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5 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
6 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
7 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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12 INTERVIEW OF: NEERA TANDEN  
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16 Tuesday, June 24, 2025  
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18 Washington, D.C.  
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21 The interview in the above matter was held in room 6480, O'Neill House Office Building,  
22 commencing at 10:06 a.m.

23 Present: Representatives Comer, Crane, Garcia, and Bell.

Appearances:

For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM:

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3 For NEERA TANDEN:

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5 MICHAEL BROMWICH, SENIOR COUNSEL

6 LILLIAN STEVENS, ASSOCIATE

7 STEPTOE LLP

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3 Mr. Greenberg. This is a transcribed interview of Neera Tanden conducted by the House  
4 Committee on Oversight and Government Reform under the authority granted to it pursuant to House  
5 Rule X.

6 Accordingly, House Rule X grants the committee broad jurisdiction for the committee to  
7 conduct investigations of any matter at any time.

8 This interview was requested by Chairman James Comer as part of the committee's  
9 investigation into President Biden's alleged mental and physical decline, the Biden White House's  
10 effort to hide that from the American people, and who was making decisions for the President.

11 Can the witness please state her name and spell her last name for the record?

12 Ms. Tanden. My name is Neera Tanden, and my last name is spelled T-a-n-d-e-n.

13 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

14 On behalf of the committee, I want to thank Ms. Tanden for appearing here today. The  
15 committee appreciates your appearance for the interview.

16 My name is Jake Greenberg, and I am the chief counsel for investigations for Chairman  
17 Comer.

18 Under the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's rules, you are allowed to have  
19 an attorney present to advise you during this interview. I see that you have two. Do you have counsel  
20 representing you today?

21 Ms. Tanden. I do.

22 Mr. Greenberg. In your personal capacity?

23 Ms. Tanden. Yes.

1 Mr. Greenberg. Will counsel please identify themselves for the record?

2 Mr. Bromwich. Michael Bromwich, senior counsel, Steptoe LLP.

3 Ms. Stevens. Lillian Stevens, associate, Steptoe LLP.

4 Mr. Greenberg. For the record, starting with majority staff, can the additional staff members  
5 please introduce themselves with their name, title, and affiliation?

6 Mr. Benzine. Mitch Benzine, general counsel, Republican side.

7 Ms. Harker. Margaret Harker, senior adviser with the majority.

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

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

10 Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Democratic staff, House Oversight Committee.

11 Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] also Democratic staff, House Oversight.

12 Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] also Democratic staff, House Oversight.

13 Ms. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Democratic staff.

14 Ms. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Democratic staff.

15 Ms. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Democratic staff.

16 Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Democratic staff.

17 Ms. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] general counsel for Leader Jeffries.

18 Mr. Benzine. Can we go off the record?

19 [Discussion off the record.]

20 Mr. Greenberg. There are also Members in the room.

21 Would the Members like to identify themselves for the record?

22 Chairman Comer. James Comer, Kentucky.

23 Mr. Crane. Eli Crane, Arizona.

1           Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

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

3           The questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions for an hour, and then  
4 the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an hour if they so choose.

5           To the extent Members have questions for the witness, they will be propounded during their  
6 side's respective rounds.

7           Do you understand?

8           Ms. Tanden. I do.

9           Mr. Greenberg. The clock will stop if the witness needs to confer with counsel, when counsel  
10 for the witness is speaking, and when Members or staff are speaking during the opposing side's round  
11 of questions. We will alternate back and forth until there are no more questions.

12          Do you understand?

13          Ms. Tanden. I do.

14          Mr. Greenberg. There is a court reporter taking down everything I say and everything you say  
15 to make a written record for the interview.

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

19          Further, to ensure that the court reporter can properly record this interview, please speak  
20 clearly, concisely, and slowly.

21          Also, the court reporter cannot record nonverbal answers, such as nodding or shaking your  
22 head, so it's important that you answer each question with an audible verbal response.

23          Do you understand?

1 Ms. Tanden. I do.

2 Mr. Greenberg. Exhibits may be entered into the record. Majority exhibits will be identified  
3 numerically. Minority exhibits will be identified alphabetically.

4 Do you understand?

5 Ms. Tanden. I'm sorry. Say that again, please.

6 Mr. Greenberg. Our exhibits will have numbers and the minority's will have letters.

7 Ms. Tanden. Okay.

8 Mr. Greenberg. We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful  
9 manner possible, so we will take our time.

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

12 Do you understand?

13 Ms. Tanden. I do.

14 Mr. Greenberg. If we ask about specific conversations or events in the past and you are unable  
15 to recall the exact words or details, you should testify to the substance of those conversations or events  
16 to the best of your recollection.

17 If you recall only a part of the conversation or events, you should give us your best recollection  
18 of those events or parts of conversations that you do recall.

19 Do you understand?

20 Ms. Tanden. I do.

21 Mr. Greenberg. You are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. This  
22 also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in this interview.

23 Do you understand?

1 Ms. Tanden. I do.

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

4 Do you understand?

5 Ms. Tanden. I do.

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

8 Do you understand?

9 Ms. Tanden. I do.

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

13 Do you understand?

14 Ms. Tanden. I do.

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

17 Ms. Tanden. No.

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

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



1 Do you understand?

2 Ms. Tanden. I do.

3 [Tanden Majority Exhibit No. 1  
4 was marked for identification.]

5 Mr. Greenberg. I'd like to introduce as exhibit 1 a letter to you from Gary Lawkowski, counsel  
6 to the President, informing you that President Trump has made the decision not to assert executive  
7 privilege with respect to your testimony and that he will not assert immunity to preclude you from  
8 testifying.

9 Ms. Tanden. I understand.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Ordinarily we take a -- do we have this marked as exhibit 1?

11 Mr. Benzine. I do.

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

16 Do you understand?

17 Ms. Tanden. I do.

18 Do you mind if I take a minute just to read the letter that I've just received?

19 Mr. Greenberg. Sure.

20 Ms. Tanden. I'm happy to do that after you're done or I can do that whenever it works for you.

21 Mr. Greenberg. We can go off the record right now and take some time.

22 [Discussion off the record.]

23 Mr. Greenberg. It's my understanding, Mr. Bromwich, you have a question?

Mr. Bromwich. Yeah. Just to confirm, we got this letter at 9:56 a.m., and the last line is, "Should you have any questions about the issues, please contact me."

It would have been nice to get the letter beforehand.

A couple of points.

Ms. Tanden never had any intention of asserting executive privilege. She's not been asked to do so and she would not have done so, notwithstanding this letter.

Second, on page 2 of the letter, it says in the last paragraph, "For the same reasons underlying his decision on executive privilege, President Trump has determined that he will not assert immunity to preclude you from testifying."

## What does that mean?

Mr. Greenberg. I'm not in a position to speak for the White House.

Mr. Benzine. We can't speak for the White House.

Mr. Bromwich. The White House doesn't normally confer immunity, the Justice Department does. So I don't understand what that means.

Mr. Benzine. I don't know either. We got the letter at 9:59.

Mr. Bromwich. Glad we got it first.

Okay. Those are my only questions.

Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

We understand, Ms. Tanden, that you have transmitted testimony to the committee.

Ms. Tanden. Uh-huh.

Mr. Greenberg. We're happy to mark that as exhibit 2 for the record.

[Tanden Majority Exhibit No. 2]

was marked for identification.]

1 Ms. Tanden. Thank you.

2 Mr. Greenberg. Do you have any questions before we begin?

3 Ms. Tanden. No.

4 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. My clock reads 10:17, and the majority's hour will begin now.

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. GREENBERG:

7 Q Thank you again for being here, Ms. Tanden.

8 Beginning with your educational -- or your undergraduate degree -- can you walk us -- tell the  
9 committee what your educational background is?

10 A I went to UCLA.

11 Do you want me to start with college?

12 Q Yes.

13 A I attended UCLA from 1988 to 1992. I got a bachelor of arts degree from UCLA. I  
14 attended Yale Law School from 1993 to 1996 and received a Juris Doctor degree.

15 Q Thank you.

16 Now I'd like to walk through your professional background.

17 In 1992, you worked on Bill Clinton's presidential campaign. Is that correct?

18 A I did. I worked in the California Clinton-Gore campaign.

19 Q And then you went on to work in the Clinton White House. Is that correct?

20 A I did, four years later.

21 Q What years were you in the Clinton White House?

22 A I started in, I believe, March of 1997, and I left the Clinton White House in June -- I  
23 believe it was June or July of 1999.

1 Q Were you a domestic policy advisor for First Lady Hillary Clinton?

2 A I was a policy advisor for First Lady Hillary Clinton.

3 Q And Hillary Clinton is going to have several different titles. I will try to be respectful of  
4 when she attains those as we walk through.

5 A I appreciate that.

6 Q In 2000, you worked for Ms. Clinton's Senate campaign. Is that correct?

7 A I did.

8 Q Then you worked as Senator Clinton's legislative director from 2003 to 2005. Is that  
9 correct?

10 A Yes.

11 Q You worked as an advisor to Senator Clinton's presidential campaign in 2008. Is that  
12 correct?

13 A I was her policy director, not -- my title was not advisor. It was policy director for her  
14 presidential campaign.

15 Q Thank you.

16 You then went to work in the Obama administration. Is that correct?

17 A Yes. I worked for then-Senator Obama's presidential campaign and then worked in the  
18 Obama administration.

19 Q Did you work in the Department of Health and Human Services?

20 A I did.

21 Q You then worked at -- for Secretary Clinton's 2016 presidential run. Is that correct?

22 A You know, I actually don't believe I had a -- any kind of paying job. I was on her  
23 transition, which was a voluntary position.

1 Q Thank you.

2 Your next government --

3 A In fact, I did not receive any remuneration from her campaign.

4 Q Were you advising her campaign?

5 A Yes. I mean, I was an unofficial advisor. But I did not have a title for the campaign, nor  
6 did I have a salary.

7 Q Your next government position would be in the Biden administration. Is that correct?

8 A Uh-huh. Yes.

9 Q And during this time frame that we've covered, 1992 to 2021, you also had spent some  
10 time working for or leading the Center for American Progress. Is that correct?

11 A Yes.

12 Q While working for the Center for American Progress, did you interact with a lot of  
13 Democratic politicians?

14 A I interacted with a lot of politicians. The majority of them were Democrats.

15 Q Do you know Representative Ro Khanna?

16 A I have met Representative Ro Khanna. I don't recall if my first meeting with him was  
17 during my tenure at CAP, but it may well have been.

18 Q Sure. Representative Khanna recently said in an interview, "Democrats must be  
19 honest...Joe Biden should not have run for reelection."

20 Do you think Joe Biden should have run for reelection in 2024?

21 A I leave that to the historians. I know the President. I worked with the President. He  
22 handled decisions very well. He directed me. I leave it to the historians to say what the best course  
23 for the future is.

1 Q You don't have an opinion on whether Joe Biden should have run for reelection?

2 Mr. Bromwich. Let me interrupt for a second.

3 We have some very specific topics that you told us you would be pursuing. Her subjective  
4 views on whether the President should have run again is not one of those. So I object to that as being  
5 not within the scope of the interview you described for us.

6 Mr. Greenberg. Are you directing your client not to answer the question?

7 Mr. Bromwich. I'm just advising you that you have strayed beyond you what said this  
8 interview would cover.

9 Mr. Greenberg. And as the committee made clear when we transmitted those topics to you, we  
10 are not bound by those topics. We have questions for Ms. Tanden. We think that those topics will  
11 largely cover the broad strokes of this interview. But we are not bound by it, that document that we  
12 sent you.

13 Mr. Bromwich. Okay. I just expected for you to adhere at least at the beginning to the topics  
14 that you described. If it happened to veer off afterwards from those, I can understand that, if her  
15 answers led you to ask follow-up questions that might not have been within the bounds. But within  
16 the first five minutes we're asking for subjective views as to whether somebody should have run for  
17 President, which strikes me as way off the beaten path.

18 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

19 Are you directing your client not to answer?

20 Mr. Bromwich. No. She's perfectly capable of answering the question. I just -- I don't want to  
21 unduly prolong the interview by talking about issues that you didn't focus our attention on.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

23 Q Do you think that Joe Biden should have run for election -- reelection -- in 2024?

1           A    I thought the President had done a good job as President.

2           Q    Do you think Democrats should be honest about whether they believe Joe Biden should  
3 have run for reelection in 2024?

4           A    Which Democrats?

5           Q    Democrats writ large. Do you think that they should be honest about their belief whether  
6 Joe Biden should have run for reelection in 2024?

7           A    I believe all people, Democrats included, should be honest about everything.

8           Q    Do you think they have been?

9           A    I don't know.

10          Q    Before turning to your time in the Biden White House, can you tell the committee when  
11 you first met Joe Biden.

12          A    I believe I first met Joe Biden -- I was in a meeting. First time I was in a meeting with  
13 Joe Biden was during a Democratic Caucus lunch sometime in my tenure as legislative director for  
14 Senator Clinton. I believe there was a Thursday caucus lunch that I attended when the chief of staff  
15 couldn't. It could have been another meeting. But it was of the full Democratic Caucus and he was  
16 speaking about George Bush's foreign policy. And I believe that was the first time I met him.

17          Q    Did you ever work for Joe Biden directly before joining the Biden White House?

18          A    In 2008, when I joined the presidential campaign, I joined the Obama-Biden presidential  
19 campaign when the Vice President was -- when he was selected.

20               My only engagement with him was where we worked together prior to my time as -- in his  
21 White House -- was during -- I helped -- I was a staffer on his debate prep.

22          Q    You helped Joe Biden prepare for his debate against whom?

1           A    I mean, I was one of 15 people and probably the most junior person in the debate prep.  
2   But I -- when he was doing the debate with Sarah Palin, I was on that debate prep camp. It was  
3   about -- or debate prep. It was eventually a camp, but there was, you know, 10 or 12 people on that  
4   prep.

5           Q    How many meetings did you go to as part of that?

6           Mr. Bromwich. If you recall.

7           Ms. Tanden. I mean, it could have been anywhere between five and ten.

8                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

9           Q    What was your job in those meetings?

10          A    To fact-check domestic policy. So, I mean, I didn't interact with him more than a handful  
11   of times directly.

12          Q    Were you a stand-in for anybody during those debates? In other words, did you play a  
13   role as Sarah Palin during those debate prep sessions?

14          A    No. Jennifer Granholm played Sarah Palin -- and, I might add, quite effectively.

15          Q    Did you -- so you were just watching and advising?

16          A    So I was watching. And essentially if the Vice -- back then Senator Biden -- if he made a  
17   mistake on domestic policy, I was supposed to alert people.

18          Q    Did he make a lot of mistakes?

19          A    I mean, he was new to some of President -- then-Senator Obama's policies, so they  
20   weren't really mistakes. But I was -- there was occasion two or three times where I spoke directly to  
21   him about Senator Obama's policies, but he didn't make mistakes of fact or anything.

22          Q    Did he strike you as a pretty capable debater?

23          A    I think he struck the American people as a capable debater after the debate.



1 Q But during the sessions, did you find him to be bright?

2 A Did I find him to be bright?

3 Q Yes.

4 A Yes.

5 Q Did you find him to be eloquent?

6 A I mean, he wasn't eloquent in each of the debate preps. You know, sometimes he was  
7 better than others.

8 Q Was he good at conveying a message?

9 A You know, I thought he was -- it wasn't really my job to determine if he was good at  
10 determining a message -- delivering a message. You would have to ask others.

11 My job in that situation was to decipher -- you know, really make sure he was stating the facts  
12 of the President's policies, and he did a good job of that.

13 Q Did you become personal friends with Joe Biden during this time?

14 A No.

15 Q Prior to joining the White House, did you have a personal friendship with Joe Biden?

16 A No.

17 Q You never had coffee with him one-on-one?

18 A No. The only meeting I had with Vice President Biden in the White House, I was part of  
19 meetings where there was, like, 12 or 15 people. I know that happened two or three times.

20 I, at one point, had a, I believe, a 30-minute meeting with one of my staff members and  
21 then-Vice President Biden on apprenticeships, and in my role as the President of the Center for  
22 American Progress we had a robust policy on apprenticeships and trying to ensure that there were  
23 more apprenticeships in the country, and he had a keen interest in that topic.

1           And so I don't remember how the meeting developed, but we had a half an hour meeting in his  
2           West Wing office. And that was -- besides, like, Vice Presidential Christmas parties where I got a  
3           picture with the Vice President or events of 200 or 300 people -- that's how I saw the Vice President.

4           Q     Did you ever develop a friendship with Jill Biden during this time?

5           A     No.

6           Q     Did you ever develop a friendship with Jill Biden from this time while Joe Biden was  
7           Vice President to the beginning of the Biden administration in 2021?

8           A     No.

9           Q     Did you ever develop a friendship with Beau Biden?

10          A     So I went to law school with Beau Biden. I -- he was in -- oh, Beau Biden. Oh, my  
11          mistake. No. My mistake. Sorry. I don't believe I'd ever met Beau Biden.

12          Q     Did you ever develop a friendship with Hunter Biden?

13          A     Hunter Biden was in my class at Yale Law School. I don't remember seeing or meeting  
14          Hunter Biden in my time at Yale Law School. I only saw Hunter Biden for the, I think, really perhaps  
15          the first time at social events at the White House.

16          Q     And when you say "social events at the White House," do you mean during the  
17          Obama-Biden administration?

18          A     Oh, I'm sorry, during the Biden-Harris administration.

19          Q     Okay. So you did not really have a relationship with Hunter Biden prior to joining the  
20          White House, the Biden White House?

21          A     No. I mean, when I saw Hunter Biden at the White House he remembered that we were  
22          in -- at Yale together. I don't know if he remembered we were in the same class, but he remembered  
23          that we were at Yale together. But I genuinely do not remember meeting Hunter at Yale Law School.

1 Q Did you ever develop a friendship with James Biden, the President's brother?

2 A I don't believe I've ever met James Biden.

3 Q Did you ever develop a close relationship with Frank Biden, the President's other  
4 brother?

5 A I don't think I even know what Frank Biden looks like. I don't believe I've ever met  
6 Frank Biden.

7 Q And did you ever develop --

8 A In fact, I know I've never met Frank Biden.

9 Q Thank you.

10 Did you ever develop a friendship with Valerie Biden Owens, the President's sister?

11 A I never developed a friendship with Valerie Biden. I have seen her at social events at the  
12 White House, and that is the extent of our relationship.

13 Q Thank you.

14 When was the last time you spoke with Joe Biden?

15 A I had a telephone call with the President, with President Biden, former President Biden,  
16 like, two months ago? I can get you the date if you want me to.

17 Q Sure.

18 A I was traveling in Poland.

19 Q You were traveling?

20 A I was traveling in Poland.

21 Q You called him?

22 A No. He called me.

23 Q He called you. What did you talk about?

1           A     We talked about the state of America. We talked about, you know, actions of the Trump  
2 administration. We talked about how institutions seem to be targeted, Harvard was under attack, the  
3 media.

4           We talked about -- I think he asked me how my kids were doing. That was about it.

5           Q     Was anyone else on the call?

6           A     Not that I know of.

7           Q     Do you know if anyone else was in the room with President Biden while he was having  
8 that call?

9           A     I don't know.

10          Q     Thank you.

11          We're going to dive into your various positions in the Biden White House in more detail, but  
12 right now I just want to lay it out for the record what I believe are your three main positions in the  
13 Biden White House.

14          First, you served as senior advisor to the President beginning in May of 2021. Is that correct?

15          A     Yes.

16          Q     Then, in October of 2021, you retained your title as senior advisor, but you also became  
17 the staff secretary. Is that correct?

18          A     Yes.

19          Q     You held this position until May of 2023. Is that correct?

20          A     Yes.

21          Q     In May of 2023, you became the director of the Domestic Policy Council. Is that correct?

22          A     That was the last day of May.

23          Q     Thank you.

1 The DPC is part of the larger Office of the President, right?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And you served in that position until the end of the Biden administration in this year,  
4 2025, correct?

5 A Yes. My last day was January 17th.

6 Q Thank you.

7 You are now once again leading the Center for American Progress, correct?

8 A I am. I am chief executive officer.

9 Q Before we dive into more detail about those positions and what you were doing in those  
10 positions, I think it would be helpful to run through a few people who might be coming up in the  
11 course of this interview.

12 Who is Ron Klain?

13 A Ron Klain was chief of staff on the first roughly two years of the administration, the  
14 Biden administration.

15 Q How do you know Mr. Klain?

16 A I met Ron Klain, I believe, in debate prep in 2008. He was leading the debate prep.

17 When I served in the White House on the Office of Health Reform, I occasionally saw him in  
18 the hallways. He always said hello.

19 Mr. Bromwich. What time period are you talking about, just for clarity?

20 Ms. Tanden. I'm sorry, this would be 2009 to 2010.

21 At some point he became the -- he became a board member of the Center for American  
22 Progress Action Fund, within a few years of that period or around that period. I did not have anything  
23 to do with his selection. I believe John Podesta did. So I knew him in that capacity. He was chair of

1 the CAP Action -- or not chair. He was a board member for CAP Action. And that was how I knew  
2 him.

3 Mr. Greenberg. What is CAP Action?

4 Ms. Tanden. CAP Action? So Center for American Progress Action Fund is a 501(c)(4). It's  
5 an advocacy organization.

6 Mr. Greenberg. Did you become friends with Mr. Klain after his time in the Vice -- after the  
7 Obama administration?

8 Ms. Tanden. Well, I would say -- I would characterize my relationship with Ron as one in  
9 which we were definitely friendly. We worked together at CAP Action. But, you know, I had never  
10 gone out for a meal in this period.

11 Mr. Bromwich. A political friend, not a social friend.

12 Ms. Tanden. A political friend. Yeah. I never, like, went to dinner with him or I've never  
13 been to his house, he's never been to my house. So, yes, we would be political friends, I guess.

14 BY MR. GREENBERG:

15 Q Thank you.

16 As chief of staff, his office during the Biden administration would have been right next to the  
17 Oval Office. Is that correct?

18 A No, it is not correct. The chief of staff's office is four or five offices down from the Oval  
19 Office.

20 Q Okay.

21 Who is Bruce Reed?

22 A Relative to what his experience was on the Biden administration?

23 Q Yes.

1           A    He was -- he's the former deputy chief of staff for policy. I don't know if his title -- his  
2 title is deputy chief of staff. I don't know if foreign policy was in there. But he handled a lot of  
3 policy.

4           Q    When did you first meet Mr. Reed?

5           A    I met Bruce Reed in 1999. No, no, no, I'm sorry, I met Bruce Reed in 1997. He was  
6 chair of the Domestic Policy Council when I was selected to become associate director for domestic  
7 policy, although I did not interview with him.

8           Q    You did not interview with him?

9           A    No.

10          Q    Are you friends with Mr. Reed?

11          A    I mean, in a similar vein. I've known Bruce Reed for many years. We've worked  
12 together. And obviously he was my boss' boss' boss in the Clinton White House and in various  
13 campaigns. I've gotten advice from him on various topics. But I don't believe we've ever, you know,  
14 had more than coffee once or twice in 25 years, or 27, 28 years that we're talking.

15          Mr. Bromwich. 28 years.

16          Mr. Tanden. 28 years.

17          Mr. Greenberg. Don't ask me to do math on the record, please.

18          Do you know where Mr. Reed sat in the West Wing?

19          Ms. Tanden. Yes. He had two different offices.

20          So during the period of time that Ron Klain was chief of staff, Bruce had an office -- I mean,  
21 how would I describe this? There's the Oval Office. I guess I'll just speak --

22          Mr. Bromwich. Do you want her to draw a chart? Would that be helpful? A diagram?

23          Ms. Tanden. I can kind of broadly do it if you'd like.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q If we can stick to words, I think that would be best.

3 A Okay. Okay. Okay.

4 Q I appreciate it, though.

5 A I'll just describe this.

6 Q Thank you.

7 A There's the Oval Office. If you are facing the Resolute Desk from the hallway and you  
8 go -- the next immediate office to the Oval Office is a private office. And then the next immediate  
9 room, I should say, is a dining room. And then the next immediate office was for many years Mike  
10 Donilon's office. And then the next immediate office to that was Steve Ricchetti's office. And then  
11 the next immediate office to that was Ron Klain's office, which was a corner office. The chief of  
12 staff's office, I believe, has always been that office.

13 Across from Mike Donilon's office both deputy chiefs of staff sat, so other side of the hallway,  
14 so Bruce Reed's office was across the way. So his office was right next to the Roosevelt Room. And  
15 then -- so that is the answer to your question.

16 Q Thank you.

17 A And he had a second office, I should say.

18 Q Thank you.

19 A My apologies. After Mike Donilon left the White House, Bruce Reed took his office.

20 Q Understood. Thank you.

21 Do you know if Bruce Reed previously worked for Joe Biden prior to joining the Biden White  
22 House?



1           A    I believe he was his chief of staff. I don't remember when, though. It was one or two  
2 years on the Obama administration.

3           Q    Can you estimate -- you just did -- can you estimate how long he served with President  
4 Biden prior to joining the Biden White House?

5           A    I believe it was no more than two years, but I couldn't accurately tell you.

6           Q    Thank you.

7           You made mention of Mike Donilon. Who is Mike Donilon?

8           A    Mike Donilon was a senior advisor to the President.

9           Q    And his office was quite close to the Oval as you just described. Is that correct?

10          A    I mean, it was three rooms down, but it is the closest office.

11          Q    Do you know if Mike Donilon worked for Joe Biden prior to joining the Biden White  
12 House?

13          A    I do. He worked with him, I take it, for decades.

14          Q    When was the last time you spoke with Mr. Donilon?

15          A    I believe that Mike Donilon called me. I think I can genuinely not remember if it was a  
16 text or a call. But I did a TV appearance sometime in early February, and he either called or texted  
17 "good job," which I was moderately surprised by. I didn't expect him to be watching cable television.

18          Q    Are you friends with Mr. Donilon?

19          A    I mean, I didn't know -- I never met Mike Donilon until the Biden White House, and I  
20 had a cordial and positive relationship with Mike Donilon, but I have not ever had a private meal with  
21 Mike Donilon or been to Mike Donilon's house or even gone out for coffee with Mike Donilon.

22          Q    When was the last time you spoke with Bruce Reed?

1           A    I believe a couple -- maybe a month or so ago. I can -- we can get dates on things like  
2   that. But a month or so ago.

3           I've spoken to Bruce just two times, I think, since the White House. He came over to CAP  
4   soon after I started and we talked about ideas for progressives. And then I talked to him on the phone  
5   a couple of weeks ago, maybe two months ago, where I think we were talking about a possible event  
6   for the President.

7           Q    Thank you.

8           And who is Steve Ricchetti?

9           A    Steve Ricchetti was counselor to the President.

10          Q    When did you first meet Mr. Ricchetti?

11          A    I think I met Steve Ricchetti in the Clinton White House.

12          Now, I was, you know, several levels down from Steve Ricchetti, so I believe I just saw him in  
13   the hallway at some point and said hello. But I don't, you know, I don't know that he actually  
14   remembers me. But that's how I know him.

15          Q    And Mr. Ricchetti's office, as you described, was about four or five offices down from  
16   the Oval Office. Is that correct?

17          A    It's four or five rooms down from the Oval Office.

18          Q    Thank you.

19          When was -- and do you know if Mr. Ricchetti previously worked for Joe Biden prior to  
20   joining the Biden White House?

21          A    Yes. I also believe he was chief of staff for Joe Biden, but I don't remember -- it was in  
22   the -- I can't remember if it was at the end of the first term or beginning of the second term of  
23   President Obama's tenure, but somewhere in there.

1 Q Okay. And when was the last time you spoke with Mr. Ricchetti?

2 A Sometime in -- you know, over two months ago, I believe, Steve Ricchetti called me. He  
3 was checking in to see how things were going. And in the -- yes, we talked. I think we've spoken  
4 once since the administration has ended, maybe twice.

5 Mr. Benzine. What's the functional difference between counselor to the President and senior  
6 advisor to the President? Like, is one, I mean, an AP, an assistant to the President, or is one a deputy  
7 or is one a special? Do you know?

8 Ms. Tanden. They're all assistants to the President.

9 Mr. Benzine. Okay.

10 Ms. Tanden. I cannot tell you what the difference between a counselor and a senior advisor for  
11 the President is.

12 Mr. Benzine. I can't either, so I appreciate it.

13 Ms. Tanden. I know. I could not discern. Both were -- counselor, senior advisor were tended  
14 to be -- they all tended to be assistants to the President, as far as I can tell.

15 BY MR. GREENBERG:

16 Q Just to be clear, when you have spoken or texted with Bruce Reed, Mike Donilon, Steve  
17 Ricchetti, you didn't talk about this interview with them?

18 A I did not, no.

19 Q Thank you.

20 Did you ever talk during those last conversations, did you ever speak about President Biden's  
21 mental or physical capacities?

22 A I think in my conversation with Steve Ricchetti he -- and I should definitely try to find  
23 the date. This was over -- I think it was in the first month of my tenure at CAP, so it must have been

1 over three months ago. He referenced that there were books coming out about the President's -- about  
2 the President and some degree of outrage about the books. But we didn't talk about the underlying  
3 capacity or incapacity of President Biden. That was the extent of the discussion.

4 Q But did you get the impression that the outrage was because of questions about President  
5 Biden's mental or physical decline?

6 A The outrage -- you know, the outrage was that people were writing that the President was  
7 incapacitated, and this is my impression of what was happening, and that that was outrageous since he  
8 believed it was completely untrue.

9 Q Thank you.

10 It's my understanding that throughout the time of the Biden administration people affiliated  
11 with the Clinton camp were not fully embraced by longtime Biden people who surrounded the  
12 President. Do you agree with that?

13 Mr. Bromwich. Can we define by what you mean by "Clinton camp"?

14 Mr. Greenberg. Sure. People who have for a long time worked for or been affiliated with  
15 Secretary Clinton is how I would define the Clinton camp.

16 Mr. Bromwich. Okay. Go ahead and ask your question again. Sorry.

17 BY MR. GREENBERG:

18 Q It's my understanding that throughout the Biden administration people who had been  
19 affiliated with the Clinton camp or a part of the Clinton camp were not fully embraced by longtime  
20 Biden people. Do you agree with that?

21 A Well, I can only tell you my experience. And I started off as senior advisor. I became  
22 staff secretary. And then I moved to domestic policy advisor, a position that I felt was very suited for  
23 my skills.

1           So I had not met Joe Biden. I mean, I had not worked closely with Joe Biden. I had not hung  
2 out with Joe Biden. I had never just socialized with Joe Biden. And I was a person who was elevated  
3 to that role of domestic policy advisor. So my experience does not seem to comport with that  
4 experience. I can only tell you my experience.

5           And I would also note, Jake Sullivan was the National Security Advisor who had worked  
6 closely with Secretary Clinton for many years.

7           Q    When you started as senior advisor, where was your desk in the West Wing?

8           A    Well, at first, for a few weeks, before my office was -- my permanent office as senior  
9 advisor was set up, I was in a hallway of OEOB on the first floor.

10          Would you like me to go through my offices?

11          Q    That would be great.

12          A    Then --

13          Mr. Bromwich. High entertainment value.

14          Ms. Tanden. Then, as senior advisor, I had the -- I had a corner office in the OEOB on the first  
15 floor. It was the largest office I have ever had in my professional career.

16          Then, as staff secretary, I moved to the bottom -- the ground floor of the West Wing. And  
17 then, as domestic policy chair, I moved to the second floor of the West Wing -- also quite a nice corner  
18 office. Not as large.

19               BY MR. GREENBERG:

20          Q    Mike Donilon and you shared a title as senior advisor to the President, right?

21          A    He did. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Yes, he did.

22          Q    Mike Donilon, as you previously described, had an office in the West Wing, correct?

23          A    Yes.

1 Q You did not when you first began, correct?

2 A I did not, but I would also say I started in May and offices seemed to be assigned by then.

3 Q Sure. There is reporting from Alex Thompson, Jake Tapper, and others that Mike  
4 Donilon, Steve Ricchetti, Bruce Reed made up a particularly close group of advisers to Joe Biden. Do  
5 you agree with that reporting?

6 A I mean, they were among his close advisors.

7 Q Do you think that you were as close to the President when you first began as Mr.  
8 Donilon, for example?

9 A No. When I first began, was I as close to the President as the person who he worked with  
10 for 40 years when I had not worked with him before? No.

11 Q Well, that's kind of what I'm getting at, is when the Biden administration began certainly  
12 the people who had been with the President -- with President Biden for a long time were his closest  
13 advisors, setting aside titles and things like that.

14 A Well, I mean, in fairness, I don't think he had worked that closely with Brian Deese, who  
15 was his NEC director, and I think my impression was the President relied on Brian Deese a lot.

16 Mr. Bromwich. And NEC is the National Economic Council?

17 Ms. Tanden. I'm sorry, the National Economic Council.

18 So I -- it was -- that was my impression. Obviously, a President has new staff around him, and  
19 I saw that the President spent a lot of time with Brian.

20 You know, he had not known Jen O'Malley Dillon that long as far as I understood. I think that  
21 she joined the campaign a year or so out. So I didn't have the impression that they had a longstanding  
22 relationship and she was deputy chief of staff.

1           Mr. Greenberg. Do you think that Brian Deese was as trusted by the President as Mike  
2   Donilon?

3           Mr. Bromwich. You're asking her to speculate on somebody's mental state.

4           Mr. Greenberg. Just asking her opinion.

5           Ms. Tanden. Was he as close to? I don't know. I would say he was probably closer to Mike  
6   Donilon. But if the question is did the President rely for serious advice and counsel to people he didn't  
7   know until recently, the answer is yes.

8                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

9           Q    Have you read "Original Sin" by Alex Thompson and Jake Tapper?

10          A    I have not.

11          Q    Have you ever spoken with Jake Tapper or Alex Thompson?

12          A    I have. I did not speak to Alex Thompson in any relationship to this book. I met with  
13   Alex Thompson in the first -- sometime in the first two years of the administration and he asked me for  
14   coffee and we got coffee, and I was not a source for him on anything.

15          Jake Tapper, after the election, asked to meet to get a drink. I did not know he was writing a  
16   book when I agreed to get a drink. He, in the course of the drinks, announced or said to me that he  
17   was writing a book.

18          I believe I noted that I might have rethought this drinks issue since we've never gotten drinks  
19   before if I had known he was writing a book. I told him I was not a source, I was not planning to be a  
20   source for his book.

21          Q    What were you talking about during those drinks?

22          A    Well, it started off with a discussion of, like, he -- I did his show multiple times. Again,  
23   I've never socialized with Jake Tapper. This was my first social experience with him.

1 But my daughter had met him. I had done his show once and my daughter had met him and he  
2 remembered that and he asked about my daughter. So we talked about how she went to Wellesley. He  
3 asked about my kids and family. You know, we talked -- I asked him about CNN, news of CNN.

4 And at some point, not immediately, but at some point in the conversation he told me he was  
5 writing a book. He did not tell me the title. I told him that I was not interested in being a source for  
6 his book.

7 He kind of followed up a few times. I suggested there were other people who were -- you  
8 know, he had sort of described it as not, again, "Original Sin" but like a campaign book, a book that  
9 was really about the campaign.

10 I told him I was very distant from the campaign, I was really separated from the campaign. If  
11 he wanted to talk about that, he could talk to the President's close advisors, you know, maybe call  
12 some of the pollsters. That would be a strategy.

13 Q And, sorry, you said he followed up a few times. I just want to make clear, he followed  
14 up -- you're saying he followed up in the course of that conversation.

15 A Yes. Yes. And then I never spoke to him again and I never spoke to Alex Thompson. I  
16 mean, I never spoke to him again about for the book.

17 Q Did he make clear that he was -- that part of the subject of that book was going to be an  
18 examination or an evaluation of President Biden's decision to run for reelection in 2024?

19 A I think he -- I believe he made clear -- I believe what he said in that at the time was that  
20 he was writing a book about the decision and, like, the whole facts about the decision.

21 It was not clear to me the book was about the President's capacity. It was more about, as I  
22 remember this, it was more about, like, what happened.



1           And I'll say, you know, I said very clearly, like, I wasn't really involved in the campaign and I  
2           thought it was going to be -- you know, that's why I -- he certainly didn't tell me what the title of the  
3           book was, although I'm sure he made note of it or something.

4           Ms. Harker. Did you all discuss President Biden's capacity?

5           Ms. Tanden. No.

6           Mr. Greenberg. You said that you made some suggestions to him about other people he could  
7           talk to.

8           Ms. Tanden. I mean, what I said to him was, if you're interested in -- I don't know -- I didn't  
9           know anything about what happened here.

10          Mr. Bromwich. In the campaign.

11          Ms. Tanden. Like, I wasn't super involved in the business of the campaign. If you want to,  
12          like, talk to other people, you should talk to people involved in that, you should talk to the senior  
13          advisors, the campaign, the pollsters, those people would know.

14          Mr. Greenberg. Did you recommend that he talk to Mike Donilon?

15          Ms. Tanden. I mean, I may have. I don't know. I don't remember. But, like, I may well have  
16          said Mike, Anita.

17          Mr. Bromwich. Anita Dunn.

18          Ms. Tanden. Anita Dunn.

19                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

20          Q     Steve Ricchetti?

21          A     Steve Ricchetti. I may well have said that. I don't remember doing it, but I may well  
22          have.

23          Q     Bruce Reed, same thing?

1           A    I don't know if I said Bruce Reed, but may well have.

2           Q    Okay.

3           Ms. Harker. What was the context in which you made those recommendations? Was it to  
4 discuss the campaign, not to discuss the President's capacity? What was it?

5           Ms. Tanden. It was -- my understanding in my conversation with him is he was writing a book  
6 about the campaign and the President's decision to withdraw, something that I was very far removed  
7 from, and I said the people who would know those issues were these people.

8           And he asked some questions about the campaign, and I said those -- you know, like -- and the  
9 people who were, like, around the President as he was deciding, what was going on in those hours, or  
10 whatever, and I was, like, you should talk to the campaign, maybe the pollsters, other people.

11           I was really trying to say I do not -- first of all, I'm not interested in being a source for this  
12 book.

13           Second of all, I do not believe I am a source for this book.

14           Second of all, I was basically saying, you know, like, I'm not a person who can give you any,  
15 like, interesting information anyway, you should go to other people.

16           BY MR. GREENBERG:

17           Q    Have you been a source for any other book?

18           A    Not that I know of.

19           [Laughter.]

20           Q    Where did you meet Mr. Tapper for drinks?

21           A    Oh my God, what is it called? I can't remember the name. I hope this doesn't mean  
22 anyone thinks I don't have capacity.

23           [Laughter.]

1           It's the restaurant right next to Comet Ping Pong.

2           Q     Okay.

3           Mr. Bromwich. We can look it up. I know the block she's talking about.

4           Ms. Tanden. I'm sorry, I can't remember.

5           Mr. Greenberg. It's okay.

6           Mr. Bromwich. I should have looked that up yesterday.

7           Mr. Greenberg. In Mr. Tapper's book and Mr. Thompson's book they refer to a close group of  
8 advisors as the Politburo, which they attribute to other people in the White House using that term.  
9 Had you ever heard that term before?

10          Ms. Tanden. I have never heard that term before I saw it in the press.

11          Mr. Greenberg. Did you ever hear any kind of shorthand to refer to the group of advisors that  
12 included Mike Donilon, Steve Ricchetti, Bruce Reed, maybe others?

13          Ms. Tanden. I believe that soon after Jeff Zients became chief of staff there was an article in  
14 Axios or Politico that described a quintet. That quintet included Jen O'Malley Dillon, Bruce Reed,  
15 Steve Ricchetti, Mike Donilon, and Anita Dunn. So it was described as the quintet and Jeff.

16          Mr. Bromwich. Jeff Zients?

17          Ms. Tanden. Jeff Zients.

18                 BY MR. GREENBERG:

19          Q     Understood. The quintet did not include you?

20          A     No, it did not include me, nor did it include Lael Brainard, who was the National  
21 Economic Council Chair.

22          Q     Now I want to get into a little bit more about your entry into the Biden White House and  
23 the jobs that you held.

1 Joe Biden announced in November of 2020 that he would nominate you to lead the Office of  
2 Management and Budget. Is that correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q OMB is part of the Executive Office of the President. Is that correct?

5 A It is.

6 Q Did you work on the Biden 2020 campaign?

7 A No.

8 Q Did you work on Joe Biden's presidential transition in either 2020 or 2021?

9 A No.

10 Q Okay. When did you begin discussions to join the Biden administration?

11 A At some point in the fall I spoke to Ron Klain or Ron Klain spoke to me, and I don't  
12 remember the date, but it was in the fall. He suggested -- I believe it was in the fall.

13 He, in the course of a conversation, he thought he may become chief of staff if the President  
14 was elected, and if he did, he wanted to know if I'd be interested in serving.

15 Mr. Benzine. Sorry.

16 Sir, would you mind announcing yourself for the record?

17 Mr. Garcia. Sure. I'm Robert Garcia. I'm the new ranking member of Oversight.

18 Chairman Comer. Congratulations.

19 Ms. Tanden. Congratulations.

20 Mr. Benzine. Thank you, sir.

21 Ms. Tanden. Nice to see you.

22 Mr. Greenberg. Besides Ron Klain, did you have any other discussions with other people  
23 about you joining the Biden White House potentially?

1           Ms. Tanden. In the weeks before, the week or so before the election, I believe Jeff Zients  
2       reached out to say that they were potentially -- they were vetting people who could be in office. It was  
3       not about a particular role. I don't believe it was for -- I was at that point notified it could be OMB.  
4       But he said that they were reaching out to gather information about people if the President won. And  
5       that was the conversation.

1 [11:05 a.m.]

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Going back to your conversation with Ron Klain, did you get the impression that he was  
4 pushing your name forward in the Biden campaign, and later the Biden transition team, for you to hold  
5 a position in a potential Biden White House?

6 A I did not get the impression he was putting my name forward for anything. I think he was  
7 just broadly asking if I would be interested in serving. I did not get the impression -- nor did I get the  
8 impression from anyone else -- my name was part of, like, out there for anything.

9 Q When did it start to become more crystallized that they had you in mind, that the Biden  
10 transition or the Biden campaign had you in mind to lead OMB?

11 A Well, I believe it was after the election. I was talking to a vetting attorney and handing  
12 information to them. And I was like, "Can you be a little bit more specific about the role?" And they  
13 said to me multiple times, you know, "We are going to gather this information, and you could be  
14 dropped from selection at any point."

15 So I believe it was either the first time -- I'd have to go look at my notes or my emails -- but I  
16 think it was immediately after the election or right before the election were the first -- you know, it  
17 was a -- some kind of formal -- like, I had a sense it was OMB from -- I had a sense it was OMB.

18 Q Did you speak with Joe Biden ever about joining his administration?

19 A He interviewed me eventually.

20 Q When was that?

21 A I believe it was right before Thanksgiving. I think it was Tuesday or Wednesday of  
22 Thanksgiving. I had an hour-long interview. Actually, it was scheduled for half an hour. It went for

1 45, 50 minutes. And, you know, he -- it was -- the interview -- yeah. So, I mean, he interviewed me  
2 for the job.

3 Q Who else was in that interview?

4 A So it was a Zoom because this was taking place during COVID. In the beginning of the  
5 interview, before the President got on, Jeff Zients was there. I think he was chair of the transition.  
6 And then --

7 [Discussion off the record.]

8 Ms. Tanden. Lisa Monaco. Yeah. My apologies for the senior moment.

9 Lisa Monaco was in there, was in the Zoom. I had a, like, 2- or 3-minute discussion.

10 And then I believe it was just the President and I in the Zoom. But I don't know. Maybe they  
11 were also -- they went off camera. I just was hyper-focused on him. And he was the only person on  
12 screen at that point. So they could have -- I mean, my memory is not clear whether they were on  
13 Zoom and muted and listening or not.

14 BY MR. GREENBERG:

15 Q Had you met Lisa Monaco before?

16 A I'm sure I had seen her at something before, like socially. But I don't know that I ever  
17 had been in a meeting with her.

18 Q She's not a friend of yours?

19 A No. No. She's on the transition, I think. I think she was like a -- had a role on the  
20 transition. That was my impression.

21 Q Did you ever speak with Bruce Reed about potentially joining the Biden administration?

22 A No. In fact, Bruce Reed's name was up for OMB in the press. So I did not speak with  
23 him about it.

1 Q Did you ever speak with Mike Donilon about joining the --

2 A No. At that point, I don't think I really -- I don't think I knew Mike Donilon.

3 Q And did you ever speak with Steve Ricchetti about potentially joining the Biden --

4 A No. I should say I was on a Zoom with Mike Donilon in August. I mean, it was like one  
5 of those Zooms where the campaign asks --

6 Mr. Bromwich. August of 2020.

7 Ms. Tanden. Yes. August of 2020.

8 I was in a Zoom with, you know, maybe 20 or 25 people where he was just talking about the  
9 state of the campaign. And I think that was the only time I had been with him prior to the  
10 administration.

11 BY MR. GREENBERG:

12 Q During your interview with Joe Biden, did he recognize you from previously having met  
13 you?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Did he speak clearly?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Did he meander in his thoughts? I ask only because you said the meeting was slotted for  
18 30 minutes and it went quite a bit longer. So was he being particularly long-winded?

19 A No. I thought he was being particularly thorough. I mean, he asked me my views on a  
20 whole range of issues related to Office of Management and Budget. He asked me about, you know,  
21 my views on relative spending, of investments in nondiscretionary spending versus defense  
22 spending -- sorry -- nondefense discretionary spending versus defense spending.



1           You know, he asked me about my experiences. He -- you know, it was an on-point interview.  
2           He, you know, probably told a story at some point, which I don't recall at this point, but it was related  
3           to his experience.

4           He was at one point on the Budget Committee. He did not seem to enjoy his tenure on the  
5           Budget Committee, which was a source of engagement in the interview.

6           Q    The Director of OMB is a Senate-confirmed position, correct?

7           A    It is.

8           Q    You withdrew yourself from consideration leading OMB in early 2021. Is that correct?

9           A    Yes. Apparently, there was some concern about my tweets, which is a standard we no  
10          longer seem to apply.

11          Q    You withdrew yourself from consideration --

12          A    I did.

13          Q    -- after Senator Manchin announced he would not vote in favor of your confirmation,  
14          correct?

15          A    Yes. Some weeks after that, yes.

16          Q    And you alluded to your tweeting. Is that what you attributed to Senator Manchin not  
17          being in favor of your confirmation?

18          Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

19          Ms. Tanden. I think he referenced it himself in his remarks.

20          Mr. Benzine. Did anyone instruct you to withdraw?

21          Ms. Tanden. No.

22          Mr. Benzine. You withdrew on your own?

23          Ms. Tanden. I mean, I engaged with folks that I was going to withdraw.

1 Mr. Greenberg. Who were those folks?

2 Ms. Tanden. I talked to Ron Klain. I think I spoke to Anita Dunn.

3 Mr. Benzine. Did you speak to President Biden regarding your withdrawal?

4 Ms. Tanden. I did not.

5 BY MR. GREENBERG:

6 Q In May of 2021, President Biden made you senior advisor to the President, correct?

7 A He did.

8 Q Did the elevation of you to senior advisor coincide with your withdrawal from the  
9 consideration process -- the nomination process -- for leading OMB?

10 A What do you mean?

11 Q When it became clear that you would not be confirmed to lead OMB, was it immediate  
12 that you came to know that you would be raised to senior advisor?

13 A No.

14 Q When did you learn that you would be made senior advisor?

15 A I mean, I think I knew 10 days before I was named senior advisor? I mean, there were  
16 weeks, if not a month or two months, where I was not sure I would work in the administration.

17 Mr. Bromwich. So for the timeline, how long after you withdrew your nomination were you  
18 first talked to about a senior advisor position?

19 Ms. Tanden. About that role?

20 Mr. Bromwich. Uh-huh.

21 Ms. Tanden. I believe two weeks before?

22 Mr. Benzine. Were there any other roles up for discussion in that interim?

1           Ms. Tanden. I mean, there was, like, a whole month where I really didn't talk to anybody. I  
2 mean, I, like, had very cursory conversations.

3           And then there was another month or so where there were some discussions. I mean, it was  
4 sort of like there would be a senior advisor-ish role, but what I was doing was up for debate.

5           But there was nothing confirmed with the role until about a week, week and a half before. And  
6 I wasn't -- you know, I was not positive I was going into the administration until really ten days, two  
7 weeks before.

8           BY MR. GREENBERG:

9           Q    Did you get the impression that somebody was -- that you had an ally in the White House  
10 pushing for you to get a role in the administration?

11          A    I mean, not really. I mean, Ron -- I was talking to Ron about a role.

12          Q    Uh-huh.

13          A    But I didn't get a sense that someone else was pushing. You know, I didn't get any --

14          Q    Sure.

15          A    I probably felt like I could have had more allies at that point.

16          Q    You entered as senior advisor and I think your area of specialty was healthcare policy in  
17 the U.S. Digital Service. Is that correct?

18          A    Uh-huh.

19          Q    Did you have a designated staff in that role?

20          A    I mean, I had a staff person. I had an assistant.

21          Q    Who was that?

22          A    Richard Figueroa.

23          Q    Had you --

1 Mr. Bromwich. Can we take a break?

2 Ms. Tanden. I just have to go to the bathroom.

3 Mr. Greenberg. We're like 3 minutes --

4 Ms. Tanden. Okay. Okay. Yeah. Sure, sure.

5 Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

6 Ms. Tanden. Sorry to announce it.

7 BY MR. GREENBERG:

8 Q Who was Richard Figueroa?

9 A Richard Figueroa was my assistant. He had worked at the Center for American Progress.  
10 I was looking for an assistant. He became my assistant.

11 Q And how long had you known him prior to him becoming your staff -- designated staff --

12 A I mean --

13 Q -- as senior advisor?

14 A Oh. I'm so sorry.

15 I don't really know that I knew him. I think I had seen him a little bit in CAP, you know, as the  
16 CEO, and I think he worked in the leg affairs shop. But people attested that he was good in his role.

17 Q And what were your -- how would you describe your job duties as senior advisor?

18 A So I had a variety of responsibilities. The Supreme Court. When I first entered the role,  
19 there was a lot of concern that the Supreme Court would strike down the ACA. So I sort of led a red  
20 team effort to say what our response would be.

21 The ACA. Once the Supreme Court decided -- the Affordable Care Act -- once the Supreme  
22 Court decided not to overturn the ACA, I was -- I started helping on outreach and -- yeah, outreach  
23 and some strategy around the Build Back Better legislation.

1 Q And this will be my last question. Then we can take a break.

2 A Oh, thanks.

3 Q How often would you see President Biden in this role as senior advisor?

4 A I saw the President a few times. I saw the President probably -- yeah. I mean, in the  
5 space of those several months, I probably saw him once a month.

6 Q What's the latest -- sorry. One more.

7 What is the latest you ever met with the President during this time while you were senior  
8 advisor prior to you becoming staff secretary?

9 Mr. Bromwich. What do you mean "latest"?

10 Mr. Greenberg. Latest in the day.

11 Ms. Tanden. I don't really remember. It might have been 6, 7. I'm genuinely --

12 Mr. Greenberg. You don't recall.

13 Ms. Tanden. I mean, I was part of social -- I was part of social events with him. You know,  
14 small groups, someone was leaving or some things happening that happened at 6 or 7 at night.

15 Mr. Greenberg. I think we can go off the record right now.

16 [Recess.]

17 Mr. [REDACTED] We'll go on the record. The time is 11:29 a.m.

18 Mr. Tanden, I want to first thank you for agreeing to participate in today's interview  
19 voluntarily. Today marks the first transcribed interview of the 119th Congress conducted by  
20 Chairman Comer and the Oversight Committee.

21 At the beginning of the first hour, the minority requested an opportunity to memorialize the  
22 contours of these interviews and depositions on the record and to ensure that the minority has equal  
23 access to materials produced herefore.

1           The majority refused this basic request.

2           Prior to today's interview, conversations were had between majority and minority staff  
3 regarding equal access to video footage and transcripts.

4           In particular, staff agreed in writing that the minority will have equal access to full video  
5 footage of transcribed interviews and depositions and the majority will share that footage at the time  
6 they receive it.

7           Now, secondly, Ms. Tanden, I understand that you brought a statement here today that you did  
8 not read during the first hour with my majority colleagues. I would like to give you an opportunity to  
9 read that statement to the record.

10          Ms. Tanden. Thank you so much.

11          I am Neera Tanden. I am here in response to the request made by Chairman Comer in his letter  
12 to me dated May 22nd that I participate in this transcribed interview.

13          As the committee staff knows, my counsel and I have been willing to voluntarily cooperate  
14 with this committee from the time I received the letter. I am here to answer your questions about my  
15 service in the Biden administration.

16          My cooperation should not be taken to mean that I think the committee's investigation is a  
17 worthy subject of oversight. I do not believe it is. Indeed, millions of Americans wonder why this  
18 committee has conducted no oversight of the current administration on topics far more worthy of the  
19 committee's time and attention than this one.

20          Those topics include the sale of a Qatari jet to the White House for the private use of President  
21 Trump after he leaves office, universities and prominent law firms that are subject to attack, President  
22 Trump's meme coin and cryptocurrency adventures, and the excesses of ICE officers who are wearing

1 masks as they detain, sometimes with the use of force, people lawfully in the United States. All of  
2 those seem subject to -- important subjects for oversight.

3 In this country, at this time, there is truly a need for genuine oversight of the executive branch  
4 and its overreach, but instead this committee is devoting its resources to the last administration instead  
5 of the current one.

6 Let me discuss my service in the White House.

7 In May 2021, President Biden named me as senior advisor with a portfolio that included  
8 healthcare issues, among others. In October 2021, I was named the staff secretary and senior advisor.

9 As staff secretary, I was responsible for the handling -- for handling the flow of documents to  
10 and from the President. I was also authorized to direct that autopen signatures be affixed to certain  
11 categories or documents which the President had approved.

12 We had a system for authorizing the use of the autopen that I inherited from prior  
13 administrations. We employed that system throughout my tenure as staff secretary.

14 In May 2023, I was named head of the President's Domestic Policy Council. From that point  
15 forward, I no longer served in the role of staff secretary, I was no longer responsible for the overall  
16 flow of documents to and from the President, and I no longer had any responsibilities in connection  
17 with the use of the autopen.

18 As head of the Domestic Policy Council, I had periodic discussions with the President on a  
19 range of domestic policy issues.

20 I would note that much of the public discussion on the subject matter of this hearing has  
21 conflated two very different issues -- first, the President's age, and second, whether the President was  
22 in command as President -- whether President Biden was in command as President.

1 I had no experience in the White House that would provide any reason to question his  
2 command as President. He was in charge.

3 I am prepared to answer your questions on this topic -- on the topics you provided that are  
4 within the scope of this inquiry.

5 Thank you.

6 Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you, Ms. Tanden.

7 With that, we'll go off the record.

8 [Discussion off the record.]

9 Mr. Greenberg. We'll go on the record.

10 Mr. Benzine. Before Jake starts questioning, I just want to clarify the record as to what  
11 happened at the beginning of the last hour.

12 Minority counsel and majority counsel had an off-the-record conversation where minority  
13 counsel asked if we would validate on the record what we had already agreed to in writing previously  
14 regarding sharing of information.

15 Minority counsel said that majority counsel refused to do that. That is not true. Majority  
16 counsel said that minority counsel could ask majority counsel to do that at the top of the second hour,  
17 and that question was never raised.

18 The witness was in the room for that conversation.

19 Do you agree with that?

20 Ms. Tanden. I mean, I've got to honestly --

21 Mr. Bromwich. We don't want to be in the middle of this.

22 Ms. Tanden. I've got to honestly tell you I wasn't really tracking what was going on there.

23 Mr. Benzine. Okay.



1           Ms. Tanden. So I can't really attest to -- I was very much more focused on what you were  
2 about to ask me.

3           Mr. Benzine. Jake can ask questions.

4           Mr. Greenberg. Okay. Thank you, Ms. Tanden.

5                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

6           Q     Turning back to your time as senior advisor to the President, do you know who Anthony  
7 Bernal is?

8           A     Yes.

9           Q     Who is he?

10          A     Anthony Bernal was -- I believe his title was senior advisor to the First Lady.

11          Q     Is it your understanding that he had had roles in Jill Biden's office for a long time?

12          A     I understood him to have worked with the First Lady for a very long time.

13          Q     Did you know Mr. Bernal previous to you coming to the Biden White House?

14          A     I believe I met Anthony Bernal in the Clinton administration because I believe he had a  
15 role working for then-Second Lady Tipper Gore. And so I had, you know, seen him at events. We  
16 didn't have -- we weren't friends or had any kind of social relationship.

17          Q     But did you understand him to be close with the First Lady?

18          A     I did. I think I understood that, you know, I think people said something to that nature  
19 soon after I got there, like, in the summer or something. But I didn't really totally understand the role  
20 when I first arrived.

21          Q     What did people say?

22          A     That Anthony was close to the First Lady.

23          Q     Who was saying that? Do you know?

1 A I really don't remember.

2 Q When was the last time you spoke with Mr. Bernal?

3 A I think the last time I spoke to Anthony Bernal was early January 2025.

4 Q What did you talk about?

5 A It was related to something about LGBTQ issues.

6 Q Was that prior to the end of the Biden administration?

7 A Yes. Yes. It was early January 2025. I mean, it wasn't a very long discussion.

8 Q Did you get the impression that Mr. Bernal advised Dr. Biden about policy issues?

9 A I couldn't -- you know, he had taken an interest in LGBTQ issues. And I don't really  
10 recall whether he raised the First Lady's name at all. I don't know that he did in that conversation.

11 Q Did you, as senior advisor, did you interact with the First Lady's office in that role?

12 A When I was senior advisor in the beginning of the administration?

13 Q Yes, ma'am.

14 A Not really. I mean, I think I, when I first got to the White House, I made the rounds and  
15 met with various people. And I met with -- in the course of that, I met with sort of department heads.  
16 And I met with Julissa Reynoso, who I think was the First Lady's chief of staff. And at one point I  
17 had a brief meeting with Anthony. But I never met with the First Lady.

18 Q What was your meeting with Mr. Bernal like?

19 A It was -- it was like a -- a little bit like a "get to know you." I think he came over to my  
20 office, said welcome. I don't remember it being particularly substantive. I'm trying to recollect this  
21 meeting.

22 Yeah. I mean, I think he was just saying greetings.

23 Mr. Bromwich. Do you not recall the specifics?

1 Ms. Tanden. Yeah. I don't really recall the specifics of the meeting.

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Did you ever hear, during the entirety of your time in the White House, did you ever hear  
4 people express frustration or annoyance or fear about Mr. Bernal?

5 A I didn't -- I mean, I did not hear anyone express fear of Mr. Bernal. You know, like, I  
6 didn't -- that was not, like, something in the water cooler with me. I didn't really work closely with  
7 Anthony Bernal. I was probably in perhaps two or three, four, five meetings in my tenure with him.  
8 He was in our 8:40 meeting every morning.

9 Q I'm sorry. What 8:40 meeting?

10 A There was a senior staff 8:40 meeting every day with 25 department heads of the White  
11 House.

12 Q And Mr. Bernal would be in those meetings?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay.

15 Do you --

16 A I mean, that didn't seem unusual to me because I had worked in the Clinton White House.  
17 And I understand the Obama White House, they had a similar practice.

18 Q Do you know who Annie Tomasini is?

19 A I do.

20 Q Who is she?

21 A Annie Tomasini was director of Outer Oval Operations.

22 So Outer Oval Operations oversees the Oval Office itself.

23 Q Can you provide a little bit more detail about what that means?

1           A    It means, like, responsible for, you know, people coming in and out of the Oval Office  
2   and the President's -- you know, giving the President information.

3           And I worked with her -- or my office and her office worked very closely together when I was  
4   staff secretary, because we basically were responsible for the information flow, and the information  
5   flow had to go through Oval Office Operations. So that's how our offices worked together.

6           Q    Did you know Ms. Tomasini previously?

7           A    I did not.

8           Q    When was the last time you spoke with Ms. Tomasini?

9           A    A few months ago. We were talking about getting a drink together, and we did not.  
10   Like, nothing -- we did not get together.

11          Q    So as director of Outer Oval Operations, would you go to Ms. Tomasini on the occasions  
12   that you wanted to -- were needed to brief the President?

13          A    Well, I think there was a combination of times when people wanted to go and brief the  
14   President or there was an issue. I mean, we could work -- like, that could work through the chief of  
15   staff's office. It could work through Annie Tomasini. And it could work through the chief of staff. It  
16   could work through Annie Tomasini. It could work through -- when she was director of Outer Oval  
17   Operations. It could work through Jen O'Malley Dillon. Jen O'Malley Dillon oversaw the schedule,  
18   so, like, for -- people would often go to her.

19          Q    Who else had that kind of gatekeeping role to President Biden?

20          Mr. Bromwich. Anybody other than those you've mentioned.

21          Ms. Tanden. I mean, gatekeeping like --

22                BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q If you wanted to go talk to the President -- well, I'll ask. If you wanted to go talk to the  
2 President, could you just walk into the Oval Office and talk to the President?

3 A I could not. I did not.

4 Q Okay. So you had to go through somebody to talk to --

5 A Yeah. But for most of my meetings, I think that was organized by Jeff.

6 Q Jeff?

7 A Zients. The chief of staff.

8 Mr. Benzine. What about the first two years?

9 Ms. Tanden. That would have been -- you know, Ron designated meetings, the manifests.  
10 Like, he would say, this needs to happen, and, like, this meeting needs to happen. And then, like,  
11 Annie would organize the meeting or, like, that would get scheduled.

12 So it was kind of like between Ron Klain, Jen O'Malley Dillon, and Annie Tomasini. But, you  
13 know, I was broadly aware that Steve Ricchetti could have, like, organized meetings. I think for  
14 Members of Congress he often did that, you know.

15 Mr. Greenberg. Would you ever go through Mr. Ricchetti to get a meeting with the President?

16 Ms. Tanden. I didn't go through Mr. Ricchetti ever.

17 Mr. Benzine. Who had Oval walk-in privileges?

18 Ms. Tanden. I don't know.

19 Mr. Benzine. You didn't?

20 Ms. Tanden. I did not have Oval Office walk-in privilege.

21 Mr. Greenberg. If you had to guess, do you think Mr. Donilon had Oval walk-in --

22 Mr. Bromwich. You're asking her to guess. She doesn't want to guess.

23 BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q Okay. You worked in the White House. Did you get the impression that Mr. Donilon  
2 had walk-in privileges?

3 A I didn't really have the impression that people have walk-in privileges, honestly. Like, I  
4 think that -- I didn't -- I wasn't -- there wasn't any discourse of that in the -- I mean, the President, like,  
5 relied on Mike Donilon for advice and counsel, but I didn't have any sense of walk-in privileges.

6 Q In the verbal map that you sketched for us about where people sat, did you get -- you  
7 didn't -- did you get the impression that those people could -- it was easier for those people to get a  
8 meeting with the President than people who didn't sit in the close vicinity of the Oval Office?

9 A So I have never been at this level in the White House, but it has been my experience that  
10 in every White -- it has been my general perception, in every White House that I have served in, that  
11 the people who are in the first floor, the closest proximity to the President, generally meet with the  
12 President the most.

13 That has been my experience. That was my experience, my sense, perception, for President  
14 Obama and President Clinton.

15 Q Do you think those people are the most trusted people in the administration by the  
16 President?

17 Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

18 Ms. Tanden. I mean, I don't know.

19 Mr. Greenberg. I mean, if they're getting a lot of meetings, they're probably really trusted,  
20 right?

21 Ms. Tanden. Probably.

22 BY MR. BENZINE:

23 Q Did you have --

1           A     But there were -- I mean, I just want to say the President met with Jake Sullivan regularly  
2     as National Security Advisor, a person who had not -- you know, had worked with him before but had  
3     not served with him for decades.

4           And he worked close -- my impression was that he was -- had worked -- had many meetings  
5     with Brian Deese, who I don't know that he knew well before this -- the term. Brian had served in the  
6     Obama administration, but I don't know that -- it wasn't my impression that he had known the  
7     President very well when he was Vice President.

8           Q     Did you have --

9           A     When he was Vice President to President Obama.

10          Q     Did you have residence privileges?

11          A     I did not.

12          Q     Do you know who did?

13          A     I do not.

14          Mr. Greenberg. Did you know if Anthony Bernal did?

15          Mr. Bromwich. What are the privileges you're talking about?

16          Mr. Benzine. Access to the residence.

17          Ms. Tanden. I only read about that in the paper, in a news article. I did not know -- I do not  
18     know it independently of that.

19          Mr. Greenberg. What do you think is conferred when somebody -- what do you think -- why  
20     would somebody have residence privileges?

21          Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

22          Ms. Tanden. Well, when I would work for the First Lady, so in -- I worked for Hillary Clinton  
23     in 1997 to 1999 -- I had to take material over to her on a regular basis.

1           The way we did that was, you know, I regularly went to the usher's office, and they took the  
2 material up to the floor -- up to the residence. So, you know, you're on the first floor, and they live on  
3 the second and third floor.

4           So, I mean, people had to do that a lot. I just don't know -- I mean, I don't really know. But I  
5 just -- like, it's not so unusual to me. I mean, I think -- I believe Melanne Verveer may have had it  
6 but --

7           Mr. Benzine. Do you know if the First Lady had walk-in privileges?

8           Mr. Bromwich. To where?

9           Mr. Benzine. The Oval.

10          Ms. Tanden. I do not know. But I've never -- I don't think I ever saw her in any meeting that I  
11 was in in the Oval Office.

12          Mr. Benzine. Did you ever see her in the West Wing?

13          Ms. Tanden. Very rarely.

14                BY MR. GREENBERG:

15          Q    Do you know who Ashley Williams is?

16          A    I do.

17          Q    Who is she?

18          A    She was a staff person in Outer Oval Operations.

19          Q    She was helping Ms. Tomasini then?

20          A    Yes. She worked in Ms. Tomasini's office or operations department.

21          Q    Did you know Ms. Williams previously?

22          A    No.

23          Q    Have you had conversations with Ms. Williams?



1 Mr. Bromwich. When?

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Ever.

4 A I mean, when I've traveled on Air Force One or, like, hanging out, waiting for the  
5 President, you know, we'd have idle chitchat. But I've never -- nothing really beyond that.

6 Q When was the last time you spoke with her?

7 A I mean, maybe December of 2024?

8 Q Okay. What did you --

9 A Perhaps early January?

10 Q And what did you talk about?

11 Mr. Bromwich. If you remember.

12 Ms. Tanden. I mean, maybe --

13 Mr. Bromwich. Don't guess.

14 Ms. Tanden. I don't know. I can't recall. Nothing substantive.

15 BY MR. GREENBERG:

16 Q And this would change, but I think you testified or said earlier that you met with the  
17 President about once a month?

18 A As senior advisor.

19 Q As senior advisor? Okay.

20 And is it -- in your role as senior advisor, was your supervisor, superior, was that Ron Klain?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did you ever express to Mr. Klain during this time that you wanted a different role in the  
23 administration?

1           A    I may well have. Or I -- I don't know. As senior advisor?

2           Q    Yes, ma'am.

3           A    No, not as senior advisor.

4           Q    Did there come a time when you wanted a different role?

5           A    As staff secretary, I definitely at some point was, like, happy to move on.

6           Q    Why is that?

7           A    I mean, it's a fascinating role, but I had done it for a year and a half and was interested in  
8 more challenging -- different kinds of challenges.

9           Q    If you -- even if you weren't briefing him that day, did you see President Biden every  
10 day?

11          A    Did I see him personally?

12          Q    Yes.

13          A    No.

14          Q    How often --

15          A    I'm sorry. What time period are we talking about?

16          Q    As senior advisor before October of 2021 when you became staff secretary. Did you see  
17 the President every day?

18          A    No. I mean, different people had the title "senior advisor," and it meant different things.  
19 You know, like, I didn't see him every day.

20          Q    What do you mean it meant different things?

21          A    Well, I was senior advisor, and I had different roles than other senior advisors.

22          Q    But some senior advisors would see the President every day, do you think?

1           A    I mean, I don't know how -- I don't know if people saw the President -- I don't know who  
2 saw the President every day.

3           Q    As senior advisor, did you ever find yourself wanting to speak with the President or  
4 needing to speak with the President about something but you were told you couldn't that day?

5           A    No.

6           Q    Okay. Thank you.

7           In October of 2021, you become staff secretary, correct?

8           A    Uh-huh.

9           Q    The position of staff secretary was held by Jessica Hertz prior to you assuming the role.  
10 Is that correct?

11          A    Yes.

12          Q    Who is Ms. Hertz?

13          A    Jess Hertz is a lawyer. She was staff secretary before I was. I don't really know -- I  
14 mean, I shadowed her for a day or two. We had -- we met a few days before I joined. I think I met  
15 with her for the first time on Wednesday. Her last day was Friday. I had several meetings with her  
16 and her staff to get acclimatized.

17               I believe she had worked at a tech company at some point. That's basically the extent of my  
18 knowledge.

19          Q    But you weren't friends with her prior to the --

20          A    No.

21          Q    We've gone through a few people in this interview, and I think for most of them you've  
22 characterized them as political friends. Did you have --

23          A    Or acquaintances.

1 Q Or acquaintances.

2 Did you have any personal good friends in the White House?

3 A I mean, the White House is not a place where you perhaps make a million friends. It has  
4 not been my experience. I had known Evan Ryan for a while. I had known Emmy Ruiz prior. I had  
5 known, a little bit, Jen O'Malley Dillon. But I, you know, I wouldn't say it was a place where, you  
6 know, we were -- like, it's a high-intensity --

7 Mr. Bromwich. Workplace.

8 Ms. Tanden. Workplace. And I think my experience was that we were all really focused on  
9 the heavy workload.

10 Mr. Greenberg. Do you think that's the experience of others in the White House?

11 Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

12 Mr. Greenberg. If you know.

13 Ms. Tanden. I think -- my impression was that most people were not socializing with each  
14 other.

15 BY MR. GREENBERG:

16 Q Did you get the impression that Mike Donilon, Steve Ricchetti, Bruce Reed, Anita Dunn,  
17 that maybe they were socializing together?

18 A I don't know.

19 Q You were named staff secretary in October 2021. You held the position until May of  
20 2023, right?

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q That's about a year and a half?

23 Mr. Bromwich. You've got to say something.

1 Ms. Tanden. Oh. I'm sorry. Yes. My apologies.

2 By Mr. Greenberg.

3 Q Did you move offices when you became -- I'm going to use shorthand.

4 A Yeah.

5 Q I recognize that you retained the title of senior advisor. I'm probably just going to say  
6 "while you were staff secretary."

7 A That's fine.

8 Q So when you became staff secretary, did you move offices?

9 A I did.

10 Q Where did you move to?

11 A So I moved -- when I became staff secretary, I moved from, as I said earlier, the corner  
12 office on the first floor, I believe it was 160, of the OEOB, and I moved to an office on the ground  
13 floor of the West Wing.

14 Q The ground floor, is that the same floor as the offices of Mike Donilon, Bruce Reed,  
15 Steve Ricchetti that we went over earlier?

16 A No, no. So the White House has three floors, the ground floor, the first floor, the second  
17 floor. So I was on the ground floor. There are, like, National Security has -- NSC has offices on the  
18 ground floor in addition to the first floor.

19 Q Is that where Jake Sullivan would have an office then?

20 A His office was on the first floor. The Homeland Security Advisor, Liz  
21 Sherwood-Randall, was on the ground floor.

22 Q It was a smaller office, I assume?

1           A    It was a pretty big office by West Wing standards. Pretty small office by OEOB  
2 standards.

3           Q    Did you still answer to Ron Klain in this position?

4           A    I did.

5           Q    And did you have a designated staff in this position?

6           A    I did. A small staff.

7           Q    How many would you estimate?

8           A    I believe we had probably five to six staff overall.

9           Q    Did you have a deputy?

10          A    Maybe seven.

11          I did. I had a -- I hired a deputy shortly after I joined. His name is Alex DeMots.

12          Q    You didn't inherit Ms. Hertz's deputy?

13          A    I did. I had -- I inherited -- I'm sorry. I did inherit him for a while, and then he moved on  
14 some period later.

15          Q    Who else filled that role during your time as staff secretary?

16          A    I think it was only those two people.

17          Q    Oh. I'm sorry. You did not inherit Mr. DeMots from Ms. Hertz?

18          A    No. And I did have a deputy and -- really embarrassingly -- this will hurt his feelings, I  
19 cannot remember his name. He left a few months after I started.

20          Q    And then Mr. DeMots --

21          A    Yes.

22          Q    -- became your deputy.

1           A    Yes. It might have been four or five months after I started. It could have been in the  
2   spring.

3           Mr. Bromwich. You're not sure.

4           Ms. Tanden. I'm not sure. I feel very badly that I cannot remember his name. I'm bad with  
5   names, so I apologize. But it's in public record.

6                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

7           Q    And you said five -- roughly five to seven people worked in -- as your staff as staff  
8   secretary.

9           A    Yeah. In all, there were probably seven of us. So I had an assistant, and there were three  
10   to four assistant staff secretaries in addition to the deputy staff secretary.

11          Q    Who was your assistant?

12          A    Richard Figueroa for a time. And then I had another assistant whose name I'm forgetting.  
13   This is so embarrassing. It's like the worst foible.

14          Yeah. And then we had assistant staff secretaries.

15          Q    Can you remember any of their names?

16          A    Yeah. Chris Farley was an assistant staff secretary. At some point, he was a -- he was  
17   my chief of staff. Zach Leighton was my chief of staff before that.

18                I mean, these are people who are, like, in their twenties and thirties, you know, like, there was a  
19   woman named -- why am I blanking -- Dani Schulkin (ph), I believe? I mean, I can get you the names  
20   after.

21          Q    Sure.

22          A    Susan Cheng is another one.

23          Q    How often would you see the President in this role?

1           A    I didn't see the President very often in this role. I mean, I had a senior -- in my senior  
2   advisor role I still, like, oversaw U.S. Digital Services. Like, I handled some events. But generally  
3   speaking, I didn't see the President in my staff secretary role.

4           Q    Isn't the staff secretary in charge of controlling paper flow to the Oval?

5           A    Yes. And the way that that operated in this -- in the White House, which I did not  
6   understand to be different from other White Houses, but the -- or at least in the previous White House,  
7   the previous Democratic White House, the Obama White House -- is that we manage the book -- the  
8   books, you know, the debriefing book, the decision book, and we handed that off to Oval Office  
9   Operations.

10          Q    And that would have been Annie Tomasini.

11          A    Or her staff.

12          Q    Or her staff.

13          Did that surprise you when you -- that you didn't get to see the President much as staff  
14   secretary?

15          A    I had called -- when I became staff secretary, I had called previous staff secretaries. So I,  
16   just as preparation for the job, I had called Todd Stern, who was a staff secretary for President Clinton.  
17   I exchanged messages with Phil Caplan, who was a staff secretary for President Clinton. I believe I  
18   exchanged messages with Raj De, who was a staff secretary for President Obama. I had spoken to  
19   John Podesta, who was the first staff secretary for President Clinton.

20          So in my general parameters of this, I did not have the -- this did not seem surprising to me.  
21   But I did not get into the particularities and details.

22                BY MR. BENZINE:

23          Q    A couple other questions about responsibilities.



1 A Uh-huh.

2 Q As staff secretary, were you privy to the President's schedule?

3 A I was.

4 Q Did he have both a public and a private schedule?

5 A He did.

6 Q Were you privy to both?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Did you have a hand in planning and actually scheduling, or was it just you were able to  
9 see the President's time?

10 A Yeah. We had to ensure that the President was briefed for all of his events and meetings,  
11 so we got the schedule in that form.

12 Q When did the schedule usually start? What time?

13 A 9 or 9:30.

14 Q And when did it end?

15 A I mean, it could end, like, 10 or 11.

16 Q What was kind of normal?

17 A I'd say 7.

18 Q Was it common to use phrases like "desk time" or "POTUS time" on the schedule?

19 A I believe there were -- yes, I think they -- I don't know if they used the term "POTUS  
20 time," but I believe it was "desk time."

21 Q Desk time. Was that in his public or private schedule?

22 A I didn't review his public schedule regularly, so I don't know if it was in his public  
23 schedule. But there were times where it said "desk time."

1 Q What did that normally mean?

2 A In my experience, the desk time got eaten up by other meetings or crises that would come  
3 up. So desk time was supposed to be kind of a buffer time, but in my experience, they didn't seem to  
4 have much buffer time.

5 Q Were there any other terms used to -- built in, like, excuse the informality, but  
6 "nonworking" time in the President's schedule?

7 A Not really.

8 Q Were there any times where he was not available for something that was scheduled?

9 A Not that I'm aware of.

10 I mean, my experience with the President's schedule was that it was a pretty packed schedule,  
11 you know, that I was -- the time that I saw the schedule was from October 2021 to -- I did not have  
12 access to the schedule after when I was DPC Chair.

13 And so my experience with the schedule was that it, like, felt relatively packed in the sense that  
14 you could have "desk time" on the schedule but something would arise where the President needed  
15 information for a call, for a Member of Congress.

16 We controlled the information flow of that, so we would organize that call. Like, we'd get the  
17 briefing for the call, get it up to the Oval Office.

18 So, you know, just not my general experience that there were just open windows of time. They  
19 usually felt like they got eaten up.

20 Mr. Greenberg. What you just described was in your role as senior advisor, though, not as staff  
21 secretary.

22 Ms. Tanden. No. That's as staff secretary.

23 Mr. Greenberg. That's staff secretary okay.

1           Ms. Tanden. I did not receive the schedule as senior advisor. I only received the schedule as  
2 staff secretary.

3                   BY MR. BENZINE:

4           Q    Were there any other pseudonyms in the schedule for, like, I don't know, say, like,  
5 "gardening time," and it was actually time to take a nap, or something like that?

6           A    No.

7           Q    No?

8           A    No.

9           Q    Did the President use any aliases in scheduling?

10          A    No.

11          Q    All right.

12          A    No.

13          Q    And --

14          A    I'm not familiar with him using an alias ever.

15          Q    And you just said this, but just for clarity, when you became Chair of the Domestic  
16 Policy Counsel, you no longer had access to the schedule.

17          A    I mean, I saw, like, what was in the press.

18          Q    Okay. Just a few more responsibility questions for staff secretary time.

19          Did you have any involvement in the production of White House transcripts?

20          A    No.

21          Q    What about involvement in Cabinet meetings?

22          A    I sat in Cabinet meetings.

1 Q Did that change -- was that consistent through all three, or was that only as staff  
2 secretary?

3 A I was -- I sat in Cabinet meetings both as staff secretary and as Domestic Policy Chair. I  
4 did not sit in Cabinet meetings as senior advisor.

5 Q Were you planned in the process for scheduling -- or were you involved in the process of  
6 scheduling or planning a Cabinet meeting?

7 A Not as a regular course. There were occasions where one of my issues would be a  
8 significant issue and then the Cabinet staff or -- Cabinet secretary staff or Evan Ryan would reach out  
9 to my office or directly.

10 Q Were you involved in Cabinet meetings in either the Clinton administration or Obama  
11 administration?

12 A No.

13 Q Do you recall how many Cabinet meetings President Biden held?

14 A Overall?

15 Q Uh-huh.

16 A No.

17 Q Were there Cabinet meetings, full Cabinet meetings, that were outside of, kind of, the  
18 public view?

19 A Well, he had multiple meetings with Cabinet members.

20 Q I'm saying kind of the, like, big ones --

21 Mr. Bromwich. Full --

22 Mr. Benzine. -- that had the TV pool in them. Like, how many of those Cabinet meetings of  
23 those did he have? Full Cabinet.

1           Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

2           Ms. Tanden. I don't know. I mean, my memory was that they were about once a quarter, once  
3 every six months.

4                   BY MR. BENZINE:

5           Q   And then after the TV pool and reporters left, did the Cabinet meeting continue?

6           A   Yes.

7           Q   Who --

8           A   Sometimes for quite a long time.

9           Q   Who on the staff in the White House itself usually attended those meetings?

10          A   Do you want me to just give you the whole list of names of people who usually went?

11          Q   A rundown. Like, I imagine --

12          A   It was a lot of people.

13          Q   -- the Cabinet secretaries went --

14          A   All the Cabinet secretaries --

15          Q   The Cabinet secretaries' staff went.

16          Mr. Bromwich. Maybe by position.

17          Ms. Tanden. Okay. So the chief of staff, all three -- two to three. There were three deputy  
18 chiefs of staff under Jeff Zients. There's two under Ron Klain. The assistant to the President for  
19 legislation, the Cabinet secretary herself, the NEC Director, National Economic Council Director, the  
20 National Security Council Director, the Domestic Policy Council Director, the counselor, Steve  
21 Ricchetti, the senior advisors.

1 I don't think Anita Dunn went to the Cabinet meetings. The communications director. The  
2 press secretary. Gene Sperling went on many an occasion. Sometimes Jeff Zients as the COVID  
3 director went.

4 BY MR. BENZINE:

5 Q Were you involved at all in setting the topics for the meetings?

6 A I didn't control the topics. But sometimes, you know, we would have a discussion  
7 about -- it would -- like, they would designate Secretary Becerra to talk about healthcare, and so I  
8 would be alerted to that.

9 And I think I was in a Cabinet briefing, a briefing ahead of the Cabinet, with the President once  
10 or twice.

11 Q You kind of just touched on this, but if you have more. Did the White House coordinate  
12 topics with departments and agencies prior to the meeting occurring?

13 A I believe they did, yes. But I also sat in Cabinet meetings where it went off topic. You  
14 know, the President raised to people: What are your thoughts?

15 Q In both the public and the private version of meetings?

16 A Yes. Only in the private version.

17 Q Only in the private version was --

18 A Yeah.

19 Q All right.

20 A Yeah. There was one Cabinet meeting where he kind of opened the floor, and there was,  
21 like, a robust discussion between the HUD Secretary and Deb Haaland and a few other people, you  
22 know, that was not scripted, as I could tell -- as far as I could tell.

1           Q    Prior to the meeting occurring, were there questions and answers scripted in advance  
2 between the President and the secretaries?

3           A    I believe that the questions were -- I believe the questions were offered, and I think that  
4 there were answers. Yes, I think there were answers --

5           Mr. Bromwich. This is in the public --

6           Ms. Tanden. This is the private session. But also there were, in my experience, there were  
7 times where that was ignored.

1 BY MR. BENZINE:

2 Q In the times where it was -- I'm going to use the phrase "scripted," please don't take  
3 anything by it, and if it's wrong, correct me -- in those times, did the White House reach out -- so if it  
4 was Health and Human Services, if it was Secretary Becerra, did the White House reach out and say,  
5 "Mr. Secretary, can you ask this question of the President?" and then coordinate what the answer was  
6 going to be? Is that what you're saying?

7 A Oh. No, no, no, no, no. I think the President was generally asking them questions.

8 Q Okay. So flip it then. You would --

9 A But I don't know if they called them or I don't know how that happened. I mean, it wasn't  
10 my job to do that.

11 Q Okay.

12 In those meetings, was there ever a teleprompter?

13 A No.

14 Q What about note cards for the President?

15 A I mean, I believe he had note cards because there was one time I sat sort of close behind  
16 him. But I don't really --

17 Q You don't know what was on them or --

18 A No.

19 Q No.

20 To your experience, did the President ever have any kind of, like, script for those  
21 meetings -- "I'm going to call on the Attorney General first, then HUD, then DOD" -- or was it a little  
22 bit more free-flowing?



1           A     When I -- so as staff secretary, I would see the materials the President had, and he often  
2     had, like, a flow, you know. Like, there was things that they wanted to -- as I understood it, reviewing  
3     the materials, they kind of wanted to -- these meetings were meant as accountability exercises for the  
4     Cabinet secretaries.

5           So he would ask them particular questions in a kind of -- with a plan to have follow-up in  
6     between those meetings on those topics.

7           I was in Cabinet meetings where it felt pretty free-flowing at particular times. I was in Cabinet  
8     meetings where it kind of felt scripted.

9           I was also in meetings in between -- like, after a Cabinet meeting that Jeff Zients had called  
10    where he was trying to hold people accountable based on things the President had pushed onto the  
11    Cabinet or sort of, like, requested of them.

12          Q     And you said, like, most of the time, it was the President asking the questions of the  
13    Cabinet. And I don't remember if you answered this explicitly. Were the Cabinet secretaries provided  
14    those questions in advance of the meeting?

15          A     I don't know if they were. They may well have.

16          I think they --

17          Mr. Bromwich. You don't know --

18          Ms. Tanden. I think they sometimes had -- yeah. I mean, I don't know. I think they  
19    sometimes had their -- you know, as staff secretary, I might have seen some, like, outline of an answer  
20    or something.

21                BY MR. BENZINE:

22          Q     Did you ever hear any concern from a Cabinet secretary that it was overly scripted or  
23    they lacked access during those meetings?

1           A    I had heard that they were boring.

2           Q    From who?

3           A    I don't -- I honestly don't remember, but it was, like, kind of a thing, that they were  
4 boring.

5           Q    From the secretary level or from the staff that sat in the back?

6           A    Well, it might have been the staff level. But I felt like people had kind of complained  
7 that they weren't -- like, I mean, you know, sometimes these -- I was in a Cabinet meeting that went  
8 for two and a half hours. Like, it was long.

9           Q    Uh-huh. That would explain how desk time gets used up, right?

10          A    Yes. A good example.

11                BY MR. GREENBERG:

12          Q    So as staff secretary, sitting -- I'm going to ask just some broad questions about the  
13 contours of that job.

14          A    Sure.

15          Q    You were sitting on the ground floor.

16          A    Uh-huh.

17          Q    The Oval Office is on what floor?

18          A    The first floor.

19          Q    Part of your job was to control what papers made it from -- made it in front of the  
20 President, right?

21          A    Yes.

22          Q    Did you find that to be an awkward system, that you were sitting away from the Oval  
23 Office?

1           A     I believe I had the same office that staff secretaries had had for, like, 30 years. I mean, it  
2     was the same -- I had the same office that the staff secretary had in the -- or at least in the beginning of  
3     the Clinton White House.

4           So it might not have been the same office the staff secretary had in the Obama White House  
5     because they had made the position a deputy assistant to the President, and President Biden had  
6     elevated it back to an assistant to the President.

7           Q     So --

8           A     So I did not find it particularly awkward.

9           Q     What was the -- like, if you needed to get a bill from Congress signed by the President,  
10    what was the process by which that happened?

11          A     So David Kalbaugh was the law clerk. He was -- or the clerk of -- for the President. He's  
12    clerked for the White House. That is a career position. I believe David Kalbaugh had worked for  
13    every administration since President Clinton's administration. He worked in the Trump  
14    administration.

15          He would give me a -- he would email me when legislation had passed, like, when the time  
16    horizon, you know, our ten days, the clock started ticking.

17          Sometimes he had flexibility with other -- with the House of Representatives or the Senate to  
18    determine when to get it, but there wasn't maximum flexibility. So he would alert me.

19          Mr. Bromwich. Mr. Kalbaugh you're talking about.

20          Ms. Tanden. Mr. Kalbaugh would alert me to -- that, you know, the clock was ticking. And I  
21    would -- I was often on email chains with the -- Annie Tomasini or her designees, and Louisa Terrell,  
22    who was assistant secretary of legislation, and we would be sort of managing this process. And,

1     essentially, we would get the bill from David. David Kalbaugh would receive the bill or go to the Hill  
2     and get the legislation.

3             We would receive it in staff secretary. And then we would coordinate -- we would hold the bill  
4     until there was a time where the President could sign the bill.

5             And then the President -- and then we -- and then we'd send it up to Outer Oval Operations.  
6     They would have the bill. The President would know, like, often there was a bill signing, there was a  
7     picture.

8             The President enjoyed those. We got the picture taken. The bill would come back. Or there  
9     would be a bill signing. Then we would get the bill, and we would give it back to the law -- the clerk.

1  
2 [12:16 p.m.]

3 BY MR. GREENBERG:

4 Q Did David Kalbaugh -- is that C-a-l-b-a?

5 A K-a-l-b-a-u-g-h.

6 Q Thank you. Was David Kalbaugh, then, responsible only for those documents -- for  
7 documents that were coming from the Hill?

8 A No, no. He dealt with, you know, executive actions of the President. So executive  
9 orders, you know, he reviewed those. You know, letters to the Cabinet Secretaries,  
10 proclamations -- the whole suite.

11 Q So he was ultimately in charge of getting these documents to Oval Office Operations? Is  
12 that correct?

13 A No, no, no. Just to restate --

14 Q Sure.

15 A -- David Kalbaugh would get the document. Like, let's just say legislation, right? A bill  
16 passes. We have 10 days. He would get the legislation from the House or Senate. I don't remember  
17 the names. Maybe it was clerks, too, there. He would get the bill.

18 He would bring it to my office. I often had bills, like, on my desk. We held onto the bill  
19 until -- it was my practice to hold onto the bill until we had a time for which -- by which the President  
20 was signing the legislation.

21 Then we took it -- our office took it up to Outer Oval. We would see if the President was  
22 having to do pictures, you know, pictures or events around the bill signing. Then the bills would come  
23 back to us, as Staff Secretary. And then we would hand it off to David Kalbaugh --

1 Q Thank you.

2 A -- to be enrolled or whatever the right process was for legislation.

3 And he dealt with the Federal Register as well.

4 Q Was it the same process for pardons and commutations?

5 A No. The pardons were operated through -- the pardon process, I believe, operated  
6 through White House Counsel.

7 Q So Staff Secretary had no role in getting the President's signature on a pardon?

8 A We had a role in the decision-making around the pardons. And I honestly just don't  
9 remember -- and you may know -- whether the President's signature is required for pardons.

10 He did sign, hand-sign, some pardons. Those were -- the pardons that I am aware of that he  
11 hand-signed were the ones in which they were prisoner exchanges for deals to release American  
12 hostages.

13 BY MR. BENZINE:

14 Q Do you know the name Rosa Po?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Who is she?

17 A Rosa Po was the -- had worked in the COVID office with Jeff Zients -- I don't know what  
18 her role was there -- but later moved to the National Security Council and I believe was in their  
19 ExecSec operation and then moved to be, I guess, chief of staff or counselor or something, or a senior  
20 advisor, to Jeff Zients.

21 Q Was she involved at all in the pardon process?

22 A I don't -- the pardon process in general?

23 Q Yeah.

1 A No, not that I'm aware of.

2 Q And then one last kind of, like, communications question. Did anyone have the ability to  
3 send emails on behalf of the chief of staff or Bruce Reed or Mike Donilon?

4 So sometimes it comes up in Outlook as, like, sent on behalf of Jeff Zients, but it would show  
5 up as looking like it came from Jeff Zients. Do you know if anyone had that ability?

6 A I don't think so.

7 I'm sorry. Just say that again. On behalf of? Say the -- just say what you -- ask your question  
8 again.

9 Q Did anyone have access to email accounts in order to send emails on behalf of?

10 So, if someone had control or access to Mr. Zients's calendar and sent out a calendar invite, it's  
11 not -- it would say "calendar invite on behalf of Jeff Zients."

12 A Oh, that might have happened. I just don't know.

13 Q Okay.

14 A Like, I just don't recall -- yeah. I think it came -- I can't remember. It might have said  
15 "on behalf," calendar invites. But I don't really remember emails, like, a substantive email, that ever  
16 said "on behalf of."

17 Q Okay. Thank you.

18 BY MR. GREENBERG:

19 Q You previously said, I think, that the President hand-signed certain pardons, the ones that  
20 had to do with prisoner exchanges. Is that --

21 A Yeah.

22 Q -- your understanding?

23 How did --

1           A     Now, I just have to say, I cannot remember if it was, like, the pardon or the decision to do  
2     it.

3           Mr. Bromwich. To make the exchange?

4           Ms. Tanden. To make the exchange.

5                     BY MR. GREENBERG:

6           Q     So were there pardons where President Biden's signature would appear on them that he  
7     did not personally sign those?

8           A     I don't re- -- I mean, so I just want to say, as Staff Secretary, I believe I dealt with one  
9     group of pardons, maybe two. They were pardons that dealt with people who had  
10    marijuana -- possession of marijuana or had some, like, equity issue involved. And I remember a  
11    decision memo that went up to the President, and I remember getting the decision memo back.

12           And, you know, we had a protocol for decisions for the President. It was a protocol that was  
13    established in previous administrations that I followed, which was, we had a decision memo, which  
14    had a box at the top of it. The decision memo described the decision itself, if the President comes  
15    (ph), et cetera. It said at the top "agree," "disagree," or "to discuss."

16           We also had a decision card on top of that which synthesized the decision and also had that  
17    card. The President traditionally signed both of those.

18           I believe there was a decision and a decision card for those pardons. That series of pardons  
19    happened, I believe, in something like December 2021.

20           Now, I don't -- I just don't recall, like, any -- like, the President signing anything directly. We  
21    just did have a decision.



1           Q    So were you responsible, then, for when pardons or commutations came down? Were  
2   you ultimately in charge of -- were you the one who needed to get President Biden's signature on those  
3   documents?

4           A    They were treated like other decisions of the President. So I had the -- you know, I  
5   assembled the decision -- I mean, a decision memo came to us. We edited the decision memo. As I  
6   recall, the decision memo was -- you know, it had -- it was a decision memo, and then it had materials  
7   for each of the pardons.

8           And then we had a decision card. I worked on those. I put it in the decision book. The  
9   President received a decision book every day. And I remember getting the decision card and memo  
10   back.

11                   BY MR. BENZINE:

12          Q    What were the circumstances where you wouldn't have a decision memo or a decision  
13   card for something? Were there ever verbal authorizations?

14          A    I think there was only one time where I had a verbal authorization from Ron Klain, which  
15   I required that he write to me. And it had nothing to do with a pardon; it was relatively pro forma.

16          But, in our decision process, you know, even Ron Klain would take a decision memo and get it  
17   signed and give me a decision card back.

18          Q    Were you still involved in the, like, decision book after leaving the Staff Secretary's  
19   Office?

20          A    No.

21          Q    Do you --

22          A    I mean, other than sometimes I had to get decisions, and I would then distribute to the  
23   Staff Secretary.

1 Q Do you recall the process changing at all?

2 A I don't know. It didn't feel different to me, because our process for the decisions were,  
3 you know, we would have a conversation about what the decision was, why it was needed. We  
4 worked with the policy team, [inaudible] policy teams. We worked with the policy team. I edited  
5 decision memos directly, as Staff Secretary. I worked on the card. We would put the decision -- you  
6 know, depending on the timing -- some are on a slow roll -- would likely go into a decision book.  
7 Often, people -- the President would have meetings around decisions.

8 So -- now, I established a process that, once a decision was made, I would alert the assistant to  
9 the President who were authors of the memo. So, after I left, I received those, as Domestic Policy  
10 Council chair, when I needed a decision. They did the same to me. So, as far as I could tell, at least  
11 that element of the decision-making process was the same.

12 Q The, again --

13 A And we did decision memos for the Office of Operations. So it didn't feel different, but I  
14 didn't -- you know, I didn't know.

15 Mr. Bromwich. You weren't centrally involved in it.

16 Ms. Tanden. I wasn't involved.

17 BY MR. BENZINE:

18 Q Yeah.

19 Again, it's to the best of your recollection. That one instance you remember of Mr. Klain  
20 authorizing something pro forma without a decision memo, was that specific to Staff Secretary or was  
21 that your whole time?

22 A No, no, it was when I was Staff Secretary. Otherwise, I wouldn't --

23 Q You wouldn't necessarily know.

1 A No.

2 Q Okay.

3 A And it was -- you know, I remember it being as a -- I mean, I don't remember the issue,  
4 but I remember it being a relatively pro forma issue. And I required that he send me the -- he send me  
5 the email. And then we, you know, gave the -- handed that off to Dave Kalbaugh.

6 Mr. Greenberg. What was important for you to be in that email?

7 Ms. Tanden. That President -- that Ron Klain was ascertaining that the President had decided.  
8 The process we used for our decision memos was that the President signed in two different locations.  
9 He signed the card, and he also signed the decision memo.

10 Mr. Benzine. You said it was pro forma. What was the decision?

11 Ms. Tanden. For Ron Klain?

12 Mr. Benzine. Uh-huh.

13 Ms. Tanden. I just don't remember. I just didn't see -- it wasn't, you know, something that I  
14 was in any way concerned. Or we did --

15 Mr. Bromwich. It was just the process wasn't followed, right?

16 Ms. Tanden. Yeah. I mean, it was -- it was -- I mean, it wasn't -- it wasn't -- I also believe it  
17 wasn't an executive -- it wasn't authorizing use of the autopen or anything like that. It was just a  
18 traditional decision. But I like to be persnickety about that.

19 Mr. Benzine. It wasn't signing a bill or signing a pardon, anything like that?

20 Ms. Tanden. No, no, no.

21 And, you know, in my tenure with the President, you know, as you know, there was an Office  
22 of Legal Counsel decision that the President could sign a legislation by autopen. But, in my

1 experience, in my tenure, the President did not sign any legislation by autopen. And, in fact, we took a  
2 bill halfway around the world in order for him to sign the Ukraine legislation in person.

3 Mr. Benzine. In the decision memo, did it say "authorized to use autopen" or "authorized to  
4 affix signature" or anything similar?

5 Ms. Tanden. No, it did not. It was -- but it was the established practice of the prior -- as I  
6 determined -- as I heard directly from Staff Secretaries and also in my conversations with David  
7 Kalbaugh, that this was the established practice of prior administrations, I believe both Republican and  
8 Democratic, but I can only really directly attest to Democratic administrations.

9 Mr. Greenberg. You've brought up autopen. What was the autopen used to sign for  
10 documents, to your knowledge as Staff Secretary?

11 Mr. Bromwich. You mean what categories of documents?

12 Mr. Greenberg. What categories of documents.

13 Ms. Tanden. Yeah. So there's broadly, kind of, two categories of documents. One is letters.  
14 There's tens of thousands of letters, maybe hundreds of thousands of letters that the autopen is used  
15 for.

16 And then there are particular executive actions of the President that -- some range from  
17 exceedingly pro forma but still, you know, require a signature -- commissions, for example. You  
18 know, it has been, as understood by Dave Kalbaugh, the established practice of administrations for at  
19 least 50 years that commissioned officers' signatures would be autopenned. Sometimes Presidents  
20 autopen them, very rarely.

21 And then there's all kinds of executive actions for the President. So that can be, for example, a  
22 Continuation of National Emergency -- oh, like, to step back, whether you continue sanctions on a  
23 company and a country that is under sanctions. So, every year, a Continuation of National Emergency

1 is -- well, every year, sanctions have to be re-upped, reauthorized, by the President under the power of  
2 the National Emergencies. So, you know, it may not be the biggest decision, of whether the President  
3 was going to re-up Iran sanctions, but we needed to have a decision from the President to do that.

4 So that's the kind of thing that we would have decision memos around. There were a lot of  
5 those. There was a lot of decision memos around that. And then from executive actions to the  
6 President -- and then we had decisions that would pertain to a regulation or a policy process, which  
7 didn't require an autopen signature. But you're asking autopens, right?

8 Mr. Greenberg. That didn't require autopen signature?

9 Ms. Tanden. Okay. So -- I'm sorry. There's decision -- we had a lot of decisions, some of  
10 which required autopen/didn't require autopen.

11 There's use of the autopen. When we used the autopen for executive actions of the President,  
12 not for -- not for letters. The President -- you know, there were some exceptions to letters in which the  
13 President would sign. It was his habit to sign military condolence letters, you know, by hand. But  
14 everything else was basically autopenned.

15 For autopen use for executive actions of the President, you know, that could be a proclamation  
16 specifying a particular action. It could be an executive order. It could be a letter to -- you know, it  
17 could be a, kind of, letter to Cabinet Secretaries. We had a process by which we had a decision memo  
18 for the President -- we had a decision memo around the use of that -- around that action, and then the  
19 card. And he signed his signature as a matter of course to both.

20 Mr. Bromwich. And it was only when those two documents were returned that the autopen  
21 could be used?

22 Ms. Tanden. Yes. I mean, not "could be used." I mean, there was a time or two we only got  
23 the card with his signature.

1           Now, I also reviewed these memos. He often made dots on the memos, he wrote notes. He  
2 would come back with questions. We would have to -- like, I always had to review them because he  
3 might ask a question in which there would have to be a followup meeting.

4           Mr. Benzine. So it was a decision memo for the underlying decision and then a decision memo  
5 for the use of autopen. Is that --

6           Ms. Tanden. No. There was one decision memo --

7           Mr. Benzine. Okay.

8           Ms. Tanden. -- for the underlying decision that authorized the use of the autopen with a  
9 decision --

10          Mr. Bromwich. And then a card that was the synopsis of the decision memo --

11          Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

12          Ms. Tanden. Yes.

13          Mr. Bromwich. -- and the President initialed or signed both.

14                BY MR. BENZINE:

15          Q     So, in the decision memo regarding the actual executive action, it would have a line that  
16 said, "I authorize the use of autopen for this"?

17          A     I don't know that it did.

18          Q     How -- the -- I'm sorry if I'm misunderstanding.

19          A     No, no. I'm sorry if I'm not being clear.

20          Q     I thought you just said there was just one decision memo, regarding the decision itself,  
21 and in that memo it said whether or not you could use the autopen for it.

22          A     No, no. It would just authorize the decision and the form of decision -- either use the  
23 autopen or didn't use the autopen. You see what I'm saying?

1 Q Okay. So you had a --

2 A So executive orders always had a signature, so it was, like, authorizing use of the autopen  
3 for that. But some things he would decide -- like, a policy, we would get a decision card, and he  
4 wouldn't use the auto- -- there was no need for an autopen.

5 Q So you had a separate memo that said executive orders need to be wet signature except  
6 for A, B, and C legislation -- wet signature except for A, B, and C? That kind of thing?

7 A I mean, I think I engaged -- I talked to the clerk about what was needed for those  
8 categories. I'm --

9 Q But the actual, like -- I'm trying to get at if -- so you said the President hand-signed, I  
10 think, all legislation, was what you said.

11 A Yeah.

12 Q Including flying one halfway around the world. Did he hand-sign all executive orders?

13 A He did not. He hand-signed many executive orders, but he did not hand-sign all  
14 executive orders.

15 Q So how --

16 A Which, I understood that to be previous practice as well.

17 Q So how was the decision made on which one got autopenned versus which one was  
18 hand-signed?

19 A The President would make that, or the senior advisors would make that. Usually, it was  
20 like, did he want to have a signing event? Did he want to sign it?

21 I would be informed that he wanted to -- I mean, it's traditional practice of whether you're  
22 going to do a signing event for it or not, was -- and my understanding was that this was a normal  
23 practice of both administrations -- of all administrations prior to --

1 Q Were there -- you said the President or senior advisors would make it. Were there ever  
2 executive orders autopenned just based off senior advisor authorization?

3 A No. You mean, like, without a decision card with the President's signature?

4 Q No, no, no. Like, the actual pen itself was just -- using-the-autopen decision --

5 A No.

6 Q -- did not involve the President.

7 A The chief of staff -- so, when I entered the role, I believe there was a memo from the  
8 chief of staff to the clerk -- and I believe this was the standard practice -- designating me as a person  
9 who could authorize the use of the autopen.

10 Q All right. That's what I was trying to get at --

11 A Okay.

12 Q -- if there was any, like --

13 A Oh, yes.

14 Q -- kind of, guidelines on how it was used --

15 A Yes.

16 Q -- and what it was used for.

17 A Yes. So I believe the autopen -- I had a memo -- I had a memo either -- yes, there was a  
18 memo when I started that authorized my use of the autopen, and my deputy could authorize the  
19 autopen, and we were the only commissioned officers.

20 Now, I oversaw the use of the autopen, you know, for executive actions, and my deputy  
21 oversaw the use of the autopen only for letters, correspondence.

22 Q And last question. I know we're a minute over.

23 Were any other staffers authorized to use the autopen?



1           A    I cannot recall if Ron Klain was authorized to use the autopen, but I don't believe -- he  
2 never used the autopen during my tenure.

3           Q    All right. Thank you.

4           Mr. Greenberg. We will go off the record.

5           Ms. Tanden. And -- oh, could I just say one more thing?

6           Mr. Greenberg. Oh, we'll go --

7           Mr. Benzine. Back on.

8           Ms. Tanden. So the way the autopen worked is that the -- David Kalbaugh's office actually  
9 controlled the autopen. So, when we used the autopen, it would be that I informed David Kalbaugh  
10 and he would have his staff actually autopen the document. And, you know, he's a --

11          Mr. Bromwich. You never personally autopenned a document.

12          Ms. Tanden. I have never -- I didn't even see it, the process, until late in my tenure.

13          And, as I said, David was a good career official who worked in both Democratic and  
14 Republican administrations, including President Trump's.

15          Mr. Greenberg. Thank you.

16          We'll go off the record.

17          [Recess.]

1 [1:14 p.m.]

2 Mr. [REDACTED] On the record.

3 BY MR. [REDACTED]

4 Q Ms. Tanden, good afternoon.

5 I understand that you had something you wanted to clear up for the record.

6 A Yeah. I just wanted to make a few clarifications.

7 So I just wanted to say that Michael Hochman was my deputy when I started. One of my Staff  
8 Secretaries was -- the one I referenced was Dani, Dani Schulkin.

9 And then, just to clarify the process, there was the established practice -- the established  
10 practice that I followed from previous administrations. There was one memo that -- there was one  
11 process for executive actions that could include the use of the autopen or not, and there were separate  
12 memos around the autopen.

13 So I just wanted -- I think I was confusing on that topic, and I just wanted to clarify.

14 Q I appreciate the clarification.

15 A And I apologize for that.

16 Q On that point, you've offered a lot of detail during the proceedings today in an effort to be  
17 helpful to this committee, which we all appreciate.

18 I just wanted to highlight that the matters you have been speaking about are complex and, in  
19 many cases, occurred several years ago.

20 So, just to be clear, the facts and the detail that you're providing today you're providing to the  
21 best of your recollection. Is that right?

22 A I am.

23 Q Yes. Thank you.

1           And then just one other matter I wanted to clarify. You made mention in the previous round of  
2 desk time --

3           A    Uh-huh.

4           Q    -- the President's desk time. And I believe one of my majority colleagues referred to desk  
5 time as "non-work time."

6           A    Uh-huh.

7           Q    I just wanted to clarify that that is not, in fact, the case. It is not so, as I understand it,  
8 that the President was not working during his desk time. Is that right?

9           A    Yes, absolutely. So desk time was always work time. It was always -- you know, like,  
10 desk time could be the President was making calls to Members or calls to leaders or calls to overseas.  
11 You know, desk time was often eaten up by, you know, a briefing of the President on some issue that  
12 had just happened.

13           You know, I would -- that's how I saw desk time. Desk time was the President was, like, in the  
14 Oval Office working and managing issues.

15           Q    Executing his official duties.

16           A    Absolutely.

17           Q    Thank you.

18           No further questions from us.

19           A    Okay, cool.

20           [Recess.]

21           Ms. Harker. On the record.

22           BY MS. HARKER:

1 Q Ms. Tanden, you just mentioned what activities President Biden did during desk time.

2 How do you know what activities he did during desk time?

3 A I often received a schedule after the -- I received a readout of the President's day for the  
4 record, so I was able to see how the President spent his time.

5 Q And that detailed what was done during desk time?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And who authored that?

8 A I believe it was Outer Oval staff.

9 Q I'm sorry?

10 A Outer Oval staff monitored the descriptions of his time.

11 Q Thank you.

12 BY MR. GREENBERG:

13 Q Okay, Ms. Tanden. I'd like to keep going on some questions regarding the workings of  
14 how you did your job as Staff Secretary.

15 A Uh-huh.

16 Q And I'm just hoping that you can clarify for me, not having been the Staff Secretary, this  
17 dynamic with decision memos and the decision cards.

18 A Uh-huh.

19 Q So is it correct that, while the President wouldn't sign everything that needed a signature,  
20 and sometimes those things would be autopenned, he would sign the underlying decision memo and  
21 decision card that would authorize that action?

22 A Yes.

1           So, just to lay out the process, the President has to make a series of decisions. Many of those  
2       decisions are some formulation of executive action for the President, executive action -- he's  
3       authorizing executive action for the administration. Not all of them are. Some are policy decisions.  
4       Others -- but many of them are.

5           In that case, we would have the standard protocol that I used, that I was following from  
6       previous administrations, was that there was a decision memo that outlined the decision, pros and  
7       cons, it provided substantive information, and then there was a decision card.

8           And, as I noted earlier, on both the decision memo and the decision card, there was three -- I  
9       believe three options: "agree," "disagree," "let's discuss" -- or "need further information" or "discuss  
10      further." I think it might've been "discuss further." It was on both of those.

11          He traditionally signed both. Sometimes he didn't. Sometimes he would check off "further  
12      discuss." Sometimes he would write a note, a particular question. Then I would take that material to  
13      the principal author and say, "The President is looking for additional information." I would tell the  
14      chief of staff. That was the process.

15          Q     So the "yes"/"no"/"let's discuss" options, that wasn't a checkmark or an X in a box. That  
16      was President Biden's signature next to those things?

17          A     Yeah, it was often his initials, you know, "JRB." Sometimes he would sign. Often it was  
18      "JRB." And he signed on both.

19          Mr. Bromwich. And, to be clear, if those two came back, that was an authorization to use the  
20      autopen?

21          Ms. Tanden. Yes, I read that as an authorization to use the autopen. And that was the protocol  
22      that I established with both the previous Staff Secretaries as well as, I believe, with Dave Kalbaugh.

23                BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q And, to be even more clear, you read it as an authorization to use the autopen if it was  
2 only a "yes."

3 A Yes, yes, absolutely. Yes, only for "yes."

4 There were times where he said "further information," people went back to him, and no action  
5 was taken.

6 Q Why not just sign the underlying thing, if he's going to be initialing a decision memo?

7 A So the President's time is the most precious resource in the world, in my view. It's one of  
8 the most precious resources in the world. Many of these decisions are kind of pro forma decisions.  
9 You know, for example, the use of the autopen was required for the sanctions policies. Some of these  
10 are relatively quick and rote. So he could kind of combine those quickly and make the decision at his  
11 house, you know, like, at night.

12 So that was the -- you know, we -- I think this whole process developed out of shortening the  
13 amount of time.

14 But the President did sign executive orders by hand. You know, we had his -- you could  
15 probably see, there were many, many, many public events around executive orders that the President  
16 signed.

17 BY MR. BENZINE:

18 Q Just for clarity, you said, like, continuing sanctions is something the autopen is required.  
19 Do --

20 A I believe it is.

21 Q -- you mean that a signature is required?

22 A I believe a signature is required.

23 Q All right. I just wanted to be --

1           A    Yes. So I want to -- yes, you're -- yes, a signature is required.

2           Q    Okay. Thank you.

3           A    I believe a signature is required.

4           Q    I just wanted to be --

5           A    Yes.

6           Q    -- extra-special-clear --

7           A    Yes.

8           Q    -- so there wasn't anything --

9           A    Yes. As I understood it, as outlined in the OLC memo from 2005, that established the  
10 power to use the autopen to sign legislation -- a power that in my tenure President Biden did not use  
11 but I know other Presidents have used.

12           You know, no legislation talks about autopen. It just talks about the signature. But it has been  
13 an established practice by OLC that -- or, it was determined legally binding to use the autopen.

14           BY MR. GREENBERG:

15           Q    So some executive orders from President Biden were signed via autopen, correct?

16           A    I believe so, but I cannot remember which ones.

17           Q    But how was the decision made, whether an executive order would be signed by autopen  
18 or not?

19           A    I mean, I think they were subject to the President's schedule, like, whether the issue rose  
20 for him to do an event around it.

21           I mean, my sense was that he signed by hand a lot of the executive orders, but I don't actually  
22 recall the difference of whether there was executive orders he -- yes, there were some executive orders.

1     There was one on Native Ameri- -- there was one I remember, a Native American -- missing  
2     indigenous people that he, you know, reviewed and then we used an autopen for.

3             But I don't remember all the details otherwise, which were executive orders he signed and  
4     which he used for the autopen. But generally there were events around executive orders.

5             Ms. Harker. Forgive me if I missed this, but who makes that determination, whether it's going  
6     to be autopen or hand? You said the schedule was a factor, but who is making that determination?

7             Ms. Tanden. Well --

8             Mr. Bromwich. If you know.

9             Ms. Tanden. -- I mean, I think it often was the chief of staff or other -- like, the people  
10    deciding his schedule. But I don't know the full extent of it.

11            BY MR. GREENBERG:

12            Q    You said you never operated the autopen.

13            A    No.

14            Q    Who did?

15            A    As I testified earlier, or spoke to earlier, David Kalbaugh oversaw the operations of the  
16    autopen, and there were career staff who actually authorized -- actually used the autopen.

17            Q    So do you know any of the actual staff who were using the autopen?

18            A    No.

19            Mr. Bromwich. You don't know their names.

20            Ms. Tanden. No.

21            BY MR. GREENBERG:

22            Q    Do you know how many there were?

23            A    I believe there were at least two.



1 Q Do you know how many autopens were in use?

2 A I believe there's one and a backup, but I don't know for sure.

3 Q Do you know where the autopens are?

4 A They are on the fourth floor of the OEOB.

5 Q Do you know if there was an autopen in Delaware?

6 A I don't believe so.

7 Q Do you know if there was an autopen anywhere besides White House grounds?

8 A I don't believe so.

9 Q Did situations ever arise in which you would just go get President Biden's signature on a  
10 document that needed to be signed?

11 A Well, yes, situations arose where we would -- I mean, one good example is, the President  
12 chose to have -- he chose a process where he had to sign for any increase in weapons for Ukraine. I  
13 don't believe that was required by law, but he set up a process where he wanted to essentially ensure  
14 that he was deciding on any increased weapons for Ukraine.

15 So, in that, you know, we had a quick memo. Sometimes those decisions would move quickly.  
16 We would take -- you know, we would have the decision memo, we handed it to Outer Oval Office  
17 Operations, and they handed it to the President.

18 And then we would get it back relatively quickly. That happened one time when our office  
19 sent it up at, like, 3:00 and we got the signature back by 4:00, I think.

20 Q I think you made reference earlier to, when you became Staff Secretary, the amount of  
21 interaction you had with the President actually decreased. Do I have that right?

22 A I mean, it -- I mean, marginally. I saw the President maybe once every 6 weeks after that.

1           There were times where I went in to talk about a decision. That didn't happen very often. It  
2           was my experience that was also not the case for prior Staff Secretaries. They were usually handled  
3           by policy staff or senior staff.

4           So I saw the President probably less frequently, but not -- you know, it might have been once  
5           every 6 weeks, once every 2 months, not once every 7 months or something.

6           Q    Uh-huh.

7           A    I also went -- I also went to -- I went on trips with the President and saw the President in  
8           that process.

9           Q    How often did you travel with the President?

10          A    I think I went to two or three -- on two or three trips with the President. I didn't travel  
11          that often. I sent my staff.

12          Q    Where'd you go?

13          A    I went on the trip to Poland and Brussels. I went on a trip to -- this is my time as Staff  
14          Secretary?

15          Q    Yes, ma'am.

16          A    I went on a trip to -- the President was doing a voting-rights speech in Atlanta. I think  
17          those were the two trips I went on when I was Staff Secretary. Oh, and I went in -- I went to Los  
18          Angeles for the June Summit of the Americas, I think, in 2022.

19                BY MR. BENZINE:

20          Q    Any trips as DPC chair?

21          A    Yes, I went on multiple trips as DPC chair.

22          Q    A handful? A dozen?

23          A    Somewhere between 6 and 12.

1 Q All domestic, or did you go on foreign trips as well?

2 A I only went on -- as domestic policy chair --

3 Q Yeah, no --

4 A -- I only got to go to domestic policy.

5 Q I have to ask the question.

6 A No, no, I'm sorry. That's fine.

7 Q Did you ever go to Delaware?

8 A No.

9 Q Did you ever go to Camp David?

10 A No.

11 BY MR. GREENBERG:

12 Q But when the President traveled, somebody from your staff would travel with him?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Why is that?

15 A Because we were in charge of the information flow to the President. So we would handle  
16 memos; you know, if people had to get briefing material to the President, they would send it to our  
17 office. That person who was with the President would, you know, make sure it was in proper order,  
18 hand it off to Outer Oval Operations.

19 Q While you were serving as Staff Secretary, did the pace at which things were being  
20 autopenned ever increase?

21 A No, not that I -- not that I recall in any way, shape, or form.

22 Q Did the mix of items that were being autopenned change at any point?

23 A No.

1 BY MR. BENZINE:

2 Q Jake asked, but I'll ask again, because I'm still unclear on it. I think you said the schedule  
3 might've been the primary driver on when it was going to be a wet signature or when it was going to  
4 be autopenned, except for legislation, and the chief of staff primarily made that decision? Is that fair?

5 A I mean, the President signed -- personally signed a lot of executive actions. There were,  
6 kind of, pro forma things that he would agree to. You know, like, a great one that honestly became the  
7 bane of our existence were the CNEs, the Continuation of National Emergencies, which were the  
8 sanctions. So that's the kind of thing that we always autopenned. I think my sense is every  
9 administration has used the autopen for those --

10 Q Uh-huh.

11 A -- although I don't know for sure.

12 So, you know, I mean, I think there were things -- I think the, you know, higher-profile issues  
13 the President signed; lesser-profile issues we would do by autopen.

14 Q Is the decision tree documented anywhere, or was it kind of just a staff decision on this  
15 was high-profile, he should sign it himself, or this can be pro forma and just go through the autopen?

16 A I don't believe there was a decision tree. We just basically went off past practice.

17 You know, I mean, I will say, I had a weekly meeting with the clerk. You know, we were -- I,  
18 you know, wanted to make sure we were following protocols. We were well within established  
19 protocols.

20 Q And then the decision memos themselves, you'd get them back. What did you do with  
21 them after the decision was made?

22 A We separated them apart from other materials, and I believe they were all in the archives.

23 Q Okay.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q As Staff Secretary, was it ultimately your responsibility to make sure that the items  
3 leaving the White House with President Biden's signature had gone through the proper process of  
4 getting that signature, whether through autopen or President Biden signing them himself?

5 A I'm sorry. What do you mean by "items leaving the White House"?

6 Q Whether it was a bill, whether it was a pardon, whether -- any action taken by the  
7 President that required his signature, did that responsibility ultimately fall on you?

8 A I mean, the way I perceived my role was that my role was to oversee the decision process  
9 and get the President's approval or disapproval, you know. I mean, I considered my role as to just  
10 ensure he was getting the decision and he made whatever decision he wanted to make, and I was part  
11 of that process.

12 So I don't really -- I didn't understand -- I didn't really perceive my role as making sure all  
13 legislation was approved. I wasn't trying to make the decision for him. I guess I'm not really clear on  
14 what you're asking.

15 Mr. Bromwich. I think he's asking, were you responsible for putting out a decision to the  
16 outside world?

17 Is that right?

18 Mr. Greenberg. Yes.

19 Ms. Tanden. Oh. Yeah. Well, I would inform the assistants to the President who made -- on  
20 the decision, and then they would, you know, operationalize that process. So people would then  
21 inform communications if that was necessary or other steps.

22 BY MR. GREENBERG:

1 Q Let me ask you this. Say there was a five-page bill that needed to be signed by the  
2 President --

3 A Uh-huh.

4 Q -- and, through whatever process, President Biden signed the wrong bill, he signed a draft  
5 or something like that. This is a hypothetical.

6 A Yeah.

7 Q Would that mistake ultimately be your mistake?

8 Mr. Bromwich. Let me ask it -- did that ever happen?

9 Ms. Tanden. No.

10 Mr. Bromwich. That, to your knowledge, President Biden signed the wrong document or the  
11 wrong bill?

12 Ms. Tanden. No. But it could've been Dave -- I mean, David Kalbaugh and I worked together,  
13 and he was under our broad auspices of the Staff Secretary, but, you know, he was a separate -- he ran  
14 his own department. So, if he gave me the wrong bill and I gave that to the President, you know, I  
15 don't know that that would've been my fault. It could've easily been Dave Kalbaugh's fault.

16 So I'm not totally understanding the nuance of your -- I don't mean to elide your question.

17 BY MR. GREENBERG:

18 Q Is it your responsibility as Staff Secretary to make sure that the President is signing the  
19 right document?

20 A Yeah. Yeah. I mean, broadly speaking, sure.

21 Q And you would only see the President maybe once every 6 weeks?

22 A Yes, but I saw his signature regularly. He made notes on memos, you know, like --

23 Mr. Benzine. Did you keep a log?

1 Ms. Tanden. I believe -- I don't --

2 Mr. Bromwich. Wait, wait. A log of what?

3 Ms. Tanden. Yeah.

4 Mr. Benzine. You know, you making sure that all the decision memos that you got that were  
5 yeses had signed outcomes.

6 Ms. Tanden. We -- either, I believe, we kept a log or the law clerks kept a log, but, you know,  
7 we ascertained that there was a signed memo for -- a signed decision card and memo for everything  
8 that we -- for, you know, when it was an affirmatively signed decision card for any action that we were  
9 taking.

10 Mr. Benzine. I'm saying more so, like, you got the decision card on -- today's Tuesday -- you  
11 got the final decision card on Tuesday --

12 Mr. Bromwich. Decision card and the decision memo. It's a package.

13 Mr. Benzine. Yes. Well, she said not always, but most of the time.

14 Ms. Tanden. It is rare.

15 Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

16 Ms. Tanden. It really isn't -- very rarely.

17 BY MR. BENZINE:

18 Q You get that on a Tuesday. The plan is to sign the actual underlying measure on a  
19 Thursday.

20 A Uh-huh.

21 Q Do you then go back in an Excel spreadsheet and go, decision log signed Tuesday, bill  
22 signed Thursday?

1           A     We -- yes. So we had a briefing book for the President, and we had -- you know,  
2     basically, I had a staff member who had a tracker of the decisions, and they would note in the tracker,  
3     you know, when we got the decision, when the decision came back. So, yes, there's a record that I  
4     believe is in the Staff Secretary materials.

5           Q     Did the log include whether or not it was autopenned or wet signature?

6           A     It always included his signature.

7           Q     But there wasn't a category in the log of "used autopen on this day"?

8           A     I don't believe there was.

9           Q     Okay.

10          BY MR. GREENBERG:

11          Q     I know that you stopped being Staff Secretary in May of 2023. Is that correct?

12          A     Yes.

13          Q     Who took over the position?

14          A     Stefanie Feldman.

15          Q     Who is Ms. Feldman?

16          A     Ms. Feldman served as deputy domestic policy advisor to President Biden and the  
17     administration and had worked with him for years before that.

18          Q     Were you friendly with Ms. Feldman before?

19          A     Not particularly, no.

20          Q     Did you stay close afterwards?

21          A     No.

22          Q     Did you ever speak to her about how she was doing as Staff Secretary?



1           A     Well, sometimes I felt that she was over-editing my memos. And maybe once or twice I  
2     had noted that I had been Staff Secretary.

3           Mr. Bromwich. So you knew what should be in a memo.

4           Ms. Tanden. And it felt -- so I had some sense of what the President's memos should have.  
5     But, you know, I think I only said that once or twice.

6           Mr. Greenberg. Do you know if the autopen was used for pardons of various individuals -- of  
7     anyone?

8           Mr. Bromwich. During what period of time?

9           Mr. Greenberg. During your term as Staff Secretary.

10          Ms. Tanden. So, as I said earlier, we had a decision memo during my tenure of -- there was a  
11     group of pardons that I believe were about, fundamentally, you know, people who had been  
12     experiencing COVID and COVID lockdown in prison. I don't really remember the details. I believe  
13     that that happened in December of 20- -- around the fall/winter of 2021, 2022. I do not recall if there  
14     was an autopen used for those, but there may well have been. I just don't know. I just can't remember  
15     if an autopen was required for pardons by the President or just a decision to the pardon attorney.

16          Mr. Bromwich. Was that batch the only pardons that you recall?

17          Ms. Tanden. Under my tenure, yes. I only recall doing one.

18          Mr. Greenberg. You only -- sorry. You only recall doing one batch of pardons? Is that what  
19     you just --

20          Ms. Tanden. Or they could've been commutations, honestly. I think they were commutations  
21     and pardons? Maybe commutations?

22          Mr. Greenberg. So, if the President didn't want to sign pardons himself --

1           Ms. Tanden. Oh, no, no, no. I'm so sorry. There is the regular pardons, okay? Then there was  
2 a -- this is, like, domestic pardons. Then there was a group of national-security actions that were  
3 essentially --

4           Mr. Bromwich. Prisoner trades.

5           Ms. Tanden. There were people -- prisoner trades. So, as part of the prisoner trade, the  
6 President had to pardon or commute someone's -- some, like, Russian person or something who was in  
7 an American prison. And those pardons or commutations -- which I do not remember what they  
8 were -- he specifically signed those. And that worked through the National Security Council as well as  
9 the -- those went through the National Security Council.

10          Mr. Greenberg. So --

11          Ms. Tanden. Whereas traditional pardons went through the White House Counsel.

12          Mr. Greenberg. But I think you said earlier that only you and your deputy and maybe Ron  
13 Klain had the ability to authorize the use of the autopen. Is that correct?

14          Ms. Tanden. Yeah.

15          Mr. Greenberg. So -- but is it possible then, for pardons, that somebody else was authorized to  
16 use the autopen for pardons?

17          Ms. Tanden. I don't think so. I mean, I don't know --

18          Mr. Bromwich. You don't think that?

19          Ms. Tanden. No.

20          Mr. Bromwich. Okay.

21                BY MR. GREENBERG:

22          Q     So is it your understanding that all pardons were signed by President Biden himself?

23          A     All pardons?

1           Q    Is it your understanding that all pardons issued by President Biden were signed manually  
2 by President Biden?

3           A    No. I don't believe that he -- there was a group of pardons that occurred during my  
4 tenure -- there's two groups of pardons that I recall. One was the national-security pardons, which he  
5 signed, or -- and I don't know that he signed the pardon. He might've just signed the decision memo  
6 around that but with, like, a signature on an actual memo, not just a card. Okay.

7           Then there was the pardons that I was responsible for that happened in the winter. There was,  
8 you know, a number of cases. I don't remember if he signed that -- I don't believe he signed -- I know  
9 he didn't sign it by hand, and I don't believe -- I can't recall if we -- if it required an autopen or not.  
10 That's what my testimony is.

11          Q    Okay. Now, I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm just trying to understand the logic here.  
12           Are you saying that President Biden -- there may be pardons that President Biden issued over  
13 the course of his Presidency that don't have a signature at all then?

14          A    Yeah, I just don't recall if they were -- if a signature was required for the pardons. I  
15 just -- you should -- that's, like, a -- I can't remember.

16          Q    Sure.

17          A    I only had -- I mean, just to say, in my tenure, I only had these two experiences that I can  
18 recall. So it didn't feel very unusual to me, because we got -- we definitely got the decision card with  
19 the -- I remember the card and the memo for that domestic -- those domestic pardons. And I just don't  
20 recall, like, right at this point, I don't recall if there was an autopen used for the pardons or not.

21          Q    So you don't know if President Biden signed the pardon for Hunter Biden?

22          A    Well, I wasn't Staff Secretary.

1 Q I understand that. But my question is, you don't know if President Biden signed the  
2 pardon for Hunter Biden?

3 A I mean, I have no idea what happened with that.

4 Q And you have no idea if President Biden signed the pardons for the other family  
5 members, the pardon that was dated -- I believe it was dated January 19th but it was released January  
6 20th of 2025.

7 A My last day in the White House was January 17th.

8 Q So you don't know?

9 A I do not know.

10 Q Were you ever told that President Biden had to be woken up to sign something that you  
11 needed signed during your time as Staff Secretary?

12 A No. I'm trying to -- no. No.

13 Q Are you sure?

14 A Sure.

15 Mr. Benzine. Was there ever a point where you needed something signed where you couldn't  
16 get to him?

17 Ms. Tanden. No.

18 BY MR. GREENBERG:

19 Q Did you ever talk to Mike Donilon, Steve Ricchetti, or Bruce Reed -- I can break it up.  
20 Did you ever talk to Mike Donilon about needing to get the President's signature on an item?

21 A No.

22 Q Did you ever talk to Steve Ricchetti about getting the President's signature on an item?

23 A No.

1 Q Did you ever talk to Bruce Reed about getting the President's signature on an item?

2 A Like, often. Bruce handled the policy of the domestic -- he was the deputy chief of staff  
3 for policy. So a lot of decisions -- a lot of decisions, particularly in policy matters, you know, he  
4 would take to the President. So -- or he would be in the -- there was often a morning meeting that he  
5 or he and Jeff would discuss various policy issues. So I went to Bruce relatively regularly around  
6 getting decisions from the President.

7 Q Did --

8 A As Staff Secretary, I should say.

9 Q Sure. Did Mr. Reed ever -- did he communicate back to you that the President had  
10 signed off on this and it can be -- that a decision has been made on a particular item?

11 A Well, I always worked to get the card and the signature. I don't think I ever just took  
12 Bruce -- I cannot recall a single instance in which I just took Bruce Reed's word for anything. I had  
13 the card, and Bruce would -- I would make sure that we had a signature back from the President.

14 Mr. Bromwich. And it's not because you distrusted Bruce Reed. It's just because you had a  
15 process that needed to be followed.

16 Ms. Tanden. Yes.

17 BY MR. GREENBERG:

18 Q Did Bruce Reed ever say -- did Bruce Reed ever just say to you, "The President is okay  
19 with this; please get it signed," and then you pushed back?

20 A No. He never said that to me. He never said, "Here," like, "we have an agreement, and I  
21 got the President to agree, and you should just act like it's signed." That never happened.

1 Q Did you ever face -- were there ever any uncomfortable conversations with Bruce Reed  
2 about how you wanted to go by the signature card and signature document and Bruce Reed for  
3 whatever reason was not helpful in that situation?

4 A No, no. I mean, he knew that the protocol -- and I will say, I sometimes have a reputation  
5 for toughness, and I always require the signature card, you know. And I will say, I insisted on the  
6 signature card, you know, with everyone. So everyone knew. There was no -- there was never,  
7 like -- I never had dramatic pushback.

8 I think early in my tenure there was a very pro-forma item, and I can't remember if it was  
9 someone in the ExecSec department of the National Security Office sort of asked, and I was like,  
10 "Always get the signature. We need the signature."

11 So I was a stickler. And, you know, I was that -- that was sort of a point of pride with Staff  
12 Secretaries, was to be a stickler on these issues.

13 Q And just so I understand, would there come time -- recognizing that you would see the  
14 President maybe once every 6 weeks, were you ever seeing the President and he just said to you,  
15 "Ms." -- I'm assuming he used your first name, but --

16 A He did.

17 Q -- you know, "Ms. Tanden, will you just throw my signature on that document?"

18 A No.

19 Q No. So --

20 A And he also knew that he -- I mean, like, he knew the process was that he had to sign the  
21 signature, he had to sign the card. And, you know, I mean, it was on -- like, sometimes when I was in  
22 DPC, he'd be sort of ready to get the card and sign it when a decision was made.

23 Mr. Bromwich. No shortcuts allowed in any of that.

1 Ms. Tanden. Yeah.

2 Mr. Greenberg. So the President answered to your system.

3 Ms. Tanden. Well, I felt like it was a system that was good for all of us.

1 [1:51 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GREENBERG:

3 Q Were there ever situations in which you were trying to get a signature from President  
4 Biden for a long period of time and you couldn't get that signature?

5 A No. I think, you know, we really had a process, and I explained this to everyone. We  
6 needed to give the President a week to make decisions. Lots of things happen in that week. He had a  
7 week to make decisions, you know. But that was also -- he -- it never really went beyond a week.

8 Now, there were times the President just chose -- he would make a series of decisions on the  
9 decision book and not make a decision on something, and I kind of took that to mean that he did not  
10 want to proceed. And sometimes -- usually the chief of staff or someone would go talk to him about  
11 it, and usually it did indicate he didn't want to -- he didn't want to -- he did not agree with the decision.

12 Q So the President had a week --

13 A I mean, this was our process.

14 Q Sure.

15 A Like, he's the President, so I can't, like, push him around, but --

16 Q The President had about a week --

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q -- to sign a particular document that you might --

19 Mr. Bromwich. To decide.

20 Ms. Tanden. Yeah.

21 BY MR. GREENBERG:

22 Q To decide. Thank you.

23 Once you got the decision memo and card --



1 A With his signature --

2 Q -- with his signature --

3 A -- agreeing to the action.

4 Q -- what was -- how fast would you get the signature on the applicable document?

5 A You mean the autopen if it was necessary?

6 Q If it was necessary, yes.

7 A If it was necessary? I mean, our process was to do that relatively quickly.

8 I don't know -- you know, I would -- what we did is, we had an email or a notation on an  
9 underlying memo that we would send to Dave Kalbaugh. So we had, basically, communicated to the  
10 counsel's -- to the clerk's office, and then, you know, I think their practice was to get it signed  
11 relatively quickly, but I don't know if sometimes that waited a day.

12 I tried to inform the assistant to the President, you know, within an hour or so of receiving the  
13 decision. That was my practice.

14 Q Your practice was, within an hour of receiving the decision the document would be  
15 signed by the --

16 A No, no, no. Within an hour of receiving the decision, I would inform the assistants to the  
17 President who were in charge of the decision or the underlying matter, I would inform them that it had  
18 been decided.

19 We would also simultaneously inform -- often, my staff informs the clerk. He managed, you  
20 know, the direct application of the autopen. And I don't know how long that took. I mean, I imagine,  
21 my sense of it, it was relatively quick, because you want these things to go quickly.

22 And there are times, you know -- there was one -- you know, there are times where people are  
23 working, kind of, all hours. We had a letter to a foreign leader on a Saturday evening.

1           So, you know, my sense is it was relatively quick. But that was -- the actual application of the  
2   autopen was handled by Dave Kalbaugh.

3           Q    Could it have been a couple days, that process, for the signature to actually be applied to  
4   the applicable document?

5           A    I would find that very surprising. I'm not aware of any situation where it took a couple  
6   days. But I don't -- I can't attest that that didn't happen. I didn't oversee the use of the autopen, like,  
7   directly, where it's direct application.

8           Ms. Harker. You mentioned that you often spoke with Bruce Reed about getting decisions  
9   from the President.

10          Ms. Tanden. Uh-huh.

11          Ms. Harker. Who were the other individuals that were typically getting decisions from the  
12   President?

13          Ms. Tanden. The chief of staff got decisions from the President on a regular basis. It  
14   depended on the subject matter. You know, Jake Sullivan got a lot of decisions from the President.  
15   He got, like, I think, all of the national-security decisions.

16          In addition, you know, I mean, there are a range of sort of pro-forma decisions that would go  
17   into the decision book where the President would just decide.

18          But it was mostly Bruce Reed, Ron Klain, Jake Sullivan. You know, occasionally it would be  
19   a -- you know, I think occasionally they would come from Brian Deese, NEC Director. But, yeah, I  
20   think those were the usual routes.

21          Mr. Greenberg. I'm going to reveal that I've never operated an autopen, but do you --

22          Mr. Benzine. They're not terribly interesting.

23          Ms. Tanden. Does that mean you have operated a --

1 Mr. Benzine. I have operated an autopen before.

2 Mr. Bromwich. We have some questions for you.

3 Ms. Tanden. Exactly.

4 Mr. Greenberg. How many different autopen signatures were tied to the autopen?

5 Ms. Tanden. What do you mean?

6 Mr. Bromwich. You mean, one "Joseph R. Biden, Jr.," one "Joe Biden," one "Joe"?

7 Ms. Tanden. Yeah, what are you --

8 Mr. Greenberg. That is what I mean.

9 Do you program an autopen?

10 Ms. Tanden. Yeah, it is programmed, and I believe they had one or two signatures. But I think  
11 this is a better question for David Kalbaugh. But, yes, I think they have one or two signatures.

12 And there is an autopen -- obviously, it's only for -- it's only for letters -- for the First Lady.

13 Mr. Benzine. So, just to the best of your recollection -- the one or two signatures -- I know there  
14 are some, like -- the informal letters he sends would sometimes just be signed "Joe."

15 Ms. Tanden. Yeah, I mean, I think there's --

16 Mr. Benzine. Like, obviously, it's, like, "Joseph R. Biden" on executive orders and things.

17 Ms. Tanden. I think there was, as I recall -- but, you know, this is, like -- I don't remember  
18 well, so this could easily be wrong, but I believe it was "Joe Biden" and then "Joseph R. Biden" were  
19 the two signatures. I don't know that there was a "Joe." But, you know, like --

20 Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

21 Ms. Tanden. -- there was two -- like, for letters, he might do "Joe Biden." For, like, executive  
22 actions, it would be "Joseph R. Biden."

1           Mr. Greenberg. Are you familiar with any -- if there was a point in time when one signature  
2 changed to another, to a separate signature?

3           Ms. Tanden. Yeah, I mean, I recall a conversation with David Kalbaugh and -- I can't  
4 remember his name. There was another office under us who handled records, Office of Records  
5 Management -- where there was some discussion of, you know, you change the autopen once every 2  
6 years, so you'd go get a new signature.

7           Mr. Bromwich. Is that the physical pen? I think he's asking about the different forms, like,  
8 "Joe Biden" versus "Joseph R. Biden."

9           Ms. Tanden. No, no. So I think, like, the idea -- I think this is, you know -- had happened.  
10 And, like, I think that we had some discussion where they were like, the standard practice was that in  
11 the next 6 months or something we should get a new signature. Because signatures change, and  
12 standard practice was to do that every year or two. And I don't think -- I think that I left the job before  
13 that happened.

14          Mr. Benzine. And that's just changing the programming on the autopen itself, not, like --

15          Ms. Tanden. Yeah, I mean, like, you'd get --

16          Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

17          Ms. Tanden. -- a new signature from the President, and then they --

18          Mr. Benzine. Program it.

19          Ms. Tanden. -- program it.

20          Mr. Greenberg. I think can we turn away from the autopen for right now.

21                I think we'll end our hour here. We have more questions, but we can go off the record for now.  
22 Thanks.

23                [Recess.]

1 Mr. [REDACTED] All right. We'll go back on the record.

2 BY MR. [REDACTED]

3 Q Ms. Tanden, to your knowledge, are you aware of any instance where an executive order  
4 was issued during the Biden Presidency without President Biden's knowledge or authorization?

5 A No.

6 Q Are you aware of any instance where a Presidential memorandum was issued during the  
7 Biden Presidency without President Biden's knowledge or consent?

8 A No.

9 Q Are you aware of any instance where a pardon was issued during the Biden Presidency  
10 without President Biden's knowledge or authorization?

11 A I am not aware of any instance like that.

12 Q Are you aware of any instance where an order granting clemency was issued during the  
13 Biden Presidency without President Biden's knowledge or authorization?

14 A No.

15 Q Are you aware of any other instance where a Presidential action was issued by the White  
16 House during the Biden Presidency without President Biden's knowledge or authorization?

17 A I am not aware of any instance like that.

18 Mr. [REDACTED] We'll go off the record.

19 [Recess.]

20 Mr. Greenberg. We'll go back on the record.

21 BY MR. GREENBERG:

22 Q Okay, Ms. Tanden, just a quick followup question on process, and then we can move on.

23 A Uh-huh.

1 Q The decision memos and the cards --

2 A Uh-huh. Yes. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say "uh-huh."

3 Q -- those were handled mostly by Outer Oval Operations. Is that correct? And by  
4 "handled," I mean people from Oval Operations were the ones who would go deliver those to the  
5 President. Is that right?

6 A No. I -- and maybe I was unclear, which I apologize. There were two kinds of -- well,  
7 there are two kinds of processes.

8 So, for materials that didn't require, you know, a discussion or a big conversation, the President  
9 had a decision book. This was the process that I believe every prior President followed; at least I did.  
10 And I ascertained for sure that President Clinton and President Obama had this process, where some  
11 decision memos, ones that were generally more pro forma, would go into a decision book.

12 That decision book -- you know, we would assemble the decision book, "we" being the Staff  
13 Secretary. When I was Staff Secretary, the Staff Secretary would assemble the decision book. I  
14 reviewed every decision memo. I edited decision memos. That was a core function of my  
15 responsibility.

16 That decision book would -- we would, with the briefing book, hand that decision book with  
17 the briefing book to the Oval Office Operations, and they would get it every night, you know,  
18 somewhere between, you know, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, whenever the President left. And he  
19 would -- and we would refresh that decision book every day or every other day, depending on  
20 decisions.

21 And then there was a whole series of decisions that would travel through the chief of staff or  
22 Bruce Reed or Jake Sullivan, and they would take those decisions in. And then there were decisions,

1 you know, that -- and these generally flowed through the chief of staff -- where, you know, there  
2 would be a meeting or something with a decision card.

3 Q And you weren't part of those meetings, right?

4 A Very rarely. So I -- there was -- there were a few occasions where I went into the  
5 meeting with the President on an issue. It was, like, usually something that, you know -- there was  
6 a -- often, the chief of staff would have a morning meeting with the President, and on a few occasions I  
7 went in on those. Sometimes that was about a decision to veto legislation or not veto legislation.  
8 There was a series of those decisions that went to the President regularly.

9 Q And then you would -- from your perspective, the next time you would see this decision  
10 book or the decision memo or the decision card, it would be with Joe Biden's initials or his signature  
11 next to it, right?

12 A Yes. And, you know, often I reviewed the memos. You know, he often had -- the  
13 President would kind of dot as he went through a memo, so I could -- I looked for whether he wrote  
14 notes, whether he had any questions, you know, whether he put a question mark. Sometimes he'd put  
15 a question mark in a section. And if there were notes, I would send that material also to the assistant  
16 to the President.

17 Q So, from the time that the decision book, the decision memo, the decision card leaves you  
18 and then comes back to you, it was a bit of a black box. You're not involved in that middle portion  
19 very often when the President is reviewing the book, reviewing the card, reviewing the memo.

20 A No. But I looked at each memo that I received back to ensure that it had the President's  
21 signature.

22 Q Fair. Thank you.

1 I want to change topics. I actually want to go back to the conversation that you had with Jake

2 Tapper over drinks.

3 A Uh-huh.

4 Q That was a few months ago?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Do you remember when? You might've said. I'm sorry.

7 A It was, I believe -- it was after the election and before Christmas. I don't remember  
8 specifically when. Maybe after Thanksgiving?

9 Unfortunately, I don't have my record from my time in the White House. I did not maintain  
10 my standalone records.

11 Q Did you -- it's my understanding that you met him with the understanding that you were  
12 just going to have a social event and --

13 A Yes.

14 Q -- and talk.

15 A At Bucks.

16 Q At Bucks.

17 A I remembered.

18 Mr. Bromwich. Thank goodness.

19 BY MR. GREENBERG:

20 Q We will confirm. No.

21 Why did you think you were meeting him?



1           A     I mean, he literally asked me to get a drink. And I -- you know, I've known him sort of  
2 casually as a -- like, I was on his show a lot. I've seen him, you know -- his -- like, 10, 15 years ago,  
3 we both were at -- we used to go to the same public pool in Bethesda, so I've known him a long time.

4           So I thought it -- I think it was a social call. I mean, I'd never had drinks with him before, but  
5 it was also after the election and I thought maybe he just wanted to shoot the crap about it. I  
6 don't -- you know, I don't know if that's a technical term, but --

7           Q     Technical enough.

8           Did you -- and Alex Thompson was not at those --

9           A     He was not present.

10          Q     And did you talk -- you shared some stories about your families and, kind of, small talk.  
11 Is that right?

12          A     Yeah.

13          Q     And then Mr. Tapper brought up that he was writing a book, right?

14          A     Yes.

15          Q     And it was your understanding that Mr. Tapper was writing a book about Joe Biden's  
16 decision to run for reelection. Is that right?

17          A     It was his decision -- I under- --

18          Mr. Bromwich. He said it was the campaign.

19          Ms. Tanden. Yeah.

20          Mr. Bromwich. That's what you said.

21          Ms. Tanden. Yeah. I mean, I thought he was really centering on the President's decision not to  
22 run for reelection. Like, it was about -- that's, you know, like -- that's what I recall that conversation  
23 about.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q And you weren't involved in the President's campaign very much, right --

3 A Right.

4 Q -- in 2024? So you wouldn't have been a very good source for a book about the  
5 President's campaign, right?

6 A I didn't think I was.

7 Q Mr. Tapper did write a book that touched on the President's campaign to some extent, but  
8 he wrote a book that was also a review, maybe a critique, of the President's decision to run at all for  
9 President.

10 Are you familiar with that?

11 A Am I familiar with the book he wrote?

12 Q Yes.

13 A I am broadly familiar with the book he wrote. I've not read the book. I've read some of  
14 the coverage of the book.

15 Q And is it your understanding that part of the thesis of the book is that Joe Biden was  
16 impaired, either physically or mentally?

17 A I understand that that is what the book alleges.

18 Q Do you think that's a false narrative?

19 A I can only tell you my experience. And I worked far more closely with the President in  
20 the time I was Domestic Policy Council chair.

21 My experience with the President was that we had a -- often had a robust back-and-forth on  
22 issues. I felt like I had to be really prepared because he could ask questions on really complicated  
23 issues. I had occasion to discuss complicated Medicare drug negotiations with the President.

1           So, of the public reading of that book, it did not align with my experience. The public, you  
2 know, conversation did not align with my personal experience.

3           Q    You said you had complex conversations with the President.

4           A    Uh-huh.

5           Q    Did you ever attempt to have complex conversations with the President and he was not  
6 able to engage in those kind of conversations?

7           A    No.

8           Q    Throughout your entire time in the Biden White House, did you notice Joe Biden  
9 increasingly aging, in terms of his physical condition?

10          A    Yes, I noticed that he was aging in terms of his physical condition. I noticed that, you  
11 know, he shuffled more.

12          Q    Did it take him longer to answer simple questions?

13          A    No. I did not have the experience that it took him longer to answer simple questions.

14          Q    Did he deliver meandering answers sometimes?

15          A    I mean, every politician I know has delivered meandering answers sometimes. I started  
16 my career working for Bill Clinton.

17          Q    Point taken. But you worked 4 years in the White House, roughly, right?

18          A    Three-and-a-half years, yes.

19          Q    Three-and-a-half years in the White House.

20          A    Almost 4 years. Yes.

21          Q    Did the rate at which President Biden would deliver meandering answers increase?

22          A    Not in my experience. I mean, he told a lot of stories in the first year, in my experience,  
23 and he told a lot of stories towards the end of his administration. I mean, if there was a few more

1 stories, I couldn't really ascertain, but it wasn't my experience that, you know, he was far more  
2 meandering, you know, towards the end of the administration than the beginning.

3 Q But in the course of your day-to-day, talking with people around you in the White House,  
4 in the EEOB, did you ever get the impression that people were talking about Joe Biden becoming  
5 more meandering in his answers, for example?

6 A I mean, I didn't have conversations with people who thought he  
7 was -- I -- people didn't -- I didn't have any conversations with people who thought he was getting  
8 more meandering.

9 You know, I mean, my experience was that, you know, he could tell a story that, you know,  
10 like, was relevant to the discourse that we were having and could, you know, sharply recall instances  
11 when he was a city council member. But I didn't -- I wasn't tracking -- it did not -- I was not tracking  
12 nor did I have any conversation with anyone that it was getting -- you know, there were a lot more  
13 stories towards the end than when I started as DPC chair in the beginning of the administration.

14 I mean, he told a lot of stories on the beginning of the administration. My first meeting with  
15 him, we had a whole conversation about the ACA. He went into a long story about the ACA passage.

16 Q Let's talk about the 2024 Presidential debate.

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q Did you help President Biden prepare for that?

19 A I did not.

20 Q You were head of the Domestic Policy Council at that point, correct?

21 A I was.

22 Q Pretty fair to assume that domestic policy would come up in the course of a debate, a  
23 Presidential debate, isn't it?

1           A    Yes. So Bruce Reed was in debate prep for the President, and I provided information to  
2 Bruce Reed. My staff worked with Bruce Reed's staff on debate prep materials. But I was not in  
3 debate camp or in any debate preps for the President.

4           Q    Do you know why?

5           A    I don't.

6           Mr. Bromwich. Did find that odd, that you weren't?

7           Ms. Tanden. I didn't -- I wasn't tracking whether previous Domestic Policy Council chairs  
8 were in previous debate preps, but I don't believe the DPC chair was in the debate prep for President  
9 Obama in his reelection, so -- it wasn't my impression that Cecilia Munoz was, so I wasn't -- I don't  
10 think I found it super-surprising.

11                   BY MR. GREENBERG:

12          Q    But beyond being the head of DPC, you also had previously, many years before, been in  
13 debate prep with Joe Biden, had you not?

14          A    Yeah, I had.

15          Q    Don't you -- did you think that you could add value to this debate prep for Joe Biden in  
16 his upcoming debate with President Trump?

17          A    I mean, my experience is, a lot of people are trying to get into things, and that was just  
18 not my MO. So people knew my skills. I talked to Bruce Reed about -- you know, he was putting  
19 materials together; my team gave him materials --

20          Q    Did Bruce Reed communicate with you ever during -- I think it was a week that President  
21 Biden was preparing for this debate with President Trump.

22          A    Yes.

23          Q    Is that your understanding?

1           A    Yes.

2           Q    Did Bruce --

3           A    I mean, I think they had prep sessions -- it was my impression that there were some prep  
4 sessions before the week, but the debate -- the intense debate preparation was in the week before.

5           Q    And did Bruce Reed, during that week, ever call you?

6           A    He did.

7           Q    What did you guys talk about?

8           A    Childcare.

9           Q    Meaning President Biden's policy position on childcare?

10          A    Yes, like, the specifics. Like, how his plan on childcare -- I think the President had a  
11 specific question about how his proposal on childcare would be allocated at the State level and  
12 whether there would be a State share, how much the State would pay and how much the Federal  
13 Government would pay. I think that was the President's -- as I recall, that was the President's specific  
14 question.

15          So Bruce called me, I answered Bruce's question, and I believe he shared -- my understanding  
16 is that he was sharing that with the President.

17          Q    Did you ever ask Mr. Reed how debate prep was going?

18          A    I don't think I directly asked Bruce, but in one of the 8:45 meetings, or 8:40 meetings,  
19 Jeff Zients, who's chief of staff, sort of had Steve and Bruce on the call, and I believe one of them said  
20 it was going well or fine.

21          Q    Did you ever hear from anybody else who was helping prepare the President for his  
22 debate about how it was going?

23          A    In debate camp -- or prep?

1 Q Yeah.

2 A No.

3 Q Um --

4 A I'm sorry. I think I was at a social event with Ron Klain about a month before. Now, I  
5 don't know if debate prep had started. And, you know, he was like, "This is a big job." He didn't say  
6 it was going badly. He didn't say it was going well. He said it was a big job.

7 But I don't know if they'd started the preps, honestly, at that point or it was just sort of broad.  
8 But to err on the side of caution here, I'll -- that's my --

9 Q How did you understand Mr. Klain to mean that, "It's a big job"?

10 A I really took it as it was like, you know, the President hadn't had to debate in 4 years.

11 Q But he had been President for 3-1/2, so he should have a pretty good grasp of these topics  
12 at this point.

13 A I didn't think it was -- I did not take that that the President didn't have a grasp of the  
14 topics. I took it more like he hadn't had to parry in a while.

15 Q Where did you watch the debate?

16 A I did not physically watch the debate. I was on a car ride to New York City, so I listened  
17 to the debate on the radio off and on and I searched Twitter.

18 Q While you were driving?

19 A No. I was the passenger.

20 Mr. Bromwich. Good question.

21 Ms. Tanden. Good question. My husband was driving. So my husband and I were traveling  
22 to New York. I had a long-planned long weekend in New York. And so I didn't watch the debate  
23 directly.

1 BY MR. GREENBERG:

2 Q But you listened to the debate?

3 A I mean, I saw portions of the debate afterwards.

4 Q But you were following it on Twitter?

5 A Yes.

6 Q What were your impressions from Twitter about how the President was performing  
7 during the debate?

8 A I mean, my impression was that he was performing very poorly at the debate.

9 Q Did you have any phone calls during that car ride with anybody about the debate?

10 A I believe I -- no, I don't think I called anyone. I might've had a text exchange with Evan  
11 Ryan, who told me it was getting better during the course of the debate.

12 Q Who is Evan Ryan?

13 A She was the Cabinet secretary.

14 Q Are you friends with Evan Ryan?

15 A I mean, we're friendly.

16 Mr. Benzine. She's still married to Secretary Blinken?

17 Ms. Tanden. Uh-huh.

18 BY MR. GREENBERG:

19 Q You have since seen clips of President Biden's performance at the debate.

20 A Yes.

21 Q Do you agree with the assessment that he did not have a very good debate?

22 A He seemed to perform very poorly.

23 Q How would you describe it?



1           A     I think he had a poor debate performance. And I never watched the full debate, but of the  
2 clips I saw, you know, I understand how people thought that.

3           Q     Some of the critiques focused on his ability -- the President's ability to focus and deliver a  
4 message. Do you agree with that?

5           Mr. Bromwich. Based on what you've seen.

6           Ms. Tanden. Yeah, I mean, I don't think he performed well, as I said, in the debate.

7           Mr. Greenberg. Some of the critiques are focused on President Biden's appearance and pretty  
8 apparent aging. Do you think -- well, you have seen videos now of --

9           Ms. Tanden. Uh-huh.

10          Mr. Greenberg. -- President Biden's performance.

11          Mr. Bromwich. Now, wait. You're assuming facts that she hasn't testified to. She said she has  
12 not seen the entire --

13          Ms. Tanden. I didn't see the entire debate.

14          Mr. Greenberg. I'm sorry. You have seen clips of President Biden's performance.

15          Ms. Tanden. Yes, I've seen clips of some of the performance.

16          Mr. Greenberg. In your 3 years, I guess, previously working in the Biden administration, had  
17 you seen President Biden like that before?

18          Ms. Tanden. No. I was genuinely surprised at his performance. I mean, I found it -- I found it  
19 out of character. You know, I mean, that was not my experience.

20          Mr. Benzine. Inside the White House, were there any conversations about the President's  
21 performance?

22          Ms. Tanden. At the debate or just generally?

23          Mr. Benzine. At the debate.

1           Mr. Bromwich. After the debate.

2           Ms. Tanden. Yeah. I mean, after the debate, at, I believe, 10:00 in the morning, there was  
3 a -- we had an 8:40 meeting. Usually every day we had an 8:40 meeting with, you know, 20 or so  
4 assistants to the President or department heads. And at that meeting the next day, Jeff Zients said, you  
5 know, he wanted to talk about the debate.

6           Both he and Anita, Anita Dunn, talked about the debate. They said the President had -- you  
7 know, it was not a great debate. The President -- you know, we all could see it was not a great debate.  
8 "It's one performance. The President has accomplished a lot as President." That's what Anita and Jeff,  
9 sort of, their message was or what they were saying.

10          And then they referenced that the President was going to have an event later in the day in North  
11 Carolina and that, you know, staff should look at what he did in -- his remarks in North Carolina.

12                   BY MR. BENZINE:

13          Q     Was at least the -- there was public reporting afterward that he had a cold and that's why  
14 he did poorly in the debate. Did that come up in the senior staff meeting?

15          A     I believe Anita did say he had a cold.

16          Q     All right.

17          After the debate, were there any conversations that you were privy to regarding no longer  
18 running for reelection?

19          A     No. That I was privy to? No.

20          Q     Did you hear of any conversations around the White House about no longer running for  
21 reelection?

22          A     No. Everything I ever heard about that was in the paper.

23          Q     Did you have any personal conversations with the President regarding his debate?

1 A I did not.

2 Q What about any donors?

3 A I did not. Hmm, let me think. No, I did not.

4 Mr. Greenberg. What about anyone from the Center for American Progress?

5 Ms. Tanden. I did not.

6 BY MR. BENZINE:

7 Q It's been reported both in --

8 A I should just clarify, John Podesta was not at the Center for American Progress; he was at  
9 the White House at the time. The day after the debate, I talked to John. Our entire conversation was  
10 about public perception of the debate, and, you know, I think we thought the public perception would  
11 be negative.

12 Q Did Mr. Podesta think it was recoverable?

13 A I don't think we had a conversation like that, but I don't -- he wasn't thinking it was -- he  
14 did not communicate in any way it was irrecoverable.

15 Mr. Greenberg. And I just want to clarify, you were at the White House the day after the  
16 debate?

17 Ms. Tanden. No, no, no. No, I was on -- the conversation was on the phone. I was in New  
18 York.

19 Mr. Greenberg. Okay. Thank you.

20 BY MR. BENZINE:

21 Q There was a decent number of reporting -- and I think a decent number of aides have  
22 since said this -- that they wish the President was more public-facing after the debate to kind of quell  
23 those concerns.

1 Did you ever advocate for that or hear anybody advocate for that?

2 A On the Monday after the debate, I went in to talk to Bruce Reed about, you know, the  
3 debate, what had happened. And I asked if the President -- you know, what is the thought about doing,  
4 you know, press events? And he said they were planning that the President would do a press event; it  
5 might take a week or so, but it was on the schedule to do a press event.

6 Q Did it happen?

7 A I think it did happen, at the NATO Summit.

8 Q That one?

9 A Yeah.

10 Q Immediately after the debate, the President and his family went to Camp David for a  
11 photo shoot, I believe, with Vogue. Do you recall that?

12 A Probably -- yes, I probably -- I think it happened like Sunday or Monday. He went to  
13 Camp on Saturday night, I believe, so --

14 Q Do you recall any conversations about canceling the photo shoot with Vogue?

15 A No, I don't recall any conversations. I mean, you know, I was domestic policy chair at  
16 the time, so --

17 Q I --

18 A -- I mean --

19 Q You just never know what you hear in the hallways, you know?

20 A Yeah, yeah, sure, sure. Nobody -- I wasn't involved in any conversations like that.

21 Q And then it's skipping ahead a little bit, but while it's in my mind: Do you recall any  
22 conversations post-debate, prior to withdrawal, about not running for reelection?

23 A About whether the --

1 Q The President would withdraw.

2 A I mean, like --

3 Mr. Bromwich. With people in the White House? Or with --

4 Ms. Tanden. What do you mean?

5 BY MR. BENZINE:

6 Q We'll start with people in the White House.

7 Were there any conversations -- you said the -- I asked specifically, the senior staff meeting  
8 immediately after the debate, if there were conversations about not running for reelection.

9 Do you recall any conversations about not running for reelection between the debate and the  
10 President's eventual decision?

11 A I mean, there were no formal conversations that I was part of about the President not  
12 running.

13 I remember when Nancy Pelosi did her interview on "Morning Joe," I definitely -- I said  
14 something to someone in my office, and I don't recall who -- it could've been one of my  
15 deputies -- where I said, you know, this is really a problem, this is a big issue, right?

16 But, I mean, that's the kind of conversation. I was not a part of any formal conversation at all  
17 about the President's decision to withdraw or not.

18 Q There were a few instances between 2023 and the eventual decision to not run where  
19 former President Obama came by the White House or made a phone call to President Biden.

20 A Uh-huh.

21 Q Were you involved in any of that?

22 A No.

23 Q Your old boss didn't come by to say hi?

1           A    I saw President Obama, I believe it was when I was Staff Secretary. There was an ACA  
2   event, and I saw him in the hallway, and he gave me a very nice -- very nice hug. Like, we didn't have  
3   a substantive conversation.

4           Q    Okay.

5           Um --

6           Mr. Bromwich. Looks like you're at the end there, Mitch.

7           Mr. Benzine. I'm getting close, Michael. I mean --

8                   BY MR. BENZINE:

9           Q    A couple of other reelection questions --

10          A    Sure.

11          Q    -- just, you know, whether you heard anything or saw anything.

12          I think I know the answer to this question, but were you involved in any way in the decision to  
13   not seek reelection?

14          A    No. I wasn't involved in any of the campaign meetings, just to say. There were  
15   campaign meetings, I believe, but I was not part of any of those.

16          Q    That probably answers my next question. Were you involved at all in analyzing,  
17   discussing, reviewing polling numbers?

18          A    No. I mean, what you do you mean? When? Like, at any time?

19          Q    In 2023 through the end of the election?

20          A    I was in a handful of Saturday meetings. Jeff Zients had a, kind of, Saturday meeting. I  
21   was in a handful of those meetings. On occasion, there was polling distributed about just the  
22   President's approval. I don't recall more details.

1 But they were -- I don't recall -- I was definitely not in any meetings, like, around this time.  
2 There were a few that I was part of in, you know, '23 and '24. But I wasn't in any of these meetings,  
3 like, in the month or so before and the month or so after this period.

4 Q Some of the reporting was that the polls were not getting to the President, that Mike  
5 Donilon was a pretty good filter of bad polls. Do you have any knowledge of that?

6 A I have no idea.

7 Mr. Greenberg. Who was distributing the polling at those meetings that you made reference to  
8 just a minute ago?

9 Ms. Tanden. I mean, they were on the table. So I think they may have come from the chief of  
10 staff, Rosa Po, maybe. I remember sometimes she would come in and distribute an agenda with a  
11 polling memo.

12 BY MR. BENZINE:

13 Q Did you ever hear or hear about any conversations regarding whether or not President  
14 Trump was going to end up in prison while in the White House?

15 A Absolutely not.

16 Q All right. Mike Donilon never mentioned --

17 A No.

18 Q All right.

19 BY MR. GREENBERG:

20 Q After the debate, did you personally think that the President should drop out of the race?

21 A My concern after the debate was that the public -- you know, there was a high degree of  
22 public anxiety about the President's performance. I did not, you know, sit around thinking about  
23 whether the President should get out or not.

1 Q Really? I think everybody in America was thinking -- was asking themselves if he was  
2 going to drop out or not. You didn't have an opinion either way?

3 A Well, I mean, I was personally -- I mean, my -- I've worked for the President. I have a  
4 great deal of affection for the President. I really thought the whole situation was very, kind of,  
5 heartbreaking.

6 Q And it's your -- what you're telling the committee today is that, when you saw President  
7 Biden debating that night, that was --

8 Mr. Bromwich. She didn't see him. She didn't see him debating that night, just to be clear.

9 BY MR. GREENBERG:

10 Q When you saw clips of President Biden debating that night, that was a one-time situation  
11 and you had never seen the President behave that way.

12 A Yeah. I mean, I prepped the President on complicated issues. You know, he never  
13 stopped a meeting. You know, he never evinced anything like --

14 Q And I think you made reference to the NATO Summit that came that President Biden  
15 attended shortly after that.

16 A No, no, no. So I went to the NATO Summit -- I went to -- that's the year before.

17 Mr. Bromwich. No. You said, in response to whether President Biden should go more public,  
18 that they were planning something --

19 Ms. Tanden. Oh, yes, yes, yes.

20 Mr. Bromwich. -- and then he --

21 Ms. Tanden. Oh, I'm sorry.

22 Mr. Bromwich. Yeah. That's what he's referring to.

23 Ms. Tanden. I thought you meant my travel planning.



1           Mr. Bromwich. No, no. That's what he's referring to.

2           Ms. Tanden. Yes, the NATO Summit. Yes. I'm so sorry. My apologies. I thought you were  
3 asking about what I attended. I'm sorry.

4                       BY MR. GREENBERG:

5           Q     So that NATO Summit was -- at that event, President Biden confused the names of  
6 Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin. Is that correct?

7           A     Did that happen? Yes, that happened.

8           Q     Have you since heard the audio recording of the interview that Special Counsel Robert  
9 Hur conducted with President Biden?

10          A     No.

11          Q     Are you familiar with any of the reporting involved in that?

12          A     I am familiar with the reporting, but I did not listen to the hearing -- I did not listen to the  
13 tapes.

14          Q     I think both of the events were -- both the NATO Summit and Special Counsel Hur's  
15 audio with President Biden showed many of the things that people believe they witnessed during the  
16 debate, a President who was halting or confused and meandering.

17          A     Hmm. So my impression of the NATO Summit press conference -- which I did watch a  
18 fair amount of, not the entirety, but did watch a fair amount of the NATO press conference. So my  
19 impression of that was that the President had made a mistake confusing two people's names; then he  
20 answered questions, relatively complicated foreign policy questions, and he answered them with  
21 relatively complicated answers that did denote to me a broad but deep grasp of foreign policy issues.

22                So that -- you know, that -- I did not have the impression that you had, that the NATO press  
23 summit was meandering or denoted a sense that he didn't understand policy issues. Because he was,

1 you know, describing our interactions with Russia, how we were leading in Europe. So I had a  
2 different impression.

3 Ms. Harker. At any point during the administration did you have any concerns about President  
4 Biden's cognitive abilities?

5 Ms. Tanden. I did not.

6 Ms. Harker. Did anyone in the White House at any point during the administration say to  
7 you -- express any concern about President Biden's cognitive abilities?

8 Ms. Tanden. No one expressed that concern to me.

9 BY MR. BENZINE:

10 Q Were you interviewed by Special Counsel Hur?

11 A I'm sorry?

12 Q Were you interviewed by Special Counsel Hur?

13 A I was not.

14 Q Were you ever involved in the review or presentation of President Biden's annual  
15 physical?

16 A No.

17 Q Do you know who was, outside of Dr. O'Connor?

18 A I think just -- all I know is from what I read about this after the debate, which is of Doc  
19 O'Connor's involvement. And I knew, like, he -- those documents went out.

20 Q The letters after the --

21 A The letters after the fact.

22 Q Do you know if they go through the Chief of Staff's Office or Press Secretary's Office  
23 prior to release?

1           A    I don't know.

2           Q    Would that --

3           A    I think it went through the communi- -- obviously, the press secretary put it out, but I  
4 don't know the whole process.

5           Q    Would that have been a letter that you would've seen as Staff Secretary?

6           A    I do not see it as Staff Secretary.

7           Q    Along the lines of what Margaret asked, do you remember any discussions about  
8 providing the President with a cognitive exam during his annual physicals?

9           A    No.

10          Q    Do you recall any discussions about use of a wheelchair?

11          A    No. Absolutely not.

12          Q    After the debate, there was a large meeting of Democrat Governors at the White House.  
13 Did you attend that meeting?

14          A    I did not.

15          Q    Do you know why not?

16          A    I think it was a political meeting. It was only Democratic Governors who attended, I  
17 believe. And I believe it was a political meeting.

18          Q    On July 8, 2024, President Biden sent a letter -- I believe it was public -- that said he was  
19 not planning on withdrawing. Were you involved in that letter at all?

20          A    In no way, shape, or form.

21          Q    Along the lines, again, of what was previously asked, did you ever hear any concerns  
22 about the President being isolated from Members of Congress or the Senate?

1           A    I mean, I heard concerns that people -- you know, I heard broad scuttlebutt in general that  
2   the President -- that people couldn't get access to the President. But, you know, I'd also served in the  
3   Obama administration in which people -- Cabinet Secretaries had talked about not having enough  
4   access to the President. So I didn't denote a much larger scale to that experience than I did before.

5           Q    That was my next question. Any concerns from members of the Cabinet about access to  
6   the President?

7           A    Yeah. I mean, that's -- that's my response.

8           Q    Just general concerns kind of consistent with previous administrations?

9           A    I mean, you know, like, in the Obama administration and the Biden administration, I  
10   don't remember a specific conversation, but I remember, you know, like, hearing a lot -- maybe it was  
11   in the press or elsewhere or scuttlebutt or chitchatter -- that, you know, Cabinet Secretaries wanted  
12   more face time, and I remember that very specifically in the Obama administration as well.

13          Q    Do you recall any -- "directives" is probably too strong a word -- conversations about  
14   shielding the President from bad news?

15                I think it's pretty well-known he has a bit of a temper sometimes. And it's been reported that  
16   specifically Mike Donilon and Steve Ricchetti, who've known him the longest, kind of, like, filter  
17   information to make it seem less bad.

18          Do you recall anything like that?

19          A    I mean, I was in several briefings with the President where bad news was definitely  
20   delivered. So, I mean, I didn't really feel like there was some fiat not to give him information.  
21   Because, you know, like, when you're President, you get a lot of bad news and people share bad news,  
22   and that happened in my presence.

1 Q I have -- Michael might remember this from working with me before. I have a broad  
2 question and then a list of names and if you've ever spoken to them.

3 A Okay.

4 Q Just to check all our bases, make sure that we can try to --

5 A Sure.

6 Mr. Bromwich. That's a long list.

7 Ms. Tanden. Oh, my goodness.

8 Mr. Benzine. It's not that long because I've been going through it as we've been going.

9 Ms. Tanden. Okay. Okay.

10 BY MR. BENZINE:

11 Q So any conversations, I'm going to limit the time scope to, like, 2023 until present, so  
12 post-administration as well --

13 A Okay.

14 Q -- with any of the following people regarding the President's health, age, or ability to be  
15 President of the United States.

16 A I mean, I guess I'd like to just, like, differentiate two things in this whole age situation.  
17 There were, like, a lot of conversations in the White House about how the public considered  
18 the President's age an issue. Like, that was a very rich discourse --

19 Q Uh-huh.

20 A -- where, you know, it was like, the number-one concern voters had about the President  
21 was his age. So I feel like that kind of percolated all around.

22 Q Well --

23 A But his capability is a separate issue.

1 Q -- let's limit it, then, to health or ability to be President.

2 A Yes. Okay. Great.

3 Q First Lady Biden?

4 A No.

5 And the question is, have I had a conversation about these two issues, health or ability to be  
6 President, with this person?

7 Q Correct.

8 A Okay.

9 Q Hunter Biden?

10 A Nope.

11 Q Ashley Biden?

12 A Nope.

13 Q Naomi Biden.

14 A Nope. I mean, just to say, I don't think I met -- I'm not sure I've met any --

15 Mr. Bromwich. The answer is "no" then.

16 Ms. Tanden. Oh, sorry. Okay. Sorry.

17 BY MR. BENZINE:

18 Q Valerie Biden Owens?

19 A No.

20 Q Vice President Harris?

21 A No.

22 Q Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff?

23 A No.

1 Q President Obama?

2 A No.

3 Q President Clinton?

4 A No.

5 Q Secretary Clinton?

6 A No.

7 Q Ron Klain?

8 A No. Hmm -- President -- what's the question?

9 Q Any conversations with Mr. Klain regarding President Biden's health or ability to be  
10 President?

11 A No. I mean, just to say, I did inquire about the President, how quickly he was recovering  
12 from COVID, with Ron Klain. So --

13 Q That was --

14 A That's the health question.

15 Q -- post-debate, pre-NATO, right? That was when he got COVID?

16 A No. The first time he got COVID.

17 Q The first time. Okay. Everyone's had it nine times, so it really doesn't --

18 A Yeah. So it was the first time, not the second time.

19 Q All right.

20 Jeff Zients?

21 A No.

22 Q Rahm Emanuel?

23 A No.

1 Q Bill Delay (sic)?

2 Mr. Bromwich. Daley?

3 Ms. Tanden. Daley?

4 BY MR. BENZINE:

5 Q Daley?

6 A No.

7 Q Jake Sullivan?

8 A No.

9 Q Anita Dunn?

10 A No.

11 Q Mike Donilon?

12 A No.

13 Q We already went through -- it was "no" to Reed, and one conversation with Ricchetti in  
14 the last 2 months or so where he was upset at the book.

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay.

17 Mr. Bromwich. But not specifically about Biden's ability or --

18 Mr. Benzine. That's what the book is about.

19 Ms. Tanden. No. So he was upset that -- I just want to be super-clear about this. His concern  
20 was that the book was inaccurately describing the President's capabilities.

21 BY MR. BENZINE:

22 Q Okay.

23 Jen O'Malley Dillon?



1 A No.

2 Q Anthony Bernal?

3 A No.

4 Q Annie Tomasini?

5 A No.

6 Q Ashley Williams?

7 A No.

8 Q Dr. O'Connor?

9 A No.

10 Q Kate Bedingfield?

11 A No.

12 Q Jen Psaki?

13 A No.

14 Q David Axelrod?

15 A No.

16 Can I go back to Jen Psaki?

17 Q Yes.

18 A Jen Psaki and I had a conversation after the President -- this was, I think, in 2022 after  
19 one of the President's medical --

20 Mr. Bromwich. The question was limited to '23 and '24.

21 Ms. Tanden. Oh, okay.

22 Mr. Benzine. Yeah.

23 Ms. Tanden. But it was not really --

1 Mr. Benzine. Like, regarding the physical or --

2 Ms. Tanden. Yeah, it was just regarding the physical. So it was regarding his health.

3 BY MR. BENZINE:

4 Q Karine Jean-Pierre?

5 A Nope.

6 Q Nancy Pelosi?

7 A No.

8 Q Chuck Schumer?

9 A No.

10 Q Hakeem Jeffries?

11 A No.

12 Q Any other Senator?

13 A No.

14 Q Any other Member of the House?

15 A No.

16 Q And any member of the Cabinet?

17 A No.

18 Q And all of that, just to preclude any further debate, is to the best of your recollection,  
19 correct?

20 A Yes, it's to the best of my recollection.

21 Q All right.

22 A Yeah. No, none of them.

23 Q Two, kind of, like, housekeeping questions, and then I think Jake scribbled some --

1 A Again, this is on his capability and, like, health ability, right?

2 Q Yes.

3 A Okay.

4 Q What were the common modes of communication in the White House while you were  
5 there?

6 A Email and telephone.

7 Q Any texts?

8 A No. We did not have text capability on our phones, or I didn't.

9 Q On your government-issued phone?

10 A On my government-issued phones.

11 Q It's been reported that some of the press shop used Signal. Any use of Signal?

12 A I have never used Signal with anyone for government work.

13 Q And then -- famous last words -- my last question: Have you discussed this interview  
14 today with anyone other than your counsel?

15 A My husband. My mother. My children.

16 Q No one other than that? All right.

17 Thank you.

18 A Oh, yes. So, like, several weeks ago, I had a conversation, like, a 15-minute  
19 conversation, with Ron Klain. And in the course of that conversation -- so I think it was June 9th, we  
20 ascertained this morning. In the course of that conversation, I said how happy I was to testify. I think  
21 I noted that I worked for Secretary Clinton for a long time and never had to testify in front of anyone  
22 and that I was going to testify here. And I think it was, like, a 2-minute conversation with Ron Klain.

23 Q All right.

1 And I told a fib, but -- I have one final question, but I'll let Jake go.

2 Mr. Greenberg. Oh. Do you want to ask it now?

3 Mr. Benzine. No, later.

4 Mr. Greenberg. Okay.

5 BY MR. GREENBERG:

6 Q Do you believe President Biden is suffering cognitive decline?

7 A I do not.

8 Q Do you believe Joe Biden, from the debate, would've been capable of leading the country  
9 for 4 more years?

10 A I don't -- I mean, my experience with him after the debate was that he was handling  
11 decisions, he was in command, he would give back and forth on issues. So my response to is based on  
12 his post-debate performance with me, which is that I believed he could.

13 Q But if the Joe Biden from the debate showed up to the White House every day, do you  
14 think a person like that is capable of leading the country?

15 A But that just wasn't my experience. I saw the President often after that -- after the debate.  
16 So it's hard for me -- I have an experience, not a hypothetical experience. I have an experience. And I  
17 have to go off that experience.

18 Q I don't think that really answers my question.

19 Mr. Bromwich. Oh, it does. I think it does.

20 Mr. Greenberg. Okay.

21 Ms. Tanden. I mean, I guess, I think it's a hypothetical.

22 BY MR. BENZINE:

1 Q I'm going to ask one final question, and I want to make sure that I get your resume right  
2 before I ask it. Three Presidential campaigns?

3 A Uh-huh.

4 Q And three White Houses?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And the office of a Senator?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And the office of the First Lady?

9 A Yes. Well, I will say -- I just want to -- I worked in the Obama White House. I  
10 technically worked at HHS, so -- but I was on the President's Office of Health Reform, so I worked in  
11 the White House --

12 Q And then detailed to HHS. Is that --

13 A Basically.

14 Q Yeah.

15 A Or, really, at HHS, detailed to the White House.

16 Q And then at CAP for on and off in there and CEO --

17 A Yes.

18 Q -- currently? At CAP, do you work on campaigns?

19 A No, I do not work on campaigns.

20 Q You don't donate any money to any PACs? You don't have your own PAC?

21 A We don't have a PAC.

22 Q Okay.

23 A We do not donate to campaigns.

1 Q But fair to say, for the last 30 years, heavily involved in Presidential politics?

2 A I mean, I feel sadly about how much you're aging me.

3 Mr. Bromwich. You don't look it.

4 Ms. Tanden. Okay.

5 Mr. Bromwich. You don't look it.

6 BY MR. BENZINE:

7 Q But that's fair?

8 A Perhaps 24 years.

9 Q Twenty-four years heavily involved in Presidential politics?

10 A Yeah, I've been involved in many a Presidential campaign.

11 Q Are you an expert in Presidential politics?

12 A I mean, who isn't these days?

13 Q I mean, 24 years of experience might put you there.

14 A I -- I --

15 Mr. Bromwich. That's a rhetorical question. Go ahead.

16 Ms. Tanden. Yes.

17 BY MR. BENZINE:

18 Q Should President Biden have run for reelection again?

19 A I mean, I can only tell you from my experience, which is, the President really  
20 overperformed when it came to legislation. He passed major pieces of legislation. He handled really  
21 complicated issues like Medicare price negotiations, something that many advocates have asked for for  
22 decades. He handled -- you know, it's not like just he "handled"; he, you know, was in charge of  
23 negotiations and processes. In my time, I saw that, I witnessed that.

1           So I can only tell you what my experience is, and, from that experience, I saw a President who  
2 was in command.

3           Q    That was an answer to a question but not mine.

4           Should the President have run for reelection again? It's more of a political question than your  
5 expertise question.

6           Mr. Bromwich. It is, but it's not really within the scope of --

7           Mr. Benzine. It absolutely is. Whether or not he was --

8           Mr. Bromwich. Where is it?

9           Ms. Tanden. Well, the question actually -- if you're asking me if he was capable of running for  
10 reelection, the answer is yes. If you're asking me a political question, I mean, I've given you my  
11 answer.

12                   BY MR. BENZINE:

13          Q    Leave it to historians and he did a good job as President?

14          A    You know, I mean, he was a very capable -- like, he was capable in command --

15          Q    Okay.

16          A    -- when I was briefing him and working with him.

17          Q    Okay.

18          I think can we can go off the record.

19          [Recess.]

1 [3:14 P.M.]

2 Mr. [REDACTED] On the record.

3 BY MR. [REDACTED]

4 Q Ms. Tanden, I just have a few questions for you. I know it's been a long day, and we  
5 appreciate you bearing with us.

6 One thing I wanted to clarify at the outset. My majority colleagues asked you a number of  
7 questions about the Jake Tapper book.

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q And as you told us earlier, you did not read that book, correct?

10 A Yes, I did not read the book.

11 Q So my majority colleagues made a number of representations to you about what that book  
12 alleges and what it substantiates, but since you haven't read it, you don't have any firsthand knowledge  
13 about either of those things, correct?

14 A I do not.

15 Q Okay. In your answers during the previous rounds to questions regarding President  
16 Biden, I understood you to draw a distinction between physical signs of age that President Biden may  
17 have exhibited on the one hand and his mental acuity and ability to execute the duties of the  
18 Presidency on the other.

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q Is that a fair summary?

21 A Absolutely. I consider those two very separate things.

22 Q And with respect to the latter category, the President's ability to do the job, you expressed  
23 confidence in Joe Biden's ability to execute the duties of the Presidency. Is that a fair summary?



1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. And the President's performance in the 2024 presidential debate did not change  
3 your view. Is that right?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Was it ever your view at any time that President Biden was unable to make decisions  
6 about matters within the scope of his presidential duties?

7 A No, it was not.

8 Q Or was otherwise unable to execute the duties of his office?

9 A No, it was not.

10 Q Did you ever --

11 A Actually, just to be clearer, I never had a view that he could not exercise the duties of his  
12 office or that he was not in command of the Presidency.

13 Q Did you ever have any concerns about President Biden's ability to handle significant  
14 policy matters?

15 A No.

16 Q What about issues of national security?

17 A No, I had no concerns. I handled complicated policy issues with the President, very  
18 complicated issues around Medicare policy, Medicaid policy, very difficult to comprehend for many  
19 senior advisors, and he handled those very well.

20 Q So to sum all of this up, you have no knowledge that Joe Biden was at any point in time  
21 unable to execute the duties of his office as President. Is that right?

22 A That is correct.

23 Mr. [REDACTED] That's all we have. Thank you.

1           Ms. Tanden. Thank you.

2           Mr. [REDACTED] We'll go off the record.

3    [Whereupon, at 3:16 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing \_\_\_\_ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date