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

INTERVIEW OF: BRUCE REED

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in 2335, Rayburn House Office Building,
commencing at 10:02 a.m.

Appearances:

For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM:

BILLY GRANT, COUNSEL, OVERSIGHT

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MARGARET HARKER, SENIOR ADVISOR

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[REDACTED], MINORITY DEPUTY CHIEF OVERSIGHT COUNSEL

For BRUCE REED:

CARLOS URIARTE, ESQ.

JOSEPH FOLIO, ESQ.

KEIGHLE JOYCE, ESQ.

Morrison Foerster

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

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

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

12 Mr. Reed. Bruce Nelson Reed, R-E-E-D.

13 Mr. Grant. Thank you. On behalf of the Committee, I want to thank Mr. Reed for
14 appearing here today. The Committee appreciates your appearance for the interview.
15 My name is Billy Grant, and I am a counsel for Chairman Comer.

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

19 Mr. Reed. I do.

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

21 Mr. Uriarte. Sure. Carlos Uriarte, U-R-I-A-R-T-E, with Morrison Foerster.

22 Mr. Folio. Joseph Folio, F as in Frank, O-L-I-O, with Morrison Foerster.

23 Ms. Joyce. Keighle Joyce, J-O-Y-C-E, with Morrison Foerster.

24 Mr. Grant. Thank you. For the record, starting with the majority staff, can the
25 additional staff members please introduce themselves with their name, title, and affiliation.

1 Mr. Greenberg. Jake Greenberg, chief counsel for investigations for Chairman
2 Comer.

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

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

5 Mr. Spectre. Peter Spectre, professional staff member for the majority.

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

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

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

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

10 Mr. [REDACTED], counsel member.

11 Mr. Grant. Thank you all.

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

17 Mr. Reed. I do.

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

22 Mr. Reed. Yes. Thank you.

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

1 the staffer will wait until you finish your response before proceeding to the next question.

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

6 Mr. Reed. Yes.

7 Mr. Grant. Exhibits may be entered into the record. Majority exhibits will be
8 identified numerically. Minority exhibits will be identified alphabetically. Do you
9 understand?

10 Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

15 Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

21 Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

25 Mr. Reed. Yes.

Mr. Grant. If at any time you knowingly make false statements, you could be subject to criminal prosecution. Do you understand?

Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

Mr. Reed. No.

Mr. Grant. Please note that if you wish to assert a privilege over any statement today, that assertion must comply with the rules of the Committee on Oversight and 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. Do you understand?

Mr. Reed. Yes.

[Reed Majority Exhibit No. 1

was marked for identification.]

Mr. Grant. I would like to enter as exhibit 1, a letter transmitted to your counsel dated June 24th, 2025, from Mr. Gary Lawkowski, deputy counsel to the President. This

1 letter informs you that President Trump has determined not to assert executive privilege
2 over your assessment of former President Biden's fitness for the office of the President and
3 your knowledge of who exercised executive powers during his administration. The letter
4 also states that President Trump will not assert immunity to preclude you from testifying
5 before the House Oversight Committee.

6 Ordinarily, we take a 5-minute break at the end of each hour of questioning, but if
7 you need a longer break or a break before that, please let us know and we will be happy to
8 accommodate. However, to the extent that there is a pending question, we would ask that
9 you finish answering the question before we take the break. Do you understand?

10 Mr. Reed. Yes.

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

12 Mr. Reed. No.

13 Mr. Grant. My clock reads 10:08, and the majority's time will begin now.

14 Mr. Uriarte. May I just ask one question before we get going? We have a very
15 short foundational statement we'd like to read into the record. Is that possible?

16 Mr. Greenberg. We're not doing that, but I'm happy to enter that as a separate
17 exhibit if you'd like.

18 Mr. Uriarte. Okay. Let's get started on the questions and we'll come back to it.

19 EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. GRANT:

21 Q Mr. Reed, can you just give us the background of your education, where you
22 got your undergraduate degree and any additional professional degrees.

23 A Sure. I grew up in Idaho, small town, Coeur a'Alene. I came east to go to
24 college. I wanted to be a writer. I got an English degree from Princeton. I got a Rhodes
25 Scholarship to study in England. Got a master's English literature in 1984.

1 Q Thank you. Obviously, you have a lengthy robust career. We'll try to hit
2 most of it during this, but just to start, could you tell us where you are currently employed.

3 A I currently do work as head of AI at Common Sense Media, which is a nonprofit
4 that works on kids' online issues, online safety issues.

5 Q And that's policy stuff?

6 A It's policy work, yes.

7 Q And then when did you first start into politics?

8 A Well, I grew up in a small town. My father was a country lawyer. My mom
9 was a community leader. She later went on to be minority leader of the Idaho State
10 Senate, so she had me knocking on doors and handing out candy at parades when I was very
11 young. I didn't see much future in that. That's why I went off to be a writer.

12 I started in politics. I couldn't find a job as a writer in New York City, so I came to
13 look down here, and Al Gore, who had just been elected to the Senate, was looking for a
14 speech writer, so I came to work for him in 1985.

15 Q Thank you. And then shortly after that, you worked for then-Governor Bill
16 Clinton?

17 A Yes. I spent nearly 5 years in the Senate, and also on Al Gore's presidential
18 campaign. Left at the beginning of 1990 to work for the Democratic Leadership Council, a
19 think tank here on the Hill, which Governor Clinton was taking over as chairman. Worked
20 for him for the -- throughout '91 and '92. Left the think tank to be his deputy campaign
21 manager for policy and worked on his '92 campaign.

22 Q And then after working on this campaign, you were a part of the Clinton
23 administration. Is that correct?

24 A Yes. I started as a deputy assistant to the President for domestic policy,
25 became assistant to the President for domestic policy planning, and then assistant to the

1 President for domestic policy, and served all 8 years in the Clinton White House.

2 Q After wrapping up with the Clinton administration, you had a few different
3 roles. Can you just briefly walk us through some of those roles?

4 A Sure. After the 2000 election, I went back to the Democratic Leadership
5 Council, worked as President of the think tank for most of the that decade. In 2010, the
6 Obama White House asked me to come work for them as executive director of the
7 Bowles-Simpson National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. I did that for a
8 year.

9 At the end of that, I started as Joe Biden's chief of staff and assistant to President
10 Obama in 2011. Did that for almost 3 years. Then left to move out west, run a
11 foundation, try to earn enough to put my kids through college, and then returned to politics
12 to work with Joe Biden as his deputy campaign -- as a senior adviser in the -- starting in 2019
13 in his campaign.

14 Q Prior to being then-Vice President Biden's chief of staff, had you met Joe Biden
15 prior to that?

16 A I had. In early 1987, when he was putting together his presidential campaign,
17 he was looking for a speech writer, and a good friend of mine, law school friend of my wife
18 and a neighbor of ours, Ron Klain, recommended me for the job, so I interviewed with
19 Senator Biden. He offered me the job. I went to my boss at the time, Al Gore, and talked
20 to him about it, and he said that he was considering running for President himself, so I didn't
21 take the job and stayed on Senator Gore's staff and worked on his campaign as well.

22 Q Did you have any role or negotiations for any role for President Biden's 2008
23 presidential campaign?

24 A I did not. I had -- I encountered Senator Biden in the '90s in the Clinton
25 administration when I was doing domestic policy and working on crime issues, worked with

1 him on the Brady bill and the crime bill.

2 Q And you mentioned that for the 2020 presidential campaign for Mr. Biden, you
3 were a senior adviser.

4 A Yes.

5 Q What kind of role -- what was your actual role?

6 A My role was to travel with him and be a policy adviser. It was quite similar to
7 the role I'd had in the '92 campaign with Governor Clinton, so I spent far too much time in
8 Iowa and elsewhere with him in small unsafe planes and vans traveling around the country
9 as his policy guy.

10 Q And how did you come to begin working on the 2020 presidential campaign?
11 Did somebody --

12 A He asked me to.

13 Q President Biden did?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q Through the campaign --

16 Mr. Greenberg. When did he ask you to join the campaign?

17 Mr. Reed. It was -- it must have been March of 2019. He announced in April.

18 Mr. Greenberg. Had there been previous conversations to that about Joe Biden
19 running for President in 2020?

20 Mr. Reed. I was mostly working out west, so I wasn't part of many conversations.
21 I'm sure that I was part of some. I don't remember any conversations with him before that
22 time, but I undoubtedly had some with my friends that I knew from the Biden's time as Vice
23 President.

24 BY MR. GRANT:

25 Q Granted, during campaign, you know, it can be very hectic, but what would

1 your standard day-to-day kind of responsibility look like for the 2020 presidential campaign?

2 A So my entire role was on the road. I don't think I set foot in the headquarters
3 in Philadelphia until the end of campaign and I may have stopped by the Washington
4 headquarters once, but mostly I just traveled with him, and that meant, you know, I'd go
5 along on a trip that was 3 or 4 days long, and we'd work from morning until late at night,
6 either driving long distances or flying long distances, so it was -- but it was -- it was about
7 half of my time was spent, so I was -- I wasn't working as long hours as he was.

8 Q Would you say that you spoke with or met with Mr. Biden daily during this time
9 period?

10 A Yeah. I sat next to him in the van. You get to know each other pretty well
11 when you're driving around for 400 or 500 miles a day.

12 Q Did you get to know any other members of the Biden family during this time?

13 A Well, I'd been his chief of staff, so I knew Dr. Biden well and I met his children.
14 I knew Beau as well as Hunter, and Ashley, and I may have met some of the grandkids.

15 Q Did you think that Mr. Biden should run in 2020? Was he, you know, your
16 first thought that he should run for President in 2020?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And prior to the 2020 election on the campaign trail or otherwise, did you ever
19 have any conversations with Mr. Biden about being a one-term President?

20 A I don't recall any conversations about that. I think most of our conversations
21 were about trying to win.

22 Q Fair enough. Did you speak with, to the extent you recall, any other senior
23 campaign advisers about President Biden being a one-term President at this point during the
24 2020 race?

25 A We very well have. As I said, we were just hoping to get through the

1 primaries.

2 Q During the 2020 campaign cycle, did you see or hear President Biden's struggle
3 to communicate while on the campaign trail?

4 A He stumbled over his words sometimes. He's a good communicator, but
5 often talked too long and sometimes said things that he didn't intend to say.

6 Q He mixed up words, mixed up names, that kind of thing?

7 A He has always talked a little too much, talked a little too fast, and made his
8 share of gaffes along the way.

9 Q Did you have any discussions with President Biden about the COVID lockdowns
10 and running more of a virtual campaign and how that might benefit him?

11 A I was with him on the campaign trail when the COVID emergency was declared
12 and we shut down campaigning, and I came back to Washington and worked there for the
13 next few months until the campaign started doing events again.

14 Q Would you travel up to Wilmington at all during this time, or did you stay here?

15 A Once we started -- once he started doing events again, which was on a very
16 limited basis, probably, I guess I must have gone up for the convention, for example, which
17 was in Wilmington, and we did the occasional of that. We did a lot of virtual events.

18 Q And speaking about those virtual events, were you involved in any of the
19 decisions to keep President Biden primarily in Delaware during this time?

20 A I was not involved in those decisions, no.

21 Q You didn't speak with any other senior campaign staff about keeping Mr. Biden
22 in Delaware?

23 A I just did events with him wherever and by whatever means I was asked to do.

24 Q And during this time, Mr. Biden often did his events in the afternoons. Did
25 you have any conversations with Mr. Biden about more strictly scheduling events in the

1 afternoons instead of, you know, in the mornings or later at night?

2 A I did not. I remember doing events and having conversations at various hours
3 of the day, but --

4 Q And on the same vein, did you have discussions with other senior campaign
5 staff about, you know, events being held primarily in the afternoons?

6 A Not that I can recall.

7 Ms. Harker. Did you discuss with anyone how the COVID lockdowns could benefit
8 Mr. Biden's campaign?

9 Mr. Reed. I don't recall any conversations like that. I was part of a number of
10 conversations about what to do about COVID. The President had regular conversations
11 with experts on the topic, and sometimes I was part of those by virtual.

12 BY MR. GREENBERG:

13 Q Do you agree that having worked on other campaigns that the 2020 election
14 was unique in its emphasis on virtual events?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Who -- understanding that you might not have been part of those
17 conversations, do you have any impression about who would have been part of the
18 conversations to make the campaign a more virtual-style campaign?

19 A As I recall, we did that because for the same reason we'd stopped campaigning
20 in March. That it wasn't -- we couldn't do big crowd events. We didn't want to expose
21 people to COVID by bringing a bunch of people together. And so, you know, in the fall
22 there were a few more events on the road, but, you know, everyone was working virtually
23 for most of 2020.

24 Q Do you believe Annie Tomasini would have been part of conversations to keep
25 the President more --

1 A I can't speak for what conversations Annie might have been part of.

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q During the 2020 campaign -- we'll step back for a second. Before the COVID
4 lockdowns happened, did Mr. Biden often use the teleprompter during campaign events?

5 A I'm sure he did.

6 Q You don't remember?

7 A The -- we did all kinds of events, so I'm sure there were set speeches where he
8 read off a prompter.

9 Q Did his use of the tele -- did President Biden's use of the teleprompter, did it
10 increase when the campaign became more virtual, stay about the same?

11 A As I said, I wasn't in-person at his house for most of that time, so -- but I'm sure
12 that he used a prompter for many events, sure.

13 Q You didn't have discussions about policy points that you wanted to be in a
14 speech or added to a teleprompter?

15 A Well, I'd get information to the folks in Wilmington, but it wasn't my job to
16 determine, you know, put his events together and I wasn't present in Wilmington to oversee
17 them.

18 Q When you said you would get things to the folks in Wilmington, who were
19 those people in Wilmington?

20 A So there were a couple people in his pod who were -- had been around enough
21 and were careful, so it wouldn't be exposing them or him to any COVID risk. Annie
22 Tomasini, I believe Ashley Williams, and Stephen Goepfert, who was his body man at the
23 time.

24 Q They were all in Wilmington? Before we get too much more past the 2020
25 election, I just want to run through a list of people, and if you could tell us when the last

1 time it was when you spoke with them.

2 A Sure.

3 Q So President Biden.

4 A Sometime in June. I couldn't say which day.

5 Q Of this year?

6 A Of this year, yeah.

7 Q And do you recall what you spoke about?

8 A He -- since he left office, he's had periodic meetings when he's in town with
9 former advisers and often to talk about events that he's going to be doing. I don't
10 remember what the last conversation was about.

11 Q Do you often give him some type of policy advice or otherwise when he is
12 doing events now?

13 A Well, when he asks for it, sure.

14 Q Okay. When is the last time you spoke to former First Lady Jill Biden?

15 A She may have been in town for one of those meetings. I don't know that it
16 was in June. It might have been earlier.

17 Q And Hunter Biden?

18 A I think the last time I saw him would have been when the family traveled -- on
19 the last day of the administration when the family traveled out to California. Several of us
20 flew out with the President on Air Force One and then we turned around and came back.

21 Q You've had no other conversations, phone calls, emails, text chains?

22 A I don't think so. I don't recall any, no.

23 Q What about Ashley Biden?

24 A The same, although I can't remember. I assume she was on that trip to
25 California, but I haven't spoken to her since.

1 Q What about President Biden's grandchild, Naomi Biden?

2 A Same.

3 Q Valerie Biden Owens?

4 A I can't remember if she was on that trip, but if -- that would have been the last
5 day, inauguration day.

6 Q Vice President Kamala Harris?

7 A Definitely not since we left office.

8 Q Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff?

9 A Same.

10 Q Ron Klain?

11 A I don't recall seeing or speaking with him since we left office. I could be
12 wrong.

13 BY MR. GREENBERG:

14 Q Do you remember a conversation, any conversation with Mr. Klain, about
15 potentially working for former President Biden after he left office?

16 A Could you clarify the question. About Ron working for him?

17 Q I'm sorry. About -- have you ever had -- do you recall a conversation with Mr.
18 Klain about you working for former President Biden after former President Biden left office?

19 A I don't recall any conversations with Ron about that.

20 Q Have you had any conversations with anybody about that?

21 A Before we left office, the President wanted advisers to keep working with him.
22 Never anything formal, and so I didn't consider working for him.

23 Mr. Grant. Same question for Jeff Zients.

24 Mr. Reed. I believe I've seen him at the one or two strategy -- weekly meetings
25 where the President has come back to D.C.

1 Mr. Uriarte. Again, you're asking when was the last time Bruce spoke to these
2 people?

3 Mr. Grant. Yes.

4 Mr. Grant.

5 Q Anita Dunn?

6 A I don't recall seeing her since the -- since we left office.

7 Q Any other conversations, phone calls, emails, texts?

8 A No.

9 Q What about Mike Donilon?

10 A Mike has come to the -- a weekly meeting. Probably last heard from him
11 virtually at a meeting here with -- when the President was in town in May or June.

12 Q No other phone calls, emails, text communications?

13 A Not that I can recall.

14 Ms. Harker. What is this weekly meeting?

15 Mr. Reed. It's just when he is in town, which is not very often, he, at least for the
16 first six months, had a transition office, and so a few of us would spend an hour or two just
17 talking with him.

18 Q And by "he," you mean --

19 A The President.

20 Q President Biden?

21 A Yes.

22 Q "In town" being D.C.?

23 A Yes.

24 Ms. Harker. And the meeting was in-person?

25 Mr. Reed. Yeah. I don't remember having that meeting when he wasn't here,

1 so --

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q How about Jen O'Malley Dillon? I'm sorry, let me back up. Bruce Reed?

4 A That's me.

5 Q Of course.

6 A I have conversations with myself all the time.

7 Q I do, too. Jen O'Malley Dillon?

8 A She has emailed me constantly to ask me to donate to the Massachusetts Bike
9 Race for Cancer, which I always give every year to her. She's a great rider, and so I already
10 agreed to do it, but I continue to get emails.

11 Q Anthony Bernal?

12 A I probably -- probably the last time I saw him would have been the last time I
13 saw Dr. Biden in the transition office sometime this spring.

14 Q No other phone calls, emails, or text messages?

15 A Not that I can recall.

16 Q Annie Tomasini?

17 A I've had -- I think I received a text message from her last week.

18 Q And what was that about?

19 A The President was giving a speech in Chicago.

20 Q Neera Tanden?

21 A I went to see her shortly after she was named President of the Center for
22 American Progress, so that would have been February or March.

23 Q Ashley Williams?

24 A I saw her at the transition office the last time I was there in June.

25 Q No other conversations, emails, texts?

1 A No.

2 Q Dr. Kevin O'Connor?

3 A I don't think I've seen him since we left office. I can't recall seeing him.

4 Q And no other conversations, phone calls, emails, text messages?

5 A No.

6 Q Kate Bedingfield?

7 A I don't remember the last time I talked to her. It was some time, I suppose, at
8 some point in 2024, might be 2023.

9 Q Jen Psaki?

10 A Again, it's been a year or 2.

11 Q David Axelrod?

12 A A couple of years. I couldn't say for sure.

13 Q And Karine Jean-Pierre?

14 A Saw her the day we left office.

15 Q No other phone calls, text messages, emails?

16 A I don't think I've run into her since.

17 Q Have you discussed this interview with anyone other than your counsel?

18 A No.

19 Q Have you discussed this interview with President Biden at all?

20 A No.

21 Q There have been a number of books that have been released about the 2024
22 election the past couple of months. Firstly, "Original Sin" written by Jake Tapper and Alex
23 Thompson. Did you speak with either of them about their book?

24 A Jake Tapper came to the White House, interviewed me after the election. It
25 was a brief interview in December.

1 Q Do you know of anyone else who spoke with Mr. Tapper or Mr. Thompson for
2 their book?

3 A It was arranged by the comms team, so I don't -- I believe he spoke to other
4 senior staff.

5 Q Chris Whipple authored the book, "Uncharted, how Trump Beat Biden, Harris,
6 and the Odds in the Wildest Campaign in History." Did you speak with Mr. Whipple for his
7 book?

8 A Yes. They arranged for me to speak to him as well.

9 Q Same time period, December, January?

10 A Yeah. I think it was before the Tapper interview.

11 Mr. Greenberg. And "they" is the White House communication staff?

12 Mr. Reed. Uh-huh.

13 BY MR. GRANT:

14 Q And then Josh Dawsey, Tyler Pager, and Isaac Arnsdorf wrote, "How Trump
15 Retook the White House" -- "2024, How Trump Retook the White House and the Democrats
16 Lost America." Did you speak with any one of those authors for their book?

17 A Yes. I believe I spoke to Tyler Pager in that same time frame. I can't
18 remember if it was in person or over the phone.

19 Q Have you discussed any of these books with anyone that you worked with in
20 the White House?

21 A I haven't read the books.

22 Q You didn't read any of the books?

23 A No.

24 Q Didn't skim them or anything?

25 A No.

1 Mr. Greenberg. But did you discuss the book's publication or the fact that the
2 books exist with anybody that you formally worked with in the White House?

3 Mr. Reed. I think Steve Ricchetti called to complain about them.

4 Mr. Greenberg. He complained about them here. Do you remember what his
5 complaint was centered around?

6 Mr. Reed. I'm sure you've got a good sense of that from him.

7 BY MR. GRANT:

8 Q Turning back to now after the 2020 election, you were briefly considered for
9 the Office of Management and Budget. Is that correct?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you were not successful in that. Why were you not successful in
12 becoming the OMB director?

13 A The President chose someone else. He chose Neera.

14 Q Did you have any conversations with the President or other senior staff about
15 not being the OMB director?

16 A No. The -- no.

17 Q And then, your official title in the White House was deputy chief of staff for
18 policy. Is that correct?

19 A Yes.

20 Q When were you officially alerted to that would be your title coming into the
21 Biden administration?

22 A I went to Wilmington a number of times throughout the transition, and on one
23 occasion, probably late December, early January, the President asked me if I would do that.

24 Q Did you have any other conversations about that before having that formal
25 meeting with the President?

1 A I didn't have any conversations with him about that before then.

2 Q Other senior advisers to the campaign or to the transition?

3 A I made clear to the President and everyone else in the senior team that I was
4 happy to do whatever the President asked. I knew that no matter what title I had, my role
5 would be the same. I'd be his policy guy and I'd end up traveling with him a lot, which is
6 what this job turned out to be.

7 Q Are you aware if you were ever in the running for chief of staff?

8 A I'm not aware.

9 Q There are many senior advisers that had their children in the Biden
10 administration. Did any of your children work in the Biden administration?

11 A Yes. My daughter Julia.

12 Q And what was her role?

13 A She was -- she started as day scheduler and ended as special assistant to the
14 President and deputy director of oval office operations.

15 Q Did you make the recommendation to hire your daughter?

16 A No. She had worked at the National Economic Council in the Obama
17 administration, had many friends from there. She wanted to do advance work on the
18 campaign, so she talked with her friends. They gave her a tryout. She was good at it.
19 You can't fake being good at advance, so she did a year and a half of advance work on the
20 campaign. After the campaign, she interviewed and was offered a job to do -- to advance
21 for the Secretary of Defense. She was excited about that, but then to her surprise and
22 mine, President Biden asked her to work in his outer office instead.

23 Ms. Harker. Who did she report to in her position in the White House?

24 Mr. Reed. Her boss initially was Annie Tomasini, and then when Annie became
25 deputy chief of staff, replacing Jen Dillon, she reported to Richard Ruffner.

1 Ms. Harker. Thank you.

2 Mr. Greenberg. As deputy chief of oval operations, was she replacing Ashley
3 Williams in that role?

4 Mr. Reed. It wasn't deputy chief. It was -- so Ashley was -- so Annie started off as
5 director of -- I can't remember exactly, but director of oval office and assistant to the
6 President, and Ashley was deputy assistant to the President and also deputy of that office,
7 and Julia had got a couple of, you know, kind of just step promotions, and she was one of
8 four people working in the what they call the "outer oval."

9 BY MR. GRANT:

10 Q Turning now to after the transition and officially being inaugurated into the
11 White House, who would you say were the closest advisers to President Biden?

12 A I can't speak for him on that front. He had a number of people who had
13 worked for him a long time.

14 Q You didn't get a sense that some were closer than others?

15 A What's the phrase that my former colleague, Gene Sperling, used to say about
16 us? We may not be particularly good, but we're here a lot, so there were a number of
17 people in that situation who had been around Joe Biden for a long time, and so several
18 people who knew him well.

19 Q Would you consider yourself as one of President Biden's closest advisers?

20 A I knew him well. I worked for him off and on over the course of 14 years, and
21 he liked the fact that I tried to work for him almost 40 years ago. So -- but I had a distinct
22 role as his policy guy.

23 Q Have you ever heard of the term, "politburo," referring to senior advisers in the
24 White House?

25 A I hadn't ever heard that term until the news accounts of "Original Sin."

1 Q How about the term, "pooh-bahs"?

2 A I've heard that term. I don't remember in what context or who the pooh-bahs
3 were.

4 Q But you did hear it in the White House?

5 A It's a phrase that is used in, you know, common speak, but yeah, I was unaware
6 of any nicknames any of us might have had.

7 Q So the same kind of answer for gray hairs?

8 A Well, I'm old enough to have gray hair, but I don't get it, luckily. I don't
9 remember that being a common phrase.

10 Q And then how about triumvirate?

11 A No, I don't remember that.

12 Q Any other terms that you can remember in reference to the closest senior
13 advisers in the White House?

14 A No. Senior staff, I guess. That's kind of what we called ourselves.

15 Q Senior staff?

16 A Uh-huh.

17 Q What qualities did President Biden admire the most in his staff in the White
18 House?

19 A He was a very demanding boss, so he wanted people who knew their stuff.
20 You know, when he came to the Senate as a young man, he often told the story of his
21 maiden speech on the Senate floor where he attacked a proposal -- he attacked a tax break
22 championed by Senator Russell Long for a tax break for stripper wells and he gave an
23 impassioned speech about how they were a waste of taxpayer money and should be
24 abolished, but to his chagrin, Senator Long came out on the floor and said could I ask the
25 distinguished gentleman from Delaware have you ever seen a stripper well, do you know

1 how they work?

2 And Biden was completely humiliated, because he had no idea what a stripper well
3 was, so he swore to himself he was never going to let that happen again, and he has
4 overprepared ever since. He often says he was grateful that he lived in Wilmington,
5 because that gave him 90 minutes to prepare for whatever he was going to do that day.

6 And he had -- you know, he's had -- he spent 36 years on the Hill, and another 12 in
7 government. That's a lot of staff, and he had a system for how to break them in, and that
8 was to pummel them with questions, to ask them anything he could think of on the topic
9 just probing to see what they didn't know. He wanted to find the limits of our knowledge
10 so he knew whether to trust our advice. And so, the thing he valued most was if you knew
11 your stuff, if you could speak plain English, if you could take a policy idea and communicate
12 it to an ordinary person and have him understand what you're talking about. He would
13 always say, Pick up the phone, call your mother, read her what you just proposed, and if
14 she -- and let me know if she understands what you're talking about.

15 And I think he valued people's political judgment, not necessarily their leanings so
16 much as if they could see where the ball is going to bounce, if they knew whether the idea
17 that they were pushing was going to go over well or was going to bomb.

18 Q Would you say that being an honest person is important to work in the White
19 House?

20 A It's an important quality everywhere.

21 Q Being organized, is that an important quality to work in the White House?

22 A It helps.

23 Q What about being loyal?

24 A That's important in work, important at home, important in life.

25 Q What about having a good memory? Is that important to working in the

1 White House?

2 A I think that, again, that's a good quality everywhere.

3 Q Who from the First Lady's office, Dr. Biden, was most involved in the west wing
4 of the White House?

5 A We had a senior staff meeting every morning in the chief of staff's office under
6 Ron and under Jeff and Anthony Bernal, representing the First Lady's office in that meeting.

7 Q Outside of those meetings, were you in frequent communication with Mr.
8 Bernal?

9 A I would see him when the President and First Lady traveled together. He
10 would travel with her and I would travel with him.

11 Q And then as the deputy chief of staff for policy, did Mr. Bernal ever come to
12 you with policy ideas that were from him?

13 A The First Lady had policy, as I said she worked on vocational education,
14 community college, cancer, and she had a small policy staff that worked on those, so I dealt
15 with them often and sometimes talked to Anthony.

16 Mr. Greenberg. Can I just ask, and we might get into more of this later, but when
17 you say that when the President was traveling, you were with the President and Mr. Bernal
18 was with the First Lady, did Ms. Williams travel with the President as well?

19 Mr. Reed. Sometimes, yeah. I mean, she had been -- during the campaign Annie,
20 Ashley and I had all been regular travelers. In the White House, Annie and Ashley would
21 often trade off because Annie's job required her to be in the White House a fair amount,
22 because she was helping to plan schedules for the next event, and so, there were
23 times -- plenty of times when all three of those people would be traveling, but not always.

24 Mr. Greenberg. Any -- named three people including yourself there. Anybody
25 else a --

1 Mr. Reed. Regular traveler?

2 Mr. Greenberg. -- a regular traveler. Exactly.

3 Mr. Reed. So the President has always had, like presidents before him, had a body
4 guy, which was Stephen Goepfert during the -- well, Richard Ruffner at the beginning of the
5 campaign, then he went off to law school. Stephen Goepfert for the balance of the
6 campaign. He stayed on for a couple of years in the White House. He was replaced by
7 Jacob Spreyer as his body guy, and then I believe when Richard Ruffner came back -- when
8 Annie was promoted to deputy chief of staff for administration, Richard Ruffner came back
9 into the White House, took her job running outer oval operations. Ashley moved to
10 another job outside of that office that was downstairs in the White House doing a lot of
11 traveling events, and there was a fourth person in the outer oval, Drew Rodriguez.

12 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

13 BY MR. GRANT:

14 Q If Mr. Bernal came to you and to the other senior advisers in the west wing
15 with a request or a policy idea, what were usually the next steps for that?

16 A Well, for any policy idea, first, is it a good idea? Second, will it work? Is
17 there money for it? So if he came with an idea, it would be the same as if others came to
18 me with an idea. I'd run the traps on it, see if it was plausible, and then it would be subject
19 to the same constraints as any other proposal, and if it wouldn't work, or if we couldn't
20 afford it - there was -- or if it didn't seem like it was a workable idea.

21 Q So Mr. Bernal's ideas, and by extension of that Dr. Jill Biden's ideas, they didn't
22 carry any additional weight or sway with you when it came to making a policy
23 determination?

24 A Well, she had a lot of good ideas, so -- and as I said, she was especially active
25 on community college and voc ed and cancer, which are all priorities of the President as

1 well.

2 Q Did you ever hear anyone say that it wasn't worth fighting or second guessing
3 Mr. Bernal when he came forward with any ideas or recommendations?

4 A I don't recall anyone saying that, and Anthony had been in three White Houses
5 as well, so he knew that there was also a process for policy ideas.

6 Q And did you ever hear Mr. Klain say, You don't fight city hall when referencing
7 requests made by Mr. Bernal?

8 A I don't recall him saying that, no.

9 Q Did you ever hear Mr. Bernal ask other aides if they were a Biden person?

10 A I don't recall him saying that.

11 Q And did you ever hear anyone refer to Mr. Bernal as the loyalty -- excuse me,
12 loyalty police?

13 A I don't recall that phrase. He was loyal.

14 Q But he didn't question anyone else's loyalty in the White House?

15 A I can't speak to his thoughts. He had high standards for events. He'd been
16 an advance person himself. He was a tough -- he was tough on others and tough on
17 himself. You know, if he got praised as senior staff for a State dinner that everyone
18 thought was an A-plus event, he'd say maybe B-plus, so --

19 Q And did anyone ever report Mr. Bernal to you for lashing out at them or
20 speaking inappropriately to them at any --

21 A Not that I can recall.

1 [11:00 a.m.]

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q It's been widely reported that President Biden could have a bit of a temper at
4 times. Did you ever experience President Biden's temper at you?

5 A As I said, he was demanding. He wanted people to know their stuff. And
6 there were plenty of occasions when he was frustrated that we didn't know what we were
7 talking about or that we were doing an event that he felt was a bad idea.

8 Q Did you ever have any fears of delivering any bad news to President Biden?

9 A I -- I delivered bad news, and I don't think I had any hesitations about that.

10 Q And did you ever have to maybe spin some news to make it more positive
11 when bringing something to the President?

12 A You can't hide bad news from Joe Biden. Like, he's -- he would say he's Irish
13 through and through. He doesn't own a pair of rose-colored glasses. Everything is pitch
14 black.

15 So sometimes we'd have to get him to level-set and realize that something wasn't as
16 bad as he thought it was, but there was no point in sugarcoating things for him.

17 Q Was there ever any sort of effort made to insulate President Biden from the
18 people that were outside that senior adviser role?

19 A No. We -- he liked to meet new staffers, and he held them to the same
20 standards as he'd always done. So there were -- there were some junior- and mid-level
21 staff who thrived under that pressure.

22 I had a guy who worked for me. He was a former Supreme Court clerk. He came
23 and briefed the President on a range of domestic issues, and the President said to him, You
24 know things. I want you in every meeting.

25 There were others who came in thinking, this is so exciting, I get to meet with the

1 President, and then he asked them a series of questions that they had never thought about
2 and -- and embarrassed them the way Russell Long had embarrassed him.

3 And I remember one guy, one mid-level staff who -- who had floundered so much in
4 front of the President that he said to me, What was it like to watch the worst first briefing of
5 a President ever, and I told him, This is nothing new.

6 Q Did you ever hear any complaints about staff regarding access to the
7 President?

8 A In every White House -- lots and lots of people want to be in every meeting.
9 And so in every White House, people complain that they weren't -- you know, they weren't
10 at this meeting with the chief of staff, or they weren't at this meeting with the President, or
11 they didn't get to go to this event. And I think this was a very meritocratic White House.
12 If you knew your stuff and the meeting was going to go better with you present, you got to
13 come. If you were just going to be there for the thrill of being with the President, you
14 shouldn't come.

15 And often -- President Biden did not like big meetings, because if there were 10
16 chairs gathered in front of his office -- in front of the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, he'd
17 look at us and say, Is anybody still working? And the larger the meeting, the worse it got in
18 that regard.

19 So, you know, he wanted people there who knew what they were doing, and that
20 could be -- you know, that was kind of without regard to rank or even whether he went back
21 with them a long way.

22 So I don't -- you know, I don't think that this White House was much different from
23 any other in that regard.

24 Q Are you aware of any Members of Congress, Senators, complaining about their
25 access to President Biden?

1 A Again, every White House -- and I think -- I can't speak for all Members, but as a
2 general matter, Joe Biden spent more time with Members of Congress because he actually
3 likes Congress. He's, you know, he's an Article I guy. He thinks that the legislative body is
4 more important than the executive branch. His loyalties are always to that. He missed
5 the Hill. He loved talking to Members.

6 And when I worked for him in the Obama White House, he complained all the time
7 about how President Obama didn't want to spend time with Members, would do events,
8 wouldn't let the Members be up on -- his team wouldn't let the Members be up on stage
9 because that would take away from the President's glory.

10 President Biden was just the opposite. If Members of Congress came, he'd ask
11 them to stand. He'd ask people to applaud for them. When we went on trips, he'd bring,
12 you know, the whole State delegation along.

13 I remember multiple times sitting around the conference table on Air Force One with
14 all the Members who were along for the ride. We would've been -- we have done a lot of
15 speech prep with the President beforehand to get his speech to the point where we
16 thought -- where he thought it was ready to go, and then he'd take the speech and he'd
17 spend an hour or two on the flight doing speech prep with the Members, where they could
18 tell him to add this or that.

19 So, again, not every Member's ever happy with what a White House is doing, but he
20 bent over backwards to involve as many as he could.

21 Q And lastly, same thing for Cabinet members, complaining of access?

22 A Same thing, every White House, same drill. There are Cabinet members who
23 want more time, want more time for their issue, want -- you know, there's a lot of Cabinet
24 agencies. It's a big Cabinet. Everybody feels the obligation to push for what their
25 employees are working on, and Biden's approach was, again, respectful.

1 He -- he'd been the shoulder to cry on for Cabinet members in the Obama
2 administration. He liked members of his Cabinet. He was very close to some of them,
3 so -- but in any administration, there are going to be frustrations where somebody's priority
4 gets ahead of somebody else's or -- and no President can see every member of his
5 administration, every member of his Cabinet every day, so --

6 Mr. Grant. We'll go off the record.

7 [Recess.]

8 Ms. [REDACTED] We'll go on the record. The time I have is 11:20.

9 Mr. Reed, I understand that you have a statement that you would like to read.

10 Mr. Reed. Yes. Thank you.

11 Ms. [REDACTED] And enter into the record?

12 Mr. Reed. Yes, please.

13 Ms. [REDACTED] I would like to mark as exhibit A Mr. Reed's statement for the record.

14 [Reed Exhibit A

15 was marked for identification.]

16 Mr. Folio. Do you want to mark it?

17 Mr. Uriarte. Oh, sure. Sorry about that.

18 Mr. [REDACTED] Can we go off the record for a second?

19 Mr. Greenberg. Yeah.

20 [Discussion off the record.]

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

22 Go ahead, Mr. Reed.

23 Mr. Reed. Thank you.

24 My name is Bruce Reed, and I served as the deputy chief of staff for policy to
25 Joe Biden. I'm appearing here today voluntarily in response to a request from

1 Representative James Comer, chair of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2 in the House of Representatives, that I participate in a transcribed interview related to my
3 work for President Biden.

4 After beginning my career as a speech writer for then-Senator Al Gore, I went on to
5 serve as the domestic and economic policy adviser and assistant to the President in three
6 different administrations.

7 From 1993 to 2001, I served as domestic policy adviser to President Bill Clinton. In
8 2010, I worked for the Obama White House as executive director of the
9 Simpson-Bowles Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. From 2011 to 2013, I
10 served as chief of staff to then-Vice President Biden and policy adviser to President Barack
11 Obama. And from 2021 to 2025, I returned to serve as President Biden's deputy chief of
12 staff for policy.

13 I understand that the Committee is interested in understanding President Biden's
14 mental and physical faculties.

15 In my role as deputy chief of staff for policy, I was one of several senior staff
16 members who advised the President on the litany of decisions Presidents must make every
17 day. Joe Biden had waited a long time to become President. After 36 years in the Senate
18 and 8 years as Vice President, he relished the chance to make decisions he'd watched other
19 Presidents make. I watched him make many difficult decisions in meetings with his policy
20 advisers and in setting the agenda for the annual State of the Union address.

21 From the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office to his office in the Treaty Room at the
22 White House to his desk on Air Force One, President Biden made hundreds of decisions
23 while reviewing his decision book, a binder of decision memos provided to him by the staff
24 secretary. That book contained time-sensitive decision memos on a range of topics:
25 executive orders, personnel appointments, judicial nominations, budget and policy

1 proposals, extensions of continuing national emergencies, military and civilian pay increases,
2 and even delegations to international inaugurations and funerals.

3 At times, I sat with President Biden while he reviewed his decision book and decided
4 whether to accept, reject, or amend his team's recommendations. The President's signed
5 decision memos went back to the staff secretary, who was responsible for ensuring his
6 decisions were documented and memorialized. This practice is like the two prior
7 administrations in which I served, where the staff secretary was responsible for ensuring
8 that the President's decisions were documented, memorialized, and executed.

9 While I can only speak to my own observations, I had the benefit of working with
10 President Biden nearly every day of his Presidency. Despite his age, President Biden
11 maintained an unrelenting work ethic, embraced complex policy issues, and approached
12 decisions with diligence and deliberation.

13 Joe Biden was a demanding boss who routinely grilled staff members on a topic until
14 he reached the limits of our knowledge so he could judge whether to have confidence in our
15 advice. That didn't mean he'd take it. From the first days in the White House to the last,
16 President Biden governed the same way he'd gotten there, by trusting his own values and
17 instincts.

18 The Presidency ages everyone, and President Biden was no different. During his
19 time in the White House, we all witnessed Joe Biden age physically. He couldn't walk as
20 well as he used to, but he remained dogged, inquisitive, and relentless throughout.

21 There is no tougher test than the Presidency. President Biden asked tough
22 questions, made tough decisions, and led his country well in challenging times for the Nation
23 and the world.

24 Joe Biden dedicated over 50 years of his life to public service, and it was an honor to
25 serve with him in the White House.

1 Thank you.

2 Ms. [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Reed.

3 EXAMINATION

4 BY MS. [REDACTED]

5 Q Mr. Reed, in the majority's June 4th, 2025 letter to you, it alleges that
6 President Biden's staff was intent on hiding what alleges to be, quote, rapidly worsening
7 mental and physical faculties.

8 In the interest of making sure we have a clear record, Mr. Reed, you have no
9 knowledge that Joe Biden was at any point in time mentally unable to execute the duties of
10 the Presidency?

11 A I have no knowledge.

12 Q Thank you.

13 And to your knowledge, did anyone in the White House at any point during
14 Joe Biden's Presidency ever make decisions or issue any Presidential memorandum in
15 Joe Biden's name without his knowledge or authorization?

16 A I have no knowledge of that.

17 Q And again, at any point during the Biden Presidency, did anyone at the
18 White House, to your knowledge, ever issue any type of executive order without Joe Biden's
19 knowledge or authorization at any point during the Presidency?

20 A Not to my knowledge.

21 Q And apart from instances in which Joe Biden delegated authority to Vice
22 President Harris while he was undergoing 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 Not to my knowledge.

1 Q And I also would like to turn to -- you've worked at many administrations,
2 correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you said that people always complain about the lack of access to the
5 President?

6 A Yes, they do.

7 Q Did you ever prevent President Biden from meeting with a Member of the
8 House of Representatives out of concern of his mental acuity?

9 A No.

10 Q What about Senators?

11 A No.

12 Q Members of the Cabinet?

13 A No.

14 Q And the White House staff?

15 A No.

16 BY MR. [REDACTED]

17 Q You mentioned during the hour with the majority loyalty as one of the
18 qualities. It wasn't the first thing you listed or even the second or the third. There has
19 been through, in the media, some suggestion in some corners that loyalty to President Biden
20 or the Biden family was in some way inimical to the obligation to serve the Constitution or
21 the Presidency itself, that maybe people were putting the interests of loyalty to Joe Biden
22 over other values: fidelity, the Constitution, or the office of the Presidency.

23 Can you speak to that a little bit, when you talked about the value of loyalty to
24 President Biden?

25 A Sure. So, look, Joe Biden ran for President, pledging to honor the

1 Constitution, swore an oath to the Constitution, and that was his first priority. And I can
2 say for -- I can't speak for everyone, but I know for myself it is such a privilege every day to
3 walk through those gates, enter the White House, and have the chance to serve your
4 country. It's a hard job, and it's incumbent on anyone who holds one of those jobs to do
5 what they think is right, to do right by their country, to give it their best, and to honor the
6 Constitution just as the President does.

7 Q It sounds like you didn't see a tension between, you know, having to somehow
8 put the interests of the individual occupying the White House, in this case President Biden,
9 with the Presidency itself. Is that right?

10 A That's right. Look, the country comes first. The -- we worked for the
11 President, and we did everything we could to help him advance his agenda and to get his
12 message across. But we were there to serve a larger purpose as well, which was to try to
13 make America a better place, keep the promises that we kept, and continue the traditions
14 that have served us so well.

15 Q And did you feel like that same way of thinking about the office applied to
16 President Biden himself?

17 A Yes. You know, he's -- he taught constitutional law. He'd often talk about
18 how much that meant to him. He revered the Office of the Presidency, and as I said
19 earlier, had enormous respect for the Congress as well.

20 He wanted the system to work and wanted us to do the right thing, wanted us to do
21 the jobs that he'd asked us to do.

22 Q You've touched on how difficult the job can be at -- I do want to go back just to
23 the 2020 election which, of course, was before he was President.

24 In the last hour, there was a little bit of back-and-forth about virtual events during
25 that race being in Delaware as opposed to, I suppose, on the campaign trail or doing things

1 live.

2 You did answer this, but just for the record, what was going on in the world during
3 the 2020 general election?

4 A There was a pandemic, and it was a very hard time for the country. And
5 Joe Biden wanted to put safety first. He did not want to put anyone -- his staff, his
6 supporters, or anyone else -- in harm's way. And that's why -- you know, that's why we
7 shut the travel down in the primaries. That's why he was careful not to expose all of us or
8 the crowds that we would draw at an event to harm, and tried to do what the pandemic
9 experts were recommending, which was wear a mask, stay in your pod, don't take
10 unnecessary risks.

11 Q And then I think we should just make some of the subtext a little clear on this
12 point. There was no thought about using the pandemic as a way to hide President Biden
13 from the world during the 2020 campaign because of some sort of mental --

14 A No, no, no. People got to see a lot of him, they got to hear a lot of him, and
15 so he was still campaigning. He was grateful when he had the opportunity to actually do a
16 little bit of travel because, look, he's a fingertip politician. He loves crowds, he loves to
17 meet people. That's how he got -- that's why he got into the business, because he's a
18 people person.

19 So -- and he missed out on so much because of the pandemic. We didn't have a
20 real convention. We had, you know, one of those honking conventions where a few
21 people got to sit in their cars and we had honk lines instead of applause lines.

22 He didn't -- he didn't get to enjoy the thrills of the campaign trail which can be so
23 exciting down the stretch in a Presidential campaign. So, you know, if he'd had a choice,
24 he'd have been working rope lines every day of the week.

25 Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you very much.

1 Let's go off the record.

2 [Recess.]

3 Mr. Grant. Back on the record.

4 BY MR. GRANT:

5 Q Mr. Reed, we'll move now towards more of your role in the White House.

6 And just to get started, can you inform us to what -- granted, things obviously fluctuate in
7 the White House -- but what a standard day would be for you?

8 A Sure. So I generally get up around 4 in the morning so I could read the news
9 and read through the President's briefing book, which I get by email overnight, and just
10 spend a couple of hours being ready to face the day ahead.

11 We had a senior staff meeting in the chief of staff's office. The time varied. It
12 was, I think, 7:45 and around 8 or 8:15 under Jeff. Then another senior staff meeting with
13 a larger group of -- it included kind of all arms of the White House, and those would be over
14 by 9.

15 And then every day was different. If we were traveling, I'd -- you know, those trips
16 would usually leave late morning and come back. Depending on how far we went, we
17 could -- if it was just a short hop, we might be back by 6, but often it was 8 or 10. And
18 then, you know, same drill the next day.

19 If it was a regular day at the White House where the President wasn't traveling, then
20 my scheduled depended on his. I didn't do national security meetings. I just did
21 domestic, economic policy, and then usually most -- all his events. So I'd go to speech
22 preps and event preps and -- then sometimes he'd call me into the White House to work on
23 decisions or we would occasionally have -- the chief of staff would have a hold-for-Ron or
24 hold-for-Jeff meeting, where a handful of advisers would come in to talk to the President
25 about whatever topic was most urgent that day.

1 Then there were policy meetings. There were probably three or more chief of staff
2 policy meetings in the chief of staff's office with the various policy counsels. And then I
3 met with the head of -- or representatives from every policy counsel and some other offices
4 in the White House once a week.

5 So a lot of meetings in my office, a lot of meetings in the chief of staff's office, a lot of
6 impromptu and scheduled meetings with the President. And then if he had events in
7 town, I'd go to those with him as well.

8 Q And obviously it sounds like you were very intricately involved with the
9 President in the day-to-day. What was it like to get access to meet with President Biden?
10 Did you have walk-in privileges to go into the Oval Office? Did you -- I'll leave it there.

11 Did you have walk-in privileges to go into the Oval Office?

12 A I -- I came to meet with him when I was asked to meet with him. And
13 sometimes his door was open, but I tried not to just barge in. It's not good form.

14 Q So --

15 A If the President wanted to see me, I came in. And if I needed to see him, I
16 would ask Annie or Richard for time.

17 Q So you didn't necessarily need to set a formal block on the schedule to meet
18 with the President? You could walk up to the door or walk up to Ms. Tomasini and say, can
19 I have 5 minutes, and go and meet with the President?

20 A Yes. It's, again, standard practice and good form to come to the meetings
21 you're invited to and to go through regular channels to get time on the President's calendar
22 if need be.

23 I had a lot of sympathy for the people who were doing traffic control in the Oval,
24 didn't want to take advantage of that. And as I said, most of the times that I came there, it
25 was because I was either there for a scheduled meeting or because he'd either called or had

1 his team call me and said, come down the hall, meet with him.

2 Q Did you have access to the White House residence?

3 A As a senior staff member, I had a pass that would allow me to go to the
4 White House residence. And we had regular meetings in his office in the Treaty Room, but,
5 you know, the -- I wouldn't go upstairs in the White House unless for a scheduled meeting or
6 I'd been asked to or I was accompanying him.

7 Q Did anyone else have residence access as well?

8 A Oh, yeah, I think most of the -- most senior staff could -- but certainly senior
9 staff could enter the building. I think access to the residence, the second and third floor,
10 was for his -- his body persons and, you know, closer personal aides.

11 Q Are you aware of any other member of the senior staff being able to go to the
12 other floors of the residence or have access to the other floors of the residence?

13 A To the best of my recollection, we came when we were invited. We didn't
14 just barge in, so --

15 BY MR. GREENBERG:

16 Q Sorry. Can you just explain to me, like, as somebody who hasn't worked in
17 the White House, the second and third -- we're referring to the residence --

18 A Yes. So --

19 Q -- but the second and third floors are really more where the President lives?

20 A Exactly. So the basement of -- the basement of the White House, which
21 is -- you know, if you walk from the West Wing, past the Rose Garden, into the White House,
22 you enter the basement level, which has a couple of rooms that we sometimes use for
23 meetings with the President. The Map Room was often used. It has a couple of
24 ceremonial rooms, the China Room, the library, that there'd be no reason to go there unless
25 you were there for a Christmas party or something.

1 There's the Diplomatic Reception Room, which is an oval. So the West Wing was
2 built in early 1900s, and the reason it has an Oval Office is because there's three ovals in the
3 residence. The one on the basement floor is the Diplomatic Reception Room. The one
4 on the first floor is the Blue Room, and the one on the second floor is the Yellow Oval.

5 So there's a lot -- and there's a lot of traffic back and forth from the West Wing to
6 the East Wing. The Legislative Affairs Office and the First Lady's Office are in the
7 East Wing. So a lot of people who work in the White House would be traveling back and
8 forth on that first level.

9 And when we would go on a -- when we'd depart either from the north portico, the
10 fountain side of the White House, or when we'd go on Marine One, we'd often leave for the
11 helicopter from the Diplomatic Reception Room, which opens onto the -- onto the south
12 lawn.

13 The first floor is the one that you see when you go on a tour or you go to a
14 White House holiday party. It's the ceremonial rooms, the ones you see Presidential
15 events in, the State Dining Room closest to the White House -- closest to the West Wing, the
16 Red Room, the Blue Room, which is the big oval one that the Christmas tree is in every year,
17 the Green Room, and then the East Room where Presidents tend to do press conferences
18 and meetings with national governments and so on.

19 There's a -- there are two staircases and at least one elevator that go from the first
20 floor -- from the basement up to the second floor.

21 If we were meeting with the President in his office, which is -- on the Treaty Room,
22 there's a ceremonial staircase which you can sometimes see in wide-angle shots of a press
23 conference. It's a red staircase that goes up to his office. On the -- let me see if I can get
24 all these right. On the second floor, there are big windows on the west and east. One
25 faces the West Wing. The other faces the Treasury Department. In between that, there

1 are a couple of bedrooms. There's a long center hall with couches and art work. There's
2 a -- the Yellow Oval, as I said, which faces the monuments. There's the Treaty Room, the
3 President's office, which also has a good view of the monuments, and then there's the
4 Lincoln Bedroom.

5 And as a general matter, most of my time in that building -- there's also a third floor
6 where there's a solarium where -- with a view of the Mall and a couple of other rooms.

7 Most of my time would've been on the ground floor, except for Presidential events
8 on the first floor, and then on the second floor, a lot of time in the Treaty Room.

9 Sometimes we used other rooms for tapings, but generally the, I guess, personal space was
10 everything but the Treaty Room on the second floor and then the whole third floor.

11 Q The President would sleep on the third floor? Is that correct?

12 A There are -- actually, I don't know. There are bedrooms on the second and
13 third floor. I think the master bedroom is on the second floor, but I couldn't tell you which
14 one.

15 Q And then how frequently would you be using the Treaty Room for a meeting
16 with the President, roughly? Was that like a once-a-week occurrence, a once-a-month
17 occurrence?

18 A He liked that room a lot, so I'd say maybe three times a week.

19 Q Okay.

20 A Yeah. That's where -- when he was in town and he wanted to see us, typically
21 in the morning before he would go over to the Oval Office, he'd have a hold-for-Ron or a
22 hold-for-Jeff, and we'd meet over there.

23 Sometimes we used it for speech prep. We did a lot of State of the Union work in
24 there. And often if he had -- if he'd already gone over to the White House building for a
25 late afternoon event or evening reception and we had more work to do, we'd either do it in

1 the Map Room or in the Treaty Room. Sometimes we'd go back to the Oval Office.

2 The -- the Treaty Room is quiet and it's, I think, a good place to work.

3 Q Would you be shocked if you saw, for example, Secretary Austin over there in
4 the Treaty Room?

5 A Well, Cabinet members, when they came to the White House, they usually
6 came for a reason, either to meet with other Cabinet members or meet with the President.
7 And usually those meetings would take place in the Sit Room or in the Oval Office.

8 So I -- I can't say, because as I told you, I didn't do many national security meetings.
9 There may have been occasions where the President had other advisers or Cabinet
10 members up to the Treaty Room.

11 Q But that would've been, if not strange, out of the ordinary, if a Cabinet
12 Secretary --

13 A Most of the daily business of the White House happens in the West Wing, and
14 the events in the -- or the meetings in the residence were more as a -- either because the
15 President asked for them, or, you know, there were some things that are -- like when he
16 would do digital time to take social media, that was generally in the -- on the basement floor
17 of the -- of the White House because it was easier to set up and keep, you know, keep
18 lighting there for long periods of time.

19 So, again, it was -- the White House is a busy place. The Cabinet Room is reserved
20 for the President's use only. The Roosevelt Room, he has first dibs on it, but they're
21 just -- there isn't a lot of free office space in the West Wing, so sometimes we got to do stuff
22 in the residence.

23 Q And would it be unusual to see Anthony Bernal on the second floor?

24 A Well, he worked for the First Lady, so he would go where she was when
25 summoned.

1 Q Have you, in fact, seen Mr. Bernal on the second floor?

2 A I'm sure I must have, but I don't recall any particular instances, but it wouldn't
3 surprise me to see him there.

4 Q Would it be unusual to see Ms. Tomasini on the second floor?

5 A No. Because as I said before, she -- she was really the kind of master of his
6 schedule, and he was very particular about his schedule, not just the daily schedule but his
7 upcoming schedule. And so she would have to spend a lot of time with him going over
8 what we were going to do the next day or what we were going to do the next week
9 and -- so, you know, if Dr. Biden was in town, the President and the First Lady tried to have
10 dinner together, 7:30-ish or so. So if there was something that needed Annie or others'
11 attention, after that, they'd go -- she'd go see him over there. So -- but it wouldn't surprise
12 me to see Annie at all.

13 Q And I'm not turning back. We'll get going here in a second, but it would've
14 been strange -- it would've been improper for you to go to the third floor just uninvited?

15 A I don't know if I would've gotten in trouble for doing it, but -- but I didn't -- I
16 didn't go exploring. Sometimes he showed it -- I think I had -- a few times had lunch or
17 dinner on the patio with him on the third floor. One time when President Clinton was
18 visiting, we went up to the third floor, and President Biden showed us the golf simulator
19 that President Trump had installed, which is just like the one that, you know, Tiger Woods
20 started the whole league about, and -- but President Biden said that he never used it. He
21 just didn't have any hobbies. He just worked, so I didn't get to see how it worked.

22 Q And would you have been -- would it have been strange to see Ms. Tomasini or
23 Mr. Bernal on the third floor?

24 A I wouldn't be surprised to see them. You know, they were close to the family.
25 So if the granddaughters were visiting or -- so I can't recall a specific instance of seeing them

1 there. You know, as I said, I was there a few times, but -- and it's -- like, it has a view you
2 wouldn't forget. So I couldn't say how often they might've been there.

3 Q And you said you didn't really go -- you didn't go exploring and you didn't go to
4 the second or third floor really without an invitation.

5 Did you get the impression that Mr. Bernal and Ms. Tomasini were getting invitations
6 for the times that they were there or did their job kind of -- just kind of put them there
7 regularly?

8 A I think their job put them in close proximity to the President and First Lady
9 regularly.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. Thank you.

11 BY MR. GRANT:

12 Q Did they have any different demarcations on their badge that allowed them to
13 go to the second or third floor different from your own badge?

14 A I don't think so. They -- you know, the Secret Service knew who we were, so
15 they didn't let just anybody go upstairs.

16 Q And then when it comes to President Biden's schedule, did you have access to
17 his schedule?

18 A We got a copy of it every day -- every morning. And we also -- he also had a
19 block schedule that would get updated, roughly, every day or every couple of days. That
20 was a long-term schedule that was -- would go out 3 or 4 weeks.

21 Q And you could -- sorry. Could you see both the public schedule and the
22 President's private schedule?

23 A Yeah, I don't -- I don't know that I ever looked at the public schedule. I saw
24 the private schedule because needed to look at it to see how many meetings I was down for.
25 And then I followed the block schedule closely because that had a forecast of where we

1 would be traveling and, you know, how many days I'd be away from home, so --

2 Q How often -- or let me back up. What time usually would President Biden
3 come into the Oval Office, West Wing area in the mornings?

4 A Typical day for him was he'd work out with his trainer somewhere in the
5 residence. He'd do the Peloton. He'd do a lot of planks, which he complained a lot
6 about. Then quite often -- well, then he'd go get a shower, get cleaned up, get dressed and
7 ready for work, and then have us -- often we'd have a either scheduled or impromptu
8 hold-for-Jeff or hold-for-Ron meeting in the Treaty Room where we'd spend a half hour or
9 45 minutes updating him on events overnight.

10 He was particularly interested in what was going on in the Hill, so, you know -- so leg
11 affairs people would come to that meeting, Sherwood, Schulkin (ph) often, and others.

12 And he'd have a breakfast muffin, call a Member or two. And then I think usually
13 first meeting -- first scheduled meeting was the 10 o'clock Presidential daily briefing, which
14 took place in the Oval. I didn't participate in those, but those -- that's the one internal
15 meeting that shows up on the public schedule that has -- that's been a tradition for
16 White Houses. And that, I think, is supposed to go an hour. There was a lot going on in
17 the world, so it often went an hour and a half.

18 Then it varied on the, you know, kind of what the day was like, but typically we'd
19 have some event in the afternoon. So there'd be -- and if it involved a speech, there'd be a
20 prep for that speech in the late morning after the PDB, where the President would rewrite
21 the speech a second time because he would've already had a meeting about it the day
22 before. And he'd hear the details of the event and focus a lot on the policy for that event
23 because it was game day and he was going to have to be comfortable with how he was
24 explaining it. And Joe Biden liked to rewrite speeches endlessly, so that could -- a speech
25 prep could go an hour, hour and a half.

1 Then he'd have lunch, a brief lunch, usually in his study, the -- the dining room off
2 the Oval Office. Sometimes bring one or more of us in there. Sometimes watch cable
3 news.

4 Then in the afternoon, he -- if we were lucky, he'd have desk time where we could
5 work on decisions to kind of deal with the mountain of paperwork on his desk. Then
6 there'd be one last prep for the event. The event would be mid to late afternoon, always
7 ran longer, always had a real person who was -- you know, if it was a prescription drug
8 event, it would be some senior citizen who was taking an expensive cancer drug. And the
9 President would want to know everything about their case and everything about the drug
10 and why it cost so much and how they were doing, and then he'd, you know, want to spend
11 time with them, give them a tour of the Oval.

12 And so that could stretch to the event, if it was scheduled for 3, it might, you know,
13 stretch till 5 all in, then he'd generally go downstairs to the Map Room and do digital time
14 on the same topic.

15 And then we'd have another hold-for-Jeff meeting at the end of the day in
16 the -- well, it's supposed to be the end of the day -- in the Map Room, where we'd bring
17 decisions to him that were time-sensitive. If you guys were taking up a Congressional
18 Review Act motion to overturn one of our rules and regulations, and leg affairs needed him
19 to signal his level of opposition to that measure, we'd sit down with him and go over a
20 decision memo, getting him to authorize a veto threat, and argue that, you know, he was a
21 Senator, he hated veto threats. He didn't like it when Presidents threatened vetoes, but
22 then usually if it was something, you know, he cared about and had issued in the first place,
23 he'd sign off on the veto threat.

24 And there would be other things like national security updates from Jake, or storm
25 warnings and forecasts from Liz Sherwood-Randall, economic prognostication from the

1 Council of Economic Advisers, or head of the NEC, and a good, you know, hour, hour and a
2 half's worth of business that we did in the Map Room.

3 And as I said, if we were -- if we were lucky, that was it, and he'd go upstairs to have
4 dinner with Dr. Biden, but often she was on the road and the meetings would continue.

5 Q So his day roughly started at, what, 9, 9:30, 10 o'clock?

6 A As I said --

7 Q As far as --

8 A -- workout at 8, meeting in the Treaty Room, 9:30, head over to the Oval after
9 that. And then it was one thing after another. Every day was different until, you know,
10 roughly 7 on a good day, but sometimes he'd bring some of us upstairs because he just
11 didn't want the meetings to end.

12 And so generally out of there at 8. At 8 o'clock, his briefing book would come for
13 the next day, which was a hundred pages of background material on the events he was
14 going to do the next day.

15 And as I said, if we were traveling, another story. It would be -- you know, it'd start
16 the same way but often end much later, if we'd gone to the Midwest, for example.

17 Q Did you at any point during President Biden's term in office get the impression
18 that the daily schedule of being the President with a, you know, oftentimes robust travel
19 schedule, did it seem to you that President Biden struggled with that at all?

20 A He loved traveling. He said -- before he decided whether or not to run, he
21 said, schedule me like I'm campaigning. And so he -- he loved going on the road. He
22 loved the crowds, meeting different people, you know, seeing other parts of the country,
23 you know, just getting away from the office.

24 And it was a lot. The foreign trips were the worst. I probably did a third of those,
25 but those were incredibly exhausting. I remember the first one that we had -- first time I

1 flew back with him from a NATO conference in Brussels. We'd been traveling for 4 or 5
2 days, working nonstop. We did a press conference that went late into the evening. Then
3 we got on the plane to fly back to the States, you know, in the wee hours. And he was so
4 excited about the meetings that he had, that he came to the -- there's a senior staff cabin in
5 Air Force One. It has four seats all facing each other. The President's cabin is up at the
6 front, and he'd often come back just to talk to us.

7 So on the trip back from Brussels, it was Mike and Jake and Tony Blinken and I, and
8 we were all completely exhausted, and the President would not stop talking about the
9 meetings he'd had, the leaders he talked to.

10 So we took turns staying awake to listen to his stories, and he talked the entire way
11 home across the Atlantic. So that was -- as I said, he was an exhausting guy to work for.

1 [12:11 p.m.]

2 BY MS. HARKER:

3 Q Do you know if he was medicated at that time?

4 A I am not his doctor.

5 Q Do you have any knowledge of whether he was on amphetamines at that time?

6 A No, I have no knowledge of that.

7 Q Thank you.

8 BY MR. GREENBERG:

9 Q You made reference I think just now to scheduling him like he was
10 campaigning.

11 Was that consistent throughout his time as President, that he wanted his schedule
12 like that?

13 A Yeah. Like every President that I've worked for, he sometimes complained
14 that he was being overscheduled and that he needed more time with his wife. And then
15 the schedulers would adjust the schedule to give him a little bit more time with his wife and
16 then he would complain that he wasn't being scheduled enough.

17 Q Did you see that taking a toll on President Biden, that he was scheduled so
18 heavily?

19 A No. As I said earlier, the Presidency ages people. He got older. He walked
20 slower after tripping over his dog in the transition.

21 But he still threw himself into everything and was hard to keep up with.

22 Q I ask because when we spoke with Mr. Donilon last week he made reference to
23 the changeover from Mr. Klain to Mr. Zients. And it was my impression that Mr. Zients had
24 meetings with most of the senior staff and asked for recommendations. And Mr. Donilon
25 explained that he thought it would be really beneficial for the President if -- I'm

1 paraphrasing -- but if the load was lightened and his schedule were freed up a little bit.

2 That wasn't your view at that time of the changeover, that the President needed to
3 have the -- to lighten the load for the President?

4 A I don't know anything about any such conversations. The load didn't get
5 lighter. I think one of the first things the President did after -- I believe it was after Ron had
6 left -- was take a nine-hour train ride in the dark of night to Ukraine, to a war zone. And he
7 was always doing stuff like that.

8 So the White House takes a toll on everybody. Mike slept a lot on planes. But my
9 impression was that the President liked to be busy.

10 Q So just to be clear, it was never your belief that the President could benefit
11 from taking a lighter schedule?

12 A I guess I worked for Joe Biden long enough to know that he was always going to
13 crave contact with crowds, would want to be giving it his utmost, and that he was going to
14 work himself hard.

15 Q And not to belabor the point, but is it your testimony then that throughout the
16 4 years of the Biden Presidency you didn't see a change in Joe Biden's ability to handle the
17 schedule that he was holding?

18 A Look, we all got tired. But he still wanted to be out there. He still wanted to
19 pack his days.

20 And there were plenty of times when I wished that he would stop editing the speech,
21 stop keeping us -- stop rewriting his speech, stop keeping us there to go over something that
22 we had already gone over a lot.

23 But he liked work. As I said, he didn't have hobbies -- he didn't have anything else
24 to do. He just had his job. And he didn't watch much TV other than cable news. He
25 didn't read novels.

1 And even when we'd go to -- I was the chief of staff representative. Wherever the
2 President goes, he needs a representative from the chief of staff's office to be with him.
3 So if he leaves the national capital area, he needed someone who will be there in a
4 continuation-of-government thing.

5 And so there were a handful of us who played that role. The national security team
6 had one person, but they had about 20 people that they rotated through who did that.

7 And then there were a couple of us probably -- mostly me, some Steve -- although
8 Steve doesn't like to fly -- sometimes Annie.

9 And so once or twice a month I'd spend a weekend in Wilmington or Camp David or
10 Rehobeth with him. And on those days, he still wanted to work.

11 Q And, respectfully, sir, I've heard you say in your answer that he liked to work,
12 and he wanted to work. My question was, did you notice any change in his ability to
13 handle the schedule over the 4 years that he was having been in the Presidency?

14 A I thought he was doing -- I thought he was doing a good job as President. He
15 was doing the work. And we were all tired, but we kept at it.

16 Q And I do recognize that you thought he was doing a good job, but did his ability
17 to handle the schedule change over those 4 years?

18 A I didn't think so.

19 The burden of whatever you're working on as President has more -- has a
20 considerable impact on how you're feeling about things. And so dealing with two wars was
21 harder than dealing with one. And so I think that was tiring to everyone involved. But I
22 felt that he was doing it well.

23 Q And Mr. Donilon said that -- again, I am paraphrasing -- but when President
24 Biden was tired, he would be more likely to make mistakes. Is that your understanding as
25 well?

1 A I am sure that's true of anyone. He was capable of making mistakes when he
2 was wide awake.

3 Q Thank you.

4 BY MS. HARKER:

5 Q When traveling with the President, did you ever see -- did you ever observe Dr.
6 O'Connor or folks from the medical unit meeting with President Biden?

7 A Dr. O'Connor traveled with us sometimes, and they often talked. And with Dr.
8 O'Connor, he liked to talk about all kinds of things --

9 Q Do you know if the frequency of the President's meetings with Dr. O'Connor
10 changed throughout the duration of his Presidency?

11 A I don't know. You know, Dr. O'Connor was -- he was the White House doctor.
12 He's there all the time. He has an office in the -- that office has an office in the basement
13 of the White House. So he was around a lot, and he talked a lot.

14 Q Did you ever observe President Biden receiving any medical treatment?

15 A I was there watching from a distance when he had a COVID test, when he
16 tested positive for COVID in July of 2024. I don't remember anything specific what there
17 may have been.

18 Q Did you ever observe President Biden receive an IV infusion?

19 A No, I don't think so.

20 Q Did you ever observe President Biden in a wheelchair?

21 A Not that I can recall.

22 BY MR. GRANT:

23 Q Were there ever any discussions of putting President Biden in a wheelchair?

24 A Not that I can recall.

25 Q When it came to the formal Cabinet meetings, were you involved in those?

1 A Yeah, I was. I was there as like a back bencher.

2 Q Did you attend all of the Cabinet meetings?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Both the public sessions and the private sessions?

5 A Yeah.

6 Q How would you say the President -- how would you say President Biden was in
7 these Cabinet meetings? Was he effective?

8 A Yes.

9 You know, the quality of discussions varied. Cabinet meetings -- the Cabinet Affairs
10 team would organize the meetings so that over the course of however many Cabinet
11 meetings we had, every Cabinet member would get at least one chance to speak.

12 And so they were formalized events in the sense that the Attorney General knew
13 they were supposed to say something, and we were going to have a discussion on that issue.

14 And so they followed a script often. But President Biden liked to go off script, and
15 there were plenty of times when he challenged his Cabinet and when he was troubled by
16 something. And by the way, if an agency was handling something, he would raise that in
17 front of the other Cabinet members.

18 So they were long and not always the most interesting really. But I always tried to
19 make sure that I didn't nod off while the press was present.

20 Q Fair enough.

21 In your mind, did President Biden's effectiveness in these Cabinet meetings, both the
22 public sessions and the private sessions, did his effectiveness change at all?

23 A No, I don't think so. You know, the press part of it is -- he always tried to work
24 it so you'd sit on the President's side of the table, because if you sat on the press, the other
25 side of the table opposite him, you took your life in your hands because the press stormed in

1 with long boom mikes. The President was always worried that someone was going to get
2 hurt.

3 And then they'd want to shout questions. And so they were like free-for-alls.

4 As I said, like in I'm not sure every Cabinet meeting I've ever been to, but in past
5 administrations as well, they're not what you would think they would be like.

6 If you're reading, you know, about Lincoln's White House or something, that it's not
7 a real meeting where there's one question on the table and everybody's sinking their teeth
8 into what we should do next.

9 Sometimes the President would ask advice more broadly, and it would open up the
10 conversation. But for the most part, because it's a big Cabinet and everybody has to have
11 their say on something, everybody had a turn. And sometimes it was interesting.
12 Sometimes no.

13 Q I believe you said that these meetings were often scripted?

14 A Yeah. The President was supposed to call on somebody. They knew they
15 were going to be called on. They knew what they were going to say. And as with all
16 things Joe Biden, it didn't always follow the script.

17 But there were only a few occasions when a Cabinet meeting really got interesting,
18 and that was like if the President was kind of lighting into some Cabinet member for what
19 they had or hadn't done.

20 Q Was there a teleprompter ever used in these Cabinet meetings?

21 A I don't think so.

22 Q You don't think so?

23 A No, he usually just -- he had talking points.

24 Q Did the amount of Q&A Cabinet meetings stay the same over the 4 years?

25 A Well, the Q&A was just the press, and they, you know, basically that was

1 regulated by the press team. And it was usually like one question or two. Or actually,
2 often it was just the President says his thing, and then the press tried to ask a bunch of
3 questions, and then the wranglers come in to herd the press out.

4 Q And then, I apologize, step back again to some of the scheduling and some of
5 the travel.

6 Did you ever have to wake up President Biden in the White House?

7 A Not that I can recall, no.

8 Q Did you ever have to wake him up on any of the trips you were on with
9 President Biden?

10 A I don't recall. I'm sure there were trips where he slept. As I told you, there
11 were times when we would wake each other up because the President was in our cabin.

12 Q Did you ever notice or see President Biden falling asleep or nodding to sleep in
13 a meeting of any kind?

14 A Well, that happened a few times on foreign trips where you've gone through
15 five or ten time zones and everybody's struggling to stay awake. So it happened a few
16 times. It was not --

17 Q Did that ever happen on domestic trips where you had to wake him up?

18 A I will say like trips back to the White House after a night flight or something or a
19 late night helicopter, you know, probably everybody on Marine One was either asleep or
20 trying to sleep. But that was not unusual. As I said, we were all tired.

21 BY MR. GREENBERG:

22 Q What were the specific events that you mentioned in foreign travel that the
23 President had to be woken up?

24 A No, I didn't say he had to be woke -- oh, you mean, there were -- he didn't need
25 to be woken up.

1 There were occasions where for a minute or two -- like, so here's a typical NATO
2 meeting, or let's say it's a G-20 meeting.

3 The way those are organized is that they end, kind of last part of meeting is for every
4 foreign leader present, which could be 30 or 35, would get to speak for three minutes, and
5 everybody had to be in the room to listen to it. And it was always at the end of two or
6 three days.

7 So those were a nightmare for everyone involved because hardly any of the leaders
8 stuck to their three minutes. And we would sit in the back, like not in the room itself, but
9 we would sit in the holding room. And then we had a pool going as to which -- like how
10 many hours it would go. And that closing set of statements would go easily three hours.

11 So there are times like that where any given leader in that room might have been
12 struggling to stay awake.

13 Mr. Grant. We'll go off the record.

14 [Recess.]

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[1:17 p.m.]

Mr. [REDACTED] Welcome back, Mr. Reed. I just have a few questions to touch on some things that were discussed in the previous hour earlier in the day.

BY MR. [REDACTED]

Q You had a conversation with the majority staff about Cabinet meetings.

A Uh-huh.

Q They used the word "scripted" at times to describe the meetings. Just a couple of questions on that.

First, is there anything about Cabinet meetings during President Biden's administration that was strikingly different than Cabinet meetings in other administrations in which you've served?

A No. The Cabinet meetings in the Clinton administration and the Obama administration were quite similar. They're a chance for the Cabinet to gather, a chance for them to hear about what some of their colleagues are doing.

But they're not decision-making meetings. They're not the kind of thing where there's often a vigorous exchange of views from everybody around the table. There just isn't time for that.

So to keep the conversation going and to make sure that every Cabinet member over the course of the term has a chance to talk about their work, there's in all the administrations I have been in, there's an attempt to have an order, have an agenda, so that a meeting could be interesting and that it didn't get dominated by whoever talks the loudest or talks the most.

Q And then the idea that there would be questions that might be provided to a member of the Cabinet in advance, that had nothing -- that was no evidence of Joe Biden --

1 A That was standard practice as well because the Cabinet member's staff would
2 want to know, like, what are we supposed to talk about? And they don't get very many
3 chances to be in front of all their colleagues and they're nervous about what they're going to
4 say.

5 So it's -- as I said, there are plenty of times when the discussion didn't end up on the
6 same topic where it started. But everyone involved wanted to have -- wanted to make
7 sure that the people whose turn it was to speak got the chance to do that.

8 Q So, again, just to make the subtext very clear here, that was not some
9 indication of President Biden's mental acuity being different or some nefarious plan to,
10 quote, "usurp the power of the Presidency"?

11 A No. No. It's just the way Cabinet meetings are normally done. And
12 President Biden would often take the conversation in a different direction. He challenged
13 Cabinet members on what they had to say. He'd bring up other topics that he was either
14 pleased or annoyed with.

15 So they were in every respect just like the Cabinet meetings that I sat through in
16 previous administrations.

17 Q Let me switch topics.

18 I believe it was the last hour, but earlier today, there was a little bit of discussion of
19 President Biden's schedule. And this has come up in some of the past interviews as well,
20 portions of his day that were designated as, say, desk time.

21 This may be an area of interest now because in the first Trump administration -- you
22 may not remember it -- but there was unflattering news about something called executive
23 time, which we're not going to touch on.

24 But regarding the desk time, in your experience was desk time anything else but
25 working time for the President?

1 A It was a chance to work. There was always a mountain of paperwork on his
2 desk. He would complain about not having enough time to work on the decisions he had
3 to make, on top of everything else that he was doing that day, and the speeches that he had
4 to look at, and so on.

5 And so desk time was used for exactly that, sitting at his desk, the most important
6 desk on Earth, and plowing through the work that as President he had to do.

7 Q You mentioned this both in the conversation and also in the statement that you
8 read. You said: "We all witnessed Joe Biden age physically. He didn't walk as well as he
9 used to, but he remained dogged, inquisitive, and relentless throughout."

10 I think you also said something like -- the majority asked you: Did he make more
11 mistakes when he was tired? And you said: He made mistakes even when he was wide
12 awake. What did you mean by that?

13 A What I meant was that Joe Biden has often had his words get ahead of where
14 he intended. He's made plenty of verbal mistakes over the years.

15 And he would do that. One reason why I think that has happened is that his whole
16 life since he was a child he suffered with a stutter.

17 And one of the ways to deal with a stutter is to make sure you keep talking, not to
18 slow down, because if you slow down, you might stop. And if you stop, it's hard to get
19 started again.

20 So as a result of that, he tends to talk faster than he would otherwise and longer
21 than he would otherwise. And once you start talking fast, things can -- that his words can
22 slip up. And so that's the kind of mistakes I was referring to.

23 I believe The New York Times at one point referred to him -- this was in 2012, when
24 he was Vice President -- as a "human verbal wrecking crew," because he had a way in which
25 the words didn't always come out the way he intended and he was over his skis on some of

1 the things that he said.

2 Q Similarly, I think you said something like: We were all tired by the end of the
3 Presidency. You may have been asked whether the President got more tired as his term
4 went on.

5 Is that in any way inconsistent with what you said about his ability to do his job or his
6 mental acuity throughout his term?

7 A The President was dogged, inquisitive, determined, making tough decisions
8 from day one till the last day.

9 Every President I've served has been tired, and it's the kind of job where you have to
10 do the work whatever time of day it is, however you're feeling that day.

11 So President Biden was enthusiastic and determined about the work he was doing
12 right up till the day we left.

13 Q And just one final point. I believe you said something like President Biden was
14 an exhausting guy to work for in the last hour. And then the majority staff may have then
15 asked if you were aware if President Biden was taking amphetamines or stimulants or
16 something like that.

17 I just -- you may or may not know this, but President Trump has accused every single
18 one of his general election opponents of being on drugs. And I don't know if you knew
19 this, but in fact there's been reporting and allegations about President Trump using
20 stimulants that date back to at least 1992.

21 Let's go off the record.

22 [Discussion off the record.]

23 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. Let's go on the record.

24 BY MR. GREENBERG:

25 Q Mr. Reed, before I turn it over to Billy, I just wanted to ask a couple of

1 questions based on the minority's last couple of questions.

2 Hunter Biden recently gave an interview in which he said before the debate the
3 President's aides had given him Ambien.

4 Are you aware of the President being given Ambien before the debate?

5 A I'm not aware of that.

6 Q Are you aware of the President's aides giving him any medication before the
7 debate?

8 A No, none that I can recall.

9 Q Are you aware of Annie Tomasini ever providing medication or any kind of
10 medical treatment to the President?

11 A Not that I can recall.

12 Q Are you aware of any aides providing medication or medical treatment to the
13 President?

14 A His doctor.

15 Q Anyone outside Dr. O'Connor's office providing medicine or medical treatment
16 to President Biden?

17 A Not that I can recall.

18 Q And the President's son-in-law is a physician. Are you aware of any
19 medication being prescribed by the President's son-in-law that would make its way to the
20 President?

21 A I'm not.

22 Q Thank you.

23 BY MR. GRANT:

24 Q Turning over to the 2024 election cycle.

25 When was the decision definitively made for President Biden to announce his

1 reelection campaign for 2024?

2 A I believe he decided late March, early April. He announced it on the
3 anniversary of his 2019 announcement. I don't remember the exact date of his decision,
4 but it was not too long before his actual announcement.

5 Q Did you have discussions with President Biden weighing the options of whether
6 to run or not?

7 A I attended meetings where there were discussions of whether he was going to
8 run or not. The questions were -- or the discussions were primarily urging him to make a
9 decision one way or the other.

10 Q Were there any members of the senior staff that had reservations about
11 President Biden running?

12 A Not that I can recall.

13 Q Leading into the June 2024 debate with President Trump, were you involved in
14 the decision to debate with President Trump?

15 A I was involved, yes.

16 Q And who else was involved in that decisionmaking process with you?

17 A Ron Klain and Anita Dunn had been involved in debate discussions and debate
18 scheduling for decades. So they were the -- as far as I know -- the first ones to raise the
19 issue of when and whether the President should take part in the debate.

20 Q What was the ultimate calculation as to set up a debate with President Trump?

21 A Well, there were two questions: whether to debate and when.

22 Both campaigns were -- as I was told -- were interested in the possibility of an early
23 debate, of moving debates earlier than they had traditionally been, because early voting is
24 so common now that by the time the traditional debates took place in late September and
25 early October a significant percentage of the voters have already voted.

1 So that was one reason to consider an earlier debate.

2 And then the President had to decide whether to debate at all. And those
3 discussions took place, I believe, in April. I can't remember what day he announced that
4 he would challenge Trump to debate.

5 Q Were you an advocate for President Biden to debate President Trump?

6 A I knew from the President's experience in the 2020 campaign that he didn't
7 enjoy debating with President Trump, that those two debates were contentious, and it
8 probably hadn't been a pleasant experience for either side.

9 So he didn't like debating. He didn't like the idea of debating Trump. But he was
10 a believer in presidential debates and ultimately decided that he should.

11 The separate question is whether to do an early debate. I had reservations about
12 that idea because I wanted to make sure that he had enough time to prepare. As I said,
13 sometime in I think early May he decided to do it.

14 Q But you were or were not in support of him having a debate?

15 A I was in support of him debating. I wasn't crazy about an early debate. And
16 I didn't look forward to the debate because, like I said, their debates in the past had been
17 pretty nasty.

18 BY MR. GREENBERG:

19 Q What was the rationale for possibly having an earlier debate?

20 A As I said, the rationale was to have the debates before early voting started.
21 And because of the crowded schedule of events that the country has every 4 years -- two
22 conventions and an Olympics -- the only windows for debates, if you're going to have one in
23 early September, then you couldn't do one during the Olympics, you couldn't do one
24 between the conventions, so that meant it had to be before the conventions. So we ended
25 up doing it the last week before the Republican convention.

1 Q So as I understand it, then, a concern that was not motivating an earlier debate
2 was the President's age or mental acuity?

3 A No. As I said, the reason we did and we agreed to early debates was because
4 of how it fit with the election calendar.

5 And from my standpoint, there was no advantage to us to going early. It meant
6 that the President was going to have to find time to do debate prep in a hurry. Because
7 when Presidents run for reelection, they have two jobs. The biggest one is running the
8 country, and the second one is running as a candidate.

9 And there is a long history of Presidents who have struggled in their debates when
10 they run for a second term because they've spent most of the past year doing their day job
11 and not enough time left to do their job as a candidate.

12 Q So just to confirm, the notion of needing to dispel or not -- there was no
13 reason -- there was no calculation to hold the debate early due to President Biden's mental
14 health, mental cognitive abilities?

15 A No, we had no concerns about the President's cognitive abilities.

16 Q And so the major determining factor was purely the election calendar. You
17 weren't trying to demonstrate that age was not going to be an issue for President Biden?

18 A No. The American people knew he was old, he knew he was old, but we had
19 no concerns about his mental faculties.

20 Q Moving forward a little bit more.

21 Were you involved in debate prep with President Biden leading up to the debate?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And that was in Camp David -- at Camp David -- correct?

24 A Yes. There was a period between the decision to do the debates and Camp
25 David where I had hoped we would have time for debate prep, but the President had a great

1 deal of foreign travel, he had a very busy day job.

2 There was a hold for Bruce (ph) on the calendar on two or three days a week in May,
3 but the hold never held. And we had a few conversations but had no real chance to do any
4 serious debate prep until we got to Camp David.

5 Q And then, in preparation for the debate, did yourself and your staff prepare
6 materials for the prep?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And what kind of materials were you preparing?

9 A We helped prepare a list of potential questions that the moderators were likely
10 to raise. We prepared background material on those topics, suggested talking points, what
11 his opponent might say, what he might say in response. So kind of standard background
12 materials for a debate.

13 Q Did you have any concerns about President Biden remembering any of the key
14 facts or figures as part of debate prep?

15 A I didn't have concerns about his memory. My concern going into the debate
16 and into the debate prep was that I had seen what had happened to previous Presidents
17 who had a hard time in their first debate running for reelection because they spent their
18 time governing and relatively little time campaigning.

19 President Obama in 2012 had a disastrous first debate with Mitt Romney. Gallup
20 called it the worst -- from a polling standpoint -- the worse setback a presidential candidate
21 has had in a debate.

22 To that point, the snap polls from that debate had 72 percent said Romney won,
23 20 percent said Obama had won, 52 percent margin, which was larger even than what Bill
24 Clinton had had against George H. W. Bush when he was running for reelection and larger,
25 as it turned out, than President Trump had. I think that snap poll from that first debate

1 had 67 percent said he won and 33 percent said Joe Biden won.

2 But the main challenge of an early debate, it, frankly -- even a debate later in the
3 calendar -- is that Presidents, when they're running for reelection, generally run a Rose
4 Garden strategy. They're not out there campaigning a lot. They're doing the job and
5 taking their case to voters that they want to keep doing the job.

6 We didn't have a Rose Garden strategy, we had a situational strategy which was not
7 ideal. The President was consumed with dealing with a couple wars.

8 And so he hadn't campaigned much. The conventions hadn't happened. He
9 hadn't heard -- you know, he hadn't given his convention speech. He hadn't heard Trump's
10 convention speech. Neither side had kind of really engaged at a full-bore national level at
11 trying to make their cases to the voters.

12 So he was not in campaign mode. Donald Trump, by contrast, had been out there
13 on the stump campaigning for a year. So he had been practicing for a year. For Joe Biden
14 that early debate still felt like preseason. But the national press was treating it like the
15 Super Bowl.

16 Q Did you prepare note cards for President Biden in preparation for the debate at
17 Camp David?

18 A Yeah. The President is a big fan of note cards, has been for as long as I have
19 worked for him. I learned early on in working for Joe Biden that you didn't need to give
20 him a lot of words. He supplied the words. He just wanted to settle on what are the key
21 points that he needs to make.

22 And so when he was Vice President and when he was a candidate he'd want us to
23 boil down, instead of handing him a ten-page policy paper, he'd want us to boil it down to
24 the essence of what we -- of the pitch we would make if we saw a voter or if we were calling
25 our mother to try to explain what we were doing.

1 So he had note cards that did that on each of the issues that we anticipated would
2 come up in the debate.

3 Q Did you feel that President Biden was adequately preparing for the debate and
4 reviewing these note cards and the materials you provided?

5 A He did the work. We -- Ron and -- for the first couple of days of prep, it was
6 Ron and me. Then Ron, me, and Mike. Then Ron, Mike, Steve, and I sat with him at his
7 table in his cabin at Aspen at Camp David and went over and over the cards, and the
8 President would rewrite them.

9 We had lengthy debates about what he should say on each topic. And interspersed
10 with that, we had mock debates where the President would try things out.

11 Q I'm going to paraphrase, but Ron Klain told the committee that President
12 Biden, when reviewing materials, would often put marks on the paper or pages, whatever it
13 was that he was reviewing, whether that would be some notes, some random markings,
14 slashes.

15 Did you see those in the materials that you provided him?

16 A Yeah, we went through several rounds of them. He rewrote them. He
17 would scribble on the page. We'd type up a revised version. He revised them multiple
18 times over the course of our time at Camp David.

19 Mr. Greenberg. Did you see those markings on the materials that you had
20 prepared prior to arriving at Camp David?

21 Mr. Reed. So we had a comprehensive debate book that included everything you
22 could possibly ask, and the President devoured parts of it. He was particularly interested
23 in the possible questions and why we thought those might be the likeliest questions.

24 And from my standpoint that book was a backup document. If we had had a couple
25 of -- if we had a long period to do the length of debate prep that we had done for a fall

1 debate, if we had the amount of time that we had in 2020, he might have spent more time
2 reviewing that material.

3 But that's not how Joe Biden absorbed material anyway. You know, he'd read it.
4 But what worked for him was to engage with the essence of his argument and get that
5 cemented in his mind. Because, as I said, he was not the kind of guy who would memorize
6 two minutes. He would figure out what it was he wanted to say, and then he didn't have
7 any trouble filling out the materials.

1 [1:53 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q So President Biden arrived the evening of June 20th, 2024. Is that correct?

4 A That sounds right to me.

5 Q And it was the next morning that yourself, Mike Donilon, and Ron Klain held a
6 debate prep session in the Aspen lodge?

7 A Yeah. I believe that's the right date. It was -- I'd seen him in Rehoboth
8 briefly when he came back from Los Angeles, and then we flew to Camp David, I believe it
9 was the Friday of that week. I don't know what day that was. And then we started
10 debate over the weekend. Mike missed the first day because he was at a wedding.

11 Q And that first kind of debate prep session, how did that go? Did President
12 Biden seem prepared to you?

13 A We knew and he knew he had -- as I said, he hadn't had a lot of time over the
14 previous few weeks since we'd announced that we were doing this to dedicate to debate, so
15 he's -- he's always been a cram-before-the-exam kind of guy and thought that he could do
16 that here, but it's -- it's hard to cram when you're not feeling great, and a presidential
17 debate is a lot of material.

18 Q Did you have two longer mock debate prep sessions planned to happen while
19 you were at Camp David?

20 A Well, we had three or four mocks all together. His voice starting on -- I can't
21 remember if it was the first day or second day. His voice was -- sounded like he was
22 getting a cold, and we didn't want to overtax his voice, so we shortened the mocks that we
23 did have a bit just to protect his voice. And I think that we spent an extra day just working
24 with him in his cabin, working on the topics, and I believe had our first mock on that
25 Monday.

1 Q How long was that mock session?

2 A I couldn't tell you. You know, I think they were all in the vicinity of an hour.

3 Q And Mr. Steven Spielberg helped with debate prep. Is that correct?

4 A He was virtual, so I think he had COVID, so he watched online and then had
5 comments afterwards.

6 Q What kind of comments?

7 A You know, this was good, this was not. I don't remember specifically.

8 Q And Jeffrey Katzenberg, he also was involved with debate prep?

9 A Yeah. He was present.

10 Q And what was his role in debate prep?

11 A He -- he'd have comments, too. He I think would talk with Spielberg and
12 they'd compare notes.

13 Q Ron Klain made a statement that he was concerned with how the debate was
14 going to end up going in Atlanta when it finally came time to debate. Did he share those
15 concerns with you?

16 A You know, we sat next to each other during the mocks and we had a couple
17 good ones, we had a couple not so good ones. I think Ron and I -- well, I don't want to
18 speak for him, but we felt better by the end of the prep than we had at the beginning, and,
19 you know, in some of the mocks he was quite good and in the early ones he wasn't as good.
20 He hadn't -- you know, hadn't heard all the arguments that Bob Bower and Trump had
21 made, so he, you know, learned from those exchanges.

22 And we left for the debate on, I guess it was a Thursday morning, and the President
23 didn't seem anxious. He was still, you know, not -- didn't seem like he was feeling that
24 well, but he didn't seem worried about the debate. You never know how a debate is going
25 to go. We did another prep session asking him questions in Atlanta and then in a hotel in

1 Atlanta, and then we did one last prep session right before he left for the debate center, and
2 in that one, he was the best he'd been all week. So you're always nervous going into
3 debate, but we thought he'd do fine.

4 Q Mr. Klain informed us that he was concerned about a serious lack of
5 preparation on President Biden's part. You didn't feel that was the case?

6 A Well, as I said, these were not ideal conditions having to do -- having to
7 condense what is normally a few months of work into a few days with a President who's not
8 feeling great. It was definitely not ideal, and so, it would have been nice to have the
9 debate later in the cycle, or nice for the President to have been able to campaign a lot more
10 earlier in the cycle.

11 Q On the day of the debate, you were in Atlanta, correct?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And where did you watch the debate?

14 A There was a holding room where a bunch of people from the campaign and
15 from the White House were watching.

16 Q And who was in that room?

17 A Jen Dillon. I was standing next to Jake Sullivan. I can't remember if Ron was
18 there or somewhere else. You know, the press team from the White House, Anita, others.

19 Q And during the debate -- obviously, it was not a good debate. Did you express
20 any concerns about how the debate was going to any of those standing around you?

21 A Well, when he first opened his mouth, his voice sounded terrible, nothing like
22 we'd seen or heard at debate camp, nothing like we'd seen just moments before, so that
23 was surprising and worrisome. It seemed like he was struggling to clear his throat,
24 struggling to find his voice, and then in the debate he never really recovered from stumbling
25 over his words in his second answer, which was a shame.

1 You know, he got -- his voice sort of stalled out and he was trying to push the words
2 out, and when he did that, if you watch the video of that, it looks just like the video of him
3 describing what it was like when he was trying to overcome stuttering. His eyes squeezed
4 down to try to push out the words. I don't think he was -- you know, I think that was the
5 thing foremost in his mind was just to get the words out and, you know, it was clear what he
6 was trying to say.

7 We all knew he was trying to say we finally beat big Pharma to deliver drug prices for
8 people on Medicare. He'd said that same phrase dozens, maybe hundreds of times over
9 the past year. He'd said it in the State of the Union. Every member of the White House
10 press corps had heard him say that phrase the right way, but it -- he just tripped and fell.

11 I've always described his stutter as -- and the way he deals with it is to just try to
12 keep going, and it's like a skier going down a hill and planting a pole with each turn to make
13 sure that doesn't get going too fast, and it's beautiful to watch until a skier hits a mogul and
14 trips over his skis and says something he doesn't -- he didn't intend.

15 BY MS. HARKER:

16 Q Have you ever heard President Biden stutter?

17 A Yes. Yes. And I've heard him talk about what it was like to stutter, and
18 it -- he -- we spent a lot of time with him trying to make sure that the rhythm of the
19 speeches was right so that he would stay at the pace he wanted to stay, and so every speech
20 he would go through it and mark the spot where that line should end, which is how he's
21 done it for years, probably decades.

22 Q Have you seen him stutter in public before?

23 A I've seen him -- yes, I've seen him get stuck on words before.

24 Q Get stuck on words or stutter?

25 A Get -- start talking like this and not being able to get off. You know, that's, I

1 think, what a stutter is. And it was -- you know, it had been an embarrassment to him his
2 whole life. In high school, his nickname was Dash, not because he was the fastest guy on
3 the football team, though he was, but because when he said his name, B-B-B Biden, they
4 made fun of him for it seeming like he had to use a dash all the time, so it was always in his
5 head.

6 And as I said, every speech, every time he used a teleprompter, the lines needed to
7 end in line with how he would say the words without going too fast. And he, you know,
8 routinely counseled young people that he met along -- met on the trail about how to deal
9 with their stutter, so he wasn't hiding it. It's just something he'd had to deal with his
10 whole life.

11 Q Do you attribute President Biden's performance at the debate to the stutter?

12 A The phrase, "we finally beat Medicare," was in my view, because he got stuck
13 and was trying to proceed, because I've heard him say that phrase hundreds of times.

14 Q We finally beat Medicare?

15 A No. No. I'm sorry. I've heard him say the phrase correctly "we finally beat
16 big Pharma."

17 Q That's what he meant to say then?

18 A That's what he meant to say, yeah.

19 Q Do you attribute President Biden's performance at the debate to his stutter?

20 A I attribute that moment.

21 Q I'm asking about the debate.

22 A That moment was a very bad moment and a tough moment to recover from.
23 You know, the rest of the debate was, you know, not so memorable.

24 Q So you do attribute his poor performance or the perception of his poor
25 performance to the President's stutter?

1 A I attribute it to that mistake, which I believe was caused by his speech
2 difficulties, which were nothing new.

3 Mr. Greenberg. I believe you said a few minutes ago that he wasn't able to recover
4 from that moment. Is that -- do I have that right?

5 Mr. Reed. I mean, he kept going and he did fine the rest of the debate, but there
6 was no way for him to roll back the tape and take away that impression, which the press
7 made the story of that debate.

8 BY MR. GRANT:

9 Q But it was more than, you know, just the one gaffe of we finally beat Medicare.
10 I mean, President Biden also made a statement to the effect that no one died, no soldiers
11 died overseas during his term in office. Did troops die during President Biden's term in
12 office?

13 A Yes, in Afghanistan.

14 Q How many people?

15 A Was it 15?

16 Q 13, but I think that characterizing it as just -- as one gaffe or one stutter, you
17 know, we're focused on the wrong thing here. Can we agree, did you think the debate was
18 a disastrous performance on the part of President Biden?

19 A I thought it was a bad debate and the -- but I saw nothing in that debate that
20 gave me any pause about the President's mental faculties or his abilities going forward as a
21 candidate or as President. He'd had a bad debate like many of his predecessors have had.
22 There would be another debate. He'd have another chance.

23 And he had a long and storied history of tripping over his words. He'd been chided
24 by the media and by his opponents in 2008 and 2012 about this gaffe or that gaffe, and we
25 finally beat Medicare was a bad gaffe, but it was just a gaffe.

1 Mr. Greenberg. Do you think -- President Biden saying that no American troops had
2 died overseas during his presidency was a verbal gaffe or do you think he forgot?

3 Mr. Reed. No, I don't think -- I don't think he forgot, no. There's no forgetting the
4 tragedy of that day but, you know, he'd said things in the past that came out wrong in one
5 of the early campaigns with President Obama. He referred to President Obama as the first
6 African-American in U.S. history. He said jobs was a three-letter word. I was with him
7 when he -- as President when he gave a speech in Alabama where he admitted up front
8 every time I give a speech, I make -- you know, I usually make one mistake, and then he
9 proved himself right and then some over the course of that speech. So, you know, to me,
10 if anyone was surprised to hear Joe Biden trip over his words in 2024, where had they been
11 the last 50 years?

12 BY MR. GRANT:

13 Q So besides the -- these two gaffes we just spent time talking about, we're
14 beating Medicare and saying no troops died overseas in his term, you thought President
15 Biden's debate performance was good otherwise?

16 A I didn't say good. I said it was a bad debate.

17 Q After the debate ended, did you have conversations with other White House
18 senior staff and campaign members of whether or not the President did well?

19 A Yes. The consensus was he had not done well.

20 Q Were there any conversations after the debate about -- immediately after the
21 debate about President Biden no longer running for reelection?

22 A No. There were some commentators on TV raised that, but that -- as I said,
23 we had no doubts. The President went and gave two speeches in another event that night,
24 and then the next morning he gave a speech to a roaring crowd in -- I believe we were in
25 North Carolina, and we knew we were going to get a lot of grief for the debate.

1 Q No one brought any concerns about the reelection campaign to you after the
2 debate?

3 A It was not a good debate. We knew we were going to have to do better
4 and -- but we'd had good debates and bad many times over the years, and certainly had no
5 doubts about the President's abilities.

6 Q And you thought he should continue running for reelection in 2024?

7 A Well, the -- yes. I felt the same way about him getting out of the race as I did
8 about him getting into the race. That was his decision to make. And ultimately, he
9 decided that for the good of the party he would step aside.

10 Q But at that time, you know, within whether it's right after the debate
11 performance or within a few days of the debate performance, did you think President Biden
12 could still win reelection?

13 A I felt that he had what it takes to continue to serve as President, and that, you
14 know, the polls hadn't changed much. It was a 1 1/2 point race in the Real Clear Politics
15 average on the night of the debate, before the debate. It was a three-point race by the time
16 he dropped out. So the public -- the voting public had concerns about both candidates.
17 It was a tough year to begin with. I think the debate, in my view, made less of an impact
18 with the broader electorate than it did with party leaders, the news media, you know,
19 everyone in a panic, even though, as I said, we had all seen, heard, or reported on Joe Biden
20 making major gaffes before.

21 Q So do you think the American people's concerns and/or questions regarding
22 President Biden's mental acuity while President were legitimate?

23 A I had no concerns about the President's mental acuity and I -- you know, in our
24 dial groups, as was reported to me, neither candidate -- we had a bad debate. Trump did
25 not have a great debate either. They weren't very happy with either one of them. And

1 so -- and I think our main challenge with voters throughout 2024 was how they felt about
2 the economy, how they felt about prices, how they felt about the direction the country was
3 going. It was a tough campaign to begin with, and a bad debate that dominated the news
4 cycle for weeks on end didn't help.

5 Q Right. But you didn't really answer my question. Do you think that the
6 American people's concerns and questions about Joe Biden's mental acuity, do you think
7 those concerns are legitimate, yes or no?

8 A From my experience, I don't believe people should have concerns about Joe
9 Biden's mental faculties or agility.

10 Q After the debate, after the -- I believe President Biden went to North Carolina
11 later that night and for a speech the next day, did you advocate for President Biden to be
12 more public-facing during this time?

13 A He was already public-facing. He was giving a speech to 3,000 people and he
14 continued to campaign over the course of that week, so it -- the short answer is, you know, I
15 thought we should continue to do what we were doing, campaigning.

16 Q But the President and his family went up to Camp David that immediately next
17 weekend to take a private photo shoot. Do you think that was a good idea?

18 A I don't remember that.

19 Q In the weeks following the election, who was the most vocal about advocating
20 for President Biden to remain in the 2024 race?

21 A We had daily calls with senior staff, Mike, Steve, Anita, Jeff, and Jen O'Malley
22 Dillon, and I'm not sure who else, where others discussed what the reaction was from
23 elected officials, party leaders, delegates. You know, the decision of who gets the
24 nomination is ultimately in the hands of delegates, so the campaign was keeping tabs on
25 that, and Joe Biden was still getting enthusiastic response from crowds. We did one event

1 maybe in Michigan, I can't remember where, where a crowd chanted, don't you quit. So
2 there was a rough couple of weeks as I've seen in many campaigns, and we keep going.

3 BY MR. GREENBERG:

4 Q Can I ask, at this point after the debate, before July 21st when Joe Biden drops
5 out, there seems -- there's a distinction to me between your boss telling you he wants to
6 stay in the race and you do everything you can to the job set in front of you, and conversely,
7 there is you providing advice that you believe to be accurate, and my question is, at this
8 point, are you doing the job that Joe Biden has tasked you to do or are you providing the
9 best advice that you can -- are you yourself advocating that Joe Biden stay in the race?

10 A Well, as I said, I felt that if he wanted to stay in the race, he should stay in the
11 race. He won the primaries. If the delegates supported him, he should stay in the race.
12 And I didn't think he should step aside because the press was -- wouldn't talk about anything
13 else or some party leaders had their doubts, and I didn't have doubts about his ability to
14 govern or campaign, but I felt like it was his call and I wasn't -- and I was going to be
15 comfortable with whatever he decided.

16 Q And at this point, did you think if President Biden elected to stay in the race
17 that he would win?

18 A There's no way to say that from -- you know, we had -- there were 4 months
19 left to go in the campaign. It was a three-point race. But there were, you know,
20 significant head winds before the debate because the economy was getting better, but
21 people didn't feel that way. You know, we had the polling numbers on the direction of the
22 country hadn't been great for a long time and the country was in a sour mood. Some of
23 that had to do with us. A lot of it didn't.

24 So -- but there's no way to handicap a race that was in the margin of error at the
25 time he dropped out, and so I didn't have -- yeah, I wouldn't have hazarded a prediction one

1 way or the other.

2 Q Did you think President Biden had as good of a shot as anybody to win that
3 race then? Is that a fair summary of what you just said?

4 A Well, I think that the history of the President stepping aside and turning it over
5 to someone else hadn't gone too well in, you know, the last half century, LBJ, Harry Truman.
6 And so, in general, I think that changing horses midstream wasn't going to change prices or a
7 lot of the factors that were on people's minds, so it was going to be a tough race for
8 whoever ran it, and that would have been true if he hadn't decided to run in the first place,
9 and whatever he decided in July.

10 Q It's been a year now since -- over a year since Joe Biden dropped out of the
11 race. Hindsight maybe offering some clarity, do you think Joe Biden should have dropped
12 out of the race earlier?

13 A No. As I said, you never know in politics, but the way that year went just
14 didn't feel like our year, and Vice President Harris did a good job, had a much better debate
15 than we'd had, still lost. So I wouldn't hazard to have been a prognosticator then. I know
16 it's hard to do in hindsight now.

17 Q So now that you mentioned Vice President Harris lost, do you think that the
18 reaction from the pundits, from -- and we'll get there the next hour, from members of
19 Congress was an overreaction to the debate?

20 A Yes. If they were the least bit concerned about Joe Biden's capacity to be
21 President of his mental faculties, then that was an overreaction, because there was no
22 reason for that. If they had, you know, doubts about how the election was going to turn
23 out, in my view, the election was going to be a challenge no matter who was at the top of
24 the ticket.

25 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you. We'll go off the record.

1 [Recess.]

2 BY MS. [REDACTED]

3 Q Mr. Reed, I wanted to follow up on a conversation you had with my majority
4 about the debate and debate prep, and your concern about the early debate was because of
5 the timetable, correct?

6 A Uh-huh.

7 Q And the decision to participate in the debate early wasn't an effort to conceal
8 President Biden from the public.

9 A That's correct.

10 Q And it wasn't a way to hide some mental acuity issue, correct?

11 A No.

12 Q And also, regarding the debate, you agree that it wasn't the President's best
13 debate?

14 A No, it was not a good debate.

15 Q And you understood the President's debate. You talked about, like, his issues
16 with big Pharma, like -- about his stutter. And you don't attribute his performance during
17 the debate to cognitive issues, correct?

18 A No. No.

19 Q And in your sense, it was -- what would you say it was?

20 A Mostly, as I said, he wasn't in campaign mode. He hadn't been campaigning,
21 he was rusty, and he, for good reasons, but not so good for his campaign, he had spent too
22 much time governing and not enough time campaigning.

23 Q And nothing in that debate made you believe that President Biden wasn't able
24 to execute the duties of the office of the President?

25 A No. After that debate, I remained fully confident that he could execute the

1 presidency.

2 Ms. [REDACTED] Thank you.

3 BY MR. [REDACTED]

4 Q And was there anything about the debate prep that changed your perspective
5 on President Biden's ability to do the job?

6 A No. No. He was dogged and engaged and inquisitive about that, too, and
7 the debate prep was less than ideal, because he was -- seemed to be sick, and -- but I had no
8 concerns about his -- about his abilities.

9 Q You were also asked some questions during the last hour about what the
10 American people believe or what they thought, or that kind of thing. Let's interpret that as
11 potential polling results at the time. Do any of those opinionable polls to the extent you
12 remember any of them change your opinion on President Biden's ability to be President?

13 A No, the polls don't change my opinion of Joe Biden's ability to be President, and
14 the polls didn't change very much in the wake of the debate.

15 Q You also got asked a question or two about the statements during that debate.
16 I don't know if you recall, but during that same debate, President Trump denied whether he
17 had referred to U.S. soldiers who were killed abroad in World War I and World War II as,
18 quote, "suckers," and, quote, "losers." Do you recall that?

19 A I do.

20 Q Just one of many articles in the CBS News article that's roughly
21 contemporaneous for the debate said current and former U.S. military servicemembers as
22 detailed the CBS news, multiple instances when Trump made disparaging remarks about
23 members of the U.S. military who were captured or killed, including referring to the
24 American war dead at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in France in 2018 as, quote,
25 "losers," and, quote, "suckers." A senior Defense Department official and a former U.S.

1 Marine Corps officer with direct knowledge of what was said detailed how Trump said he
2 did not want to visit the cemetery because it was, quote, filled "with losers." These
3 accounts were backed independently by two other officials, a former senior U.S. Army
4 officer and a separate former U.S. Marine Corps officer.

5 In another conversation with Trump on the trip, Trump referred to the 1,800
6 Marines who died in World War I Battle of Belleau Wood as, quote, "suckers for getting
7 killed." Let's go off the record.

8 [Discussion off the record.]

9 BY MR. GRANT:

10 Q Mr. Reed, after the debate, I believe a few weeks after the debate, there was a
11 Zoom meeting with some pollsters from the campaign, and I believe some of the data
12 shared shows that Americans had issues with President Biden's age. Do you remember
13 polls like that coming up in that meeting?

14 A Well, I remember a meeting with pollsters. I don't know if it was the same
15 one, and I don't remember exactly what was said in that meeting. Voters had had
16 concerns about the President's age throughout the campaign.

17 Q And you did not share their concerns? Age wasn't an issue for you for
18 President Biden?

19 A I mean, no, it was not a concern.

20 Q When were you made aware -- let me back up. When did the conversations
21 begin on whether President Biden should drop out of the race or not?

22 A So the last time I saw Joe Biden before he dropped out was in Las Vegas when
23 he came down with COVID, as I described earlier. That was the Tuesday before the Sunday
24 he dropped out, I believe, and he had COVID, so there wasn't going to be any more
25 campaigning for a while. So I went to Juneau, Alaska, where my son was doing a summer

1 internship as a young prospective attorney. He had his first trial, so I went and watched
2 that and stayed in Alaska the balance of the week, and didn't learn of the President's
3 decision until he announced it on a senior staff call on that Sunday morning.

4 Q But prior to his announcement to you all, were there any discussions about
5 potentially dropping out?

6 A As I said before, the -- we had regular calls about, you know, regular senior
7 staff calls about what leaders were saying, what delegates were saying, but I wasn't involved
8 in the discussions with President Biden in those final days about whether to run or not to
9 run.

10 Q Did you have any discussions with members of Congress about trying to get the
11 President to drop out of the race?

12 A I was with him on a handful of occasions when he did Zoom calls with -- he did
13 a handful of Zoom calls with various caucuses in the House, and I can't remember any in the
14 Senate, but -- and some individual members spoke out in those meetings.

15 Q Did you ever engage with any external stakeholders that were trying to
16 propose that President Biden should drop out of the race?

17 A I'm sure I must have heard from some. I don't remember any specific ones,
18 but, you know, there was a debate within the party about what he should do, and so I heard
19 members say that, and undoubtedly heard others say it.

20 Mr. Greenberg. Similar to that question, during this time, did anybody reach out to
21 you with concerns about the President's ability to execute the office of the President?

22 Mr. Reed. No. No one reached out to me concerned about his abilities.

23 BY MR. GRANT:

24 Q When you would discuss with relevant stakeholders or hear from members of
25 Congress with their concerns and thoughts that President Biden should probably drop out of

1 the 2024 race, did you pass those concerns on to President Biden yourself?

2 A I don't remember having any specific ones with Members of Congress, and
3 again, any -- the conversations that I recall from that time, some people were raising
4 concerns about whether he would win, but I don't remember any discussions about whether
5 he could do the job.

6 Q Were you aware of other members of the senior staff bringing similar concerns
7 to the President himself?

8 A I'm not aware one way or the other on that.

9 Q You said that you were out of D.C. when you learned of President Biden
10 dropping out of the race. Do you -- did you have any -- what were the discussions with the
11 senior -- on the senior staff call? Were people upset that the President was dropping out?
12 Did you think he could still push forward, there was a path to victory?

13 A I can't speak for others. I was sad for the President. I know it was a hard
14 choice. But I don't remember anything other than, you know, people sharing that same
15 feeling.

16 Q Did you have any conversations with other members of the senior staff and the
17 White House to which somebody said that the President was making the right choice in
18 dropping out of the race?

19 A I don't remember anyone saying that, but I was in Juneau, and so, I went for a
20 hike.

21 Q After the announcement of the dropout, I suppose when you returned back to
22 D.C. from Alaska, I assume you returned to the White House and started prepping for the
23 last few months of the administration. Is that correct?

24 A Yeah. The day after the President dropped out of the race, I was back in the
25 White House. He called me and he said put together a 6-month plan for what we're going

1 to do the rest of the way.

2 Q And did that include post-presidential plans?

3 A No. It was how many points we could put on the board before we left. In
4 fact, we spent that ensuing week putting together at his insistence a Supreme Court reform
5 proposal that he announced at the LBJ School a week later. He and I had multiple
6 conversations with Larry Tribe, his favorite counselor and law professor, about what he
7 should do on that front, and so he came back to the office raring to go.

8 BY MR. GREENBERG:

9 Q Prior to President Biden dropping out of the race, was it your intention to, if
10 President Biden won the election, stay on in the same role that you had been serving?

11 A I hadn't made up my mind what I was going to do next. Yeah, I still don't
12 know what I would have done next.

13 Q What were you weighing?

14 A The -- you know, I was turning 65. I've worked for government for 20 years,
15 so I was most interested in what I was working on, the major policy issue I was working on at
16 the time, which was AI, so I wanted to keep working on that. But when I've served in the
17 White House before and, you know, been confronted with the decision of, you know, do you
18 want to serve another term, it's just something you have to think long and hard about,
19 because it has major, you know, implications for your family, for your marriage, for your
20 finances, so that was, you know, not really an issue on my mind at the time.

21 Q Were you aware -- at this point, let me clarify, at some point in 2024, Mr.
22 Donilon left the White House to work on the campaign. Is that correct?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And it's been reported that he negotiated a \$4 million deal to work on the
25 campaign. Are you aware of that?

1 A I heard about it later.

2 Q Mr. Donilon told us that there was also a contingent aspect of his payment in
3 which if Joe Biden won, he would receive an additional \$4 million. Were you aware of
4 that?

5 A When I read the news last week.

6 Q Does that seem high to you?

7 A Media makers and consultants make a lot of money. He's very good at what
8 he does. I've long felt like as a general matter that the consultants make too much money.

9 Q Do you believe Mr. Donilon's advice to President Biden to stay in the race was
10 at all affected by the potential to receive \$4 million?

11 A No. No. No. Mike Donilon wanted to win. He wanted to beat Donald
12 Trump. He believed deeply in Joe Biden. He was going to do fine in life no matter what
13 happened.

14 BY MR. GRANT:

15 Q Towards the very end of the administration, President Biden engaged in a lot of
16 meetings to pardon individuals. Were you a part of any of the meetings to pardon any
17 individuals?

18 A Yes. I was present at some, not all, of the pardon meetings.

19 Q Were you in any meetings that were centered around the pardon of Hunter
20 Biden?

21 A No. First I learned of the Hunter Biden pardon was when the President
22 announced to us on a senior staff call the Saturday after Thanksgiving that he was going to
23 pardon his son.

24 Q Did you have any inclination that he might pardon Hunter Biden before that
25 announcement?

1 A I didn't know what he was going to do or when. I was -- I understood how
2 much he cared about his son. He always called him his only surviving son, but I didn't have
3 any involvement in that.

1 [3:08 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GRANT:

3 Q Did Hunter Biden appear to be around the White House a lot more towards the
4 end of the administration after the election cycle?

5 A I don't remember anything specific. You know, there were some family
6 events, you know, last time at Camp David, you know, last time at -- the last Christmas at
7 the White House. I don't remember anything specific.

8 Q Are you aware of Hunter Biden asking you or other White House senior staff
9 about the potential for him to get a pardon?

10 A No.

11 Q At the very end of the administration, I believe it was the last day in January,
12 President Biden pardoned a few individuals. Were you in any of those meetings in the last
13 couple days of the administration?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What were the discussions around the last-minute pardons of Dr. Fauci?

16 A I don't remember specific discussions, and I didn't -- I wasn't involved in that
17 decision. I think I was present when the President made it, but it was for -- for Dr. Fauci,
18 for General Milley. The President said he didn't want to see retaliation against them for
19 what they'd done while he was President.

20 Q And the same question -- you mentioned General Milley. Same question for
21 the January 6th Committee members and staff, were you involved in those conversations for
22 that pardon?

23 A I was present for them and, you know, same thing.

24 Q You didn't offer an opinion?

25 A No.

1 Q Then same thing for the family members of President Biden, were you involved
2 in that meeting as well?

3 A I was present at some discussions, but I was around for the pardon discussions
4 primarily for the policy, the commutations. And we had many pardon and commutation
5 meetings where several different categories of pardons came up.

6 My principal contribution was in providing the President policy advice on how he
7 could be consistent with his previous views on the commuting the death to -- commuting to
8 life in prison of the death row prisoners, commuting the sentences of drug disparity
9 prisoners who had been sentenced to a longer sentence than they'd get today but making
10 sure that they didn't have a high risk of recidivism, and then the home -- at-home CARES Act
11 commutation.

12 Mr. Greenberg. To be clear, nobody from President Biden's family's legal team ever
13 reached out to you regarding a pardon?

14 Mr. Reed. No.

15 Mr. Greenberg. Including Abbe Lowell, correct?

16 Mr. Reed. No.

17 BY MR. GRANT:

18 Q Were there any other discussions between you and other senior staff in the
19 White House at this time about these higher profile pardons and what the thoughts were
20 surrounding them?

21 A And by higher profile you mean?

22 Q General Milley, Dr. Fauci, the January 6th Committee members and staff, and
23 the family members of President Biden.

24 A And, I'm sorry, the question is?

25 Q Did you have any discussions with White House senior staff about these

1 pardons and their implications?

2 A There had been some conversations of -- not with -- you know, prior to the
3 issues going to the President, where there were discussions about individuals, but the White
4 House counsel was primarily responsible for talking to the President about them.

5 Q But did you offer any opinion to --

6 A No.

7 Q -- any other White House staff members about these pardons?

8 A Not that I can recall, no.

9 Q Did you at any point come up with any of the standards for commutations?

10 A So there are three categorical commutations. The first one under the CARES
11 Act, I don't think there were any major policy issues to consider.

12 The second one, commutations for those who are serving -- nonviolent offenders
13 serving drug sentences that were longer than they would get if sentenced today. We had a
14 couple of conversations with the President about how you -- how to determine the criteria
15 that would make sure that he kept his promise to release nonviolent drug offenders while
16 also honoring his view that we shouldn't be putting dangerous offenders out on the street.

17 And what we eventually settled on was to use the First Step Act, which has a
18 PATTERN -- something called the PATTERN score, which is based on how long the prisoner's
19 been in prison, what they were sent in for, what their behavior's been like in
20 prison -- several factors that go in to determine what their risk of recidivism is. And the
21 President settled on those who didn't have a high risk of recidivism. So, in other words,
22 they had a lower risk of recidivism than before they came up with the PATTERN score. In
23 any event, that was the major decision on that one.

24 On the death penalty, the President had issued a moratorium -- or his Justice
25 Department had issued a moratorium at the beginning of his administration to pause the

1 death penalty for 37 of the 40 prisoners on death row but not pause it for those who'd
2 committed hate crime-related mass murders or terrorism, so the Boston bomber, the
3 shooter in Charleston at the Mother Emanuel Church, and the Tree of Life Synagogue in
4 Pittsburgh.

5 Q And so because these involved policy decisions, is it fair to say that you played
6 a significant role in shaping these commutations?

7 A I -- I was helpful. Most of my contribution in that was to the -- getting the
8 balance right on nonviolent and recidivism, but I was present for the discussions of all three.

9 BY MS. HARKER:

10 Q During President Biden's term in office, did you ever witness him trip, stumble,
11 or fall?

12 A Well, I was at the Air Force Academy commencement when, after shaking 900
13 hands of graduating servicemembers, he tripped over a sandbag that Advance had left in the
14 middle of the stage, because it was a very windy day, and they were worried that the
15 podium was going to -- the speaker's podium was going to blow over. So I didn't see him
16 fall. I saw the video of it. And I saw him afterward. He was fine. He joked about
17 being sandbagged.

18 And I don't remember being there to witness him tripping on the stairs of
19 Air Force One. As I said, I've tripped on those stairs plenty of times. So that's about all I
20 have.

21 Q Who else on White House staff was present when the President fell at the
22 graduation ceremony?

23 A So we had a whole group of travelers. I'm not sure I can commit --

24 Q Who from senior staff?

25 A Annie was there, as I recall. I don't remember who was there from the

1 communications team or whether it was Karine or Ben LaBolt or Anita. Yeah, it was just a
2 regular graduation.

3 Q Recognizing that you didn't see it yourself, you saw it on the screen, how did
4 people react when he fell?

5 A Well, he was fine after, so that was -- that was our main concern. We knew
6 that the press was going to make a lot of the video, but it was -- it's something that could
7 happen to anyone. A big sandbag that shouldn't have been there, had no business being in
8 the middle of the platform, and he was unlucky enough to trip over it.

9 Q So he didn't receive any medical attention or anything, did he?

10 A I don't know. I wasn't close enough to the actual scene, but --

11 Q Do you think it would've warranted medical attention?

12 A I don't recall whether he'd been injured in any way.

13 Q You helped President Biden prepare for the 2024 State of the Union, right?

14 A Yes, I did.

15 Q How did you help him prepare? If you could briefly explain.

16 A Sure. I was in charge of the State of the Union process all 4 years. I've
17 worked on 17 State of the Unions. So I was involved in, you know, talking with him
18 multiple times about what he wanted to say, what he wanted to propose. We had -- as we
19 always do, we went through multiple drafts with him, had, you know, worked with him at
20 the White House, and then we had a few days at Camp David to finalize it.

21 Q Who from senior staff was present at Camp David for that?

22 A Mike Donilon; Vinay Reddy, who's the chief speechwriter. At some point,
23 Steve may have come up. I can't remember if Jeff came up. It was like three -- it was, I
24 don't know, 4 days or something, so -- and then there would've been somebody else from
25 comms.

1 Q Was Dr. O'Connor or anyone from the medical unit present at Camp David?

2 A I don't remember. There would've been -- I believe there's always someone
3 from the medical unit who travels with the President or is stationed where the President is
4 stationed, but I don't remember if Dr. O'Connor was there.

5 Q Do you have any knowledge about the medical care that President Biden
6 received in the weeks or days leading up to the State of the Union?

7 A I do not.

8 Q Do you know if in the weeks or the days leading up to the 2024 State of the
9 Union White House staff discussed the need to medically treat the President so that he
10 would be able to deliver the address to the Nation?

11 A No, I don't remember anything like that.

12 Q Do you know if in the weeks or days before the 2024 State of the Union
13 President Biden took amphetamines or stimulants or steroids?

14 A I don't know anything about that.

15 Q I'm going to ask you about a few quick incidents. On March 26, 2022, soon
16 after Russia invaded Ukraine, President Biden spoke in Warsaw, Poland. He stated, "For
17 God's sake, this man cannot remain in power."

18 White House aides reportedly rushed to walk back President Biden's apparent call to
19 oust Vladimir Putin. Were you consulted about this incident?

20 A I wasn't there. I wasn't consulted.

21 Q On May 23rd, 2022nd [sic], speaking alongside the Japanese Prime Minister in
22 Tokyo, former President Biden was asked, "Are you willing to get involved militarily to
23 defend Taiwan, if it comes to that?" Biden responded, "Yes." The reporter responded,
24 surprised, "You are?" And President Biden stated, "That's the commitment we made."

25 Were you consulted about the President's statement which appeared at odds with

1 the long-standing U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity?

2 A No.

3 Q The last of these. On June 20th, 2023, President Biden attended a fundraiser
4 with Governor Gavin Newsom in California. During the fundraiser, President Biden called
5 Chinese President Xi Jinping a dictator.

6 Were you consulted about this incident?

7 A I was at that event, and I don't remember the details of the conversation after.
8 I was around, but --

9 Q Did staff react to the statement that the President had made?

10 A I don't remember. I think that just if it was probably, you shouldn't have said
11 that, something like that.

12 Q Do you believe that President Biden was in command of himself when he
13 called --

14 A Yes.

15 Q -- Xi Jinping a dictator?

16 A He sometimes says things that he didn't mean to say.

17 Q Do you have any knowledge of President Biden's political advisers weighing in
18 on whether or not Dr. O'Connor should conduct a cognitive exam of the President?

19 A My only recollection of that issue is, when the President was preparing for an
20 interview with George Stephanopoulos, the comms team said that that question was going
21 to come up. Doc O'Connor gave his opinion that those tests are meaningless.

22 Q Have you -- did you ever hear anyone from White House staff say they thought
23 President Biden should or should not receive a cognitive exam?

24 A Well, I heard Doc O'Connor say they're meaningless, and I'm not a doctor.

25 Q But you never heard anyone from senior staff, besides Dr. O'Connor, comment

1 on whether he should or should not receive a cognitive --

2 A I can't speak for others. My view is that there's no tougher test than the
3 Presidency, but -- so --

4 Q Did you ever hear anyone say one way or another?

5 A Not that I can recall.

6 Q Did you ever hear any of President Biden's political advisers comment on any of
7 the healthcare that the President should or shouldn't receive, of course beyond
8 Dr. O'Connor?

9 A I don't believe so.

10 Q Neurologist Dr. Kevin Cannard visited the executive mansion 8 times in 8
11 months between 2023 and 2024. Are you aware of those visits?

12 A No, unless they've been publicly reported.

13 Mr. Greenberg. I think we're good. We'll go off the record.

14 [Recess.]

15 Mr. [REDACTED] Back on the record.

16 I'd like to mark as exhibit B a July 23rd, 2025, Punchbowl News article stating, quote,
17 "The GOP-controlled House is an arm of the White House. We don't want to harp on this
18 for too long because it's so evident if you're a Congress watcher. Under Johnson and
19 Trump, the House simply isn't an independent branch of government anymore. Whether
20 it's on Russia sanctions, the Jeffrey Epstein files, or voting for a \$5 trillion debt limit increase,
21 House Republicans do whatever Trump tells them to do."

22 [Reed Exhibit B
23 was marked for identification.]

24 Mr. [REDACTED] I'm marking as exhibit C a Truth Social post by President Trump in
25 which President Trump describes the use of the autopen during the Biden administration as,

1 quote, "treason at the highest level," end quote, and writes that, quote, "Something very
2 severe should happen to these treasonous thugs."

3 That social media post is dated on May 20th. Two days later, Chairman Comer sent
4 around his first round of letters requesting transcribed interviews in this matter.

5 [Reed Exhibit C
6 was marked for identification.]

7 Mr. [REDACTED] Also like to enter for the record as exhibit D a Presidential directive
8 directing the White House counsel to investigate, in coordination with the Attorney General
9 and other agencies, the matters involved in this investigation. That directive is dated on
10 the same day that Mr. Reed received his letter from Chairman Comer.

11 [Reed Exhibit D
12 was marked for identification.]

13 BY MS. [REDACTED]

14 Q Mr. Reed, I would like to go back to your discussions with majority colleagues
15 about the decisions President Biden made during his Presidency.

16 Did anyone, to your knowledge, ever step in to carry out the duties of the Presidency
17 in Joe Biden's place because he was unable to do so?

18 A No.

19 Q Did Hunter Biden ever carry out Presidential duties on his father's behalf?

20 A No.

21 Q Did he ever make official decisions for his father?

22 A No.

23 Q Did you believe there was an effort by Hunter Biden to usurp the Presidency?

24 A No.

25 Q Did Dr. Jill Biden ever carry out Presidential duties on her husband's behalf?

1 A No.

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

5 A No.

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

8 A No.

9 Q So is it fair to say, to your knowledge, all decisions to issue any form of
10 clemency or pardons during the Biden administration were made by Joe Biden alone?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And no one else exercised his power on his behalf?

13 A Correct.

14 BY MR. [REDACTED]

15 Q Throughout the day, our colleagues in the majority have made references to a
16 number of articles or books that have come out recently describing either the 2024
17 campaign or the final period in the Biden Presidency.

18 I would just caution you, of course, that those books are not on the record here.
19 Any characterization of those books or anything else you haven't seen yourself, you'll have
20 to forgive us and our colleagues if those are just paraphrases. Same thing with any rules
21 that were read to you about the rules of the House. Whether or not you answer yes or no,
22 of course, the minority may have a different read on anything that was given to you.

23 But one of the books that was mentioned at the top of the day was a book called
24 "Uncharted" by Chris Whipple. I know you haven't read it, but you did talk to Mr. Whipple.

25 In a recent FOX News interview, Mr. Whipple said that there is no evidence that

1 Biden was unable to fulfill the duties of Commander in Chief. He said, The notion that this
2 was somehow, you know, Biden's last year was Weekend at Bernie's, and there was a cabal
3 running the country with an autopen is just silly.

4 The notion that they're going to be able to prove that there was this dastardly
5 coverup on the part of Biden's inner circle is just crazy to me. I think the answer is that this
6 thing goes nowhere.

7 Does that quote from Mr. Whipple surprise you?

8 A No.

9 Q Now, I think there were some comments throughout the day about getting
10 sleep or being sleepy or that kind of thing. I know you've been around long enough to
11 know there's sort of a perennial story of Congress -- about Members of Congress falling
12 asleep. Very recently there was a story about a 45-year-old Member of the House falling
13 asleep during a markup of the recent tax bill, a 40-year-old Member of the House falling
14 asleep after a markup and missing a vote.

15 The other thing too is that, during the last hour, the majority asked you -- it's an issue
16 with some comments by President Biden calling President Xi a dictator, or saying that
17 President Putin of Russia should not stay in power.

18 Did those comments change your view of President Biden's fitness for office or
19 ability to do the job?

20 A No, not in any way.

21 Q Now, the majority's letter to you mentions White House staff possibly usurping
22 the authority of the Commander in Chief, of President Biden's authority. These terms are
23 not defined in the majority's letters to you or anybody else, so I think we should walk
24 through Article II of the Constitution. I have a copy if you'd like it, but I think you can just
25 bear with me.

1 Did you personally act as Commander in Chief for the Armed Forces?

2 A No.

3 Q Did you personally grant reprieves and pardons?

4 A No.

5 Q Did you personally make any international treaties?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you personally nominate and appoint any ambassadors?

8 A No.

9 Q Cabinet Secretaries?

10 A No.

11 Q Judges?

12 A No.

13 Q Or other Senate-confirmed officials?

14 A No.

15 Q Did you disguise yourself as President Biden and deliver three State of the

16 Union addresses?

17 A No.

18 Q In your view, did President Biden faithfully execute the Office of President of

19 the United States?

20 A Yes, he did.

21 Q And in your view, did he, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and

22 defend the Constitution of the United States?

23 A Yes, he did.

24 Mr. [REDACTED] Let's go off the record.

25 [Whereupon, at 3:43 p.m., the interview was adjourned.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date