked about the text message about stopping Donald Trump, a text message that involved the lead investigative agent.

So I'm wondering, do you know whether or not there had been any discussion of a FISA applications by that time?

Ms. Page. No way. You have to understand, sir, it takes a lot to get a FISA.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I know. I'm just trying -- I'm trying to dive in on where it is.

So on -- we know that there was the first interview conducted, based on your prior testimony, sometime before August 11th of 2016. Do you know if there was any discussion of a FISA application before or after -- or before that?

Ms. Page. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. With respect to -- you talked earlier about testing the information from confidential human sources. If a confidential human source has a conversation with the subject of surveillance that would undermine the presence -- I mean, the premise that anyone associated with the Trump campaign either was colluding or would be willing to collude with the Russians, is that the type of disclosure that would have to be made to the FISC?

Ms. Page. No, sir. What do you mean? We don't have a --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Do Brady/Giglio disclosure requirements apply to the FISA court?

Ms. Page. Oh, sorry. Yeah, sure. I mean, we have a duty of candor to the court.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Duty of candor.

Ms. Page. So certainly to the extent we were to find reliable information that we thought undermined a FISA application, we would inform the court of that information.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Supposed to inform the court?

Ms. Page. To the best of my knowledge, sir, we would inform the court.

Mr. Ratcliffe. No, I'm just saying the obligation is -- you can't speak to whether it was or it wasn't.

Ms. Page. I don't know what you're talking about. I thought -- if --

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm not getting into any of the specific content

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of it. I just want to know --

Ms. Page. If -- in all cases --

Mr. Ratcliffe. If there is exculpatory or --

Ms. Page. -- if the FBI discovers, you know, reliable information which it believes to be exculpatory or somehow affect the probable cause of the FISA warrant, I would expect that we would provide that to the court, yes, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. That's my question.

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Because there would be an obligation to do that.

Ms. Page. I think so. I'm not nearly as well-versed in the FISA rules. But I would just -- I would presume that we would, because that's how we generally operate.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And you know that Brady/Giglio disclosure requirements would apply in the FISA court?

Ms. Page. So Brady really doesn't -- I don't really want to be so legalistic -- but Brady is a right of a criminal defendant. So what I'm saying is I have no idea if it is absolutely obligatory. What I am saying is I believe that that is -- would be the practice of the Department and the FBI to be fully candid.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And should have been done if there was any exculpatory information.

Ms. Page. I think that that's what we would do. I believe so, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay, great.

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On Friday, Congressman Jordan asked you about the trip that you took [REDACTED] with Peter Strzok and three others. I don't know if he asked you the purpose of that trip. Can you tell us the purpose of the trip?

Ms. Page. I cannot, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Why not?

Ms. Page. On advice of FBI counsel, because it would get into the investigative steps we took.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Investigative steps related to the --

Ms. Page. The Russia investigation.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- Russia investigation?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Mr. Jordan also asked you about and you reviewed with him the January 10 email that you were on with Mr. Strzok talking about the different versions of the Steele dossier involving David Corn and Glenn Simpson and others. Do you recall that?

Ms. Page. I do, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. That was around the same time as the first of Jim Comey's now somewhat infamous memos of his conversations with both President-elect Trump and then President Trump. When did you first become aware of the Comey memos?

Ms. Page. I was aware of them as they were -- in real time. I was aware of almost all of them in real time.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So you were aware of them before they became leaked to The New York Times by Daniel Richman?

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Ms. Page. I was aware of them. I reviewed most of them. I can't say all. I reviewed most of them within a day or on the same day that they were created.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Would Peter Strzok have been -- I'm sorry. Would -- well, let me ask that. Would Peter Strzok have been aware of those?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Would Andrew McCabe have been aware of those?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir. I don't know whether Peter Strzok was aware of them or not. I did not provide them to him so --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. But Andrew McCabe would have been?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And was that -- the fact that you would have been aware of them, were there discussions about opening an obstruction of justice case or any other case against Donald Trump prior to the firing of Jim Comey on May 9th of 2017, as reflected in the Comey memos?

Ms. Bessee. Congressman, to the extent that goes into the equities of the ongoing investigation that the special counsel is now conducting, I will instruct the witness not to answer.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah, I don't want to go into what the special counsel, whether or not they are going to do it, but I think it's a fair -- I think it's a very fair question, Cecilia, because the former Director of the FBI has talked about it. He's talked about it a lot. He's given interviews about it. He has gone on TV about it. He has

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written books about it.

And he has said explicitly publicly in a congressional hearing that he wanted a special counsel to be appointed for that purpose, to investigate Donald Trump for obstruction of justice.

So I think asking her about it at this point is a very fair request.

Ms. Bessee. To the extent that it doesn't go into what the special counsel is looking at or their gathering of evidence, I understand, Congressman, that former Director Comey has talked about the memos and has talked about whether there should be an investigation. So I just want --

Mr. Ratcliffe. I don't want any of the details. I just want to know whether there was a discussion about the possibility of opening that prior to the firing of the Director.

Ms. Page. Obstruction of justice was not a topic of conversation during the timeframe you have described.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Then --

Ms. Page. I think. One second, sir.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Sir, I need to -- I need to take back my prior statement.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Which one?

Ms. Page. Whatever the last thing I just said was. Sorry. That there were no discussions of obstruction, yeah. That is -- I need to take that statement back.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So there were?

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Ms. Page. Well, I think that I can't answer this question without getting into matters which are substantively before the special counsel at this time.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, I think you've just answered it by not answering it.

Was Andy McCabe privy to those same conversations?

Ms. Page. I can't answer this substantively, sir. I'm sorry.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, were these related to some charges, whether obstruction or other charges, potentially against Donald Trump?

Ms. Page. I can't -- I can't answer that question, sir, without getting into the substance of matters that are now before the special counsel.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Again, I think you're answering it by not answering it.

Did you have knowledge about Daniel Richman's special role for Director Comey?

Ms. Page. What do you mean, sir?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did you know that he -- or when, I guess, did you learn that he was the source through which Director Comey would communicate information to the press?

Ms. Page. I learned that publicly, when it became publicly known.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But not before that?

Ms. Page. I don't believe so.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did you have interactions with Daniel Richman?

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Ms. Page. I had one interaction with him, but with respect to a going dark sort of broad legislative interest, but that's it. That was many months prior.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So back to these Comey memos. You had conversations about the Comey memos with Andy McCabe. Did you have conversations about them with Jim Comey?

Ms. Page. I think once. I think there was one time -- so, again, I guess I should make -- be more clear. We didn't talk about the Comey memos as a set, like the Comey memos. If Comey were to have a meeting that concerned him, he might come back and inform, for example, Mr. McCabe about them.

There was one time I believe in which I was part of a small group in which he came back and reported back the details of a particular meeting. Those ultimately made their way into the memos.

So I was present for at least one, possibly more, I just don't know for sure, readouts of a meeting that he would have just had with the President, Donald Trump, and then subsequently read the memos that he created about each of these meetings.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What was it about Donald Trump that created a practice that Director Comey told us didn't exist with President Obama?

Ms. Page. I can't speak for Director Comey, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did this process of the FBI Director sharing information with others in the FBI about his conversations, giving readouts of his conversations with the President, was that a standard practice?

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Ms. Page. That's not unusual, if there was a need to share what had happened. He certainly did that with respect to President Obama as well.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But never documented it in a memo form?

Ms. Page. I think that's his representation.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So you said --

Ms. Page. But I think he also answered, at least in his open testimony, that it was about the nature of the person. So I can't -- that's -- those are his words, but I can't speak beyond that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I might come back to that, but I want to move on to this now infamous tarmac meeting and at least get started in asking you about that.

To refresh your recollection from a timing standpoint, the meeting occurred on June the 27th of 2016 between former President Clinton and Loretta Lynch.

I want to ask you about an email on June the 30th of 2016 that Peter Strzok texted to you, if you'd look at that.

Ms. Page. June 30th, you said?

Mr. Ratcliffe. June 30th. We're 3 days after the tarmac meeting.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Ratcliffe. It says: Oh my God, he -- I think speaking about Bill Priestap -- Oh, my God, he is spinning about the tarmac meeting. Viewed in conjunction with [redacted] wants to meet at 4, have us bring lists of what we would do in ordinary circumstance, paren, easy,

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referred to PC, and in this circumstance, paren, easy, referred to the seventh floor.

Do you see that?

Ms. Page. I do.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Let's -- first of all, is Bill, is that Bill Priestap?

Ms. Page. I'm sure it is, yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Do you know what redacted is?

Ms. Page. I don't.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Do you know what PC is?

Ms. Page. Public corruption --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Public corruption.

Ms. Page. -- is my guess.

Mr. Ratcliffe. It's my guess, too. So --

Ms. Page. I mean, this I think is sort of a snarky text, right? So my guess is he's spinning in conjunction with the -- maybe that is like the statement, because we know that we're -- we're planning to do the -- public announcement is sort of imminent. I'm speculating there, because I have no idea what's under the redaction.

But I think this is mostly us just being a little unkind with respect to Bill Clinton -- Bill Clinton -- Bill Priestap, because he -- he was a worrier. And so I think that this is more snarky, right? There's nothing for us to do with respect to this.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. But I'm trying to find out whether this is a big deal or not. You know, the Attorney General referred to the

meeting as something she admitted cast a shadow over the integrity of the Department. It's the reason for what you referred to earlier as a quasi-recusal or halfway recusal. It is something that Director Comey referred to as a game-changer and told the IG that it tipped the scales with respect to holding a public announcement. It sounds like Bill Priestap is spinning about it.

Was it a big deal or not?

Ms. Page. To be honest with you, sir, and I'm speaking for myself, it was a boneheaded move, certainly. But I guess investigatively, I don't see it as a particularly big deal, because absolutely every single person on the Midyear investigation, both at the FBI and the Department, had concluded that there was no prosecution to be had here.

So it's not as though the meeting with Bill Clinton, even no matter what was said, even taken in the worst possible light, the evidence is what the evidence is. So there's no way to have sort of changed it.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right.

Ms. Page. So even if, in fact, everyone's worst possible nightmare about what may have transpired on that plane is all true, it still doesn't change whether there's a viable prosecution.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right.

Ms. Page. So, again, in my view, it's bad judgment and misguided, but not actually impactful of anything in particular.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So I'm going to come back to this one,

because I think we're about out of time. But you just said, and you said this yesterday or on Friday, but that it was not a big deal. Boneheaded but not a big deal investigatively, because every person involved with the Midyear had concluded that she wasn't going to be charged. Is that right?

Ms. Page. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So if I asked you the question, was the decision made not to charge Hillary Clinton with the mishandling of classified information before or after her July 2nd, 2016, interview, the answer is what?

Ms. Page. The answer is before her July 2nd interview we had not seen evidence sufficient to charge her with a crime.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. If something had changed in the July 2nd interview, then that would have all changed things. But short of an admission in that interview, there was nothing that any of us, whether at the Department or the FBI, could have anticipated that would have changed that conclusion, short of an admission or something happening --

Mr. Ratcliffe. But your answer was before the decision had been made before, that everyone had concluded.

Ms. Page. Well, you're putting words in my mouth a little bit.

Mr. Ratcliffe. These are your words.

Ms. Page. No, I'm agreeing with -- what I'm saying is a decision isn't final until it's final. So there was no final decision before July 2nd. But before July 2nd --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. -- it was the consensus of the investigative team, both at the Department and at the FBI, that there was not sufficient evidence to charge her with a crime.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So where we're going to leave off is that the decision had been made before, but the final, final decision was made after is what you're saying, to use your words.

Ms. Page. The decision isn't final until it's final.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. We'll pick up with that when we come back.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

[2:36 p.m.]

Mr. Swalwell. Back on the record.

Thank you, Ms. Page, again for spending the morning and afternoon with us. I only have a few questions. Our counsel may have some, and I understand Mr. Cummings might be coming in today.

So, again, I first just want to say that, today, our President, on foreign soil, insulted the men and women of the FBI. I'm sorry that here in Congress that you're also seeing leaders of our country insult the work that you do.

But I do think there are some fair questions, and I want to get just to some of those.

Do you regret, like, some of the messages you sent or the way that you framed some of those texts? And if you could just talk about that.

Ms. Page. I do. I think that this has been an incredibly humbling experience. Obviously, these were messages sent to somebody close to me whom I intended to be private, and I think that there are few people on this planet who would want their private messages released publicly, regardless of what they said.

I think I'm entitled to the views that I'm entitled to, and I'm entitled to express those views both publicly and privately. But I would have made different decisions had I thought about what the possible repercussions could have been.

I can't do it over again. I can only learn from it.

Mr. Swalwell. Did you ever -- were you ever part of a criminal prosecution where you so detested the defendant because of what they

did or who they hurt and you had to set aside those feelings and just stick to the four corners of the evidence?

Ms. Page. So I actually spoke about this at length on Friday, Mr. Swalwell. In fact, not just me but I think I can speak for many people at the FBI and the Department that we often loathe the subject of our investigations. And we generally do not look kindly on criminals in general and reserve plenty of harsh language for the people that we investigate.

But we, regardless and in every instance, put our personal feelings, both about them individually or the criminal activity that they are accused of, we always put it aside and conduct investigations independently and fairly.

Mr. Swalwell. Did you ever have an investigation where you received exculpatory evidence and, you know, you've got a bad guy and you really want to make sure that justice is done and then you get the evidence and you're like, crap, like, if I turn this over, it's going to make the case harder, if I keep it and I don't tell anyone, we've got a better chance of a conviction, but I know what it means if I don't turn it over? Have you ever had to make those decisions as a prosecutor?

Ms. Page. So they're not usually quite as stark, but, absolutely, you often have information which could be exculpatory or certainly could just simply be damaging to your case, and it is your obligation as a prosecutor, it is your obligation to the fairness to the defendant and the fairness in the system, to turn that information

over.

So that is something that happens regularly, and it is a part of our being, it's a part of our identity and the roles that we abide by in order to --

Mr. Swalwell. Regardless of how you feel about the defendant.

Ms. Page. Of course.

Mr. Swalwell. In the Clinton case, were you the sole lawyer making decisions about the direction of the case?

Ms. Page. I was not making decisions about the direction of the case at all. I was a lawyer supporting the Deputy Director. We had multiple lawyers in OGC who supported the investigation, and, of course, it was run by prosecutors at the Department.

Mr. Swalwell. How many lawyers could you estimate were involved in the Clinton case --

Ms. Page. So there were --

Mr. Swalwell. -- on the -- on your side.

Ms. Page. On the FBI side, there were two primary lawyers who were involved. There was a lawyer who was involved on the filter team. And then there were five prosecutors who had either regular or semiregular involvement at the Department, and then their management.

Mr. Swalwell. And on the decision to open the Russia investigation, how many lawyers were involved in that decision?

Ms. Page. The decision to open the investigation? I mean, the general counsel was involved, the deputy general counsel was involved. At least, probably -- the decision to open? I'm not sure myself.

Mr. Swalwell. Is it fair to say you were not --

Ms. Page. No, no.

Mr. Swalwell. -- the person or lawyer that --

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Swalwell. -- signed off?

Ms. Page. I did not make any decisions with respect to opening the Russia investigation.

Mr. Swalwell. Can you speak to -- well, Bob Mueller. How long did you work with Mr. Mueller?

Ms. Page. So I went over for a 45-day detail.

Mr. Swalwell. Oh, I just mean in your career.

Ms. Page. Oh. So I didn't have -- I had limited interaction with Mr. Mueller when he was the Director of the FBI.

Mr. Swalwell. In your limited interaction and the discussion you had with colleagues, can you speak to his character for truthfulness and integrity?

Ms. Page. He is unassailable on those grounds. He is an unbelievably upstanding, honest, rule-following, hard-charging, thoughtful, fair individual.

Mr. Swalwell. And with respect to other lawyers and agents on the special counsel's team, are those individuals that you had worked with in some --

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. -- manner?

Ms. Page. Some of them, yes, sir.

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Mr. Swalwell. And is there anyone on that team that you have concerns about their integrity, their character for truthfulness?

Ms. Page. No, sir. And, in fact, at least two of them I've worked quite closely with, and I know both to be incredibly bright, incredibly fair, honest, brilliant prosecutors.

Mr. Swalwell. And did you observe during the time on the team any, you know, cafeteria talk, any prejudging of the direction of the Russia investigation?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Swalwell. I don't have anything else. I'll defer back to counsel.

Thank you, Ms. Page.

Ms. Page. You're welcome.

BY MS. KIM:

Q Thank you, Ms. Page.

I'd like to ask you about several FBI employees who are mentioned in the inspector general's report. To the extent that it asks about things of which you have no knowledge, please let me know.

This, as you will see, will turn out to be a process of elimination. To be totally candid with you, there is an individual, Sally Moyer, whose name has been repeatedly brought up in connection with these aliases. And I just want to confirm whether you can identify Sally Moyer as any of the aliases named in the inspector general's report.

A I think you need to ask that question more specifically.

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Q Yes. Exactly. And so I will attempt to do so.

A Okay.

Q The inspector general's report discussed instant messages between two FBI agents, agent 1 and agent 5. The two were in a preexisting romantic relationship.

As I understand it, Sally Moyer is not an FBI agent. Is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q So do you have any reason to believe that Sally Moyer is agent 1 or agent 5?

A I know who agent 1 and agent 5 are, and Sally Moyer is not agent 1 or agent 5.

Q Thank you.

The inspector general's report also discusses FBI attorney 2 as an individual who sent instant messages of what the inspector general called a political nature. That attorney, FBI attorney 2, is referred to throughout with male pronouns.

Do you know if the FBI attorney 2 is Sally Moyer?

A I also know who FBI Attorney General 2 is, and FBI attorney 2 is not Sally Moyer.

Q Thank you.

Ms. Shen. Okay, Ms. Page, I'm going to introduce a few text messages in which it appears that you and Mr. Strzok are discussing the Russians and, sort of, their attempts at espionage and just kind of ask some of the context behind it.

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[Page Exhibit No. 9

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SHEN:

Q So, for exhibit 9, I believe, if you can direct your attention to the bottom of the page. So I'm looking at the second-to-last text on July 18th at 10:54.

Okay. So that text reads -- and I believe this text is sent from you --

A Oh, no, I don't think so.

Q Oh, I'm sorry. The first text is --

A Yeah.

Q Sorry. The first text is sent by Mr. Strzok, and it reads: And fuck the cheating motherfucking Russians. Bastards. I hate them.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

And in response, you write: I'm sorry. Me too.

Ms. Page, do you recall sending that text?

A The "me too"? Yeah.

Q The "me too," yes. And do you recall under what circumstances that exchange was sent? Was there any particular context or issue that it was responding to?

A I honestly don't remember. But I do always hate the Russians, so --

Q Okay.

Has Mr. Strzok ever communicated to you in other instances his hatred for the Russians?

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A Uh-huh, yes. I mean, most everybody who works counterintelligence at the FBI has pretty strong feelings about the Russian Federation. So this is not an unusually held view.

Q Okay. So, generally speaking, at the FBI, you've heard other instances across the agency where agents or officials have expressed their hatred for the Russians as well?

A Russia poses the most severe existential threat to Western democracy in the world. So for those of us who care about democracy and for those of us who think America is great, we have pretty strong feelings about the Russians.

Q Okay. Thank you.

[Page Exhibit No. 10

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SHEN:

Q I'd now like to introduce another text message from July 31st, 2016, as exhibit 10. And if you can direct your attention to the top of the page this time -- I'm sorry, let me correct that. The first text message would be July 30th, 2016.

A Uh-huh.

Q So I believe that first text message is from you, correct?

A That's right, yes.

Q So a portion redacted. So ends the sentence: Hate them. I think they're probably the worst. Very little I find redeeming about this even in history. A couple of good writers and artists I guess. And then redaction.

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In response to that, Mr. Strzok responds, with a redaction: Fucking conniving, cheating savages at statecraft, athletics, you name it. I'm glad on I'm Team USA.

Okay. Ms. Page, do you recall writing those texts?

A I do.

Q Okay. And do you recall any particular context those texts were made around?

A I don't.

Q So --

A I mean, this is -- we've just opened -- or, you know, we're about to open the Russia investigation, so it is very much, you know, on the forefront of all of our minds. So it would not surprise me if it's a reflection of that. But, as I said, this is an enduring sentiment for people who are in the intelligence community.

Q Well, in the intelligence community, I imagine there are -- you know, there are countries other than Russia who engage in espionage efforts. And so --

A There are countries other than Russia who engage in espionage efforts, but there are probably no other countries who are more singularly focused on the destruction of Western ideals around the world.

So it's true, other countries engage in espionage, and other countries steal, and other countries lie. But I wouldn't say that other countries do it the way that Russia does it and have as a goal, sort of, creating factions within the Western alliance in order to,

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you know, ascend to dominance the way that Russia does.

Q So would it be fair to say that Russia's espionage efforts are just far more of a threat to the U.S. national security than some other countries' espionage efforts?

A They are one of our most pernicious and dangerous threats.

Q Okay.

In Mr. Strzok's text, he refers to them as, quote, "cheating." We're in an unclassified setting, so I wouldn't want to go there, but can you describe some examples of what he may be referring to or just generally what Russia has done to be cheating?

A Well, I mean, look at the doping scandals in the Olympic Committee stuff. Look at the effort to get the World Cup in Russia that was just recently completed. I mean, they cheat.

Q And in terms of statecraft, again, in unclassified setting, are there certain examples of Russian statecraft that you find, you know, particularly egregious?

A I mean, not beyond what I've already, sort of, attempted to describe.

Q And then the last comment, Mr. Strzok, he says: I'm glad I'm on Team USA.

Would you agree that, for example, investigating the Russians for their attempts to interfere with the U.S. election would be an example of being on Team USA?

A Right. I mean, this is just being proud about being Americans. Right? We want to spread American values and American

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democracy around the world, and we think that we live in the best country in the world. And so this is simply a statement of pride and one that is in contrast to the way that the Russian Federation operates.

Q So, last Friday, the special counsel's investigation, it became public that they indicted 12 members of the Russian military intelligence, the GRU. Are you familiar with the report?

A I read about it, yes.

Q Okay. The GRU, they are Russian military intelligence, which means President Putin would be in charge of them. Is that correct?

A That's my understanding.

Q And so any attempts that the Russian military intelligence would have of interfering with the U.S. Presidential election, President Putin would be aware of that. Do you believe that to be true?

A Ask me that question again, please.

Q Okay. Sorry. I'll rephrase. Would President Vladimir Putin be aware of any attempts the GRU had in interfering with the U.S. Presidential election?

A I'm -- President Putin is the President of his country and certainly is in charge of his intelligence apparatus.

Q Okay.

A I don't want to answer that question with more specificity.

Q Fair enough. I think the point I'm just --

A Okay.

Q -- getting at is that, as the President of Russia, he would

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be the head of the Russian military intelligence.

A I would agree with that.

Q Okay.

So, actually, just earlier today, reports have come out from President Trump's meeting, summit with President Putin, and I'm just going to read to you from a Washington Post article from 12:49 p.m. today.

So the title of the article is "Putin Again Denies Russian Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election. Trump Calls Probe a Disaster for Our Country."

So the article reads: After Putin said his government played no role in trying to sabotage the U.S. election, Trump offered no pushback and went on to condemn the Justice Department's investigation of Russian interference as, quote, a disaster for our country.

Ms. Page, do you believe that the Justice Department's investigation of Russian interference is a disaster for our country?

A I do not.

Q Okay.

So it goes on to say: Putin insisted publicly that the, quote, Russian state has never interfered and is not going to interfere in internal American affairs, unquote. And Trump declined to dispute these assertions, instead saying that Putin, quote, has an interesting idea, unquote, about the issue of interference.

Now, Ms. Page, it is my understanding that the U.S. intelligence community unanimously concluded that the Russian state did attempt to

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interfere in the U.S. 2016 Presidential election. Is that also your understanding?

A Yes, it is.

Q Okay. And, Ms. Page, are you inclined to believe Putin's denial that Russia ever interfered, or are you inclined to believe in the U.S. intelligence community's assessment?

A As a part of the -- as a former part of the U.S. intelligence community, I will go with the intelligence community assessment.

Q Okay. Thank you.

Later in the article, it also says: Trump says that he holds, quote, both countries responsible, unquote, for the frayed relations between the two nations and attacked Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III's investigation.

Ms. Page, do you believe that the United States is responsible for the frayed relations between the United States and Russia?

A Well, we're responsible to the extent we're not going to accept their meddling in a U.S. election. I suppose so.

Q Okay. Well, would you blame Robert Mueller's investigation for frayed relations with Russia?

A No.

Q Okay.

And this is the last one, I promise. The article also goes on to say: In response to the questions, Trump said that both countries were to blame for the deterioration of relations. Quote, I do feel that we have both made mistakes. He added that, quote, there was no

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collusion, unquote, between his campaign and Russia, and he lamented that the special counsel's investigation into the matter has had an impact on U.S.-Russian relations. Quote, I think the probe has been a disaster for our country, unquote. He said, quote, it's ridiculous, what's going on with the probe, unquote.

Ms. Page, are you aware of anything ridiculous going on in Special Counsel Mueller's probe?

A No.

Q Okay. Thank you. I think that's all I have.

BY MS. KIM:

Q I think this might be the last tranche of questions I have for you, Ms. Page. I'd like to ask you about Director Comey.

You spoke earlier in general terms about Special Counsel Mueller. Can you explain to me how long you worked in proximity with Director Comey?

A So it would cover the span of time that I worked for Deputy Director McCabe. So, prior to February 2016, I certainly had interactions with Mr. Comey, but, once I started working for Mr. McCabe in the context of Mr. McCabe being Deputy Director, my interactions with Mr. Comey became far more frequent.

Q And can you describe for me Mr. Comey's general character and honesty as you understood them?

A He is a man of enormous integrity. I am a better lawyer and a better person for having, sort of, learned from his examples. He is obviously an extraordinary communicator, but he's also just a very

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good person and is thoughtful about how to approach problems and is a man of unassailable integrity, in my view.

Q To your knowledge, has Director Comey ever lied to you?

A No.

Q Are you personally aware of any instances where Director Comey was shown to have lied or been knowingly untruthful?

A Never.

Q Overall, do you have any reason to doubt the accuracy of Director Comey's oral or written representations of the facts from when he was the FBI Director?

A No, not at all.

Q Have you followed the recent press coverage of Director Comey's public descriptions of his meetings with President Trump?

A Yes.

Q And you said you had -- usually you had -- you have firsthand knowledge of Director Comey's memoranda that he kept to document those meetings. Is that correct?

A So I either in one or two instances was present for his initial retelling of the meeting, and in most other instances I was provided with his memo to review in real-time, like, shortly after his production of those memos.

Q Have you noted any discrepancies between Director Comey's contemporaneous recollections of the facts on one hand and his public representation of those facts on the other hand?

A No.

Q Are you generally familiar with Director Comey's testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee about his interactions with President Trump?

A I am.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that Director Comey did not -- I'm sorry, let me put that in the affirmative. Do you believe that Director Comey accurately shared with Senate Intelligence Committee his memory of his interactions with President Trump?

A Absolutely, yes.

Q I imagine you are fairly familiar with the inspector general's report. Is that correct?

A I have not read it all. I hope to never do so. But I am familiar with parts of it, yes.

Q On June 16th, President Trump tweeted: The IG report totally destroys James Comey and all of his minions, including the great lovers Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, who started the disgraceful witch hunt against so many innocent people. It will go down as a dark and dangerous period in American history.

To your knowledge, did the inspector general's report contain any information discrediting the special counsel's probe?

A No.

Q And are you aware of the inspector general's report destroying anything about Director Comey's ability to testify as a witness in the special counsel's probe?

A No.

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Ms. Kim. I think that ends our questioning for this round.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. Ratcliffe. All right. Back on the record.

So, Ms. Page, when we left off, I was asking you -- well, I asked you a question based on the answer that you'd given, and I asked you whether a decision had been made to charge Hillary Clinton -- not to charge Hillary Clinton before or after her July 2nd, 2016, interview. And your first answer was before. You said something to the effect of, because every person -- I'm paraphrasing -- because virtually every person on the Midyear Exam team had concluded that she wasn't going to be charged.

And then --

[Phone ringing.]

Mr. Meadows. You can tell a lot about a man by his ringtone.

Ms. Page. Will it say "boing, boing" on the transcript?

Mr. Ratcliffe. But then, in fairness to you, Ms. Page, you qualified that a little bit and said, well, a final-final decision was made after. I want to give you a chance to be clear.

Ms. Page. So the word -- and I don't mean to be overly lawyerly, but it comes naturally, so forgive me. The word "decision" suggests the finality. And my only point is that before the July 2nd interview the uniform view was that there was not sufficient evidence to bring any charges against Hillary Clinton. That's not a final decision, because it's not a final decision. But to that point, there was

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insufficient evidence to charge her with any crime. And that was uniformly agreed to by both the FBI individuals involved and the DOJ individuals involved.

But that, certainly, in the event, unlikely was our estimation, but in the event that there was some admission or some other revelation which changed our assessment, we were all open to that possibility.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right. But you talked about -- you started your answer before about, "to be candid," and I think that's an important word, because "candor" has a specific meaning when you're talking about an FBI agent, right? Candor and lack of candor?

Ms. Page. Everybody at the Department has an obligation to candor, yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right. And you gave a very long explanation for, you know, the decision and before, and you made reference to the discussions. We know this went all the way back to a memo -- at least, a memo drafted by Director Comey on May the 2nd of 2016. And there were multiple drafts and a lot of conversation. All of that, right?

Ms. Page. That's correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What is a lack of candor for -- what does that mean in the context of anyone associated with the FBI when they're talking to an investigator?

Ms. Page. That they're being untruthful?

Mr. Ratcliffe. A lack of candor?

Ms. Page. Yeah. A lack of candor means that they're being untruthful.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. Oh, untruthful. I thought you said being truthful.

Ms. Page. Oh, no. Sorry.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm sorry. I misheard you.

Ms. Page. That's okay. That's okay. Yeah.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Or that they're leaving out material facts, right? Only telling part of the story?

Ms. Page. Sure. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Okay.

The reason I ask is I asked that same question that I asked of you, that you gave a very long explanation, went into great detail about a great many factors that impacted it, I asked that same question to Director Comey under oath, did you make the decision before or after, and his answer was after.

He didn't explain it at all. He didn't qualify it at all. He didn't give any context to it. He didn't discuss number of decisions. He didn't say, well, we made it after but everyone had concluded long before.

Do you have any reason to give me any explanation or justification for why Director Comey wouldn't have given that information to congressional investigators or while under oath to Members of Congress?

Ms. Page. I don't know, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. I can't answer that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. We were talking about the tarmac meeting, as

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well. And I was asking you about this email on June the 30th of 2016 that related to Bill Priestap. And you gave me the context that it was, to use your words, of being a little bit unkind.

But I did want to ask, the reference to what we would do in ordinary circumstance, in parentheses Peter Strzok says, "Easy, refer to PC," which you and I both think is "public corruption." Was he making a joke there? I'm just trying to find out --

Ms. Page. Yeah. I mean, I think that you have to take this whole text in the, sort of, somewhat snarky tone in which it's intended. Because there's nothing to do, right? Like, as I sort of described already, the investigation is what the investigation is. It is virtually over. We have seen what the evidence fails to, sort of, demonstrate.

And so I think, as I said -- and I'm certainly not, sort of, proud of this, but I think that it's more a reflection of, "Oh, gosh, he's worrying again" --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right.

Ms. Page. -- and this is, sort of, not a basis to be worried about. And so I think that's why you have the, like --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right. And all --

Ms. Page. -- flippant responses at the end.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And all of that is somewhat reinforced by the text message that we've talked about before that you sent the next day on July 1st about: She's not exactly a profile in courage because she knows that Hillary Clinton is not going to be charged.

Ms. Page. Right. I think they're of a kind.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah.

But, nevertheless, this tarmac meeting, obviously it generated a lot of attention. And, again, the reason that the Director said that he did the unprecedented step of acting as investigator and prosecutor on July the 5th and, she said, cast a shadow.

The day after you sent the profile-in-courage text message was July 2nd, which was the interview of Hillary Clinton, correct?

Ms. Page. This says the 1st here, but I take you at --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah, I think --

Ms. Page. -- that you have -- you know, I know some of them are in UTC and some of them aren't, so I -- yeah.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I'll represent to you that it occurred on Saturday, July the 2nd of 2016.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And I've only got one copy of this, but I've got a document I want to show you and just -- it's essentially, I think you'd call it an LHM, or a letterhead memorandum, which is a summary of -- supposed to be a summary of the interview based on the 302s of the people that were in the room.

Ms. Page. It's a summary of, sort of, the investigation, of, sort of, all the investigative steps and what we found.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah. But specifically in connection with her interview on July the 2nd of 2016.

Ms. Page. Okay.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. Yeah. Well, I mean, you look at -- did you play a role in preparing that?

Ms. Page. I --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Because there were some text messages, I thought, where you --

Ms. Page. Yeah. So I did not play a role in preparing it. We went through, like, 52 billion drafts of this thing, like, from "a" to "the" to, you know, like, all kinds of changes, because we wanted to be as perfect as we could get it. So I am certain I am on a jillion drafts as well. I am not positive I ever read the entire thing. I started to a couple of times, but other things --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, I went through it, and I read it a couple times, and I'll represent to you that the word "tarmac" doesn't appear in there or "Loretta Lynch" doesn't appear in there. And I --

Ms. Page. That makes sense to me.

Mr. Ratcliffe. It does?

Ms. Page. That's not -- yes. So, I mean, I believe you. I have no way to disagree with you. But those were not investigative steps. This was not designed to, sort of, be every single thing that happened during the course of the Clinton email investigation. This is designed to be an assessment of what the FBI did and what the FBI found. And the tarmac incident doesn't really play a role with respect to those two things.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So -- and that's your opinion. You're entitled to it. I just want to be clear, though. So, if a meeting took place

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5 days before the interview that everyone in the country is talking about, in terms of it being inappropriate, casting a shadow, calling for a quasi-recusal, that involves the husband of the subject of the investigation and the boss of five people from the Department of Justice that are in the room, you think it's not unusual that someone wouldn't ask a question of the subject of the investigation about that meeting that had occurred 5 days before in public view?

Ms. Page. Well, so that's not what you asked me. You asked me why it wasn't in here. And so that's, sort of, my reflection of why that statement isn't in here.

With respect to why they didn't ask her -- you're asking why the prosecutors didn't ask her a question in the interview? I can't answer that except that Mr. -- it kind of goes to the point I was making earlier. If we were close to charging her and then suddenly this tarmac meeting happens and now we are not going to charge her, then I agree with you, and then we have a serious controversy on our hands.

But I guess I just don't -- I fully understand and remember and appreciate the firestorm it created. I completely agree with you on that. But if there was 0.0 percent evidence the day before the tarmac meeting and there's 0.0 percent evidence the day after the tarmac meeting, it doesn't change anything. It's a terrible optic, but it doesn't change the outcome of the investigation.

So I was not a part of a decision to ask or not ask. I didn't review the outlines with respect to whether to ask or not ask. I don't know who made the decision whether to ask or not ask. I'm just saying,

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in my opinion, it's not that weird to me. I'm not sure what you would get out of that question.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, I guess --

Ms. Page. Because there still wasn't sufficient evidence to charge her.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- what you'd get -- if the stated premise that everyone seems to have given is that she's not going to be charged unless she lies in her interview, she can't lie if she isn't asked the questions.

Ms. Page. But she wasn't at this meeting. Her husband was.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I --

Ms. Page. Right? So what is --

Mr. Ratcliffe. I guess you could confirm that if you asked her, just like you could confirm what they talked about and whether or not there was any number of discussions.

Anyway, you're entitled to your opinion. I just wanted to ask you about it because I'd seen something in these text messages that indicate that you were involved in this.

And do you recall some text messages with Agent Strzok about some of the 302s being inflammatory and not letting Congress have those?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. What do you recall about that?

Ms. Page. So that was when we were starting our production of the materials that Congress had requested. So it's not so much -- and, ultimately, they were all turned over anyway. They were emails which

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were -- or emails, excuse me. They were 302s which were -- didn't ultimately speak to any of the evidence that we found. They were inflammatory, they were certainly --

Mr. Ratcliffe. What do you recall about them? How were they inflammatory? Because I don't know that they have been turned over.

Ms. Page. So one is the quid pro quo. I mean, that we've gone -- that's gone, sort of, to the end of the Earth, the Brian -- what was his last name? McCauley maybe?

So this was the claim -- sorry. I haven't thought about this in a while, so I don't want to get this wrong. So this was the claim that, very early in the Clinton -- in the -- shortly after opening the investigation -- no. Sorry. Before that. Sorry, let me think about this for a second.

When the State Department was first, I think, complying with either their FOIA or something and had first determined that there may be classified information among the emails which had been collected, there was an allegation that Patrick Kennedy, who was then the Under Secretary for Management, I think, at the State Department, had reached out to Brian McCauley, I think is his last name -- but I could be getting it wrong -- who was an executive in our International Operations Division, and had essentially -- the allegation was that if McCauley could get the classification of this particular document changed, that the FBI could get the legat spots that they wanted at certain embassies or something like that. I don't -- I might be getting some of this wrong.

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And so that had been investigated. I think both individuals had been interviewed by the FBI. The classification of the document never changed. The legat spots were never granted. And so it was sort of a wash.

So the point was we were trying to prioritize the 302s and the documents which actually went to the underlying decision not to prosecute. Those were not those. And so, in terms of having limited resources and trying to prioritize the things which would be most salient to Congress' review of our investigation, the McCauley stuff -- there was something else; I can't remember now what it is. But the, sort of, sideshow things that didn't actually affect what the outcome was or what the evidence was in the investigation were, sort of, deprioritized.

So, I mean, that's all that's meant to reflect, ultimately. It's obviously a text message, so it doesn't have all of that context and background, but that's what that's a reflection of.

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[3:11 p.m.]

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. I want to go back the Comey memos that we were talking about. And you were relating sort of the process that you and Andy McCabe and others, apparently, would have a conversation with Director Comey about the material and what became his memos as a readout.

Did I miss anyone besides you and Andy McCabe?

Ms. Page. It's a very small number.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Who else can you think of?

Ms. Page. I think the Director's testimony was Jim Rybicki -- and this is from memory, so it's in some hearing transcript somewhere -- Jim Rybicki, Mr. McCabe, Mr. Ghattas, maybe Mr. Bowdich, and myself.

There may have been one or two other times in which one or two other people may have been aware of a particular -- hearing a readout of a particular memo -- I'm sorry; let me correct one thing. The one exception to the list I just provided was that Mr. Comey did brief his senior Crossfire Hurricane team of the meeting in early January when he's there with Clapper and Brennan and the rest of the -- Admiral Rogers, and the head of the -- the leaders of the intelligence community briefing him on the intelligence community's assessment of the Russian interference and the Russia active measures report.

The memo that he drafted following that meeting, in which he also -- is that public? -- let me stop there -- the memo that he drafted, he did brief the sort of senior Crossfire team of the events.

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We had talked about it in advance of that meeting, and he gave a readout of, you know, a debrief following that meeting. So that's the only exception in terms of the Comey memos that had a more expanded personnel list, to my knowledge.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And so was the discussion -- before you had talked about, and you said, when, you know, when we talk about concerns that the Director had -- were those concerns about the topics that the President was talking about, or were they concerns about the President?

Ms. Page. I don't know what you're talking about. I'm sorry. What do you mean? What concerns I had?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Giving the answer, you said he would bring us together to talk about -- from his meetings with the President -- concerns that came about.

And I'm wondering were they concerns about topics that the President was talking about, or was the concern the President?

Ms. Page. Well, I only recall being -- I think I was only present for one -- other than the January one about the ICA, I think I was only present for one meeting in which he kind of had described what had just transpired. I don't remember which one that was of the memos that I've read and was privy to. I just don't remember which particular one I was present for. I just remember being present for one of them.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, do you remember I asked you before about an obstruction of justice as a topic, and you gave an answer, and then you came back and said: I need to take my answer back.

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Ms. Page. That answer back, yeah.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But generally talked about certain matters, I guess. Let me ask you this: I asked you the other day about a text message that Peter Strzok sent you the day that Jim Comey got fired where he said: And we need to open the case we've been waiting on now while Andy is acting.

And you explained: It didn't have anything to do with when Andy was acting, but the case we were waiting on.

Is that the same information that's reflected in some of the Comey memos?18Usc924c@@@

Ms. Page. Just a moment, please.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Mr. Ratcliffe, I'm sure this is going to be an unsatisfying answer, but I have reviewed all the Comey memos, as I said, I have read most of them in real time, at the time that they were written. I don't have any basis to disagree with the claims made in the Comey memos, but with respect to what steps we may or may not have taken, based either on those claims or following the Director's firing, on advice of FBI counsel, I can't answer that at this time.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Your inability to answer tells me a lot. And what it tells me is inconsistent. And what I'm trying to get at, it is inconsistent with what Jim Comey has admitted that he told the President, I think, that he wasn't under investigation during that timeframe.

Maybe --

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Ms. Page. That is not inconsistent, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So he wasn't under investigation, but that doesn't mean there was a discussion going on about potential crimes involving the FBI Director's senior leadership team. That's what you're telling us?

Ms. Page. I am not telling you that. But the statement, if taken as a hypothetical, somebody could not be under investigation, but there still could be discussions about potential criminal activity, and that is totally consistent with FBI policies and would not be unusual with respect to any investigation.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Except the unusual part about memorializing it in memos that hadn't been done with other Presidents, right?

Ms. Page. I don't know what you're asking me. I'm sorry. How do you -- what?

Mr. Meadows. Well, let me follow up, if you don't mind.

Are you aware of any other time that Director Comey memorialized conversations with President Obama?

Ms. Page. I think he has testified that he did not do that. That's correct.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. And so did you not find it unique that he would be memorializing these conversations, and they weren't in totality of the all the conversations you had, but he memorialized these particular conversations. Did you not find that unique?

Ms. Page. I think that he did memorialize all of his conversations with --

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Mr. Meadows. President-elect.

Ms. Page. President-elect or President Trump. I think that's been his testimony. I wouldn't have known that he did or didn't do it beforehand, to be honest with you. So I don't know that I can answer your question.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did Director Comey have any conversations with you about the purpose behind him creating these memos?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Did Andy McCabe create any memos?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Tell us about those.

Ms. Page. I can't do that, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Without -- I'm going to respect -- try and respect as much of this as I can, but given the fact that you've acknowledged that there were memos or at least a memo, I want to find out as much as I can about the timing and the circumstances of it, even if you won't disclose the content of it.

So, first of all, let me ask you, are you aware of the content of the memo or memos?

Ms. Page. I am.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Were you involved in the preparation of the memo or memos?

Ms. Page. I reviewed some of them, probably not all, but some of them, mostly for like spelling and typographical things before he finalized them.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. You say "them," so there were multiple memos. Do you know approximately how many memos?

Ms. Page. Let's be more specific about memos with whom, if we could.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Memos with respect to President Trump.

Ms. Page. Just meetings with President Trump?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Just what?

Ms. Page. Just meetings with President Trump?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Meetings, conversations, interactions, communications.

Ms. Page. With the President?

Mr. Ratcliffe. With President Trump?

Ms. Page. There's a very small number. I'm not certain, but one or two. I'm not certain.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And can you tell me anything about the timing of those memos? When they were created and the circumstances under which they were created, without getting into the content?

Ms. Page. With respect to those one or two, to the best of my recollection, he would have created them shortly in time following whatever interaction he may have had.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And was it his interaction necessarily or could it have been memos about -- I'm trying to find out, again, the timing of this. Is this sort of related to the firing of Jim Comey or other events?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry. Ask me that question again.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm just trying to determine the context of now what I'm going to refer to as the McCabe memos and when they were created and what the circumstances of the McCabe memos were.

So can you give me a -- when was the first McCabe memo created, if you can give me the general timeframe and the circumstances under which it was created.

Ms. Page. I honestly, I could not guess at a date. I do not think that the Deputy Director had any interactions with the President of the United States until after he became the Acting Director.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

Ms. Page. But that is my -- I am speculating about that, as I sit here today.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. You're not certain about that.

Do you know whether or not there were any McCabe memos during the Obama Administration?

Ms. Page. Not to my knowledge -- I'm sorry. Memorializing interaction with President Obama?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Yes.

Ms. Page. No, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. What's your understanding of why Deputy Director or Acting Director McCabe generated a memo or memos memorializing his interactions with President Trump?

Ms. Page. I'm not really crazy about speaking for them. I would say, in general, that an FBI agent memorializes the substance of a conversation when he thinks there is a reason to memorialize it, whether

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it is the substance, whether it is the circumstances of the meeting, whether it is the nature of the interaction.

We write something down when it seems worth writing down.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Were the McCabe memos ever disclosed outside the FBI, to your knowledge?

Ms. Page. Not outside the Department, to my knowledge.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Would the special counsel have access to the McCabe memos?

Ms. Page. I -- yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Would the McCabe memos be relevant to the matters that the special counsel is investigating?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. You mentioned that there were other memos that -- I'm not sure I understood. These ones that we're talking about related to his interactions with the President, but you intimated that there were other McCabe memos that were responsive to my first overarching question.

Can you tell me what those memos relate to? How you would characterize those?

Ms. Page. Mr. McCabe memorialized certain interactions with either White House personnel or others when there was something noteworthy to memorialize, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did either Deputy Director McCabe or Acting Director McCabe, whatever capacity, did he discuss the memos, to your knowledge with Jim Comey?

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Ms. Page. Certainly, the ones that were written before the Director was fired, I would expect so. He would not have discussed them, any memos that he drafted after the Director was fired because the Director was no longer a government employee.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Based on public reports, Acting Director McCabe interviewed with President Trump for the position of Director of the FBI on or about May 18th of 2017.

Do you know if -- first of all, do you know if Acting Director McCabe discussed the McCabe memos or the Comey memos or disclosed the existence of either to President Trump in that interview?

Ms. Page. I, I don't think -- I don't know.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did you have a conversation with Acting Director McCabe about his interview with the President?

Ms. Page. I did.

Mr. Ratcliffe. His interview for the position of FBI Director?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. What generally did he relate to you about the interview that you may recall?

Ms. Page. I'm sorry, sir. I'm not going to go into the details of those conversations at this time.

Mr. Ratcliffe. For what stated reason?

Ms. Page. Because I have no idea what among the memos that Mr. McCabe drafted is of investigative utility or not to the special counsel, and so because I have no knowledge of that, I can't start parsing some parts of the content and -- versus others.

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Mr. Baker. When Mr. McCabe was just regular Deputy Director, did he ever keep any memos from conversations or interactions he had with Director Comey?

Ms. Page. He did not keep memos, but he obviously took notes, you know, during the course of his duties.

Mr. Baker. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. Let me, Lisa, may I do a followup from previously?

When we talked about the dossier's existence came into your knowledge in mid-September, it's, I think, been reported, but also during testimony, that there was a number of different versions of different memos, I guess, that became aware -- that the FBI became aware of. Is that correct?

Ms. Page. Not memos but of the reports that are called the dossier.

Mr. Meadows. Yeah.

Ms. Page. Yeah, I'm --

Mr. Meadows. Yeah, I'm not following up on his.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Meadows. But as we now know is the dossier because it had a number of different reports there.

Ms. Page. My understanding is that, if there are -- I'm going to make this up -- if there are 20 reports that the FBI received from Christopher Steele, I've completely made that number up --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- I'm just using it for example's sake.

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If there are 20 reports that the FBI received from Christopher Steele at various times and from various individuals, people, other government employees, wherever, the FBI has received certain subsets of that 20.

So, from one person, we might have received 11; from another person, we might have received 14. I'm -- again, I'm just doing this for example's sake -- but, yes, it is my understanding that the FBI has received from various sources -- not confidential human sources -- but from various places --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- varied subsets of the, quote-unquote, "dossier."

Mr. Meadows. So, when that happened, and we started to look at that, and obviously, you've got mid-September through the third week in October when a FISA application is actually issued on Carter Page, did you receive multiple sources between the mid-September, or were the multiple sources after the original FISA application?

Ms. Page. I think after.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. So did you communicate that or was that outlined in the followup FISA applications that you might have gotten additional --

Ms. Page. I'm not sure -- that's my point -- I'm not sure any were additional.

Mr. Meadows. Right, but as a subset, but they were different. So, I mean -- here is --

Ms. Page. No, that's --

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Mr. Meadows. So what you're saying is they were all consistent; it just was part it --

Ms. Page. Duplicative. Right so --

Mr. Meadows. Let's say there were 16 different items, you might have gotten 11 from this source and 10 from this, but they were all consistent is what you're saying?

Ms. Page. That's my recollection, yes.

Mr. Meadows. All right.

Ms. Page. So it's not as though, if we had 20, and Joe Smith provided us with 11, all 11 were within the 20 we had. It is not as though one of them was new to us out of the original 20. That's my --

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. I guess I should hedge this, though, because I'm not looking at any of these. That's my understanding based on what had been briefed to Director Comey or otherwise. I never looked at any of the nonofficial sources--

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. -- of the dossier.

We got the set of the reports that we got from Christopher Steele, our confidential human source. That was sort of the authoritative set that we cared about.

To the extent we got chunks or subsets from other people, we collected them, but --

Mr. Meadows. At what point did you start to get concerned that there may be some potential credibility issues as it relates to who

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may have paid for the work? Did you ever?

Ms. Page. Me --

Mr. Meadows. I mean, because we know that, on January 10th of 2017, they were still, according to Peter Strzok's email to you and others, that they were unverified still at that particular point.

Ms. Page. So, let's -- let -- there's a lot --

Mr. Meadows. January 10th.

Ms. Page. There's a lot packed in there, though. So, to your first question, when did I get concerned?

I'm not sure that I ever actually had a concern. And the reason is that, with respect to the -- certainly the first FISA -- I think we had an understanding that Steele had first been engaged by a Republican opposition but by -- I'm not going to be able to describe it better, and I hope I'm not --

Mr. Meadows. Somebody opposite of Trump.

Ms. Page. Exactly. By a Republican who is seeking opposition research. And then, after that person had dropped out -- I didn't know who -- but after that had sort of fallen away, that the engagement continued for the Democrats.

So that was sort of a wash, as far as I'm concerned. There wasn't, in my view, a political motive that affected the --

Mr. Meadows. No, the one political narrative is that they were all against Donald Trump. That would be the consistent theme there.

Ms. Page. Right.

Mr. Meadows. Whether it was for Marco Rubio or Ted Cruz, they

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were all consistently against Donald Trump.

Ms. Page. That's right. But because of the person that Christopher Steele was and the -- both his --

Mr. Meadows. Because he was credible from before when you worked with him.

Ms. Page. Exactly. And this was not a source of consternation, in my view.

Mr. Meadows. So let me drill down. And specifically, Mike Kortan and media contacts, potential media contacts, at what point did that become a concern as it relates to Christopher Steele and some of the communication that was not just a couple? It seemed to be widespread.

Ms. Page. Right. So we were very concerned about the existence and the content of Steele's reporting leaking. We were very concerned about.

Mr. Meadows. In fact, did you not verify that he had leaked? I mean, today, if you were to --

Ms. Page. Let me -- hold on. I'm sorry. One second.

Mr. Meadows. Go ahead. Sorry.

Ms. Page. No, no. At some point, December-ish, I think, maybe -- well, maybe earlier than that, maybe November. Mike Kortan, the head of our Public Affairs Office, does start to inform the team that there are more outlets asking him about this.

Do you have it?

What is it?

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Have you heard of this?

Because the existence of these reports is starting to sort of circulate in Washington circles. And I remember the team discussing, as a collective sort of saying, like, how our singular focus was to not confirm that we had them because then we knew that the press couldn't necessarily report on the substance of the allegations because they were so inflammatory.

Mr. Meadows. Right.

Ms. Page. But if they wanted to report in a way that would be less inflammatory, they could simply say: The FBI has reports that say blahbadee, blahbadee, blah.

So our single focus was to make sure they could not do that.

And with some regularity Kortan would inform us that this news outlet or that news outlet had asked him: Do you have these? Do you know about them?

And we just had a resolute "no comment" because we did not want to allow the opportunity that we did have these to even allow that to be the news story.

So --

Mr. Meadows. So was Mike Kortan's acknowledgment that this potentially could have been happening with Christopher Steele, was that part of the decision to not reimburse Christopher Steele, as has been reported, or pay him for part of the work as a confidential human source?

Ms. Page. I don't know what you're talking about. I'm sorry. Mike -- so Christopher Steele was never -- he came to us and gave us

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this information. We didn't, we didn't --

Mr. Meadows. So there was never an indication to reimburse him for his expenses or anything else.

Ms. Page. No, no, we reimbursed him for his --

Mr. Meadows. Pay him for his time?

Ms. Page. -- his travel expenses.

Mr. Meadows. Pay him for his time?

Ms. Page. No, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Meadows. I can see my colleague from Texas getting anxious, so I'm going to yield back.

Ms. Page. I was going to say one other thing. One of the other things you said sort of unverified, salacious. And so that's true, and I can't get into sort of the substance of what we did, but immediately, I mean as soon as we received the reporting from Steele in mid-September, we set about trying to prove or disprove every single factual statement in the dossier.

And so, and we had line level analysts who are super experts on Russia, try to pick apart each statement and either try to prove its veracity or prove its inaccuracy. And to the best of my knowledge, we were never able to disprove any statement in it. So we were never able to say: There's a claim about X, and that is untrue.

There are some statements for which we have never been able to confirm or deny its veracity. But there are no statements contained in the -- at least at the last time that the review is done, which is now many months ago -- that we were able to demonstrate or show were

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demonstrably false.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Ms. Page, are you talking about the Woods file?

Ms. Page. No. The Woods file is a document that accompanies a FISA, which provides the basis for each statement contained therein.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right. I've seen it.

Ms. Page. Okay.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But I --

Ms. Page. I'm not talking about the Woods file. I'm talking about a separate effort that was undertaken in order to try to verify for investigative purposes, not for purposes of the FISA, but a separate effort undertaken to try to validate the allegations contained within the Steele reporting.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So what would that, what was the name -- maybe I missed it. What was the name of that document?

Ms. Page. There's no name.

Mr. Ratcliffe. If I were trying to locate that or ask for it to be produced, what would I be asking for?

Ms. Page. I mean, the efforts to validate the Steele reporting? I don't know. It's not like a document. I mean, it is not a --

Mr. Meadows. I guess what he's saying is we have not seen these documents yet. We've made multiple requests. So I guess how can you help us home in on where those requests may or may not be?

Mr. Ratcliffe. And the reason I mentioned the Woods file is because I have seen the Woods file because I've wanted --

Ms. Page. The Woods file is different.

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Mr. Ratcliffe. And I understand that, but I thought maybe you were talking about it without naming it. So, if there's another document out there that attempts to do something similar, it sounds like --

Ms. Page. No, I don't -- it is not that similar. Every single FISA that goes to the FISC has a Woods file.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right.

Ms. Page. No matter the topic, no matter the subject, no matter the threat.

The Woods file is part of the FISA process which is designed to demonstrate that we have done due diligence with respect to the facts supporting the FISA application. This is a sort of separate effort that investigative team undertook.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Ms. Page, I have to -- I've had a chance to ask you questions over the last Friday and again today. I know I've asked you some tough questions, but I want to get on the record, have I been discourteous to you at all?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Have I given you the full opportunity to answer or explain your answers?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And have I generally been fair in my questioning?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Believe it or not, I'm asking that -- believe it or not some folks might misrepresent how we conduct ourselves in here,

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and I want to get that on the record.

So I thank you for your time.

Mr. Meadows. And I'm -- the gentleman from Boston has a couple of questions for me, and you'll tell by his accent very quickly.

Mr. Brebbia. Hi. I'm Sean Brebbia, Oversight and Government Reform, Majority.

Ms. Page. Sean?

Mr. Brebbia. Brebbia. B-R-E-B-B-I-A.

BY MR. BREBBIA:

Q I show you an email between you and Peter Strzok from October 18, 2016.

A I just want to take a second to start from the beginning and look at it.

Q Sure. Please do.

A Okay.

Q Just beginning very basically, can you tell us a little bit about what's being discussed here? The subject is [REDACTED].

A Am I allowed to -- I'm sorry. One second, please.

Ms. Bessee. May we confer?

Mr. Brebbia. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. So I don't -- I can't -- I believe that I can answer the question. I don't believe I can answer the question in an unclassified setting.

Mr. Brebbia. Okay.

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Mr. Somers. But you could answer the question in a classified setting?

Ms. Page. Yes.

Mr. Brebbia. And FBI.

BY MR. BREBBIA:

Q Okay. Couple more. In this email, there's mention of "they" editing a document. Subject of the email is "Re [REDACTED]."

The document that's being discussed, did the [REDACTED] have any involvement with preparing that document?

A There's no way I can answer that. I can't answer that it in this. I'm sorry.

Q How about anyone at the White House? Anyone at the White House have involvement in drafting that document?

A I can say, generally, I am not aware of the White House ever -- in my personal knowledge, I've never been a part of any FISA in which the White House has been involved?

Q And how about knowledge? Is there at the White House -- anyone in the White House have knowledge of that document?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q It probably makes more sense to take this up in classified setting?

A I think so, sir.

Mr. Parmiter. Could I ask just a couple of followup questions to some of the things you talked about with Mr. Ratcliffe?

You referred to a separate effort that was not the Woods file to

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validate allegations in the Steele reporting. I'm just kind of curious as to the timeframe.

When did that sort of separate effort begin to corroborate the Steele reporting, and when did it end?

Ms. Page. It began immediately upon receiving the Steele reporting. And I do not know when it ended.

BY MR. BAKER:

Q And what steps were taken to validate or refute any of the points made in the document?

A I can't go into more detail about the specific efforts that were taken, other than that herculean efforts were taken to try to prove and -- or disprove or corroborate in any way the statements contained in the Steele reporting.

Q Okay. Let's take the Steele reporting out of it.

If you were trying to validate points made in information given from another source, would it be fair to say one of the techniques to validate or disprove would be to task other sources?

A [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q So would you do everything and anything that's authorized,

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but that could include tasking other human sources to --

A Well, yes I guess it could, but think about really what you're saying. If I have a document that says, "On January 25th of 2013, Joe Smith and Sally Jones were at a restaurant," [REDACTED] that's a historical event. [REDACTED]

Q But if you have a source that owned the restaurant. I mean, you could have a source that --

A If you [REDACTED]

And then you would get whatever answer then, certainly.

But more likely, I mean, so maybe you would [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I mean, I'm making this up, obviously, but the more expeditious and likely investigative steps would be to look at what is [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

A And that would at least make that statement more likely to be true or less likely to be true, depending on what you find.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q You had indicated on Friday that there was an investigator who had been brought over to the Special Counsel's Office prior to Mr. Strzok being employed, but that that person was not a good fit?

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A That's correct.

Q Who was that person?

A I think his name was John Brown.

Q And why do you think that the special counsel deemed him -- Mr. John Brown, you said?

A I think that's his name, yeah.

Q Why do you think the special counsel deemed him not to be a good fit?

A You would have to ask the special counsel.

Q So you're not aware of why he might have been removed --

A I'm not going to speculate.

Q -- from the team?

A No.

Q Why did you leave the Special Counsel's Office?

A I talked about this at length on Friday. When Mr. Mueller first asked me to join, I was quite hesitant to do so. It had been an incredibly intense 2 years, and I have very young children at home. And I wanted to be a better parent to them. And so I originally demurred, and Mr. McCabe encouraged me to go and help out. And so as a sort of compromise position, I talked with Mr. Mueller about coming over for 45 days to sort of help them stand up their effort and that we would sort of reassess at the end of those 45 days.

And, ultimately, I knew -- I know what a Bob Mueller operation looks like, and I know the intensity and the rigor and the incredibly hard work that is required. And I was just ready to sort of make a

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change in my personal life. And so I left after the 45 days and returned to the FBI.

Q Okay. And also in your testimony on Friday, you had that indicated -- you had made some statement indicating that we had access to all of your emails, texts, communications?

A I mean, this is my presumption. There's not a whole lot of secrets out there left on me.

Q Are you aware whether there was any preservation order ever issued with respect to any of your communications?

A Preservation by whom and for what?

Q That's what I'm asking. Maybe from Special Counsel's Office, the FBI, by --

A I mean the FBI, to the best of my knowledge, preserves everything. And I'm certain there have been preservation orders that the FBI has sort of announced, but I'm not even there anymore. So I don't have access to any of the stuff before you in the first place.

Q We understand you communicated through other devices, other accounts, including iMessage and Gmail. Has there been any effort to access any of those communications?

A Well, I don't have any iMessages. We communicated using our personal devices for personal purposes. We very infrequently used those devices for work purposes. And --

Q I'm sorry. I missed that.

A We very infrequently used our personal devices for work purposes.

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Q Have you turned over those messages that were work-related?

A There are no work-related messages in my personal accounts.

Q But you indicated you "infrequently," meaning, at some point, you did communicate regarding work-related purposes over personal devices?

A I am sure that I have. I never retained those. And unless they were a record requiring, you know, sending it back through the FBI system, there's no need to retain those.

Q And neither the FBI nor the special counsel has ever attempted or requested your communications over personal devices or personal accounts?

A One moment, please.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. So there is -- my understanding is that there is some FOIA litigation, either at the Department or the FBI for which my personal accounts -- I'm sorry -- for which work-related material on my personal accounts have been requested to be preserved, but I do not have any such material to preserve.

BY MR. BREITENBACH:

Q You indicated previously that the importance that you placed on the Russia investigation over the Clinton email investigation in terms of the effect you believed it might have on national security.

Are you aware whether there was ever any similar targeting of the Hillary Clinton campaign by any foreign intelligence service?

A No, not that I'm aware. And just to be clear about your

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question, that answer was given with respect to, once we were in October and we had the sort of ongoing Russia investigation and we had the potential additional emails that may have existed on the Weiner laptop.

So I just want to make sure we're talking about -- it's not as though, other than in that one particular month, the two investigations never overlapped such that we had to do a weighing or balancing of the two investigations.

Q Serving as counsel to Mr. McCabe, the number two at the FBI, is that the kind of information that you might learn of with respect to whether another.

A If there had been a serious attempt by a foreign power to -- by a threatening foreign power to work with members of the Clinton campaign, I would have expected to know about it, yes.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q You mentioned the name John Brown a few minutes ago. Can you just clarify where he is, what his job is?

A I have no idea what his job is right now.

Q No. Was at the time. Sorry.

A So, when the special counsel first stood up and they were looking to staff that effort, they -- the FBI, I think, originally wanted to put somebody other than Pete on it so that Pete could kind of go back to his day job, as I think I described in some depth on Friday.

And so the person that they originally sought to fill the kind of lead FBI role on the special counsel was an individual named John

Brown.

Q National Security Division? Counterintelligence?

A I think a Cyber SAC.

Mr. Somers. I think we're out of time for this round.

[4:07 p.m.]

Ms. Kim. We're back on the record. It is 4:07.

BY MS. KIM.

Q Ms. Page, the email that you discussed with the majority about the [REDACTED] has been used as an exhibit for a news article that came out on July 6th, 2018, from The Hill entitled "Memos Detail FBI's Hurry the F Up to Probe Trump Campaign." Are you familiar with that article?

A I'm sorry, can you step just a little bit further from the mike? It's a little bit -- yeah.

Q Does this help?

A Yeah. Sorry. So say that all over again, please.

Q Yes. The [REDACTED] email that you reviewed with the majority was used in an article from The Hill by opinion contributor John Solomon about how the FBI allegedly kept hurry the F up pressure on the Trump campaign probe. Are you familiar with that article?

A I am familiar with that article, yes.

Q The thesis question from that article, third paragraph of that article I'll read to you is: The question that lingers unanswered is, did those sentiments, meaning anti-Trump sentiments, affect official actions?

A Right.

Q So, insofar as you can tell us in an unclassified setting, did the [REDACTED] process reflect any political biases or other improper motives?

A No. As I -- as I think I discussed earlier -- I probably shouldn't have discussed earlier in that setting. Okay, never mind.

No, there were no -- no political interest or bias which affected the Carter Page FISA.

Q Did it reflect any undue haste on the part of the FBI in an attempt to try to stop Donald Trump from becoming elected President?

A No, not at all.

BY MS. HARIHARAN:

Q Also a part of the article is they cite Peter Strzok's testimony from when he met with us in the transcribed interview where he said, quote, in response to Mr. Gowdy's question of whether he was involved in the preparation of the affidavit in support of that FISA, he said, quote: "I can tell you that I was aware of the FISA application, but I did not participate in its preparation."

And then, when asked again, he wrote -- excuse me, he said: I did not provide information. I did speak with people who were preparing it.

So, referring back to the emails that the majority showed you, was that Peter Strzok acting in his capacity as a supervisor for those responsible for the FISA application?

A That's correct. So speaking more generally, a person in a DAD role does not have any role in the FISA process. It's a very sort of regimented process that goes back and forth from the Department to the FBI. At no time does a DAD need to approve it or read it or write it or provide intelligence toward it.

To the extent Pete was involved, it was because he was -- to the extent Pete was knowledgeable that it was happening, it's because he was in charge of the Crossfire investigation. But he -- that's consistent with my understanding and recollection. He did not have a role in the drafting or the sort of approval of the FISA.

Q So just to be clear, he was not one of the individuals involved in sort of the preparation of the factual --

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And then, to the best of your knowledge, then was his testimony accurate?

A That's correct, yes.

Q Thank you.

Mr. Cohen. Ms. Page, I'm sorry, I've missed your testimony on Friday and this morning, so there might be things that are repetitious. I believe I'm correct that you've said that even if people had political perspectives, and some people were anti-Hillary and some people thought Bernie was beyond the burn, et cetera, that none of those biases affected any of the actions of Mr. Strzok or of you or anybody else within the Mueller special counsel investigation.

Ms. Page. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Cohen. Anything in the FISA applications that you know of that was not dealt with according to procedures and --

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cohen. No nefarious activity?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cohen. And wasn't there some information that if you went too far in giving the court -- the court was given information, I believe, about the fact that somebody might have paid for the dossier, but that if they went too far, they might be outing sources or going beyond what is legitimate activity?

Ms. Page. Sir, I'm not sure I can answer that question in this setting.

Mr. Cohen. And I'm not sure if I asked it right.

Ms. Page. No, I understand your question. I'm just not sure -- I'm really not sure what's been classified and -- what remains classified and what's been declassified. So I'm not -- I'm not comfortable answering that in this setting.

Mr. Cohen. And then you were asked about Mr. McCabe's memos and Mr. Comey's and the fact that he made some notes about his conversations with President Trump, and to the best of your knowledge he didn't do this with any other Presidents. Is that correct?

Ms. Page. I think that's been his testimony, yes, sir.

Mr. Cohen. Do you think in your history as an attorney, your knowledge as a human being, that the degree of the -- the reputation a person has for truth and veracity might have something to do with the likelihood of somebody making a memo about their conversation with them?

Ms. Page. I agree with you, sir.

Mr. Cohen. So he wouldn't -- if he had talked to Abraham Lincoln, he wouldn't have had to make a memo, honest Abe.

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How long were you involved with the FBI?

Ms. Page. I was -- I worked at the FBI for about 6 years.

Mr. Cohen. And this was -- how many years were you there during Comey's directorship?

Ms. Page. For all of his directorship. So for the 3-1/2 years that Director Comey was there, I was also an employee.

Mr. Cohen. And were you there after he was fired too?

Ms. Page. I was.

Mr. Cohen. Would you say the morale at the FBI went up or down after he left?

Ms. Page. We were devastated by his firing, sir.

Mr. Cohen. He was generally respected by members of the FBI?

Ms. Page. He was respected and well-liked, and people believed in his vision for the FBI.

Mr. Cohen. You were never there during the time Mueller was there, were you?

Ms. Page. I was for about the first year, year and a half of Mr. Mueller's tenure.

Mr. Cohen. Do you know what his reputation is among members of the Bureau for honesty and for diligence and for, you know, hard work and caring about America?

Ms. Page. He -- his reputation for all of those things is strong. He is regarded as very demanding, but also completely honest, you know, with integrity that is really unparalleled.

Mr. Cohen. And a lot of the work that Peter Strzok had done at

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the FBI, particularly back in 2010, when he outed I think it was as many as 10 Russian spies, was a lot of his work centered in counterintelligence on Russia?

Ms. Page. His entire career has been in the Counterintelligence Division. So his full 20 years at the FBI has been almost exclusively doing either counterintelligence or espionage cases, right. So counterintelligence is our effort to counter foreign adversaries here collecting against us. Espionage cases involve U.S. persons who have decided to turn --

Mr. Cohen. Join another team.

Ms. Page. -- and work for a foreign power.

Mr. Cohen. Yeah. Maybe go and sit next to Putin and say nice things to him, that kind of stuff.

Would you say that if he had a driving force in his life and something that he was most concerned about that it was protecting America and our country from Russian influence?

Ms. Page. That is -- he is a patriot, first and foremost, and he has devoted his entire life to defending the national security of the United States. And Russia poses probably the most pernicious threat to Western ideals and Western democracy. So, yes.

Mr. Cohen. I don't think I have anything else. Thank you. And I'm not going to offer you -- suggest you should get a Purple Heart even though I'll probably be described as sexist for not doing it.

Mr. Cummings. Thank you very much.

Ms. Page, I thank you for being here. And I know it's not the

most pleasant moment in your life.

During his testimony the other day, Agent Strzok said something to this effect: That while he may have had his own personal opinions about Hillary Clinton and even his own opinions about Donald Trump, that it did not impact his -- the investigation. In other words, when he was deliberating with his colleagues, it did not affect that.

Do you believe that?

Ms. Page. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cummings. And why do you say that?

Ms. Page. Because I was present for all of the investigative steps and for the decisionmaking that occurred on both investigations. And so I know the discussions that went on around them. I know the reasons behind the steps that we took.

Certainly, with respect to the Clinton investigation, there was not a single investigative step at all, under any circumstances, other than the July 5th statement made by the Director, that wasn't done either in conjunction with or at the direction of the Justice Department.

So there is no room for bias, to the extent it even exists in the first place, to have influenced official acts, because every single act was taken in coordination with a half dozen to a dozen or more people.

Mr. Cummings. Can you understand -- and I asked the same question of Mr. Strzok, Agent Strzok. And I practiced law many years. But can you understand why people might think when they read the texts

that it would be almost impossible not to interject that, those thoughts, into the discussion?

Ms. Page. I do understand that, sir. But I do think that we do not give up our right to have a view as to who is most qualified to be President of the United States simply because we work for the FBI or even because we are working on an investigation involving one or the other of them.

And these were our personal views. They were views, particularly before July 28th, which entirely reflected our view of the dignity befitting the White House, of the decorum and the way one holds one's self. I don't see how that is relevant at all to whether Hillary Clinton mishandled classified information 3 years prior.

And after July 28th, we were now concerned about whether there was a foreign adversary trying to work with a Presidential campaign. And so I think that the concern there is both understandable and recognizable.

I guess the other thing I would say, sir, is that -- and I've said this a number of times in response to other questions -- we don't often like the people we investigate. And that is true whether we are investigating a pedophile or a fraudster or a terrorist or a drug dealer. We don't like criminals. We don't like people who we think are criminals.

And that does not ever under any circumstances pervade the activity that an FBI agent or an FBI lawyer or a DOJ prosecutor engage in. We are not driven by political motivations. We are driven by a

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search for the truth. This is who we are as FBI employees. It is absolutely what pervades our every decisionmaking.

And if at any opportunity we saw somebody acting in a different way, we would not tolerate it. It's just not the way we operate.

Mr. Cummings. You said something a moment ago in I think it was answering one of Congressman Cohen's questions, and I don't remember the exact words. I tried to jot it down. But you were talking about Russia and the threat of Russia. I forget the words you used. You said Russia was the greatest -- can you elaborate on that, please?

Ms. Page. So it is my personal view that Russia poses probably the most -- the greatest threat certainly to Western ideals of any of our foreign adversaries. And we have vast foreign adversaries. But even the threats that are posed by China or by Iran or North Korea or others doesn't speak to sort of the core of Western democracy, right?

You have -- you have -- in the Russian Federation and in President Putin himself, you have an individual whose aim is to disrupt the Western alliance and whose aim is to make Western democracy more fractious and in order to weaken our ability, America's ability and the West's ability, to spread our democratic ideals. I mean, that's the goal, is to make us less of a moral authority to spread democratic values.

And I happen to think that this is the best country on the planet and that our values are universal values that can and should be spread across the globe. And that is not a view that is shared by Russia.

And so every effort to sow discord, to make us fractious, to harm

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the Western and American way of life is a win for the Russian Federation. It is a win for President Putin.

So it is my opinion -- I am certainly not the world expert on it -- but it is my opinion that with respect to Western ideals and who it is and what it is we stand for as Americans, Russia poses the most dangerous threat to that way of life.

Mr. Cummings. Are you aware of any FBI investigations motivated by political bias?

Ms. Page. Never, sir. No.

Mr. Cummings. You never saw signs of that when you were there?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Cummings. Are you aware of any Justice Department investigations motivated by political bias?

Ms. Page. Not that I'm aware of, no.

Ms. Page. On February 2nd, 2018, President Trump tweeted, and I quote: "The top leadership and investigators of the FBI and the Justice Department have politicized the sacred investigative process in favor of Democrats against Republicans, something which would have been unthinkable just a short time ago. Rank and file are great people," end of quote.

Do you agree that, quote, "the top leadership and investigators of the FBI and the Justice Department have politicized the sacred investigative process in favor of Democrats and against Republicans," and can you explain why you feel whatever you feel?

Ms. Page. No, sir, that's not been my experience. My experience

is as I've described it, which is that every person to a person, there are 36,500 of us, and we all care about doing things the right way.

That is the reason that we have the authority that we have as the FBI to show up at your door in the middle of the night and to knock on it and to hope that you open. And the reason that we are able to do that is because we have a reputation for honesty and integrity.

And if we cannot continue to do that, if people question our motives and people question why we are showing up at their door in the middle of the night, we are all unquestionably less safe because of it.

Mr. Cummings. Tell me, why did you become an FBI agent?

Ms. Page. So I've been a lawyer, sir, for the last 12 years. I am one of those nerdy kids who at 14 knew I wanted to be a lawyer, knew I wanted to serve -- be a public servant. I went to a public school for law school in order to have less debt and lived at home so that I could not sort of take the route of a private sector job, because I have always wanted to serve my country.

Mr. Cummings. I take it this has been a very painful experience.

Ms. Page. It has, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Do you want me to pause for a minute?

Ms. Page. I'm fine.

Mr. Cummings. Throughout your career at the FBI and DOJ, are you aware of any instances of the FBI and the Justice Department conducting investigations in favor of any party and against another?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. On May 22nd, 2018, Republican Members of Congress introduced House Resolution 907. In that, they were requesting that the Attorney General appoint a second special counsel to investigate misconduct at DOJ and the FBI.

At the bottom of the first page, the resolution asserts the following: "Whereas, there is an urgent need for the appointment of a second special counsel in light of evidence that raises critical concerns about decisions, activities, and inherent bias displayed at the highest levels of the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding FISA abuse, how and why the Hillary Clinton email probe ended, and how and why the Donald Trump-Russia probe began," end of quote.

Ms. Page, do you think that there was inherent bias at the highest levels of DOJ and FBI regarding FISA abuse?

Ms. Page. No, sir, there has not been.

Mr. Cummings. Is there any evidence of inherent bias displayed at the highest levels of DOJ and the FBI regarding how and why the Hillary Clinton email probe ended?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Is there any evidence of inherent bias displayed at the highest levels of the DOJ and the FBI against Donald Trump as part of the Trump-Russia probe?

Ms. Page. Sir, no. The actions that we took in that investigation, at least in the time that I've been present for it, are exactly what you want the FBI to do when confronted with the risk that

a member of a Presidential campaign may be working in coordination with the Russians.

There is no -- at the outset of an investigation, we cannot tell you definitively what is happening.

But the notion that we should not have opened the investigation, that we should not have looked into whether or not this is a truthful or accurate allegation is just mind-boggling to me. It is precisely what you want your FBI to do, investigate counterintelligence threats to this Nation.

It doesn't mean that anybody has done anything wrong, not at the outset. It means that we need to look. And that's what we did.

Mr. Cummings. Are you aware of any actions ever taken to damage the Trump campaign at the highest levels of the Department of Justice or the FBI?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Are you aware of any actions ever taken to personally target Donald Trump at the highest levels of the Department of Justice or the FBI?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Cummings. Is there any evidence that any FBI or Department of Justice official took any actions biased in favor of Clinton or biased against Trump?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Not James Comey?

Ms. Page. No.

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Mr. Cummings. Andrew McCabe?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Cummings. Peter Strzok?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Cummings. Loretta Lynch?

Ms. Page. Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Cummings. Sally Yates?

Ms. Page. Again, same answer.

Mr. Cummings. I'm sorry?

Ms. Page. Same answer.

Mr. Cummings. Rod Rosenstein?

Ms. Page. No.

Mr. Cummings. And Robert Mueller?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Is there any evidence that President Obama ordered any investigative activity that was biased in favor of Clinton or biased against Trump?

Ms. Page. No, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Is there any evidence that President Obama ordered a wiretap of Donald Trump or the Trump campaign?

Ms. Page. There is no evidence of that at all, sir.

Mr. Cummings. None?

Ms. Page. None.

Mr. Cummings. I take it there was some time spent trying to figure out whether there was truth to that.

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Ms. Page. At the Department, certainly, yes, sir.

Mr. Cummings. On December 3rd, 2017, the President tweeted, quote: "After years of Comey with the phony and dishonest Clinton investigation and more running the FBI, its reputation is in tatters, worst in history, but fear not, we will bring it back to greatness," end of quote.

Let me ask you something. I want to go back to something that Congressman Cohen asked you. He asked you about a certain period where -- and he was asking you about the morale. And you said -- and I'm not -- I don't remember the exact words. But can you describe, you know, when you -- I'm sure you all saw these tweets. And when you get things like that, read stuff like that, how do you think it affected the morale?

Ms. Page. I will just say, sir, that that is not consistent with my feeling about Director Comey or anybody that I know or that I've spoken to about how we held Director Comey. He was widely liked. He was respected. I don't know whether he would want to work with me ever again, but I would work for him anywhere he went any time in my life. He is a man of extraordinary intelligence and integrity, and it was a total pleasure to learn from him.

Mr. Cummings. Do you agree with the President's statement that the FBI's reputation is in tatters and is the worst -- is the worst in history?

Ms. Page. Well, it is now.

Mr. Cummings. And why do you say that?

Ms. Page. Because we continue to be a political punching bag. Because some private texts about our personal opinions continue to be used to -- as a broad brush to describe the entire activity of 36,500 individuals. Because we have been caught up in a place that we never could have possibly imagined, because all of us did the job that was asked of us.

Mr. Cummings. Is that painful?

Ms. Page. It's horrendous, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Does it make your job harder to do?

Ms. Page. Yes, it does.

Mr. Cummings. How so?

Ms. Page. Well, it's the very point that I was making. If we cannot be trusted to call on you, if we cannot be trusted to protect confidential human sources, then we need to get out of the law enforcement business. Because if we cannot be trusted to keep secrets, if we cannot be trusted to -- to believe that what we do we do for the right reasons, then we have a very big problem in this country.

Mr. Cummings. Do you agree with the President's characterization that the Clinton investigation was, quote, "phony and dishonest"?

Ms. Page. I would welcome the President to point out what we should have done differently in that investigation, what the evidence would have shown, how we would have prosecuted beyond a reasonable doubt, given the evidence before us. I would welcome a conversation with President Trump about that.

I am really tired of hearing all of the things that we should have done with nobody actually demonstrating to me why that would have resulted in a different conclusion with respect to the prosecution of Mrs. Clinton.

Mr. Cummings. In your opinion, what kind of impact do statements like this have on the morale --

Ms. Page. They're demoralizing.

Mr. Cummings. -- of the rank and file?

Ms. Page. They're demoralizing, sir.

Mr. Cummings. And what is the impact of statements like these on the public's confidence in the FBI and how does that impact our national security?

Ms. Page. I'm not sure I can expand on that further than I already have, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Let me say this. I don't have anything else, but again, I think I just want to defend the truth. And -- were you about to say something?

Ms. Page. I was going to say, so do I, sir.

Mr. Cummings. And I believe that. I believe that. And I think what I've been trying to get to is the bottom line.

You know, when I listen to some of the questioning, I try to figure out where are we going with all of this. And it seems to me when you told me and this body, this group of people, about your feelings with regard to Russia, it makes it even more urgent that we get to the bottom line or we won't have a democracy.

And I want to thank you for your service. Going through difficult times is difficult, but in the end I think if you survive it you come out a stronger person.

Ms. Page. Let's hope so.

Mr. Cummings. And I want to -- I do thank you for your service and thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Page. Thank you.

Mr. Cummings. All right.

[Recess.]

Mr. Parmiter. Let's go back on the record. It's 4:43 p.m.

BY MR. PARMITER:

Q Ms. Page, I appreciate you bearing with us. It's been a long day. We just have a couple more questions to ask.

A No problem.

Q Are you aware whether during the investigation, the MYE investigation, there was any evidence that Secretary Clinton or someone on her behalf had transmitted classified material other than by email?

A How do you mean?

Q For example --

A Like a text or something or --

Q -- by fax.

A Oh.

Q Or, you know, either Ms. Clinton herself or someone on her behalf.

A I don't know. I'm sorry.

Q So you wouldn't know whether or not she directed someone to do so?

A None of this is ringing a bell. I'm not saying that someone wouldn't have that information. I just -- none of this sounds familiar to me.

Q Okay. Are you generally familiar with something called the President's Daily Brief?

A I am.

Q And is that document generally classified?

A It is.

Q At what level is it classified?

A It depends on the reporting contained therein, but it is certainly a highly restricted document that, broadly speaking, is classified at the TS level.

Q And would be inappropriate to transmit via fax or unclassified email or to anybody who is not otherwise authorized to view it, correct?

A It could -- it could go over secure fax. It would depend on what system you were talking about. But in general, yes.

Q Okay. Let me ask you a couple of followup questions also about meetings that were held at the Bureau regarding the Midyear Exam after the case had wrapped.

Did you attend any meetings at the FBI in 2018 regarding the Midyear Exam investigation?

A In all of 2018? Oh, yeah, all the time. Yes. Oh, 2018?

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. No, I don't think so. No.

Q When did you leave the Bureau? Do you recall the date?

A May 4th of this year.

Q So I'm not going to -- I'm just going to show you an email that has been produced by the Bureau.

A Oh, oh, oh, oh. I'm sorry. Yes. So this I can explain. Sorry. Oh, no, what is this? So -- sorry.

When you talked about meetings at -- at FBI, I'm thinking about meetings with the Director about the investigation. I sort of managed or sort of ran point, coordinated, I don't know what the right word is, an effort to try to stay on top, however unsuccessfully, of all of the various -- oh, wait. I am gone at this point. Sorry. That's weird.

Q Right. So this email, just for the record, is a May 17th, 2018, email to a number of folks at the Bureau, including, well, you, even though you had left by this time, correct?

A Right. So my guess is that somebody just cancelled the -- let me take a step back.

For some period of time, although I was not involved in this after probably May of 2017, for some period of time starting in maybe the winter of 2016 through probably May of 2017, I tried to assist with the coordination within the Office of Congressional Affairs to sort of stay on top of the myriad requests coming from all the different committees for documents and for letters and sort of the congressional response and all of that.

And so I wasn't in charge of any of it. I just tried to convene a meeting weekly so as to try to not let disparate -- the disparate people who were responsible for, well, this person's responsible for this portfolio and this one has HPSCI and this one has HOCR and this one, right, so that we were all talking with one voice, we all knew what requests had come in, the responses were consistent, right, we were producing the right stuff to the right committees.

So for a period of time, like I said, probably from Decemberish 2016 through May 2017, I sort of led that effort. That's what this is a -- I think there was a sort of standing Midyear meeting that was once a week.

I don't know whether this is -- whether this reflects that, to be honest with you. I just don't know. It seems like it. It's the right personnel who would have been involved in that.

But by the date of this email, which is May 17th, 2018, I was not an FBI employee.

Q Okay. Well, would you say that this is canceling a meeting series?

A That's what it might be, yeah. So --

Q And to your knowledge --

A And maybe it happened automatically. Like when they disabled my account, right, after leaving, it's possible that -- yeah, but this would have -- exactly.

So the message contained here could have been whatever the last time I sent a cancellation. You know, sometimes Outlook saves that

last message, because obviously there's no way for me to have typed this when I'm no longer an employee.

Q Correct. So -- but, as far as you recall, had any meetings of this MYE followup team taken place in 2018?

A No, not to my knowledge. The effort has now been -- after I left for special counsel, I never picked it back up. And so, to the best of my knowledge, it was people in OCA who have been responsible for convening meetings for congressional response, to the extent ones are happening. I just don't know. I don't have knowledge of it anymore.

Q Okay. And that would have been when you left for special counsel in May of 2017?

A Correct. Correct. I never took -- my point is when I came back from special counsel, I never took it back up.

Mr. Somers. Since we're at the close of the interview, just to completely switch subjects possibly.

Mr. Meadows. Before you close out, Lisa, you have mentioned that you worked for Andy McCabe. You were probably the closest individual, professionally speaking, that he interacted with. Is that correct?

Ms. Page. Certainly -- maybe one or two people might be equally close. But yes, I would say we were quite close professionally.

Mr. Meadows. So one of the things that I guess that I'm trying to put my arms around is, you know, as you hear different things communicated by different people, and we've had the opportunity to interview Mr. McCabe previously, but it appears that he, you know, lied

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to the FBI, lied to the IG, was caught in that, admitted it, and then kind of walked it back as it related to, you know, just some of the story of sharing with The Wall Street Journal, some of the conversation with Matt Axelrod.

How do you -- I mean, would you characterize that as something that you saw typically over your professional career?

Ms. Page. I am constrained in what I can answer in light of other ongoing investigations, but I can say that I have never seen Andy lie, ever, under any circumstances. I have never seen Andy do anything other than make the right decision and often the hard decision, even when it has been personally unpopular or professionally unpopular.

I have consistently seen him make hard decisions because they were the right thing to do. I have consistently seen him be the fly in the ointment in the NSC under President Obama or in this administration because it was the right thing to do.

The findings of the inspector general are entirely inconsistent with the man I know and have worked very closely with for the last 4 years of my career. And I cannot -- I simply don't agree with those conclusions, sir.

Mr. Meadows. So -- and I thought that that's where you would go. And I guess my question is as it relates to some of the factual things that have now at least come out and been reported.

So do you see this as more of and at odds with Director Comey and Andy McCabe? I mean, where is the conflict? Because, I mean, both of them can't be telling the truth. And obviously memos that you were

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talking about earlier tangentially may or may not relate.

Ms. Page. So I really -- I really can't answer substantively, because it's the subject of other ongoing activity.

Mr. Meadows. So would it be fair to characterize that you believe someone else is not telling the truth?

Ms. Page. No. I actually -- I am -- you'll be surprised to know that I develop strong feelings about things. And I am actually quite confident, although I've spoken to neither Mr. McCabe nor Mr. Comey about this, I have a strong feeling that I understand where the disconnect happened with respect to what Director Comey thought they were talking about and with respect to what Mr. McCabe was talking about.

Mr. Meadows. So you think it may be just a big misunderstanding?

Ms. Page. I do, sir. I do.

Mr. Meadows. It's a pretty big one and you might -- and so I guess where does -- you know, I mentioned earlier Mike Kortan. Where does he come into all this? Because all of a sudden --

Ms. Page. Yeah.

Mr. Meadows. And what is troubling with me is knowing that there are a number of unauthorized disclosures that happened --

Ms. Page. I disagree.

Mr. Meadows. Hold on. That happened in Congress and happens at times in other agencies.

Knowing that, as we've been involved in this, that the FBI or specifically DOJ has done a very good job of putting a narrative out

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there that sometimes is not based on truth, I guess the question I have is, what role did Mike Kortan, Director Comey, Andy McCabe play in the matter that we have where we have to question a high-ranking FBI official that has now retired?

Ms. Page. Yes. I really want to answer that question, because it is as good one. Give me a moment, please.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Page. Mr. Meadows, I agree with you that it is curious that there is no reference in the IG report at all to Mr. Kortan, particularly in light of what I reported, which is that both interactions with the reporter were done with Mr. Kortan, in coordination with Mr. Kortan and with Mr. Kortan at my side. So I cannot explain why there is no -- there is no reference to Mr. Kortan in any testimony, if he did give any, in the IG report.

Mr. Meadows. So would it be prudent for this committee to have Mr. Kortan come and testify to perhaps add some clarity in terms of what he said, didn't say?

Ms. Page. I think that the U.S. Attorney's Office is probably adequately equipped to answer that question sufficiently, sir.

Mr. Meadows. All right.

Ms. Page. Particularly, honestly, it's so tangential to --

Mr. Meadows. The core issue.

Ms. Page. Right.

Mr. Meadows. Okay. So there seemed to be great consternation -- and that's me characterizing -- the decision to

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recuse himself, Mr. McCabe's decision to recuse himself in the final days of, I guess, when we reopened the MYE. It was apparent that he did not necessarily agree with that decision to recuse. Would you agree with that?

Ms. Page. I would agree with that, and I agreed with him. I did not think there was a basis to recuse.

Mr. Meadows. So was it that he was encouraged to recuse because of the appearance? Or why do you think he was encouraged to recuse himself? I mean, I've read a lot of back-and-forth as it relates to that, and it's still an unanswered question for me.

Ms. Page. I know the IG report has an entire chapter on this. I haven't read it. That was ultimately what Director Comey asked him to do, and so --

Mr. Meadows. But I guess did Director Comey ever tell him or you why he asked him to recuse himself?

Ms. Page. I have never spoken to Director Comey about it. He did -- Director Comey did speak to Mr. McCabe about it, obviously, because he instructed him ultimately to -- or asked that he ultimately -- Director Comey asked that Andy ultimately recuse. And I believe it's based on a sort of appearance, but I just -- I simply think that was misguided and ill-timed.

Mr. Meadows. So the reason why I ask is because you have -- now you have an Andy McCabe that recused himself, you have an Andy McCabe that's been accused of lying several times to different people within the Department. And what you're saying, that those are two unrelated

events?

Ms. Page. Oh, wholly, yes.

Mr. Meadows. And so one is perception; the other is perhaps more a direct action of Mr. McCabe?

Ms. Page. I guess so, yeah.

Mr. Meadows. All right. Yield back.

And for the record, I want to thank you for being cooperative. I want to thank you for doing the very best to answer as many questions as possible. And I think I speak on behalf of the entire committee, that your willingness to share transparently has served you well and has certainly served this country well.

Ms. Page. Thank you, sir.

BY MR. BAKER:

Q Did you say Mr. Kortan was present at your side when you were having discussions with The Wall Street Journal?

A Correct.

Q And Mr. Kortan's position at the FBI was what?

A He was the head of our Public Affairs.

Q He's an assistant director of the Public Affairs Office?

A Correct.

Q So did you, by the fact he was present, believe that this was an authorized and approved --

A It was an authorized. This is why -- we didn't get to it, but it was 100 percent an authorized disclosure. I mean, the whole premise behind the IG report in the first place I take issue with,

because I was authorized by Deputy Director McCabe and by Mike Kortan to engage with the reporter on this topic.

And so, you know, the IG has come up with a different conclusion with respect to McCabe's inherent authority to authorize it in the first place, but I simply disagree with that.

Q So you believed it was authorized?

A Yes. It was authorized, as far as I'm concerned.

Q You indicated in a previous round when there was a discussion about McCabe memos that Deputy Director McCabe had made some memos of his own. I had asked whether he had ever made any memos regarding his conversations or interactions with Director Comey, and you said, well, he took notes.

I was referring to any kind of documentation he made for proof or clarity later on as to what he was told, not just taskings.

A Got it. No, I am not aware of him ever having taken a memo as you have just described it with respect to his engagement with Director Comey. I just wanted to clarify that like every single day he likely was taking notes with respect to his interactions with Director Comey in the course of his official duties.

Q And did you have conversations with Mr. McCabe that made you believe that he thought Director Comey instructed him or wanted him to have these conversations with The Wall Street Journal, even though there weren't memos to that effect or notes to that effect?

A I'm sorry, ask me that question one more time.

Q Did you ever have a conversation with Mr. McCabe about the

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whole Wall Street Journal issue regarding whether the Director knew about it?

A Oh, no, we did not have any conversations about that. But the Director need not have known about it. The deputy had his own inherent authority to engage with the media.

So it's not something -- my point is, it's not something he necessarily would have needed to seek the Director's authority or approval for.

Q Okay. Is Mr. Kortan still employed with the FBI?

A No, he's not.

Q And do you know why he left?

A Because he was long eligible to retire.

Q So he just retired?

A Yes.

Q Okay. One final question on an unrelated topic.

You had indicated your role as an assistant to Mr. McCabe was to go to different meetings and sort of bridge back what had happened in these meetings or something like that.

A Yeah.

Q Are you aware of any meetings or did you hear discussion about the sophistication level of Secretary Clinton as it related to handling of classified information or emails and communications in general, that she either was or was not sophisticated, and that would have been part of the discussion regarding charging?

A I -- I'm not sure if I can tie it to your last statement.

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It's possible. But I was a part of -- I was a part of the sort of general briefings that the Director or the Deputy Director had as we gathered more evidence in the Clinton investigation.

And I don't remember whether it came out of Secretary Clinton's interview or interviews with some of her senior staff or both.

But yes, we did come to learn that Secretary Clinton was not particularly sophisticated when it came to technology and the use of computers. I mean, she was not a sophisticated cyber user.

Q Was there ever any evidence or any dissent in opposition to that view?

A Oh, not to my knowledge, no.

Q You had mentioned earlier that Mr. Priestap --
Mr. Somers. Can I ask one question?

Mr. Baker. Sure.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q What about her sophistication in terms of knowledge of classification and what classified documents looked like?

A She had that knowledge. Yeah. I don't --

Q Well, because in her -- the 302 of her interview, for instance, she says that she did not -- wasn't aware of what the C in parentheses at the beginning of a paragraph meant.

A Yeah. I mean, that's not -- that doesn't shock me. I mean, without the -- without the rest of the sort of header and footer and cover page.

Should she have? Yeah, probably. But like on a single line

randomly in the middle of an email, I don't find that terribly offensive to my sensibilities, but --

Q I'm just bringing that out as an example of whether -- what you saw as her level of understanding of markings on documents and things.

A No, I think she -- I have no personal knowledge of this, but given her history in government and her position, I would expect her to have had, you know, some sophistication with respect to classification.

Mr. Parmiter. On what did you base the conclusion that she was not particularly technologically sophisticated?

Ms. Page. I think both based on her statements about her understanding on how a server works and my understanding -- and I never read her 302, but my understanding is -- at least I don't think I did -- is based on what was briefed to the deputy and the Director, was like as technical questions were asked of her, she lacked the ability to answer them, as well as other people who were interviewed sort of had consistent statements with respect to her technical sophistication.

BY MR. BAKER:

Q Are defensive briefings just for Members of Congress, or would Cabinet secretaries also get them if they were potentially targeted?

A Oh, certainly. I mean, any -- a defensive briefing would go to any person in a position to have sensitive national secrets and/or

interactions or exposure with people from foreign countries.

Q Do you know if Secretary Clinton had any in her role as Secretary of State?

A Defensive briefings?

Q Yes.

A I have no idea, sir.

Q Is it likely that she could have?

A Entirely plausible, sir. But it would -- again, like there's a difference between a general CI brief, which is you're traveling to this country, beware of these things, versus, you know, we understand that Joe Smith has reached out to you to schedule a meeting, you should be aware that intelligence suggests that Joe Smith is blah, blah, blah.

Q So --

A That's -- the latter is a defensive briefing.

Q Sure. In addition to the specifics of who might be trying to do something to you as the Congressperson or the Cabinet member, is there a boilerplate that would almost go with any defensive briefing as to the how a hostile actor might try to exploit your position, exploit a meeting?

A I would expect so, but I don't have personal knowledge of it.

Q Would you guess if there was that part of that would be that email communications and communications in general and weaknesses in networks would be an area for exploitation?

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A I'm not really sure. You know, that might go to a broader CI briefing, a broader counterintelligence briefing, a warning about spear phishing, a warning about, you know, how cyber networks might be compromised.

But in a defensive briefing, to the best of my knowledge, in a defensive briefing it is usually much more specific and pointed information that we have.

So general CI brief, sure, you might talk about how different foreign actors use different tools or vectors to do their work. But if you were conducting a defensive briefing, in my view, it's more likely that it would be specific and sort of narrowly described to the specific threat or risk that you're briefing on.

Q So you don't know if someone who received a lot of defensive briefings would have their sophistication of weaknesses in email and servers enhanced by being told such a thing in defensive briefings?

A No, I don't know. I don't know.

Q Finally, you'd mentioned earlier that Mr. Priestap was -- AD Priestap was kind of a worrier. What was his relationship with Mr. Strzok? I know he would be Mr. Strzok's boss at the time that he's the AD.

A Yes. They were very close.

Q Very close.

A They -- professionally. I mean, they both had a lot of respect for each other. Both have had long careers in the Counterintelligence Division. And so both respect each other's

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instincts and knowledge and experience working CI targets. So they had a very strong professional relationship.

Q So no work tensions or --

A No, sir.

Q -- issues about decisions made?

A No, no. No, sir.

Q Okay, thank you.

Mr. Somers. I'd like to ask you about an email chain. There's only one email on the chain in particular, but you can take a look at that document. I'm mostly interested in the email from Peter Strzok to you at 7:10 p.m.

Ms. Page. One second.

Mr. Somers. That email says: We need all of their names to scrub and we should give them ours for the same purpose.

My first question is, who is "their" and "them," to your knowledge?

Ms. Jeffress. It's a long article. Do you know which part of the article this relates to?

Mr. Somers. I don't know which part of the article in particular it relates to. I'm just looking at the email from Strzok to Ms. Page, and it looks like --

Ms. Page. I don't --

Mr. Somers. -- she understood at the time, at least, what that was.

Ms. Page. I'm not sure. I'm sorry.

Mr. Somers. Okay. What about "scrub"?

[5:13 p.m.]

Ms. Page. I don't know what we're referring to, but that's usually a "let's see if we have any information in our holdings relating to these individuals." But I don't know which individuals we're talking about here.

BY MR. SOMERS:

Q Well, I took "their" and "them" -- one question on this -- "their" and "them" to mean another agency and not -- I took it to be a list of their names. Could that -- not the people in the article, not names of people in the article. I took it to be an agency or a subagency.

A Oh, I don't -- I would have taken it to mean something in the article, but I don't -- I don't remember this particular email as I sit here today.

Q If you look up to the second email from the top: That's what Bill said. I suggested we need to exchange our entire list.

A I'm not positive, sir. I'm sorry.

Q Okay. All right.

Mr. Somers. I think that's all we have for this. All right. So I think that will conclude our interview. And I want to thank you again for appearing both on Friday and again today. And that'll close the interview.

Ms. Page. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 5:14 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing_____pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date