

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: ANDREW JAMES BATES

Friday, September 5, 2025

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in room 2335 Rayburn House Office Building,
commencing at: 9:58 a.m.

Appearances:

For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM:

BILLY GRANT, COUNSEL, OVERSIGHT

JAKE GREENBERG, CHIEF COUNSEL FOR INVESTIGATIONS

MARGARET HARKER, SENIOR ADVISOR

WILL HARNICE, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

ELLISON TOLAN, COUNSEL

SHARON UTZ, SENIOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER

[REDACTED] MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

[REDACTED], MINORITY FELLOW

[REDACTED], MINORITY COUNSEL

[REDACTED], MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

[REDACTED], MINORITY DEPUTY CHIEF OVERSIGHT COUNSEL

For JAMES BATES:

CLARE BOONE, ESQ.

STEPHEN JONAS, ESQ.

JOSHUA KOLB, ESQ.

Democracy Defenders Fund

1 Mr. Grant. This is a transcribed interview of Andrew Bates conducted by the House
2 Committee on Oversight and Government Reform under the authority granted to it pursuant to
3 House Rule X. Accordingly, House Rule X grants the committee broad jurisdiction for the committee
4 to conduct investigations of any matter at any time.

5 This interview was requested by Chairman James Comer as part of the committee's
6 investigation into President Biden's alleged mental and physical decline, the Biden White House's
7 efforts to hide that from the American people, and any unauthorized executive action.

8 Can the witness please state his name and spell his last name for the record.

9 Mr. Bates. Andrew James Bates, B-a-t-e-s.

10 Mr. Grant. Thank you.

11 On behalf of the committee, I want to thank Mr. Bates for appearing here today. The
12 committee appreciates your appearance for the interview.

13 My name is Billy Grant, and I a counsel for Chairman Comer.

14 Under the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's rules, you are allowed to have
15 an attorney present to advise you during this interview. Do you have an attorney representing you
16 in a personal capacity present with you today?

17 Mr. Bates. Yes.

18 Mr. Grant. Will counsel please identify themselves for the record.

19 Mr. Jonas. Sure. I'm Steve Jonas. I'm with Democracy Defenders Fund. With me is Josh
20 Kolb, also with Democracy Defenders Fund, and Clare Boone.

21 Mr. Grant. Thank you.

22 For the record, starting with majority staff, can the additional staff members please introduce
23 themselves with their name, title, and affiliation.

24 Ms. Harker. Margaret Harker, senior advisor for the majority.

25 Mr. Greenberg. Jake Greenberg, chief counsel for investigations for the majority.

1 Ms. Utz. Sharon Utz, senior professional staff for the majority.

2 Ms. Tolan. Ellison Tolan, counsel for the majority.

3 Mr. Harnice. Will Harnice, staff assistant for the majority.

4 Ms. [REDACTED], fellow with the minority.

5 Ms. [REDACTED], intern with the minority.

6 Ms. [REDACTED], senior counsel with the minority.

7 Mr. [REDACTED], senior counsel with the minority.

8 Mr. [REDACTED] counsel with the minority.

9 Ms. [REDACTED], counsel for the minority.

10 Mr. Grant. Thank you all.

11 Mr. Bates, before we begin, I would like to go over the ground rules for this interview. The
12 questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions for an hour and then the
13 minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an hour if they choose. To the extent
14 members have questions for the witness, they will be propounded during their side's respective
15 rounds.

16 Do you understand?

17 Mr. Bates. Yes.

18 Mr. Grant. The clock will stop if the witness needs to confer with counsel, when counsel for
19 the witness is speaking, and when members are speaking during the opposing side's round of
20 questions. We will alternate back and forth until there are no more questions.

21 Do you understand?

22 Mr. Bates. Yes.

23 Mr. Grant. There is a court reporter taking down everything I say and everything you say to
24 make a written record of the interview. For the record to be clear, please wait until the staffer
25 questioning you finishes each question before you begin your answer, and the staffer will wait until

1 you finish your response before proceeding to the next question.

2 Further, to ensure the court reporter can properly record this interview, please speak clearly,
3 concisely, and slowly. Also, the court reporter cannot record nonverbal answers, such as nodding
4 or shaking your head. So it is important that you answer each question with an audible, verbal
5 answer.

6 Do you understand?

7 Mr. Bates. Yes.

8 Mr. Grant. Exhibits may be entered into the record. Majority exhibits will be identified
9 numerically. Minority exhibits will be identified alphabetically.

10 Do you understand?

11 Mr. Bates. Yes.

12 Mr. Grant. We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner
13 possible, so we will take our time. If you have any questions or do not fully understand the
14 question, please let us know. We will attempt to clarify, add context to, or rephrase our questions.

15 Do you understand?

16 Mr. Bates. Yes.

17 Mr. Grant. If we ask about specific conversations or events in the past and you are unable to
18 recall the exact words or details, you should testify to the substance of those conversations or events
19 to the best of your recollection. If you recall only a part of a conversation or event, you should give
20 us your best recollection of those events or parts of conversations that you do recall.

21 Do you understand?

22 Mr. Bates. Yes.

23 Mr. Grant. You are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. This
24 also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in this interview.

25 Do you understand?

1 Mr. Bates. Yes.

2 Mr. Grant. If at any time you knowingly make false statements, you could be subject to
3 criminal prosecution.

4 Do you understand?

5 Mr. Bates. Yes.

6 Mr. Grant. This includes both knowingly providing false testimony but also stating that you
7 do not recall or remember something when, in fact, you do.

8 Do you understand?

9 Mr. Bates. Yes.

10 Mr. Grant. Furthermore, you cannot tell half truths or exclude information necessary to
11 make statements accurate. You are required to provide all information that would make your
12 response truthful. A deliberate failure to disclose information can constitute a false statement.

13 Do you understand?

14 Mr. Bates. Yes.

15 Mr. Grant. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful testimony in today's
16 interview?

17 Mr. Bates. No.

18 Mr. Grant. Please note that if you wish to assert a privilege over any statement today, that
19 assertion must comply with the rules of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
20 Pursuant to that, Committee Rule 16(c)(1) states: For the chair to consider assertions of privilege
21 over testimony or statements, witnesses or entities must clearly state the specific privilege being
22 asserted and the reason for the assertion on or before the scheduled date of testimony or
23 appearance.

24 Do you understand?

25 Mr. Bates. Yes.

1 [Bates Majority Exhibit No. 1
2 was marked for identification.]

3 Mr. Grant. I will enter as exhibit 1 a letter transmitted to your counsel dated August 21st,
4 2025, from Gary Lawkowski, deputy counsel to the President.

5 This letter informs you that President Trump has determined not to assert executive privilege
6 over your assessment of former President Biden's fitness for the Office of the President and your
7 knowledge of who exercised executive powers during his administration.

8 The letter also states that President Trump will not assert immunity to preclude you from
9 testifying before the House Oversight Committee.

10 Ordinarily, we take a 5-minute break at the end of each hour of questioning, but if you need a
11 longer break or a break before that, please let us know, and we'll be happy to accommodate.
12 However, to the extent there is a pending question, we would ask that you finish answering the
13 question before we take the break.

14 Do you understand?

15 Mr. Bates. Yes.

16 Mr. Grant. Do you have any other questions before we begin?

17 Mr. Bates. No.

18 Mr. Grant. My clock reads 10:05, and the majority's time will begin now.

19 Mr. Jonas. Mr. Bates has a statement that he would like to read. Would you like to hear
20 it?

21 Mr. Grant. No statements during our time.

22 EXAMINATION

23 BY MR. GRANT:

24 Q Mr. Bates, can you please just start where you received your education from?

25 A North Carolina State University.

1 Q And what year did you get that degree?

2 A 2009.

3 Q And now can you walk us through -- I understand you have a pretty lengthy career but
4 just walk us through your career background.

5 A I was an Obama campaign intern during the 2008 cycle. I worked in the Obama White
6 House, then at the Office of U.S. Trade Representative during the second term. I was on the Clinton
7 campaign in 2016. I was at the Democratic super PAC American Bridge from 2019 -- or sorry, 2017
8 until '19, Biden campaign, and then the White House.

9 Q Thank you.

10 What are you currently doing for work?

11 A I am a small business owner consultant.

12 Q Just to start with some more preliminary background questions, have you discussed this
13 interview with anyone besides your counsel or family today?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And who is that?

16 A When the committee released the letter asking me to testify, I was contacted by a
17 number of reporters asking if I had comment. I did not give a comment. I was also contacted by a
18 number of former colleagues, friends who have seen coverage related to this.

19 Q And what did you discuss with those former colleagues?

20 A They were conversations you would expect. People had seen the news. They were
21 saying things, how are you doing, that kind of exchange.

22 Q Did you ever discuss the substance of your testimony here today?

23 A I said that I was not aware of anyone having done anything wrong.

24 Mr. Greenberg. I'm sorry. Who did you tell that to?

25 Mr. Bates. You said that I do not need to disclose discussions with family members, right?

1 Mr. Greenberg. Right.

2 Mr. Bates. I don't remember who in total I said that to, but it would have been some friends
3 who had been on the campaign with me, other associates.

4 Ms. Harker. Other than the statement you just mentioned, did you discuss the substance of
5 your testimony with anyone besides your family?

6 Mr. Bates. The substance, I kept that to my legal team.

7 Ms. Harker. Thank you.

8 BY MR. GRANT:

9 Q I'm going to read you a long list of names with -- based off the following question.
10 We'll go through the list of names. To any of which you answer yes to, we will come back to those
11 after concluding the list.

12 So from 2020 to present, so including post administration, have you had a conversation about
13 the President's health, age, or ability to be President of the United States with anyone on the
14 following list: President Biden?

15 A No.

16 Q First Lady Jill Biden?

17 A No.

18 Q Hunter Biden?

19 A You said pertaining to his health?

20 Q Health, age, or ability to be President of the United States.

21 A In a sense, Hunter Biden.

22 Q How so -- well, we'll come back to that.

23 Ashley Biden?

24 A No.

25 Q Naomi Biden?

1	A	No.
2	Q	Valerie Biden Owens?
3	A	No.
4	Q	Vice President Harris?
5	A	No.
6	Q	Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff?
7	A	No.
8	Q	President Obama?
9	A	No.
10	Q	President Clinton?
11	A	No.
12	Q	Secretary Clinton?
13	A	No.
14	Q	Annie Tomasini?
15	A	Yes.
16	Q	Jeff Zients?
17	A	No.
18	Q	Rahm Emanuel?
19	A	No.
20	Q	Bill Daley?
21	A	No.
22	Q	Jake Sullivan?
23	A	No.
24	Q	Anita Dunn?
25	A	Yes.

1 Q Mike Donilon?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Richard Sauber?

4 A No.

5 Q Ed Siskel?

6 A No.

7 Q Bruce Reed?

8 A No.

9 Q Steve Ricchetti?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Jen O'Malley Dillon?

12 A No.

13 Q Ashley Williams?

14 A No.

15 Q Anthony Bernal?

16 A No.

17 Q Neera Tanden?

18 A I've spoken to her. I don't believe it was about these matters.

19 Q Doctor O'Connor?

20 A No.

21 Q Kate Bedingfield?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Jen Psaki?

24 A I have spoken to her, but I don't believe it touched on this.

25 Q David Axelrod?

1 A No.

2 Q Karine Jean-Pierre?

3 A No.

4 Q Nancy Pelosi?

5 A Actually, one caveat about Karine. We can address it later if you want, but I just want
6 to volunteer that.

7 Q Okay.

8 Nancy Pelosi?

9 A No.

10 Q Chuck Schumer?

11 A No.

12 Q Hakeem Jeffries?

13 A No.

14 Q Any other Senator?

15 A No.

16 Q Any other Member of the House of Representatives?

17 A No.

18 Q Any member of the Cabinet?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Which member of the Cabinet?

21 A Denis McDonough.

22 Q Any other members of the Cabinet?

23 A No.

24 Q So you answered yes to Hunter Biden. What was the extent of your conversation with
25 Mr. Hunter Biden?

1 A We had texted one another a little bit after some of the podcast interviews that he did.

2 Q And what were you discussing about those podcast interviews?

3 A I don't remember in full, but they were mainly political observations.

4 Q And when did this -- these conversations occur?

5 A I don't know the date. They would have been subsequent to some of his podcast
6 interviews.

7 Mr. Greenberg. Just to be clear, do you mean the podcast interviews that Mr. Biden was
8 giving post Presidency, so this year?

9 Mr. Bates. Yes.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. Thank you.

11 Mr. Jonas. Do you mind repeating the first question you asked about whether there were
12 conversations with any of these folks just to make sure that the witness has that in mind?

13 Mr. Grant. Yes.

14 It's from 2020 to present, so including post administration, have you had a conversation
15 about the President's health, age, or ability to be President of the United States with anyone on the
16 following list.

17 Mr. Jonas. Thank you.

18 Ms. Harker. In those conversations with Hunter Biden, what did you discuss about the
19 President's health, age, or ability to be President of the United States?

20 Mr. Bates. I don't remember the particulars, but it mainly had to do with discussing the
21 political aftermath of the 2024 election.

22 Ms. Harker. As it related to the President's health, age, or ability to be President or -- I'm
23 not following how that answers the question.

24 Mr. Bates. Not his capacity to be President but the effect that attacks related to age had
25 been a factor in the campaign.

1 BY MR. GRANT:

2 Q And what aspects of age were you talking about?

3 A When critics of the President would make claims related to his age.

4 Q You also answered yes to Annie Tomasini. When did you speak to Ms. Tomasini?

5 A The most recent time would have been earlier this year. I believe it was after the
6 announcement of the President's cancer diagnosis.

7 Q Did you discuss anything about his health or age or his ability to be President or just that
8 he had gotten a cancer diagnosis?

9 A I was expressing sympathy when I learned about the diagnosis.

10 Q And no other conversations with Ms. Tomasini?

11 A I'm sorry. Could you repeat the time period?

12 Q From 2020 to present.

13 A Yes, I spoke with her when we were working in the White House together.

14 Q And what were those conversations?

15 A It had to do with the way in which the President was performing his duties well.

16 Q You never expressed or she never expressed to you any concerns about the President's
17 mental abilities?

18 A No.

19 Ms. Harker. What prompted the conversation with Ms. Tomasini about the President's
20 ability to do his job well?

21 Mr. Bates. Media inquiries that had to do with criticisms from political opponents.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

23 Q Why was it your inclination to speak with Ms. Tomasini about media criticisms or
24 inquiries about the President's age or health?

25 A It is typical in most organizations where I have worked to brief senior staff on coverage

1 that you are fielding questions related to.

2 Q Would you go to Ms. Tomasini to brief her on other matters?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And maybe I just -- Ms. Tomasini did not answer a lot of questions when she came
5 before this committee, so maybe I don't understand her exact role to the fullest extent, but why not,
6 you know, Mr. Zients or Mr. Ricchetti? Why particularly did you go to Ms. Tomasini for that?

7 A I did not say that I went to her in particular.

8 Q Okay. But you did go to her -- well, you did speak with her about the President's
9 health or ability to do the job. So why were you speaking with Ms. Tomasini about that in
10 particular?

11 A For one thing, it was normal to give someone of her station awareness of a wide variety
12 of major stories that covered many different topics. Also, media inquiries tended to involve what it
13 was like to work with the President, and she worked with the President closely.

14 BY MS. HARKER:

15 Q How often did you brief Ms. Tomasini?

16 A In what respect?

17 Q About press.

18 A Frequently.

19 Q Every week?

20 A I don't know the exact rhythm of it, but I would frequently brief her about press.

21 Q And who did you report to?

22 A Initially, Jen Psaki and then Karine Jean-Pierre.

23 Q Thank you.

24 BY MR. GRANT:

25 Q You also answered yes to Anita Dunn. When was the most recent time you spoke to

1 Ms. Dunn?

2 A It would have been earlier this year.

3 Q January? February? Can you guesstimate a little better? I won't hold you to an
4 exact date.

5 A I'm not sure but probably in the first quarter of the year, maybe the second.

6 Q And what did you discuss?

7 A We discussed the -- sorry. My phone is vibrating.

8 We discussed the impact of the 2024 election on American politics. During the
9 administration, she was another person whom I would regularly brief about coverage.

10 Q And regularly brief daily? Weekly?

11 A More than weekly when she was working in the White House, and that is coverage on a
12 very wide array of different subjects.

13 Q Would that include coverage on President Biden's age and mental health?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And what were those conversations?

16 A It would involve me telling her about a reporter inquiry or a media narrative, and we
17 would discuss those.

18 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Mike Donilon. When did you most recently
19 speak to Mr. Donilon?

20 A It would have been the first quarter of the year I believe.

21 Q And what did you discuss?

22 A He had called me regarding news about a book by Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson.

23 Q And what did you discuss about the book?

24 A He asked for my assessment of the best way to handle media coverage of the book.

25 Q Did you ever speak with Mr. Donilon about President Biden's age or mental acuity while

1 in the White House?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And what were those discussions?

4 A Mike Donilon worked with the President closely, and he would attest to the President's
5 high performance.

6 Q Were these also frequent meetings between you and Mr. Donilon?

7 A Less frequent than with Anita Dunn. And I would also talk with him about a very wide
8 range of subjects.

9 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Steve Ricchetti. When was the most recent
10 time you spoke with Mr. Ricchetti?

11 A It was earlier this year. I don't remember exactly when. Maybe 2 months ago.

12 Q And what did you discuss?

13 A I don't remember what we last discussed. Our last interaction was a phone call.

14 Q Do you remember if it was anything relating to President Biden's age, mental acuity,
15 general health?

16 A I don't believe that it was.

17 BY MS. HARKER:

18 Q Have you ever spoken with Mr. Ricchetti about President Biden's age or his health?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Tell us about those conversations.

21 A Very similar to the kinds of conversations I would have with Mike Donilon. They would
22 also involve the President's legislative agenda because Steve did a lot of work with the Hill.

23 Q And how frequently did you communicate with Mr. Ricchetti about the President's
24 health, mental acuity, and age?

25 A Every so often. Most of our conversations were about legislative issues.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q And just so I'm clear, and you might have said this, when you say that the conversations
3 regarding President Biden's health or age were similar to those with Mr. Donilon, I believe you said
4 that you had spoken with Mr. Donilon about Mr. Tapper and Mr. Thompson's book. So I'd like to
5 just ask the question. Have you had other conversations with Mr. Donilon about President Biden's
6 health, age, or ability to do the job?

7 A Yes, of the sort that we were talking about a moment ago, that Mr. Donilon worked
8 closely with President Biden, and he would often talk about how well the President was performing,
9 would give anecdotes.

10 Q And with these conversations, with either Mr. Donilon or Mr. Ricchetti, were you asking
11 questions of them or were you just filling in -- filling them in on what the media was saying?

12 A It was prompted by media inquiries or related media needs. So I would inform them
13 about a reporter's interest, and we would discuss the nature of the inquiry.

14 Q And I appreciate that. And when you say that you would discuss it, would you ask
15 questions? You know, Steve, is the President able to do his job? Is the President, you know, going
16 to sleep earlier? Anything along those -- did you ask questions to either Mr. Ricchetti or
17 Mr. Donilon?

18 A I would ask questions that mainly relayed what reporters were asking me to get their
19 input on.

20 Q Do you remember any of the questions that you asked -- I'm not -- not verbatim, but can
21 you give us an idea of the nature that reporters were asking you that you would then relay to either
22 Mr. Ricchetti or Mr. Donilon?

23 A The questions could have to do with political strategy about how to respond to attacks
24 on the President that had to do with age, or if a reporter brought a particular claim about an alleged
25 meeting or other kind of work event, I would go to them if they had knowledge of said event.

1 Q But specifically about the President's age, health, or ability to do the job, did you ever
2 ask questions about the underlying concern, or were you mostly asking questions about how to
3 respond in a political sense or pushback?

4 A It was mainly questions that surrounded what the reporter was asking me and then
5 what they felt would be the best way to respond.

6 BY MR. GRANT:

7 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Neera Tanden. When was the most recent
8 time you spoke to Ms. Tanden?

9 A The most recent time I spoke to her would have been within recent weeks.

10 Q And what did you discuss?

11 A We talked about congressional redistricting.

12 Q And did you have conversations with Ms. Tanden about President Biden's age, mental
13 acuity, his overall health?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And what were the substance of those conversations?

16 A She told me also in the context of dealing with reporter questions about her experience
17 speaking about policy with President Biden.

18 Q And her experience of policy with President Biden meaning working on a policy agenda
19 or shaping certain legislative actions, that kind of thing?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And did you have more direct conversations about the President's health, his age, his
22 mental acuity?

23 A Similar to what we discussed with Mr. Donilon, Mr. Ricchetti. It had to do with me
24 communicating things said by reporters and then talking with her about elements of her experience
25 that would be relevant to demonstrating the President's work ethic and abilities.

1 Mr. Greenberg. And just so I'm clear, are we talking about the time frame post Presidency
2 or during President Biden's Presidency?

3 Mr. Bates. During.

4 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

5 BY MR. GRANT:

6 Q And how frequently would you speak with Ms. Tanden about these topics?

7 A Intermittently. Not very often.

8 Q Less so than Mr. Donilon, Mr. Ricchetti, or Ms. Dunn?

9 A Yes, because those individuals had wider portfolios.

10 Mr. Greenberg. And when you were speaking with Ms. Tanden about these topics, was it
11 over the course of her entire stint at the White House? I know she held several positions, so I'm
12 just -- I'm wondering in what context you were having those conversations, if it was when she was
13 staff secretary or when she was head of the DPC.

14 Mr. Bates. I only remember this occurring when she was the head of the DPC.

15 BY MR. GRANT:

16 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Kate Bedingfield. When was the most recent
17 time you spoke with Ms. Bedingfield?

18 A I don't remember the most recent time that we spoke, but it would have been pretty
19 recent. She is a friend.

20 Q And did you discuss President Biden's mental acuity, age, overall health with
21 Ms. Bedingfield?

22 A When she was in the White House.

23 Q And what were the nature of those conversations?

24 A It would have paralleled conversations with Anita Dunn and some of the others that
25 we've mentioned where I was briefing her about media narratives, reporter questions, and we would

1 confer about the best kinds of ways to respond.

2 Q Did she ever mention any concerns to you about President Biden's health, mental
3 acuity, or age?

4 A No.

5 Q And I think you said this, but these would have also been frequently, as with Ms. Dunn
6 or Mr. Donilon or Mr. Ricchetti, these conversations?

7 A Yes.

8 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Jen Psaki. When was the most recent time you
9 spoke with Ms. Psaki?

10 A Within the last 2 months.

11 Q And what did you discuss with Ms. Psaki within the past couple of months?

12 A I believe the last time we spoke, it was about Texas redistricting.

13 Q And during Ms. Psaki's tenure in the White House, did you discuss President Biden's age,
14 mental acuity, and overall health with Ms. Psaki?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And what were the nature of those conversations?

17 A Very similar to the conversations with Kate Bedingfield.

18 Q Similar to Kate Bedingfield, these happened rather frequently?

19 A Well, Jen was my boss, and so I would speak with her very often about all kinds of
20 subjects, and as we've been talking about with other individuals, I would explain questions I was
21 getting from reporters, stories that we expected, and so we would collaborate about those.

22 Q And did Ms. Psaki ever share concerns with you about President Biden's age, general
23 health, mental acuity?

24 A No.

25 Q You also answered in the affirmative to Karine Jean-Pierre. When was the most recent

1 conversation with Ms. Jean-Pierre?

2 A The most recent conversation would have been when the letters asking us to speak here
3 became public.

4 Q And what did you discuss about the committee's letters to you all?

5 A She called me and asked if I had seen this, and I said I had, and I said that I thought it
6 would be prudent for us not to talk about it more.

7 Q So I take that to mean you didn't have any discussions about a strategy or what you
8 would say as far as testimony?

9 A That's correct.

10 Q While in the White House, did you talk with Ms. Jean-Pierre about President Biden's
11 health, mental acuity, or age?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And what were the extent of those conversations?

14 A It would have been similar in nature to the conversations with Jen because Karine
15 succeeded her as my boss.

16 Q And I assume those were also frequent meetings given that she was your boss?

17 A Yes, and about many different topics.

18 Q You also mentioned that you spoke to a member of the Cabinet. Denis McDonough I
19 believe is who you said?

20 A Yes.

21 Q When was the last time you spoke to Mr. McDonough?

22 A It would have been a couple of weeks ago.

23 Q And what did you discuss with Mr. McDonough?

24 A That we felt it was wrong for the Trump administration to undermine labor rights of
25 Department of Labor -- or Department of Veterans Affairs employees.

1 Q Have you had conversations with Mr. McDonough about President Biden's age, mental
2 acuity, or overall health?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And what are the extent of those conversations?

5 A During the Presidency, he is a Cabinet member with whom I spoke about what it was
6 like to work with the President as part of my process of responding to media inquiries, and he did
7 interviews.

8 Q And so what were those discussions like? Working with the President how?

9 A Because of his role overseeing the administration's policies toward veterans, he would
10 work with President Biden on those, and Secretary McDonough spoke to me about the detailed
11 fashion in which the President would monitor his work.

12 Q And did you have any other conversations with Secretary McDonough about President
13 Biden's age, mental acuity, or overall health?

14 A They would have been in that vein, and he attested to having a lot of confidence in
15 President Biden.

16 And then I want to just make sure I offer one thing. Since you mentioned 2020 to now, I
17 misunderstood. There are some other Cabinet members.

18 Q Okay, and who are those?

19 A Tom Vilsack.

20 Q What was the most recent time you spoke to Mr. Vilsack?

21 A I believe it would have been about a year ago.

22 Q So during President Biden's term in office?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And what did you speak about with Mr. Vilsack?

25 A The nature of Cabinet meetings.

1 Q And can you just elaborate on that? Nature of Cabinet meetings, what does that
2 entail?

3 A We received press inquiries that had to do with President Biden hosting full Cabinet
4 meetings less often than some past Presidents, and Secretary Vilsack was frustrated at that kind of
5 coverage. I was interested in his opinion because he had been a Cabinet member in the
6 Obama-Biden administration as well.

7 Q Understood.

8 And did you have any conversations with Secretary Vilsack about President Biden's age,
9 mental acuity, or overall health?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And to what extent were those conversations?

12 A He underlined his confidence in President Biden, having worked with him for the
13 entirety of the administration.

14 BY MS. HARKER:

15 Q If we could jump back to Secretary McDonough for a moment. You mentioned that he
16 did interviews. How does that relate to the subject matter of the President's health or ability to
17 conduct his position in office?

18 A He was doing media interviews for stories that I was the point of contact on.

19 Q Did you coordinate the interviews?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Is that common for someone working in the press secretary's job to coordinate
22 interviews for Cabinet secretaries?

23 A In every single administration.

24 Q It is?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Thank you.

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q You said you misunderstood the question's original timeline --

4 A Yes.

5 Q -- which is totally understandable. I write the questions, and I often misunderstand my
6 own questions.

7 So I just want to -- were there any other Cabinet secretaries that you spoke with about the
8 President, President Biden's health, age, ability to do the job from 2020 to present?

9 A Secretary Blinken.

10 Q And what did you speak with Secretary Blinken about regarding this issue?

11 A It would parallel the conversations with Secretary McDonough. They had to do with
12 Secretary Blinken working with President Biden closely on foreign policy and how he had seen the
13 President demonstrate strong abilities.

14 Q And do you know when that conversation was, roughly, or series of conversations if
15 there were multiple?

16 A I don't remember when that would have been but during the term.

17 Q Okay.

18 And sorry to be tedious but just -- would it be helpful -- because you misunderstood the
19 question to begin with, I just want to be clear. Of all the names that were read to you, are you
20 confident, besides the ones we've already gone over, that you haven't spoken with any of those
21 other people about the President's health, age, or ability to be President of the United States?

22 A Would you mind just reading them one more time?

23 Q I will. I will happily do that.

24 President Biden?

25 A No.

1 Q First Lady Jill Biden?

2 A No.

3 Q I'm going to skip the ones you answered in the affirmative.

4 Ashley Biden?

5 A No.

6 Q Naomi Biden?

7 A No.

8 Q Valerie Biden Owens?

9 A No.

10 Q Vice President Harris?

11 A No.

12 Q Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff?

13 A No.

14 Q President Obama?

15 A No.

16 Q President Clinton?

17 A No.

18 Q Secretary Clinton?

19 A No.

20 Q Jeff Zients?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. Let's talk about that one. When do you remember speaking with Mr. Zients
23 about the President's age, health, ability to do the job?

24 A The most recent time would have been during the final year of the administration.

25 Q Okay. And that would have been the most recent time. Is it fair to say that you were

1 having these kind of conversations throughout Mr. Zients' time in the White House?

2 A I would have conversations with him occasionally when it came to questions from
3 reporters and media developments.

4 Q Okay. And what -- and with the last time that you spoke with him about this, can you
5 tell me what you were talking about?

6 A The last time would have been about a story. I don't remember which story.

7 Q And is it -- and when you were having that conversation about a story, is it accurate to
8 say that you were talking about how to push back against, you know, certain -- a certain narrative?

9 A We would have been providing context on what it was really like in the administration
10 and to work with President Biden.

11 Q Okay. And did you -- did Mr. Zients express any concern about the President's age,
12 health, or ability to do the job?

13 A No.

14 Q Going back to the list now. I'll read the question again. 2020 to present, so including
15 post administration, have you had a conversation about the President's health, age, or ability to be
16 President of the United States with Rahm Emanuel?

17 Mr. Jonas. Hold on just one second.

18 [Discussion off the record.]

19 Mr. Jonas. Sorry. Go ahead.

20 Mr. Bates. No.

21 BY MR. GREENBERG:

22 Q Bill Daley?

23 A No.

24 Q Jake Sullivan?

25 A Yes.

1 Q When did you have this conversation with Mr. Sullivan?

2 A I don't remember the last conversation, but it would have been during the term.

3 Q And was that conversation similar to the ones that you were having with Mr. Blinken,
4 Secretary Blinken, Secretary Vilsack, Secretary McDonough?

5 A Particularly similar to Secretary Blinken because of their portfolios.

6 Q Returning to the question, have you spoken with Richard Sauber about this subject
7 matter?

8 A No.

9 Q Ed Siskel?

10 A No.

11 Q Bruce Reed?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Can you tell me about that conversation or series of conversations?

14 A Because of his position as deputy chief of staff, he was someone with whom I would talk
15 about many different subjects, and he is a person who I informed about media inquiries.

16 Q Do you remember the last time you spoke with Mr. Reed about the President's ability to
17 run the country, his age, or his health?

18 A It would have been during the final year of the Presidency.

19 Q Returning to the question, have you spoken with Jen O'Malley Dillon about the
20 President's age, health, or ability to be President?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Was it similar in substance to the conversation you would have with Mr. Reed?

23 A Yes, and those would also touch on schedule.

24 Q What about schedule in particular?

25 A She oversaw logistics, operations, and so when reporters asked questions that had to do

1 with the President's schedule, she's one of the people whose input I sought.

2 Q Thank you.

3 Returning to the question. From 2020 to present, have you ever spoken with the following
4 people about the President's age, health, or ability to be President? Have you spoken with Ashley
5 Williams about this?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Can you tell me about those conversations?

8 A It would have been asking about logistics in the context of media inquiries that we got
9 about that subject.

10 Q I'm not a media person. What does logistics regarding media inquiries mean?

11 A When a reporter would ask us a question that had to do with advance or movements,
12 she was someone who was knowledgeable about some of those things.

13 Q But how does a reporter asking about movement have to do with the President's age,
14 health, or ability to be President?

15 A Reporters would combine those.

16 Q In what way?

17 A They would ask questions about the President's schedule or the way in which he moved
18 and optical effects that that could have from a public relations standpoint.

19 Q So you would ask -- would you ever ask Ms. Williams if the President was having
20 problems moving?

21 A I don't believe so.

22 Q Then can you give me a -- some of the -- can you give me an idea of what kind of -- what
23 an exchange would look like with you and Ms. Williams about the President's age, health, or ability to
24 be President?

25 A It could be something like --

1 Mr. Jonas. If you remember an exchange, just give him the answer, but don't make up
2 potential exchanges.

3 Mr. Bates. I don't remember a particular exchange.

4 BY MR. GREENBERG:

5 Q You just remember that there were exchanges about the President's age, health, or
6 ability to be President?

7 A Yes, but I don't remember a particular one in the sense that you are requesting.

8 Q Did you ever speak with Mr. Bernal about the President's age, health, or ability to be
9 President?

10 A Yes.

11 Q What would you speak with Mr. Bernal about in this regard?

12 A It had to do with his experience working with the President.

13 Q And did Mr. Bernal ever express any concern about the President's ability to be
14 President or health or his age?

15 A No.

16 Q Did you ever speak with Dr. O'Connor about the President's age, health, or ability to be
17 President?

18 A Yes.

19 Q What was the nature of those conversations?

20 A We would talk with regard to the media aspect of releasing the summaries of the
21 President's physicals, and if we received media inquiries about the President's health, he was
22 someone who was a resource.

23 Q Did you ever convey to Dr. O'Connor that a particular finding wouldn't be portrayed
24 favorably in the media?

25 A No.

1 Q Are you aware of anybody conveying that kind of information to Dr. O'Connor?

2 A No.

3 Q Did Dr. O'Connor ever opine on media strategy regarding the release of information
4 regarding the President's health?

5 A I remember him being pro transparency.

6 Q Do you recall -- were you ever made aware of conversations with anyone in
7 communications speaking with Dr. O'Connor about how particular findings or medical treatments
8 could be conveyed in the media?

9 A No.

10 Q Have you ever spoken with Nancy Pelosi about the President's ability to do the job or his
11 age or his health?

12 A No.

13 Q Have you ever spoken with anybody in her staff regarding those matters?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Who did you speak with?

16 A I don't remember his name, but he was acting as her spokesperson when we were in
17 communication.

18 Q And what was the nature of that conversation?

19 A It had to do with a Wall Street Journal story that we agreed was unfair.

20 Q What was unfair about that story?

21 A That it was slanted.

22 Q Can you expand on what you mean by slanted?

23 A It was disproportionately influenced by political opponents.

24 Q And what did you convey specifically to this spokesperson about that story?

25 A That we had the sense the Journal had a preferred angle, and they were giving undue

1 latitude to Republicans who had a political interest in that angle.

2 Q And what would the spokesperson -- what did the spokesperson convey back to you
3 with regard to that?

4 A He arranged an interview with Speaker Pelosi, and after the article published, her
5 comments were omitted, and he told me that she was offended by that.

6 Ms. Harker. What was the Wall Street Journal article about?

7 Mr. Bates. It was about what it is like to work with the President in private.

8 Ms. Harker. And what did the article say it was like to work with the President in private?

9 Mr. Bates. I don't have it in front of me.

10 Mr. Jonas. It's a long article. It says a lot.

11 Ms. Harker. But you remember enough to say it was slanted?

12 Mr. Bates. Yes.

13 BY MR. GREENBERG:

14 Q Sorry. Just so I understand, so the article was published and then you called the
15 spokesperson for Speaker Pelosi?

16 A We were in touch before it published and after.

17 Q Okay. Let's start with before. What were you communicating in the before
18 conversation?

19 A What I outlined.

20 Q Okay. And the spokesperson was -- this is the conversation before the article was
21 published, and the spokesperson during that conversation conveyed what back to you?

22 A That former Speaker Pelosi was going to have a conversation with the reporters.

23 Q Okay. And then the article was published, and you spoke with the spokesperson again,
24 correct?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And what did you convey in that conversation?

2 A We were agreeing that the story was presented unfairly and relied very heavily on
3 sources from the opposite political party, and he told me that she was offended that the Journal did
4 not include her comments.

5 Q Did the spokesperson convey to you what former Speaker Pelosi said during that
6 interview?

7 A It was roughly that she defended the President and his ability to do the job effectively.

8 Q And very roughly if you can, do you know when exactly -- when, roughly, that story was
9 published?

10 A I believe it was in May of last year.

11 Q Have you spoken with Chuck Schumer -- excuse me, Senator Schumer about the
12 President's age, ability to be President, or health?

13 A No.

14 Q Have you spoken with anybody from Senator Schumer's office about these matters?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Who did you speak with?

17 A Monica Lee, a member of his communications staff.

18 Q Anyone else?

19 A I believe there was one other, but I don't remember his name.

20 Q When was the conversation with Monica Lee or, if there were multiple, when were
21 those conversations?

22 A If -- I don't remember how many there were, but the main thing I remember is that it
23 related to the same Wall Street Journal story.

24 Q I see.

25 Do you remember if it was prior to publication or post publication?

1 A Prior.

2 Q And what were you talking about with Ms. Lee?

3 A It was similar to the conversation with former Speaker Pelosi's spokesperson about the
4 nature of the story.

5 Q Did Senator Schumer sit for an interview?

6 A I don't believe he did. I believe he gave a statement.

7 Q And in that conversation, were you raising concerns that the story was going to be
8 slanted?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Why did you think the story was going to be slanted before publication?

11 A The story in a sense admits it is slanted because it explicitly grants that it is mainly
12 drawn from Republican sources.

13 Q Did you believe that more Democrats should be interviewed for that story?

14 A I did.

15 Q Did you make suggestions about which Democrat should be interviewed?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Who did you suggest?

18 A I remember suggesting that they go back to Senator Murray and Congressman Meeks
19 because we were concerned that -- we had heard that when those individuals were approached, they
20 were only asked if they could corroborate claims that had been made by Republicans, and they were
21 not given a real opportunity to share their firsthand experience.

22 Ms. Harker. Did you suggest that they speak with anyone else?

23 Mr. Bates. This was happening because the Journal had approached them specifically. I
24 don't recall this happening with regard to those two members in other settings.

25 BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q Can you just explain to me how this works? Is it standard practice to -- were you
2 conveying that message to reporters directly?

3 A Which message?

4 Q To return to Senator Murray and Congressperson Meeks?

5 A I did convey that I thought this would be fair.

6 Q And were there -- is it standard to tell reporters to reinterview people?

7 A I did not tell them to do anything.

8 Q Is it standard to suggest that they reinterview certain individuals?

9 A If you feel that there has been a significant omission that could distort the nature of the
10 reporting, absolutely.

11 Q Oh, I'm sorry. I did want to return -- I have a follow-up question regarding
12 Ms. Tomasini. I'm still a bit confused as to why you would be speaking with Ms. Tomasini's -- with
13 Ms. Tomasini about the President's age, health, ability to be President when she was director of oval
14 office operations. What about that position would give you any insight about the President's age,
15 health, or ability to be President?

16 A Reporters would ask us what it was like to work with the President, and any person in
17 that role, whatever the administration, will work with the President a lot.

18 Q And Ms. Tomasini also was frequently accompanying the President even in his travel.
19 Is that correct?

20 A She would accompany him on travel sometimes.

21 Q And she would be in the residence with him as well. Is that correct?

22 A I don't know the particulars of that.

23 Q Did you -- sorry. Did you have more to say?

24 A There could be moments where people went to the residence. I'm not saying
25 otherwise. But I don't know about when people were in the west wing or not.

1 Q Did you get the impression, though, that Ms. Tomasini was helping the President in his
2 day-to-day doing of his job?

3 A No, not -- I mean, with the exception that -- not outside of what would be normal for
4 any person in those jobs, whatever the administration.

5 Ms. Harker. One more follow-up on Ashley Williams. When you were explaining your
6 conversations with her related to the President's health, age, or ability to do the job, you mentioned
7 discussing logistics and media optics. Could you explain what that discussion was about?

8 Mr. Bates. Reporters would sometimes ask us about schedule and how it might affect
9 perception, or they would ask us about something that they had heard took place on a trip, and so
10 we would discuss those things.

1 [10:58 a.m.]

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Did you ever speak with Hakeem Jeffries about the President's age, health, or ability to
4 be President?

5 A No.

6 Q Did you ever speak with anyone on his staff about that?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Who?

9 A Christie Stephenson, the communications adviser.

10 Q And what was the nature of that conversation or multiple conversations if there were?

11 A We spoke because of the Wall Street Journal story that we have discussed.

12 Q And were you conveying similar concerns?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And what did Ms. Stephenson tell you during that conversation?

15 A She told me that Leader Jeffries was interested in doing an interview, and then, after the
16 interview took place, she called me to express frustration with the reporters because, as had been
17 the pattern that we identified with interviews they'd done with other Democratic Members of
18 Congress, the focus was overwhelmingly on negative claims that had been made by Republicans
19 instead of giving Leader Jeffries, as someone who had worked closely with President Biden, an
20 opportunity to give his experience.

21 BY MR. GRANT:

22 Q And you said, to continue on this, you had been tracking what some of these Members
23 have said to the Wall Street Journal reporter and mentioned that they go back to Senator Murray and
24 Representative Meeks.

25 At any point during this time, were you receiving any audio recordings or transcripts from the

1 interviews these Members were giving with The Wall Street Journal?

2 A Senator Murray's team offered to send me an audio recording because they were
3 distressed at what they viewed as the unfair nature of the interaction, and they wanted us to be
4 aware that they thought the story was not being prepared in a fair manner.

5 Q And did anyone -- any other Member of Congress or Senator or their staffs provide you
6 with any audio recordings or transcripts of their interviews?

7 A Christie Stephenson gave me a transcript to demonstrate why she thought the reporters
8 were acting unfairly.

9 Q And Christie Stephenson, she was the communications director for Leader Jeffries?

10 A I don't know her title, but she is a communications adviser to him.

11 Q Understood.

12 Did you ever ask congressional staff or Senate staff to record calls or make transcripts with
13 reporters?

14 A I don't believe so.

15 Mr. Greenberg. Do you know if Leader Jeffries was aware that a transcript was being made
16 of his conversation?

17 Mr. Bates. I would be very surprised if he was not aware.

18 Mr. Greenberg. But you don't know?

19 Mr. Bates. I don't know.

20 Mr. Grant. We will stop it there and go off the record.

21 [Recess.]

22 Ms. [REDACTED] We'll go on the record.

23 Mr. Bates, I understand you have a statement you would like to read.

24 Mr. Bates. I do.

25 In the White House, under Joe Biden, I worked my heart out for a President who fought for

1 values I believe in to my core. I witnessed leadership that I respect. I saw a candidate
2 demonstrate grit and resolve during a primary in which we were counted out.

3 Then I saw a President apply experience, strength, and compassion as he achieved
4 unprecedented things while still being counted out, like defeating Big Pharma so Medicare could
5 negotiate lower drug costs.

6 That meant a lot to me because, every day of my life until he passed away, my dad had to pay
7 for Crohn's medication. His grandfather, a poor farmer, had the same excruciatingly painful disease
8 but could not afford treatment.

9 Similarly, every modern President talked about bringing manufacturing back to America, and
10 many of them tried in good faith. But Joe Biden did it.

11 Growing up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, I knew what it meant for our neighbors in High
12 Point when the furniture building capital of the world lost jobs that went overseas.

13 I was proud to support Joe Biden as President because we believe in the same values.

14 In the White House, it was universally understood that Joe Biden was in charge. That is
15 completely consistent with my personal experience with the President.

16 Now someone else with a very different character is in charge. Every Republican on the
17 Oversight and Government Reform Committee voted to add \$3.4 trillion to the national debt in tax
18 welfare for the rich.

19 Now the committee is spending taxpayer dollars investigating Joe Biden, an honorable man
20 under whom the economy performed far better than it is today, while turning a blind eye to
21 corruption under Donald Trump.

22 As illegal tariffs raise the costs that Trump promised to lower, the sitting President is profiting
23 off of the American people. He has sold special access to whomever bought the most of his
24 cryptocurrency.

25 He is illegally trying to take over the Federal Reserve, which Republican economists warn will

1 increase inflation.

2 He accepted a \$400 million luxury jet from Qatar, a government that funds Hamas.

3 The President's son, Donald Trump, Jr., started a private club called Executive Branch for
4 wealthy people who want to influence the administration.

5 The President pardoned felons who assaulted police officers on January 6th and who
6 intended to kill Members of Congress and Vice President Mike Pence.

7 Ghislaine Maxwell, a convicted child sex trafficker and Jeffrey Epstein's top accomplice, was
8 recently transferred to a minimum security facility that the former warden of a supermax prison calls
9 a 'country club'.

10 To my knowledge, none of the above are being investigated. As a taxpayer and private
11 citizen, I feel that is wrong.

12 Ms. [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Bates. We just had one quick question.

13 EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. [REDACTED]

15 Q In the prior hour, you answered affirmatively to several conversations you had with
16 individuals. I just want to get it clear for the record.

17 You had conversations with those individuals regarding the President's health and fitness
18 because it related to press inquiries regarding the President's health and fitness and not your
19 concerns regarding the President's health and fitness. Correct?

20 A That is correct.

21 Ms. [REDACTED] That is all for us. We'll go off the record.

22 [Recess.]

23 Mr. Grant. We'll go back on the record.

24 Mr. Bates, before we continue on, did you share your opening statement with anyone today
25 before the interview?

1 Mr. Jonas. Other than your counsel.

2 Mr. Bates. My counsel.

3 BY MR. GREENBERG:

4 Q Do you know if it was leaked to the media?

5 A I have not seen any reporting since I have been here.

6 Q That's not what I asked you.

7 Do you know if your opening statement was leaked to the media?

8 A I have not seen my phone or feed since we've entered here.

9 Q Did you intend for your opening statement to be leaked to the media?

10 A I intended for it to be public.

11 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

12 Ms. Harker. Did you share it with anyone besides your counsel?

13 Mr. Bates. My counsel.

14 Ms. Harker. Anyone besides your counsel?

15 Mr. Bates. No.

16 BY MR. GRANT:

17 Q It got, I think, brought up briefly in our first hour. Did you ever speak with, write with,
18 or otherwise correspond with Mr. Jake Tapper and/or Mr. Alex Thompson to provide details,
19 materials, or background material for their book "Original Sin"?

20 A I spoke with Alex Thompson.

21 Q Do you remember when you spoke to Mr. Thompson?

22 A It would've been either late last year or early this year, I think.

23 Q And what did you talk about with Mr. Thompson?

24 A We spoke about my belief that, while it made sense for us to want to turn the page on
25 immigration practices during Donald Trump's first term that were inhumane, I thought we had been

1 too credulous toward some activist groups when it came to the way we did border security policy.

2 We also spoke about claims he had been given by sources about the President's health and
3 my point of view about those claims.

4 And he briefed me on some sections of the book that dealt with me personally.

5 Q And what did you discuss as a part of those sections in the book that mentioned you
6 personally?

7 A I remember being concerned that part of it could be interpreted as though I
8 communicated to fellow administration officials that it would seem disloyal if they did not do
9 interviews for stories on which I was working. And I asked him, "Did anyone tell you that they felt
10 in any way pressured by me," and he said no.

11 BY MR. GREENBERG:

12 Q I'm sorry. Before you talked -- before you said that you spoke about the portions of
13 the book that mentioned you, you said that you also spoke about your point of view of claims, I
14 believe, that were made in the book.

15 What are you referencing when you refer to that?

16 A I disagree with the overall thrust of the book, and so I was making my case for why.

17 Q How did you make your case?

18 A For one thing, I remember mentioning that the fact we advocated for a public debate
19 that, if I'm remembering correctly, the Trump campaign did not immediately agree to; that's hard to
20 reconcile with the false allegation of a cover-up.

21 Q Why were you advocating for an early debate?

22 A I was not on the campaign. I was at the White House during this time.

23 Mr. Jonas. I don't think he meant that he was personally advocating for an early debate.

24 Mr. Bates. I was aware the campaign had done so because that was public knowledge.

25 BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q Were you aware of why anybody was advocating on the campaign then for -- was
2 advocating for an early debate?

3 A They felt that the President would acquit himself well.

4 Q I'm sorry. I'm not trying to be confrontational. I don't understand why the President
5 acquitting himself well lends itself to there being an early debate.

6 A That is my understanding, that they thought there would be a contrast between the two
7 that was favorable to President Biden.

8 Q Is it fair to say that you, in your role in the White House, had been confronting questions
9 from reporters for most, if not all, of your stint in the White House regarding the President's age,
10 health, or ability to do the job?

11 A There were questions from reporters each year.

12 Q Do you think that played a role in the decision to have an early debate?

13 A No.

14 BY MR. GRANT:

15 Q Just to clarify, were you a source for the book "Original Sin" by Mr. Thompson and
16 Mr. Tapper?

17 A Not to my knowledge. Just -- I want to make sure I'm being clear about the off-record
18 conversation we were just talking about. As far as I know, none of that was used in the book, and I
19 disagree with the overall thesis.

20 Q Understood.

21 Do you know the name or names of any unnamed sources from the White House that talked
22 with Mr. Tapper and Mr. Thompson?

23 A I don't know of who is, in full, quoted in the book. I have not read the full book. I do
24 know some individuals who spoke with them.

25 Q Who are those individuals?

1 A Mike Donilon, Steve Ricchetti. I believe there were others from the senior staff who
2 shared their point of view, but I don't know who in full.

3 BY MR. GREENBERG:

4 Q Do you know anybody from the Cabinet who was interviewed for that book?

5 A I don't know.

6 Q Did you play a role in -- it's my understanding that there was, if not a directive, a
7 suggestion from the communication folks in the White House to senior staff to have interviews with
8 either Mr. Thompson or Mr. Tapper.

9 Did you play a role in facilitating or coordinating those interviews?

10 A No.

11 Q Do you know who did?

12 A I don't know who in total had worked on it. I remember Ben LaBolt, the
13 communications director, had given input.

14 BY MR. GRANT:

15 Q During this time before the book officially came out, do you recall any conversations in
16 the White House about the forthcoming book "Original Sin"? Were there discussions about the
17 book amongst the White House staff?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Do you recall who were part of those conversations?

20 A I don't know the -- I don't know who in total. I spoke to colleagues on the press team,
21 communications team, others with whom I was in regular touch.

22 Q And who would those people be?

23 A Ben LaBolt, Karine Jean-Pierre. I don't remember any other conversations, but the
24 overall point of view was that there was a preferred outcome on the part of the authors.

25 Q Did anyone inform you, or other staff that you're aware of, not to speak with Mr. Tapper

1 and Mr. Thompson?

2 A No.

3 Q Did you discourage anyone from speaking with Mr. Tapper and Mr. Thompson?

4 A No.

5 Q Same sort of question, did you ever speak with, write with, or otherwise correspond
6 with Chris Whipple to provide details, materials, or background information for his book "Uncharted:
7 How Trump Beat Biden, Harris, and the Odds in the Wildest Campaign in History"?

8 A I did talk to Chris Whipple because he approached the White House with a fact-checking
9 question for the book.

10 Q And what specifically did you talk about with Mr. Whipple?

11 A I believe it had to do with the President's legislative agenda within the first 2 years.

12 Q Are you aware of anyone else speaking with Mr. Whipple for his book "Uncharted"?

13 A Ron Klain.

14 Q Anyone else?

15 A No.

16 Q Were you a source for this book?

17 A Only if the kind of fact-checking discussion we mentioned would qualify. It would not
18 to me.

19 Q Understood.

20 And then same kind of question, did you speak with, write with, or otherwise correspond with
21 Josh Dawsey, Tyler Pager, or Isaac Arnsdorf for their book "2024: How Trump Retook the
22 White House and the Democrats Lost America"?

23 A I spoke briefly with Tyler Pager.

24 Q And what did you discuss?

25 A We discussed the book by Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson.

1 Q What specifically?

2 A We agreed that the book seemed to have a faulty foundation for many of the core
3 assertions it makes.

4 Q And were you a source for this book?

5 A I do remember us speaking briefly in a way where I believe it was off the record, and so
6 it would've been prohibited for me to be a source, but I don't remember the exact subject.

7 Q Understood.

8 I also understand that Ms. Jean-Pierre has a forthcoming book. I believe it comes out next
9 month. Did you speak with Ms. Jean-Pierre or any of her other authors about her book?

10 A I did speak with her about her book.

11 Q And what did you discuss?

12 A I'm sorry. I'm trying to silence my phone.

13 I learned about the book when it was announced in the press, and I received questions from
14 reporters about her making the decision to become an independent and no longer be a Democrat.
15 So I mentioned that I was receiving these to her.

16 I wanted to hear from her because I did not know that that was coming, and I also asked her,
17 out of curiosity, if there was anything about me in her book because it was about the time period
18 when we were working together.

19 Q Were you a source for any other books that you're aware of, or speak with any other
20 authors?

21 A I spoke briefly with Jon Allen and Amie Parnes.

22 Q And what did you discuss with each of them?

23 A It was one conference call, and I don't remember a lot about it, but I believe they were
24 mainly asking things that had to do with the candidate change when the President withdrew from
25 the race.

1 Q And, again, I won't hold you to an exact date, but do you have a rough timeframe about
2 when this conversation would've occurred?

3 A Just that it would've been after the President left the race.

4 Q And likely still while you were working at the White House?

5 A I was still working there.

6 Q Understood.

7 BY MR. GREENBERG:

8 Q Just to back up, with Ms. Jean-Pierre's book, is there, in fact, anything about you in that
9 book as far as you know?

10 A She told me no.

11 Q And what is your understanding of what that book will be about?

12 A She did describe it to me. It was a very brief explanation. I expect it to touch on her
13 time in the White House and to talk about her views on contemporary political issues, but I don't
14 know much about it.

15 Q Do you -- are you friends with Ms. Jean-Pierre?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Do you get the impression that she is disillusioned or otherwise disappointed regarding
18 her time in the White House, to the extent you know?

19 A No.

20 BY MR. GRANT:

21 Q Based on your personal perception working for President Biden, by the end of his term
22 in office, did you notice that he was not as mentally sharp as when he began his term in office?

23 A I had faith in his sharpness. I had noticed some physical changes.

24 Q What were those physical changes?

25 A He would walk a little slower, and I was aware, because of the summaries we released

1 of his physical, that that had to do with spinal arthritis and an injury to his foot from when he was
2 playing with his dog.

3 Q Of course, President Biden has literally aged, as we all do, but did you notice any other
4 signs of aging by President Biden since when you first met him?

5 A I don't believe so.

6 BY MR. GREENBERG:

7 Q And, just so I'm clear, you said that you have faith in President Biden's sharpness. The
8 question was actually, did you notice any change in it? Have you noticed a change in
9 President Biden's sharpness from the time that you first met him to the end of his time in office?

10 A No.

11 Q You believe his ability to answer questions is the same as when you first met
12 President Biden?

13 A Yes.

14 Q He, as far as you are aware, President Biden's daily schedule, in terms of when he goes
15 to sleep, is the same as when you first met him?

16 A I don't know when he goes to sleep.

17 Q As far as when President Biden would leave the Oval Office for the residence, that didn't
18 change from your time in the White House?

19 A I don't know when he would leave the Oval, but I do know that he would work into the
20 night after leaving the Oval.

21 Q How do you know that?

22 A Because I would hear from colleagues about interactions, about late-night phone calls
23 where he would reach out to, say, a member of the congressional affairs team, to ask them to look
24 into something that he was interested in. There were indications of that kind.

25 BY MR. GRANT:

1 Q During President Biden's term in office, did you ever receive any outreach from people
2 outside the White House that had concerns of President Biden's mental sharpness, age, ability to be
3 President?

4 A I remember that happening in reaction to media.

5 Q Who were these individuals?

6 A I don't remember off the top of my head.

7 Q And what did you tell them?

8 A They would've been reacting to stories or to kinds of coverage that they had seen, and
9 they would have questions about the coverage and my view of it, and I would offer it to them.

10 Q What sorts of things would encompass your view that you would convey to them?

11 A Often that there was important context that was not given its due in the reporting.

12 Q What sort of context was lacking?

13 A Well, if -- if there had been, say, a video that went viral and it did not include a vital
14 detail to understanding the video, there would be coverage of those kinds of -- that kind of online
15 content.

16 Q Same timeframe, during President Biden's term in office, did you ever hear any concerns
17 from other White House staff about President Biden's age, mental acuity, or his ability to be
18 President?

19 A I remember concerns that dealt with coverage, where people thought it was a fixation
20 of the press and that it seemed as though there had been deliberate choices, on the part of some in
21 management, to impose that subject more than would be typical.

22 Q "Some in management," who would that be referring to?

23 A Decision-makers at mainstream media organizations.

24 Q But no one in the White House ever came to you, you know, outside of media coverage
25 context, as a friend, as a colleague, and said, "We have concerns with President Biden's mental

1 abilities, his age, his ability to be President"?

2 A No.

3 Q Do you think voters were concerned that President Biden was mentally or cognitively
4 unfit to serve as President?

5 A I'm aware there was polling that showed this was something that was on the minds of
6 some voters, and I'm also aware that this was a subject that was pretty forcefully kept on their minds
7 by the press.

8 Q So do you think the voters' concerns for -- about President Biden were wrong in this
9 aspect?

10 A Yes.

11 Mr. Greenberg. Do you contribute their being wrong to the media?

12 Mr. Bates. In part.

13 Mr. Greenberg. In part? What are the other parts that you contribute this problem -- or
14 this concern of the voters to be from?

15 Mr. Bates. Also to right-wing actors who were very diligent about portraying him in a bad
16 light, usually unfairly.

17 Mr. Grant. Do you believe -- do you believe that the voters' concerns with President Biden's
18 age or his ability to be President or his, you know, cognitive abilities, do you believe that issue was
19 actually on age, or is that just a euphemism of something worse?

20 Mr. Jonas. Can you rephrase the question? I'm not sure --

21 Mr. Grant. Sure.

22 BY MR. GRANT:

23 Q The way it was often presented to the public was concerns with President Biden's age.
24 Do you think the concern was actually his numerical age, or was age just a euphemism for other
25 concerns such as his cognitive decline?

1 A I think that would depend on the audience, and I can speak for myself.

2 Q Please.

3 A I would say my own view. I don't know what those people thought.

4 Q Switching gears a little bit here, when did you first meet President Biden?

5 A We first met actually when I was in college. It was very brief.

6 Q And what was the context of when you first met?

7 A It was at a DNC winter conference meeting in Washington in 2007, and I had come to it
8 with some friends.

9 Q So this was just like in a photo line or something like that, or did you have a
10 conversation?

11 A It was a photo-line kind of conversation. It was very brief.

12 Q Understood.

13 What is your relationship like with the other members of President Biden's family, so, for
14 example, First Lady Jill Biden?

15 A We interacted occasionally. It was always positive.

16 Q And by "occasionally," is that daily, weekly, monthly?

17 A Less often than monthly. I did not do a great deal of work with the East Wing.

18 Q Understood.

19 How about your relationship with Hunter Biden?

20 A During the campaign and the first years in the White House, my portfolio included
21 coverage of the President that also pertained to Hunter Biden, and I spoke with him infrequently
22 about that.

23 I also saw him infrequently at the White House, and we would greet one another.

24 Q I'm sorry. So another way for the frequency that you were meeting with or discussing
25 things with Hunter Biden, is that more of like a daily, weekly, monthly?

1 A No. I would say probably in the neighborhood of 10 times ever.

2 Q Okay. Did you notice Hunter Biden appearing in the White House more towards the
3 end of President Biden's Presidency?

4 A I don't know. I wasn't always aware when he was around.

5 Q Understood.

6 How about your relationship with James Biden?

7 A I've spoken to him probably in the neighborhood of 5 to 10 times, and the last time that
8 I remember would've been during the 2020 campaign.

9 Q And --

10 Mr. Greenberg. Can I ask a question?

11 BY MR. GREENBERG:

12 Q Has anyone ever asked you to lie in your job?

13 A No.

14 Q Have you ever felt like you were lying to the press in your job?

15 A No.

16 Q Were you -- in the 2020 campaign, were you part of, in the course of your work, were
17 you dealing with the news regarding the discovery of Hunter Biden's laptop?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And did you formulate a response to any questions -- to any question that might arise
20 regarding Hunter Biden's laptop?

21 A I did give statements about that topic.

22 Q Did you recommend that the President or others attribute the laptop to possible Russian
23 disinformation?

24 A I remember that there were many national security experts and intelligence experts
25 who felt that it was happening -- "bore the hallmarks," I think, was their phrasing -- of a Russian

1 attempt at manipulation.

2 Q And that was wrong, right, the laptop was real? Is that correct?

3 A I don't see that as a binary because the chain of custody is not fully known.

4 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. We'll introduce as exhibit 2 the interview with Gary Shapley, dated
5 March 26, 2023, conducted by the Committee on Ways and Means. I will read from page 12.

6 [Bates Majority Exhibit No. 2
7 was marked for identification.]

8 Mr. Greenberg. In October 2019, the FBI became aware that a repair shop had a laptop
9 allegedly belonging to Hunter Biden and that the laptop might contain evidence of a crime.

10 The FBI verified its authenticity in November 2019 by matching the device number against
11 Hunter Biden's Apple iCloud ID.

12 I will also introduce, as exhibit 3, a motion filed by Special Counsel David Weiss in response to
13 a motion filed by Hunter Biden, and I will read from page 5 -- or excuse me -- page 7.

14 [Bates Majority Exhibit No. 3
15 was marked for identification.]

16 Mr. Greenberg. In August 2019, IRS and FBI investigators obtained a search warrant for taps
17 violations for the defendant's Apple iCloud account.

18 In response to that warrant, in September 2019, Apple produced backups of data from
19 various of the defendant's electronic devices that he had backed up to his iCloud account.

20 "Investigators also later came into possession of the defendant's Apple MacBook Pro, which
21 he had left at a computer store." That was filed -- end quote -- this was filed in the District of
22 Delaware in Federal court. I will enter those as --

23 BY MR. GREENBERG:

24 Q So I ask you again, was the laptop real?

25 A I was not aware of that information at the time. To be clear, I would need to review

1 what you just walked through.

2 Q You're unaware of -- were you unaware of the Hunter Biden prosecution?

3 A Not until shortly after the campaign.

4 Q Did you ever ask Joe Biden if the allegations regarding his son were true?

5 A No.

6 Q Did you ever communicate to the media whether the allegations were true?

7 A Which allegations?

8 Q Regarding Hunter Biden's business dealings.

9 A There were a number of allegations made about those.

10 Q That Hunter Biden -- you're right. Let me rephrase.

11 Did you ever communicate to the press whether Hunter Biden was or was not peddling
12 influence to his father?

13 A I don't remember, but I do remember that the former Vice President, in my view,
14 handled himself honorably in this area, and I do not think that that can be said of the person in the
15 White House now at all.

16 Q Mr. Bates, that's not what I asked you at all. Did you ever --

17 Mr. Jonas. The answer was he didn't recall, in response to your question. So next
18 question.

19 BY MR. GREENBERG:

20 Q You don't recall whether you ever communicated to the press regarding the President's
21 son, Hunter Biden, and his business dealings with, for example, CEFC?

22 A I remember CEFC. You would need to specify to me allegations that are being made.

23 Q Did you ever communicate with Hunter Biden regarding the veracity of the information
24 on the Hunter Biden laptop that was introduced in Federal court?

25 Mr. Jonas. Which inform- -- I'm sorry -- which information are we talking about?

1 Mr. Greenberg. The information found on Hunter Biden's laptop.

2 Mr. Jonas. So you're asking whether he ever verified the authenticity of that information?

3 Mr. Greenberg. I'm asking whether he ever communicated with Hunter Biden about the
4 veracity of the information on the Hunter Biden laptop.

5 Mr. Bates. No.

6 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

7 BY MR. GRANT:

8 Q Going back to your relationships with other members of President Biden's family, what
9 was your relationship like with Valerie Biden Owens?

10 A I met her a small number of times. They were brief interactions.

11 Q During your time in the White House?

12 A Yes, and during the 2020 campaign.

13 Q Same question for Ashleigh Biden.

14 A We first met during the President's term. I believe we've met twice.

15 Q And same for Naomi Biden?

16 A I had seen her more because we have mutual friends.

17 Q By "see her more," what kind of frequency would that be?

18 A Not very often, but we've gone to drinks together, that kind of thing.

19 Q Get coffees with her?

20 A No.

21 Q Dinners?

22 A She invited us to a party at her home in what I believe would've been 2023.

23 Q Understood.

24 During your time in the Biden administration, how often did you personally see or interact
25 with President in person?

1 A I don't know how to ballpark that exactly, but I saw him a lot, especially when it came to
2 travel because I was one of the press aides who would go as the spokesperson when the Press
3 Secretary was unavailable, and accompanying him to the Hill when we were trying to advance
4 priorities of his in Congress. You would also see him in the hallways.

5 Q Outside of, you know, travel or being a part of the official pool, how often would you
6 have meetings with President Biden?

7 A So, just to clarify, I was not in the pool.

8 Q Yeah.

9 A I was one of the staffers that was often doing movements with him, going to sites. I
10 was not just with the press.

11 Q Understood.

12 A So I saw a lot of things that they would not.

13 Q Understood.

14 But, outside of those times of travel or going with the President to the Hill or, you know,
15 other various appearances, how often would you meet with President Biden?

16 A As far as formal meetings, not very frequently, but interactions and up-close, firsthand
17 experiences, I had a lot.

18 Q And those experiences would be the travel or passing the President in the hallway, that
19 sort of thing?

20 A And there were times he would come to the press office.

21 Q And how often would he come to the press office?

22 A Not very often. Maybe a couple of times a year.

23 Q Did the frequency of which he came to the press office change from when his term first
24 started to when his term ended?

25 A I think it was most frequent the first year and the last year.

1 Q Have you ever been on Marine One?

2 A No.

3 Q Have you ever been on Air Force One?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Roughly how many times were you on Air Force One?

6 A Many times.

7 Q Ten, 20, 50, somewhere in between there, like a ball park estimate? I'm not going to
8 hold you to a specific number.

9 A I believe it would be above 35.

10 Q And you briefly touched on this, but how often would you usually travel with the
11 President?

12 A It would depend. We took turns going to Delaware when he would return home, or
13 official events, political events, vacations. I went to Nantucket when they were there for
14 Thanksgiving in 2022, for example.

15 Q Have you ever been to the President's Wilmington house?

16 A Yes. I have not been inside it, though.

17 Q And then, same question, have you ever been to the President's Rehoboth Beach
18 house?

19 A I have been outside of it.

20 Q Have you ever been to Camp David?

21 A During the Obama administration, not while Joe Biden was President.

22 Q How often would you attend fundraisers for then former Vice President Biden on the
23 2020 campaign?

24 A I don't believe I did any because, in my role, I was almost always in the Philadelphia
25 headquarters, or after COVID, I was working from home.

1 Q And then did you attend any fundraisers for President Biden during the 2024 campaign?

2 A Yes, in my official capacity because there are White House reporters and White House
3 staff who travel with him.

4 Q Do you remember which campaign events you attended?

5 A I don't remember in full, but they would have been mainly in Maryland and Virginia.

6 Q Understood.

7 Going into a little bit more depth of your experience on the 2020 campaign -- actually, before
8 we even get to that, you worked on Hillary -- Secretary Clinton's 2016 Presidential campaign. Is that
9 correct?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And what was your role during that campaign?

12 A North Carolina communications director.

13 Q And then when did you join President Biden's 2020 campaign?

14 A Shortly before launch in the spring of 2019.

15 Q And did someone approach you to join the campaign, or did you approach somebody
16 that you wanted to join the campaign?

17 A I told Kate Bedingfield, who was a former boss of mine, that I would be interested.

18 Q And what was your official role or roles on the 2020 Presidential campaign?

19 A I was the director of rapid response.

20 Q And what would that entail?

21 A I acted as a national spokesperson, fielding questions from the press, giving statements,
22 giving communications and messaging advice. I managed a team once we had the resources to
23 expand, and I was one of the main points of contact for the national press.

24 Q And who would've been your most direct superior in that role?

25 A Bill Russo and Kate Bedingfield.

1 Q Did you travel with then Vice President Biden during the 2020 campaign?

2 A The only thing -- I did not travel with him for this, but I helped staff a rally in Philadelphia
3 that was the formal, main launch event. I believe that is the only campaign event I went to because
4 my job required me to be in the headquarters.

5 Q And, during your time on the 2020 campaign, did you have a sense that anyone, you
6 know, may have distrusted you because you had worked for the Clinton campaign in 2016?

7 A No.

8 Q How often would you meet with President -- or then Vice President Biden's senior staff
9 on the 2020 campaign?

10 A Frequently.

11 Q Daily, weekly, monthly?

12 A Daily.

13 Q Did this include Bruce Reed?

14 A Yes, but he was not someone I dealt with as often as that.

15 Q And how about Ron Klain?

16 A Decently often.

17 Q Annie Tomasini?

18 A Some.

19 Q Some? Is there another way you can define "some"?

20 A Roughly the same as Bruce most likely.

21 Q Ashley Williams?

22 A Some.

23 Q "Some" as in the same amount as Ms. Tomasini and Mr. Reed?

24 A Probably a little less.

25 Q How about Anthony Bernal?

1 A Some.

2 Q Some as in the same as Ms. Tomasini and Mr. Reed or different?

3 A Less than that.

4 Q Anita Dunn?

5 A Often.

6 Q Daily, weekly?

7 A Multiple times a week.

8 Q Is there -- as part of your role meeting with these, you know, senior campaign staff,
9 what were the topics of your discussions that you'd be bringing to them?

10 A It could vary quite a lot because I was one of the main spokespeople who was fielding
11 questions from national media and working on stories. So it would really depend on what was
12 happening in the news and with the campaign, but it would cover a lot of ground.

13 Q How often would you meet with Jill Biden during the 2020 campaign?

14 A Very rarely.

15 Q And then, after the 2020 election, you had a role on the transition team. Is that
16 correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And what was your role?

19 A I believe the title was spokesperson.

20 Q And, in that position, is that similar responsibilities to what you had in your role in the
21 2020 campaign?

22 A Some similarities, but on the transition, most of my work had to do with Cabinet
23 nominees we were announcing. I was working under Jen Psaki, who was managing that portion of
24 the transition's work.

25 Q And managing the Cabinet nominees, what did that entail?

1 A It had to do with taking reporters' questions about which people might be in the running
2 for certain jobs. It would have to do with announcements when we were ready to make decisions
3 public. And it would have to do with highlighting those people's qualifications and records and
4 disclosures that they would make as part of the process.

5 Q Were you interacting with these Cabinet nominees?

6 A Some of them.

7 Q Which of those?

8 A Secretary Blinken, Secretary McDonough.

9 Q Anyone else that you would frequently be interacting with?

10 A I didn't deal with them frequently, but I did work with them around the announcements
11 of them being chosen as nominees. I don't remember any other -- oh, Neera Tanden because she
12 was nominated for OMB.

13 BY MR. GREENBERG:

14 Q What about Mr. Sullivan?

15 A Yes, I did talk with him. He -- he was a little bit different because that was not a
16 Senate-confirmable position.

17 Q Sure.

18 A But I did handle the press for his announcement and some of the stories related to it.

19 Q What about Secretary Vilsack?

20 A I don't believe so.

21 Q Did you know any of Blinken, McDonough, Sullivan, from previous work you had done in
22 the government?

23 A I had met Denis McDonough a few times during the Obama administration. I was in
24 touch with him at times during 2020 campaign because he was a supportive voice.

25 Secretary Blinken, I first met not long after I joined the Biden campaign, and the same for Jake

1 Sullivan.

2 Q What do you mean by Mr. McDonough was a -- I'm sorry. I just forgot what you
3 said -- a positive voice, a supportive vice?

4 A A supportive voice. Just, as is common for any Presidential campaign, you are going to
5 be in touch with high-profile individuals who are supportive and who want to express that support.

6 Q So was Mr. McDonough somebody you could go to if you needed to get a message out?

7 A I'm trying to remember which specific things we worked on. I remember him giving
8 interviews in which he explained why he supported the then former Vice President.

9 Q Is that why you -- why Mr. McDonough was one of the voices that you turned to to push
10 back against the narrative about Joe Biden's age or health or ability to do the job?

11 A I went to him because he had worked closely with President Biden in his role as
12 secretary of Veterans' Affairs.

13 Q But he had been supportive -- he had been a supportive voice from the jump, right?

14 A I don't believe he endorsed from the jump. I remember him being supportive during
15 the general election.

16 Mr. Greenberg. Thanks.

17 BY MR. GRANT:

18 Q Just to reclarify, moving into your responsibilities when you started in the White House,
19 who did you first report to?

20 A In the White House?

21 Q Yes.

22 A Jen Psaki.

23 Q And that changed when Ms. Psaki left. Is that correct?

24 A Yes. It changed to Karine Jean-Pierre.

25 Q Did you have anyone that reported to you?

1 A Robyn Patterson, who was an assistant press secretary, reported to me for a time.

2 Q And then, in your role as, you know, deputy press secretary and spokesman for
3 President Biden, what was your main portfolio of issues that you covered in the White House?

4 A It was diverse. It -- and it could vary based on what was salient in the news, but I
5 handled press about our efforts to pass major legislation, especially the Inflation Reduction Act and
6 the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

7 I was involved in a bunch of debates, I was the press office's point person for judicial
8 nominations, eventually most political matters that the White House was in a position to speak about
9 within the rules, and often in the areas where the President was being personally attacked.

1 [12:06 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q So would this include crisis communications sort of thing?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And when dealing with crisis communications, who would you usually work with?

6 A That could vary a lot. It depended on the subject.

7 Q Did you work with Ian Sams?

8 A Yes.

9 Q What was the nature of your work with Ian Sams?

10 A There were stories that would overlap between the areas to which we'd been assigned,
11 so it would have to do with oversight investigations. It would have to do with I think mainly things
12 that stemmed from that. Oh, and things that had to do with DOJ.

13 Q We kind of briefly touched on this earlier as well. Did you have access to the White
14 House residence?

15 A No.

16 Q Did you ever go to the White House residence?

17 A Not beyond the first floor, or I don't know if it's technically the first floor, but the floor
18 where the east room is.

19 Q Was there any -- did you notice people that had residence access, did they have a
20 special demarcation on their badge, or anything like that?

21 A That I don't know.

22 Q Do you know if anyone else had White House residence access?

23 A I don't know who had it.

24 Q Are you aware of who most frequently visited the White House residence?

25 A No.

1 Q And the time that you visited the residence first floor, you know, whatever, by the east
2 room, what was the purposes usually for your visits?

3 A There could be many purposes. If there were press events happening there, because
4 those are often venues for public events, or if we were hosting a certain -- if we were hosting a
5 certain constituency, there would be parties there, holiday parties, receptions, so it could vary.

6 Q And then during your time in the Biden administration, how often would the press team
7 have meetings generally?

8 A Very often.

9 Q Daily?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And how often would the press team broadly meet with senior White House staff?

12 A What do you mean by broadly?

13 Q There's probably different variations if just you and Ms. Psaki or Ms. Jean-Pierre would
14 go meet with senior staff versus if a larger coalition of the press team would go meet with senior
15 staff, so just starting from, like, a 30,000 foot view, how often would the press team be interacting
16 with the senior advisers at the White House, senior staff?

17 A The way that it worked, which to my understanding is consistent with every
18 administration, is that various spokespeople had their particular assignments, and it is very normal
19 for them to interact with senior staff about those assignments. In my experience, it's very rare to
20 have some kind of a full press team meeting with one of those people, but for individuals working on
21 the issues that those senior people also have a role in, that is very common.

22 Q So you would presumably have some type of issue that you covered, you would go meet
23 with certain senior advisers, senior staff based off issues you covered?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And how -- can you tell us broadly how the press team operated in the sense that you

1 understood the President's positions on different issues you covered?

2 A Well, the people who took point on certain subjects would become well versed quickly,
3 because you would work on rollouts or proposals, you would work on defending our positions against
4 criticism or figuring out ways to advance the case for them, so they would be learning about those
5 constantly.

6 Q And granted, in politics, positioning and messaging can change sometimes depending on
7 what's going on. How would you learn about what the particular position of the White House is on
8 something?

9 A That could take different forms. You could be told by different senior staff. It could
10 be that you're emailed about something that is coming down the pike.

11 Q And would issues -- rephrase. If you were getting a new position, would you hear from
12 Bruce Reed about what the President's position is on that matter?

13 A It could be. It would just depend.

14 Q And same goes for Mike Donilon?

15 A Well, Mike's role had more to do with overall messaging, and I don't remember talking
16 with him about policy specifics a great deal when it came to learning new positions. I would talk
17 with him about positions, but I don't think he was often someone I talked to about new ones.

18 BY MS. HARKER:

19 Q Did President Biden tell the press team what his positions were in any instance?

20 A Yes.

21 Q How often did he do that?

22 A He discussed his positions when he came back to the press office.

23 Ms. Harker. Thank you.

24 Mr. Grant. We will stop it there. We'll go off the record.

25 [Recess.]

1 [1:01 p.m.]

2 BY MS. [REDACTED]

3 Q Mr. Bates, my majority colleagues have alleged the existence of a coverup with respect
4 to President Biden's mental acuity. In the interest of making sure we have a clear record, do you
5 have -- you have no knowledge that Joe Biden was at any point in time mentally unable to execute
6 the duties of his office of President -- the office of the President, correct?

7 A Correct.

8 Q And to your knowledge, did anyone in the White House at any point during Joe Biden's
9 presidency ever make decisions to issue any form of clemency, pardons, or otherwise, in Joe Biden's
10 name without his knowledge or authorization?

11 A No.

12 Q Did you ever make decisions to issue any form of clemency, pardons or otherwise, in Joe
13 Biden's name without his knowledge or authorization?

14 A No.

15 Q And again, at any point during the Biden presidency, did anyone in the White House, to
16 your knowledge, ever issue any other type of executive order without President Biden's knowledge
17 or authorization?

18 A No. And that would be very contrary to everything that I experienced about the way
19 the White House worked.

20 Q Thank you. So to your knowledge, all decisions issuing any form of clemency, pardons
21 or otherwise, and all executive orders during the Biden administration were made by President Biden
22 alone?

23 A Yes. And to give you a sense of what I lived through, people were very diligent about
24 making sure that they were staying within parameters that he had set, and that would even extend
25 to press statements, language that would be in releases. People were very conscientious about

1 ensuring that he had signed off on things. That, compared to other places I have worked, campaigns,
2 other administrations, that the level of check-ins was abnormally high, in fact.

3 Q Okay. So basically even went beyond what typically the President would sign
4 off -- typically sign off on and other presidents would typically sign off on.

5 A Yes.

6 Q Thank you. And apart from any instances in which President Biden delegated authority
7 to Vice President Harris while he was undergoing a medical procedure, did anyone, to your
8 knowledge, ever step in to carry out the duties of the presidency in Joe Biden's place because he was
9 unable to do so?

10 A No.

11 BY MR. [REDACTED]

12 Q So just to be clear, to your knowledge, are you aware of any instance where executive
13 order issued during the Biden presidency was signed by auto pen without President Biden's
14 knowledge or authorization?

15 A No.

16 Q To your knowledge, are you aware of any instance in which the auto pen was used to
17 sign any presidential memorandum issued during the Biden presidency without President Biden's
18 knowledge or authorization?

19 A No.

20 Q To your knowledge, are you aware of any instance in which the auto pen was used to
21 sign a pardon issued during the Biden presidency without President Biden's knowledge or
22 authorization?

23 A No.

24 Q And to your knowledge, are you aware of any instance in which the auto pen was used
25 to sign an order granting clemency issued during the Biden presidency without President Biden's

1 knowledge or authorization?

2 A No.

3 Ms. [REDACTED] We'll go off the record.

4 [Recess.]

5 BY MR. GRANT:

6 Q Mr. Bates, staying with the press team operations we covered in our last hour, Ian Sams
7 told the committee that Ms. Jean-Pierre had a large book or binder of talking points. Are you
8 familiar with this book or binder?

9 A I am familiar with that binder, and I know that every press secretary that I have worked
10 with kept a similar binder.

11 Q Did you write talking points for the binder?

12 A Yes.

13 Q At whose direction would you write talking points for the binder?

14 A That could vary. I would sometimes do it on my initiative. She would ask for points
15 about subjects, as would Jen before her, and other officials could say we expect Y subject to come up,
16 could you look into this and could you prepare them. That's in my experience standard for any
17 White House press office.

18 Q And who would those other officials be?

19 A It could be many different people depending. It could be the congressional affairs
20 team if we were getting a lot of questions about an effort to pass legislation. They could be a policy
21 person if they thought that an area under their bailiwick might see more press coverage. It could
22 just vary.

23 Q Would that include the senior advisers as well providing issues to you that may come
24 up?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And was there any sort of approval process for adding talking points to the binder?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And what was that process like?

4 A That could also change its shape based on the subject and who was working on it. For
5 example, when we were dealing with Hurricane Helene, we would be dealing with the Homeland
6 Security team, National Security team. We would be dealing with the intergovernmental affairs
7 team because they were in touch with the state government and local governments, so it would
8 really shift based on the subject.

9 Q Would Ms. Jean-Pierre have final signoff, though?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And did anyone else contribute to the talking points binder?

12 A Yes. In a way that's consistent with what I had observed during the Biden
13 administration, in the Biden administration, the various spokespeople would contribute materials
14 about the subjects they covered.

15 Q Understood. Switching gears a little bit, beyond our earlier discussion of a specific Wall
16 Street Journal piece, were there any other instances in which you requested or directed a transcript
17 or audio recording of an interview?

18 A There's one thing I want to make sure is clear. When it came to Patty Murray's team
19 sending me the audio and then Christy Stevenson with Leader Jeffries' team sending me that
20 transcript, those materials were offered to me. I did not ask that they happen. I did not know.
21 Just as you all are well aware, it's standard practice for Hill staff to record interviews in the hallway.
22 I believe that was the setting for Patty Murray. But those materials were offered to me by staff who
23 felt that the reporters were pursuing the story in an unfair way.

24 Q Understood. Are there any other instances in which staff provided you transcripts or
25 audio recordings?

1 A It's possible but I don't remember anything specific. And you mean people from
2 outside of the administration?

3 Q Yeah. From members' offices or Senators' offices or cabinet officials' offices even.

4 A It's possible I was sent something about cabinet members in a manner that would be in
5 line with how any press office gets updates about people who are within the broader family talking
6 to reporters, making statements, because you want to coordinate.

7 Q But more than just updates. Transcripts or audio recordings, would you get those from
8 cabinet members' staff or themselves?

9 A Sometimes.

10 Q Sometimes being how frequently would that be?

11 A Quite rarely that I got them.

12 Q At any point would you call reporters to have them shut down stories about President
13 Biden and his health or duties or ability to perform the duties of the presidency?

14 A What do you mean by shut down?

15 Q You may have gotten a tip that so and so was going to write a story about President
16 Biden's mental decline or inability to carry out the duties of the presidency, and so based off that,
17 would you ever call reporters and try to have those stories not come out?

18 A My standard practice on any subject, whether it had to do with his age, policy, anything
19 else, was if I learned that there was an assertion that I thought was unfounded or something that
20 needed to be fact checked or something that required extra context for people to understand the full
21 picture, I would advocate for that to be done.

22 Q But outside that, you never told a reporter not to run a story?

23 A I don't have the -- I don't have that right.

24 Q And you mentioned you handled the DOJ portfolio?

25 A For roughly the first two years, I would often do the White House press office's work

1 when we thought it was appropriate dealing with DOJ.

2 Q Would you -- were you involved in the White House's efforts in the Special Counsel
3 Robert Hur's investigation?

4 A A little.

5 Q What do you mean by a little?

6 A By that time, Ian Sams had joined the staff and that was in his portfolio, so I consulted
7 with him rarely.

8 Q Other than rarely consulting, did you assist Mr. Sams at all with the comms strategy
9 regarding the Hur report or its investigation?

10 A A little bit.

11 Q Were you aware that Ian Sams made the claim that no one would need the audiotape of
12 the Hur interview with President Biden?

13 A I don't remember that specifically. I do remember the release of the transcript.

14 Q And did the press team, or more broadly the communications team, did they discuss the
15 area of the Hur report describing President Biden having a poor memory?

16 A That was discussed.

17 Q Who were part of those discussions?

18 A The people I remember were Ben LaBolt, Karine, Anita Dunn. Ian would have been a
19 part of that. I was not a participant in most of the discussions about it.

20 Q And those discussions you were a participant in, what was discussed about the Hur
21 report finding that President Biden had a poor memory?

22 A The consensus was that that was a gratuitously negative and off topic set of claims to
23 add to the report.

24 BY MR. GREENBERG:

25 Q I've heard that term, that word actually gratuitous used to characterize that line from

1 the report. I've heard it frequently from various people. Do you have any knowledge of any kind
2 of talking point coming down to use that word to describe that line from the report?

3 A I don't remember a set of talking points, but it seems fitting to me.

4 Q You stand by the characterization that it was gratuitous to include that in the report?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Have you since heard the audio recording of President Biden's interview with Special
7 Counsel Hur?

8 A I have not.

9 BY MR. GRANT:

10 Q Do you recall any conversations amongst the press team trying to attempt to remove
11 any parts of the report describing President Biden as having a poor memory?

12 A Remove from the report? No.

13 Q Anita Dunn testified to us that the communications and press staff elected to not have
14 President Biden give an interview that would air before the 2024 Super Bowl out of concern that the
15 interview would focus mostly around the Hur report and President Biden having a poor memory as
16 part of that report. Were you involved in any of the discussions about President Biden doing a
17 preSuper Bowl interview?

18 A I did not work that on directly. I do remember this being discussed with me, and what
19 I recall about it was that there was a feeling that traditionally these interviews had been less political,
20 less about governance because people are tuning in to watch the game, and there was a suspicion
21 that CBS wanted to focus more than was the norm on political, governing issues, and we thought that
22 would be tone deaf for us to do.

23 BY MR. GREENBERG:

24 Q What do you mean by political governing issues?

25 A That when someone tunes in to watch the Super Bowl, they're not really interested in

1 politics, right? And we thought that it would be annoying to viewers if here's the President talking
2 about news of the day with whomever the interviewer would be, like, and less about just the
3 American tradition.

4 Q But isn't that -- how is that different than how it -- how it is for every Super Bowl
5 interview or preSuper Bowl interview with every other President? Why this time was it decided
6 that it shouldn't happen?

7 A What I remember being told at the time was that there was a concern that CBS wanted
8 to focus on those kinds of things more than would be the norm for past presidential Super Bowl
9 interviews.

10 BY MR. GRANT:

11 Q I believe these conversations happened before the official report was made public.
12 Had you seen the report before it was made public, the Hur report?

13 A No.

14 Q Were there any -- I'll discard that. Paraphrasing a little bit, the Hur report concluded
15 that President Biden would present himself to a jury as a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with
16 a poor memory. Just for the record, do you disagree with that conclusion?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And why do you disagree with that conclusion?

19 A Because I think that President Biden is someone who presents himself with a lot of
20 dignity and that a jury would see him in the -- in a respectful way.

21 Q Did you discuss the Hur investigation or the report with President Biden himself?

22 A No.

23 Q Were there any other reactions inside the White House about the Hur report?

24 A I mainly remember what we've already discussed.

25 Q It's been --

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q Can I ask a follow-up? You said that President Biden would present himself to a jury in
3 a dignified way. Do I have that right?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And presumably he would be able to acquit himself of any charge in that situation.

6 A As he did.

7 Q It's my understanding that part of the -- part of Special Counsel's Hur's reason to not
8 charge the President was because he believed that he would present himself to a jury as a
9 sympathetic well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory. Is it your contention that Special
10 Counsel Hur should have charged President Biden?

11 A No.

12 BY MR. GRANT:

13 Q Switching gears a little bit, there's been some various reporting that when reporters
14 would come to the White House press team with a story about President Biden and his age or mental
15 acuity issues that members of the press team would either in public or privately attack those
16 journalists. I obviously don't mean to assume that that is physical attack, but would you ever, you
17 know, verbally tell reporters that they should or should not report on questions of President Biden's
18 age?

19 A I remember repeating to reporters often that President Biden himself had said publicly
20 that as the oldest President -- at that time -- he felt it was fair to scrutinize the subject of age, and
21 that is something that I mentioned. There were moments where, as we've talked about a little bit
22 here I felt that there was a desire to increase the proportion of coverage about age because it was
23 a -- it was not as complicated as talking about the governing process or debates about issues, and I
24 thought that it became outsized, and I communicated this to reporters as well as colleagues. I was
25 far from the only person who felt that way.

1 Q Did you ever -- let me back up. In an attempt to try to prevent or quash a negative
2 story of President Biden about his age or his mental acuity, did you ever enlist the help of social
3 media influencers or other progressive reporters to either change the topic of discussion or quash
4 those claims of age-related problems of the President?

5 A What I would do, and this is in line with every major communications operation I'm
6 aware of, whether it's a private company, a campaign, what have you, is if there were segments of
7 articles that we felt were inaccurate or unfair, I would sometimes speak with individuals who I felt
8 would agree to see if they were willing to publicly say so.

9 Q And did you ever send, whether it be text messages or Signal messages, send aggressive
10 messages to other Democratic operatives about negative news stories you were seeing in the press?

11 A What do you mean by aggressive messages?

12 Q Whether it be by, you know, tone, why something is being reported on, stuff of that
13 nature.

14 A I would be in touch with fellow Democrats, particularly staffers for electeds or
15 candidates, because as you all know, it's common in both parties for people to be in touch with allies
16 like that, and we would talk about many different subjects being covered, things that we thought
17 were worth promoting, things that we thought had flaws that needed to be pointed out.

18 Q Did those conversations ever get to the point where you were or could be determined
19 that you were being -- acting with a sense of hostility towards these Democrat operatives and
20 colleagues outside of the White House?

21 Mr. Jonas. I think he's asking whether you were hostile.

22 Mr. Bates. I don't remember doing things that I would regard as hostile.

23 BY MR. GREENBERG:

24 Q Have you ever yelled at a reporter?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Have you ever cursed at a reporter?

2 A Yes.

3 Q When is the last time you did that, either of those?

4 A The last time that I remember was a reporter for The New York Times, and it was my
5 final day in the administration, and it was because the New York Times did a story about as the
6 administration was closing what is it like around the President, and the reporters, I had been
7 impressed at the level of good faith, and they relayed to me that their determination was the
8 President was very much in charge, very much engaged, and that those who deal with him regularly
9 did not have a view that he was in any way encumbered.

10 And when the story ran, there was a part of it that clashed with what I had been told, and I
11 remember the specific phrasing because it offended me. It said that this story was explaining how
12 staff, I believe the wording was, 'managed his decline'. So I had called the reporter for the story
13 and I said wait a minute, when we talked earlier, you had mentioned that this wasn't what your
14 reporting found, and I was told that's correct, this was inserted by editors and I don't have control
15 over it and I'm sorry, but you should talk to the editor if you want this changed. So I did that.

16 And when I got in touch with the editor, they told me that the -- that wording, 'decline', was
17 meant to mean physical decline, and I countered to them if I tell you my grandmother is in decline,
18 does that mean that she walks a little less slowly? I don't think so. And the conversation did get
19 heated and I did raise my voice. I later apologized for that, but I think that I was -- I think it's
20 reasonable for me to object to that.

21 Q Thank you.

22 BY MR. GRANT:

23 Q Turning now to President Biden's decision to run for reelection in 2024, we'll start with
24 during the 2020 cycle, maybe immediately after the 2020 election, was it your impression that
25 President Biden was going to be a one-term President?

1 A I don't remember having a sense of whether it would be one or two.

2 Q Never any conversations about that during this time?

3 A Not that I was a part of outside of reporters who would come to us with questions about
4 that, and there was not anything of substance revealed. We were just aware that the reporters had
5 questions.

6 Q Was it your impression that President Biden intended to be a, as he put it, bridge
7 president to a younger generation of Democratic leaders?

8 A I remember that statement, but I did not take that as necessarily meaning that he was
9 not inclined to run for a second term.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Do you think other people did? If you --

11 Mr. Jonas. I mean, it's an impossible question.

12 Mr. Greenberg. It seems to have caused some ambivalence, so I was just wondering if
13 anybody ever gave you the impression that they had thoughts about that statement?

14 Mr. Bates. I know that I did not take it as meaning he would not run.

15 BY MR. GRANT:

16 Q When did you first come to understand that President Biden would likely seek reelection
17 in 2024?

18 A I don't remember exactly when I learned this, but it would have been late 2022 or within
19 the first quarter of 2023.

20 Q And at that time did you believe President Biden was fit to serve four additional years?

21 A I did.

22 Q Did you believe he could still win reelection?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Did you have any concerns about President Biden running for reelection in 2024?

25 A As someone who's worked in politics for a good while, I can't think of any candidate

1 about whom for any office I would have zero concerns ahead of a campaign, because everybody has
2 areas where they will be criticized. Everyone has strengths.

3 Q And so based off that statement, what would you say the areas of concerns were for
4 President Biden running for reelection?

5 A By far the biggest was that because of the way the pandemic disrupted the global
6 economy, inflation had gone up. This was associated with us. And I felt that it was by far our
7 biggest political vulnerability.

8 Q Inside the White House, were there any discussions or considerations of President Biden
9 being physically or mentally incapable of running and serving a second term?

10 A Not that I know of.

11 Q Do you believe any White House staff were concerned about President Biden running
12 for reelection in 2024?

13 A Not that I know of.

14 Q Were there any discussions or considerations that President Biden may not make it an
15 additional four years?

16 A Not that I know of.

17 Q Did you have any role -- shifting gears ahead a little bit, for the debate between
18 President Biden and President Trump in June of 2024, did you have any role in prep for that debate
19 leading up to the debate?

20 A No.

21 Q Not in Washington?

22 A No.

23 Q And you did not travel to Camp David to assist with debate prep?

24 A No.

25 Q Were you asked to assist any other person that was involved with debate prep on any

1 talking points, or anything like that?

2 A No. The one thing I just want to make sure I'm telling you all is we got inquiries about
3 debate prep, which has happened every time that I've been involved with an effort where there is a
4 debate upcoming, and I provided some information to those reporters about who had been involved
5 in debate prep, because that's always something they're interested in.

6 Q And that only information was about who was involved in debate prep, not how debate
7 prep was going?

8 A It was about who was involved. I believe there were some additional details. You
9 know how reporters always want color, and things like that, but I don't remember characterizations
10 of how it was going.

11 Q Were you aware or did you hear of any indication of how debate prep was going from
12 those that were assisting with debate prep?

13 A The only thing that I remember being told was after the debate I was told that they had
14 expected him to perform better based on how prep had gone.

15 Q And going to the debate -- in a recent interview, I believe it was a podcast or YouTube
16 interview, Hunter Biden told Andrew Callahan that President Biden was given Ambien to help sleep
17 before the debate. Do you have any knowledge of President Biden being prescribed or taking
18 Ambien?

19 A No.

20 Q Did you see President Biden being administered medications, including Ambien, at any
21 point in the White House in 2024 leading up to the debate?

22 A No.

23 Q In your opinion, are Hunter Biden's claims of Ambien hindering the President's
24 performance at the debate credible?

25 A I don't know what he was taking or not.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q It's been a few hours, but I think at the beginning of the interview you said the last time
3 that you had spoken with Hunter Biden was in regard to comments that he had made post -- after he
4 had done a podcast. Is this what you were referring to?

5 A We did not talk about anything that related to the President's health when we most
6 recently spoke. It was about other things.

7 Q Okay. What did you speak on?

8 A I want to be clear, I don't mean this as confrontational. I just want to be honest. I
9 was talking to him about how very frequently the current President and members of his family
10 engage in corrupt business activities that if he had done a very small fraction of, I think the phrase I
11 used was Sean Hannity would have a stroke on the air.

12 Q Do you often speak with Hunter Biden about politics?

13 A Not often, no.

14 Q And just so I'm clear, did you speak with Hunter Biden at all during the 118th Congress's
15 investigation of Hunter Biden and Joe Biden regarding international business dealings?

16 A I did -- I did text with him. I sent him a supportive message on a date that he was
17 coming to testify.

18 Q Did you speak with the President the day that he was supposed to testify?

19 A No.

20 Q It has been -- it is my understanding that the President recommended to Hunter Biden
21 that he not testify at one point. Are you aware of any of those conversations?

22 A That I don't know about.

23 Q Did you work with Ian Sams in communicating talking points regarding congressional
24 investigations of Hunter Biden?

25 A I did work with Ian sometimes a little bit about that.

1 Q And what was your contribution to that?

2 A My main contribution was that I had built knowledge about Hunter's background
3 because I had worked on stories that went into it, and so sometimes Ian would make use of that, you
4 know, do you think it is accurate, is there something else that is a relevant factor about whatever
5 element of his past being discussed.

6 Q And at any point did you ever speak with Hunter Biden's legal team about investigations
7 being conducted by the House of Representatives?

8 A No.

9 Q Did you ever speak with his legal team about investigations being run by the
10 Department of Justice?

11 A No.

12 BY MR. GRANT:

13 Q Going to the actual debate night itself between President Biden and President Trump,
14 did you watch the June 27, 2024, debate between President Biden and President Trump?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And where did you watch it?

17 A I was at a hotel room in Baltimore.

18 Q Who did you watch the debate with?

19 A My wife.

20 Q President Biden had a pretty lackluster performance in this debate. Would you agree
21 with that assessment?

22 A I agree with his assessment that it was a bad night and he did not do well.

23 Q What do you think made it a bad night and that he didn't do well?

24 A He has spoken to this, and I defer to what he said.

25 Q What are your personal opinions on why he had a bad night and didn't do well?

1 A My personal opinions are that I know he has mentioned he was doing a lot of travel
2 around the world during a short time period before the debate itself and that he was feeling under
3 the weather, as he has discussed, and I also know that this came not long after there were
4 developments concerning Hunter's legal situation that I think on a human level would be stressful for
5 any parent.

6 BY MR. GREENBERG:

7 Q Was it your immediate reaction watching and immediately after the debate that it was
8 either not going well or had gone badly?

9 A I remember in realtime thinking that he was not doing well, but I also remember
10 thinking as I saw Tweets and other reactions that criticism was overtorqued, and it reminded me to a
11 degree of watching the first debate between then President Obama and Mitt Romney where Obama
12 did not do his best, but I think that often there can be a self-perpetuating feedback loop where
13 especially talking heads like to overdramatize whatever has just happened.

14 Q I was trying to go back to prepare for this interview to go back and read the Andrew
15 Bates archived tweets and what you tweeted immediately after the debate, but I couldn't -- they're
16 not on there. I don't know why that is. Did you -- have you ever deleted tweets from your official
17 account?

18 A I have deleted -- I did delete some, but I do not believe I deleted anything that related to
19 the debate or after.

20 Q Okay. It only went back to August of 2024, so I was just -- you never made any kind of
21 mass deletion of tweets from that account?

22 A No. That is a surprise to me.

23 Q It could just be me not knowing how to work Twitter as well.

24 A It's also a surprise, because there are some folks who like to tweet old things at me, and
25 I still get alerts every so often.

1 Q I don't tweet, so I cannot relate to you, but I'm sorry.

2 A It's a healthy practice.

3 BY MR. GRANT:

4 Q At one point during the debate, President Biden started to stumble in his answer to a
5 question that was asked and his response was, We finally beat Medicare. Do you recall that
6 answer?

7 A Yes, I do, and I remember thinking in realtime that he would very often, when he was
8 talking about the significance of the Inflation Reduction Act as an accomplishment, he would say we
9 finally beat Big Pharma so that Medicare can negotiate lower drug costs, and so I immediately
10 thought that those two had just been switched like it was a flub.

11 Q So you didn't have any concerns about his answer to that question that we finally beat
12 Medicare?

13 A No. I had heard him say we beat Big Pharma so Medicare can negotiate lower drug
14 costs many times.

15 Q Mr. Klain told this committee that President Biden, throughout knowing Joe Biden, Mr.
16 Klain has noticed that he would confuse proper nouns. Considering proper nouns seem to be some
17 of the most important nouns, I found that rather concerning. Is it your experience that President
18 Biden would confuse proper nouns?

19 A So I have a dumb question. What exactly is a proper noun?

20 BY MR. GREENBERG:

21 Q The capitalized ones.

22 A Okay. I should have paid more attention, but that -- I don't remember feeling that
23 way.

24 Q Okay.

25 BY MR. GRANT:

1 Q Did any other White House staffers reach out to you, whether it be text, call, or
2 otherwise, to express thoughts on how the debate -- how they thought the debate went?

3 A Yes. I was in touch with other White House staff, and mostly I remember feeling that it
4 had not gone well, and we were trying to anticipate coverage and how we would deal with it.

5 Q Did anyone express any greater concerns than just it had not gone well?

6 A I remember people being surprised at that and wondering why it had happened, but I
7 don't remember anything beyond that.

8 Q Ron Klain testified to us that the June 2024 debate was a uniquely bad night for former
9 President Biden and he had never seen him appear that way before. Do you agree with Mr. Klain in
10 the sense that it was a uniquely bad night, the debate night?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you'd never seen President Biden struggle in that way before in public speeches or
13 debates?

14 A I had not seen a performance similar to that debate. I remember feeling that he had
15 done well in the previous debates that I had seen.

16 BY MR. GREENBERG:

17 Q Do you think that the criticisms of President Biden's performance that night were also
18 gratuitous like you characterized the lines from the Hur report?

19 A Some of it.

20 Q You think they were overblown?

21 A Yes.

22 BY MR. GRANT:

23 Q Have you -- had you ever seen President Biden lose his train of thought?

24 A I don't remember seeing anything like that happen in my interactions with him.

25 Q Had you ever seen President Biden not be able to finish a task scheduled for him to

1 complete?

2 A No. Well, the one thing I should mention is just that he has, for many years, often run
3 long where -- especially if he's talking to people for longer than is scheduled, but that has been a
4 thing with him for decades.

5 Q Had you ever seen President Biden need increased breaks before being able to
6 complete a task?

7 A No.

8 Q And so just to -- just to be clear, during the years you worked with President Biden, you
9 had never seen him appear the way he did on the debate stage with President Trump in June of
10 2024?

11 A That's correct.

12 BY MR. GREENBERG:

13 Q And just to put a finer point on it, since -- after the debate, did you ever witness
14 President Biden appear that way again?

15 A No.

16 Q Okay.

17 BY MR. GRANT:

18 Q Following the conclusion of the June 2024 debate, did you have any role in -- forgive me,
19 I'm not a press person either, but the traditional spin that happens after debates, did you have any
20 role in that?

21 A That was the campaign. We -- there are limits on how the White House can discuss
22 campaign-related matters, and so we were careful about staying within those. We did answer
23 questions about reactions to the performance from the briefing room to reporters that were working
24 on stories.

25 Q And what were some of those reactions that you provided to reporters?

1 A I don't remember particular reactions. They would be in the public record, though.

2 Q Were there any -- following the debate, were there any conversations about President
3 Biden no longer seeking reelection in 2024?

4 A That did come up, because reporters were asking us if he might withdraw. They were
5 also spending a lot of resources covering Democrats who said that they felt he should leave the race.

6 Q But no one on the White House staff made any concerns about President Biden
7 remaining to run for reelection?

8 A Not to my knowledge.

9 BY MR. GREENBERG:

10 Q And I understand in a spin situation everybody has to declare that he won the debate,
11 that your candidate wins the debate, and I -- at any point after the debate did you declare that Joe
12 Biden had won the debate?

13 A I don't remember saying he won. I remember noting in a personal capacity that I had
14 felt negative reactions were overtorqued, and I remember mentioning that in an important exchange
15 with his opponent the President did get Trump to double down on some of his abortion positions
16 that were felt to be a political liability for the current President's campaign.

17 Q And we're going to walk through the timeline here, but I just want to take a
18 temperature check on where you were at this time. Did you believe at this time that Joe Biden
19 should continue to stay in the race and be the Democratic nominee for President?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And maybe I'll just save us some time. Did you -- up until the time that Joe Biden
22 announced that he would drop out of the race, did you believe that Joe Biden was the proper
23 candidate to serve -- the best candidate to serve as the nominee for the Democrats, for the
24 President?

25 A Yes.

1 BY MR. GRANT:

2 Q Did you ever advocate for President Biden to be more public facing following the
3 debate?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Who did you advocate that to?

6 A I mentioned it to Ben LaBolt and Karine Jean-Pierre.

7 Q Did anyone else share your attitude that President Biden should be more public facing?

8 A I don't know.

9 Q Did anyone push back on that idea to you?

10 A No.

11 Q And sitting here today, do you think the President -- do you think that President Biden
12 should have been more public after the debate?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Moving forward to the eventual withdrawal --

15 BY MR. GREENBERG:

16 Q Before we do that, President Biden did appear on interviews after the debate, correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Do you think they went well?

19 A I think that they went all right. I had felt that it would be best if there were more
20 appearances immediately following, such as the rally in North Carolina the next day.

21 Q Were you confident that President Biden would not appear as he did during the debate
22 performance?

23 A Yes.

24 Q So post-debate moving towards the eventual withdrawal of President Biden, can you
25 just describe for us the growing pressure from, whether it be Democratic members of Congress and

1 the Senate or other political pundits, the pressure they were putting on President Biden to withdraw
2 from the race?

3 A Yes. There was a lot of media coverage about that, and I remember feeling that, like
4 we were talking about a moment ago, often members of the press and commentators will want to
5 overhype recent events so that they can talk about how significant whatever is happening right now
6 is, and I thought that there was disproportionate attention given to any Democrat who said they had
7 concerns or that they felt he should leave the race, and that those were framed as though they spoke
8 for a larger group of people than they did, and that at the same time it seemed there was active
9 minimization of the majority of Democratic leaders who continued to support him.

1 [1:50 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q Who was putting the most pressure on President Biden to withdraw from the race?

4 A I don't know.

5 Q You don't have a personal opinion on that?

6 A I would need a better basis than I have knowledge-wise to form one.

7 Q Did you communicate with any Members of Congress that were pressuring President
8 Biden to drop out?

9 A I don't believe so.

10 Q The weekend of July 20th, 2024, the weekend that President Biden would eventually
11 drop out of the race, where were you at that time?

12 A That weekend?

13 Q Yes.

14 A I was in Washington.

15 Q Did you ever go up to the Rehoboth house of President Biden that weekend?

16 A No.

17 Q And when did you first learn that President Biden had officially made the decision to
18 drop out of the race?

19 A I learned when it became public.

20 Mr. Greenberg. Did you ever hear in the week prior to the official announcement, did you
21 ever hear that an announcement may be coming to that effect?

22 Mr. Bates. No. What I was told was the opposite.

23 BY MR. GRANT:

24 Q Were you surprised to learn that President Biden dropped out of the 2024 race?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Why were you surprised?

2 A Because we had been receiving a lot of reporter emails, text, what have you, amplifying
3 any rumor they'd heard from seemingly any Democrat that they expected the President to seriously
4 consider withdrawing or withdrawing. And, as we would receive those, I would check in with senior
5 staff to ask if there was any truth to them; "do you think that there is a possible change coming?"
6 But I was told no.

7 Q And then, when the official public announcement was posted -- I believe it was a
8 letter -- did you have any role in drafting President Biden's July 21st, 2024, letter to drop out of the
9 2024 race?

10 A No. I just saw it when it was released.

11 Q Do you know who did draft the letter?

12 A No.

13 Q Sitting here today, do you agree with President Biden's decision to drop out?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Why?

16 A I remember that internal polling showed the damage we took from the debate itself was
17 negligible, but there had been such a consistent focus by the news media on any Democrat who had
18 a negative opinion of him continuing that the following weeks did have an impact on his ability to be
19 competitive.

20 And I did not feel that way while we were responding to that pressure, but after I had some
21 time to process what in my life was a very significant set of events, when I looked at some of the
22 public data that showed, late the final week that he remained a candidate, Virginia was
23 unprecedentedly gettable for the Republican ticket, I felt that that was impossible not to consider
24 when thinking about the big picture.

25 Mr. Greenberg. I appreciate and find it refreshing your honesty about reflection, it now

1 being over a year since these events transpired and changing your opinion.

2 Similarly, with the passage of time, have you considered -- do you believe that President
3 Biden was too old to seek reelection?

4 Mr. Bates. No.

5 BY MR. GRANT:

6 Q Did you agree with President Biden's decision to endorse Vice President Harris as the
7 candidate in his place?

8 A I thought that it made sense because the notion that there could be some kind of a
9 rushed ad hoc primary seemed impractical.

10 Q And, after this drop out, after President Biden dropped out, you remained at the White
11 House until the end of the term. Is that correct?

12 A Almost until the end of the term. They phased the staff out gradually. So I left a few
13 days before it ended.

14 Q Did you have any role in preparing for life after the Presidency for President Biden?

15 A I remember getting reporter questions about what that would look like, but I don't think
16 that we had much information to give them because it had been less of a focus during that period
17 than it typically would be.

18 Q And did you, before leaving the White House, did you help with preparations for the
19 post-Presidency transition?

20 A I don't think so. I asked for details about what we could tell the press about it, but I
21 don't remember assisting or anything like that.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

23 Q Besides speaking with somebody about how you were fielding questions and doing your
24 job, I understand that your job is speaking with people in the White House and figuring out how
25 you're going to address communications issues. Throughout your time in the White House, did you

1 ever ask anyone, senior staff, friends around the White House, whether they believed that the
2 President was able to fulfill his duties as President of the United States?

3 A The closest thing I did was tell them that there were stories that got into that area about
4 if there was someone who felt that -- if someone had concerns or if there was a story coming about
5 would he run for reelection, I would convey that, but it was not a question that I personally put to
6 anyone.

7 Q But there were a good amount of stories on this topic. Is that fair to say?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you never just asked somebody whether they believed whether -- if the President
10 was able to do the job?

11 A I already knew their answers because, as you mentioned, this came up from the press a
12 lot, and I had spoken with them about contentions made by others, and I had been given material
13 that I thought was relevant.

14 Q How about outside the White House? Did you ever talk with anybody and ask them
15 whether they believed the President was able to do his job or if he was too old for the Presidency?

16 A I may have asked people to get a sense of -- you know how it's always wise to talk to the
17 people in your life who are not very political because this can get insular. I may have asked people
18 who I use as a helpful gauge for that kind of thing what their views were but to gain more of an
19 understanding of the political landscape.

20 Q And -- but your interactions with President Biden never led you to believe that he was
21 not able to fulfill the duties of the Presidency?

22 A No.

23 Q And how many times did you interact with President Biden face to face? Just like,
24 were you interacting with him on a weekly basis?

25 A I would not say weekly, but I did have a lot of interactions with him, especially when we

1 were traveling on Air Force One, when we were going to the Hill, or you would see him around the
2 White House complex. So it was not as often as weekly, but I felt that I had a good amount of time
3 witnessing him.

4 Q At least once a month, though, you would see him, or you would speak with him face to
5 face?

6 A I would see him in person probably a little more than that.

7 Q And what's the longest conversation you ever had with him?

8 A The longest conversation that I saw him have would have been over an hour. It was
9 when we were -- we came to the Hill for different Democratic Caucus meetings. I came to those for
10 the House side and the Senate side.

11 Q And I'm sorry. I don't mean to cut you off, but my question was not the longest
12 conversation you saw him have, but what was the longest conversation you had with President
13 Biden?

14 A Well, I think that's relevant because you observe a person and their abilities whether
15 you are talking to them or whether you're seeing them close up talking to other people.

16 The longest conversation of which I was a part would have probably been about 30 to
17 45 minutes.

18 Q And what was that discussion about?

19 A I was part of a meeting with him in the Oval before he announced that Ketanji Brown
20 Jackson was his choice for the Supreme Court, and we were talking about the speech that he was
21 going to give, talking about her background, and we were talking about some of the public reactions
22 to the news that she was likely to be named.

23 He is someone who is often interested in, if something has recently broken, that it might be
24 helpful to be able to emphasize. So we talked about those things.

25 Q And did you ever participate in conversations where there would actually -- you would

1 be giving him stage directions on where to walk out and where to walk in, I suppose, and where to
2 the stop?

3 A No. Any place in government or politics that I have worked, that would be the role of
4 the advance and the scheduling team, but it was not my role as a press staffer.

5 Q And I'm about to wrap up. And, when you were having that conversation about Justice
6 Jackson, did you ever have -- was President Biden using note cards at any time?

7 A I don't believe so. He had the text of his speech because we were talking about the
8 speech and things that should be added or removed, and I remember I told him -- I'm blanking on
9 this man's name, but the mayor of Miami at that time was a Republican, and Justice Jackson's family
10 has roots in that area. And he had said something positive about her family has a history of service
11 here. I think her uncle was a police officer in Miami. And I flagged it for him, and he had reacted
12 positively, and he shouted that out in a speech. He said something like "I just heard the Republican
13 mayor of Miami endorsed her."

14 Mr. Greenberg. We'll stop right there.

15 [Recess.]

16 BY MR. [REDACTED]

17 Q Mr. Bates, the statement you read to us at the beginning of our minority's first hour,
18 you said that President Biden was in charge during his Presidency. Has anything we discussed so far
19 throughout this day changed your testimony or your view that President Biden was in charge during
20 his Presidency?

21 A No.

22 Q Do you remember, earlier today, you spent -- would it be fair to say you spent a fair
23 amount of time discussing Hunter Biden's laptop with the majority?

24 A I remember that.

25 Q Can you think of a more effective way for the Republicans to discredit their own

1 investigation of President Biden's age than by trying to tie it to Hunter Biden's laptop?

2 Mr. Jonas. Go ahead. If you have an answer for that.

3 Mr. Bates. I feel that there are enormous double standards between criticizing Hunter
4 Biden and Joe Biden in the way that it was done with regard to the laptop and at the same time not
5 investigating the current President's selling special access to whoever buys the most of his meme
6 coin or many other things that are happening right now where the most powerful person in the
7 world is directly profiting off the American people.

8 BY MR. [REDACTED]

9 Q Hunter Biden's laptop was tied to the majority's failed impeachment investigation last
10 Congress. I will represent to you that, during that 15-month investigation, the Oversight Committee
11 Republicans heard more than 80 hours of testimony from I believe 20 witnesses and reviewed more
12 than 100,000 pages of documents.

13 Mr. Bates, do you know if the House of Representatives voted to impeach President Joe Biden
14 during the 118th Congress?

15 A I actually don't remember.

16 Q They did not.

17 And your counsel may not want you to answer this, but would you consider Chairman
18 Comer's impeachment investigation a success?

19 A No.

20 Mr. [REDACTED] I'm going to enter into -- mark as exhibit A a Washington Examiner article
21 titled "Republicans Exhausted with Comer's Complete Failure to Deliver on Promise to Impeach
22 Biden: Report."

23 [Bates Minority Exhibit A

24 was marked for identification.]

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q Mr. Bates, if you are willing to take a look at that first paragraph at the end of the first
2 page below that recommended story section -- I'm sorry, the last paragraph. And then, on the first
3 page, it continues with two words into the next page. Just for ease of the record, would you mind
4 reading that paragraph?

5 A "James Comer continues to embarrass himself and House Republicans, a source close to
6 GOP leadership told the Messenger. He screws up over and over and over. I don't know how
7 Republicans actually impeach the President based on his clueless investigation and lack of
8 leadership."

9 Mr. Jonas. Go ahead.

10 BY MR. [REDACTED]

11 Q Joe Biden is no longer President, correct?

12 A Correct.

13 Q And yet James Comer has launched yet another investigation into President Biden and
14 somehow trying to tie it to Hunter Biden's laptop.

15 Now, there have been allegations of some kind of cover-up regarding President Biden's age or
16 something else, but when you were talking with the majority, you talked -- you said, and correct me
17 if I'm wrong, that your position was that, after the President's debate with now President Trump, you
18 wanted him to be more public facing. Is that right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q So were you playing some sort of four-dimensional chess here? Were you trying to
21 hide President Biden from the public by wanting him to engage with the public more?

22 A I have always felt that, the more he engages with the public, the better he does because
23 he's a very extroverted person. He's known for standing on rope lines for a very long period of
24 time. He likes to deal with people, and I think that people like what they see of him personally as
25 empathetic, as an empathetic leader.

1 Q I also would like to just go back. I think it was much earlier in the day that my majority
2 colleagues mentioned a book by Mr. Whipple.

3 Mr. [REDACTED] I'd like to enter into the record we'll call it minority exhibit B.

4 [Bates Minority Exhibit B

5 was marked for identification.]

6 BY MR. [REDACTED]

7 Q It's an article about a FOX News interview -- are you familiar with this -- with
8 Mr. Whipple, and I will read you the quote of the interview.

9 He stated that there is no evidence that Biden was unable to fulfill the duties of Commander
10 in Chief. He then went on to say, "the notion that this was somehow, you know, Biden's last year
11 was "Weekend at Bernie's" and there was a cabal running the country with an autopen is just silly.
12 The notion that they're going to be able to prove that there was this dastardly cover-up on the part
13 of Biden's inner circle is just crazy to me. I think the answer is that this thing goes nowhere."

14 Is anything surprising to you about that statement coming from Mr. Whipple?

15 A No. That is -- what you read is consistent with my experience that the staff were very
16 aware of who was in charge and whose approval they needed for any significant decision, and that
17 was President Biden.

18 And I had a lot of conversations with people whose areas reached far outside my own,
19 including Brett McGurk, who was our lead National Security Council staffer for the Middle East during
20 an extremely active time for that part of the world, and he was emphatic about his respect for the
21 President's abilities, having seen him in the Situation Room when we were defending Israel from
22 Iranian missile attacks and other situations that were high stakes.

23 Q We've also spent a lot of today talking about what to me sounded a lot like the normal
24 contours of your job or someone who has a job like yours. Would that be a fair characterization?

25 A Yes.

1 Q You use things like "as is standard" or "this is standard practice," "this is normal at
2 times." Would you say that we've spent a lot of time just hearing in a little detail about normal
3 work from someone in your position throughout your time in the White House?

4 A Yes. It reminded me of a time when a colleague of mine from the Obama-Biden years
5 had brought some of his colleagues to the White House to talk with us about what it was like now.
6 And, as we were comparing the way the Biden press office functioned compared to the Obama press
7 office, which he had been a member of, we were struck by, in some ways, the media landscape has
8 changed a lot, but many of the practices were very similar.

9 Q Sometimes you've been asked if that's something that's very normal in a way that
10 makes it sound unusual. You know, I could ask -- figure out the spelling of your first name by
11 focusing on how many A's are in Andrew, how many N's, where you capitalize it or where you haven't
12 capitalized it. Really just talking about the grits (ph).

13 The majority has asked you about transcripts, recordings being shared by the people. Is
14 there anything nefarious about that? Is that standard?

15 A In my experience, it is standard for the staff of a principal to try to make a record of
16 their exchanges with the media, and especially if they have a sense that a reporter is doing
17 something inappropriate or they are being leading in the way they are presenting the situation. It is
18 normal, and I would think that it's a practice that people in both parties use quite often.

19 Mr. [REDACTED] No more questions. We'll go off the record.

20 [Recess.]

21 Mr. Grant. We'll go on the record.

22 BY MR. GRANT:

23 Q Mr. Bates, were you involved in any meetings regarding the pardon of President Biden's
24 son Hunter Biden?

25 A I was informed about that shortly before it was announced.

1 Q Prior to it being announced, did you have any discussions about whether or not Hunter
2 Biden would be pardoned by President Biden?

3 A I remember that I was told that, at some point in the months preceding this, that it was
4 possible.

5 Q Were you in favor of Hunter Biden getting a pardon?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And why were you in favor of that?

8 A There were several reasons. Part of it was Hunter Biden had gone through a painful
9 period involving addiction, and a number of the events that were a focus of the investigation took
10 place while he was in the throes of that.

11 I also am aware, based on public commentary by legal experts, that the crimes for which he
12 was charged are very rarely charged to anyone.

13 Q And, given the rhetoric that President Biden previously said he wasn't going to pardon
14 his son Hunter and then the pardon came, were you shocked by that decision at all?

15 A I was not shocked because I'm not a parent myself, but I do think that almost any parent
16 would identify with that.

17 Q Were you involved in any of the meetings or discussions about the broad commutations
18 by President Biden?

19 A Some.

20 Q And what was discussed in some of those meetings that you were part of?

21 A The media was interested in what actions we would take in that area during the
22 transition, and we would get asked quite a lot about when would the next tranche of clemency
23 actions or pardons be announced. So we would be in touch with the attorneys and the Counsel's
24 Office and other staff whose work related to those to see when might there be another
25 development, that kind of thing.

1 Q Did you have any discussions or meetings with President Biden about these
2 commutations?

3 A No.

4 Q Were you aware of anyone in the press office having meetings about these
5 commutations?

6 A I'm not aware of individuals in the press office being in them.

7 Q Then were you a part of any meetings or discussions for the last-minute pardons of
8 Dr. Fauci? I'll stop with that one, with Dr. Fauci.

9 A I remember that the idea of those sorts of preemptive pardons for people who had
10 been criticized by the then incoming President that had been covered in the news media, and the
11 reporters were interested in if such a thing would happen. And I remember -- I remember asking
12 about it, and I remember thinking that it made sense because of comments that the current
13 President made during the campaign.

14 Q Who did you ask about it?

15 A Ben LaBolt, Karine. I also would have sent -- our normal procedure -- and this would
16 have been the case with whoever I worked with -- you send emails about inquiries you're getting so
17 that the different people who have equities can speak with you about it.

18 So there were other people on those chains, probably Counsel's Office, staff, but I don't
19 remember who in total would have been on there.

20 Q And a similar question. Did you meet or speak with President Biden about these
21 last-minute pardons of Dr. Fauci and the other similar ones that went with those?

22 A No. I learned that those were happening when they were announced.

23 Q And then, switching gears a little bit. In your time working in the White House, did you
24 ever provide President Biden with note cards for public events?

25 A No.

1 Q Did you ever provide President Biden with any note cards or scripts for television
2 interviews?

3 A I don't believe so. The only thing I want to make sure I'm offering here is, every place
4 that I have worked, you do a memo ahead of an interview where you include a bio of the journalist,
5 and you mention subjects that are likely to come up, some of their previous reporting. So that was
6 something that we did, which was at every political workplace I've been in.

7 Q But no scripts of questions and answers?

8 A I don't remember that happening.

9 Q Did you have any role in preparing remarks that would be entered into a teleprompter?

10 A I was not involved with teleprompters. There were some moments where I made
11 suggestions about things that could be put in speeches; like, if there had been an economic study
12 that reflected well on one of our proposals or if I thought there was a criticism of another proposal, I
13 would sometimes flag that for people working on speeches.

14 Q Did you attend any Cabinet meetings during your time in the White House?

15 A No.

16 BY MS. HARKER:

17 Q It's been reported that, when mainstream media like The Wall Street Journal reported
18 about President Biden's mental decline in public office, for example, The Wall Street Journal's June
19 4th, 2024, article "Behind Closed Doors, Biden Shows Signs of Slipping," White House staff covered
20 up the truth.

21 It's been reported that your colleagues believed that Biden's inner circle took advantage of
22 your loyalty and told you to deny things they knew were true. You, along with most of the press
23 team, rarely met with the President and didn't have firsthand knowledge of the President's
24 wherewithal. The press team relied on senior staff for answers.

25 Do you believe that Biden's inner circle took advantage of your loyalty to the President?

1 A No.

2 Q Were you involved in preparations for the 2024 State of the Union?

3 A No.

4 Q Do you have any knowledge about the medical care that President Biden received in the
5 weeks and days before the State of the Union in 2024?

6 A No.

7 Q Do you know, within the weeks or days before the 2024 State of the Union, White
8 House staff discussed the need to medically treat the President so that he would be able to deliver
9 his address to the Nation?

10 A I have never heard anything of the kind.

11 Q How often did you interact with President Biden's physician, Dr. O'Connor?

12 A It was usually when there was a press development that would fall into his area.
13 Mostly ahead of the releases of the summaries of his physical, we would talk with him as we
14 prepared briefing guidance because we wanted to make sure that it was accurate, and we wanted his
15 expertise.

16 And there were other moments. When the President had COVID, we were in touch so that
17 we could update the press on how he was doing.

18 Q How often did you interact with Dr. O'Connor during your time in the White House?

19 A I wouldn't know how to ballpark it, but it was intermittent based on if something was
20 happening in the press that would make me feel a need to get his point of view.

21 Q Were you ever present for any medical consultations or treatments performed by
22 Dr. O'Connor?

23 A No.

24 Q Did you discuss President Biden's treatment or health with Dr. O'Connor, setting aside
25 relevant information for what you're communicating to the press?

1 A No.

2 Q Do you have any knowledge about amphetamines that President Biden was given during
3 his term in office?

4 A I have never heard of that happening.

5 Q Have you ever seen President Biden receive an IV infusion of anything?

6 A No.

7 Q Do you have any knowledge of President Biden's political advisors weighing in on
8 whether Dr. O'Connor should conduct a cognitive exam of the President?

9 A No.

10 Q It's been reported that you stated, "We do not provide the dates on which the President
11 is seen by the range of specialists who participate in his physical nor their names" and that there
12 have been no neurological visits besides the one for his physical. Do you recall making that
13 statement?

14 A I don't recall the specific wording. I remember the setting.

15 Q Do you recall President Biden seeing a neurologist additional times in 2023 and 2024?

16 A No.

17 Q It's been reported that neurologist Dr. Kevin Cannard visited the executive mansion
18 eight times in 8 months between 2023 and 2024. Are you aware of those visits?

19 A I am aware of some reporting about his visits. I'm also aware that he has had a
20 longstanding relationship with the White House medical unit spanning multiple administrations.
21 But I am only aware of him having seen President Biden with regard to the physicals, and we
22 disclosed every time that he received a thorough neurological workup.

23 Q Ms. Jean-Pierre was asked about Dr. Cannard's visits, and she cited security reasons
24 when declining to provide context about these visits. She didn't say what those security concerns
25 were. Do you know what they were?

1 A In any administration there is going to be a consideration over what kind of material
2 should be made public from a security standpoint, and which specialists are treating the President is
3 something that foreign actors, others who should not know would like to know.

4 Q Do you know specifically what the security reasons were behind not wanting to speak
5 publicly about the neurologist visiting President Biden?

6 A Really just what I mentioned.

7 Q What you mentioned applied specifically to Dr. Cannard's visits?

8 A It applied to any specialist who had been seeing the President was my understanding.

9 Q And where does that practice come from? Is it written down anywhere?

10 A I don't know.

11 Q Who told you that that was the practice?

12 A I don't remember, but I remember being told that around this time.

13 Q Thank you.

14 BY MR. GREENBERG:

15 Q Sorry to go back to I think our last hour. You told us that you've previously yelled at
16 and sworn at journalists before. Have you ever threatened a journalist or an editor physically?

17 A Never.

18 Q Have you ever threatened a journalist or editor regarding their career prospects?

19 A No.

20 Q Have you ever threatened a journalist or editor with discipline that they would receive
21 from their own publication?

22 A The only thing that could occur to me is, sometimes, when you are having a debate with
23 a reporter, which is a big part of every spokesperson's job, whatever the party or Hill, administration,
24 you can sometimes say "I think that something you are considering claiming is at odds with the facts.
25 Here is why. Here is public information, or you have heard from somebody who was on hand for

1 the events under discussion, and that if you made that claim, it was demonstrably untrue, it would
2 not look good or it would not be appreciated."

3 I have had things of that nature said to me by journalists, right. Like, "If you say X, like, I
4 don't think your bosses will be super happy," right. But it was not -- it's not my style to threaten
5 people like that.

6 Q Have you ever threatened a journalist or an editor with future access to admin officials?

7 Mr. Jonas. Like the AP maybe?

8 Mr. Greenberg. I'm sorry?

9 Mr. Jonas. Like the AP maybe. Sorry.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Would you like an interview, counsel?

11 Mr. Jonas. No, you can talk to your colleagues about the AP and the press pool.

12 But go ahead?

13 Mr. Bates. I do think that is a fair point when the current President is suing The Wall Street
14 Journal.

15 Mr. Greenberg. I'm asking you about you, sir.

16 Mr. Bates. No, I know. I know. But I think that, if the current President is suing The Wall
17 Street Journal for outing his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein --

18 Mr. Greenberg. Once again, sir, I would ask you to --

19 Mr. Jonas. You may not like his answer but let him finish.

20 Mr. Greenberg. I would ask that he answer my question.

21 Mr. Jonas. Finish your answer.

22 Mr. Bates. The current President is suing The Wall Street Journal because they detailed that
23 he wrote a disgusting letter to Jeffrey Epstein that said "may every day be another beautiful secret."
24 And I do not think that anything I have ever done in my life could come remotely close to how
25 unethical that is.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q Okay. Now I would like you to answer my original question, which was, have you ever
3 threatened a journalist or editor with future access or pulling back future access to admin officials?

4 A The only thing that occurs to me is, if someone had demonstrated a pattern of hiding
5 relevant facts or of being over the top in their negativity to the degree that we did not trust them to
6 be fair about their representation of people, we could then consider being less liberal in the way that
7 we granted interviews.

8 But that would have to be based on a very significant set of events, and I would not consider
9 that to be a threat. I would consider that to be a reasonable caution about, "Hey, you left out a
10 really important thing that our top person for whatever issue said, and that fundamentally changed
11 the meaning. So how could we trust that if we do this kind of thing again, there won't be that kind
12 of distortion." And I think that's fair.

13 Q Did you ever take that action toward anyone at The New York Times?

14 A We had no shortage of disagreements with The New York Times. I'm not remembering
15 a specific moment with someone there.

16 Q Did you ever take that action with anybody at The Wall Street Journal?

17 A We disagreed strongly, as I noted, with the way the story I believe in May of last year
18 was done.

19 Mr. Jonas. June.

20 Mr. Bates. Or June of last year was done. However, in dealing with those same reporters,
21 we connected them with senior administration officials even though we had strong feelings.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

23 Q Did you ever advise anybody in the administration not to speak with those reporters?

24 A I remember encouraging colleagues in the administration to speak with them.

25 Q Did you ever encourage -- did you ever tell anybody in the administration not to speak

1 with them?

2 A Not that I remember.

3 Q Did you ever -- I won't use threaten.

4 Did you ever take action to limit a journalist's ability to access administration officials and that
5 journalist was from The Washington Post?

6 A There were plenty of moments where we disagreed with Washington Post, and I think
7 that could be said of any modern administration, but I don't remember doing anything of that kind.

8 Q How about Politico?

9 A Same answer.

10 Q AP?

11 A Same answer.

12 Q Reuters?

13 A The same.

14 Q Do you remember specifically -- any specific instance where you communicated to
15 anybody in the administration not to speak with a reporter?

16 A There were definitely some times where I did that, and that has happened in every
17 modern administration.

18 Q Did you ever direct or advise anybody in the administration not to speak to a reporter
19 about President Biden's health, age, or ability to do the job?

20 A I was I think quite an evangelist for individuals who worked with him most closely
21 sharing their perspectives on him. As we've been talking about, we would work to provide people
22 who could speak very credibly about what it's like to work with him most closely. So I want that to
23 be clear, that I was working to ensure more interviews like that happened.

24 The only situation that I can see where I would do that was if we thought someone had
25 demonstrated such bad faith that they could not be trusted to accurately report on the thrust of

1 what was told.

2 Q Did that ever happen?

3 A I don't remember a particular instance, but on almost any major issue, there are going
4 to be times where a reporter who has shown themselves to be less than fair reaches out to one of
5 our colleagues, and they will often tell the press office, some of them. But that would happen on a
6 variety of issues. I want to be clear about that. But I am not remembering a specific moment.

7 Q Okay.

8 And, just to return to I think two questions ago, did you ever advise anyone in the
9 administration, the White House or the administration at large to not speak to the press about
10 President Biden's age, health, mental ability, or ability to do the job?

11 A I'm not remembering a specific moment where that happened. On the whole, I was
12 pushing for more interviews with the press about what it was like to really deal with him.

13 Q You brought up Jeffrey Epstein of all things. I'm wondering, did you ever have any
14 discussions with President Biden about releasing Jeffrey Epstein documents?

15 A No, because he did not have a relationship with Jeffrey Epstein in the way the current
16 President did.

17 Q But President Biden could have released -- just to be clear, the Jeffrey Epstein story has
18 been alive for, well, decades. Was there ever a conversation in the White House to release
19 documents regarding Jeffrey Epstein or Ghislaine Maxwell?

20 A I don't know but he did not --

21 Mr. Jonas. You just answered you don't know.

22 Mr. Bates. I don't know.

23 BY MR. GRANT:

24 Q Just to return to something we touched back a while ago. You worked on the
25 confirmation of Justice Brown Jackson. Is that correct?

1 A Yes.

2 Q What was your role in her confirmation process?

3 A I was the press office staffer who took point on judicial confirmations, and so, when the
4 vacancy came into existence, the White House built a confirmations team, and I was the main press
5 office person who was assigned to it under Ben LaBolt, who would later be the communications
6 director.

7 Q And, outside of Mr. LaBolt, was there a particular senior advisor that was in charge of
8 this confirmation in particular?

9 A Senator Doug Jones was brought in to be a senior advisor for it, and we worked closely
10 with the White House Counsel's Office and the Office of Congressional Affairs. And Minyon Moore
11 was also brought in as an advisor.

12 Q Was Bruce Reed a part of this confirmation process?

13 A I don't remember dealing with him personally, but I don't know.

14 Q Mike Donilon?

15 A Same answer as Bruce. I don't remember dealing with him personally, but I don't
16 know.

17 Q Steve Ricchetti?

18 A I feel like Steve was involved because so much of Steve's work had to do with the
19 Senate.

20 Q Annie Tomasini?

21 A I don't remember her being involved directly.

22 Q Outside of the -- you mentioned the meeting with President Biden going over a speech
23 you wrote about Justice Jackson. Outside of that, how often did you meet with President Biden
24 about her confirmation and the confirmation process?

25 A That was the only time that I was in a formal meeting with him about it because that

1 was the announcement. It was a unique day. And then the remainder of the work was of a
2 different character where I was often on the Hill moving from office to office with Judge Jackson,
3 Senator Jones, and some of my colleagues from the Counsel's Office and Office of Legislative Affairs.

4 Q There was a press conference. I believe this was in July, pre President Biden dropping
5 out of the race, to which you posted on X: "To answer the question on everyone's minds, no, Joe
6 Biden does not have a doctorate in foreign affairs. He's just that fucking good."

7 This happened approximately 10 or 15 minutes before the end of the press conference, and
8 right after the press conference, Congressman Himes posted that he would hope President Biden
9 would step down, and people have since called your post tone deaf. Do you recall making this post
10 on X?

11 A I do.

12 Q And why did you make this post?

13 A Because, during that press conference, which I believe was just short of an hour, the
14 President continually demonstrated a very sophisticated understanding of geopolitics, including in an
15 extended back and forth with David Sanger. And my point was that you cannot do that unless you
16 have a lot happening upstairs.

17 Q Did anyone direct you to make that post?

18 A No.

19 Q Did anyone review that post?

20 A No.

21 Q Did anyone have to approve or review your post?

22 A No.

23 Mr. Grant. We'll go off the record.

24 [Recess.]

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q Mr. Bates, before I begin, I would just like to make sure you have in front of you -- we'll
2 give you a copy of Chairman Comer's letter to you inviting you to come and talk to the committee,
3 and also Article II of the Constitution, which you needn't review, but you may want to have it handy.

4 In Chairman Comer's letter to you, the letter makes an innuendo about maybe you or other
5 senior aides at the White House exercising the powers of the executive branch without President
6 Biden's knowledge and consent, performing the chief executive's duties. These are not defined
7 anywhere in your letter or maybe anywhere else. So it may be useful for us to try to get to ground
8 what that could possibly mean.

9 So I'm going to ask you a few questions that are in many ways just paraphrasing sections of
10 Article II. Your counsel can always interject if they think I'm misrepresenting what the Constitution
11 says.

12 In your view, did President Biden faithfully execute the office of the President of the United
13 States?

14 A Yes.

15 Q In your view, did he, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the
16 Constitution of the United States?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Did you ever personally act as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces?

19 A No.

20 Q Did you ever personally grant reprieves and pardons?

21 A No.

22 Q Did you personally make any national treaties?

23 A No.

24 Q Did you personally nominate and appoint any ambassadors, Cabinet Secretaries, judges,
25 or other Senate officials?

1 A No.

2 Q You didn't disguise yourself as President Biden and deliver his State of the Union
3 addresses, did you?

4 A No.

5 Q Did you ever receive any foreign ambassadors or recognize any foreign countries?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you ever adjourn any House of Congress?

8 A No.

9 Q So did you ever perform any duties exclusively reserved for the President of the United
10 States?

11 A Absolutely not.

12 Mr. [REDACTED] We'll go off the record.

13 [Whereupon, at 3:04 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date