

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

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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?

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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,

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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.

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[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]

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

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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.

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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]

[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]

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.

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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

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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?

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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.

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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

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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.

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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?

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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

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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

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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

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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?

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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

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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

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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?

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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 --

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

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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.]

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[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

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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 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 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

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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.

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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]

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[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 -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 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.

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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]

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.]

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[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

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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

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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

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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?

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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.

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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?

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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 formal a 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

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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