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5 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,

6 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

7 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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12 INTERVIEW OF: ANITA DUNN

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16 Thursday, August 7, 2025

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18 Washington, D.C.

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21 The interview in the above matter was held in room 2335, Rayburn House Office

22 Building, commencing at 10:03 a.m.

1 Appearances:

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5 For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM:

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1 For ANITA DUNN:

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1 Mr. Spectre. This is a transcribed interview of Anita Dunn conducted by the
2 House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform under the authority granted to it
3 pursuant to House Rule X.

4 Accordingly, House Rule X grants the Committee broad jurisdiction to conduct
5 investigations of any matter at any time.

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

10 Can the witness please state her name and spell her last name for the record.

11 Ms. Dunn. My name is Anita Dunn, D-u-n-n.

12 Mr. Spectre. On behalf of the Committee, I want to thank Ms. Dunn for
13 appearing here today.

14 The Committee appreciates your appearance for the interview.

15 My name is Peter Spectre, and I'm a professional staff member for Chairman
16 Comer.

17 Under the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's rules, you're
18 allowed to have an attorney present to advise you during this interview. Do you have an
19 attorney representing you in a personal capacity with you today.

20 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

21 Mr. Spectre. Will counsel please identify themselves for the record.

22 Ms. Grooms. Yes. My name is Susanne Grooms. I'm at Cooley.

23 Mr. Goldstein. I'm Andrew Goldstein, also at Cooley.

24 Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer at Cooley.

25 Mr. Sissoko. Noah Sissoko at Cooley.

1 Mr. Spectre. For the record, starting with the majority staff, can the additional
2 staff members please introduce themselves with their name, title, and affiliation.

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

4 Mr. Benzine. Mitch Benzine, general counsel with the majority.

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

6 Mr. Grant. Billy Grant, counsel for the majority.

7 Mr. Greenberg. Jake Greenberg, counsel for the majority.

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

9 Ms. [REDACTED], legal intern with the minority.

10 Ms. [REDACTED], senior counsel for the minority.

11 Mr. [REDACTED], senior counsel for the minority.

12 Ms. [REDACTED], chief counsel for the minority.

13 Mr. [REDACTED], counsel for the minority.

14 Mr. Spectre. Thank you all.

15 Ms. Dunn, before we begin, I'd like to go over the ground rules for this interview.

16 The questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions for an
17 hour, then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an hour if they
18 choose.

19 To the extent members have questions for the witnesses, they will be propounded
20 during their side's respective round.

21 Do you understand.

22 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

23 Mr. Spectre. The clock will stop if the witness needs to confer with counsel,
24 when counsel for the witness is speaking, and when members are speaking during the
25 opposite side's round of questions.

1 We will alternate back and forth until there are no more questions.

2 Do you understand.

3 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

4 Mr. Spectre. There is a court reporter taking down everything I say and
5 everything you say to make a written record of the interview.

6 For the record to be clear, please wait until the staffer questioning you finishes
7 each question before you begin your answer, and the staffer will wait until you finish your
8 response before proceeding to the next question.

9 Further, to ensure the court reporter can properly record this interview, please
10 speak clearly, concisely, and slowly.

11 Also, the court reporter cannot record nonverbal answers, such as nodding or
12 shaking your head, so it is important that you answer each question with an audible
13 verbal answer.

14 Do you understand.

15 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

16 Mr. Spectre. Exhibits may be entered into the record. Majority exhibits will be
17 identified numerically. Minority exhibits will be identified alphabetically.

18 Do you understand.

19 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

20 Mr. Spectre. We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and
21 truthful manner possible, so we will take our time.

22 If you have any questions or do not fully understand the question, please let us
23 know. We will attempt to clarify, add context to, or rephrase our questions.

24 Do you understand.

25 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

1 Mr. Spectre. If we ask about specific conversations or events in the past and you
2 are unable to recall the exact words or details, you should testify to the substance of
3 those conversations or events to the best of your recollection.

4 If you recall only a part of a conversation or event, you should give us your best
5 recollection of those events or parts of conversations that you do recall.

6 Do you understand.

7 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

8 Mr. Spectre. You are required by law to answer questions from Congress
9 truthfully. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in this interview.

10 Do you understand.

11 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

12 Mr. Spectre. If at any time you knowingly make false statements, you could be
13 subject to criminal prosecution.

14 Do you understand.

15 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

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

18 Do you understand.

19 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

20 Mr. Spectre. Furthermore, you cannot tell half-truths or exclude information
21 necessary to make your statements accurate. You are required to provide all
22 information that would make your response truthful. A deliberate failure to disclose
23 information can constitute a false statement.

24 Do you understand.

25 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

1 Mr. Spectre. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful testimony in
2 today's interview.

3 Ms. Dunn. No, there isn't.

4 Mr. Spectre. Please note that if you wish to assert a privilege over any statement
5 today, that assertion must comply with the rules of the Committee on Oversight and
6 Government Reform.

Pursuant to that, Committee Rule 16(c)(1) states: "For the Chair to consider assertions of privilege over testimony or statements, witnesses or entities must clearly state the specific privilege being asserted and the reason for the assertion on or before the scheduled date of testimony or appearance."

11 Do you understand.

12 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

13 [Dunn Majority Exhibit No. 1
14 was marked for identification.]

15 Mr. Spectre. I will enter exhibit 1, a letter transmitted to your counsel dated
16 June 24th, 2025, from Mr. Gary Lawkowski, deputy counsel to the President.

17 This letter informs you that President Trump has determined not to assert
18 executive privilege over your assessment of former President Biden's fitness for the office
19 of the President and your knowledge of who exercised executive powers during his
20 administration.

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

23 Ordinarily, we take a 5-minute break at the end of each hour of questioning, but if
24 you need a longer break or a break before that, please let us know and we'll be happy to
25 accommodate.

1 Ms. Dunn. Thank you.

2 Mr. Spectre. However, to the extent that there is a pending question, we would
3 ask that you finish answering the question before we take the break.

4 Do you understand.

5 Ms. Dunn. Yes, I do.

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

8 Mr. Spectre. I understand you have a written statement that we would like to
9 enter into the record as exhibit 2, if you have that.

10 Ms. Grooms. Sure.

11 So Ms. Dunn is here voluntarily testifying before the Committee. She's happy to
12 share information about the topic of the Committee's interests, which we understand to
13 be trying to understand who made key decisions and exercised the powers of the
14 executive branch during the previous administration, and understanding her observations
15 of former President Biden's mental acuity and health as one of his closest advisers.

16 She's prepared a statement that explains and answers many of those questions.
17 We'll enter that for the record.

18 Mr. Spectre. Thank you.

19 Ms. Grooms. And she's happy to read it to you if you'd like her to.

20 Mr. Spectre. Not now. Thank you.

21 My clock reads 10:10, and the majority's time will begin now.

22 EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. BENZINE:

24 Q Ms. Dunn, thank you for being here.

25 Did you provide this opening statement to anyone other than the Committee

1 today.

2 A Yes.

3 Q Who?

4 A We released it to reporters who have been following these hearings.

5 Q Thank you.

6 A Yes.

7 Mr. Spectre. Ms. Dunn, do you believe President Biden was in mental or
8 cognitive decline while he was President of the United States.

9 Ms. Dunn. I do not believe that.

10 Mr. Spectre. Do you believe he's still fit to serve today.

11 Ms. Dunn. I believe --

12 Ms. Grooms. To serve today.

13 Ms. Dunn. To serve today? It's August 2025.

14 BY MR. SPECTRE:

15 Q Right. President Biden ran for reelection. If he had won, he would be
16 President today. Do you think that he has the cognitive ability to be President today?

17 A I can't speculate on that, since the Committee has asked me not to
18 speculate.

19 I can say that while I served as a senior adviser to President Biden in the White
20 House and dealt with him on a very regular basis, that he had the cognitive ability to do
21 the job as President.

22 Q We'll get a little bit more into your experience after this.

23 But you first worked for President Biden during -- directly for President Biden
24 during his 2020 Presidential campaign? Is that correct.

25 A That's correct.

1 Q You also worked during the Obama administration as interim
2 communications director while Joe Biden was Vice President and on the 2008, 2012
3 campaigns? Is that correct?

4 A That is correct.

5 Q Of course, President Biden has literally gotten older, but have you noticed
6 signs of his aging since you first met him?

7 A I first met President Biden when he was a U.S. Senator and I was a Senate
8 staffer, and that was during the '80s. So, yes, I have seen him age over those years.

9 Q And what are the signs of aging that you've seen in President Biden?

10 A As is the case with many Presidents -- with all Presidents -- he aged in the
11 job. But I would say that, primarily while he was President, I thought his voice was
12 softer and that his childhood stutter reappeared.

13 Q You thought that his childhood stutter got worse?

14 A I had -- yes. I had not even known he had a stutter until I started working
15 on his Presidential campaign. But in the course of his Presidency, I think the stutter did
16 become more pronounced at times.

17 Q So did President Biden, or in his various roles, did he have strategies to limit
18 the appearance of his stutter when he spoke?

19 A He has written himself and talked about the strategies he used when he was
20 a child to overcome his stutter.

21 I am not aware of any strategies he used as President. I'm just not aware of
22 them.

23 Q Why do you think his stutter came back, for lack of a better word?

24 A Again, I can't speculate. I can only say what I observed.

25 Q You don't think that had anything to do with him being much older or being

1 in cognitive decline?

2 A I don't think a stutter is generally seen as a symptom of cognitive decline,
3 although I'm not a doctor. But I would say that I did think that his voice getting softer
4 and the stutter returning were perhaps signs of his aging in office.

5 Q During his Presidency did you receive outreach from people outside of the
6 White House who were concerned about President Biden's cognitive decline?

7 A I don't remember conversations of those -- of that kind.

8 Q So you don't remember any conversations with somebody from outside of
9 the White House talking to you with concerns that President Biden was in cognitive
10 decline?

11 A I don't remember any conversations of that kind.

12 Q During his Presidency, did you ever hear concerns about President Biden's
13 cognitive decline from inside of the White House, from White House staff?

14 A No, I do not remember hearing any conversations about cognitive decline
15 within the White House staff.

16 Q So just to be clear, nobody -- do you think that these conversations were
17 happening and you just weren't part of them, or do you think that no one inside of the
18 White House was concerned that President Biden was not sharp enough mentally to
19 be -- to continue to run for President for a second term or to serve as President?

20 A Well, again, I can't speculate as to what people were talking about. I can
21 only speak to what I observed, which was a President who was engaged with the issues, a
22 President who was making the decisions that a President needs to make, and who had
23 the decisions brought to him for him to make by his senior advisers.

24 Q Do you think if people had those concerns about President Biden's cognitive
25 state that they would have been afraid to bring them to you or other members of the

1 senior staff?

2 A Well, again, I can't speculate. I think I was viewed as a fairly accessible
3 senior staff member.

4 Q If somebody had brought a concern like that, how do you think you would
5 have reacted?

6 A Because no one brought that kind of concern to me, that's a very hard
7 question for me to answer.

8 BY MR. BENZINE:

9 Q Cognitive decline is a bit of a term of art. Did anyone bring concerns to you
10 about the President's age or his performance in press conferences or anything like that?

11 A His performance as a candidate clearly, as he aged, was something that we
12 recognized. I think I've already said that his voice had grown softer, that he needed to
13 project more, particularly in large crowds, press conferences.

14 But -- and so we did have concerns -- I did have concerns -- just around his
15 performance as a candidate in those areas.

16 But I thought and continue to believe that the wisdom and experience that he had
17 as President, the records that he had achieved as President, the leadership he provided
18 the country, were critically important for the country moving ahead.

19 Q I've heard the "wisdom and experience" line before. I think the President
20 used it himself. Was that your concoction?

21 A No, it was not.

22 Q Okay.

23 A I wish it were. I'd have copyrighted it.

24 BY MR. SPECTRE:

25 Q President Biden obviously ran for reelection in the 2024 campaign. Do you

1 think voters were concerned that President Biden was mentally or cognitively unfit to
2 serve as President?

3 A What we saw in the public polling and what we saw in the private polling
4 was that age was a concern for voters, as it was in 2020.

5 But, again, he was -- he had served with distinction. He had a record to run on.
6 He had the wisdom and experience to do the job. And that's what he was taking to the
7 American people.

8 Q You know, I understand what you're saying about age. To me, I think age
9 and mental or mentally or cognitively unfit are two separate issues, right? People age
10 differently. And, of course, President Biden, he was the oldest President at that point.
11 Is that correct?

12 A Yes, that is correct.

13 Q So concerns about age and concerns about his mental or cognitive state are
14 related, but they can be looked at separately. Is that right?

15 A Oh, I think so. And there were voters who had concerns around his age
16 who did not have concerns around his ability to do the job.

17 Q So do you not think that voters were concerned about his ability to do the
18 job in terms of his cognitive abilities?

19 A No. You're asking me to mind read a lot of voters in this country.

20 I can tell you that in our data, we saw that his age was certainly an issue for voters
21 but that voters also saw him as someone who was doing the job as President.

22 Q Some polls after the debate found that 72 percent of voters did not believe
23 Biden has the mental or cognitive health to serve as President, as well as nearly half of his
24 own party.

25 Do you think that the voters were wrong to be concerned that President Biden

1 was mentally or cognitively unfit to be President.

2 A Coming out of the debate, there is no question that people had concerns
3 that had been brought to the forefront by his poor performance in the debate. We
4 were looking at a campaign where we felt we would have more opportunities to address
5 those concerns through a convention, through a second debate.

6 Q You say "concerns." Can you define the type of concerns?

7 A The concerns that you just raised in the public polling.

8 Q About his cognitive or mental abilities?

9 A About his ability to be President.

10 Q So just to be clear, do you think voters' concerns about cognitive decline by
11 President Biden were legitimate?

12 A I'm a big believer in listening to voters. So I think we heard those concerns
13 and thought about ways that the President could go address those concerns.

14 Q We can rewind a little bit here, and we'll get into your roles working directly
15 for President Biden a little bit more later, but I kind of want to talk about some of your
16 other roles.

17 I understand you've had a very long career, and I'll try not to harp on each position
18 too long here. But was your first role in government during the Carter administration?
19 Is that right.

20 A That's correct.

21 Q And you interned for the then-White House communications director. Is
22 that right?

23 A No. I interned for Hamilton Jordan, who was, when I began interning for
24 him, a senior adviser and then became White House chief of staff.

25 Q Okay.

1 And then did you have another role after being an intern in the Carter
2 administration.

3 A Well, I went to work for Jerry Rafshoon, who did the advertising for the 1980
4 Carter reelection campaign.

5 Q So you worked on the campaign after interning at the White House?

6 A That's correct.

7 Q And I know -- you mentioned in our last topic that you had worked in the
8 Senate as well. You said you were a Senate staffer. Was that a government position
9 for a Senator? Is that right?

10 A Yes. Uh-huh.

11 Q And, again, we'll get into it. But did you have any other government
12 positions besides your internship with the Carter administration and the role you're
13 discussing now in the Senate, between then and working for the Biden administration?

14 A Yes, I did. In 1982, I was the press assistant for the Senate Democratic
15 Policy Committee in the United States Senate. I then went to work for Senator John
16 Glenn of Ohio in 1983 and served Senator Glenn through -- oh, I'm sorry. I don't recall
17 exactly, but probably mid-1984.

18 I then worked for Congressman Chet Atkins, Democrat from Massachusetts, in
19 1987. And -- oh, I'm sorry. I worked for Representative Bob Edgar from Pennsylvania
20 from August 1984 through January 1987. I then went to work for Congressman Chet
21 Atkins, Democrat of Massachusetts, in 1987.

22 I next worked in the Federal Government for United States Senator Bill Bradley. I
23 joined Senator Bradley's staff in, I believe, February of 1991 and served him until August
24 of 1993.

25 In 1995, I was a temporary staffer in the United States Senate for Senator Daschle.

1 And again in 2001, I served in a full-time temporary basis for Leader Daschle when he
2 became majority leader through the rest of that year, that terrible year.

3 Then I -- let's see -- then I served in 2009 in the Obama White House and did not
4 serve again in the government until I went to work for President-elect Biden.

5 Ms. Grooms. And all those dates are to the best of your recollection.

6 [Laughter.]

7 Ms. Dunn. They are to the best of my recollection. I'm a little hazy on a few of
8 them, but I'm pretty good on most.

9 Ms. Grooms. That was pretty impressive.

10 BY MR. SPECTRE:

11 Q We understand and we appreciate that.

12 During those various Senate and House roles, did you also have a role on any of
13 the campaigns, on any political campaigns.

14 A Yes, I did.

15 Q Mostly for Senate candidates or for a mix?

16 A When I was working for candidates it was not when I was, by and large,
17 when I was working for the House or the Senate.

18 I also served as the communications director for the Democratic Senate Campaign
19 Committee under John Kerry and then under John Breaux in the 1988 and 1990 cycles.
20 So, obviously, I was working on a huge number of campaigns during that time.

21 I then went to work for -- after I left Senator Bradley's staff, I went to work for
22 what was then know as Squier Knapp Ochs, which was a political consulting firm. I
23 worked on a huge number of campaigns during that period.

24 I worked on Senator Bradley's Presidential campaign in 1999 and 2000. I, again,
25 was doing a lot of campaigns during this period and worked on Senator Obama's

1 Presidential campaign in 2008.

2 Q I'm not sure if that was what you had just mentioned there, but in 1993 you
3 joined the political consulting firm SKDK? Is that right?

4 A Well, that firm at the time was known as Squier Knapp Ochs.

5 Q And you had -- would you intermittently leave that firm to work in various
6 other places over the years and go back to it? Is that right?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q What was your -- and I'm sorry if you said it earlier -- but what was your role
9 at SKDK?

10 A Well, when I entered the firm, I entered it as a senior vice president. And
11 then I was made a partner in the firm -- to the best of my recollection, honestly --

12 [Laughter.]

13 A -- I think in 1998.

14 Q Sure.

15 Is it fair to say that across your various positions, communications and strategies
16 were generally the focus of your roles.

17 A That is correct.

18 Q During -- you mentioned the first time that you met then-Senator Biden was
19 in the 1980s. Do you recall specifically?

20 A No, I don't.

21 Q Did you interact with Senator Biden in the '80s and '90s many times or just a
22 few times?

23 A To the best of my recollection, just a few times.

24 Q And were these Committee hearings where you would hear him speak, or
25 were these interactions directly with Senator Biden?

1 A They were much -- very much in the nature of, "Hello, Senator," primarily
2 when I was at the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee in the 1990 cycle, because
3 Senator Biden was up for reelection. So he would come to the group meetings of
4 Senators and things like that.

5 Q I understand.

6 You mentioned that -- and I don't want to mischaracterize it, correct me if I
7 misrepresent your testimony here -- but I think you said that you didn't know that
8 President Biden ever had a stutter until much later, and that -- to me that says he did not
9 have a stutter when -- or you didn't notice a stutter when you interacted with
10 then-Senator Biden.

11 A Well, you know, I didn't know him very well. I didn't work for him. But
12 that is correct. I really didn't know until I went to work for him.

13 Q How would you characterize his communication skills during that time when
14 he was a Senator?

15 A Well, he had a reputation for making long speeches. He certainly -- he was
16 chairman of the Judiciary Committee when I worked for Senator Bradley. Bradley did
17 not serve on any committees with Biden, but they had a pretty good personal relationship
18 from having literally trained together.

19 Q But you thought that his communication skills outside of being long-winded
20 were good?

21 A Again, I really wasn't in a position to judge. I didn't watch him very
22 carefully.

23 Q So let's skip ahead a little here to you mentioned that you worked on
24 President Obama's 2008 campaign. Is that right?

25 A That's correct.

1 Q And did you join him in 2007-ish?

2 A No, I joined it at the beginning of 2008.

3 Q Okay. What was your role on the 2008 campaign?

4 A My role in the 2008 campaign was a role as a senior adviser with
5 responsibility for communications, press, and research and policy.

6 Q Did your relationship with then-Senator and vice Presidential candidate
7 Biden change during this time? Did you start interacting with him more?

8 A I interacted with him a little more, primarily around preparing him for his
9 debate against Sarah Palin. I was part of that team.

10 Q And we'll talk a bit more about debate prep later, but just to touch on it a
11 little bit, what did debate prep for that debate against Sarah Palin look like? How did
12 you prepare him?

13 A Well, I wasn't in charge of that debate prep. But it was group meetings,
14 talking through issues, mock debate, conversation after mock debate. Fairly standard
15 debate prep.

16 Q And how would you assess then-Senator Biden's abilities during debate prep
17 at that point?

18 Ms. Grooms. This is the debate prep --

19 Ms. Dunn. Against Sarah Palin --

20 Mr. Spectre. Yes.

21 Ms. Dunn. -- in 2008.

22 BY MR. SPECTRE:

23 Q Yes.

24 A I really don't remember having a strong impression of it one way or the
25 other.

1 Q But it didn't strike you as memorably bad?

2 A Again, I'm having trouble remembering it. It was a long time ago. The
3 debate itself ended up fine.

4 Q So you remember his performance in that debate?

5 A I do remember his performance in the debate.

6 Q And you said it was fine?

7 A It was fine.

8 Q How else would you characterize his performance in that debate?

9 A That is the characterization I'm giving you.

10 Q It was fine?

11 A Yes.

12 Q His communication skills and his delivery were fine?

13 A Yes. Uh-huh.

14 Q You mentioned this again as well earlier, but you then served as interim
15 White House communications director during the Obama administration? Is that right?

16 A I did in 2009 from -- again, to the best of my recollection -- the beginning of
17 April through the end of the year.

18 Q I have around November. Does that sound right?

19 A I left at the end of the year, yes.

20 Q Okay. And then when you left at the end of 2009, did you return to SKDK,
21 or did you go somewhere else?

22 A No, I returned to my firm.

23 Q During that time between the 2008 campaign and the 2012 campaign, did
24 you maintain close contact with the Obama White House?

25 A I had, I think it's fair to say, I had contact with friends who worked in the

1 Obama White House, and having been part of that organization was involved primarily
2 with the planning for 2012.

3 Q That organization being SKDK or --

4 A No, no, no. I'm sorry. I apologize.

5 Having been involved with the Obama campaign in 2008. After I left the White
6 House, I would say my primary dealings with them were around starting to plan 2012.

7 Q So you interacted with them every -- every how often with people at the
8 Obama White House?

9 A That's a difficult question for me to answer accurately. I had very good
10 friends who I'm sure I interacted with a great deal, although I can't give you any kind of
11 numerical thing.

12 And then in a sort of organized capacity, I don't remember how the structure was
13 in terms of meetings, but I did periodically attend meetings on the political side.

14 Q Who were the friends that you're mentioning that were working at the
15 Obama White House during the 2009 to 2012 years?

16 A Well, Pete Rouse, who had been Senator Daschle's chief of staff, is a dear
17 personal friend of mine and is someone with whom I would have had contact. Valerie
18 Jarrett was a dear friend of mine. There were many friends of mine on that staff.

19 Q Okay. Did you interact with then-Vice President Biden, same time period,
20 during that time?

21 A No, I actually can't remember any interactions I had with Vice President
22 Biden until 2012.

23 Q And at that point you worked on the 2012 campaign. Is that right?

24 A I was an adviser to the 2012 campaign. I did not work full-time for the
25 2012 campaign.

1 Q Did you help President Obama and Vice President Biden prepare for their
2 respective debates during the 2012 campaign?

3 A I did.

4 Q I understand that you don't have a strong recollection of then-Senator
5 Biden's 2008 debate prep. Do you have a better recollection of his 2012 debate prep?

6 A No, I don't remember specific issues as they came up.

7 The one thing I remember from that debate prep was having come out of the very
8 weak first debate that President Obama had, the sort of necessity for him to go out there
9 and be very energetic, to prosecute the case energetically, and that's what we told him he
10 had to do.

11 Ms. Grooms. Are you talking about Obama or Biden.

12 Ms. Dunn. Oh, no, I'm talking -- I'm sorry. I'm talking about Vice President
13 Biden in his debate against Paul Ryan, because the first Obama-Romney debate had not
14 gone as well as we had hoped it would, and, therefore, the next debate was the Vice
15 Presidential debate. And so we really saw Biden's performance as an opportunity to go
16 put some energy back into the campaign.

17 Q And was Vice President Biden successful at doing that?

18 A In my opinion, as a political observer and someone who worked on the
19 campaign, yes.

20 Q What made him successful?

21 A He was very energetic and very aggressive in the debate.

22 Q How would you say his communication skills were during the 2012 Vice
23 Presidential debate?

24 A Communications skills are a pretty broad category here. I would say his
25 performance in the debate was strong.

1 Mr. Benzine. Did he win that debate against then-future Speaker Ryan.

2 Ms. Dunn. Well, I certainly thought he did. I think there were those who
3 disagreed.

4 BY MR. SPECTRE:

5 Q So after the 2012 campaign, did you go back to your firm SKDK again? Is
6 that right?

7 A Yes. I had been at the firm through the 2012 campaign. I was acting as a
8 consultant to the Obama campaign, not as a full-time employee.

9 Q And to be clear, to go back, you were a full-time employee during the 2008
10 Obama campaign. Is that right?

11 A That is correct.

12 Q Do you recall how much you were paid for the 2008 campaign?

13 A No, I don't recall exactly. I was paid whatever the senior staff on the
14 campaign were paid -- and we had a very cheap campaign manager.

15 Q You don't have -- I actually don't know what that position pays, roughly.
16 Do you have a range you could share?

17 A I don't remember, but, obviously, the Obama FEC reports are available.

18 BY MR. BENZINE:

19 Q I'll ask it broader. Was it less than \$4 million?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Was it less than \$8 million?

22 A Yes.

23 Q All right.

24 A To the best of my recollection.

25 [Laughter.]

1 Q Fair enough.

2 BY MR. SPECTRE:

3 Q Fair enough.

4 So you returned to your -- or you had been at your firm, but you, after the 2012
5 campaign, you were at your firm.

6 Did you maintain close contact again with the Obama White House during the
7 remainder of the Obama administration.

8 A Again, you know, I had friends there. I didn't have as close contact in terms
9 of going to meetings or anything like that because we weren't looking at a reelection
10 campaign.

11 So I would say it was probably more, to the best of my recollection, it would be
12 more personal contacts that I had with people at that point.

13 Q With your friends at the White House?

14 A With my friends. Uh-huh.

15 Q So you didn't interact with Vice President Biden during Obama's second
16 term?

17 A Boy, I do not remember interacting with him at all during the second term.

18 Q So then --

19 A I'm sorry. Let me. I did attend a Christmas party at the Vice President's
20 residence during that period, just to be clear.

21 Q Thank you.

22 A So I think I have a picture of myself with Joe Biden from that period at a
23 Christmas party.

24 Q Do you recall talking with Vice President Biden at that Christmas party?

25 A I was in a photo line, so it was probably a very brief conversation.

1 Q And then you became a senior adviser on Joe Biden's 2020 Presidential
2 campaign. Is that right?

3 A Yes. I was advising the campaign in 2019 without having a formal paid role
4 with the campaign and did not take a leave from my firm to become a full-time employee
5 of the campaign until 2020.

6 Q So eventually you were a full-time employee of the 2020 campaign?

7 A Yes, I was.

8 Q And prior to that, while you were just advising it, was that just volunteer
9 work?

10 A It was to some extent volunteer work, yes.

11 Q And to the other extent, was that part of your SKDK role?

12 A I'm sorry. I'm not sure what you're asking.

13 Q You said that to some extent, prior to becoming a full-time employee on the
14 2020 campaign, you were to some extent volunteering. What did you mean by that?

15 A Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't clear.

16 I also -- my firm's direct mail unit was hired separately from me to do some direct
17 mail for the Biden campaign, which during the primary was actually pretty nonexistent
18 because we had no money.

19 Q And in 2019 or 2020 did your interaction with then-candidate Biden
20 increase?

21 A Yes, it did.

22 Q Did it increase in 2019 while you were doing these direct mail operations
23 and volunteering, or was that in 2020 that it increased?

24 A It was in 2019. I was part of a strategy group.

25 Q And so how frequently would you interact with then-candidate Biden during

1 that time?

2 A It's hard for me to characterize that accurately. There would be times
3 when we would interact pretty regularly, certainly around the planning of the launch of
4 the campaign. And then there were weeks at a time when I would not speak with him
5 directly.

6 Q We'll come back to in a little bit more detail of, again, each of the positions
7 where you were directly working for President Biden or his campaigns, but I just want to
8 flesh out the last couple of positions here.

9 After the 2020 campaign, you were a senior adviser to President Biden from
10 around -- from the beginning of the administration in January to around August? Is that
11 right.

12 A That's correct.

13 Q Why did you leave in August?

14 A I hadn't been planning to go into the White House to begin with. I had
15 already worked in the White House, wasn't necessarily looking for a White House role
16 when I helped on the campaign.

17 The President asked me to serve, though, so -- but I had told him it could only be
18 for a limited amount of time.

19 Q So there was an agreed-upon end date at the beginning? Is that fair?

20 A Yes.

21 Q What did you do -- I'm sorry.

22 You returned to the White House eventually in May of 2022 in the same role. Is
23 that right.

24 A It was a slightly different role. I served in 2021 as a temporary employee
25 with an SGE, special government employee. When I returned in May 2022 it was a fully

1 commissioned assistant to the President.

2 Q Assistant to the President?

3 A Yes.

4 Mr. Benzine. What was your -- lack of a subtitle -- assistant to the President and
5 what.

6 Ms. Dunn. I actually didn't have an "and" as far as I can remember. I think I
7 just was an assistant to the President.

8 Mr. Benzine. All right.

9 Ms. Dunn. Yes.

10 BY MR. SPECTRE:

11 Q Your duties while you were an SGE, what were those duties?

12 A To help advise the White House on communication strategy, press strategy,
13 during those early days of the administration.

14 Q So when you returned as an assistant to the President, it was a different title,
15 but is it fair to say that it was a similar role as when you had been an SGE?

16 A I took on more managerial responsibilities when I returned in May of 2022.

17 Q And then you served from May of 2022 until after President Biden withdrew
18 from the 2024 race, and you left around July or August? Is that right?

19 A I left August 6th.

20 Q August 6th. A year ago yesterday.

21 And you joined Future Forward, the main PAC supporting the Harris campaign at
22 that point? Is that right.

23 A That's correct.

24 Q What was your role on the Future Forward PAC?

25 A It was primarily to raise money and work on the political coordinated side

1 because my 90-day cooling-off period, which would have allowed me to work on the
2 independent side, wasn't -- 90 days from when I left was going to take me into November.
3 So I was on the political coordinated side.

4 Q And forgive me for going out of order here, but for President Biden's 2024
5 campaign you were a White House employee. You didn't have any paid role on the
6 campaign or --

7 A No, I was a White House employee.

8 Q And are you currently employed by Future Forward?

9 A I consult with Future Forward, yes.

10 Q And so you work at the same firm we've been discussing?

11 A No, I did not return to my firm.

12 Q Okay. So you would advise or consult for Future Forward independently?
13 Is that fair?

14 A That's correct.

15 BY MR. BENZINE:

16 Q I have one more campaign structure question.

17 A Yes.

18 Q Is it common to have contingency bonuses based off the outcome of the
19 election?

20 A That is not uncommon in campaigns.

21 Q All right. Thank you.

22 A At least in my experience.

23 BY MR. SPECTRE:

24 Q I did say I'd do this. We're going to go back into each of the positions that
25 you had working for President Biden or candidate Biden.

1 So in the 2020 Presidential campaign, what were your responsibilities on that
2 campaign.

3 A In 2019, again, I was a consultant who was primarily in an advisory capacity
4 helping mostly in the communications, press, research area. Broader campaign strategy
5 was driven by others.

6 I would say that as the year went on I became more and more involved with the
7 campaign and that in early 2020, I cannot remember exactly when, somewhere between
8 the Iowa caucus -- again, I can't remember exactly when -- then-candidate Biden asked
9 me to take on a larger role in terms of overall campaign management, which I did.

10 And then after he had locked up the nomination in, realistically speaking, in March
11 of 2020, I returned to a different role, which was to be in charge of the convention, to
12 obviously continue working with the communications and press operation, and to
13 work -- to be one of the liaisons with the transition operation.

14 Q Who did you report to in this role?

15 A I reported to our campaign manager, Jennifer O'Malley Dillon, and to the
16 candidate.

17 Q And you said a little bit earlier, you discussed your frequency of interaction
18 with then-candidate Biden.

19 Is it fair to say that it -- did it decrease with the onset of COVID-19? Is that right.

20 A As I remember, having had a fairly intense period of engagement, once
21 COVID hit and everybody went home, I had -- most of my interactions with Biden at that
22 point became part of meetings and with structure.

23 Q When you say meetings --

24 A I didn't travel with him or anything.

25 Q When you say meetings, do you mean in-person meetings or virtual

1 meetings or both?

2 A Virtual meetings.

3 Q And so prior to COVID you had, I think you said, deep interactions or
4 frequent interactions with then-candidate Biden. Is that fair?

5 A During the six weeks that I was running the campaign, for all intents and
6 purposes, fairly frequent interactions with him.

7 Q Fairly frequent.

8 During that time how would you say then-candidate Biden's communication skills
9 were.

10 A His performance as a candidate when his back was against the wall was a
11 very good performance. He was very focused. He knew what he had to do. He went
12 and executed extremely well.

13 Q And, again, I know we discussed it, at some point you became aware that
14 President Biden had grown up struggling with a stutter. Is this when you found that out,
15 when you were working on the 2020 campaign, or was it later?

16 A No, I learned it working on the 2020 campaign. There was a large piece in, I
17 believe, The Atlantic -- to the best of my recollection it was in The Atlantic -- by an author
18 who also had a stutter and who had written about Biden and had interviewed him, I
19 guess. It was a very long, very moving piece. But I also -- I had also learned about it, I
20 think, from another staff member before that.

21 Q So you never -- and I understand that you said that you didn't frequently
22 interact with Senator Biden in the 1980s and 1990s, but you had interacted with him
23 much more than the average American over the course of his various positions. Is that
24 fair?

25 A I think it would be fair to characterize my interactions with him as limited

1 when he was Vice President, and then once he became a candidate for President in 2020
2 more regularly.

3 Q And so you had these multiple interactions with Biden over the years and
4 then many interactions while he was a candidate, and you never noticed that he had a
5 stutter until you read it in the media? Is that right?

6 A That is correct, yes. Uh-huh.

7 Ms. Harker. When did you first personally observe President Biden stutter.

8 Ms. Dunn. You know, I don't remember. Okay? And it's likely he stuttered
9 and I just didn't notice it because I wasn't looking for it. But I do not remember.

10 BY MR. SPECTRE:

11 Q Were you eventually involved in discussions over which staffers would get
12 which jobs in the eventual Biden White House?

13 A I was involved in -- to the best of my recollection, I was involved primarily
14 around the areas where I had most responsibility in the campaign and where I knew the
15 personnel the best. So press, communication, research -- I'm sorry, research.

16 Q Thank you.

17 Do you recall specific people that you had a direct role in hiring.

18 A Well, the President hires people. I do not have a direct role.

19 Q In advising the President to hire?

20 A Because I spent a good chunk of the transition not planning to go into the
21 White House, I was not as involved in discussions around the White House staff as I would
22 have been if I had been planning to go into the White House from day one. So many of
23 those decisions were made without my input.

24 Q During the 2020 campaign did you or anyone else take steps to conceal
25 then-candidate Biden's cognitive decline or signs of his aging?

1 A I'd like to take issue with the cognitive decline piece of this. We did not see
2 cognitive decline. I did not see it. I did not experience that. I had a candidate who
3 had won an improbable primary victory and then won the Presidency in 2020.

4 Q So you don't feel as though you concealed then-candidate Biden from the
5 press or the media or otherwise?

6 A The candidate debated in the primaries -- I don't recall the exact number of
7 times but something -- maybe 9 or 10 times for the Democratic Party to see. He
8 debated twice in the general election. He did interviews.

9 Obviously, COVID limited the amount of time he could be out there campaigning,
10 but the candidate was out there for people to see.

11 Mr. Benzine. I'm going to phrase it a similar way, and Susanne can get mad at
12 me again.

13 Did President Biden win both 2020 debates against President Trump.

14 Ms. Dunn. In my opinion, and from what I observed, yes. And I will say that
15 politically we felt the debates were very beneficial to the Biden candidacy in 2020.

16 Mr. Benzine. And just for clarity in defining "win," you spent a lot of time with
17 dial groups in real time. You spent a lot of time with polling after the fact. Is that how
18 you would define "win," that the dial group showed that the President did a good job or
19 they were appreciating his message.

20 Ms. Dunn. I think what our research showed was that he had strengthened his
21 position.

22 BY MR. SPECTRE:

23 Q Did you have a role in preparing candidate -- Presidential candidate
24 Biden -- during the 2020 campaign for his debates?

25 A His primary debates?

1 Q Any debate.

2 A Yes.

3 Q So the primary debates only?

4 A No. I was also involved in the general election debates.

5 Q Do you recall President Biden's -- then-candidate Biden's performance
6 during those debate preps?

7 A I only recall a couple specifically. I certainly recall generally that -- the
8 debates during the primaries were very different from the general election debates.
9 They started off with huge stages of candidates. There were 10 candidates on the stage.
10 They weren't really classic debates, and you prepared people differently.

11 Q Did you see any change in President -- then-candidate Biden's abilities from
12 when you had prepared him while he was running to be Vice President in 2008 and 2012
13 for his debates?

14 A That's a hard question for me to answer because his debates in 2008 and
15 2012 were against Republican opponents, and they were one-on-one.

16 The primary debates we were preparing him for were more like forums. They
17 were multi-candidate and they were against Democrats. So that's a very different
18 dynamic to begin with.

19 Q Sure.

20 A In terms of change from 2008 and 2012, it's a hard one for me to judge.

21 Q I can appreciate that the format was --

22 A Apples and oranges.

23 Q I can appreciate that the format was different. But in terms of his style or
24 communication abilities or his delivery or forgetting the substance of an answer or
25 anything of that sort of genre, did anything change regarding that from 2008, 2012, going

1 to 2020?

2 A Again, to the best of my recollection, I think it was pretty much the same.
3 Some of the primary debates were better than others.

4 Q Okay.

5 And then after the 2020 election or -- I guess my understanding is sometimes it
6 starts before -- but did you have a role on the transition team in that time.

7 A Yes, I was one of the co-chairs of the transition.

8 Q What was -- what does a co-chair for the transition team do?

9 A I'm sure every administration is different.

10 What I did primarily during -- on the transition was to help evaluate potential
11 Cabinet, sub-Cabinet nominees, as well as to work on the development, the policy
12 development, of what would become the Recovery Act.

13 Q The American Rescue Plan?

14 A I mean, I'm sorry, the Rescue Plan. I make the same mistake he does.

15 Q I understand.

16 So which Cabinet members were you involved in vetting or evaluating, I think you
17 said.

18 A I was not involved in vetting.

19 Q Apologies.

20 A I don't remember exactly. I do and can tell you that I was not involved in
21 the discussions around the Attorney General.

22 Q You were not involved?

23 A No. No. I'm not a lawyer, and that was a very small group of people.

24 Q Was your husband, Bob Bauer, involved in those discussions?

25 Ms. Grooms. Is that really relevant to this investigation.

1 Mr. Spectre. Are you instructing the witness not to answer.

2 Ms. Grooms. Let's go off the record.

3 Mr. Spectre. We'll go off the record.

4 [Discussion off the record.]

5 Mr. Spectre. We can go back on the record.

6 BY MR. SPECTRE:

7 Q So you were a co-chair of the Biden-Harris transition team, and you said you
8 were involved in preparing policy ideas that would eventually become the American
9 Rescue Plan. Is that fair?

10 A The policy team had the primary responsibility. I was more involved, as is
11 appropriate and as I remember, with sort of communications, political strategy on it.

12 Q And as part of that role -- or separately from that role -- you were also
13 involved in picking or evaluating potential Cabinet picks for President Biden? Is that
14 right?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q Okay.

17 And then -- we discussed this earlier -- you joined the Biden White House as a
18 special government employee --

19 A That's correct.

20 Q - in January of 2021, right at the beginning of the administration? Is that
21 right?

22 A It was January 21st, yes.

23 Q During that first stint as a special government employee, before you left at
24 the end of 2021, were you one of President Biden's closest advisers?

25 A It's a hard question. I was certainly part of the group of senior advisers that

1 he met with on a regular basis and who met with each other to develop
2 recommendations for the President.

3 Q And forgive me if you said this earlier, but when were you -- I know you said
4 that you weren't planning on working at the White House and you stayed longer than you
5 initially anticipated. Did you say that as well?

6 A I'm not sure I said it, but I did stay a little longer than I'd initially planned to,
7 yes.

8 Q So who approached you to do that job, or how did you wind up with that
9 role?

10 A I'm sorry. With the role in 2021?

11 Q As a special government employee beginning in 2021. How did you wind
12 up with that role?

13 A To the best of my recollection, Ron Klain, who was going to be the incoming
14 White House chief of staff, called me and told me that the President-elect was going to
15 call me and ask me to do this. So he wanted to give me a heads-up, but he told me that
16 I needed to do it. And then the President called me.

17 Q What did you discuss on that call?

18 A He told me that I had been a part of the campaign and that he needed me at
19 the beginning of the administration, given the challenges -- COVID, all of the economic
20 stresses on the country, all of the things that he was walking into as President -- and that
21 he needed me at the beginning of the administration to help.

22 Q Did you discuss with President Biden what your role would be specifically
23 during that call?

24 A No, I did not.

1 [11:03 a.m.]

2 BY MR. SPECTRE:

3 Q Did you discuss the fact that you were planning to leave at the end of the
4 year on that call?

5 A No, I don't remember.

6 Q Or later during that year?

7 A I don't remember, okay. I was -- I do remember being clear with Ron that it
8 would be a temporary thing.

9 Q And as we discussed, you returned in May of 2022, this time as assistant to
10 the President?

11 A Correct.

12 Q Why did you return?

13 A You know, it's a great question I ask myself all the time. No. The -- it was
14 very clear that the President was going to have an extremely difficult reelection given
15 everything going on in the country. It was the post-COVID period, the economy, and
16 I -- I felt a responsibility to come back.

17 Q So you primarily came back out of concern that President Biden had -- that
18 there were external issues causing President Biden to have a difficult reelection?

19 Ms. Grooms. I'm not sure that's what she said.

20 Ms. Dunn. No, I think what is accurate to say is that I came back just given the
21 challenges facing the White House and my feeling of responsibility to help address them.

22 BY MR. SPECTRE:

23 Q And none of those challenges facing the White House or President Biden
24 were with regard to his age or cognitive abilities?

25 A No. I want to be clear, we didn't have concerns -- and I did not have

1 concerns -- about his cognitive abilities or his ability to lead this country as President, his
2 ability to make the decisions that only a President can make. We took those decisions
3 to him. He made those decisions. I think he was a strong President for this country at
4 a time when we needed a strong President. So that was not a concern that I had then.
5 It was not a concern I had throughout his Presidency.

6 Q I understand that, but if voters had concerns about that, that would
7 potentially be a problem for his 2024 -- his future 2024 reelection campaign, was that a
8 factor in your returning to the White House?

9 A The fact that we were facing a 2024 reelection campaign that was going to
10 be very tough for a variety of reasons, was certainly a factor in my decision to return to
11 the White House.

12 Q A variety of reasons --

13 A Yes, the economy --

14 Q -- including his age?

15 A Oh, age had been an issue in the 2020 campaign. Obviously, the voters
16 chose him despite any concerns they might've had about age because they were looking
17 for his leadership. We knew that it would continue to be an issue, but we also
18 believed -- and I believed -- that what he had accomplished as President, the fights he was
19 fighting for the American people, were going to be a strong platform to take into a
20 reelection campaign.

21 BY MR. BENZINE:

22 Q Why did you return to the White House and not just go work for the
23 campaign?

24 A I had played a role in the White House of helping to kind of coordinate and
25 work closely with the other senior advisors. And it just -- and I felt it was a better place

1 for me to be, particularly because when an incumbent President is running for reelection,
2 so much of the outcome of that race really does hinge on his performance as President.
3 And hopefully some day her performance as President.

4 Q I missed the -- pardon me. I missed the date that you returned to the
5 White House for that stint. Do you recall?

6 A I returned as an assistant to the President in May 2022.

7 Q At that point, did you -- was Special Counsel Hur already appointed?

8 A Oh, no. No. No, huh-uh. No. I'm -- I'll double-check this, but I do not
9 believe that at that point we knew about the documents.

10 Q Okay.

11 A So --

12 Q Thank you.

13 BY MR. SPECTRE:

14 Q So you returned to the White House to, in part, help the President in terms
15 of his communications, working communications to prepare his narrative going forward
16 to the 2024 campaign. Is that -- is that right?

17 A Well, as I remember it, there was also a huge piece of business around the
18 President's accomplishments and making sure that the administration was
19 communicating those accomplishments in an effective way, and that his schedule, his
20 interviews, his political meetings, his outreach, all of that was coordinated around what
21 he was doing and what he'd gotten done. So it was not just a narrative. It was very
22 much around making sure we had an administration-wide effort.

23 Q During that brief hiatus, though, I think you said earlier that you were just
24 back at your firm during those, however many months that is, 6 months or so. Is that
25 right?

1 A As I remembered, there was one exception to that, which was I took -- I
2 entered the White House again for, I believe, 9 days as an unpaid SGE during the period
3 of time when the President was heading into a State of the Union, and the deputy chief of
4 staff's father had passed away and she was on compassionate leave.

5 Q So this was in early 2022?

6 A As I remember, it was probably early March, but I -- I don't remember the
7 exact dates.

8 Q And excluding those 9 days while you were working for the White House, did
9 you still have a role in White House communications from afar?

10 A I did not have a formal role in White House communications. I did not
11 participate in regular meetings, for example. So, you know, obviously, people would call
12 me and I would talk to them, but I didn't have a formal role.

13 Q So you advised on communications. Is that fair?

14 A I would advise if people asked for advice.

15 Q How frequently would that occur during that hiatus?

16 A You know, I really don't remember very well, but it was not that frequently.

17 Mr. Spectre. Rather than starting a new topic, why don't we go off the record
18 there.

19 [Recess.]

20 Mr. [REDACTED] All right. We'll go on the record. The time is 11:25 a.m.

21 BY MR. [REDACTED]

22 Q Ms. Dunn, I want to thank you again for your time today and for agreeing to
23 speak to the Committee.

24 During the previous hour, I believe my Republican colleagues entered into the
25 record what is Majority Exhibit No. 2, which is a statement from you.

1 A Yes.

2 Q I'd like to give you an opportunity to read that statement.

3 A Thank you.

4 I have known President Biden since he was a Senator but did not serve on his staff
5 or work for him directly until the 2020 Presidential campaign. Following his election, I
6 served as a senior advisor to the President from January to August 2021 and again from
7 May 2022 to August 2024. In that role, I focused primarily on press and communication
8 strategy. I brought to this job past experience with West Wing operations from my role
9 as a senior advisor during the Obama administration.

10 From what I experienced and observed in the White House, President Biden made
11 all of the important decisions expected of someone serving as the President of the United
12 States. As is typical and necessary for the role, President Biden relied on senior advisors
13 to execute his priorities and manage the day-to-day operations that allowed the
14 White House to run effectively, but his authority and involvement in decision-making was
15 clear.

16 In my meetings and other interactions with him, President Biden was engaged on
17 the substance, editing press statements and working with us to map out communication
18 strategy. Before scheduling a press interview or releasing a statement under his name,
19 we sought his approval, and he was an active participant in the preparation of his
20 speeches and public statements.

21 While I observed that President Biden aged physically during his time in office,
22 which is something that happens to every President, he remained throughout my
23 interactions with him fully engaged and clear in his direction and supervision. His ability
24 to probe, to find a weakness in an argument, and to make well-informed decisions did not
25 change during my time in the White House.

1 President Biden also was appropriately accessible to the press. According to
2 Presidential communications scholar Martha Joynt Kumar, professor emeritus at Towson
3 University, over his 4-year term, President Biden conducted 37 press conferences, as well
4 as 151 interviews and 679 informal question-and-answer sessions with the press. He
5 conducted numerous public meetings and events during this time as well. With 679
6 informal question-and-answer sessions, President Biden had more of these interactions
7 with reporters than almost any other President over a 4-year term, going back to Ronald
8 Reagan.

9 I did not observe the White House staff making key decisions or exercising the
10 powers of the Presidency without President Biden's knowledge or consent. The
11 President made it clear that decisions rested with him, and White House staff brought
12 issues to him for him to decide. I believe strongly then and I believe just as strongly
13 today, that Joe Biden was an effective President who accomplished many important
14 things for the American people.

15 Thank you for that opportunity.

16 Q Thank you, Ms. Dunn.

17 In the past hour, I believe you testified to this fact a couple times, but I just want
18 to make sure the record is very clear. At any time during the Biden Presidency or during
19 the 2024 campaign, did you have concerns that President Biden was suffering from
20 cognitive decline.

21 A I did not have concerns that the President was suffering from cognitive
22 decline throughout the time I served in the White House.

23 Q Thank you.

24 And did you at any time during the Biden Presidency, believe that President Biden
25 was unable to execute the duties of the Office of President.

1 A I did not.

2 Mr. [REDACTED] If we could just quickly go to a discussion you had with majority
3 staff in the last hour about President Biden's speech impediment, or discuss his stutter,
4 more colloquially. Just -- you had said that you only more recently became aware of his
5 stutter. Just for the record -- and we'll put an article into the record to this effect, titled,
6 "A Pioneer, a President and a Legacy," that President Biden first publicly addressed his
7 speech impediment in 2004 at a speech before the National Stuttering Association, just so
8 you know.

9 Let's mark this as exhibit A.

10 [Dunn Minority Exhibit A
11 was marked for identification.]

12 BY MR. [REDACTED]

13 Q This same article quotes President Biden at another speech, the 2016
14 speech, when he was talking about his stutter and why he didn't talk more openly about it
15 for a while. He said, "I remember to this day how stuttering felt. How dehumanizing.
16 How embarrassing. How much it put into question -- in my own mind as well -- my
17 capabilities."

18 In another speech he said, "I was afraid that if people knew I stuttered, they
19 would've thought something was wrong with me. I, too, thought I was handicapped."

20 You may know now, given that this was an issue during the more recent
21 campaigns, that roughly 70 million people worldwide suffer from a speech impediment or
22 a stutter. Are you aware of anything like that generally.

23 A Yes. I learned a great deal about this issue in the course of working for
24 President Biden.

25 Q And you also, I think, probably have seen firsthand how President Biden's

1 speech impediment may have been used as part of, you know, the rough-and-tumble
2 politics during his campaigns and during his Presidency. Is that probably right?

3 A It is correct to say that sometimes when he would get stuck on a word, those
4 videos would get widely circulated and used to mock him, which was painful. I've also
5 seen the President spend time after events with people who stutter, who come just to see
6 him. And in 2020, one of those people, a boy in New Hampshire, ended up making a
7 speech at the Democratic Convention. So --

8 Q In your statement you just read, you said that President Biden was, quote,
9 "fully engaged and clear in his direction," end quote.

10 Would it be fair to say that nothing about your experience with President Biden
11 personally, his speech impediment, or anything you've just said in the past hour about
12 President Biden's speech impediment, in any way contradicts or undercuts your
13 testimony that the President was fully engaged and clear in his direction.

14 A The President was fully engaged and clear in his direction, whether it was on
15 policy, whether it was on press, whether it was politically, whatever the issue was. He
16 was engaged in details to a great extent, sometimes details I didn't think a President
17 needed to be involved in, but he was very involved and clear with us what he wanted to
18 say, where he wanted to go, what he wanted to do.

19 Q And you can only speak for yourself, but just so the record is clear, nothing
20 you said in the last hour about President Biden's speech impediment you meant in any
21 way to cause shame, embarrassment, disparagement, anything on the 70 million people
22 around the world who suffer from a speech impediment?

23 A I would be so upset if anything that I said about the President's speech
24 impediment was ever interpreted that way. You know, he is someone who inspires
25 people because of his overcoming that speech impediment when he was a child, and he's

1 talked about this and written about it a great deal since I've gotten to know him more
2 closely. And I would not ever want anyone to interpret that as disparagement or a
3 question about whether someone who has a stutter or speech impediment or any kind of
4 issue is disqualified from serving as President.

5 Mr. [REDACTED] Ms. Dunn, in the prior hour, my Republican colleagues asked you a few
6 questions about campaign compensation. Do you recall that.

7 Ms. Dunn. Oh, I do.

8 Mr. [REDACTED] And in particular, they asked you about a \$4 million compensation.

9 Do you recall that.

10 Ms. Dunn. I do.

11 [Dunn Minority Exhibit B
12 was marked for identification.]

13 BY MR. [REDACTED]

14 Q I'd like to enter into the record what will be Minority Exhibit B. This is a
15 Daily Beast article dated October 15, 2024, entitled, "Donald Trump's Campaign Manager
16 Chris LaCivita's LLC Multi-Million Payday Revealed."

17 Now, we don't need to go through the entirety of this article -- it's rather
18 lengthy -- but I'd rather -- I'd like to read you the first paragraph of this article. It states,
19 quote, "The consulting firm of Donald Trump's White House campaign's co-manager has
20 raked in \$19.2 million and counting from the Republican nominee's political operation in
21 just 2 years, the political -- excuse me -- The Daily Beast has learned."

22 Ms. Dunn, is \$19.2 million more than \$4 million.

23 A Yes.

24 Q Thank you.

25 I'll also note for the record that on the third paragraph here, The Daily Beast notes

1 that Mr. LaCivita's consulting firm was to receive \$150,000 bonus if Trump happened to
2 win the election.

3 All right. We'll go off the record.

4 [Recess.]

5 Mr. Spectre. We can go on the record.

6 BY MR. SPECTRE:

7 Q Ms. Dunn, I understand you have something you wanted to state for the
8 record.

9 A Yes. I apologize. When I went through my government service earlier, I
10 left off 4 months that I worked for the National Security Council in 1979.

11 Q And --

12 A As a staff assistant.

13 Q On that note, I neglected to ask you about your --

14 Ms. Grooms. And all of her sort of memory is to the best of her recollection --

15 Ms. Dunn. Yes.

16 Ms. Grooms. -- for her very extensive career.

17 Ms. Dunn. This is to the best of my recollection.

18 BY MR. SPECTRE:

19 Q Sure, and we understand that. Thank you for clarifying.

20 And on that note, I never asked you, where did you attend college.

21 A I attended college at the University of Maryland.

22 Q And what year did you graduate?

23 A I didn't.

24 Q So was your time at the National Security Council, was that during college

25 or --

1 A Yes, it was.

2 Q Okay. Thank you.

3 We left off during our last hour discussing your role in the Biden White House.
4 Just quickly, you know, how often did you interact with President Biden during your time
5 in the White House.

6 A Again, this is an imprecise thing to discuss. You know, I would generally see
7 the President, you know, three or four times a week, sometimes more; if there was a
8 speech coming up, sometimes less.

9 Q And was that fairly consistent throughout the administration?

10 A Well, to the best of my recollection, it was fairly consistent. There were
11 times when we were preparing for something major, again, where there -- I would have a
12 huge amount of contact with him, and there were times when he was preparing for a
13 foreign trip I would have very little.

14 Q Do any times stand out to you where you had less access or where you spent
15 less time with President Biden?

16 A To the best of my recollection, there are no times that really stand out. I
17 was not as involved in national security policy as others were, though, so -- so during the
18 intense national security times, I would have less contact.

19 Q You said, I think in your opening statement last hour with the minority
20 colleagues, that press and communications strategy, that that was sort of the bulk of your
21 role in the White House. Is that fair?

22 A Yeah. I think it's fair to characterize the bulk of my role as press and
23 communications, which obviously as a senior advisor, we all talked with each other.

24 Q Did you play a role in responding to what some might call blunders or gaffes
25 made by President Biden during that time?

1 A You know, as I remember, the press and communications operations would
2 have the end product of dealing with those, but a broader group would deal with that.

3 Q So you were involved with that?

4 A Oh, I was involved, yes.

5 Q I believe you were not at the White House -- you were not at the
6 White House in March of 2022, is that correct, because you came back in May?

7 A Again, I don't remember exactly when I was there. I was there for a 9-day
8 period in March, either late February or early March. So I apologize, I don't remember
9 exactly.

10 Q Were you at the White House when Russia invaded Ukraine on March 26th?

11 A Let's see, I do not believe I was. But, again, I apologize, that is a time when
12 my memory is hazy from when I was in and when I was out, so --

13 Q I understand. I think you said you had some amount of interaction with
14 White House staff even during that hiatus, again, excluding the 9-day period where you
15 were back.

16 Soon after Russia invaded Ukraine, President Biden spoke at the Royal Castle in
17 Warsaw, Poland. President Biden stated, "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in
18 power." Do you recall that happening.

19 A You know, I remember the speech, yes.

20 Q Were you shocked by President Biden's remarks?

21 A I don't remember being shocked by them, no.

22 Q Do you believe that President Biden knew he was saying or implying to call
23 for the oust of -- ousting of Putin?

24 A No. I think -- my role has always been that at the end of the day, Presidents
25 set the policy and Presidents get to say these things.

1 Ms. Harker. Do you think it was an intentional statement.

2 Ms. Dunn. I -- you know, I have no way of knowing that. I was not -- I was
3 not -- I'm -- I was not around that Poland trip at all, so --

4 BY MR. SPECTRE:

5 Q And in your limited communications advising role, I think that's fair based on
6 your testimony, did you have any role in advising on the strategy for responding to these
7 remarks?

8 A The -- I don't remember having any role around those particular remarks,
9 and given that they were national security, I think the national security team would've
10 taken the lead on that.

11 Q In -- on May 23rd, 2022, speaking alongside the Japanese Prime Minister in
12 Tokyo, former -- then-President Biden was saying -- was asked, "Are you willing to get
13 involved militarily to defend Taiwan if it comes to that?" Biden responded, "Yes." The
14 reporter responded, surprised, "You are?" And President Biden stated, "That's the
15 commitment we made."

16 Were you consulted at all -- let's start -- start here. You were in the
17 White House, again, at this point on May 23rd, 2022.

18 A I had returned to the White House by then.

19 Q Were you involved in any strategy or decisions or otherwise related to the
20 response to these comments by President Biden?

21 A No, I do not remember being involved in those conversations. I
22 think -- again, I think those conversations were primarily out of the National Security
23 Council and that national security press staff took the lead.

24 Q So do you know specifically who's in charge of that?

25 A You know, I don't remember who was in charge at the time. But at the end

1 of the day, Jake Sullivan, who was our National Security Advisor.

2 Q Do you believe that President Biden knew what he was saying when he
3 made the statement was at odds with longstanding U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity?

4 A I believe President Biden as President was able to set U.S. policy and to say
5 these things if he believed it was in the national interest.

6 Q Regardless of whether he was able to, do you think he knew what he was
7 saying was at odds with longstanding U.S. policy?

8 A You know, I can't make that judgment. He certainly was well aware of
9 what U.S. policy had been, having been chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee,
10 Vice President, and President.

11 Q Understanding you said you were not deeply involved in national security
12 discussions, but had you ever been involved in a conversation with President Biden about
13 strategic ambiguity or U.S.-Taiwan policy?

14 A I do not remember being involved in a discussion with President Biden on
15 U.S.-Taiwan policy or strategic ambiguity.

16 Q On June 20th, 2023, President Biden attended a fundraiser with California
17 Governor Gavin Newsom. During the fundraiser, President Biden called
18 President -- Chinese President Xi Jinping a dictator.

19 Sort of the same question, were you involved in any discussions or strategy for
20 responding to these comments.

21 A Let's see. As I recall, I was not on the trip, and, again, it was primarily
22 national security that had the lead in figuring out the response.

23 Q Do you believe that President Biden was in command of himself or his
24 remarks when he called Xi Jinping a dictator?

25 A I believe President Biden said what he meant to say.

1 Q So you believe that President Biden meant to call Xi Jinping a dictator?

2 A I believe Presidents say these things and that they get elected to say these
3 things.

4 Q And similar question from the last one, had you had any -- had you been
5 involved in any discussions with President Biden about whether Xi Jinping was a dictator
6 or should be publicly called one?

7 A You know, I was not -- to the best of my recollection, I was not in a
8 discussion about that. And as I said earlier, I did not -- I really didn't play a significant
9 role in national security communications. I was aware of them.

10 Q Okay. Thank you.

11 A Okay.

12 Q We understand there was a daily meeting of sort of the senior-most staff
13 around 8 a.m. every morning. Were you -- were you involved in those meetings?

14 A Yes, I was.

15 Q And there was a second sort of broader meeting of the other senior staff
16 around 8:40 or whenever the first one wrapped up. Is that fair also?

17 A The times changed in the course of this administration, so I don't want to be
18 held to times, but, yes, there was a smaller meeting and a larger meeting.

19 Q And you were generally at both of these meetings?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Who else was in the earlier senior-most staff meeting, generally?

22 A Senior advisors. You know, if national security was a big issue, Jake Sullivan
23 or somebody else from NSC would often drop by to give us an update on what was
24 happening. Annie Tomasini. You know, Anthony Bernal representing the First Lady.
25 You know, Jen O'Malley Dillon was there when she was deputy chief of staff. But when

1 she left to become campaign manager she didn't participate.

2 Q And the broader meeting was sort of department heads. Is that fair?

3 A Yeah, the broader meeting was the full senior staff of the White House, yes.

4 Q What was the usual topic of the earlier senior-most staff meeting?

5 A No, there -- there wasn't a usual topic, because there's really not a normal
6 day in the White House. So, you know, sometimes it would be the President's schedule,
7 you know, what he was doing that day, is the speech pinned down, do we know what
8 we're doing here. Sometimes it would be an update on the Congress and legislation,
9 what was going on there, what needed to happen.

10 You know, again, it was -- kind of depended on the day, but it was an opportunity
11 for the strategic group to meet in the morning, kind of talk to each other about whatever
12 was front of mind.

13 Q During these senior-most staff meetings, were there ever discussions of
14 President Biden's health, his cognition, or his age?

15 A None that I can remember. In terms of cognitive, I can certainly say that
16 age is a polling issue, you know. I can't give you what day we discussed it, but I am sure
17 we discussed it.

18 Q And not to go back to this sort of bifurcation of age and sort of the things
19 that come with age, but you're sort of saying again that age was a polling issue.
20 Did -- did you all, at that time, not see concerns about cognition, whether those come
21 with age or not, as being a polling issue as well worthy of discussion?

22 A You know, what we were discussing was strategically what we needed to get
23 done. And as I recall, to the best of my recollection, you know, the issue around age
24 was one we discussed. I do not recall any specific discussions around cognitive issues.

25 Q And so the discussions around the President's age, were those only

1 discussions of public perceptions of his age or were there concerns from within the staff
2 as well?

3 A You know, as I remember, they were very much discussions around public
4 perception and addressing public perceptions and concerns.

5 Q And to be more specific about public perception, did that include
6 conversations about the perception of Cabinet members, Members of Congress, party
7 leaders, anyone like that, about President Biden's age?

8 A I'm not sure I understand exactly what this question is.

9 Q During -- during the senior-most staff meetings, did you ever have
10 discussions about Cabinet members, Members of Congress, or party leaders being
11 concerned about President Biden's age?

12 A You know, I can't remember any specific discussions of that kind.

13 Q And then, same question for the broader meeting, did any of those topics I
14 just asked you about, did those come up at the broader meeting at 8:40-ish?

15 A As I remember, the 8:40 meeting was more for people to report in what
16 various parts of the White House were doing that day, so it was a coordination meeting.

17 Q And when those staff reported in, you don't recall any instances where they
18 were reporting in hearing or otherwise dealing with concerns about President Biden's
19 age, health, or cognition?

20 A No, I do not remember that.

21 Q During either of these meetings, these daily meetings, were there ever
22 discussions of executive decisions that had been made or were to be made in the future?

23 A Yes. Those -- you know, those senior advisors played -- and the entire
24 senior White House staff -- played an important role in getting those decisions to the
25 President's desk.

1 Q And so there were related discussions during both of those meetings
2 frequently?

3 A Yes.

4 Q During your time at the White House, what was your understanding of the
5 process for getting approval from President Biden on an executive decision?

6 A When you talk about executive decision, are you talking about an executive
7 order? Are you talking about something a Cabinet agency is doing? I mean, there are
8 a lot of executive decisions that get made.

9 Q Executive orders is certainly one, pardons, clemency decisions, legislation
10 that he would be signing, anything of that nature.

11 Ms. Grooms. Do you want to maybe speak to something that you're aware of, a
12 topic that you're aware of, like a --

13 Mr. Benzine. Well, here --

14 Ms. Dunn. I'm terrible remembering --

15 BY MR. BENZINE:

16 Q I'll split up --

17 A Yeah, split it up.

18 Q -- the compound question.

19 A Thank you. Yeah.

20 Q Were you involved at all in the decision-making of approving legislation?

21 A Of whether or not the President would sign legislation?

22 Q Yes, ma'am.

23 A By and large, you know, I was not. By the time legislation got to a point
24 where it was passing this body and the Senate, you know, generally speaking, whether
25 the President was going to sign or veto it would have become clear.

1 Q And your involvement in signing or vetoing legislation would be more from a
2 comms perspective than the policy perspective?

3 Ms. Grooms. We -- you're asking if she was involved in signing or vetoing
4 legislation?

5 BY MR. BENZINE:

6 Q No. In the decision-making process around it, would you come in and say,
7 from a comms perspective this is what we're looking at, versus a discussion regarding
8 whether or not the changes in the Rescue Plan were good changes?

9 A You know, as I remember, I was primarily involved in giving my best
10 judgment on how things, you know, would play with our party, with various
11 constituencies, with the press. So --

12 Q All right. And, then, were you involved in the decisions of whether or not
13 to issue executive orders?

14 A You know, again, as I remember, executive orders were -- in that we would
15 discuss them as senior advisors. But by and large, that process was helmed by Bruce
16 Reed, and they came -- a lot of times came through Cabinet agencies, through the Cabinet
17 process to Bruce's desk.

18 Q What about pardons or clemency?

19 A Pardons and clemency was led -- that process was led by the White House
20 Counsel's Office.

21 Ms. Grooms. Excuse us for one second.

22 Ms. Dunn. Yeah.

23 [Discussion off the record.]

24 Ms. Dunn. Yeah. So that the recommendations to the President on pardons
25 and clemency were developed by the White House Counsel's Office, that a group -- a

1 group of which I was one of the people, would look at them and then the
2 recommendations would go to the President for his decisions.

3 BY MR. BENZINE:

4 Q And trying to tie a bow on this -- and I hate hypotheticals. I know I'm going
5 to get hit for asking a hypothetical. But in the situation that legislation -- well, I'll use
6 executive order because it doesn't involve Article I. The executive order process is
7 happening, you know, people are going back and forth with agencies on what the policy
8 looks like, back and forth with the President and other advisors on what the policy looks
9 like.

10 My understanding of what you said is that you would be involved in some of those
11 discussions but primarily from a communications and press perspective. Is that fair.

12 A I think that's a fair characterization --

13 Q Okay.

14 A -- of my role. And as things were prepared for a recommendation to the
15 President, often I didn't know about some of them. I mean, they just didn't rise to the
16 level where I was paying attention to them.

17 Q All right. Thank you.

18 BY MR. SPECTRE:

19 Q So did you ever observe President Biden reviewing the decision book or
20 memos -- decision memos regarding an executive action?

21 A As I remember it, that I did a few times on Air Force One and -- but I, you
22 know, by and large, was not in the room when he was making those decisions. He had a
23 decision book, a notebook where memos would go into it. He often also would talk to
24 the policy people who had been directly involved in the development of the policy and
25 ask them questions.

1 Q So who would be in the room while President Biden reviewed those memos
2 or that book?

3 A Well, he was reviewing the -- you know, as I remember, a lot of those
4 memos got reviewed at night. He would take the notebook home with him and come
5 back the next day and memos would come back out of the Oval Office. You know,
6 sometimes, you know -- well, I have been asked not to speculate, but based on my
7 experience there, some -- you know, sometimes the chief of staff, often Bruce Reed; if it
8 was in the foreign policy sphere, Jake Sullivan; the appropriate staff people.

9 Q And so you never played a role in physically giving the decision book or
10 decision memos to President Biden for his review?

11 A I don't want to say never, because I did give him decision memos that were
12 around press interviews and communications pieces. You know, whether we would
13 issue a statement, those would be decision memos that would have a "yes/no, let's
14 discuss" on them.

15 Q So --

16 A So I don't want to say never.

17 Q So it was a similar process to get President Biden's approval for press-related
18 actions as well?

19 A We would follow the formal process. Obviously, press being what it is,
20 there were times when we would just have to walk into the Oval Office and hand him a
21 statement and let him look at it and make whatever changes he wanted. But if we had a
22 lead time for it, we would definitely follow the decision, you know, as I recall, so -- the
23 decision book.

24 Q So outside of press or communications, do you recall an instance where you
25 physically gave President Biden the decision book or decision memos?

1 A I do not recall one, so --

2 Q And same question, do you recall ever receiving the decision book or
3 decision memos back from President Biden after his review for executive actions?

4 A You mean outside of press and communications?

5 Q Yes, ma'am.

6 A I do not remember ever doing that, no.

7 Q I know you said Mr. Reed would have been more involved in executive
8 orders.

9 A Uh-huh.

10 Q Were you ever involved in an exec -- in the decision process for an executive
11 order?

12 A Well, "ever" is such a big word, okay. So I do not remember any specific
13 times that I was, beyond the kind of press communications piece. I do not recall being
14 involved in the policy discussions or policy recommendations beyond sort of my portfolio.

15 Q So the decision to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for members of the Armed
16 Forces, you weren't involved in the decision meetings or the decision memos?

17 A I do not remember being part of the decision memos. I do remember
18 being part of discussions around the communication strategy around that.

19 Q So when did you first learn of President Biden's intention to mandate the
20 COVID-19 vaccine for members of the Armed Forces?

21 A I don't know. I don't remember, I'm sorry.

22 Q Were you part of any conversations regarding possible pardons or clemency
23 decisions?

24 A I was, yes. The staff discussions. I never had a discussion with the
25 President about the recommendations that came out of White House Counsel, so -- I

1 should -- I'll just give one note of context here, which is that the ones that I was involved
2 in were the ones that were looking at people in Federal prisons serving long periods of
3 time for relatively minor drug offenses or who under current drug law would have been
4 released but were being held under previous law. So they were consistent with keeping
5 the campaign pledge that the President had made.

6 Q So to be clear, the only pardon or clemency decisions you were directly
7 involved with were these decisions for marijuana-related offenses?

8 A That is correct.

9 Ms. Grooms. And I -- just to clarify, she's -- I think you keep saying she was
10 involved in the decision. Obviously the President makes the decision. She's -- she
11 keeps saying that she was involved in a discussion at a staff level related to the
12 recommendation made to the President.

13 Mr. Spectre. Sure.

14 Ms. Grooms. So I just want to clarify that --

15 Ms. Dunn. Yeah.

16 Ms. Grooms. -- and have you clarify that so that we don't have some confusion
17 on the record from the language.

18 Mr. Spectre. Thank you.

19 BY MR. BENZINE:

20 Q You had left the White House and went to the Vice President's campaign in
21 early August 2024?

22 A I didn't go to the Vice President's campaign.

23 Q Or you went to the super-PAC, yes.

24 A I went to the super-PAC.

25 Q Sorry. My apologies.

1 A Yeah.

2 Q After -- on December 1st, the President pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, and
3 then at the end of the term pardoned a number of people. Were you involved at all in
4 discussions regarding the President pardoning his son?

5 A I do not remember being part of those discussions, except to the extent that
6 the press was asking if he would, and we asked him. So --

7 Q And he said no at that point?

8 A And he said no.

9 Q You gave an interview to CNN where you said the White House was really
10 not a part of this process. It was a process that was done very much internally with the
11 family and with the defense lawyers. How did you know that if you weren't involved?

12 A You know, I -- I don't remember saying that, but any knowledge I had would
13 have been secondhand. And probably if I said that, probably shouldn't have.

14 Q And you said -- you eventually said that you did agree with pardoning -- his
15 decision to pardon his son, but disagreed with the way it was done, the timing, and the
16 attack on the judicial system. Can you --

17 Ms. Grooms. Could we --

18 Mr. Benzine. -- expand on that a little bit?

19 Ms. Grooms. Could we see what you're reading from --

20 Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

21 Ms. Grooms. -- or the article?

22 Mr. Benzine. I can have someone pull it.

23 We can go off the record for a minute.

24 [Discussion off the record.]

25 Mr. Benzine. We can go back on the record.

1 I'm going to introduce as Majority Exhibit 3 an article from CNN Politics from
2 December 11, 2024, discussing Ms. Dunn's comments at a December 4th New York Times
3 DealBook Summit.

4 [Dunn Majority Exhibit No. 3
5 was marked for identification.]

6 BY MR. BENZINE:

7 Q Ms. Dunn, we talked about it a little bit before, but I wanted to make sure
8 that you saw the exact quote. I asked you about your quote here on the second page,
9 "The White House was really not a part of this process. It was a process that was done
10 very much internally with the family and with the defense lawyers."

11 And you said you probably heard that secondhand. Is that true.

12 A Yeah. To the best of my recollection, I would not have had firsthand
13 knowledge of that.

14 Q And then, two paragraphs up, you said, "I do not agree with the way it was
15 done, I don't agree with the timing, and I don't agree, frankly, with the attack on the
16 judicial system," clarifying the timing, the argument, and sort of rationale.

17 Can you explain a little bit more what you meant about why you didn't agree with
18 the timing? We'll take each clause --

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q -- on its own.

21 A Well, I made it clear that I didn't disagree with the pardon per se for Hunter
22 Biden, who -- and I said -- as I recall, I said that I didn't think he should go to jail. But I
23 think my argument, as I remember, was more with the statement that was issued by the
24 President at the time, and also the timing, that this was the first one, so -- and free
25 standing.

1 Q I am going to paraphrase, so if your memory is better than mine, please
2 correct me. The Pres- -- part of the President's statement was that he issued the pardon
3 because he thought it was a politically motivated prosecution on his son. Is that fair?

4 A I think that is fair, yes.

5 Q So is that part of the statement that you disagreed with?

6 A As -- you know, as I remember, that would've been part of the statement
7 that I had issue with, given that the President had been careful for his 4 years in office to
8 really avoid attacking the Justice Department or Justice Department officials.

9 Q And it was a special counsel that was prosecuting Mr. Biden. Is that
10 correct?

11 A Yes, it was, uh-huh.

12 Q Which has some degree of independence from the attorney general? Not
13 as much as an independent counsel, which I learned last night as well, but --

14 A Yes, there had been a special counsel, as I remember, appointed -- I do not
15 remember when he was appointed, so --

16 Q All right. Thank you.

17 We're going to shift a little bit, and then I'll go back to Peter, but I just want to ask
18 some baseline questions regarding the autopen. Did you have any role in approving the
19 use of the autopen.

20 A I did not.

21 Q Did you ever authorize the use of the autopen?

22 A I did not.

23 Q Did anyone ever tell you to use the autopen?

24 A No, nobody did. Can I just clarify that I certainly sent letters over to the
25 Presidential correspondence unit, congratulatory letters, which I believe were

1 autopenned.

2 Q And that's one of the categories that I believe is routinely autopenned?

3 A That is very routinely. But I just want to be clear that I would've made
4 those requests.

5 Q The -- was there some kind of directive outlining that that was a routine use
6 of the autopen?

7 A I don't remember one, so --

8 Q You don't remember a memo saying, you know -- I know, based off previous
9 witness testimony, that President Biden never autopenned any legislation but did
10 autopen executive orders and then kind of some of the -- or most of the routine
11 correspondence. But you don't recall a memo or anything from the chief of staff saying
12 we can use an autopen on X, Y, and Z?

13 A I do not remember seeing any such memo, so --

14 Q Okay.

1 [12:22 p.m.]

2 Mr. Spectre. So I'll switch gears a little bit.

3 We've talked about already today some of your experience with preparing
4 President Biden in various debates prior to his Presidency, as well as President Obama
5 while a candidate and a President.

6 But you also assisted President Biden in debate preparation for the 2024
7 campaign? Is that right.

8 Ms. Dunn. Yes. I think it is fair to say I played less of a role than I had in 2020.
9 But I did play Dana Bash, the CNN moderator, in the mock debates and was part of the
10 discussions afterwards.

11 Mr. Spectre. And was your husband, Bob -- Robert Bauer -- also involved in the
12 debate prep.

13 Ms. Dunn. I believe it's been widely reported that he was.

14 Mr. Benzine. Who played Jake Tapper.

15 Ms. Dunn. Ben LaBolt, also reported.

16 Mr. Benzine. Oh, I hadn't seen that. Thank you.

17 BY MR. SPECTRE:

18 Q Did you think it was a good idea at the time for President Biden to debate
19 President Trump?

20 A Yes, I did think that it was a good idea for us to have the early debate.

21 Q The early debate or to have a debate at all? I understand that those were
22 kind of two different questions at some point.

23 A I think that's an accurate characterization. But I was a proponent of -- once
24 the decision had been made that there would be debates, I was a proponent of the early
25 debate as, indeed, all of the senior advisers were.

1 Q And why? Why were you a proponent of doing an early debate?

2 A We had seen success coming out of the State of the Union and the
3 President's performance there. We, as I remember, we felt that the best reassurance to
4 voters about Joe Biden was for them to hear and see Joe Biden.

5 We had a race that was seen as a referendum on the President that we needed to
6 turn into a choice between the President and Donald Trump. And the political waters
7 were deteriorating. We had thought there would be a more robust Republican primary
8 contest. There was not.

9 And I'm sure I'm leaving reasons out, but those were primary reasons, that we
10 needed those big moments.

11 Q And you needed to do them earlier why?

12 A Well, we felt that, given the fact that the Republican nomination had been
13 wrapped up and it was a two-person race, we felt that the President would benefit from
14 the comparison with Trump, as he had in 2020.

15 Q I think you also used the word "reassurance" about President Biden. What
16 did people need to be reassured about?

17 A Well, I think -- I don't recall personally using that word, but, you know, as I
18 mentioned earlier, we found that the best -- you know, our best argument for reelection
19 was people seeing Joe Biden.

20 Q Do you think that the American people needed reassurance about President
21 Biden's age, cognitive abilities, physical health?

22 A Well, I'm going to split off age from the other two, as I have been, because it
23 was a very -- what people needed to see was a President who was ready to keep fighting
24 for them, and they needed to see him in public.

25 We were -- we did a lot of things to accomplish this, but there was nothing that

1 was going to be as effective as side by side with Donald Trump.

2 Q Did the release of Special Counsel Hur's report have any effect on your
3 opinion about having a debate at all or having it earlier?

4 A No. As I recall, it certainly made me feel that having a debate and having it
5 earlier made sense.

6 But the other important piece was the President's performance at the State of the
7 Union, which we really did see as politically very beneficial, and looking for ways to
8 replicate that energy.

9 Q So the release of the report did play some role in your calculations?

10 A As I recall, it did play some role, yes.

11 Q And, again, you've bifurcated age from these other concerns. But in Special
12 Counsel Hur's report, on page 6 -- which this is a very widely reported line, so we can
13 introduce it if you'd like, but I can read it for you here.

14 Special Counsel Hur wrote: "We have also considered that, at trial, Mr. Biden
15 would likely present himself to a jury, as he did during our interview of him, as a
16 sympathetic, well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory."

17 So is that your recollection of -- did I read that correctly.

18 Ms. Grooms. How would she know if you read that correctly.

19 Mr. Spectre. Would you like me to introduce it into the record?

20 Ms. Grooms. Sure. I don't think she's going to dispute the quote. I'm just not
21 sure she can answer the specific question you asked.

22 Mr. Benzine. Instead of handing out 400 pages, we can just phrase it that way.

23 Do you dispute the accuracy of that quote?

24 Ms. Dunn. That certainly is the quote I remember, yeah.

25 Mr. Spectre. Thank you.

1 And I only ask because, again, in terms of bifurcating age from cognitive abilities,
2 Special Counsel Hur does not simply say that President Biden is an elderly man. He says
3 that he believes that President Biden is an elderly man with a poor memory.

4 So did memory or cognition really not play any role in shaping your advice
5 surrounding having the debate earlier.

6 Ms. Dunn. The decision to have a debate earlier and the recommendation to the
7 President, which he ultimately agreed to, was based very much on the politics of the
8 debate.

9 The Hur report was some of it. The State of the Union was some of it. The
10 overall political situation was some of it. And above all, the need to make this a
11 two-person race as opposed to a referendum.

12 BY MR. BENZINE:

13 Q I want to ask a little bit about the Hur report, because it goes to -- I think
14 there was a lot of reporting that that line in particular, there were a lot of attempts to get
15 it taken out of the report.

16 When the classified documents were discovered, you were already back at the
17 White House, correct.

18 A Yes, that's correct.

19 Q Were you involved in discussions on how to respond to their discovery?

20 A So I may need you to clarify that question, because, obviously, there were
21 legal discussions around that which I was not really involved in, not being a lawyer. And
22 then there was a communications discussion, which I was involved in.

23 Q In the communications discussion, were you involved in whether or not to
24 proactively reveal that classified documents had been discovered at the President's home
25 and office?

1 A As I remember, I was involved in that discussion.

2 Q Who else was involved in that discussion?

3 A The White House Counsel's Office primarily, along with the President's
4 personal lawyers.

5 Q And at that discussion, what was your advice?

6 Ms. Grooms. Her advice on.

7 Mr. Benzine. Whether or not to proactively reveal the discovery of classified
8 documents.

9 Ms. Dunn. You know, when it comes to communication around legal issues, I
10 tend to let the lawyers make the first decisions on what they think.

11 They felt that this was a fairly routine thing that they preferred to try to work out
12 with the Department of Justice and with NARA -- I'm sorry, with the Archives -- and to see
13 if we couldn't just leave it at that.

14 BY MR. BENZINE:

15 Q So I'm not trying to put any intonation into it, but the discussion centered
16 around that White House counsel and others, other lawyers, thought that this could be a
17 closed-door discussion between DOJ and NARA to try to solve the issue without, like,
18 making it a big deal?

19 A As I remember, given the fact that, obviously, the President's counsel had
20 volunteered that these documents had been found, they had not been found by anyone
21 else, and that they were raising this proactively, that -- and given the way these things
22 have been handled in the past -- at least this is my memory of this -- they felt there was a
23 possibility of just handling this internally with them.

24 Q And eventually Special Counsel Hur was appointed by Attorney General
25 Garland to investigate the matter and whether or not the President knew he had

1 classified documents, where they were stored, and that kind of thing.

2 Were you interviewed by Special Counsel Hur.

3 A I was not.

4 Q It was also reported that the special counsel gave the White House a draft
5 copy of the report for review prior to issuance. Did you review the draft?

6 A No, I did not.

7 Q Do you know who did review the draft?

8 A I believe the White House Counsel's Office. But, again, I can't speak
9 authoritatively to that.

10 Q Did the White House Counsel's Office bring you any concerns regarding the
11 draft?

12 A The White House Counsel's Office did not discuss the substance of the draft
13 with me after they had reviewed it.

14 Q There were a number of letters back and forth between the special counsel
15 and the White House counsel and the President's personal attorney, particularly around
16 the statement that Peter read that he was a well-meaning, elderly man with a poor
17 memory.

18 Were you involved at all in any of the drafting of those letters.

19 A No, I was not.

20 Q Obviously, the final report included that language.

21 Were you involved in the public response from the White House to the report.

22 A Yes, I was.

23 Q What was your involvement?

24 A We had an initial discussion, as I remember, around whether there should be
25 a written statement or whether the President should address it directly, and I was

1 involved in that discussion.

2 Q And on which side of the fence did you land?

3 A I don't remember where I was initially. The President made the decision
4 that he wanted to address it directly.

5 Q The President then gave a press conference afterwards. Were you involved
6 in preparing him for that press conference?

7 A Yes. As I remember, he gave the press conference after he had returned
8 from addressing the House Democratic retreat, and there was not a lot of time to prepare
9 him. That is what I remember from that.

10 Q All right.

11 It was reported that after the report came out that, using the White House
12 colloquially, that they were upset with DOJ for allowing the release of this report and that
13 it violated special counsel regulations and that the language was inflammatory and all this
14 stuff.

15 Do you recall any of those conversations.

16 A I think our counsel and I think our lawyers were very angry about that, as I
17 remember, yes.

18 Q Were there any conversations regarding firing Merrick Garland?

19 A I certainly was not part of any discussions about firing the Attorney General.

20 Q And then one final one.

21 Before this discovery of the documents in November 2022, did anyone ever raise
22 the possibility of classified documents at the Penn Biden Center to you.

23 A I don't remember anyone raising that, no.

24 Q Thank you.

25 BY MR. SPECTRE:

1 Q I initially brought up the Hur report --

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q -- with regard to what factors were considered when deciding to hold the
4 2024 Presidential debate much earlier than normal, I think earlier than had ever been
5 done.

6 And just so the record's clear, did cognition on the part of President Biden play
7 any role in holding the debate earlier.

8 A And, for the record, as I remember it, we felt that Hur had made the age
9 issue front and center, although the President then had a State of the Union where he
10 performed extremely well, and that the -- but the impetus behind doing the debate early
11 and doing the debate, you know, in June rather than waiting till September, was a
12 political decision on the part of senior advisers. It was a recommendation to the
13 President based on what we were seeing in terms of the overall political situation.

14 Q I understand that. To me, that still just sounds like a euphemism, though.
15 I understand that there were concerns about President Biden's age and I understand that
16 Special Counsel Hur raised concerns about his age, but were there not also concerns
17 about his memory or cognition and did Special Counsel Hur not also raise concerns about
18 President Biden's memory?

19 Ms. Grooms. So you're combining the words "memory" and "cognition." The
20 Hur quote doesn't combine those. So you're conflating them a lot, and I think maybe
21 that's part of the confusion that you're creating.

22 Mr. Spectre. Okay.

23 Did President Biden's memory or difficulties with memory play any role in the
24 decision to hold the debate earlier.

25 Ms. Dunn. You know, as I remember, we didn't have discussions around memory

1 in the context of the debate or really didn't discuss memory.

2 I've said this before: Age was an issue. You know, he had aged while he was in
3 the White House. He looked older. It happens to every President. And I worked for
4 a young President and I worked for an older President, and it happened to both of them.
5 And that was really the concern that voters had.

6 Mr. Spectre. So you don't think voters were concerned that President Biden's
7 memory, for instance, had declined.

8 Ms. Dunn. I cannot speak, again, for the American voters out there. But the
9 concerns that we heard and that we were really addressing with the early debate were
10 around his age.

11 Mr. Benzine. I'm paraphrasing a little bit something that happened a couple
12 hours ago. I think you said that after the debate with President Biden being more
13 public-facing, one of the goals was to -- that you worked to address concerns about his
14 ability to be President. Did I scribble that down correctly.

15 Ms. Dunn. You know, I don't remember exactly what I said. But it certainly was
16 to go out there and demonstrate that he was President, that he was energetic, that he
17 was looking forward to the next 4 years, to show the voters Joe Biden.

18 Mr. Benzine. Those same concerns didn't exist prior to the debate.

19 Ms. Dunn. The debate was part of addressing those concerns, to make it a
20 two-person race, and for people to hear directly from Joe Biden.

21 I think I did say earlier that we always felt our best answer to concerns people
22 raised about his age was for people to see Joe Biden directly.

23 BY MR. SPECTRE:

24 Q So we can get a little bit more into how the debate prep itself, I think
25 specifically at Camp David, how that went. And you said already that you were at Camp

1 David for the debate prep with President Biden for the 2024 debate? Is that correct?

2 A Yes. As I remember, I arrived Sunday afternoon, and the debate was on
3 Thursday.

4 Q Do you recall who else was there when you arrived or arrived with you?

5 A As I remember, Bruce and Ron were already there. I seem to remember
6 that Mike had a wedding to attend, so he had left but was coming back that Sunday. I
7 do not remember who else was already there.

8 Q Mike Donilon, is that --

9 A Yes. I'm sorry, Mike Donilon. I think Steve I do remember arriving on
10 Sunday. Jeff Zients arrived on Sunday. I think most people arrived on Sunday, and it
11 had just been a very small group.

12 Q When you -- when did President Biden arrive?

13 A I don't remember exactly, but he had arrived the previous week.

14 Q So he was already --

15 A Sometime in that week. He was already there.

16 Q When you arrived at Camp David, what was your impression of President
17 Biden's condition? Did he seem tired or sick or anything of that nature?

18 A As I remember, I didn't see President Biden on Sunday when I arrived. We
19 didn't do anything Sunday night.

20 On Monday, we had an initial kind of mock debate Monday afternoon, where I
21 thought he seemed in pretty good shape, but he was developing a cold at the time. And
22 then we had the larger mock debate on Monday as well.

23 Q So you thought he was all right but was just -- maybe just coming down with
24 a cold?

25 A He was starting to come down with a cold. It was clear.

1 Q And what made that clear?

2 A Cold symptoms. As I remember, he was sneezing, blowing his nose, kind of
3 the classic cold symptoms.

4 Q Do you have any knowledge of President Biden being given Ambien during
5 this time?

6 A I have no knowledge of that, no.

7 Q Do you have any knowledge of President Biden being given or taking Ambien
8 at any time?

9 A I have no knowledge of that, no.

10 Q Hunter Biden recently said in an interview something to that effect. Do you
11 doubt that assertion or do you just have --

12 A No, I just have no knowledge of this.

13 Q Is it true that President Biden took several naps during the first day of
14 debate prep?

15 A I don't know. I was not -- you know, I saw him -- I saw him at the small
16 mock. I saw him at the larger mock. We went through Q&A after both of them. I
17 don't know what he was doing before I saw him.

18 Q And just -- we've talked about this in a few different spots here, but just for
19 clarity -- what exactly was your role in debate prep?

20 A My role was to play in the mock debates the CNN moderator, Dana Bash.

21 Q And besides playing a character during the mock debate, did you play any
22 other role in debate prep?

23 A After we did the mock debates, we would go through Q&A with the
24 President, talk to him. Those conversations were led by Ron Klain, but all of us
25 participated.

1 Q Mr. Klain told us -- and I'm paraphrasing -- but that essentially when he
2 arrived he was concerned that President Biden had not reviewed the materials, the
3 relevant materials for the debate prep, and that that was clear because he had not made
4 his usual slash marks and other annotations on the cards.

5 Did you notice that yourself.

6 A No, I don't remember seeing his -- I don't remember seeing the President's
7 materials this time, so I didn't see his personal notebook.

8 I would say that that was not the first time I had heard that. I didn't hear Ron
9 complain about it this time. But that was not an unusual complaint at the beginning of
10 debate prep.

11 Q It was not an unusual complaint?

12 A Like in 2019 and 2020.

13 Q So similar concerns arose where advisers noticed that there were no
14 annotations or markings on the preparation, which indicated to them that President
15 Biden -- or at that point candidate Biden -- had not reviewed the materials. Is that fair?

16 A At the beginning of prep, some -- there were times. But I would also say
17 that I was not there in 2024 meeting with him in small group as I had been in the past.

18 Q What was your impression of President Biden's level of preparedness at the
19 early stages of debate prep in 2024?

20 A So as I remember, I actually thought he was in better shape than I had
21 expected on that Monday in those mock debates.

22 Presidential incumbents tend to do very poorly in their first debate. That's kind
23 of a historical debate thing that happens, and I'd, obviously, been involved in the 2012
24 Obama debates.

25 Q So he was better than expected in what way?

1 A In the sense of having a good sense -- you know, having a sense of how he
2 wanted to go prosecute his arguments. I thought that he was -- as I remember, I
3 thought that he was in pretty good -- a pretty good space about how he wanted to set up
4 some of the contrast.

5 Q And you expected him to be worse than that?

6 A I wasn't really sure what to expect. He'd had a grueling June schedule that
7 included two European trips and had not had that much time to review his preparation
8 materials. It's true.

9 Q So I think the way I asked it was when -- at the beginning of debate prep.

10 A Yeah.

11 Q But over the course of debate prep, did concerns arise for you about
12 President Biden's level of preparedness or his performance?

13 A As I remember it, the concerns that arose for me in the course of debate
14 prep that week were very much around the cold, its effect on his voice, and the fact that
15 it seemed to be getting worse, that if on Monday he had cold symptoms, by Tuesday he
16 had a cold, by Wednesday he had a bad cold.

17 And thus the progression concerned me because it -- I did have concerns around
18 how it might affect his performance.

19 Q Were there any conversations about potentially delaying the debate?

20 A None that I was part of.

21 Q Were you a part of any discussions with other people at Camp David, other
22 advisers at Camp David, who had concerns about President Biden's health at that point?

23 A As I remember, we were all concerned about his voice and how his voice was
24 going to sound and how just in general his -- you know, the cold and how he was going to
25 feel by Thursday.

1 Q Did anyone else raise different concerns? Did anyone raise concerns about
2 President Biden's mastery of the issues or understanding of what had been said on the
3 campaign trail or -- by President Trump -- or anything outside of his voice and seeming
4 sick?

5 A I don't remember having those conversations specifically. The
6 President -- as I remember, the President was in pretty good shape on the arguments that
7 Donald Trump was making against him. But, again, that is my memory of it.

8 Q So you wouldn't say his voice was hard to hear, that his delivery was halting,
9 or that his answers were all over the place during debate prep?

10 Ms. Grooms. Those are three different --

11 Ms. Dunn. Those are three different questions. I will go to the first one.

12 BY MR. SPECTRE:

13 Q I can ask you again, if you like.

14 A Yeah. Uh-huh.

15 Q Did President Biden's performance range from bad to passable?

16 A That's a difficult question because there are some people who in prep are
17 never going to be that great but they're what we like to call game day players, and you
18 put them on -- out there and they perform. I think that is a phrase that comes from
19 some sport, but I forget which one.

20 And I think we had always regarded him -- I certainly had regarded President
21 Biden as a game day player.

22 Q Was his voice hard to hear?

23 A His voice -- as I remember, his voice was not hard to hear in the mock
24 because he was projecting. In the Q&A afterwards, his voice was soft but he was also
25 losing his voice because of the cold. In the mock debates, though, you could hear him

1 and you could hear him clearly.

2 Q Was his delivery halting?

3 A Again, as I remember, his delivery in the mock debates was fine. He did a
4 pretty good job. But his voice was going.

5 Q And, again, during the mock debate, were his answers all over the place, in
6 your view?

7 A I don't remember thinking his answers were all over the place. I certainly
8 remember thinking that he needed to tighten up answers, that he wasn't following all of
9 the talking points we had given him. But that is not unique to 2024. That is simply Joe
10 Biden.

11 Q And we're getting close to the end of our hour here so I think this will be my
12 last question.

13 A Okay.

14 Q But were these debate prep sessions, mock sessions, were they called off
15 early?

16 A As I remember, we did shorten the mocks, the mock part of it, on Tuesday
17 and on Wednesday, because we wanted to save his voice. We didn't want to have him
18 standing there for 90 minutes and using his voice that much.

19 Q So the mocks, multiple of them, were cut short, and the concern was to save
20 his voice?

21 A Yes. That is what I remember.

22 Q Okay.

23 Mr. Benzine. Were any members of the President's family at debate prep.

24 Ms. Dunn. Not that I remember. Dr. Biden was not there. I don't remember
25 anybody.

1 Mr. Benzine. No? Hunter Biden.

2 Ms. Dunn. No, no, no. And I'm sitting here thinking was there a grandchild
3 who came by at some point, but I do not believe that is the case. But I could be wrong.

4 Mr. Spectre. We can go off the record.

5 [Recess.]

1 [1:26 p.m.]

2 Mr. [REDACTED] All right. We'll go on the record. The time is 1:26.

3 BY MR. [REDACTED]

4 Q Ms. Dunn, in the prior hour you discussed with my Republican colleagues
5 discussions around decisions to issue pardons and clemency and take other executive
6 action.

7 Again, just so the record is very clear, to your knowledge, did anyone in the White
8 House at any point during Joe Biden's Presidency ever make decisions to issue any form
9 of clemency or pardons in Joe Biden's name without his knowledge or authorization.

10 A To my knowledge, that did not happen.

11 Q Did you ever make decisions to issue pardons or clemency on behalf of Joe
12 Biden?

13 A I did not.

14 Q That was the President's decision. Is that right?

15 A The President made those decisions. Staff made recommendations.

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

19 A To my knowledge, no executive orders were issued without the President
20 having reviewed and made a decision on them, and other executive actions as well.

21 Q Now, apart from any instances in which President Biden may have delegated
22 authority to Vice President Harris to undergo a medical procedure, did anyone, to your
23 knowledge, ever step in to carry out the duties of the Presidency in Joe Biden's place
24 because he was unable to do so?

25 A To my knowledge, no.

1 Q In the prior hour, you also touched a bit on debate prep. Did anything
2 about debate prep change your understanding that Joe Biden was able to execute the
3 duties of President of the United States?

4 A In the course of debate prep nothing that happened raised issues for me
5 about the -- about the President's ability to execute his duties as President of the United
6 States.

7 Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you.

8 We'll go off the record.

9 [Pause.]

10 Mr. Spectre. We can go on the record.

11 BY MR. SPECTRE:

12 Q We concluded our last hour talking about debate prep. I just want to take
13 one step back from that.

14 When did you first understand that President Biden would run for a second term.

15 A As I remember, after the midterms in 2022, he told -- I'm sorry, let me start.

16 What I remember is that he told his senior advisers after the midterm of 2022 that
17 we should assume he was running unless he told us differently and that we should start
18 putting together a plan for the reelection campaign.

19 Q So -- and, again, I don't want to mischaracterize what you said, so please feel
20 free to clarify -- but you stated in regards to your coming back to the White House after
21 being a special government employee, you came back in 2022, and I think one of the
22 reasons that you said you came back was to help prepare a strategy or otherwise help the
23 President in -- with the prospect of reelection.

24 Did you not know at that point that he planned to or were you assuming.

25 A As I remember, I, like most other people in the senior ranks of that

1 administration assumed the President would run for reelection.

2 He'd had an extraordinarily successful first 2 years and clearly felt good about the
3 job he was doing, but also that he had not finished yet.

4 Q So in March of 2020, President Biden said something along the lines of that
5 he saw himself as a bridge to a new generation of leaders, and I'm paraphrasing a little bit
6 but it was something along those lines.

7 Do you remember that.

8 A I'm familiar with that. Michigan, if I'm not mistaken.

9 Q Did you not see that as President Biden indicating -- or candidate Biden
10 indicating that he intended to only serve one term?

11 A As I remember, that was not how I interpreted it. In the course of the
12 2-year campaign, he said something to that effect once, as I remember. And Presidents
13 generally serve 8 years when they can get reelected.

14 Q Do you think that was the American people's perception of those
15 comments?

16 A Again, I can't really read the minds of the American people here.

17 Q Did you have concerns about President Biden running for reelection?

18 A I thought, as I remember, he had -- I thought that he had been a very
19 effective President who had gotten a lot of things done, and that to the extent that I
20 would have concerns, they would be around how tough politically that reelection would
21 be.

22 Q Did you say to other White House officials that, you know, "Are we sure this
23 is a good idea?" something to that effect?

24 A As I remember, there were conversations between the senior advisers and
25 some of the political advisers off and on throughout 2023, testing the proposition. But

1 the President had been clear with us that we were supposed to prepare for reelection,
2 and that is what we did.

3 Q Were you worried that he would be embarrassed?

4 A I don't recall exactly, but certainly I didn't want him to lose.

5 Q Was there -- inside of the White House -- was there ever any consideration
6 of whether President Biden would be physically capable of running for and serving a
7 second term?

8 A I don't remember that there was concern around whether he physically was
9 capable of serving a second term or running for a second term.

10 Q And to avoid compound questions, I'll just ask you that same one again
11 about whether he -- whether there were conversations within the White House of
12 whether President Biden was mentally capable of running for and serving a second term.

13 A In my observation, President Biden was serving as President every day, the
14 most difficult job in the world, making decisions, making very tough decisions under
15 enormous levels of stress, and doing a very good job. And I think that we felt, that many
16 of us felt that that answered that question.

17 Q So then there weren't conversations or discussions about whether he would
18 be mentally capable of running for and serving a second term?

19 A I don't remember any conversations along those lines.

20 Q Were you aware of any staffers that were concerned about President Biden's
21 mental ability to run for or serve a second term?

22 A I was not aware of staffers feeling that way.

23 Q We'll go back to the debate now.

24 A Uh-huh.

25 Q I think we finished up talking about debate prep at Camp David.

1 On debate night, did you attend the debate.

2 A I did not attend the debate.

3 Q Where did you -- did you watch the debate?

4 A I did watch the debate from my home.

5 Q From your home. On television?

6 A Actually, on my computer with dial groups.

7 Q Could you explain just for the record what a dial group is?

8 A Yes. Dial groups are groups of voters who are brought in to watch
9 speeches, debates, other things, and they're instructed to turn the dial to the right if they
10 feel positive, to the left if they feel more negative. And it allows you to track in real time
11 sort of emotions and what is working, what's not working.

12 Q Did you watch it alone or with someone else?

13 A No, I was with my family.

14 Q President Biden did not perform well in that debate. Would you agree with
15 that?

16 A I was watching it on the dial groups. And I've said and I believe he didn't
17 have a great night, he had a bad night, that the beginning of the debate was weaker than
18 the end of the debate.

19 But I have to say, as someone who was watching it on the dial groups, neither
20 candidate did particularly well.

21 Q You said it was a bad night. So what about it made it a bad night?

22 A I thought -- at the beginning of the debate, I thought his voice sounded soft.
23 I thought his answers weren't particularly sharp or good. So, clearly, I think people
24 know what made that a bad night.

25 Q Had you seen that version of President Biden, what you're describing his

1 answers looked like and the way he sounded? Was that -- had you seen that during
2 debate prep?

3 A You know, we had not seen it during debate prep, and I was surprised to see
4 it on the debate stage.

5 Q Had you ever seen President Biden like that in any other instance?

6 A I cannot remember another instance where he was like -- like the beginning,
7 the first 10 to 15 minutes of that debate.

8 Q It seemed that President Biden would freeze up or lose his train of thought
9 during some of his answers during the debate. Is that fair?

10 A The President didn't have a good debate. His answers weren't sharp. He
11 sounded wandering, especially at the beginning. I think that he didn't do what he'd set
12 out to accomplish in terms of reassuring the American people about his ability to serve
13 the next 4 years.

14 And so whatever specifics you want to raise, I think I would generally say that the
15 beginning of that debate was very harmful politically to his candidacy.

16 Q So you said it didn't do a good job of reassuring the American people that he
17 was fit to serve another 4 years.

18 A Yeah.

19 Q So reassuring. So do you believe the American people were concerned that
20 he was unfit to serve for 4 more years?

21 A No. As I think I've said before, we had seen that age and his age was really
22 the primary issue for so many voters about whether or not they were going to vote for
23 him for reelection. Part of what we wanted to do with that debate was to show them a
24 Joe Biden who was gearing to go for the next 4 years.

25 Q So -- and forgive me, but we keep coming back to this sort of point

1 here -- but the debate, doing it the way it was done to dispel concerns of President
2 Biden's age, the debate, nothing about it would make him actually younger, of course.
3 So what about it -- how would it dispel -- how would it have dispelled concerns about
4 President Biden's age?

5 A As I think I've said earlier, we had seen that the best way to address
6 concerns around age was for people to see Joe Biden -- to see him out there, to see him
7 making the State of the Union speech, going back and forth with Members who were
8 heckling him, to see him on the campaign trail.

9 So, again, it was people hearing for themselves as opposed to what was coming on
10 their social media networks.

11 Q So did you think it would be beneficial politically for President Biden to
12 demonstrate that he was energetic?

13 A We thought it would be beneficial for the American people to get to see Joe
14 Biden directly without any filter. That is why we recommended the debate, along with
15 wanting to make it -- to define the race more as a two-person race.

16 Q And this was, again, to help dispel or alleviate concerns about President
17 Biden's age?

18 A This was to reassure people and to communicate to people, as I remember,
19 that his age wasn't going to keep him from being a great President in a second term.

20 Q What about someone's age would make them unable to serve a second
21 term?

22 A Well, I don't think there was a -- at least as I remember -- there was nothing
23 about his age or his physical shape that would have made him unable to serve a second
24 term.

25 He'd had clean bills of health. His doctor had written he was fit to be President,

1 to serve as President. Those of us who had regular interactions with him saw him as
2 someone who was doing the role of President and continuing to do so.

3 So there are people who have concerns just about age in general in this society.
4 We felt hearing from Joe Biden would help to set those minds at ease.

5 Q People have concerns about age in general, meaning -- what do you mean by
6 that?

7 A Well, there are -- and you're young -- but as you get a little older you will
8 discover that people associate age with certain qualities, maybe not as energetic, maybe
9 not -- you know, not someone that you want to give jobs to. I think it's pretty
10 well-documented in this country.

11 The President was extraordinary for a person his age or a person even younger
12 than him in terms of what he accomplished, and that is what we wanted to go out there
13 and show the American people.

14 Q And you felt that he did not go do a good job of showing that?

15 A There's no question that debate did not help our case.

16 BY MR. BENZINE:

17 Q You said that President Biden had a good State of the Union address a
18 couple months prior to the debate.

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q And after the State of the Union, did you -- were there dial groups on the
21 State of the Union as well?

22 A I'm sorry, doubters in what sense?

23 Q Dial groups.

24 A Oh, dial groups?

25 Q You mentioned dials.

1 A Yes, we had done dial groups.

2 Q Prior to the State of the Union, were there still concerns amongst the voters
3 about the President's ability to serve another 4 years?

4 A No, the concerns that we saw with voters, as I remember, to the best of my
5 recollection, were more just to do with his actual age, hearing about how old he was, in
6 the sense that he was the oldest President ever, which was certainly widely reported on a
7 very consistent basis.

8 Q You said one of the -- you said about the debate that you wanted to reassure
9 people about his ability to serve another 4 years. Was that strictly just speaking about
10 age?

11 A Yes. Yes, that is, as I remember, that is very much about age, and the fact
12 that he wanted to show people he really had the energy and that he had the desire to go
13 do this job for another 4 years.

14 Q And you listed a couple perceived negatives about age, including one that
15 not someone you'd want to give a job to.

16 Is loss of memory a problem with age.

17 A I'm not an expert on aging. Unfortunately, about to become one, probably.
18 [Laughter.]

19 A But, you know, I think that younger people have memory problems as well.
20 I think we've all met people who have memory problems.

21 Q Is making faster decisions more difficult with age?

22 A I might question the idea that a faster decision is always a better decision. I
23 think that -- and certainly when it comes to being President, snap decisions are not
24 necessarily what people are looking for. They're looking for the right decision.

25 Q Is it more common amongst elderly people to have other kind of, like,

1 mental acuity issues?

2 Ms. Grooms. I think we're just having, like, a really strange conversation about --

3 Mr. Benzine. I just don't know what age means.

4 Ms. Grooms. What age means in what context?

5 Mr. Benzine. Well, having the debate earlier to reassure people about his ability
6 to serve another 4 years because of his age.

7 Ms. Grooms. I think she's answered this question approximately 25 times.

8 So I think why don't you just explain for us then one more time what you were
9 thinking --

10 Ms. Dunn. Uh-huh.

11 Ms. Grooms. -- which is all she can do, when she made the recommendation to
12 have him do the early debate.

13 Ms. Dunn. So the President was, as was widely reported, the oldest President to
14 serve in the history of the United States. This had become part of how people saw him.

15 We felt that doing the early debate would accomplish two things:

16 One is, start forcing the choice between Biden and Trump as opposed to making
17 the race a referendum just on Joe Biden.

18 The second was, given the fact that people widely knew him as being the oldest
19 President ever to serve, that it would be a way of demonstrating to the American people
20 that he was ready for the next 4 years.

21 BY MR. BENZINE:

22 Q And I won't ask you again. Just having the debate earlier doesn't change
23 the number. The concern about age has nothing to do with the number. It has to do
24 with what age represents, which is what we just walked through and, as you testified, not
25 someone you want to give a job to.

1 So like --

2 A Well, that is sometimes the case. But I'll just say one more time that there
3 were two reasons to do that debate. They were both important reasons for us
4 politically.

5 The President agreed to do the debate. We had had a State of the Union
6 address where we had seen both our fundraising, his numbers, and grassroots
7 enthusiasm really spike up after that event. And we were looking for similar events that
8 we could organize around where people could get excited about Joe Biden.

9 Q In the -- if you saw it in the polling after the State of the Union, did voters'
10 concerns about his age dwindle?

11 A They did not. I think I've said already that it was not a successful debate.

12 Q No, no. I'm sorry if I misspoke. The State of the Union.

13 A Oh, the State of the Union?

14 Q Polls or dial groups after --

15 A Okay. So that's an interesting question. Certainly in our research we did
16 see that the State of the Union had helped address some of those voter concerns.

17 Q How so?

18 A We just saw in our research that people moved towards Joe Biden again.

19 Q But did the research say that part of their concerns regarding age were
20 lessened?

21 A You know what, I don't remember the exact things. And, unfortunately,
22 you've already had our pollster in here.

23 But I will just tell you that there -- that I do remember that the numbers, especially
24 with some key groups, definitely moved more towards Biden or an openness towards
25 supporting Biden, which at that point is what you're trying to accomplish.

1 Q And just -- and then I'll kick it back.

2 Do you think that was because he was energetic that night.

3 A I think it's because he had a very good State of the Union that night.

4 Q Do you think it's because he showed that he could spar on his feet that
5 night?

6 A I think that was part of it. I think that his overall message was an important
7 part of it as well.

8 Q Do you think his command of the facts was important that night?

9 A In my experience, voters are more interested in where you're going to take
10 them and how they're going to get there than they are on the minutia of legislative bills.
11 I'm sure your bosses would agree with me.

12 Q And then do you think his ability to project was important that night?

13 A I thought, as I think I've said before, that his voice and having a strong voice
14 was really critical for his public appearances.

15 Q Thank you.

16 BY MR. SPECTRE:

17 Q I think you said earlier that you had never seen President Biden conduct
18 himself the way he did during the debate prior to that. Is that accurate?

19 A I mean, yes, I think that what I said was that, as far as I can remember, I
20 hadn't seen that 10-, 15-minute stretch at the beginning, had not actually seen that
21 replicated.

22 Q George Clooney in a 2024 op-ed wrote that when he had seen the President
23 about 3 weeks before, quote, "He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate."

24 So it sounds like Mr. Clooney had seen President Biden act similarly. But you
25 never did.

1 A I can't judge what George Clooney saw. I can only say what I -- what I saw.

2 Q Were you at that fundraiser where --

3 A No, I was not there.

4 Q Sorry, at the fundraiser with Mr. Clooney?

5 A No, I was not at the Clooney fundraiser.

6 Q So do you think President Biden's age had anything to do with his bad night
7 at the debate?

8 A You know, I'm not sure what caused his bad night at the debate. I believe
9 that, you know, he was ill, he had a bad cold, he had gotten progressively worse in the
10 course of the week, and that he went on that stage not feeling well, and, you know, he
11 had a bad night. But I honestly cannot tell you why.

12 Q I think you've said that you don't -- that the dial groups didn't react strongly
13 to President Biden's debate performance.

14 Do you not think that the American people were more -- I can start again.

15 Do you think that the American people were more concerned about President
16 Biden's age after the debate.

17 A Coming out of the debate, and a debate that, at least in our dial groups,
18 neither candidate did particularly well, the attention and certainly the press attention in
19 the political world focused very much on the President's performance and his weak
20 performance, and that we saw over the days coming out of it, as I remember, as I
21 remember, you know, that we started to see a little deterioration, although the bottom
22 did not drop out.

23 Q I mentioned it earlier, but this was a CBS and YouGov survey conducted after
24 the debate that found that 72 percent of voters do not believe Biden has the mental or
25 cognitive health to serve as President, as well as nearly half of his own party. That's up 7

1 points from the beginning of June.

2 Were you not hearing that sort of information at this time.

3 Ms. Grooms. You're asking whether she was aware of that poll at this time?

4 BY MR. SPECTRE:

5 Q Were you aware of that poll at the time?

6 A As I remember, to the best of my recollection, we were seeing so many polls.
7 I'm sure I probably did see that poll. But all of the polls -- the public polling in particular
8 was pretty negative at that point.

9 Q I guess I'll be more specific. The poll -- and, again, not to have this age
10 versus the things that come with age argument, but I think it's important. The poll is not
11 about his age specifically. It's about his mental or cognitive health to serve as President.

12 So at least according to that poll, a significant group, a significant majority of the
13 American people were concerned that President Biden did not have the mental or
14 cognitive health to serve as President.

15 So during that time, did you know that the American people were concerned that
16 President Biden did not have the mental or cognitive health to serve.

17 A As I recall, the polling, the polling across the board was pretty negative when
18 it came to this. It's one of the reasons why we adopted a strategy to try to get the
19 President out there as much as possible coming out of that. Of course, we had a NATO
20 summit coming up, which was poor timing, but nothing you can do about NATO.

21 So we knew that people needed to see him and hear him even more coming out
22 of that debate.

23 Q I'm not sure if that answered my question.

24 Were you aware that the American people had concerns about President Biden's
25 mental or cognitive health around the debate.

1 A And I think I answered that by saying that we were aware what the polling
2 said, absolutely, and that's why we adopted a strategy to make sure they could hear more
3 from Joe Biden, see more from Joe Biden, that he was going to do more interviews, that
4 he was going to be out there as much as we could get him out there.

5 Q And was President Biden aware of these concerns?

6 A You know, I can't say specifically that he saw any individual poll you may ask
7 me about. But certainly his senior advisers talked to him about what the political
8 situation was coming out of the debate. He also got a lot of information from other
9 people as well.

10 Mr. Benzine. Did you think there was a difference between how the voters
11 viewed the debate and how the, like, political elite class viewed the debate?

1 [1:55 p.m.]

2 Ms. Dunn. I thought that -- you know, as I remember, I thought that the political
3 elite class was, you know, kind of overreacting in terms of the rush to say that you had to
4 replace someone who had won the nomination with millions of votes, who'd been chosen
5 by voters, who'd been chosen by his political party and was the President of the United
6 States and a very successful President.

7 BY MR. BENZINE:

8 Q So what happened over the next 5 to 10 days with Leader Jeffries and
9 Speaker Pelosi and George Clooney and all the donors was an overreaction to the debate,
10 in your opinion?

11 A I'm not going to label that that was an overreaction, because some of those
12 people, certainly Leader Jeffries, Speaker Emeritus Pelosi, people like that have a
13 responsibility to their members, and they were reacting to what their members were
14 saying.

15 But it was a -- the real question was can Joe Biden still win this race. And that
16 was what, as I remember, we set out to demonstrate that he could still do.

17 Mr. Spectre. You said in a Politico Playbook podcast -- it was published August
18 9th, but you recorded it the day after you left the White House. Do you recall.

19 Ms. Dunn. I recall recording it, yes.

20 Mr. Spectre. During that interview, you said that, after the debate, was, quote,
21 "24 days of unrelenting, negative, horrible attacks on Joe Biden." Yeah, then he started
22 moving from his own party and then from the press.

23 So did you believe the press reporting on President Biden's performance the
24 debate was horrible.

25 Ms. Grooms. Can you please read that one.

1 Mr. Spectre. It's a podcast. I can't.

2 Ms. Dunn. There's a transcript of that podcast.

3 Mr. Spectre. Can we go off the record for 1 second.

4 [Discussion off the record.]

5 Mr. Spectre. We can go back on the record.

6 BY MR. SPECTRE:

7 Q What was your opinion of the press' coverage to the reporting of President
8 Biden's performance during the debate?

9 A I thought the press was exceedingly rough on Biden, although not surprising,
10 because I think that there were many reporters who covered him who were -- well, I
11 don't think you want to go into my analysis of the Washington press corps but -- and our
12 challenges with them.

13 But I did think that it was one-sided, that there was very little scrutiny given to
14 things that Donald Trump had said, things that he had said in the course of the debate.
15 There was almost no coverage of Trump during this period up until, of course, July 19th,
16 and that was very one-sided and exactly, unfortunately, what we had set out to try to
17 change, which was change it from a referendum to a choice. So --

18 Q And I won't ask you specifically about the quote, but I think it's important.
19 I'll read it to you just so you have context.

20 You said that after the debate, people started getting that feedback for Biden to
21 drop out. People started getting that feedback within 48 hours.

22 Were you aware that people at the White House were getting feedback in general
23 for the President to drop out.

24 A As I remember, I was aware, yes. We discussed it.

25 Q Were you getting outreach directly from people on that topic?

1 A Yes. I was getting outreach from people who were concerned and wanted
2 him to drop out. I was getting outreach from people who wanted to know what our
3 plan was to move forward. So I was getting outreach along a variety of issues.

4 Q And limiting this to the 48 hours after the debate, there were people
5 reaching out saying that President Biden should drop out during that time?

6 A Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize -- I just misspoke then, because I would say, in
7 the 48 hours after the debate, I didn't get many of those incoming calls. I think people
8 were still trying to digest what had happened.

9 Q And then after the 48 hours, you started receiving some outreach saying that
10 President Biden should drop out?

11 A As well as outreach saying what is -- you know, what is your plan for staying
12 in? How are we going to go win this thing?

13 Q Who, if you can recall, were advocating for the President to drop out?

14 A You know, I can't recall anybody specifically. I know all of us were getting
15 many calls from people across a wide spectrum of issues.

16 BY MR. BENZINE:

17 Q Immediately after the debate, the President I think went to two post-debate
18 parties and spoke on the stage?

19 A He did.

20 Q And then went to like a Waffle House or something and then went to
21 Raleigh, North Carolina. Am I -- does that match your recollection?

22 A Yes. As I remember, he went to a post-debate party. He did the Waffle
23 House in Atlanta, as I'm pretty -- again, my memory may not be 100 percent, but I'm
24 pretty sure he did the Waffle House. Then he went to Raleigh for a rally.

25 Q As someone from the South, you can really only go to the Waffle House after

1 midnight.

2 A Well, I think it was after midnight.

3 Q I think it was too.

4 And then he had a while -- a little while without very many public-facing events
5 and then the NATO summit. Is that --

6 A Okay. So, unfortunately, I can't fill in many of those blanks, but he did have
7 three fundraisers the following day, after the fundraiser -- I mean, after the debate. And
8 then he went to Camp David. And he came back from Camp David, as best I recall,
9 Monday and made a public statement from the White House that evening on the
10 Supreme Court's immunity decision.

11 Q Do you recall why he went to Camp David that weekend?

12 A To the best of my recollection, I think there was some family event that had
13 been planned.

14 Q A photo shoot with Vogue?

15 A Yeah, I just don't remember.

16 Q Do you remember any discussions about canceling that trip to Camp David?

17 A I was not part of any discussions on canceling it.

18 BY MR. SPECTRE:

19 Q And to be clear, after the debate, you still thought that the campaign was
20 recoverable for President Biden?

21 A I am not a person who believes that elections are decided in June. I believe
22 they're decided in November. We had some big events ahead of us that I thought we
23 had to take into account as we thought about moving forward. We had a convention.
24 We had a second debate in September that, you know, had the President stayed in, I
25 think would have had a world record number of people watching it, so -- anyway, so I was

1 not prepared immediately after the debate to say that the campaign was ended.

2 Q And you thought -- you had no -- you had no concerns about President
3 Biden's fitness to serve another 4 years after the debate?

4 A I dealt with Joe Biden as President, you know, nearly 3 and a half years, take
5 a few months out for when I was gone. You know, I watched him make hard decisions.
6 I watched him make easy decisions. I watched him do some incredibly difficult things,
7 and I did not have concerns around his cognitive ability to do the job as President.

8 Q And you still didn't have those concerns after the debate?

9 A I did not have those concerns.

10 Q Do you think that the American people's concerns about President Biden's
11 cognitive or physical fitness were legitimate?

12 A You know, the American people have a right to make their own decisions,
13 but the American people also have a right to change their minds, to get more
14 information, and that's what campaigns were about. So what we were concentrating on
15 was how do we put together a campaign coming out of this that can still win.

16 BY MR. BENZINE:

17 Q On July 8th, the President issued a letter saying that he was staying in the
18 race, similar to what you've been saying, he won --

19 A Oh, yeah, uh-huh.

20 Q -- so many delegates, so many votes, that kind of thing. Were you involved
21 in the drafting of that letter?

22 A I was not.

23 Q Were you involved in the press or communications aspect of that letter?

24 A Yes, I was.

25 Q What did that involvement look like?

1 A Pardon?

2 Q What did that involvement look like?

3 A The press and communications around it. You know, I don't -- I don't recall
4 specifics. The decision that it was drafted and presented really is something that the
5 President had already signed off on, and then we were just going to figure out what to do
6 with it in the press, but I don't recall exactly what tactics we used.

7 Q Do you recall whose idea the letter was, like why he needed to state such a
8 hard claim at that moment?

9 A You know, as I recall, we had been having, as part of our senior advisors
10 discussions, the need to kind of shut this down, to make the -- to take away the
11 discussion about whether he would drop out. So I do not know whose idea the letter
12 was. I just know that it was very much in the vein of what we'd been talking about in
13 terms of next steps.

14 Q And then I'm not going to read the quote because I didn't print off the
15 transcript, but on July 10th, Speaker Emerita Pelosi said, in essence, it's up to the
16 President to decide whether or not he's going to run. Do you recall that?

17 A I do remember that.

18 Q That was 2 days after the President said he's absolutely going to run?

19 A I do remember that.

20 Q Did the Speaker give you or are you aware if she gave anyone else a
21 heads-up about this comment?

22 A I did not get a heads-up from her. I'm unaware if she gave anyone else but
23 she may have.

24 Q What was the White House's reaction to that interview?

25 A I can only speak to my own reaction here, which was, obviously, she was

1 reopening a door that we were trying to close. It was, you know, clear that this was an
2 additional political problem, yeah.

3 Q To your awareness, was the President aware of the Speaker's comments?

4 A Well, he was certainly aware of them after she made them. I do not know
5 if he had prior knowledge.

6 Q What was his reaction after the fact?

7 A I don't remember talking to him directly.

8 Q Do you remember getting a readout of his reaction from any of the other
9 senior staff?

10 A You know, I don't remember getting a readout. I was not as involved at
11 that point in some of the discussions, so --

12 Q And then on July 11th, I believe you went to a meeting of the Democratic
13 Senatorial Campaign Committee. Is that correct?

14 A I do not remember attending that meeting.

15 Q Okay. Was that just Mr. Ricchetti, Mr. Donilon, and --

16 A And Jen O'Malley Dillon.

17 Q And Jen O'Malley Dillon?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. Did you get a readout from that meeting?

20 A As I remember, I got a very brief readout that it was very tough, so --

21 Q There wasn't a whole lot of support in the Senate?

22 A There was not a whole lot of support, uh-huh.

23 Q Do you recall if that readout was presented to the President?

24 A I do not know if it was. I would -- again, I was not in all the meetings at that
25 point.

1 Q All right.

2 BY MS. HARKER:

3 Q Were you surprised that the President had little support in the Senate at that
4 point?

5 A As I remember, it was at a very -- you know, it was at a fairly low point, and
6 the Senators, you know, the Senators weren't coming out publicly, but they were still
7 communicating privately. So I guess I was not surprised that Senators were worried.

8 Q Because there had been private communications from the Senators, or why?

9 A Why was I not surprised?

10 Q Yes.

11 A I think there had certainly been some individual communications into the
12 senior advisor team primarily to Steve Ricchetti because he dealt more with congressional
13 relations, and he did report them out.

14 Mr. Spectre. In your view, who were the people -- I'll ask a different question.

15 Was anyone in the campaign or in the White House advocating for President Biden
16 to drop out at this point.

17 Ms. Dunn. To my knowledge and as far as I could tell, there was no one within
18 the senior ranks of the campaign or the White House who were advocating this at this
19 point. I cannot speak to the junior ranks of the campaign. I wasn't there. I wasn't in
20 Wilmington.

21 Ms. Grooms. At what point are we talking about.

22 Mr. Spectre. Up until, let's say, July 11th at this point.

23 Ms. Dunn. I thought we were at July 11th, as you made me relive just a really
24 fun period, day by day.

25 Mr. Spectre. So up until July 11th, you were not aware of any senior campaign

1 officials or White House staff that thought that President Biden should drop out of the
2 race. Is that right.

3 Ms. Dunn. I was not aware of any.

4 Mr. Spectre. And at some point, did one of those people say that they believed
5 President Biden should drop out after July 11 but prior to President Biden dropping out.

6 Ms. Grooms. Say it to Ms. Dunn.

7 Mr. Spectre. Did you have any conversations with anyone on the campaign or in
8 the White House where someone said President Biden should drop out of the race prior
9 to him dropping out of the race.

10 Ms. Dunn. I do not remember having any conversations with anyone on the
11 senior ranks about should the President drop out -- who said to me that they thought the
12 President should drop out. The conversations were very much how do we try to get
13 through this.

14 Mr. Benzine. What about conversations with the campaign's internal pollsters?
15 Did they ever communicate to you that there was a narrow or zero path to victory.

16 Ms. Dunn. I believe, as I remember, we had -- we were getting our battleground
17 data out of the field and had, as I remember -- to the best of my recollection, it was a
18 Zoom meeting, that was not an in-person meeting -- where they presented the
19 battleground data and presented a very grim picture of that data.

20 Mr. Benzine. Do you recall the electoral count in that picture.

21 Ms. Dunn. I do not recall it. I don't remember.

22 BY MR. SPECTRE:

23 Q And regardless -- this is, again, in reference to the Playbook podcast I
24 mentioned earlier, and I'll ask you a specific question to get at it without asking you about
25 the quote itself.

1 You said you had this decision that the Democratic Party made to ignore their
2 primary voters and ignore their primary process. This was a very donor-driven thing.

3 Do you think that the Democratic Party in their push to have President Biden
4 withdraw from the race were ignoring primary voters and the primary process.

5 A As I recall, we all had strong feelings about the fact that there had been a
6 primary process, that the only primary candidate, elected official who would run against
7 the President had run a campaign very specifically focused on his age, and the State of
8 New Hampshire had spent a significant amount of money up there, and that the
9 President, who was not even on the ballot, had won as a write-in candidate there with
10 71 percent of the vote despite a campaign based on his age, and that the President had
11 gone through a primary process in which millions of people had voted for him to be the
12 nominee. So we were concerned about that, the message it sent.

13 Q And you also said that this was a very donor-driven thing. Do you think
14 that the Democratic Party, their push to have President Biden step aside in the 2024 race,
15 that that was a donor-driven thing?

16 A You know, I've had a chance to have some perspective since August 8th, and
17 as I look at it in retrospect, you know, it was -- you know, it was not just donors. It was
18 also Democratic voters. It was Democratic elected officials.

19 Their basic concern, though, going to what this Committee is looking at, was not
20 whether or not the President could do the job. It was very much whether the President
21 could win and what Democrats saw as an existential threat on the part of the Republican
22 nominee.

23 Q What had changed that they thought that he couldn't win?

24 A They felt that his debate performance was so bad, and they had concerns
25 around whether his second debate performance would be any better. Just the concerns

1 that they had around Joe Biden had crystalized. It was an unfortunate thing for the
2 President.

3 Q I guess I'm still not clear. If the party was worried, of course, that their
4 nominee wouldn't win, and they were worried that voters had not liked what they had
5 seen at the debate, what were the voters concerned about?

6 Ms. Grooms. This is like a lot of -- like, it's the entire Democratic Party. It's the
7 entire voters. I think she's explained as best she can with this question, which we've
8 kind of repeated a number of times, her views of what she both personally felt and what
9 she thought other people felt in the world of the Democratic Party and Democratic
10 voters. I don't know that there's more that we're going to get from this.

11 BY MR. SPECTRE:

12 Q Were you among the people most fiercely defending President
13 Biden's -- defending the idea that President Biden should stay in the race?

14 A As I remember, I was a very vocal proponent for his staying in the race
15 during the post-debate period and really up until, you know, he dropped out.

16 Q Who else was among that group?

17 A Oh, I think most of the senior advisors. Many of us had been through some
18 really tough times with Presidents, with candidates, and felt that, you know, Joe Biden
19 had been a strong President who had really done great things for the American people
20 and that we wanted to help him fight through to another term.

21 Q Did you go to President Biden's Rehoboth Beach house on the weekend of
22 July 20th, the weekend he eventually dropped out of the race?

23 A No, I did not.

24 Q When did you learn that President Biden was considering dropping out of
25 the race?

1 A When I was -- as I remember, I was summoned to a senior staff call or a
2 senior advisors call or some kind of call that Sunday, and having a little experience in
3 politics, felt that was probably going to be the message.

4 The President at that point had been diagnosed with COVID and was home and,
5 you know, so obviously a strategy of fighting back was becoming more difficult.

6 Q So to that point, why did President Biden drop out of the race?

7 A I think he made a statement that is very self-explanatory.

8 Q And you have no further knowledge of the reasons that led to President
9 Biden withdrawing from the 2024 race besides what he outlined in his letter?

10 A No. I'm going to let the President speak for himself on this one.

11 Q Do you have any knowledge of the factors that led President Biden to drop
12 out of the race besides what was in his letter?

13 A I don't have any -- I don't have any knowledge of any other factors.

14 Q Was your husband Bob Bauer -- Robert Bauer, excuse me, in Rehoboth that
15 weekend?

16 Mr. Goldstein. If you know where he was.

17 Ms. Dunn. Yeah, I know where he was. He was in Woodstock, New York.

18 Mr. Spectre. So unrelated to the President dropping out of the race.

19 Ms. Dunn. Unrelated.

20 Mr. Benzine. Were you given any advance notice on the withdrawal.

21 Ms. Dunn. I was not.

22 BY MR. SPECTRE:

23 Q Do you still believe today that if President Biden had stayed in the race, he
24 would've eventually won the 2024 election against Donald Trump?

25 A I have no way of knowing what would've happened in that race, and I don't

1 think any of us do.

2 Q At the time of President Biden dropping out of the race, did you still believe
3 that President Biden could win in November?

4 A At the time he dropped out, I believed that he could win. That is different
5 from believing he would win. But I worked on -- I spent a lifetime in campaigns, and I
6 did believe that there was a path to victory that we would be able to find.

7 Q Did you disagree with President Biden's ultimate decision to drop out of the
8 race?

9 A No, I respected his decision. Presidents and candidates get to make the
10 decision to get in and they get to make the decision to get out.

11 Q He didn't counsel -- he didn't ask for your advice about whether to drop out
12 of the race or not?

13 A No, he did not.

14 Q If he had, what would you have told him?

15 Ms. Grooms. No, we're not -- we're not going to do a hypothetical if the
16 President had called her. She has answered that she didn't talk to him. He didn't
17 consult with her. She respects his decision. Let's not do hypotheticals.

18 Mr. Spectre. Regardless of the President's decision before he dropped out, did
19 you think that it was the right choice for President Biden to drop out of the race.

20 Ms. Dunn. People get to make their own decisions about whether they're going
21 to be candidates or not, and he made the decision to run, and it was his decision to make.
22 So it was not for me to say if it was right or wrong, so --

23 Mr. Spectre. You are an expert in this area, would you not say.

24 Ms. Grooms. In which area.

25 Ms. Dunn. People getting out of races.

1 Mr. Spectre. In Presidential elections and elections, political elections in general,
2 are you an expert.

3 Ms. Dunn. No, I wouldn't say I was an expert, but I am someone with a great
4 deal of experience, and one thing I have learned is that the decision to run is the most
5 personal decision, and the decision to get out is an equally personal decision, and that a
6 lot of factors go into it that staff don't know about and they don't need to know about it.

7 BY MS. HARKER:

8 Q When discussing the events following the debate leading up to the
9 President's ultimate withdrawal, you mentioned a couple times that you were less
10 involved in conversations than previously. At what point did you become less involved?

11 A You know, I really don't recall, but certainly the second half of -- by the
12 second half of 2024, I was less involved in some of the discussions than I had been in the
13 past.

14 Q Why is that?

15 A You know, I'm not really sure, but I was no longer as involved as I had been.
16 I wasn't included in things.

17 Q Thank you.

18 Mr. Spectre. We can go off the record.

19 [Recess.]

20 Mr. [REDACTED] All right. We'll go on the record.

21 BY MR. [REDACTED]

22 Q Ms. Dunn, I believe in the last hour you said something to the effect of age
23 was a primary issue for voters as to whether to vote for Joe Biden for reelection. Does
24 that sound right?

25 A That sounds pretty accurate.

1 Q And to the extent that age was a primary issue, would you agree that that
2 was the voters' perception of Joe Biden?

3 A Perception? I'm sorry, I'm not quite --

4 Q Sure, of course. So to the extent that voters had views on Joe Biden's age,
5 that was their perception from viewing him on TV and from afar. Is that fair to say?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And to be clear, you worked in the Biden White House. Is that right?

8 A Yes.

9 Q On two different occasions?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Is it fair to say, during your time at the White House, you worked closely with
12 Joe Biden?

13 A Yes.

14 Q You saw him frequently?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did you agree with -- strike that.

17 What were your opinions about Joe Biden's ability to serve as President and carry
18 out the duties.

19 A I thought the President made the decisions that only a President can make.
20 I thought that he set the direction and tone for his administration, that he held, you
21 know, his Cabinet and his staff accountable, and that he was fully capable of acting as
22 President and, indeed, he did so every day.

23 Mr. [REDACTED] And did polling -- did the polling in any way change your
24 perception or opinion on what you just said.

25 Ms. Dunn. No, the polling did not change my perception of the President.

1 BY MR. [REDACTED]

2 Q Ms. Dunn, was age a factor in the 2020 election of Joe Biden?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Was it also a factor for Donald Trump in the 2020 election?

5 A Not as much for Trump as it was for Biden.

6 Q Fair enough, but it was still a factor that was considered?

7 A Yes, it was.

8 Q And same for 2024. Was age a factor in whether voters wanted to elect
9 Donald Trump, in your view of the polling? In 2024, excuse me.

10 A In 2024? Again, less of an issue for Trump than for Biden.

11 Q But an issue nonetheless?

12 A But an issue.

13 Q Ms. Dunn, there have been allegations that, broadly, senior staff covered up
14 Joe Biden's mental acuity during the 2024 campaign. Do you agree there was a coverup
15 in any respect?

16 A I do not agree.

17 Mr. [REDACTED] We'll go off the record.

18 [Recess.]

19 Mr. Greenberg. We're on the record.

20 BY MR. GREENBERG:

21 Q Ms. Dunn, during your conversation with minority just now, you said that, to
22 paraphrase you, age was not as much of an issue for Trump as it was for Biden. Why do
23 you think age had become an issue more for President Biden than it had with Trump?

24 Ms. Grooms. Do you mean in the polls.

25 Mr. Greenberg. In the polls, sure. In the polls.

1 Ms. Dunn. In the polling? Each candidate has their own strengths and
2 weaknesses. Age was a significant issue for Biden. Trump had other issues, okay,
3 so -- but while age was a concern, there were other concerns about him that were far
4 more -- were stronger.

5 Mr. Greenberg. I understand that but, in your opinion, why had that become an
6 issue for President Biden and not for President Trump as much.

7 Ms. Dunn. You know, that's a hard judgment for me to make that I think part of
8 it is the definition of President Trump was so different, the concerns about him were very
9 different, although very strong.

10 Mr. Greenberg. So you have no opinion as to why a narrative formed that
11 concerned President Biden's age.

12 Ms. Grooms. I'm not sure what you're talking about, "a narrative."

13 Ms. Dunn. I'm not sure what the question is here.

14 Mr. Greenberg. Sure. You have no opinion as to why people were concerned
15 about President Biden's age but not as much President Trump's age.

16 Ms. Grooms. I think she's talked ad nauseam about her understanding about
17 people's concerns about President Biden's age. I think the topic of whether or not
18 people were concerned about President Trump's age is definitely not what you guys are
19 investigating here, but if you would like to investigate it, I'm sure somebody else would be
20 more appropriate to do that.

21 Mr. Greenberg. And I appreciate that.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

23 Q But I'm asking -- I understand that we've talked about age quite a bit today,
24 but I'm asking why you believe, in your opinion -- you've worked in this area for quite a
25 while -- why that became an issue for President Biden and not for President Trump?

1 A So I'm going to give a short answer to this, okay. There was a very
2 concerted effort to make it an issue about President Biden, going back to the 2019
3 campaign, significant social media, significant attacks on his age. So I think -- you know,
4 and part of a media ecosystem and parts of the media that was very dedicated to it. So I
5 think that helped because obviously there were -- there was an equal amount of focus on
6 President Biden's opponent but it was around different issues.

7 Q Okay. So you think that the public concern -- just so I understand you -- the
8 public concern about President Biden's age was -- the cause of that was through the
9 media?

10 A No, that is not what I said.

11 Q Okay, please, please.

12 A Okay. No, I just want to reframe this a little, okay, which is, as I think we've
13 discussed now since around 10 this morning --

14 Q Sure.

15 A -- okay, President Biden's age was a concern for voters. It was a concern in
16 the 2020 race. It was a concern in the 2024 race. Okay. It was -- you know, there
17 was no one thing that caused it, and, of course, he was the oldest President to ever serve.

18 So I would say, at the end of the day, it was many, many things that caused that.
19 There's no one thing I can point to.

20 Q Okay.

21 A So that's really the answer.

22 Q And the last question on this. I just want to understand what you said
23 previously about the media. What role was being played, then, by the media to
24 exacerbate this issue? That's my word, not your word.

25 A Right. And I don't want to use your word --

1 Q Okay.

2 A -- because I don't believe they exacerbated. I do believe that as part of the
3 political campaign in 2019 and 2020, and then on an ongoing basis while the President
4 served, that there were parts of the -- of his opponent's ecosystem that -- in particular,
5 some of the media parts -- that spent a disproportionate amount of time covering the
6 President's age and perceived issues around that, as opposed to other things. That's all.

7 Q Okay.

8 A Okay?

9 Q One more question. What parts of the media are you talking about? You
10 said media parts. I just want to know.

11 A And I think I just made that clear, but I'll restate it just in case, which was it
12 was parts of the media ecosystem that are aligned with opponents to President Biden.
13 That's what I would say. Okay?

14 Q Okay. Thank you.

15 Then I just wanted to -- I've been sitting in the back there, and I want to go back
16 maybe a couple hours.

17 But I think you said that in 2024, the idea was to get President Biden out there so
18 people could see him -- for people to see Joe Biden directly, is what you said. Do I have
19 that right.

20 Ms. Grooms. Do you mean in relation to the decision to do the early debate.

21 Mr. Greenberg. Yes.

22 Ms. Dunn. I think that sounds right.

23 BY MR. GREENBERG:

24 Q Is that -- was that your -- was that advice given by you?

25 A As I recall, it was a consensus on the part of senior advisors and the

1 campaign political team that having him out there more was helpful.

2 Q And not to be nitpicking, but did you agree with the consensus?

3 A It's a consensus.

4 Q But a consensus doesn't mean that there is nobody saying no.

5 A Yes, I agreed.

6 Q Okay. Thank you.

7 Was that your view throughout your time in the White House, that people should
8 see Joe Biden more.

9 A As I recall, certainly during the campaign and then when he became
10 President, it was definitely my view that to get him out of Washington, to get him into the
11 rest of America was good for him, and it was good for, you know, the American people to
12 see their President.

13 Q Does that include getting Joe Biden in front of -- or not in front of but to
14 participate in interviews with the media?

15 A In my experience, there are different ways to get him out there. We
16 thought that having him go out there, give speeches, do events, actually get to talk to
17 people, was also very effective.

18 Q But did you believe that the President should also participate in media
19 interviews?

20 A As was appropriate.

21 Q Can you expand on what you mean by "as was appropriate"?

22 A As a mix of different ways to communicate. As our media lens gets
23 increasingly fractured, you know, you have to work harder to get to more people across
24 more platforms.

25 Q Did you ever advise against certain media interviews?

1 A Did I ever? So I would say any President, I'm sure present one included,
2 gets probably a couple of hundred requests a week for media interviews. So I would say
3 that I almost certainly in the course of the White House did advise against accepting every
4 one.

5 Q Did you advise against the President participating in an interview that would
6 air before the Super Bowl?

7 A The -- I'm sorry. When are we talking about?

8 Q Let's start with ever and then we can narrow it down.

9 A With ever? Okay, well --

10 Q Well, there are 4 years, so there's four Super Bowls. I'm the worst to talk
11 about sports on this Committee, but my understanding is it happens once a year. So any
12 of the four that occurred during the Biden administration.

13 Ms. Grooms. I think it's inevitable that she advised against lots of interviews
14 considering she said there are hundreds a week, and she advised against many of them,
15 so --

16 Mr. Greenberg. That is true, but I'm asking if you ever advised against the
17 President participating in the interview that would air prior to a Super Bowl.

18 Ms. Dunn. To any Super Bowl ever?

19 Mr. Greenberg. Any Super Bowl ever in the 4 years that President Biden was --

20 Ms. Grooms. Are you thinking about a specific request, about a specific --

21 Ms. Harker. Do you recall any particular Super Bowl interview that you advised
22 on? There were four, so --

23 Ms. Grooms. Well, you're saying that you think that there were four times when
24 some specific media entity requested the President to do some kind of --

25 Ms. Harker. Ms. Dunn, please answer the question.

1 Ms. Grooms. What's the question.

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Did you ever advise against the President participating in an interview that
4 would air prior to the Super Bowl -- immediately prior to the Super Bowl?

5 A Well, let's get our facts straight here, okay. They don't air the interview
6 immediately prior. They do it as part of the afternoon programming. Many
7 net -- many networks don't air the entire interview in its entirety. They pick out maybe
8 2 to 3, 4 minutes. So there's this myth that grows that somehow a President's giving 2
9 hours to address the American public at half time, which is simply not true.

10 Given that, I think that in 2024, the White House made the decision that the
11 President was not going to do the CBS Super Bowl interview, and I think that's what
12 you're asking about.

13 Q Yes, ma'am.

14 A Okay. You could have asked me.

15 Q And why did you advise against, in 2024 let's start with, that interview?

16 A The first, as I remember -- I'm going to have to remember this. It was going
17 to be 3 minutes that they were going to show and then an additional 20 minutes across
18 other platforms throughout the following week. So it really wasn't the huge interview
19 that, say, Barack Obama had gotten when I was in the White House back then.

20 But the second reason was a timing issue, as I remember, that we anticipated the
21 Hur report was going to come out, and we didn't feel that spending, you know, an entire
22 interview before the Super Bowl talking about classified documents was going to help the
23 cause too much.

24 Q When you say 3 minutes, do you mean that that -- I'm really showing how
25 little I know about this, and please educate me. When you say 3 minutes, the interview

1 itself wouldn't last 3 minutes, right? You're talking about --

2 A Oh, the interview was going to be longer. I'm sorry I interrupted you.

3 Q No. So were you concerned that the 3-minute clip was going to be not a
4 good clip?

5 A Well, we were concerned it was going to be a clip that for Super Bowl
6 watchers was not going to be what we wanted to be talking about.

7 Q And by not wanting to be talked about, you're talking about the Hur report
8 potentially?

9 A I'm talking, yes, about classified documents as opposed to, you know,
10 whatever else the President might have wanted to talk about. So that was the decision
11 that nobody within the White House disagreed with.

12 Q Thank you.

13 And it's my understanding --

14 A Or at least nobody I know of, I'm sorry, as I remember. So --

15 Q And it's my understanding that in 2023, the President also did not do that
16 same interview. Is that correct?

17 A In 2023, as I remember -- and I wasn't directly involved with these
18 negotiations -- the White House and our press office advised that the President do the
19 pre-Super Bowl interview with FOX Sports because FOX was airing the Super Bowl, and
20 that we thought it would be a good way to cross over into an additional audience, the
21 FOX Sports audience, and that at the end of the day, FOX decided not to do that.

22 Q FOX decided not to do the interview?

23 A Correct, because they didn't want FOX Sports to do it; they wanted FOX
24 News.

25 Q And did you advise against the President speaking with FOX News then?

1 A I don't recall having any discussion that was -- I think we had the plan on the
2 FOX Sports, and when that didn't happen, we just moved on.

3 Q Wouldn't that be a pretty good opportunity, though, to speak with some
4 people who maybe the President didn't -- the President can speak to a different
5 demographic of people by having him speak with FOX News?

6 Ms. Grooms. I think she just said that --

7 Ms. Dunn. I think there were a lot of interviews that we did and there were a lot
8 of interviews we didn't.

9 Mr. Greenberg. And on that one, why didn't you, though.

10 Ms. Dunn. No, again, I don't really remember the discussions around then.

11 Mr. Greenberg. Okay.

12 Mr. Spectre. On the 2024 Super Bowl, you characterized the concern about the
13 clip to be about the special counsel's report to be about classified documents. By the
14 point at which the decision was made to not do the interview, had you already seen a
15 copy of the report or did you know what the report contained.

16 Ms. Dunn. No, I did not.

17 Mr. Spectre. So were you aware that Special Counsel Hur would make reference
18 to President Biden's -- made reference to President Biden being an elderly man with a
19 poor memory.

20 Ms. Dunn. Nope.

21 Mr. Greenberg. So just so I understand, looking back over the 4 years, you think
22 you played it pretty consistently that Joe Biden should be out visible to the American
23 people and you didn't take any steps to hide him away from cameras.

24 Ms. Dunn. As I remember it, we always, right, we consistently felt that having
25 the President out with people, which is where he really gets a lot of his strength from,

1 was far preferable than having him, you know, in Washington, and that we drove towards
2 a lot of that, and that we, you know, felt that the American people hearing directly from
3 Joe Biden was a positive.

4 BY MR. SPECTRE:

5 Q Were there -- during your time at the White House, were there concerns
6 ever raised by the staff or by President Biden that the schedule was too heavy or that it
7 was taking a toll on him?

8 A You know, as I remember, periodically people would raise concerns around
9 overscheduling him.

10 Q Did --

11 A This is consistent across every White House that I have been familiar with.

12 Q And so when you say consistent, these concerns were not more serious for
13 President Biden than you were familiar with in previous administrations?

14 A Not as I remember.

15 Q Were there any -- were there ever any attempts to lighten President Biden's
16 load with regards to his schedule?

17 A Not that I was aware of.

18 Q Did you ever advocate for President Biden's load to be lightened?

19 Ms. Grooms. In what way.

20 Mr. Spectre. For his schedule.

21 Ms. Dunn. Not that I recall. I certainly advocated for trying to have press
22 events, you know, earlier in the day so we could try to pick up local news coverage, as
23 well as other coverage as well. I think most press secretaries you talk to would agree
24 with that.

25 BY MS. HARKER:

1 Q Are you aware of any White House staff discussing the need for President
2 Biden to be medicated in order to deliver the State of the Union in 2024?

3 A No.

4 Q Do you have any knowledge of President Biden's political advisors weighing
5 in on whether Dr. O'Connor should conduct a cognitive exam of the President?

6 A I'm sorry. I'm not sure I understand what you mean by "weighing in".

7 Q Do you have any knowledge about President Biden's political advisors
8 expressing opinions or offering advice on whether a cognitive exam should be conducted
9 of the President?

10 A As I remember, we had a discussion at the senior advisor level about
11 whether the President should have a cognitive exam that was based purely in the political
12 world on whether we thought it would help address some of the attacks that he was
13 getting.

14 Q What attacks are you referring to?

15 A Primarily attacks from Republican officeholders. That's what I'm referring
16 to.

17 Q Attacks about the President's cognitive issue?

18 A Attacks on the President, yes, uh-huh.

19 Q Who participated in those conversations?

20 A I don't remember, but generally the senior advisors.

21 Q And what opinions were expressed?

22 A I think that, as I recall, the senior advisors decided that no matter how many
23 tests he took, it would never really quiet the people who were attacking him in an
24 election year on these issues. We did not have any concern about his ability to pass
25 those tests.

1 Q The senior advisors didn't think a cognitive exam would help in any way?

2 A We did not think it would help politically, but, again, we had no concerns
3 about his ability to pass that test.

4 BY MR. GREENBERG:

5 Q When you say senior advisors, did Dr. Biden ever participate in any of those
6 conversations?

7 A I am not aware that she did. If she did, it was not in a conversation I was in.

8 Q Did any member of the Biden family ever participate in those conversations?

9 A Not that I am aware of.

10 Q Thank you.

11 A Yep.

12 BY MS. HARKER:

13 Q Did you ever see President Biden receive an IV infusion?

14 A No.

15 Q Were you ever involved in any conversations about President Biden possibly
16 needing a wheelchair?

17 A No.

18 Q Neurologist Dr. Kevin Kennard visited the executive mansion 8 times in 8
19 months between 2023 and 2024. Are you aware of those visits?

20 A No.

21 Q Thank you.

22 Mr. Spectre. So I'm going to ask this question for a list of people --

23 Ms. Dunn. Okay.

24 Mr. Spectre. Did you want to ask something else first, Jake.

25 Mr. Greenberg. Real quick question.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q Did you recommend Andrew Bates to work in the White House?

3 A Yes.

4 Q How did you know Mr. Bates?

5 A I knew him from the campaign.

6 Q And did you recommend Ian Sams to work in the White House?

7 A I did.

8 Q And how did you know Mr. Sams?

9 A Through his work at HHS in 2021.

10 Q Thanks.

11 A He had worked for Harris in the primaries of 2019 and had been quite
12 effective.

13 Q What in particular made him effective?

14 A He was an effective spokesperson and good on television.

15 BY MR. SPECTRE:

16 Q So I'll ask you about a list of people. The question is just when was the last
17 time you spoke with this person.

18 A Okay.

19 Q So when was the last time you spoke with former President Joe Biden?

20 A I'll say a year ago.

21 Q So prior -- a year ago. So prior to when you left the White House or
22 afterwards?

23 A Prior to when I left.

24 Q Do you recall the content of that conversation?

25 A Just to tell him I was leaving.

1 Q What was his reaction to you leaving?

2 A We had discussed it, so I was just telling him he was going to read about it in
3 the papers.

4 Q Former First Lady Jill Biden?

5 A Certainly before I left the White House. I have not spoken with her since
6 then, and I don't remember.

7 Q Hunter Biden?

8 A Before I left the White House.

9 Q And do you recall the content of that conversation?

10 A I do not, no.

11 Q Former Vice President Kamala Harris?

12 A Before I left the White House.

13 Q So while you were at the PAC supporting Harris?

14 A At the super-PAC. I did not speak with her, no.

15 Q Okay. And do you recall what that conversation was?

16 A I don't.

17 Q Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff?

18 A Before I left the White House.

19 Q And do you recall the conversation you had?

20 A No, I don't.

21 Q Ron Klain?

22 A Let's see. I spoke with Ron last year. I'm not sure -- maybe earlier this
23 year to get the address of his daughter who had a baby.

24 Q So that was the contents of your conversation, was a personal matter?

25 A Nothing to do with this investigation, no.

1 Q Jeff Zients?

2 A Probably 6 or 7 months ago. Nothing to do with this investigation.

3 Ms. Grooms. These are all to the best of your recollection.

4 Ms. Dunn. Yes, all to the best of my recollection.

5 Ms. Grooms. Difficult memory test.

6 Ms. Dunn. Yes.

7 BY MR. SPECTRE:

8 Q Mike Donilon?

9 A To the best of my recollection, I last spoke with him in the spring about an
10 intern he wanted to place from Harvard from his IOP class.

11 Q To the PAC?

12 A No. He wanted ideas.

13 Q Okay.

14 Ms. Grooms. Why don't we just keep it to not related to the investigation.

15 Ms. Dunn. I'm sorry. Too much information. Okay.

16 BY MR. SPECTRE:

17 Q Bruce Reed?

18 A Not since I left the White House, to the best of my recollection.

19 Q And do you recall --

20 A I don't.

21 Q Do you recall what the conversation was about?

22 A No, I don't.

23 Q Jen O'Malley Dillon?

24 A Shortly after the campaign ended.

25 Q President Biden's campaign?

1 A No. Shortly after -- so in November, November of 2024.

2 Q And do you recall the content of that conversation?

3 A It was, you know, "too bad."

4 Q So --

5 A Not related to this investigation.

6 Q Anthony Bernal?

7 A Not since I left the White House, to the best of my recollection.

8 Q And same question. Do you recall what the conversation was about?

9 A Nothing related to this.

10 Q Annie Tomasini?

11 A Not since I left, to the best of my recollection, and nothing related to this.

12 Q Have you discussed this interview today with anyone other than your
13 counsel?

14 Ms. Grooms. I mean, obviously, yes. I don't understand the question. Do you
15 mean other people who are being interviewed by the Committee.

16 BY MR. SPECTRE:

17 Q Anyone other than your counsel?

18 A You mean the fact that I'm coming in here or substance?

19 Q Have you discussed --

20 A I mean, my granddaughters know I'm coming here.

21 Q Sure.

22 Ms. Grooms. I mean, we put out a press release earlier today. So I'm not sure
23 what the context is.

24 Mr. Spectre. Have you discussed -- have you discussed the issues relevant -- I'll
25 start again.

1 Have you discussed your testimony in today's interview with anyone other than
2 your counsel.

3 Ms. Dunn. I don't believe so, except --

4 Ms. Grooms. You probably have. So why don't we just say yes.

5 Ms. Dunn. Yes. Okay.

6 Mr. Spectre. And who was that.

7 Ms. Grooms. Okay. So why don't we go off the record.

8 Ms. Dunn. Can we go off the record for a second.

9 Mr. Spectre. Can we go off the record for a second?

10 [Discussion off the record.]

11 Mr. Spectre. We can go back on the record.

12 Have you discussed your testimony in this interview today with anyone other than
13 your counsel or your family.

14 Ms. Dunn. Nothing substantive.

15 Mr. Spectre. Okay.

16 BY MR. GREENBERG:

17 Q Ms. Dunn, did you ever believe that Karine Jean-Pierre should leave the
18 White House?

19 A I don't remember. Karine was a valued member of the staff.

20 Q Did you ever advocate for her firing?

21 A I do not believe I ever advocated to fire Karine.

22 Q Did you ever work to find a graceful exit for Ms. Jean-Pierre?

23 A I'm not sure what this has to do with anything.

24 Ms. Grooms. I'm not sure -- I'm not sure what topic we're even on at this point,
25 but it certainly doesn't have anything to do with the President's cognitive health. Now

1 we're doing personnel decisions at the White House.

2 Mr. Greenberg. Which are relevant to the President doing his job.

3 Ms. Grooms. You think that there's -- I don't understand. Please explain the
4 nexus.

5 Mr. Greenberg. Sure. The President running the White House is part of the
6 President's job, and I'm trying to understand this personnel decision, whether it was
7 cleared -- whether the President actually was the person who decided or if there were
8 other people who contributed to her departure.

9 Ms. Grooms. I don't understand.

10 Mr. Greenberg. I'm sorry. Can you answer.

11 Ms. Grooms. Only the President makes decisions about people leaving. I don't
12 understand.

13 Ms. Dunn. But Karine didn't depart the White House until the end.

14 Mr. Greenberg. Sure. But did you ever advocate for her to do that.

15 Ms. Sawyer. Are you asking did she advocate related to the subject matter of
16 your investigation?

17 Mr. Greenberg. I'm asking if she ever advocated for Ms. Jean-Pierre to leave the
18 White House.

19 Ms. Sawyer. And I think all we're asking you to do is articulate a connection
20 between that question and the subject matter.

21 Mr. Greenberg. Well, if the answer is yes, I'll have follow-up questions. If the
22 answer is no, then I won't.

23 Ms. Grooms. This is so far outside the field of the topic. I have no idea what
24 we're talking about.

25 Can we go in the other room for just one second.

1 Mr. Greenberg. Sure. We can go off the record.

2 [Recess.]

1 [3:07 p.m.]

2 Mr. Greenberg. We'll go on the record.

3 Ms. Dunn, I'll ask the question again.

4 Ms. Dunn. Yes.

5 Mr. Greenberg. Did you advocate for Ms. Jean-Pierre to leave the White House.

6 Ms. Dunn. No, I did not advocate for Karine Jean-Pierre to leave the
7 White House.

8 Ms. Grooms. Okay. And she had something else she just wanted to explain.

9 Ms. Dunn. Oh, I'm sorry. I also want to clarify that, on the question of
10 discussing this investigation, I did have someone I worked with proofread and fact check
11 my opening statement.

12 Mr. Spectre. Someone fact checked? Someone with knowledge of --

13 Ms. Grooms. No.

14 Ms. Dunn. No. No. But --

15 Mr. Spectre. Fact check, meaning.

16 Ms. Dunn. Fact check, just going through the facts that I put in it, the things
17 from Martha Kumar, that kind of thing, to make sure that we had the backup for those
18 statements.

19 Mr. Greenberg. I'm sorry, who are we talking about?

20 Ms. Dunn. We're talking about Jordan Finkelstein, who works with me, okay,
21 and he just proofread it for me. So I did not discuss the substance of this with him.

22 Mr. Spectre. Okay.

23 Ms. Dunn. Okay.

24 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you very much. We'll go off the record.

25 [Pause.]

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

2 BY MS. [REDACTED]

3 Q Ms. Dunn, you said, in your role, the President got a lot of requests for
4 interviews, correct?

5 A That's correct.

6 Q And because of the President's time, he couldn't do every single interview,
7 correct?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Did you ever prevent President Biden from doing an interview because you
10 were concerned about his mental acuity?

11 A No.

12 Q And the reason why you turned down interviews were because?

13 A Because we had so many demands on his schedule. I had to fight for as
14 much time as I could get.

15 Q Okay.

16 BY MR. [REDACTED]

17 Q So throughout the day we've talked about a lot of things.

18 We've talked about whether you could recall or whether President Biden made
19 annotations on his debate prep materials.

20 We've talked about where your husband might have been on any given weekend
21 in July. Turns out he was in New York.

22 We've talked about whether the White House made President Biden available or
23 was willing to make him available to FOX Sports for an interview around the Super Bowl.

24 We've talked about a range of polling.

25 We've talked about whether people from the outside world contacted you with

1 concerns after the President's debate with President Trump.

2 We've talked about your various jobs throughout the 1980s.

3 Is there anything we've talked about today that changes the views and opinions
4 you have expressed in your opening statement?

5 A Nothing.

6 Q So just to be clear, none of these things we've talked about today changes
7 your testimony that the President was -- he made all of the important decisions expected
8 of someone serving as President of the United States? Nothing --

9 A That's my testimony.

10 Q That's right.

11 He relied on senior advisers to execute his priorities and manage the day-to-day
12 operations that allow the White House to run effectively. But your testimony is still his
13 authority and involvement in decision-making was clear.

14 A That's correct.

15 Q Correct?

16 A Yes.

17 Ms. Grooms. In your experience.

18 Mr. [REDACTED] In your experience.

19 Nothing we've talked about changes your experience that President Biden's ability
20 to probe, to find the weakness in an argument, to make well-informed decisions did not
21 change during your time in the White House, correct.

22 Ms. Dunn. That was certainly my experience.

23 Mr. [REDACTED] And I do think your counsel in the last hour may have inquired
24 whether we were still on topic, given the topic may be being what was sent to you in the
25 letter from Chairman Comer on June 4th, potentially on this June 24th letter from the

1 White House Counsel's Office -- which, I would just note, it refers to both an interview
2 and a deposition, so there may be an error there.

3 I think we should just quickly just go back to the topics in those letters to you.

4 The letter to you does mention possibly usurping the authority of the former
5 President. It talks about exercising the powers of the executive branch.

6 I'm paraphrasing very slightly here.

7 These are terms that are not defined in the letter to you, either letter to you.

8 So it just may be useful to quickly go through some of the President's enumerated
9 powers in Article II of the Constitution, which I'm happy to share with you. I think you
10 could also count on your lawyers to object if for some reason I am misparaphrasing
11 something, or not. I do have copies. But --

12 Ms. Grooms. Oh, I'm sorry.

13 Mr. [REDACTED] You'd like it? All right. I'd be very happy --

14 Ms. Grooms. You assume I have memorized Article II of the Constitution; I have
15 not. I'll be fair to both sides.

16 Mr. [REDACTED] Here you go.

17 Ms. Grooms. Thanks. I'll just read along.

18 Mr. [REDACTED] And just in case you would like the 25th Amendment, here it is,
19 too, Susanne.

20 Ms. Grooms. Thank you.

21 Mr. [REDACTED] All right. So --

22 Ms. Grooms. I'm not as good of a lawyer as you thought I was.

23 BY MR. [REDACTED]

24 Q So we will go through some of the enumerated powers in Article II of the
25 Constitution, given that the letters that you received from the White House and Chairman

1 Comer mention executive power and potentially unconstitutional assertion of executive
2 power by White House advisers.

3 Did you personally act as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

4 A No.

5 Q Did you personally grant reprieves and pardons?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you personally make any international treaties?

8 A No.

9 Q Did you personally nominate and appoint any ambassadors?

10 A No.

11 Q Cabinet secretaries?

12 A No.

13 Q Judges?

14 A No.

15 Q Or other Senate-confirmed officials?

16 A No.

17 Q Did you personally convene both Houses of Congress?

18 A No.

19 Q Did you disguise yourself as President Biden and give a few State of the
20 Union addresses?

21 A No.

22 Q In your view, did President Biden faithfully execute the Office of President of
23 the United States?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And in your view, did he, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and

1 defend the Constitution of the United States?

2 A Yes.

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

4 [Whereupon, at 3:21 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

1 Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

2

3

4 I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the
5 answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

6

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Witness Name

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Date

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