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LISA M PALAZZO

Closing Date 05/16/18

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This Period	\$0.00	This Period	0
Year to Date	\$0.00	Year to Date	0

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EXHIBIT 6

From: [Steven Palazzo](#)
To: [Paul Breazeale](#)
Subject: Chevy Tahoe
Date: Saturday, June 2, 2018 1:22:14 PM

Paul -

The campaign has been leasing a Chevy Tahoe since last November.

I believe 20% or less of the usage is personal. Balance of usage is official and campaign usage. I've asked for the Tahoe cost before but just haven't had time to do the math and cut the check back to the campaign.

Could you direct Dylan to calculate what I owe for the use of the Chevy Tahoe and set it up as a payable from me at the 20% level. Guess for the paperwork he could invoice me.

Thanks,

Steven

Sent from my iPad

EXHIBIT 7

From: [Dylan Mears](#)
To: [Steven Palazzo](#)
Cc: [Paul Breazeale](#)
Subject: Lease Reimbursement
Date: Thursday, June 28, 2018 2:13:56 PM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[CSP Lease Reimbursement.xlsx](#)

Mr. Palazzo,
Please see the attached spreadsheet showing the amount of the Tahoe lease from 1/1/2017 – 6/30/18.
20% of the lease is \$3,831.16.

Regards,

Dylan Mears

Staff Accountant
Palazzo & Company, LLC
P.O. Box 6888
Gulfport, MS 39506
228-396-8800 Office
866-272-9224 Toll Free
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PalazzoTaxlogo_color_low



WWW.PALAZZOTAX.COM

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EXHIBIT 8

From: [Steven Palazzo](#)
To: [Jacque Soileau](#)
Cc: [Paul Breazeale](#)
Subject: Re: Palazzo Automobile expenses since 2016 auto lease 02.14.2020.xlsx
Date: Saturday, February 15, 2020 2:06:37 PM

This file appears to have all credit card transactions. However I think I should only be responsible for the card I used. Other gas transactions by campaign staff would be and should be 100% chargeable to the campaign.

Please discuss and update if necessary.

Regards,

SMP

From: Jacque Soileau <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2020 2:31 PM
To: Steven Palazzo <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Paul Breazeale <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Palazzo Automobile expenses since 2016 auto lease 02.14.2020.xlsx

Steven per our discussions, attached is a list of automobile expenses since the lease of the 2016 Tahoe to date. Please review for any corrections. The 20% personal use amount is calculated at the bottom. If you agree with this amount, please reimburse the campaign for personal use of the two leased vehicles since November, 2016.

Thanks.

Jacque

Jacque T. Soileau
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EXHIBIT 9

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OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS (OCE)
of the
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCE Review 20-2124

Interview of FORMER STAFFER A

Conducted Virtually

Friday, July 31, 2020

5:50 p.m. EST

Job No.: 312913

Pages: 1 - 116

Transcribed by: Lee Ann Nussbaum, CET

1 Interview of FORMER STAFFER A, conducted
2 virtually.

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12 Pursuant to agreement, before Kevin Kiser,
13 Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of
14 Virginia

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A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS OF
THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

JEFFREY BROWN, ESQUIRE

HELEN EISNER, ESQUIRE

ANNA ELLISON, LAW CLERK

425 3rd Street S.W.

Suite 1110

Washington, DC 20024

202.225.9739

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 MR. BROWN: This is Jeff Brown with the
3 Office of Congressional Ethics. With me is my
4 colleague, Helen Eisner, as well as Anna Ellison.
5 Before us we have Former Staffer A, and we are
6 undertaking a remote video interview. It is July
7 31st. It is about 5:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

8 Former Staffer A has been given a copy of
9 the false statements warning and has signed the
10 acknowledgement, and with that we will get started.

11 Former Staffer A, is it okay if I call you
12 Former Staffer A?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

14 MR. BROWN: I shouldn't just assume that.

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yeah, that's fine.

16 MR. BROWN: All right. We will get
17 started. So, Former Staffer A, you -- you don't
18 work for Representative Palazzo anymore; you work
19 elsewhere. Where are you currently employed?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm a unit program
21 coordinator with the 81st Medical Sports Squadron
22 at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay. And is that the -- is
2 that the role you've had since you left the
3 Congressman's office?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. I got
5 employed there October 1st of 2018.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. So that helps me. So
7 previously you were employed with Representative
8 Palazzo. Can you give me rough time frames in
9 which you were employed with him?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: There was -- I want to
11 make sure I give you the right dates. I want to
12 say it was February, the very first week of
13 February 2017, until July 30th, if I remember
14 correctly, of 2018.

15 MR. BROWN: Okay. And how was it that you
16 came to work in the Congressman's office? How'd
17 you get hired?

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I actually had just
19 separated from the military September of '16. I
20 was -- worked at the Armed Forces Retirement Home
21 down here in Mississippi, and I was just looking
22 for other opportunities, applied for a position

1 through Indeed, and I actually received a call from
2 Bridgette. I apologize, I don't remember her last
3 name, but she worked in the office and offered me a
4 position.

5 MR. BROWN: Okay. And what was that
6 position? What was the role you were hired into?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: As the military and VA
8 caseworker.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. And I can probably
10 guess what that entailed, but can you tell us a
11 little bit about what your role was?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: I was the only
13 caseworker in that particular branch down in the
14 Biloxi area, and I would handle any of the
15 constituent inquiries that would come through,
16 whether it was by phone, email, or any other
17 various entity that came through.

18 Ms. Anita Bourn, in our Hattiesburg
19 office, would kind of vet through them and send
20 them to the representatives at the various
21 locations. And then I would just follow up with
22 the constituent, find out what their issues were

1 and how the representative could assist them.

2 I would reach out to the various agencies
3 that applied to their situation to get a result for
4 them. If it took longer than 30 days, I would
5 follow up every 30 days with the agency and give
6 that constituent a follow-up message.

7 MR. BROWN: You mentioned Anita. Was that
8 the individual that you reported to within the
9 Congressman's office?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: No, sir. She was the
11 head caseworker out of the Hattiesburg office, but
12 I actually reported to I want to say it was
13 Bridgette at first, but then it became Michele
14 Gargiulo when she took over the position as -- as
15 her position. I don't recall what the name of it
16 is.

17 MR. BROWN: And Michele and Bridgette,
18 they were both in the Biloxi office with you,
19 correct?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. Was Leslie Churchwell,
22 was she in that office as well?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, she was. She was
2 our scheduler. And at the time of my hiring, TJ
3 Moran was one of the representatives who would go
4 out, as well as -- we called him Hass (phonetic).
5 I'm trying to think of his -- Mr. Ladner. I don't
6 remember his first name.

7 MR. BROWN: And okay. Those are all the
8 individuals who were working in the Biloxi District
9 Office during the time frame in which you were
10 employed with the Congressman?

11 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. We did have
12 various interns, but they were the most consistent
13 individuals in that office.

14 MR. BROWN: Okay.

15 MS. EISNER: And just to get all the names
16 out there for the transcript, is Bridgette's last
17 name Jones? Is that -- does that seem familiar?

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, it does.
19 I'm sorry. It's just been a little while.

20 MS. EISNER: Yeah, and just, you know, as
21 background so you know, when it comes to dates and
22 names, we just want you to tell us to the extent

1 that you remember.

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

3 MS. EISNER: I mean, we're not going to
4 hold it against you if you don't remember a
5 specific date or a specific name. It's just
6 whatever you can recall.

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

8 MR. BROWN: I was already very impressed
9 that you could remember it was the first week of
10 February 2017 you started there, so.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: My birthday's February
12 1st, so it was around my birthday.

13 MR. BROWN: Okay. At some point you
14 separated from the Congressman's office. Can you
15 tell us about that?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. So I want to
17 say it was around May time frame. I had come home
18 one evening and I found out that my grandfather was
19 very seriously ill and they had given him probably
20 until the end of the week. Again, it was Monday
21 night.

22 So I contacted Michele and told her I

1 needed to leave and go see him at least before time
2 had passed and I was no longer able to. So she
3 said that was fine.

4 I immediately packed up my car and headed
5 to El Paso, Texas, which is about a 17, 19-hour
6 drive. Got there and found out Wednesday that it
7 was a little bit more serious than we had initially
8 thought. The doctors gave him 30 days. By the
9 time I got there, they gave him a week, and hospice
10 was actually involved. He had passed away that
11 Saturday after I arrived.

12 And I reached out to Michele and explained
13 to her what had occurred. She told me we really
14 didn't have anything in place as far as
15 bereavement, but we did have another -- he wasn't
16 an intern. He was actually -- initially started
17 out at the Biloxi office. His name is Tyler. But
18 he had transferred to the D.C. office. He had a
19 death in his family within days of mine.

20 So they told me go ahead, just take the
21 time you need for the funeral but keep me updated.
22 So we had the funeral the following Wednesday, and

1 then I headed back home and I started that Monday
2 after.

3 Came into work, and obviously considering
4 the circumstances, I was not myself. Was doing as
5 best as I could, but I was not mentally there, and
6 Michele had sat down with me and told me my
7 performance just was not up to the standards that
8 it had been, that I had come in late a few times,
9 and that they were going to put me on a 30-day
10 probationary period and then they would revisit it.

11 So after that I went back to my office and
12 I started an Excel spreadsheet, because I'm very
13 much about lists, very Type A, and I recorded
14 everything I did at every moment every day for
15 those 30 days. If I went to the restroom, if I
16 picked up the phone in the middle of working on a
17 case I recorded it. So that way at the end of the
18 30-day period I could substantiate and show them
19 the level of work that I was doing.

20 Towards the end I kind of was keeping
21 track of it about the three-and-a-half, four-week
22 mark and I had performed actually even more cases

1 during that time than I had been doing previously.

2 Woke up one day, I woke up late, and the
3 very first thing that came to my mind is this is
4 it. This is the day I'm going to be let go. Came
5 into work and I immediately started working. I did
6 notify them that I was running late. Came into
7 work and started immediately on a case, and Michele
8 asked if I could come into the break room, that her
9 and Leslie wanted to speak to me. I told her, "No
10 problem." And she asked if I had any upcoming
11 appointments, and I did a little bit later on but I
12 was clear for about an hour.

13 So I came and sat down and she told me,
14 you know, we're here to do your 30-day review, you
15 know, you've had some improvement, but it's still
16 not quite to the level that we feel it should be so
17 we're going to go ahead and let you go. And she
18 said being that I'm a single mother, the
19 Congressman wanted to make sure that I got at least
20 two months of severance pay to help me while I'm in
21 my search for a new position. I didn't argue, I
22 didn't fight, I kind of already suspected that was

1 coming.

2 I did provide them copies of everything
3 that I had been doing for those 30 days. I had
4 printed it out. I had gone into the meeting --
5 because I suspected that's what it was about. She
6 had said, "Thank you," asked if I had any comments.
7 I said no. I told her, "Do you want me to sit down
8 with Lela Bremen," because at the time she had been
9 hired on, and go over some of my VIP cases. And
10 she said, "No. I want you to grab what you can,
11 grab your stuff, and walk out the back door." I
12 said, "Do I need to let anybody know?" She says,
13 "Nope. You will tell nobody nothing. You're just
14 going to grab your stuff and then quietly leave."
15 So I said, "Okay."

16 So I went back to my office and I started
17 packing it up. I called my cousin at the time, who
18 had my vehicle. He was running some errands for
19 me. And I told him, "You need to turn around and
20 come pick me up."

21 So I packed everything and I -- my office
22 was close to the back door. I set everything

1 outside and came back in and I took everything that
2 I needed to give to Gabbi -- she was working at the
3 front desk -- and told her as far as some calls
4 these individuals need to be called back but to
5 forward it to Lela. She said, "Are you okay?" I
6 said, "No. I'm leaving." She goes, "Okay. Are
7 you coming back?" I said, "No. I'm done." And I
8 didn't say anything more. I just walked out the
9 back door.

10 I found out later that Lela and the other
11 staffers were told to have no communication with
12 me, that I was not supposed to speak to them about
13 anything, and if I did for them to notify Leslie or
14 Michele or somebody as far as if I was talking
15 about certain circumstances.

16 I found out weeks later that Leslie had
17 made a comment -- and excuse my language, but this
18 is how it was given to me -- that she sure hopes
19 that I'm not opening up my fucking mouth and
20 talking about her boss or we're going to have
21 problems.

22 I didn't say anything to anybody. I had

1 signed a non-disclosure agreement. I assumed, you
2 know, if I opened up my mouth and made any comments
3 I would lose the severance package. And I have
4 four kids. Again, as a single mother, I can't
5 afford to lose any income.

6 MR. BROWN: Let me stop you right there
7 and let me unpack a little bit of that, and then I
8 want to hear you tell me the rest of the story.

9 You said that you were offered two months
10 severance.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

12 MR. BROWN: And was this you said Michele
13 and Leslie that you sat down with to discuss this?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

15 MR. BROWN: So you're -- you come in --
16 about how late were you that day?

17 FORMER STAFFER A: I arrived by 9:00, so
18 about an hour late.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. After you arrived,
20 Michele and Leslie asked to sit down with you in a
21 private room it sounds like?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: The conference room,

1 yes, sir.

2 MR. BROWN: How did that conversation
3 start? Can you tell me a little bit more about
4 what was said?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: To the best that I can
6 recall, because it has been some time, you know, I
7 came in, she asked for me to close the door behind
8 her and, you know, it was a very formal affair.
9 Her and Leslie were on the other end of the table
10 from me. And she said that we were here to discuss
11 my 30-day probationary period and to talk about
12 where we go from here at this point. So it was
13 kind of perceived as we're just going over your
14 evaluation, but I knew walking in there it was more
15 of a termination.

16 MR. BROWN: And when the severance comes
17 out, was there any -- was there any paperwork that
18 you were provided at the time?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I was not given
20 anything to take home. I cannot recall whether or
21 not I signed anything. But they did inform me I
22 would get some documentation from the Human

1 Resources Department, an individual there.

2 In fact, I actually did not receive any
3 paperwork for about 30 days, and the paperwork I
4 did receive just told me to take that form with me
5 to the unemployment office.

6 So when I called the Human Resources
7 Department to follow up, they said it was listed in
8 the computer as if I had voluntarily quit, not that
9 I was fired. And that's the only reason why I
10 hadn't gone to unemployment beforehand.

11 MR. BROWN: But as I understand, you said
12 previously the offer that was made to you was
13 for --

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Two months' pay.

15 MR. BROWN: Two months of pay.

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

17 MR. BROWN: Okay. Was there any
18 expectation that you would be doing any work --

19 FORMER STAFFER A: None.

20 MR. BROWN: -- during those two months?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: None. I was told to
22 not come back to the office.

1 MR. BROWN: And this was two months of pay
2 at your -- whatever the salary was that you were
3 making at the time?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct, while I was
5 searching for new employment, yes, sir.

6 MR. BROWN: And was this in addition to or
7 separate from any accrued leave?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: No. We didn't even
9 discuss my leave situation. I was actually in the
10 hole, you might say. From my understanding, the
11 Congressman only allots ten days annual leave per
12 employee. So because I had used that time to go
13 ahead of the funeral, that counted towards my
14 leave. I was already in the hole according to
15 them.

16 MR. BROWN: And by "in the hole," you
17 essentially mean you just didn't have any --

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

19 MR. BROWN: -- any accrued leave that they
20 should be paying you out for?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

22 MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.

1 MS. EISNER: Did you -- so with the
2 paperwork that you received about 30 days later
3 approximately, did that include a non-disclosure
4 agreement?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: No, ma'am. And I tried
6 finding it to show you. I did locate it later, but
7 it's just a very typed up memo. It does not have
8 anything personable showing my name or dates. All
9 it states is to take that letter to the
10 unemployment office. And it has like the Human
11 Resources Department contact information to
12 validate that I was employed.

13 MS. EISNER: Okay. If you -- if you do
14 have that you would be able to pass that along to
15 us?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Oh, yes, ma'am.

17 MS. EISNER: That would be great.

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm sorry.

19 MS. EISNER: Oh, no, that's fine.
20 Sometimes -- this happens all the time. People
21 just recall things as they're going through the
22 process. That's completely fine.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. EISNER: So because you said a little
3 bit earlier that you -- I think you said you kept
4 your mouth shut when you left because of the
5 non-disclosure.

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

7 MS. EISNER: And is that something that
8 was just communicated to you or -- if you could
9 help me understand if you ever signed a
10 non-disclosure agreement.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: I did sign a
12 non-disclosure. I know Lela never got one because
13 she went through the Wounded Warrior -- and I
14 apologize if I'm bringing her up, but our jobs were
15 very similar. I did have to sign one in the
16 beginning. Bridgette made sure that I had one on
17 file in their books, because I had to go through
18 and read -- it was a binder they had with like some
19 of the ethics and what we were and were not allowed
20 to do and talk about, and I had to sign the
21 non-disclosure agreement after that.

22 MR. BROWN: So this is a non-disclosure

1 agreement that you signed when you started in
2 Representative Palazzo's office?

3 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

4 MR. BROWN: And so when you're talking
5 about, you know, being required not to say anything
6 when you were terminated, that was somebody --
7 either Leslie or Michele -- reminding you that you
8 had signed a non-disclosure agreement?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

10 MS. EISNER: Okay. And is everyone who
11 works in the office, besides Lela because she came
12 through a different path, required to sign this
13 type of non-disclosure agreement?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: We're supposed to.
15 Within the first week we're supposed to read over
16 this binder. I mean, it's very dry and boring.
17 But following reading through that --

18 MS. EISNER: I'm sorry. We understand.

19 FORMER STAFFER A: After reading it,
20 though, we are required to sign a non-disclosure
21 agreement, and then that is kept on file.
22 Bridgette was holding onto them, but I think it

1 went into Michele's office eventually.

2 MS. EISNER: And during your time in the
3 office, how often did people mention the
4 non-disclosure agreement [audio cuts out] in
5 relation to things that you learned or things that
6 you were doing? And I want to separate that from
7 the time after you departed from the office. Just
8 during your time was the non-disclosure agreement
9 something that was discussed?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Not around me.
11 Obviously there are conversations that they have
12 privately amongst, you know, the Congressmen,
13 Michele and whatnot. But it was never mentioned
14 after me from that point. I did deal with a lot
15 of, you know, PI, HIPAA information, just because
16 of the release forms. But I think it was just
17 implied that I would understand after that point,
18 especially being prior military.

19 MR. BROWN: Did you ever get a copy of the
20 non-disclosure agreement that you signed
21 originally?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I do want to say yes,

1 but I didn't see a copy, so I don't -- my
2 assumption is it might have been something that I
3 kept in my office there. But I don't have it on
4 me. I'm going to try looking one other place to
5 see if I could find it for you.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

8 MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.

9 MS. EISNER: So one of the things -- just
10 to kind of go back to the beginning of your story
11 about how things transpired in the last month
12 before you were terminated. You know, you've sort
13 of given us a picture of what happened with your --
14 with the passing of your grandfather and then
15 coming back to the office and that period of time
16 where you kept track of your records. What is not
17 clear to me is why -- what the reason was -- what
18 reason was provided for why you were terminated and
19 why you think you were terminated. So if you could
20 go into that a little bit.

21 FORMER STAFFER A: So I know Mississippi
22 is a -- I think the word's like a no fault state --

1 they don't have to really give a reason before they
2 terminate you. I know I was the only caseworker
3 down there initially for a while, and I was
4 handling all the -- all the cases for Hancock,
5 Harrison, and Jackson County that were related to
6 military and VA. So I had a substantial workload
7 on me.

8 When Lela got hired on, the assumption was
9 she was going to take some of that off because she
10 was also prior military. They did give her some
11 cases, but she became more of a projects person.
12 They would send her on a lot of different meetings
13 that the -- not meetings so much -- events. She
14 would go to some of those events. She would handle
15 some of our bigger projects. So I still did the
16 brunt of the force.

17 Again, like I said, there were -- you
18 know, there was a couple times I would be a few
19 minutes late here, a few minutes late there. I
20 would always text and let somebody know, because
21 even being military it was just kind of ingrained
22 into me. There were times that, you know, I was

1 five minutes late coming in and Leslie wasn't there
2 yet either. But it was okay if Leslie wasn't there
3 because she's the one who would open up. She's the
4 only one with a key, her, Michele, and Bridgette.
5 So if we got there earlier, we would just wait for
6 her anyways.

7 It became very catty in the office at some
8 point where it was kind of the gossip and what
9 they're going through and what they're talking
10 about, and I was more so separated. As the
11 caseworker I always stayed in my office. I always
12 did the cases. I didn't really get put in a lot of
13 those other conversations.

14 So I don't fully know why I was fired
15 other than, you know, I was late. But I felt like
16 my performance had shown otherwise. I was able to
17 substantiate it. I know they were monitoring
18 everything that I was doing on the computer during
19 that last 30 days because we did have one situation
20 where a constituent -- I had reached out to the
21 Social Security office and I had sent them a letter
22 on letterhead, Congressman Palazzo's letterhead,

1 just stating that they did have an open case with
2 us and that we were looking into the information
3 for their child support case.

4 I had went to scan it, I left it on the
5 printer, and I got in trouble for that because that
6 is not what we use letterhead for. I didn't put
7 details of it, but it was more so just letting them
8 know because their caseworker said they needed
9 proof that somebody was actually looking into the
10 case. So that was one piece of paperwork that they
11 did include when they first talked about the
12 probationary period.

13 MS. EISNER: Okay. I mean, it sounds like
14 you're -- you're kind -- you're giving me some
15 little details of things that maybe somebody could
16 use to explain poor performance, but to me it's not
17 amounting to --

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. EISNER: -- sort of a serious cause
20 so --

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I was never given a
22 real reason.

1 MS. EISNER: Okay. And one of the things
2 you said was there was sort of a cattiness in the
3 office. If you could break that down a little bit
4 for me. You said, you know, they were talking
5 about what they're going through. What are the
6 things that they were talking about in the office?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: If -- for lack of
8 better words, it's like too many hens in the hen
9 house. Not enough males in the office -- and that
10 sounds horrible -- [audio cuts out] -- when they
11 would go to events they would talk about what would
12 happen after events. But some of those
13 conversations were had on the other side of the
14 office where, you know, if I'm in -- I'm in the
15 middle of what I'm doing, I'm not fully paying
16 attention to their conversations.

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Or they would talk
19 about what the Congressman's, you know, what's
20 coming up for him and what they're going to be
21 doing in relation to that.

22 MS. EISNER: Did you feel that the tone in

1 the office or the environment changed roughly
2 around when your grandfather got ill or was that
3 more during the 30-day probation period?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: So the office tone
5 started to change when Michele took over, and not
6 necessarily in a bad way. But obviously a change
7 of leadership there's going to be a change in how
8 things work. It did change significantly though
9 after I started the 30-day period. I felt like I
10 was on eggshells the whole 30 days. I didn't want
11 to do anything wrong; I didn't want to be one
12 minute late back from lunch. I made sure I did not
13 log onto anything other than what I needed to, even
14 if it was my break time. It did not matter. I was
15 not opening up any other pages on the government
16 computers.

17 And I do want to mention -- I apologize.
18 I forgot this. Prior to my grandfather passing --
19 it seemed like I had multiple events -- I actually
20 had to have emergency surgery -- they found a cyst
21 right above my tailbone -- and had it at the VA.
22 And I was out for a couple days for convalescence

1 -- convalescent leave for [audio cuts out] --

2 So in May, maybe the end of April --
3 actually it was around spring break. I apologize.
4 So it was around April of that year. I don't
5 recall the spring break time frame. I did have
6 emergency surgery with the VA. I was out a couple
7 days. My doctor recommended two weeks. I got one
8 week.

9 When I came back they were accommodating
10 with, you know, I couldn't really sit long periods,
11 I couldn't stand long periods, so they got me, you
12 know, one of the raised up desks so that I could
13 work with that. And then, again, shortly after
14 that is when my grandfather died.

15 So I don't know if they thought it was a
16 problem but, I mean, it was all legitimate reasons
17 that I was having to take leave for. So when that
18 30-day period came up, I mean, I was paranoid.
19 I've got one income. I can't afford to lose this
20 job. So I am crossing every T, dotting every I,
21 just hoping I can continue on and get past this 30
22 days.

1 I was speaking to Anita, probably about
2 three days before this happened, because she came
3 down to the Biloxi office. We had a little
4 luncheon. And Anita pulled me aside and said, you
5 know, I've been doing awesome. She's seen how many
6 cases that I've been going through and, you know,
7 to keep up the good work. She thinks that
8 everything's going to be okay. And then three,
9 four days later I was let go.

10 MR. BROWN: I got the impression that
11 there's sort of an in crowd and an out crowd --

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Very much.

13 MR. BROWN: -- and if you're -- and who's
14 -- who's in the in crowd?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie and Bridgette.
16 I mean, they were thick as thieves. They would go
17 out. Even after work they would do a lot of stuff
18 together. They were part of the Krewe of Medics
19 down here, a Mardi Gras event. I don't think they
20 were very close with Michele outside of work, but
21 at work the impression was it was the three of them
22 and then the rest of us.

1 MR. BROWN: I want to take one step back
2 and ask you one more thing that you had said to us
3 originally, and then I want to give you an
4 opportunity to finish the story about the severance
5 and --

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

7 MR. BROWN: -- and all that. One thing
8 you said, I think you said, and I'm hoping you can
9 elaborate on it, is I think you said it was either
10 -- it was either Bridgette or Leslie said something
11 along the lines of like tell nobody nothing. What
12 -- what exactly was said and why -- what's your
13 understanding of why that was said to you?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: So it was -- it was a
15 reminder -- and I can't recall if it was Michele or
16 Leslie, but, you know, don't forget that you did
17 sign a non-disclosure agreement. Everything that
18 you saw and handled here stays here. Any cases
19 that you were working on, you no longer are working
20 on them past this point. And it was pretty much a
21 reminder just what happens here stays here, point
22 blank. So again, that was [audio cuts out]

1 package.

2 MS. EISNER: And this specific comment
3 that you heard, which was something along the lines
4 of keep your f'ing mouth shut, is that something
5 you heard or did somebody --

6 FORMER STAFFER A: No.

7 MS. EISNER: -- tell you that it was said?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: So that was something
9 that Lela told me. After she was terminated, she
10 reached out to me because from what she advised me
11 they were not allowed to communicate with me
12 whatsoever. If I made any attempt to communicate
13 with them they were supposed to block me, and if it
14 became a persistent thing that they would notify
15 Leslie or Michele and they would take care of it.

16 So from my understanding, Lela said there
17 was conversations, whether -- I don't think it was
18 everybody together talking. I think it was she
19 overheard it, that they made a comment about I
20 better not be talking about her congressman or, you
21 know, I'm going to regret it. But obviously there
22 was some cuss words in there.

1 MR. BROWN: When I was asking you about
2 the prior comment that was made to you while you
3 were, you know, while you were in the conference
4 room during your termination discussions I was
5 wondering if -- if that was more of a remember you
6 signed this non-disclosure agreement and you cannot
7 talk about the cases that you were working on or
8 that's a don't talk about the things that happened
9 in this office and with respect to this
10 congressman.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was
12 everything, sir. I took it as an umbrella
13 statement for everything. That was the impression
14 I was given.

15 MR. BROWN: Helen and Anna, unless either
16 of you wants to jump in -- I think, Former Staffer
17 A, if you could just sort of continue along where
18 you were with respect to the termination and the
19 severance. I think you were saying, you know, you
20 were 30 days out and you still hadn't got the
21 severance.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. So again, it

1 was 30 days from the point that I had had the
2 conference with them and they had let me go.
3 Again, I didn't make any attempts to talk to Lela,
4 I didn't talk to any of the other coworkers. I
5 honestly thought Lela was part of the reason why I
6 was fired.

7 I thought because of that one paper that
8 was left on the scanner, she had brought that up to
9 their attention when she found it. I don't think
10 she was doing it to be malicious, just I found
11 this, is this what we're supposed to do? She was
12 still kind of getting her feet wet.

13 I didn't reach out to anybody. I actually
14 blocked Lela on social media. I blocked her phone
15 number. I just didn't want to deal with it
16 anymore. And then Lela contacted me shortly after
17 she was terminated, and that's when I kind of
18 started to see some of what had unfolded after I
19 left.

20 Again, 30 days after I left I contacted
21 Human Resources because I still had not received
22 any paperwork. I was waiting for my SF-50 so that

1 I can update it in USAJOBS to actually start
2 looking for another government position. And
3 that's when they advised me that paperwork would be
4 coming pretty soon with it. I opened up the
5 package that I got and it was paperwork talking
6 about the unemployment.

7 So when I reached back out to find out why
8 I'm getting paperwork on unemployment when I was
9 terminated, I didn't quit, and they said, "No, in
10 the computer it shows that you -- you quit." I
11 said, "No. I was fired."

12 So pretty much 30 days had gone by that I
13 could have collected unemployment while I was
14 searching, and I wasn't even aware of how it was
15 listed. So I didn't question it. I got my SF-50
16 and I just pressed forward with the new jobs.

17 MR. BROWN: Why didn't you ever approach
18 anybody about the severance?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: As far as what, sir?

20 MR. BROWN: Well, I think you said to us
21 that the promise was you'd be paid two months of
22 severance.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

2 MR. BROWN: Did you -- did you ever ask
3 anybody at HR or the Congressman's office where the
4 severance payment was?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: No. I -- I received
6 them as if I was still working, the very last day
7 of the month.

8 MR. BROWN: Oh, so you were paid for those
9 next two months?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. I'm sorry. But I
11 was told it was severance, but I was paid at the
12 end of the month for the next two months.

13 MR. BROWN: Okay. So there were -- there
14 were two months where you were not working in the
15 Congressman's office?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

17 MR. BROWN: But you were paid your -- your
18 full salary for those two months?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

20 MR. BROWN: Okay.

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I apologize for any
22 confusion. But they did deliver it to me as a

1 severance package.

2 MR. BROWN: Understood. It was just that
3 you -- you didn't ever sign anything?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't recall. I wish
5 I knew. I tried looking to see if I had paperwork
6 with signatures to see if it would kind of spin my
7 memory up, and I don't. So if I did sign it they
8 have it.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. So it's possible that
10 you -- you may have signed some sort of severance
11 agreement, but regardless of whether you signed it
12 or not there were two months in which you were not
13 working in the Congressman's office but you were
14 being paid your full salary?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

16 MR. BROWN: Okay. Helen, anything else on
17 the severance?

18 MS. EISNER: No. I think you can keep
19 going.

20 MR. BROWN: Then I'm going to move on to
21 another topic, unless you had anything else there
22 that you wanted to touch on, Former Staffer A.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: No, sir. I think we
2 touched on all of it.

3 MR. BROWN: Okay. It's my understanding
4 that you witnessed members of Representative
5 Palazzo's official staff performing personal
6 errands of some kind for either the Congressman or
7 his family and that these individuals would have
8 been doing that during, you know, official work
9 hours. I'm wondering what you can --

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

11 MR. BROWN: -- tell me about that.

12 FORMER STAFFER A: There was a few
13 instances -- a few times when TJ Moran would be
14 driving around, he would pick up the Congressman's
15 suits. We weren't given all the details on where
16 TJ was. He was just always out in the field. But
17 when the Congressman was around, you know, he was
18 pretty much his driver, his errand boy, whatever he
19 needed. Shortly after --

20 MR. BROWN: And when you -- when you say
21 "errand boy," did you ever witness or did TJ ever
22 tell you about specific errands that he was doing?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: He would do the dry
2 cleaning, he would go to storage a lot to go pick
3 up stuff from the storage unit. At the time we
4 weren't going for an election, so it wasn't related
5 to the election, but stuff had to be taken to
6 storage or picked up from storage.

7 MR. BROWN: And the --

8 FORMER STAFFER A: And those are the --
9 I'm sorry.

10 MR. BROWN: Go ahead. No, no. You go
11 ahead.

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Those were just the
13 conversations that I would hear. Nothing was ever
14 directly said to me.

15 MR. BROWN: When he was going to storage,
16 I know you said it wasn't for an election, do you
17 know if he was dropping off items that were of a
18 personal nature for the Congressman?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I was never privy to
20 that information.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. Go ahead.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: There -- shortly after

1 I got hired on, probably -- I'm trying to think --
2 maybe May or June, Bridgette and Leslie went out
3 for about two days getting some supplies for his
4 children to start camp. They came back with all
5 the supplies, and they used the conference room to
6 get everything organized, boxed up, labeled to get
7 shipped out for his children.

8 There was many times that they would leave
9 because they had to go to the river house or --

10 MR. BROWN: Let me -- let me stop you
11 there.

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

13 MR. BROWN: And before you get to that,
14 let me ask you a little bit more about Bridgette
15 and Leslie.

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

17 MR. BROWN: So you're saying that
18 Bridgette and Leslie there's a -- there's a two day
19 period where instead of working in the official
20 office they're outside of the official office --

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Shopping.

22 MR. BROWN: -- during what should be work

1 hours --

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

3 MR. BROWN: -- and they are picking up
4 materials for the Congressman's children who are
5 going to attend summer camp?

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

7 MR. BROWN: Okay. And then subsequent to
8 those two -- okay. So there -- there are -- I'll
9 just -- I'll repeat some of that just in case. But
10 so Bridgette and Leslie spent two days -- I take it
11 this is at the start of the summer, collecting
12 materials for the Congressman's kids who are
13 getting ready to go off to camp.

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

15 MR. BROWN: And then how long did they
16 spend in the office in the Congressman's -- in the
17 conference room getting those materials prepared to
18 send to camp?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: The rest of the day.
20 You know, they would spend the morning pretty much
21 shopping, come back, bring everything in in the
22 afternoon that first day. If they had more stuff

1 that they had to go get, they would go out and get
2 more the next day.

3 Leslie did spend some time in the late
4 afternoon just checking calls and emails, but the
5 majority of their time was out of the office
6 shopping. On the second day, I mean, they spent a
7 significant time, two to three hours, organizing,
8 labeling, putting stuff in bags and putting them in
9 these totes that were going to be shipped out.

10 MR. BROWN: And you know this because you
11 saw this?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. And I was asking
13 what all of it was for because I was eating my
14 lunch in the break room and they had told me it was
15 for his kids for summer camp. And I had heard
16 conversations but to actually see what they were
17 doing.

18 MR. BROWN: And just to be clear, this is
19 not -- this is during official work hours?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I was there.

1 MS. EISNER: And what types of materials
2 were we talking about? What was on the table?
3 What were they organizing?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Clothes, batteries,
5 swimsuits, towels. The general stuff that you
6 would get in preparation for being at summer camp
7 for a couple weeks.

8 MR. BROWN: This is -- this is sleep-away
9 summer camp I take it?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, it is. Yes, sir.

11 MR. BROWN: And it's for all three kids?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was just for
13 the two youngest children. If I remember
14 correctly, [REDACTED] (ph) did not go to the summer camp.
15 He was doing some kind of football camp behind, but
16 it wasn't the same as theirs.

17 MR. BROWN: Do you recall with respect to
18 them going to camp anything about having to label
19 the children's clothes?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: They would label the
21 bags just to separate whose clothes they were to
22 another's. Even though it was going in the trunks,

1 everything had to be labeled for the actual summer
2 camp for the counselors so that nothing got
3 confused.

4 MS. EISNER: Did you see the Congressman
5 during that two day period? Was he involved at all
6 in that process?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: He was never in the
8 office during those two days.

9 MS. EISNER: Okay. Besides those two days
10 when you observed them working on the camp
11 preparation, were there any other times when you
12 saw them working on tasks related to the children?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: They did do it the
14 following year but before I was terminated, they
15 were getting stuff prepared again for the summer
16 camp situation. Nothing came into the office, but
17 they were starting the talks on, you know, his kids
18 are going to go, you know, he needs me to get a
19 list together of what all they're going to need.

20 From my understanding, because I did
21 question, you know, well, where's their mom in all
22 of these arrangements? And from what I was told,

1 after her stroke a few years ago that she was not
2 in a condition to be able to really take care of
3 them and that I know [REDACTED] lived with his
4 grandparents. I think the kids lived with her, but
5 she just was not able to do these tasks.

6 MS. EISNER: Okay. And besides tasks
7 related to summer camp, did you observe any other
8 tasks that were performed on behalf of the
9 children?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Not in the office.
11 Again, a lot of it would be, well, I've got to go
12 to the river house; I've got to go run a few
13 errands for the boss. But we -- I wasn't really
14 privy to that level of information. Again, it's
15 the in crowd and the out crowd, and I was not part
16 of the in crowd.

17 MS. EISNER: What about any awareness of
18 -- so outside of the office -- again, this would be
19 based on what you heard people talking about, not
20 observed directly in the office -- but babysitting
21 or --

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1 MS. EISNER: -- picking up the kids,
2 anything along those lines, if you could tell us
3 about that.

4 FORMER STAFFER A: I had heard on
5 instances where some for the interns or some of the
6 other staffers would be babysitting for him on
7 occasions. I've heard that they -- like you said,
8 would pick up the kids, take them to medical
9 appointments.

10 He would drive to go to Louisiana back and
11 forth to pick them up when he would be home, and
12 they sometimes would be with him when we would go
13 to lunches. I want to say he took us out to
14 lunch -- including me. I don't know what they did
15 when they were out in the field, but I went to
16 lunch with him twice and [REDACTED] came along with us.
17 So he would stop by the office here and there. I
18 never met the two younger children. But, yes, I
19 was aware that staffers were doing stuff outside of
20 work hours for him.

21 MS. EISNER: And based on your awareness
22 of that, what's your impression of how frequently

1 that was occurring?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: It seemed like every
3 time he was in town someone was managing his life
4 for him, that he really couldn't -- it sounds awful
5 to say, but he really couldn't get himself figured
6 out.

7 My other impression, too, was when anybody
8 would come from DC with him, whether it was Tyler
9 or one of the other staffers, that they would be
10 staying at the river house in case he needed
11 anything, whether it was in the morning he needed
12 this done or that done, that they would be
13 available to drive him around.

14 MR. BROWN: Who would you say was managing
15 -- you say managing his life. Who --

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie.

17 MR. BROWN: -- was doing that? Leslie?

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie, yes, sir.

19 MR. BROWN: And when you were talking
20 about staffers or interns driving the kids, was
21 that during official work hours?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I never visually saw

1 it, but that's just what I had been told, what I
2 kind of heard. Because, I mean, some of it, I'm
3 sure, was rumors. You hear rumor mills. But it
4 was just kind of know that this is -- this is what
5 we do. This is kind of part of the job. If we're
6 asked, we just do it, no questions. But I did not
7 ever physically see anybody driving the kids
8 without him.

9 MR. BROWN: And by "part of the job" you
10 mean assisting with the children when the
11 Congressman is responsible for the children?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Right. Correct.

13 MR. BROWN: As I understand it, him and
14 his wife are divorced?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

16 MS. EISNER: And you said, just to get
17 this clear as well, this is what you were told.
18 Who was it who told you this information?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: When I first got hired
20 on with Bridgette, she said we pretty much just
21 make sure that the Congressman's happy. Whatever
22 he needs, whatever, you know, we need to get done

1 to make sure that that happens we do.

2 MS. EISNER: Okay. And were you ever
3 asked to do anything to make sure that the
4 Congressman was happy?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: My job was solely case
6 work and only case work.

7 MS. EISNER: Why do you think you weren't
8 asked?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Because I wasn't part
10 of the clique.

11 MS. EISNER: Okay.

12 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know if it was
13 because there wasn't that level of trust, there
14 wasn't that level of I can ask her to do this and
15 it's not going to come back on me. I'm not sure,
16 but that's what I always assumed, that's why I
17 wasn't invited to some of these events, because I'm
18 not part of his trustworthy circle yet.

19 MR. BROWN: I assume you are aware, and I
20 assume that others in that office were aware, that
21 doing personal errands for a congressman during
22 official time could run afoul of some ethics rules.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

2 MR. BROWN: Was there discussion of that
3 in the office?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: No. Never.

5 MS. EISNER: Can I ask a question about
6 that? This just reminds me of earlier on you were
7 talking about -- when we were talking about how you
8 signed the non-disclosure agreement, you talked
9 about reading through a binder of information that
10 you also had to sign. Was that the House's ethics
11 manual?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, it was.

13 MS. EISNER: Okay. And do you know if
14 every staffer was asked to read the House ethics
15 manual as a part of the onboarding process?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: They're supposed to.

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I know Gabbi read it, I
19 got it. And that's what I was told when I was
20 given it, that this is something that every staffer
21 has to go through and read and then we sign the
22 non-disclosure agreement at the end.

1 MS. EISNER: Okay. And, you know, when
2 you witnessed these types of activities during work
3 hours, did anyone ever raise the question of, you
4 know, ethics rules and how this related to the
5 reading of the House ethics manual and the guidance
6 in that?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely not.
8 Absolutely not. But the impression -- you know,
9 being military, I wasn't an officer, I wasn't high
10 up in that position. I was at the bottom, per se.
11 And, yes, question your leaders, but they're still
12 your leaders and you still go with what they're
13 saying.

14 And it -- I didn't want to ruffle feathers
15 and then I get in trouble. So as long as I was
16 doing okay, I didn't care what they were doing. It
17 wasn't my problem. I'm going to do right and I'm
18 going to make sure I'm legal with what I'm doing.
19 It's not the appropriate answer, but that was my
20 mindset.

21 MS. EISNER: Understood.

22 MR. BROWN: So the impression I'm

1 gathering from this conversation is that it's
2 Leslie, Michele and Bridgette who are sort of
3 recognized that part of their job entails making
4 the Congressman's life, his personal life, run
5 smoother.

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

7 MR. BROWN: And they did -- they did some
8 of those tasks during what were official work
9 hours.

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

11 MR. BROWN: Did you ever -- with respect
12 to personal errands, did you ever see or hear of
13 anyone assisting the Congressman with his laundry
14 or dropping his laundry off anywhere?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: I didn't see them drop
16 it off or take it anywhere; I just know they would
17 come back with his suits every now and then as if
18 they picked it up for him.

19 MR. BROWN: And how about grocery
20 shopping?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I never witnessed that.

22 MR. BROWN: Did you ever hear about

1 anybody doing grocery shopping for the Congressman
2 or for the kids?

3 FORMER STAFFER A: I did not. And to be
4 quite honest, I didn't even know where he lived. I
5 didn't know if he lived here, didn't know if he
6 lived in Louisiana. It was kind of -- not really a
7 big secret, but we weren't supposed to know. I
8 knew about the river house because it's actually on
9 my way home. So I knew that was his property, but
10 I didn't know whether or not he was even living
11 there. And as far as I was aware, the kids were in
12 Louisiana when he wasn't here.

13 MR. BROWN: Why was his living
14 arrangements a big secret?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know, sir. I
16 know when he's at the DC office he stays in his
17 office. He sleeps there. And that was told to me
18 by Tyler and -- forgive me. I'm trying to think of
19 his name. He's a -- I want to say he's over
20 Michele, but he's at the DC office.

21 MR. BROWN: Patrick?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Patrick, yes, sir.

1 They were talking --

2 MS. EISNER: Patrick Large?

3 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, ma'am. They
4 were just -- him and Tyler were just talking about,
5 you know, different experiences while Tyler's been
6 there and what the gym looks like, you know, the
7 facilities at the DC office, and had mentioned that
8 the Congressman did sleep in his office on
9 occasions, that he did not have his own private
10 residence out there.

11 MS. EISNER: What about when the kids were
12 visiting? You said he would drive to Louisiana,
13 pick up the kids. Where would they stay then?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: I have no idea. I
15 assume they were at the river house, but that was
16 just my assumption because I didn't know of any
17 other properties. I just was told that they lived
18 with -- [REDACTED] lived with his grandparents and that
19 the two younger kids were with the mom. I don't
20 know where the mom lives. But he would go to
21 Louisiana a lot to pick up the kids, so I assume
22 that's where she was.

1 MS. EISNER: Did you ever hear of the
2 Congressman staying in a hotel while he was in the
3 district?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: It was never mentioned
5 around me. I'm not sure.

6 MS. EISNER: Okay.

7 MR. BROWN: Or how about staying at the
8 office, Biloxi or otherwise?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: He was there a lot on
10 the weekends. I didn't know if he was sleeping
11 there, but he did have a couch in his office. I
12 was told from Leslie on occasions that he would be
13 there on the weekends that she had heard he was
14 sleeping there, and that was part of the reason why
15 none of us had keys or had access to the office.
16 But I never witnessed it. I never heard it from
17 anybody else while I was working.

18 MR. BROWN: But Leslie did mention to you
19 that either she understood or she was told by the
20 Congressman that he was sleeping in the office?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Lela, not Leslie. Lela
22 Bremen.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

2 MS. EISNER: Oh, so it was Lela who heard
3 he slept there --

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

5 MS. EISNER: -- not Leslie? Okay.

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am. Sorry.

7 MS. EISNER: Okay. And then did you see
8 -- he had a sleeper sofa in the office?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: I didn't know if it was
10 a sleeper sofa. It was a couch.

11 MS. EISNER: Okay.

12 FORMER STAFFER A: I didn't investigate it
13 too much. If it was a sleeper sofa, it was maybe a
14 twin size.

15 MS. EISNER: Okay.

16 MR. BROWN: Did you have anything else
17 there, Helen? Or if not I'll -- I have one more
18 series of questions on personal errands.

19 MS. EISNER: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MR. BROWN: So I know, Former Staffer A,
21 at some point you chatted with Brian Rose and got
22 quoted in an article that --

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Oh, my gosh, yes.

2 MR. BROWN: -- [cross-talk] published. In
3 that article you said something like -- or at least
4 you were quoted as saying something like two senior
5 staffers take a week of paid leave to tend to
6 Palazzo's children. They get the kids ready for
7 camp, take them and bring them back. Let's take
8 each of those sentences. Tell me about two senior
9 staffers taking a week of paid leave to tend to the
10 children.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: So that part I did not
12 say. I did [audio cuts out] that Leslie and
13 Bridgette had helped him previously when it came to
14 his kids for camp, but I never mentioned that they
15 were on leave. It happened during work hours.

16 MR. BROWN: Okay. So that -- that relates
17 back to what we were previously talking about,
18 Leslie and Bridgette and Michele --

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

20 MR. BROWN: -- would assist the
21 Congressman with the children during work hours for
22 summer camp or otherwise.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. For that first
2 incident with the summer camp, Michele was not
3 employed yet, so it was just Bridgette and Leslie.
4 The following year when it was Bridgette and Leslie
5 assisting, I did not see anything come in the
6 office, and I think that's because Michele had
7 taken over that role.

8 MR. BROWN: Sorry. Can you say that last
9 part again? I just missed it.

10 FORMER STAFFER A: So the first incident
11 where I had mentioned they pulled everything out,
12 they labeled it, when I physically had eyes on it,
13 that was pre Michele's employment as the district
14 manager.

15 MR. BROWN: Okay.

16 FORMER STAFFER A: If I'm saying that
17 correctly. Forgive me if I'm getting her role
18 mixed up. But prior to me leaving my position and
19 hearing those conversations about them talking
20 about it again, nothing was ever brought into the
21 office, and I just assumed it was because Michele
22 was there and things were running a little bit

1 differently, they didn't want to bring it into the
2 office that time.

3 MR. BROWN: But you understood that they
4 were still assisting with those same sort of tasks?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. And how about the --
7 the quote here is "They get the kids ready for
8 camp, take them and bring them back."

9 FORMER STAFFER A: So I don't recall if
10 they drove them there or if it was the Congressman.
11 They obviously got them ready by getting all their
12 supplies, getting everything together. They would
13 ship boxes out to them. If they needed care
14 packages, the Congressman would just tell them what
15 to buy and to put in the boxes.

16 MR. BROWN: Okay. Anything else there,
17 Helen?

18 MS. EISNER: No. Go ahead.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. You've mentioned the
20 river house on a couple of occasions.

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

22 MR. BROWN: Just generally, what is the

1 river house?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: So it is a property off
3 of -- I'm trying to think of the name of that
4 street. I think it's -- it's close to the
5 interstate. Forgive me for not knowing the exact
6 name of it. The property sits behind -- it's not
7 really a gate, but it's a walled structure, and
8 then it's a small driveway. I have driven in there
9 once just because I was curious on what it looked
10 like. It's in -- about a block, block and a half
11 worth and it kind of has a cul-de-sac and you can
12 come back out. But the property's right up against
13 one of the bays, so it does have a possibility of
14 having a boat, that kind of structure. It's very
15 heavily with security cameras.

16 I was -- when I went through and was
17 driving around just to look at it, you could see
18 the cameras very clearly. I didn't want to go too
19 close and then be alerted and have to explain why
20 I'm by the Congressman's property. But I did not
21 go any closer than that.

22 MR. BROWN: I think you said previously

1 that staffers were heading to the river house.

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

3 MR. BROWN: Why were they going there?

4 How was it used? Can you elaborate?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: I know the purpose of
6 it I was told was for campaign purposes, that that
7 was the intent of why the river house was
8 purchased, to use for a campaign. But furniture
9 was getting replaced, furniture was getting
10 delivered, stuff had to be repaired, so they had to
11 go to the river house for people to show up.

12 MR. BROWN: And who was -- who was going
13 there?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Bridgette and Leslie.

15 MR. BROWN: And they would go there during
16 work hours and --

17 FORMER STAFFER A: During work hours, yes,
18 sir.

19 MR. BROWN: And they're going there to
20 meet contractors or the delivery folks?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. That's what I
22 was told.

1 MR. BROWN: And how do you know -- yeah,
2 how do you know this? Who's telling you that?

3 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie and Bridgette
4 would just say, I'm going to the river house. The
5 cable guy is coming, the gas company, or, you know,
6 we've got furniture being delivered. And it wasn't
7 we'll be back in an hour; it's just we're going to
8 the river house. So whenever they came back they
9 came back.

10 MS. EISNER: And why was the house being
11 maintained? Why was furniture coming and the gas
12 company? What was the reason for that?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: We were just told it
14 was a campaign -- it was going to be a campaign
15 house. So I assumed when campaign season -- I was
16 very new to politics. My assumption was when the
17 campaign season was starting to ramp up that some
18 of the staffers would be coming down and utilizing
19 that as a -- like a control center for where
20 everything was going to be occurring.

21 MS. EISNER: Okay.

22 MR. BROWN: Did that happen?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: I was not privy to
2 those conversations. I'm not sure.

3 MS. EISNER: How frequently did they go to
4 the river house for furniture deliveries? Was that
5 on a regular basis?

6 FORMER STAFFER A: It was quite a bit. It
7 was one to two times a week they had to do
8 something at the river house or the storage. It
9 was one of the two.

10 MR. BROWN: And again, the storage, you
11 don't know if going to the storage was for personal
12 reasons or campaign reasons or otherwise?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. I went with
14 them one time to the storage, but that was for
15 campaign reasons, to pick up the signs, the -- I
16 don't know -- the political signs that say Vote for
17 Congressman Palazzo.

18 But I was told he also has two to three
19 storage units -- or he did at the time -- and the
20 one that I had been going to -- or the one that I
21 went with them to is not the same that they were
22 going to because they had mentioned the street that

1 it was on and the company that owned it. It wasn't
2 the same [audio cuts out] -- yes, but that's not
3 where we kept the -- the signs. It wasn't at that
4 facility.

5 MR. BROWN: Is that where they --

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

7 MR. BROWN: -- indicated that they were
8 going?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

10 MR. BROWN: Okay. And do you --

11 MS. EISNER: Did you --

12 MR. BROWN: -- have any idea what was
13 housed at John Fayard's Storage?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: No, sir. I was never
15 allowed to go when they went there. I had case
16 work to do.

17 MS. EISNER: Did you play a role for the
18 campaign at all?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: No.

20 MS. EISNER: Okay. So when you would go
21 to the storage locker and you found the signs, what
22 -- what capacity was that in?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: We had an event coming
2 up at one of the restaurants. The Congressman was
3 inviting different people from the community, just
4 a way to kind of I guess get the buzz out. So I
5 went with them to get the signs so that we could
6 drive them over to the event, and then we had signs
7 there for people to take home with them.

8 MR. BROWN: And that's a campaign event?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: That one was a campaign
10 event. That's -- aside from that event, I only was
11 privy to two other events in the over one year that
12 I was there, about a year and a half.

13 MR. BROWN: Did you volunteer to go do
14 that? Did you get asked to do that? Did you get
15 told --

16 FORMER STAFFER A: I was told, "This is
17 what we're doing."

18 MR. BROWN: Okay. And this was during
19 official work hours?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: We went to the storage
21 during official work hours, but the event was
22 outside of work hours. So we went to the storage

1 to get the campaign items to bring back and get
2 them loaded into the vehicles that were going later
3 on, and then we just finished up our work for the
4 day.

5 MR. BROWN: And you were told by who that
6 you needed to go pick up the campaign signs?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: I -- I know Bridgette
8 was there. I can't recall if that was the time
9 Michele was there. But it was pretty much
10 everybody's leaving; the office is getting closed
11 for that time period while we go and get this.

12 MS. EISNER: Besides that particular
13 event, did you observe staff leaving the office in
14 the middle of the day for other campaign related
15 tasks?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: They left all the time.
17 I mean, there -- there was no consistency of
18 anybody being there aside from me; Gabbi was at the
19 front all the time answering the calls; Lela, when
20 she didn't have events was there, but Bridgette and
21 Leslie and Michele were always gone. I -- they
22 mentioned a lot about doing campaign stuff, but I

1 don't know what they were doing.

2 MS. EISNER: Okay.

3 MR. BROWN: Does the -- does the
4 Congressman have set office hours in the district
5 office?

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, he does. Yes.

7 MR. BROWN: And what are those?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: They were eight to
9 five, if I recall correctly.

10 MR. BROWN: And that applied to you. Did
11 that apply to others?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: It was supposed to
13 apply to everyone.

14 MR. BROWN: But it didn't?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: No. No. There were
16 occasions where they would leave and we could lock
17 up, because we could just set the alarm, lock the
18 doors and walk out, but we could not come back in.

19 MR. BROWN: And I just want to go back to
20 the one event where you were told you had to go
21 pick up signs.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1 MR. BROWN: You know, again, you said you
2 were -- you were told that you had to do that. Was
3 -- you know, did you feel like you were acting in a
4 volunteer capacity to do that or that you felt like
5 that was a responsibility that you needed to take
6 care of that day?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: That was just the
8 responsibility as congressional staffers. This is
9 what we do for the Congressman during campaign
10 season. It wasn't just me. It was a group of us
11 that went. But it wasn't do you want to come? It
12 was just kind of implied this is what we do because
13 this is our boss.

14 MR. BROWN: Who -- who -- who else or how
15 many other individuals did that?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: I want to say Leslie
17 and Bridgette were -- there was probably about five
18 or six of us that were there.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. And everybody, as you
20 understood it, was told we got to go get these
21 signs and deliver them to wherever this campaign
22 event was going to be held?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: We brought them back
2 and just put them in the Congressman's vehicle.
3 But yes.

4 MR. BROWN: At the -- at the congressional
5 office?

6 FORMER STAFFER A: At the office, yes.

7 MR. BROWN: And this occurred sometime in
8 the afternoon before five p.m.?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

10 MS. EISNER: And can you give us a sense
11 of the approximate time period when that event was?
12 Was that in 2018?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: It was in 2018. I
14 really don't think Lela was on board yet. And she
15 came on -- I don't recall exactly when she came in
16 there. But I do want to say it was 2018, because
17 when I was terminated in -- hold on. Let me
18 backtrack. I got hired in 2017. It was probably
19 2017 time frame --

20 MS. EISNER: Okay.

21 FORMER STAFFER A: -- towards that.
22 Because I know when I got terminated in 2018 I

1 wasn't part of any of that stuff, and then I think
2 the following year they were working on campaign
3 stuff again.

4 MS. EISNER: Okay. Did you ever get the
5 impression that the Congressman was particularly
6 worried about his re-election prospects?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: He was. I know when E.
8 Brian Rose -- they had mentioned to it "I think
9 we've got this. We should be good." TJ was very
10 confident, but I know there was some concerns,
11 especially because he was not doing the town halls.

12 A lot of constituents were not happy about
13 it. Lela and I would, you know, answer the phone
14 -- well, we all answered the phones, but we would
15 get especially a lot of veterans who would be very
16 concerned and wanted to know why, why was the
17 Congressman not here? Why is he not at our town
18 halls? You know, we have questions for him too.

19 And we just had to keep reassuring them,
20 well, that's what we're here for. We're a
21 representation of him. You know, he's at a
22 separate event, whether he was or not, that was

1 what we told them.

2 MR. BROWN: Were there any other times
3 where you, as an official staffer, were asked to do
4 campaign work during official work hours?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: No. That was the only
6 time I was part of any of that.

7 MR. BROWN: Did you witness other official
8 staffers being told to do campaign events during
9 official work hours?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: I did not. But again,
11 I sat in my office and did a lot of the case work,
12 so.

13 MS. EISNER: Were you aware that the
14 Congressman was trying to sell the river house?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: No. I found out later
16 that it was -- let me backtrack. I saw For Sale
17 signs there, but I thought those were from him
18 purchasing and they just never came down. They
19 were up there for a significant amount of time.

20 But as I would drive past, you actually
21 have to go over a bridge -- it's hard to explain.
22 The house is kind of surrounded by trees, so you

1 can't see the house from the road. But as you
2 cross over the bridge where the bay is, you can see
3 the back of the house. And he had his big Palazzo
4 flag right there by the bay, and then eventually it
5 was just gone.

6 I thought the river house was still in his
7 name. I probably just found out about two, three
8 months ago that it wasn't in his name anymore, when
9 Lela had mentioned it to me that E. Brian Rose had
10 I guess found out that it was no longer his
11 property.

12 MR. BROWN: Did you have some other stuff
13 on the river house, Helen?

14 MS. EISNER: No. You can continue.

15 MR. BROWN: Okay. How familiar are you
16 with Kyle Palazzo?

17 FORMER STAFFER A: I was not part of Kyle
18 Palazzo at all. I met -- had never met him. He
19 wasn't there when I was in the office.

20 MR. BROWN: Was he living outside of
21 Mississippi at the time you were working for the
22 Congressman?

1 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm not sure. I had
2 actually never heard of him until after I was
3 terminated, and then Lela had explained to me some
4 of the tasks that she was given to work and do for
5 him.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. Sorry. Just bear with
7 me for a second.

8 FORMER STAFFER A: No, you're fine.

9 MS. EISNER: Can I -- I'll actually jump
10 in. There is one other question I wanted to ask
11 about the river house, if I can go back to that for
12 a moment. You talked a little bit earlier about
13 how when staffers would come down from DC they
14 would sometimes be asked to stay at the river
15 house.

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

17 MS. EISNER: I think you mentioned Tyler
18 at some point. Can you go into that a little bit
19 more?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: I wasn't given a whole
21 lot more details than that other than Tyler's going
22 to be in town; he's going to be at the river house.

1 I know Tyler has family here in town, but he's more
2 so in the Hattiesburg area, which is about another
3 hour and a half away. So when he was down here on
4 the coast, I was told that he was staying at the
5 river house while he was here.

6 MS. EISNER: And how often would that have
7 been?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Tyler didn't come down
9 super often. It was maybe every other month that
10 we would see him.

11 MS. EISNER: And when --

12 MR. BROWN: Who knew that he was staying
13 there? Was that Tyler telling you that or somebody
14 else?

15 FORMER STAFFER A: No, I would hear it
16 elsewhere. Leslie would be mentioning it;
17 Bridgette would be mentioning it in conversations
18 as they're doing, you know, the Congressman's
19 scheduling.

20 MS. EISNER: And when he came down every
21 other month, how long would he stay at the house?
22 Or at --

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Just --

2 MS. EISNER: -- how long would he stay in
3 the district?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Usually it was just a
5 couple days. There would have been some kind of
6 event that he was coming down for to help the
7 Congressman, or he would be assisting TJ with field
8 work and they could kind of be tag-teaming doing
9 different regions.

10 MS. EISNER: And why -- why would he stay
11 at the river house?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know. I don't
13 know.

14 MS. EISNER: You said --

15 FORMER STAFFER A: My impression was his
16 family was just a little bit farther away. It just
17 made sense for him to be more local.

18 MS. EISNER: Earlier you said something
19 about people staying at the river house so that
20 they could help the Congressman? I think you said
21 something along those lines.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1 MS. EISNER: What was it about staying at
2 the river house that made it easier to help the
3 Congressman?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was just
5 convenient. The river house is maybe ten minutes
6 away from the Biloxi office, if that. So I think
7 it was just convenient to be able to be close
8 enough to pick up the Congressman and get going in
9 the morning early and do whatever they needed to
10 do. Where as if he was in Hattiesburg, it would
11 have taken him a lot longer to -- you know, he'd
12 have to leave earlier to come down.

13 MS. EISNER: Okay. So that was kind of --
14 that was your impression of the reason that --

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

16 MS. EISNER: Okay. You never heard him
17 say that. Did you ever hear him complain about
18 staying at the river house?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: No. No. I only talked
20 to Tyler when he was in an internship capacity.
21 Once he became an official staffer I'd say hi to
22 him, and it would be kind of cordial, but we really

1 didn't have any discussion.

2 MS. EISNER: Besides Tyler did anyone else
3 stay there that -- when they came down from the
4 district office?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: We would have a couple
6 other staffers coming down, but I -- they were all
7 new. I didn't know any of them. So I wouldn't ask
8 about it and I wasn't really tuned into that --
9 those conversations.

10 MS. EISNER: Okay. Anyone else that you
11 knew of or you heard conversations about as far as
12 them staying at the river house?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Not by name. I knew it
14 was staffers, but I was never given names of who
15 all was there. I knew it was more than Tyler, but
16 I didn't know who.

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

18 MR. BROWN: You've mentioned Lela a couple
19 times. How do you guys know each other?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Just working together.
21 I was actually one of the individuals who
22 interviewed her when she got the pos -- when she

1 was applying for the position. Me and TJ did the
2 interviewing. We gave our recommendation, and then
3 based off of that they decided to hire her. So I
4 did train her in some of the case work, and then
5 once she started doing the projects we really
6 didn't do a whole lot together event-wise.

7 We were friends on social media. Again,
8 after I got terminated I -- I kind of split ways
9 because I honestly thought she was part of the
10 reason. And once she got terminated, she reached
11 out to me and was explaining that's not what it
12 was. We were told not to communicate with you.
13 You know, I wasn't the one who did that. So we
14 were able to kind of air out some of my
15 frustrations against her.

16 MR. BROWN: So you have reconnected since
17 she was terminated. Do you guys have -- like, you
18 know, are you guys friendly? Do you keep -- do you
19 keep up with each other?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: We're friendly. I
21 mean, I wouldn't say we're best friends. We don't
22 hang out on the weekends. We're acquaintances.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

2 FORMER STAFFER A: That's pretty much
3 about as much as it is now.

4 MR. BROWN: I guess I'm curious, how long
5 did you guys overlap in the office? It was a
6 couple months?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: It was a couple months.

8 MR. BROWN: Okay.

9 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't remember -- I
10 don't think she had hit her one year yet by the
11 time I was terminated.

12 MR. BROWN: Was it enough time to get a
13 sense for the kind of work that she did in the
14 office? Because I know you had said earlier in our
15 interview that, you know, when you were there she
16 was still sort of getting her feet wet.

17 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. No, she -- she
18 did very, very well. She had some expertise that I
19 did not, being Army. I was Air Force. She was in
20 the law side of Army so she knew a lot of other
21 things, and she was also part of the Reserves. So
22 I didn't have as much familiarity with that. I

1 would give her those cases.

2 But, you know, we had a couple cases
3 where, for example, one of them was a gentleman who
4 popped positive on a drug test, but the paperwork
5 wasn't done correctly when the military got him
6 out. And it was something just very minute that
7 Lela has experience in that she was able to go back
8 and find it and we got it corrected.

9 She had a very good working relationship
10 with the VA director. Just a -- she had a
11 different temperament than me. I'm -- I'm willing
12 to help anybody, but she is very, you know, I work
13 for the Congressman, this is what we're doing.
14 There's no questions. Not in a bad way, but it was
15 just opposite from me.

16 But her work did speak for itself. She
17 did do very good work. She was turning cases over
18 very well, and it wasn't just, you know, answering
19 phone calls and closing a case. She actually
20 followed through with it.

21 MR. BROWN: And so your impression of the
22 work that she did was positive; she -- she did good

1 work in the office?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely. Yes.

3 MR. BROWN: What were -- what were others'
4 impressions of her in the office?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: They didn't talk --
6 nobody talks bad about her in front of me. I
7 assume it's because they thought we were just
8 really close friends. From my understanding, they
9 thought she was a really hard worker. Michele had
10 told her, you know, you're -- you're doing really,
11 really well. You're probably one of the top
12 caseworkers that's -- I've ever worked with.

13 She did a lot of the extra projects and a
14 lot of the extra events. Because Michele told her,
15 you know, "I have complete confidence in you." And
16 I heard that many times. I don't think it was she
17 didn't have confidence in me, but my role was a
18 little bit different.

19 Lela wasn't fully hired on as a
20 caseworker; she was caseworker, events,
21 coordinator, project manager. I mean, she did a
22 little bit of everything. And Michele made that

1 very clear when she got hired. She would assist
2 me, but she would also be doing a lot of other
3 events relating to military affairs.

4 MR. BROWN: Were you in the office -- Lela
5 was put on administrative leave at some point.
6 Were you in the office at that time?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: No. I was already
8 terminated.

9 MS. EISNER: When you -- you talked a
10 little bit earlier about there being sort of an in
11 crowd and an out crowd in the office. Would you
12 say she was in the in crowd or the out crowd?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: I think she was more in
14 than me, but she wasn't fully there. They did
15 trust her with some stuff, but they I think were
16 still kind of careful in the beginning. By the
17 time I was terminated and me and her reconnected
18 later, it seemed like they gave her a little bit
19 more responsibilities.

20 I know when they changed offices she was
21 part of helping them locate new furniture for it.
22 So I think they trusted her with some stuff, but

1 they were still very careful with some of the more
2 private, personal things. Because Lela was very
3 outspoken. And being that she came from a legal
4 background, she had no problem telling somebody if
5 they were doing things wrong.

6 MS. EISNER: She was outspoken. Do you
7 consider her to be truthful?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

9 MS. EISNER: Okay. What --

10 MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

11 MS. EISNER: What was it you think that
12 they feared about her being outspoken?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Because she -- you
14 know, I -- I do face when I need to really -- when
15 it's going to jeopardize myself or my career, but I
16 kind of keep back and I do what I need to do to
17 take care of me and mine.

18 Lela did that, but she also was very, very
19 outspoken when it came to military members, the
20 veterans. If it wasn't right, it wasn't right.
21 She called out the VA; she called out many agencies
22 for not doing the right thing.

1 So I think because they saw that she was
2 willing to do that there, there was this we need to
3 be careful because she might do it here type of
4 feeling.

5 MR. BROWN: Was this sort of work that she
6 was doing on behalf of veterans appreciated in the
7 office?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Oh, absolutely. At
9 least that's what was being said. Now, if there
10 were side conversations that I'm not aware of --
11 but, I mean, it was coming through not only from
12 her work but the director of the VA was reaching
13 out, the regional director of the VA was reaching
14 out to Michele just saying what great work she's
15 doing. Plenty of people were calling in about it
16 as well.

17 MR. BROWN: And are you hearing this, this
18 sort of stuff, from Lela or are you -- you're
19 getting the constituent calls and you're hearing it
20 from Michele?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm getting it from the
22 calls and I'm hearing the conversations from

1 Michele just telling her how awesome she's doing
2 and what we're -- what we're getting back
3 feedback-wise.

4 MR. BROWN: Did --

5 FORMER STAFFER A: And then also from the
6 individuals as well. I'm sorry to interrupt.

7 MR. BROWN: No, that's okay.

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Mr. Matthews, I had
9 worked with him a few times. There's a couple
10 other representatives at the VA. And I don't
11 recall all their names now, but, you know, many of
12 them would say, You and Lela are like phenomenal.
13 You guys are so, you know, wonderful, and if we
14 could do anything to help you out -- so the
15 impression was from the community as well that she
16 was making moves and doing really good things.

17 MR. BROWN: You know, at any point -- I
18 realize this occurs after you leave the office, but
19 at any point do you learn about why she's put on
20 administrative leave? I assume if you learned that
21 it's probably from her.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: She did mention to me

1 -- I don't recall the reason that we might have
2 talked about for the administrative leave. I know
3 it did happen very shortly after them moving
4 offices and her assisting with all the furniture.

5 We did talk about the prospect that it may
6 have been because of Kyle, her just not wanting to
7 go that route and she started -- it seemed like she
8 was starting to help him get his -- whatever the
9 Congressman was asking. And then when it became
10 something where it was against her morals and she
11 pushed back, that's when every -- from my
12 impression of what her story was, that's when
13 everything started to go downhill.

14 MR. BROWN: Tell me more about this. So
15 at some point you and Lela have discussed her
16 termination and --

17 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

18 MR. BROWN: What did -- what did Lela
19 explain to you about why she was terminated, and
20 what did she explain to you about what she was
21 doing to assist Kyle and why that may have made her
22 uncomfortable, or as I think you said it cut

1 against her morals?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: From what I can recall,
3 Kyle was discharged from the military. Don't
4 remember what the reasons were anymore, but he
5 wasn't in a mental, physical or any state to really
6 be performing in those duties any longer. I want
7 to say I think there was drugs involved, but
8 forgive me if I'm wrong.

9 But I know the Congressman was asking Lela
10 if she could find -- from what she told me -- if
11 she could find a way to reverse what was done so
12 that he could get back into the military. And
13 after she dove a little bit more into the details
14 she told me she just wasn't comfortable. You know,
15 he got out for legitimate reasons and, you know,
16 I'm not going to fight to get somebody back in who
17 shouldn't be in the military.

18 And me and her both, like I said, prior
19 military, even if we're not in like that's our
20 military. And, you know, you don't want somebody
21 who's not up to those standards being in the
22 military, even after you are, because you're

1 passing on that toxic leadership.

2 She, you know, mentioned to me that she
3 felt that was part of the issue of why she was
4 terminated. It was shortly after getting all the
5 furniture. And she said that she felt like she was
6 used just for that purpose, to get a good deal, and
7 then was let go very shortly after everything was
8 moved over.

9 MR. BROWN: What do you -- how did she
10 help get a good deal? What do you mean by that?

11 FORMER STAFFER A: One of her friends owns
12 a furniture business, and when they were first
13 talking about it she had mentioned to them, you
14 know -- I think it's called Southern Charm -- I
15 know somebody who works there. Maybe we can see
16 what kind of furniture they have. And because of
17 her relationship, I know she was able to get a
18 significant chunk of that money taken off of the
19 final purchase price.

20 MR. BROWN: And this is furniture for the
21 district office that moved from Biloxi to Gulfport?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Gulfport, yes, sir.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

2 MS. EISNER: When was it that you first
3 had that conversation with Lela to discuss the
4 issues related to Kyle Palazzo and the furniture?

5 FORMER STAFFER A: It was -- it was
6 shortly after she got terminated and around the
7 same time that Mr. E. Brian Rose had approached us.
8 After Lela was terminated, you know -- she had done
9 all this work to set up a veterans event for the
10 Congressman where he was going to be signing some
11 of these veterans' books, which we both know he was
12 not supposed to be doing that. We had gotten
13 notification that that should have come from the VA
14 themselves or from a representative but not him.

15 However, this event was scheduled, so she
16 asked me if I would go with her. It was going to
17 be some of the signing, then there was going to be
18 a VA booth where you could check on the status, and
19 then a couple other organizations.

20 So I went with her, didn't say anything,
21 but the appearance was -- it was really odd. Mr.
22 E. Brian Rose met us there because he wanted to

1 talk to us. So I did, and I made it very clear to
2 him, you know, I'm -- I'm not willing to go on your
3 show. I'm not willing to speak up about this. I
4 do not want this to be documented, because it's my
5 livelihood. And again, my assumption was if I
6 spoke up I'm -- it could come back on me. And even
7 though enough time had passed, I'm a government
8 employee by this point. So he assured me he
9 didn't. Obviously that was not true.

10 But me and Lela, as we were approaching
11 the entrance all the staffers came outside that
12 were there, Tyler -- I cannot think of her first
13 name -- Ms. Duckworth, she was there. There was a
14 couple other individuals. And forgive me, I don't
15 remember who they were, but they all came outside
16 and they were just asking how we were doing, trying
17 to do some small talk. And they had brought Lela's
18 leftover -- some of her stuff from her office.
19 They had it in a box there for her on the bench.

20 And we went in and we looked around.
21 Because we're both veterans. I mean, we weren't
22 doing anything malicious. We were seeing the

1 event. We very clearly could have been there for
2 our own services, but we had watchful eyes on us
3 the entire event until we left. And that was the
4 first interaction me and Lela really had face to
5 face. And we had talked on the way there, we
6 talked on the phone probably the day before, and
7 she had explained to me everything that had
8 transpired.

9 After she was terminated, Gabbi cut ties
10 with her. She hadn't heard anymore from Gabbi.
11 She had been removed from her Facebook. And we
12 assumed the same thing that happened to me happened
13 to her, that she was just told not to communicate
14 anymore.

15 MR. BROWN: You said something earlier
16 about, you know, Lela explaining that what the
17 Congressman was asking her to do made her feel like
18 it was against her morals. Do you remember anymore
19 specifics on what exactly he was -- he was doing
20 that was making her feel that way?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was just the
22 fact that he was pushing that she help Kyle get

1 back into the military. Based off of what she read
2 and saw from a legal standpoint, it didn't merit
3 him getting back in there. The military did
4 nothing wrong. It was his fault entirely for being
5 kicked out.

6 MR. BROWN: Did she -- did she ever say
7 anything about the Congressman or any of the
8 staffers reaching out to higher ups in the Navy --

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

10 MR. BROWN: Okay. What did she say about
11 that?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: That was part of what
13 he was asking her to do is reach up to our contact
14 at the Navy Headquarters, the individuals that we
15 reach out to as caseworkers, and to fix this where
16 he can join back in, and whatever we needed to do
17 to basically make everything that happened go away
18 so he could re-enlist. And that was where Lela was
19 telling me she just was not comfortable, that was
20 not our role. He got out because he deserved to be
21 out.

22 MR. BROWN: And so you guys are talking

1 about this right after she's terminated, and that's
2 right around the time of this claims clinic that
3 you went to?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. That's what it
5 was called. Yes.

6 MR. BROWN: Right. And that's in roughly
7 February of 2019?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

9 MR. BROWN: How did you come to connect
10 with E. Brian Rose? How did you personally come to
11 connect with him? Was that through Lela?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: It was through Lela. I
13 had -- I never talked to him, but I had been to a
14 few VA funerals. We would sometimes go if it was a
15 funeral of a member who did not have any family.
16 We would go on the Congressman's behalf just to let
17 the family know, you know, the Congressman, you
18 know, sends his condolences.

19 We had two events that the VA was hosting
20 in a pavilion at the cemetery that we went to as
21 well, and one of them E. Brian Rose was there. So
22 I basically knew who he was, but my role was not

1 politics. My role was helping the constituents.
2 So I made sure to separate myself. I didn't want
3 to be part of it.

4 And then after Lela had been terminated,
5 she started reaching out a little bit more to him.
6 I think it was to discuss some of the stuff he was
7 bringing up in his campaign or even after his
8 campaign, just his views and opinions, and they had
9 probably connected that way.

10 He was pushing the I'd go onto his radio
11 show to speak to him on some of these claims. And
12 I made it real clear I would not. I have no
13 problem talking to you right now in person with
14 Lela there, but I didn't want to talk farther than
15 that.

16 MR. BROWN: And did -- do you guys
17 maintain any relationship today or is that really
18 the only time you interacted with him?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: That's the only time I
20 interacted with Mr. Rose.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: So when I found out I

1 was connected to comments that he said I made, I
2 was actually very upset because I did not give
3 permission to release anything. And my name was
4 specifically mentioned in the article that he had
5 published.

6 MR. BROWN: And you said Lela's -- Lela
7 reached out to him in the wake of her termination,
8 right?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know if she was
10 talking to him before, honestly. But I know
11 afterwards she did talk to him quite a bit more.
12 Shortly after she got term --

13 MR. BROWN: What -- what's your
14 understanding of why the two of them were
15 conversing?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: I think she agreed with
17 a lot of what Mr. Rose's perspectives were. He
18 seemed to be more for the veterans than Mr. Palazzo
19 was. Some of their views seemed to line up a lot
20 more. Lela's more on the political side of it than
21 I was.

22 But I know when she left she had mentioned

1 to me she did not take a severance package, she did
2 not want the hush money, and that she was going to
3 make sure that what was not ethical and what was
4 not right got to the right individuals and that the
5 Congressman -- somebody did something about what
6 the Congressman was doing.

7 MR. BROWN: And to take that one step
8 further, she felt like E. Brian Rose was somebody
9 who was worth connecting in that regard -- worth
10 connecting with in that regard?

11 FORMER STAFFER A: Right. Yes, sir. And
12 I'm not sure if he reached out to her first or she
13 reached out to him, but they were conversating.

14 MR. BROWN: Okay. I'd like to just take
15 like a three minute break real quick or just a
16 couple minutes, if that's okay with everybody, and
17 then come back. I think maybe we'll just have a
18 couple additional, you know, maybe --

19 MS. EISNER: Yeah.

20 MR. BROWN: -- ten or fifteen more
21 minutes, if that's okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

1 MR. BROWN: Everybody -- I just want to
2 have a quick chat with Helen, and then I think we
3 can come back and wrap this up.

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

5 MR. BROWN: Does that work?

6 MS. EISNER: Okay.

7 FORMER STAFFER A: That works.

8 MR. BROWN: Why don't we -- five minutes,
9 everybody back on?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

11 (Recess from 7:18 p.m. to 7:24 p.m.)

12 MR. BROWN: So, Former Staffer A, just a
13 couple more questions and we'll try and get this
14 wrapped up.

15 One of the things you mentioned earlier
16 was you went to the claims clinic and a book was
17 being handed out. I think that book was A Time to
18 Honor.

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

20 MR. BROWN: I think you also mentioned
21 something about these books shouldn't have been
22 handed out. Did you say something along those

1 lines?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. When it
3 first --

4 MR. BROWN: What's your understanding of
5 why -- why that was the case?

6 FORMER STAFFER A: When it first came out,
7 we had reached -- I for -- I want to say it was
8 Lela had reached out to get a couple of the books
9 delivered to us so that the Congressman could
10 present them at some of the events that we're
11 doing. We did get a couple of the books, but we
12 were told we had to keep a strict inventory of who
13 got it, when, what date, and who signed it out.

14 So we had a few in our office that we were
15 doing initially that way, and then we got
16 information from -- I want to say it was the VFW.
17 It was one of the individuals who was running it
18 for the region. I don't recall his name, but he
19 had reached out and said that that's not something
20 that the Congressman can do, that they actually got
21 guidance, that it can't come from the Congressman.
22 And we had it in writing somewhere that we couldn't

1 do it.

2 I never visually saw it because I wasn't
3 part of that giving them out process, but it was
4 made aware to us that it's not something the
5 Congressman was supposed to be doing, but he still
6 kept passing them out at some of these various
7 events.

8 MR. BROWN: How was it -- how was the
9 staff made aware that the Congressman or, you know,
10 staffers shouldn't be giving the books out?

11 FORMER STAFFER A: When it was first
12 brought to our attention, we were talking about it.
13 Michele, Lela, were going back and forth with this
14 gentleman -- forgive me, I don't remember what his
15 name was -- but to get more information on it. And
16 then when they finally came to that resolution,
17 that it's not a role for Congressman Palazzo and we
18 shouldn't be giving it out, it was kind of talked
19 about in the office. I could overhear Michele
20 saying it; I overheard Lela talking about it.

21 It wasn't publicized. We didn't have a
22 big old meeting about it. It was just the main

1 people who were part of the military, VA spectrum,
2 knew that it's not supposed to be given out.

3 MR. BROWN: It wasn't --

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Anita Bourn was aware
5 of it as well.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. So it wasn't something
7 in writing, but the staff needed to be aware, was
8 made aware --

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

10 MR. BROWN: -- that this book couldn't be
11 handed out by either the Congressman or by his
12 staffers?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

14 MR. BROWN: And is there -- is there any
15 chance -- you said that you thought it was somebody
16 at the VFW who -- who informed the office that they
17 shouldn't be handing it out? Is that your
18 impression?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I want to say it was
20 the VFW or DAV.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: He's at the very high

1 -- he's one of the individuals that we can go to if
2 we're having any questions or issues. I don't
3 think he has a whole lot to do with the Wounded
4 Warrior program, but I know he's somewhere in
5 there. His office works with them as well.

6 MR. BROWN: Do you know if anyone in the
7 office ever discussed the matter with the House --
8 the House Franking Office or with the House Ethics
9 Committee?

10 FORMER STAFFER A: I -- I remember when it
11 was first talked about that the Congressman
12 shouldn't be doing it. Michele had mentioned that
13 she was going to reach out. I don't know if those
14 discussions were made. But when all was said and
15 done, we found out we weren't allowed to, we
16 actually had to return all the books with our log
17 back to this gentleman. I don't know whether or
18 not that was actually done, but I know it continued
19 to be presented at other events even after that.

20 MR. BROWN: How do you -- how do you know
21 that?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Lela would mention to

1 me that, you know, we were taking these books out
2 there. I saw them taking them. I heard Michele
3 mention, "Don't forget to grab some of the A Time
4 for Honor books for the Congressman."

5 MR. BROWN: And this is all after
6 everybody had been alerted that they shouldn't be
7 doing this?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay.

10 FORMER STAFFER A: So I assumed that there
11 was a loophole or they found some way to make it
12 work, because I wasn't told anything after but it
13 was continuing.

14 MR. BROWN: Okay. Do you ever remember
15 Colleen Kennedy being talked to about these issues?

16 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't remember if she
17 was talked to about it. I know Patrick was in on
18 the conversations, but I'm not sure about Colleen.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. I did not have anything
20 else on A Time to Honor.

21 The only other question I have for you
22 just really quickly is you mentioned TJ Moran a

1 couple of times at the beginning of this interview.
2 What exactly was TJ's role in the office as you
3 understood it?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: He was one of our field
5 reps. So I know he worked with a lot of the
6 community partners for the Congressman. He would
7 set up some of the events that the Congressman
8 would go to such as like the blessing of the boat.
9 He would schedule stuff to meet up with like the
10 sheriff's department when they would have events
11 for the Congressman to come out.

12 MR. BROWN: And what sort of relationship
13 did he have with the Congressman?

14 FORMER STAFFER A: He didn't seem to be
15 like a very close relationship like Leslie and the
16 Congressman had. It did seem professional, but it
17 did also seem when the Congressman needs something
18 done we make it happen.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. All right. I think
20 that's -- that's it for me.

21 MS. EISNER: I just have a few, few more
22 questions and I think we're almost done. We won't

1 take anymore of your time.

2 When you talked with Lela about her
3 departure from the office, did she ever raise any
4 issues regarding emails that he had with [audio
5 cuts out] or officers? Was that something that you
6 talked about?

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Can you repeat that
8 last part? Your connection was going in and out.

9 MS. EISNER: Yeah, sure. So when you
10 talked with Lela about her departure, did she talk
11 about any emails that she exchanged with
12 stakeholders or with officers?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: She did not make
14 mention of any of those to me.

15 MS. EISNER: Okay. Did she have a
16 relationship with any sort of -- you talked a
17 little bit about the strong relationships she had.
18 But any relationships with sort of senior officers
19 at Keesler Air Force Base?

20 FORMER STAFFER A: She did work a lot with
21 -- I don't remember who was it -- the deputy -- the
22 wing deputy? The wing commander. Because some of

1 our case work went that way. But she was also
2 working a few other issues such as the Housing
3 Department, Hunt Housing, they were having issues.
4 She went to a few town halls where she was
5 interacting with the deputy commander of the wing.

6 MS. EISNER: Were you ever aware of any
7 allegations of an inappropriate relationship she
8 might have had with any of those individuals?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: No. No. I'm trying to
10 think. I want to say Captain [REDACTED] might have been
11 another name. If I'm getting it correctly, he
12 would have been the exec in that office. I know
13 they talked, you know, obviously professionally on
14 that relationship. But, you know, they would joke
15 a little bit in the conversations, and that was as
16 far as I knew it went. I do not know of any other
17 relationships unprofessionally outside of that.

18 MS. EISNER: What about a Captain [REDACTED]?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I never heard of a
20 Captain [REDACTED].

21 MS. EISNER: Okay. I just have one other
22 question. Jeff, is there anything you want to add?

1 MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

2 MS. EISNER: So I just want to kind of
3 bring it back to the beginning when you were
4 talking about your departure from the office and
5 that one comment that you heard that Leslie had
6 said which was along the lines of just we want you
7 to keep your mouth shut.

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

9 MS. EISNER: What -- what was it that she
10 was referring to? What didn't she want you to talk
11 about?

12 FORMER STAFFER A: She didn't want me to
13 create a stink in the community or cause any issues
14 that were going to come back on the Congressman.
15 Basically to just shut up and color and continue on
16 with my life and leave the Congressman alone. But
17 it was more of a defensive like "my" Congressman
18 alone, if that makes sense.

19 MS. EISNER: Okay. So it was -- it
20 wasn't --

21 FORMER STAFFER A: It felt like it was
22 more of a pers -- like I was more going to be

1 personally attacking her if I said anything about
2 my time or if I tried to bash the Congressman in
3 the media afterwards.

4 MS. EISNER: And was there something
5 specific that she knew that you knew that she
6 thought you had the ability to bash the Congressman
7 about?

8 FORMER STAFFER A: No, nothing specific.
9 I think it was just in general. I know prior to me
10 leaving I want to say Angeline (phonetic) Fair or
11 -- I want to say her name's Angeline. She ended up
12 getting a position at the Navy Station. I wondered
13 after I was terminated if something very similar
14 happened to her. I was told that she had
15 separated. She got a different position.

16 But when I met her at one of the events,
17 the imp -- the feeling I got from her is it was
18 more of a termination and she had kind of bitter
19 feelings about it. We had talked about Bridgette
20 and, you know, some of the stuff that I was getting
21 trained on. And she was like, yeah, just be
22 careful. And that was about as much as I was told.

1 MS. EISNER: Besides sort of Angeline and
2 Lela and, you know, what you've told us about the
3 way in which you were asked to leave the office --

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

5 MS. EISNER: -- is there anyone else in
6 your time in the office that you heard of that
7 would have had a similar circumstance occur to
8 them?

9 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm trying to think.
10 Mr. Ladner left on good terms. I think his entire
11 time there was very professional. He was a field
12 rep as well. But, you know, a prior colonel in the
13 military, he was by the book and did a very good
14 job. I never heard anything ever bad.

15 [REDACTED] left very suddenly. I didn't know what
16 it was for at first, and then I was told he was
17 getting a position with some Marine inst -- I don't
18 know what the name of it is, but Michele used to
19 work there for them previously. So I figured maybe
20 her connections she got him a job.

21 [REDACTED] left very suddenly, and then I
22 was told she's just doing part-time work. She's

1 only going to work on certain things for the
2 Congressman. She'll be back for the campaign
3 season. So we didn't see her for a time period,
4 but when we did she was either working campaigns or
5 she was working on the academy stuff.

6 I found -- I was told later from Lela --
7 because, again, I wasn't in the circle. I guess
8 there was an event that happened. They got a bit
9 too intoxicated, which was the norm. When I went
10 to two events it was kind of well known that
11 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both drink pre-game and then drink
12 heavily at some of these events -- but that an
13 advance was made by [REDACTED] in an elevator and it was
14 reciprocated by [REDACTED]. And then later on she
15 denied it, said that that's not what happened, and
16 that she said something to the Congressman so [REDACTED]
17 was terminated.

18 So I was told he was terminated because of
19 that unprofessional relationship, but I'm not sure
20 what happened to [REDACTED], why she went on
21 half-time and -- I understood that she got employed
22 somewhere else but she was still doing stuff on the

1 side for the Congressman.

2 MR. BROWN: You were told that about [REDACTED] by
3 Lela?

4 FORMER STAFFER A: With what had happened,
5 the details of that event, yes. But I knew he was
6 terminated and the way it was done. After I left
7 it looked very similar to me because it was one day
8 he was there, everything's good, and then the next
9 day he got a new position at this particular
10 institute, and he's going to be starting there
11 Monday so this is his last day. It was a very
12 quick transition. But there was no talks of it
13 beforehand that he was even looking.

14 MR. BROWN: Anything else there, Helen?

15 MS. EISNER: No. I don't think. Do you
16 have any further questions?

17 MR. BROWN: I -- just to wrap it up,
18 Former Staffer A, I want to say thank you again for
19 taking the time to speak with us. I always want to
20 give witnesses in your position an opportunity to
21 talk, you know, about anything else that you feel
22 like maybe we didn't ask you questions about that

1 you expected us to ask questions about or if
2 there's anything you felt like you wanted to or
3 needed to elaborate on.

4 FORMER STAFFER A: No. I mean, I think we
5 pretty much covered a lot of it. You know, my
6 personal feeling is that there is an unprofessional
7 relationship between Leslie and the Congressman,
8 maybe not an intimate, sexual relationship, but I
9 feel like she is very close and protects him, if
10 that makes sense. She does a lot of stuff for him
11 in whatever capacity.

12 I had heard rumors from Lela about her and
13 his brother having a relationship. I'm not aware
14 of that. I know she has had relationships with men
15 while I worked there that turned very stalker-ish,
16 just in her personal life just doing unethical
17 stuff period.

18 Bridgette, I don't know, I felt like her
19 and the Congressman were on a very good close
20 relationship until Michele got there. So I don't
21 know necessarily if Michele did a whole lot
22 unethical. I didn't see a lot of that. I wasn't

1 privy to those conversations.

2 I do feel like there was a lot of you
3 scratch my back I scratch yours. I know Michele's
4 son or daughter got out of the military and Lela
5 helped them do that. It wasn't unethical. It was
6 just wrapping that up. And then her child got a
7 position of -- as a congressional staffer
8 elsewhere.

9 Again, I think it was more if you're not
10 part of the in crowd, you know, you're not going to
11 do very well, stay for very long.

12 MR. BROWN: I think the only other thing
13 I'll ask you is, is there anybody else that you
14 feel like, you know, given the things that we've
15 talked about today and the issues that appears
16 we're -- we're discussing, is there anybody else
17 you feel like that we should speak with or might
18 want to speak to us about these issues?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know how much
20 you would get from TJ if I offered TJ. I feel like
21 there's still that level of protection almost. And
22 I think part of it's because some of the stuff he

1 was doing it wasn't supposed to be done. You know,
2 he was doing stuff outside of his parameters.

3 The only person, like I said, I could
4 think of is Angeline, Angelina (phonetic), because
5 I just didn't get the vibe that she just up and
6 quit to go and get another position. I really felt
7 like she was terminated. But I never had a
8 conversation with her outside of that.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. Anna, did you have
10 anything else?

11 MS. ELLSION: No, thank you.

12 MR. BROWN: Well, then, Former Staffer A,
13 I will just repeat our thanks. Again, I'm sure
14 this is not how you expected or wanted to spend
15 your Friday evening, but we appreciate you taking
16 the time to speak with us.

17 One thing I will close by saying is just,
18 you know, I'm sure you and Helen have talked about
19 the confidential nature of this investigation, so
20 we do ask you to keep this confidential, you know,
21 both for the sake of the investigation and for the
22 sake of the individual who is under investigation.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

2 MR. BROWN: So I understand you appreciate
3 that, and again thank you for taking the time to
4 speak with us. With that I think we can end the
5 recording.

6 MS. EISNER: So let's stop the
7 transcription.

8 (Off the record at 7:43 p.m. EST)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER - E-NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, Kevin Kiser, the officer before whom the
3 foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify
4 that said proceedings were electronically recorded
5 by me; and that I am neither counsel for, related
6 to, nor employed by any of the parties to this
7 case and have no interest, financial or otherwise,
8 in its outcome.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
10 hand and affixed my notarial seal this 4th day
11 of August 2020.

12

13 Notary Registration No.: 7637508

14 My Commission Expires: 9/30/2024

15

16 *Kevin James Kiser*

17

18

19 Kevin Kiser, Notary Public

20 for the Commonwealth of Virginia

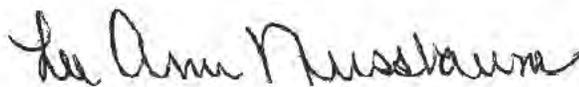
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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, Lee Ann Nussbaum, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record of the recorded proceedings; that said proceedings were transcribed to the best of my ability from the audio recording and supporting information; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this case and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.



LEE ANN NUSSBAUM, CET
Certified Electronic Transcriber
August 4, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject to the Nondisclosure Provisions of H. Res. 895 of the 110th Congress as Amended

ERRATA SHEET

Page	Line	Correction	Reason
5	21	"Sports" should be "Support"	
13	13	"branch" to "office"	Reads like I am speaking about military branch
9	4	"Hass" should be "HOSS"	
11	1	"before time had passed" should be "before he passed"	
17	8	"her" should be "me"	
23	14	"after" should be "to"	
23	15	"PI" should be "PII"	
35	18	"enfolded" should be "unfolded"	
36	15-16	Remove sentence "I got my SF-50..."	I thought I received it but didn't
42	21	extra "in"	
56	11	"but he did have a couch in his office"	I recalled incorrectly, he had 2 chairs and not a couch at this office
57	7-14	remove sleeper sofa conversation	I recalled it from my conversations with Lela, not not have at Biloxi office

This errata sheet is submitted subject to 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (commonly known as the False Statements Act).

Witness Name:

Witness Signature:

Date:



EXHIBIT 10

The Honorable Steven Palazzo
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Re: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
Review No. 20-2124

(8) All documents and communications related to services Kyle Palazzo provided to Palazzo for Congress and efforts made to establish the fair market value of such services.

Affirmation of our firm –

Kyle Palazzo was employed as a political coordinator for Palazzo for Congress to support the 2018 general election and to maintain campaign continuity of operations for the 2020 election cycle. In his employment with Palazzo for Congress his responsibilities included:

- Attending and speaking at public and political events as a representative of Palazzo for Congress;
- Volunteer coordination for door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, and get-out-the-vote efforts;
- Coalition building;
- Sign maintenance, delivery, installation, and storage;
- Monitoring and advising on south Mississippi political activity;
- Reelection planning;
- Assisting in managing 11072 Old Highway 67, Palazzo for Congress campaign office.

His pay was commensurate with responsibility and consistent with the pay of others that have been employed by Palazzo for Congress since 2010.

EXHIBIT 11

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Interview of
FORMER STAFFER B,

⋮
OCE Review
20-2124
⋮

Mobile Videoconference Interview of
FORMER STAFFER B
Conducted Virtually
Wednesday, July 29, 2020
10:28 a.m.

Job No.: 310896
Pages 1 through 173
Reported by: Peggy L. Dingle

1 Mobile videoconference interview of
2 FORMER STAFFER B, conducted virtually:

3

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8 Pursuant to agreement, before Peggy L.
9 Dingle, E-Notary Public of the State of Maryland.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS
(OCE) OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

JEFFREY BROWN, ESQUIRE

HELEN EISNER, ESQUIRE

Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE)

of the U.S. House of Representatives

425 3rd Street, Southwest

Suite 1110

Washington, D.C. 20024

(202) 225-9739

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Pawela, video

technician

Anna Ellison, (OCE) law clerk

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E X H I B I T S

(Attached to the Transcript)

FORMER STAFFER B INTERVIEW EXHIBIT	PAGE
1 Not identified	171
2 Lease	171
3 Not identified	171

1 PROCEEDINGS:

2 MR. BROWN: This is Jeff Brown with the
3 Office of Congressional Ethics. With me is my
4 colleague Helen Eisner. Also with us is our law
5 clerk Anna Ellison.

6 We are undertaking a video interview
7 of Former Staffer B this morning. It is about
8 almost 10:30 a.m. on July 29th, 2020. Former
9 Staffer B has been given a copy of the False
10 Statements Warning and signed the Acknowledgement
11 prior to today's interview.

12 And with that, we will just jump into
13 things, Former Staffer B.

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

15 MR. BROWN: It's okay if I call you
16 Former Staffer B, I assume?

17 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes, that's fine.

18 MR. BROWN: So, Former Staffer B,
19 you -- you don't work for Representative Palazzo
20 anymore, but you are currently employed
21 somewhere?

22 FORMER STAFFER B: I am not.

Transcript of Former Staffer B
Conducted on July 29, 2020

6

1 MR. BROWN: You are not. Okay. Let
2 me ask you, you -- you served in the military.
3 Are you -- are you currently active duty?

4 FORMER STAFFER B: I am not active
5 duty, no.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. Reservist?

7 FORMER STAFFER B: No.

8 MR. BROWN: Okay. So you -- you were
9 previously on active duty, but -- but no longer?

10 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

11 MR. BROWN: Okay. I should say thank
12 you for your service.

13 FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, thank you.

14 MR. BROWN: You -- you worked for
15 Representative Palazzo. What was the -- what was
16 the time frame in which you worked for him?

17 FORMER STAFFER B: Of course you asked
18 me that and I am going to draw a blank.

19 MR. BROWN: Just -- just roughly.

20 FORMER STAFFER B: 2000 -- January --
21 might have been February 2018 to -- it was
22 February 2018 to January 2019.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

2 FORMER STAFFER B: And those are
3 estimates. I don't 100 percent know.

4 MR. BROWN: I am not great with dates
5 either. So I understand.

6 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

7 MR. BROWN: Your -- your role, what
8 was your -- what was your title when you worked
9 in Congressman Palazzo's office?

10 FORMER STAFFER B: I was the Wounded
11 Warrior Fellow. So I was -- I was a Wounded
12 Warrior Fellow. So I specifically worked with
13 military and veteran -- and, actually, when I
14 first got there I was to shadow another employee
15 and just kind of assist and put on military
16 events, but then I completely took over all of
17 the veteran constituents so -- veteran and
18 military constituents. So I became the Veteran
19 Constituent Liaison.

20 MR. BROWN: Okay. You worked in
21 the -- you worked on the official side in the
22 official office. Did you have any role on the

1 Congressman's campaign?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: I did not.

3 MR. BROWN: And so fair to say then
4 your major responsibilities for you were being a
5 liaison to veterans and sort of being a case
6 worker for all current military and veteran
7 affairs?

8 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

9 MR. BROWN: And just tell me, how did
10 you get hired?

11 FORMER STAFFER B: I had a friend
12 contact me and say, Hey, you would be perfect for
13 this job.

14 And I was like, Okay.

15 They said, It's a fellowship. You
16 should look at it.

17 So I looked at it. And in the
18 meantime another person wrote me and said, Hey, I
19 have talked to people in Congressman Palazzo's
20 office and told them that you are a voice for
21 veterans and you are the perfect candidate for
22 this job and you should email this person, which

1 was Michele Gargiulo, who is the District
2 Director.

3 And so I did that. And she said, Go
4 on and complete the U.S.A. Jobs Application. And
5 I explained to her that I did and I had submitted
6 it.

7 And so then she called me and we had a
8 phone conversation and then we did an in-person
9 interview, which I thought I was going to meet
10 with Michele, but I met with Jessica, who was
11 actually the Veteran Constituent Liaison at that
12 time, and T.J. Moran, who was the field rep.

13 So I had my interview with them and
14 then were told, you know, Hey, if you move to the
15 next step, we will have an in-person interview.
16 So then I went to a lunch with all of the local
17 staff.

18 And then about two weeks later -- we
19 kept getting ice storms so it kept getting pushed
20 back -- I met with the Congressman face to face
21 in the office. And there were several other
22 people that were supposed to be interviewed, but

1 he told Michele right on the spot that he wanted
2 to hire me and start me that day.

3 MR. BROWN: Okay. And who was your --
4 who did you directly report to in the office?

5 FORMER STAFFER B: Michele.

6 MR. BROWN: Michele. Okay. And you
7 worked out of the Biloxi office originally and
8 then the Gulfport office?

9 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. I was --
10 actually, when I was hired -- and -- and I said
11 Michele, but, technically, Anita Bourn out of the
12 Hattiesburg office is who I was supposed to
13 directly report to because she is over all of
14 constituent services, but it was more Michele
15 because I ended up doing a lot of the projects.

16 MR. BROWN: Okay.

17 FORMER STAFFER B: But, yes, I
18 started in the Biloxi office. And when I was
19 hired I was supposed to start -- I chose to go to
20 Biloxi and then go to the Pascagoula office three
21 days a week, but that never happened, so...

22 MR. BROWN: So you worked out of

1 Biloxi originally alongside Michele and then
2 Gulfport later when the offices moved to
3 Gulfport?

4 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

5 MR. BROWN: You are a Wounded Warrior
6 Fellow, but you work in Congressman Palazzo's
7 office. Explain to me how that works.

8 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. So I was --
9 so my understanding, and it's still very
10 confusing, I was -- all my interview process was
11 with the direct office, Congressman Palazzo's,
12 but for paperwork purposes and paper purposes I
13 was employed by Chief Administrative Offices and
14 I -- I had two program liaisons that were over me
15 that I would check in with. I would, you know,
16 submit my mileage, if I had issues, if I needed
17 business cards, I would report to them and check
18 in with them. But other than that, day-to-day it
19 was -- go ahead. Sorry.

20 MR. BROWN: And I was just going to
21 say that's Mac Tolar and Solomon Jennings are the
22 two individuals you just referred to?

1 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

2 MR. BROWN: Okay. Sorry.

3 FORMER STAFFER B: That's okay.

4 That's it. I mean, that's -- that's the best I
5 can explain it.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. So the hiring
7 process occurs through the Congressman's office,
8 all the interviews are with folks in the
9 Congressman's office, but you are sort of in some
10 ways checking in with the staff at the Wounded
11 Warrior Fellowship?

12 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

13 MR. BROWN: Is that -- is -- your
14 contact with the Wounded Warrior Fellowship
15 employees Mac and Solomon, is that formal in any
16 way or is that sort of more of an informal
17 connection?

18 FORMER STAFFER B: I think it's really
19 just, you know, they are there to support you,
20 but day-to-day it's, you know, you really need to
21 work with the people that you are working
22 directly with. They are kind of there if some

1 issues do arise.

2 Like, I know one time I was venting to
3 them. They -- you know, there have been
4 officials where they have told me, Hey, this is
5 official, and but it's, I mean, a lot of email
6 exchange, a lot of text message exchange. Very
7 rarely do you ever get them on the phone. So I
8 guess that's kind of --

9 MR. BROWN: I gather that they run an
10 extensive program in which they place a large
11 number of veterans and then they are sort of
12 there as a support network for those vets,
13 veterans?

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct, that's
15 exactly it.

16 MR. BROWN: Having gotten some of
17 those preliminaries out of the way, you know,
18 just a little bit more about your background. I
19 would like to jump in to some more specific
20 issues and the one place I want to start, because
21 it sounds like it might be a good place to start,
22 is why did you end up leaving the Congressman's

1 office?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: I was terminated.
3 So I was actually at home with my son, who was
4 sick. He had a hundred and -- it's been over a
5 year. So I think it was over a hundred and
6 (inaudible) --

7 THE COURT REPORTER: Excuse me.

8 (Thereupon, a brief off-the-record
9 discussion occurred, and the interview continued
10 as follows:)

11 MR. BROWN: So, Former Staffer B, you
12 were saying you were terminated and you got a
13 phone call when your son had a fever.

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. So I was
15 home. It's kind of a weird story, but I was -- I
16 had arranged a veterans' Claims Clinic and I had
17 set up where the Jackson VBA, so the Veterans'
18 Benefit Administration, was going to come down to
19 Pascagoula and I had got the Elk's Lodge and we
20 were going to help veterans with their claims --
21 one-day claims processing. And then I had
22 arranged for nonprofit organizations, as well as

1 the VA Medical Center, to be there to set up and
2 help veterans any way that they could.

3 So my son was sick and I told Michele
4 I was going to try to get somebody to watch him.
5 And she said, Can you have a phone call at, I
6 believe it was, 10:00 o'clock.

7 And I said, Yes. So at 9:58 I said,
8 Am I calling you or are you calling me? And
9 before I could even push send, my phone rang and
10 it was Michele. And Michele asked how my son was
11 and I told her.

12 And then immediately Mac came on the
13 line and told me that I was terminated and it was
14 effective that day but that, you know, there
15 could be a severance package offered. And, of
16 course, I became upset because I knew where this
17 was coming from.

18 And so I became upset, plus my child
19 was screaming and crying in the background, and I
20 I told them, I said, I can't even hear this
21 conversation. And they told me it was based off
22 an email that I had sent to a stakeholder. And,

1 you know, I said, What stakeholder? I asked
2 questions.

3 And Mac told me, Listen, there is
4 nothing you can say or do. Your best bet is to
5 stay quiet.

6 And, you know, I ended up hanging up
7 the call because I couldn't hear, I had my child
8 was screaming and I was very -- you know, very
9 upset because I worked my tail off in that office
10 and it's still very, very emotional.

11 Those veterans were like my children.
12 You know, I had over 300 cases. I had Vietnam
13 veterans that wouldn't open up to their family
14 that would come in and sit down and talk to me
15 and I connected with those veterans. I cared
16 about those veterans and I took care of them.

17 And, you know, to have them stripped
18 from me and never be able to make contact with
19 them or make sure that they were taken care of
20 was just -- I was so shocked. And so I did; I
21 became emotional.

22 You know, and I tried to talk to Mac

1 and say -- and he told me he was in the office,
2 that he was in the Gulfport office and then,
3 actually, he had been in town a week ago to do
4 this. And so he said, You know, there is nothing
5 you can do. And that's how I was terminated.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. I think what I
7 would like to do -- that was a really helpful
8 explanation. I understand, you know, when you
9 said you knew where it was coming from that, you
10 know, you said to us in some prior communications
11 that you think it -- this all resulted from your
12 speaking up about a special favor that the
13 Congressman was seeking from the Secretary of
14 Navy.

15 So if it's okay with you, what I would
16 like to do is just unpack some of what you just
17 said and maybe we can walk through it step by
18 step sort of in line with some of the materials
19 that you sent us. Would that be all right?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. Before I do that,
22 the one thing I want to ask you is, you know,

1 generally in your emails you refer to a RE Code.

2 That's a Re-enlistment Code, right?

3 FORMER STAFFER B: (Former Staffer B
4 nodded.)

5 MR. BROWN: Okay. And, you know, just
6 generally I am hoping you can spend a minute or
7 so talking about how one is assigned a -- did you
8 say an RE Code or Re-enlistment Code?

9 FORMER STAFFER B: It's an RE Code.

10 MR. BROWN: Okay.

11 FORMER STAFFER B: And it's based off
12 of -- it's actually based off of the Regulation
13 and, obviously, the U.S. Code, but it's -- it's
14 based off of their reasoning in your
15 characterization of your service. So I was a
16 military paralegal. So that's what I did. I did
17 separations.

18 But an RE Code is assigned based off
19 of your service or if you had honorable service
20 and if they would ever want you or you would ever
21 be eligible to come back in the Service.

22 So somebody that, you know, is --

1 reached their ATS date -- I don't know if you
2 know what that is, but that's their expiration
3 term of service. So if they have reached that,
4 they are going to be able to come back in no
5 problem. They have had honorable service.

6 Somebody that has been kicked out for
7 things like fraudulent enlistment or drug use,
8 they are going to have an RE Code that either --
9 I can't -- because my mind is a little -- I am
10 going to be honest, I am a little nervous and I
11 am a little overwhelmed with all of this, but
12 there are certain RE Codes that you can get a
13 waiver. So I think it's a two. I don't
14 remember, to be honest with you. But certain RE
15 Codes you can get a waiver.

16 And what that is is you go to their
17 recruiter and you -- you know, you ask for, Hey,
18 I require a waiver; can you go forward? And some
19 they require, like, a medical and some they
20 require, you know, that they prove that they have
21 gone through drug rehab.

22 The RE Code that Kyle Palazzo had is

1 non-waiverable. It is we don't want you in the
2 Service; you are not welcome in the Service ever
3 again.

4 MR. BROWN: Okay. Let me -- let me
5 stop you for one second. You know, I have looked
6 online and it looks like the -- the Navy has an
7 entire -- you know, there is the Naval Discharge
8 Review Board website that outlines this process.
9 That's the place you would be looking to
10 understand how this process works and it sort of
11 out -- outlines all the steps that you, on behalf
12 of Kyle, would have needed to -- to go through in
13 order to -- to -- to try and get that RE Code
14 adjusted?

15 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes and no. It's
16 kind of -- so I hate to be so detailed because I
17 know you really all don't want to spend millions
18 of hours on the phone, but I kind of need to
19 explain.

20 So an RE Code, your Re-entry Code, you
21 can't just ask the Navy, hey, change my RE Code,
22 unless you are Congressman Palazzo. But, okay,

1 so by law and by Regulation, you cannot ask the
2 Navy to change your -- to up your RE Code so that
3 you are waiverable. You cannot do it.

4 What you have to do is prove that the
5 way that you got your Code. For Kyle's -- for
6 Kyle's situation he was given a fraudulent
7 enlistment. Okay? So that's what he was
8 separated under was fraudulent enlistment.

9 What they would have had to do is
10 argue that because he was a brand new individual
11 into the Navy he should have been given -- he
12 could have been given or should have been given
13 an entry-level separation. Instead of banning
14 him for service altogether, they could have given
15 him an entry-level separation, given him the
16 opportunity to rehabilitate and have the chance
17 to serve again. That's to show that there was
18 unjust reasoning and that there was clerical
19 error in the separation that he was given. Once
20 they can get that changed, then they can request
21 the RE Code to be changed.

22 I know that's very confusing. I

1 probably just confused you.

2 MR. BROWN: No, no, that's okay. I --
3 I -- I -- you know, I spent some time on the
4 Naval Discharge Review Board site and it -- it --
5 it outlines a pretty detailed process by which
6 you go about doing these things.

7 So I -- I guess the only thing I
8 wanted to confirm was that is -- you know that --
9 that website and that eligibility process, those
10 are the sorts of things that you would be looking
11 at when you are trying to assist Kyle or any
12 other vet -- veteran that's trying to do this
13 sort of stuff?

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

15 MR. BROWN: Okay. With that out of
16 the way, let me -- let's -- let's dive into
17 the -- the situation with Kyle. And so how did
18 you first become aware of or come to assist Kyle
19 with his Re-enlistment Code issues?

20 A The Congressman came into my office
21 and said, Can you come here? I went into his
22 office and there was a young man sitting there

1 that I had never seen in my life. And he said,
2 Close the door. And, you know, I just -- I
3 closed the door and I set there.

4 And he said, Okay, before I say
5 anything, let me remind you of confidentiality
6 and, you know, nothing that is said in this
7 office leaves this office.

8 And I said, Yes, sir. And, of course,
9 I was a little confused because I had no idea who
10 this guy was.

11 And then he introduced him and said,
12 You have met my little brother Kyle before?

13 And I said, No.

14 And he said, Okay. Well, this is my
15 little brother Kyle and he, you know, had some
16 trouble in the Navy. And he said, I want him to
17 be able to serve in the Mississippi National
18 Guard with me and I think if there is anybody
19 that can make this happen, it would be you.

20 And I said, Okay.

21 And he said, I am not going to go in
22 to the details of it. I will let Kyle let you --

1 you know, tell you the story and give you all the
2 details. So I would like for you to take Kyle in
3 your office, sit down with him and he can explain
4 to you everything that has happened with him and
5 we can go from there and you can handle it.

6 And I said, Yes, sir. And so Kyle
7 came into my office and he explained to me that
8 the day before he left for, I call it basic
9 training but I think the Navy calls it boot camp,
10 but that he did, I want to say, it was cocaine.
11 And I can't remember, to be honest, right now.
12 It's been a year and some change, so. And I
13 said, Okay.

14 And he said, As soon as I got to
15 reception, he said, I got notified and called in
16 and told that I had popped hot.

17 So when you go to ship out for the
18 military you go through what's called MEPS and
19 that's the Military Entry -- Entry Processing
20 System like where they do all your physical and
21 they make you do a urinalysis. That is the
22 urinalysis that he tested positive on. By the

1 time he made it through his unit, with the
2 traveling they had already -- he said it was two
3 days later they notified him. And so then he was
4 quickly processed out and separated.

5 So I explained to him that -- you
6 know, I asked him, I said, You know, what -- what
7 is the thought process here?

8 And he said, I don't know. You know,
9 the Congressman seems to think that, you know, we
10 can get this fixed. I have been through, you
11 know, some rehab and he is going to get some
12 generals and some higher-ranking people to write
13 me letters of recommendation.

14 And I said, Do you have your DD214? Do
15 you even have a DD214?

16 And he said, I don't know what I have.
17 So I told him the first step would be for us to
18 request his records because there is a separation
19 packet. No matter how long you are in, there is
20 a separation packet. They have to -- you have
21 been enlisted, you know, through the MEPS. You
22 are property of the military at that point and so

1 the fact that he made it to his duty station they
2 would have had to separate him.

3 So we talked about ordering that and I
4 needed him to go online and do that. I couldn't
5 do that for him, plus there was documents that he
6 needed to fill out.

7 So we started that process and in the
8 meantime I had explained to him that, you know,
9 while we waiting for these documents you are
10 going to want to -- any rehab documentation that
11 you are talking about, this MEPS. But I
12 explained to him at that point that, you know,
13 this isn't just asking the Navy to change your RE
14 Code.

15 But I went over with him, you know,
16 about the entry-level separation and that they
17 could have processed him out of the military that
18 way and we would have to go that route about it.

19 So do you want me to go further into
20 it? That's kind of how I...

21 MR. BROWN: That -- that is -- that was
22 very helpful. Let me unpack some of that.

1 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

2 MR. BROWN: So as I understand it, the
3 first time that you are approached about this
4 assisting Kyle it occurs during your work hours
5 in the Congressman's office, again, during your
6 official hours?

7 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

8 MS. EISNER: And can I just ask on that
9 point if you know approximately when that would
10 have been? You don't need to know the specific
11 date, just what, you know, month or generally
12 when that would have occurred?

13 FORMER STAFFER B: I don't, but -- I
14 don't know if I forward documentation when I was
15 put on the administrative leave, but it was about
16 a month before that.

17 MS. EISNER: Okay. So I think would
18 that have been sometime in the early fall,
19 September or August of 2018?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: It was actually
21 right before the Election because I -- I had to
22 wait for the -- for the Election to be finished

1 to go back. So --

2 MR. BROWN: In an earlier --

3 FORMER STAFFER B: -- I don't --

4 MR. BROWN: In an earlier

5 submission -- in an earlier submission to us you

6 said it was around October of 2018. Does that

7 sound about right?

8 FORMER STAFFER B: That would be about

9 right. I just -- like I said, I don't know --

10 actually, it would be because I remember I was

11 texting with Kyle around my son's birthday and

12 that's in November. So that would be around that

13 time frame, yes.

14 MR. BROWN: Okay. So the first

15 request, again, this occurs in the Congressman's

16 office. This is in the Gulfport office?

17 FORMER STAFFER B: This is in the

18 Biloxi office.

19 MR. BROWN: Biloxi office. Okay. And

20 this is -- there is no implication that this is

21 a -- a volun -- you know, that you are

22 volunteering to do this or anything like that?

1 This was an ask of you in your official capacity?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

3 MR. BROWN: Okay. You started talking
4 a little bit about you -- you had an initial
5 conversation with Kyle in which you -- he
6 essentially told you the story about how he was
7 kicked out of the -- the Navy. So you learn --
8 you learn all this stuff by Kyle telling you
9 about it.

10 Did you ever see any documentation on
11 all that? In other words, I am trying to
12 understand, you know, you learned he was kicked
13 out for cocaine and he had an RE Code 4. Did --
14 did you ever see any documentation about that or
15 was that just a conversation with Kyle?

16 FORMER STAFFER B: So we requested
17 Kyle's military records and they came back with
18 two sheets and one of them did confirm that.

19 The other thing is there was
20 Angeline -- I cannot remember her last name, and
21 I believe she was -- she was not hired as a
22 Wounded Warrior, but she worked as a veteran --

1 she had attempted to start the process with him.

2 And I can't remember the name of the
3 system we used to track -- you know, keep track
4 of all of our cases and input all of our
5 documentation, but in there I could see where she
6 had contacted the Department of Navy to try to
7 get his records and there was notes in there.

8 MR. BROWN: And the notes said what?

9 FORMER STAFFER B: That she was trying
10 to assist him to get his RE Code changed. It
11 didn't go into detail as far as what his RE Code
12 was. The documentation that we received back did
13 confirm that he was kicked out and that it was a
14 fraudulent enlistment.

15 I can't tell you right now exactly
16 what it was, but I do believe he had -- it wasn't
17 a DD214, but it was still a separation document.
18 And I don't know -- I would have to look up what
19 they call it, but he did not have a DD214.

20 MR. BROWN: Okay. And so during that
21 initial conversation with Kyle he told you that
22 it was drug-related discharge and that he has

1 since gone to rehab?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

3 MR. BROWN: Okay. In the submission
4 you sent to us -- again, I am going to ask you
5 about dates and I know I am not good with dates
6 and I don't mean to put you on the spot here, but
7 you said --

8 FORMER STAFFER B: That's okay.

9 MR. BROWN: -- the discharge -- his
10 discharge occurred in 1998. I think that -- that
11 Kyle's, you know, roughly 32 years old now. So I
12 am guessing it wasn't 1998. Is it possible that
13 that date's off?

14 FORMER STAFFER B: I believe it
15 actually -- he was -- I think he was 17. Like,
16 he was really young. This was -- this was quite
17 a long time ago. So if I said that right around
18 the time that I was -- my original email to that
19 office was right after I was terminated and I had
20 emailed multiple people about it. So it would
21 have been fresh in my head.

22 Today I couldn't tell you what date

1 that would be. But if that email was sent back
2 then, then that would be the correct date.

3 MR. BROWN: Let me -- let me ask you a
4 follow up. You said I think her name was
5 Angeline was somebody who was also working with
6 Kyle. Do you know Angeline's last name?

7 FORMER STAFFER B: I don't. I don't.

8 MR. BROWN: This is somebody who
9 worked in the Congressman's Biloxi and/or
10 Gulfport office?

11 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

12 MR. BROWN: Okay.

13 MS. EISNER: Is it -- is it possible
14 that -- I am sorry to interrupt, Jeff -- the last
15 name is Delgado-Francis?

16 FORMER STAFFER B: That sounds right,
17 correct.

18 MR. BROWN: Okay. And so you said
19 Angeline had sort of started this process but
20 it -- it -- it hadn't gotten anywhere by the time
21 you got on board?

22 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct, correct.

1 And I don't know, you know, how long she worked
2 on it. The only thing -- and that was Kyle
3 telling me and then there was a little -- in the
4 system that we use, like I said, there was just a
5 little note that she had asked his records to
6 assist with his RE Code, but there was no detail.
7 And all that was is just the transmission to the
8 Department of the Navy requesting his records,
9 and I don't know if she ever got them back.

10 I don't think she did because when we
11 got the documentation back for Kyle we literally
12 got about two documents and we were both shocked.
13 I mean, I did separations and I can tell you a
14 separation packet is not two documents. So we
15 were both shocked.

16 And based off of his reaction of only
17 getting the two documents, I don't think they
18 ever did receive them from when Angeline had
19 requested them.

20 MR. BROWN: Let me back up again for
21 just one second to unpack something that you said
22 previously. You said when the Congressman first

1 approached you about this he called you in to his
2 office, said, Close the door, and then he made a
3 mention about keeping this confidential.

4 What's your understanding of why he
5 is -- he is telling you that this should all be
6 kept confidential?

7 A Well, he did go into detail of, you
8 know, this is -- this is, you know, a family
9 matter. It is confidential. You know, I don't
10 want everybody to know Kyle's business. And --
11 and he went into the whole anything that happens
12 in this office doesn't leave this office.

13 So, you know, respecting, one, Kyle's
14 privacy and, two, you know, we always -- we did
15 that for any constituent. You are not supposed
16 to go home and talk about, you know, their
17 situations with your family or anybody or, you
18 know, call up and talk to, you know, anybody else
19 about situations that come up.

20 So but I think, you know -- and -- and
21 I can -- I am going to elaborate on that a little
22 bit. When I was put on administrative leave I

1 had put Kyle's name in there because in order to
2 keep track of all the cases I had put his name in
3 there and just said that I was working a case.
4 Everybody knew that I was working a case for Kyle
5 that the Congressman had had me do.

6 And Anita Bourn had contacted Michele
7 and asked, Hey, Former Staffer B's, got this case
8 in here. It says that it's for Kyle. Do you
9 want me to do it?

10 And Michele had called the Congressman
11 and he told her, No, nobody is to touch that
12 case. Wait until Former Staffer B gets back.

13 And so it was -- even the Privacy
14 Release Form, you know, I did have Kyle fill out
15 a Privacy Release Form because, you know, to get
16 the information from the Department of the Navy I
17 had to have a copy of that, but I didn't keep any
18 copies of that. I got rid of it immediately
19 because we had to put, you know, what we were
20 doing on that.

21 So I took extra -- extra steps to try
22 to make sure that everybody in the office wasn't

1 made aware because that is a personal matter
2 that, you know, you don't really -- you can't
3 control what your family member does, but it
4 could negatively affect, you know, the
5 Congressman and, plus, Kyle doesn't want
6 everybody to know his business. So I tried to
7 make sure that, you know, all tracks were covered
8 with that.

9 MR. BROWN: Did you in any way
10 understand his request to keep this situation
11 confidential to relate to the fact that he would
12 have been doing something inappropriate on behalf
13 of his brother?

14 FORMER STAFFER B: No. And to be 100
15 percent honest, I believe at the time that he
16 made that statement he had full faith that I was
17 going to take care of it, I was going to do it,
18 it was going to happen overnight and he just
19 wanted it done behind the scenes without, you
20 know, everybody in the office knowing.

21 I don't -- and this is -- this is just
22 based off of all of the -- everything that

1 happened, I don't think when he made that
2 statement that it was because he was going to go
3 directly to the Secretary of the Navy and I think
4 it was just, Hey, if anybody can do this, you can
5 do this, but keep-it-quiet type thing.

6 MR. BROWN: You also mentioned that
7 the Congressman said -- said something along the
8 lines of he was going to have some military
9 personnel write favorable letters on Kyle's
10 behalf. Can you elaborate on that at all?

11 FORMER STAFFER B: Kyle told me that
12 he was -- that -- every -- everybody who refers
13 to -- everybody besides myself refers to the
14 Congressman as Boss. So that's who I am talking
15 about when I say Boss is the Congressman.

16 He said, The Boss says that, you know,
17 he is going to get letters from generals and
18 colonels to submit on my packet. And that was
19 actually one of the reasons that everything got
20 held up is because there was never any of these
21 letters came forward.

22 MR. BROWN: Well, let's get --

1 let's -- let's jump ahead and get to that. So my
2 understanding --

3 MS. EISNER: But, Jeff, can I -- can I
4 just jump in and ask a question, which is you
5 were having quite a bit of interaction with Kyle
6 at that point of time. What was Kyle doing
7 professionally and -- I mean, did you get a sense
8 of where he was employed or what was happening in
9 his life at that point in time?

10 FORMER STAFFER B: Kyle randomly
11 showed back up to the area and I was told, you
12 know, from him that he had a very successful
13 painting business in Alabama, didn't have a place
14 to live, was staying at the River house that was
15 in D'iberville and he did not have a job. It was
16 mentioned that he came to help take care of the
17 parents, but he didn't have a job, didn't have a
18 place to stay and just randomly showed up one
19 day.

20 MS. EISNER: And how frequently were
21 you in communication with him during this period
22 of time?

1 FORMER STAFFER B: When it first
2 started we would communicate quite a bit just --
3 and we would talk, you know, kind of personally.
4 You know, I think he felt comfortable with, you
5 know, hey, this -- she knows a lot of my
6 business.

7 And, actually, on my son's birthday he
8 asked to come over to my house and I said no.
9 And that was kind of when it was a little
10 awkward. You know, it's like, uh, you are, you
11 know, the Boss's brother and I am not trying to
12 hang out with you, plus, I don't know you and the
13 only thing I do know about you isn't great
14 information, but I am trying to help you.

15 And so we would text, you know, about
16 just random stuff. He told me he had a daughter
17 and that. But he would come into the office --
18 it started out he was very -- not in the office
19 that often, but when we moved, then he came in
20 the office all the time. He started working in
21 the office and he was going to events just about
22 daily.

1 MS. EISNER: And that was when the
2 office moved to the Gulfport office? That was
3 the transition point?

4 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

5 MS. EISNER: Okay.

6 MR. BROWN: Let me -- let me ask you
7 this, Former Staffer B. So you begin helping
8 Kyle, as I understand it, in or around October
9 2008 and this is the sort of stuff --

10 FORMER STAFFER B: Didn't come out.
11 Sorry.

12 MR. BROWN: Sorry to --

13 FORMER STAFFER B: Go ahead.

14 MR. BROWN: So this -- the assistance
15 to Kyle begins in or around October of 2018, as I
16 understand it. You are requesting his separation
17 packet materials at that time. You are also
18 trying to put together his -- you know, I think
19 there is the initial application, which I think
20 is the DD293? Is that what you are referring to?

21 FORMER STAFFER B: I don't remember
22 the document numbers now, but what -- what the

1 only -- it would have been a DD293. The document
2 that I would have sent forward to reflect his
3 records from the Department of Navy I can't
4 remember whether it would be a DD293 request.

5 MR. BROWN: I think the DD214, as I
6 see it on their site, is the document that you
7 would submit in order to request
8 separation-related records and then there is a
9 separate document, sort of like an application,
10 that you have to prepare, in which I think you
11 would attach, like you said, letters of
12 recommendation from folks.

13 But that's -- I guess all I am trying
14 to ask at this point is those are the issues that
15 you are working on in October, November, December
16 of 2000 --

17 FORMER STAFFER B: Yeah.

18 MR. BROWN: Okay.

19 FORMER STAFFER B: Those are the --
20 those are the items I am trying to gather to be
21 able to submit. The only thing that was actually
22 submitted was the request for records.

1 MR. BROWN: Right. And as I
2 understand from one of the submissions you sent
3 to us early on was that, you know, you had sent
4 an email to Kyle, I assume from your official
5 account, listing all the things and all the steps
6 that he needed to take in order to start get --
7 getting this process rolling?

8 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. And then it sounds
10 like, from, again, the submission that -- that
11 you -- you had sent us shortly after this all
12 occurred, in or around January of 2019 the
13 Congressman and some others got back involved in
14 Kyle's case. And I am specifically referring to
15 it sounds like in about January of 2019 you said
16 the Congressman contacted you about Kyle's
17 Privacy Release Form. What -- what happened
18 there?

19 FORMER STAFFER B: So I got a phone
20 call. And I very rarely ever got phone calls
21 from the Congressman. And so I -- I answered it
22 and he said, I need Kyle's Privacy Release Form

1 sent to me.

2 And I said, I didn't maintain a copy
3 of that, sir.

4 And he said, You don't have it in --
5 again, I can't remember the name of the program
6 we used, but where we upload all of our --

7 And I said, No, sir, I didn't keep
8 that to try to keep privacy and I didn't want it,
9 you know, around the office.

10 And he said, Okay.

11 Before I could hang up the phone, Kyle
12 had called me on my cell phone and said he was
13 (inaudible) -- sorry. I had another call come
14 in.

15 MR. BROWN: Yeah, I think we -- we
16 probably missed just the last couple seconds of
17 that. So if you could, restart.

18 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. So the
19 Congressman called me, asked about the Privacy
20 Release Form. And then before I could hang up --
21 you know, I explained I didn't have it. Before I
22 could hang up the phone, Kyle called me on my

1 cell phone, asked if I was in the office and then
2 he appeared in the office. And he shut the door
3 and said, What is going on?

4 And I said, I don't know. You tell
5 me. And I said, All I know is that the
6 Congressman has asked for your Privacy Release
7 Form. And I said, I did not keep your Privacy
8 Release Form.

9 And he said, Okay. Well, I am
10 supposed to get one.

11 And I said, Well, here is the form.
12 You can fill it out.

13 And he said, What is going on? And he
14 showed me the email traffic with Patrick Large,
15 the Congressman, and Kyle was, I guess, cc'd on
16 it, where he was going to go directly to the
17 Secretary of the Navy and ask for this RE Code.

18 He -- Patrick Large had an appointment
19 with the Secretary of the Navy and had been
20 communicating with the Secretary of the Navy's
21 Office to go and sit down and request for Kyle's
22 RE Code to be changed.

1 And I told Kyle, I am not okay with
2 this. And I said to him -- I explained, I said,
3 Kyle, if we do this and somebody gets wind of
4 this, I said, it's not going to be good, I said,
5 especially because people are already -- this
6 will lead in to another issue, but I said, People
7 don't believe that your brother served and, you
8 know, there is lots of accusations out there that
9 he doesn't drill.

10 And I said, And people are all on top
11 of his military -- you know, his National Guard,
12 I said, and then all of a sudden your name pops
13 up and people are going to start looking at how
14 you randomly got into the Mississippi National
15 Guard.

16 And I said, We would not do this for
17 any other constituent. And I told him, I said,
18 We need to go about this the right way and I
19 don't want to be involved in this.

20 And he said, I know. I know. I am
21 just -- I got to get the Privacy Release Form. I
22 don't know. I don't really agree with it,

1 either. I hear what you are saying.

2 And I said, Well, here is the Privacy
3 Release Form. If you want to fill it out and
4 send it to him, go right ahead, but I do not want
5 to be involved in this process.

6 So I was in my office when we had that
7 conversation. And the more and more I thought
8 about it, I became really upset because I knew it
9 wasn't the right thing to do, two, I spent just
10 about, I mean, 12 to 13 hours a day helping
11 veterans and we would never do this. And trying
12 to get the Congressman to help any veteran that
13 truly deserved help was never something that we
14 would do. And just because you are his brother
15 doesn't mean you should, you know -- and so I
16 really got concerned.

17 And so I went outside and I called
18 Michele --

19 MR. BROWN: Can -- can I interrupt
20 you --

21 FORMER STAFFER B: -- and I told
22 her, I said --

1 MR. BROWN: Former Staffer B, can I
2 just (inaudible) --

3 FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, I am sorry.
4 You are really quiet.

5 MR. BROWN: Sorry. Let me just
6 interrupt you (inaudible) --

7 FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, you know why?
8 I know what happened. Hold on one second. I
9 can't hear you. Okay. Go ahead.

10 MR. BROWN: I just -- I wanted to
11 interrupt you before you got to the conversation
12 with Michele and I wanted to unpack a little
13 bit --

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Yup.

15 MR. BROWN: -- what you said there.
16 Let me just start with this. So as I understand
17 it, Kyle came in to your office. And when he was
18 in your office did he have a copy, like a
19 physical copy, of the email string?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: It was on his cell
21 phone. He pulled out his cell phone and said,
22 What is this and what -- he said, What the hell

1 is going on?

2 He was pretty -- he was pretty -- you
3 know, he was confused as to what was going on and
4 why he was being ordered to come in -- you know,
5 in to the office and get a Privacy Release Form
6 and I don't think he really understood the aspect
7 of requesting that meeting with the Secretary of
8 the Navy really meant. And so that's where he
9 was kind of like, What the hell is going on? He
10 showed it to me not realizing that probably
11 shouldn't have showed it to me.

12 MR. BROWN: So you looked on Kyle's
13 phone and you saw a copy of an email exchange
14 between the Congressman and Patrick Large and
15 somebody in the Secretary of the Navy's Office?

16 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

17 MR. BROWN: Can you tell us -- I -- I
18 know it's been a while, but just what do you
19 remember about -- what -- what specifics do you
20 remember about that email string?

21 FORMER STAFFER B: They were simply
22 requesting an appointment with that office to

1 talk to them about getting Kyle's RE Code
2 changed. The exact wording I couldn't tell you,
3 but that's -- that's what the email was -- that
4 was what the request was.

5 MR. BROWN: And so that was sent from
6 Patrick Large to somebody in the Secretary of the
7 Navy's Office?

8 FORMER STAFFER B: That -- to be
9 honest with you, I cannot remember if it was the
10 direct email to the Secretary of the Navy's
11 Office or it was the -- him telling the
12 Congressman that he had requested it. Does that
13 make sense?

14 MR. BROWN: Yeah. I guess what I am
15 trying to figure out is, you know, sort of what
16 exactly was conveyed to the Secretary of the Navy
17 versus what was the understanding between Patrick
18 and the Congressman or Patrick, the Congressman
19 and Kyle. Does that -- does that make sense?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. So, I
21 mean, really all they -- I mean, really what they
22 were doing is asking to come in to sit down to

1 get Kyle's RE Code changed and to discuss Kyle's
2 RE Code with the Secretary of the Navy, and that
3 meeting specifically would have been held by
4 Patrick Large. Does that make sense?

5 MR. BROWN: Yeah. No, that does. And
6 so, you know, there -- in other words, in that
7 email there was specific -- to the Secretary of
8 the Navy there was a specific ask for a meeting
9 and it was -- it was clear that that meeting was
10 going to be about Kyle Palazzo and that the
11 meeting would involve changing his RE Code?

12 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

13 MR. BROWN: Helen, did you have
14 anything there?

15 MS. EISNER: Yeah, just one thing. In
16 your time as a Wounded Warrior Fellow had you
17 ever seen any other direct communications with
18 the Secretary of the Navy on behalf of any
19 constituents or anyone who was seeking help from
20 the Office?

21 FORMER STAFFER B: Give me one second.

22 (Thereupon, a brief off-the-record

1 discussion occurred, and the interview continued
2 as follows:)

3 FORMER STAFFER B: But when I would
4 send out requests for -- for constituents, that's
5 who you contacted the Secretary of the Navy for
6 certain things. But, let's be honest, that is --
7 just like with the Congressman, that's a --
8 that's a -- you know, a populated -- prepopulated
9 doc -- you know, stationery. That's not an
10 actual the Secretary of the Navy has officially
11 addressed that. You know what I mean?

12 That's -- that's like when you
13 write -- well, that's like if a constituent came
14 to the Congressman, I would send him those
15 letters, but it has the Congressman's signature
16 on it.

17 So I got several responses from the
18 Secretary of the Navy but no direct email with
19 the Secretary of the Navy requesting a meeting to
20 sit down with the Secretary of the Navy.

21 MS. EISNER: Okay. So the difference
22 between a form letter and something that's been

1 personalized?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. And there
3 is no email -- I mean, when we would email, we
4 had liaisons that we would email with and they
5 probably weren't even anywhere near that office.

6 But, yes, I mean, it's a completely
7 different office. Where it's very direct, this
8 is more of a process that I would go through.
9 Does that make sense?

10 MR. BROWN: So to be clear, this was
11 not an email to a -- you know, a sort of
12 prepopulated inbox or to one of the liaisons in
13 the Office? This was an email to the Secretary
14 of the Navy for personnel management issues?

15 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. This
16 was -- this was a request for a meeting to sit
17 down face to face to discuss this RE Code in
18 confidence for -- for Patrick on behalf of Kyle
19 to -- well, not really on behalf, but to speak
20 about his RE Code.

21 MR. BROWN: And I assume this was sent
22 from Patrick's official accounts, his official

1 email accounts?

2 FORMER STAFFER B: And -- and that's
3 the part that I can't -- I saw an exchange and --
4 but, yes, all of it was on their personal -- I
5 mean, their professional accounts discussing
6 this.

7 So what I am saying is is I can't
8 remember if I saw the actual email, like the
9 first email was the email directly to the
10 Secretary of the Navy's Office, or if it was the
11 exchange of him sending it -- their response to
12 the Congressman to say, you know, I am going to
13 give the appointment, only because it's been
14 quite a while. But I know that the request was
15 made and that's what the email exchange was
16 about.

17 Does that make sense? I am sorry. I
18 am probably confusing you.

19 MR. BROWN: No, that does make sense
20 and -- and, you know, we are just trying to nail
21 down the details. And I understand it's been a
22 while, so I -- I -- I certainly understand if

1 it's hard to remember each and every specific
2 detail we may be asking you.

3 FORMER STAFFER B: I just don't want
4 to make -- I don't want to make a statement that,
5 you know, is not exactly what I saw. I mean, I
6 know that the detail of the email was -- of the
7 email exchange was we are requesting a meeting
8 with the Secretary of the Navy to discuss Kyle's
9 RE Code.

10 So, you know, who the first email was
11 to and all that, that's the part I can't 100
12 percent sure, but I know that there was a request
13 made to the Secretary of the Navy for that
14 meeting.

15 MR. BROWN: And -- and -- and that
16 email string may have later included
17 conversations between Patrick and the Congressman
18 about that request?

19 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

20 MR. BROWN: Okay. So I interrupted
21 you previously and you were starting to talk
22 about how you saw that email and the email, you

1 know, upset you because you didn't think it was
2 appropriate and that you then called Michele. So
3 please elaborate on what your conversation with
4 Michele entailed.

5 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. So I went
6 outside the building and I told Michele. I
7 called her and, you know, I started out by saying
8 to her, You know that I am working on something
9 for the Congressman.

10 And she said, I do.

11 And I said, And I know all about, you
12 know, the privacy and this and that. And I said,
13 But at this point I don't care, I said, about
14 that. If I get fired because of this, I don't
15 care because, I said, this is risking all of our
16 jobs.

17 And I told her, I said, Michele, I
18 respect you and I respect your position and I
19 don't -- I think all of us will be on the line if
20 somebody gets wind of this.

21 And she was like, Well, where are you
22 at right now?

1 And I said, I am outside of the
2 office.

3 And she said, Why don't you drive down
4 the street?

5 So I got in my car and I drove down
6 the street to talk to her and I explained to her,
7 you know, what was going on and this and that.
8 And I, you know, told her, I said, Michele, we
9 would never do this for another constituent and,
10 you know, I was working all this stuff for him.
11 So I said, I don't know why all of a sudden the
12 rush, what's going on, but I am not okay with
13 this.

14 And I, you know, told her, I said, if
15 this happens, somebody is going to look into it
16 because the entire State of Mississippi talks
17 about how the Congressman does not do his drills
18 and how he is No-Show Palazzo when it comes to
19 the Mississippi National Guard.

20 And I said, Imagine when you add
21 another Palazzo to the ranks, that's going to
22 raise eyebrows and people are going to start

1 investigating.

2 And I said, If they come back and find
3 out that our office went directly to the
4 Secretary of the Navy, got his RE Code changed
5 without going through any process, even though he
6 has an RE Code that is not waiverable, we are
7 toast. Like, we are done. Our careers are over.

8 And I said, You know, if me coming to
9 you about this I end up losing my job, I don't
10 even care because, I said, this is wrong. And we
11 had a very long, probably couple-hour-long
12 conversation.

13 And she told me she agreed, that she
14 didn't think it was right and that we wouldn't do
15 it for any other constituents. And she told me,
16 Continue doing what you are doing. Continue
17 gathering the documentation for his packet the
18 same -- drive on with what you were doing.

19 And She said, You know, sometimes you
20 can't tell the Congressman what to do and, you
21 know, this is the way that he wants to do this.
22 We just kind of have to sit back and -- and --

1 and let it happen.

2 And I was like, Michele, it's wrong.

3 And she said, It is, but just continue
4 driving forward.

5 So in the meantime she told me that
6 she had major concerns with why Kyle was suddenly
7 back in the office and that she thought that he
8 was potentially on drugs.

9 I apologize. My seven-year-old is
10 interrupting give me one second.

11 (Thereupon, a brief break was taken,
12 and the interview continued as follows:)

13 MR. BROWN: And, Former Staffer B, I
14 will -- I will let you continue on.

15 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. I couldn't
16 even remember where I was.

17 MR. BROWN: Do you want me to remind
18 you where we were?

19 FORMER STAFFER B: No. I drove down
20 the street and Michele raised concerns. I
21 remember now. Sorry. My son threw my head off a
22 little bit.

1 So Michele said that she had some
2 concerns with Kyle and that she felt like he
3 could possibly be on drugs. He was spending a
4 lot of time in the office and he was -- was being
5 sent to a lot of events to represent the
6 Congressman.

7 And she -- you know, he was also doing
8 work on the new office and it was the -- the move
9 was originally supposed to happen and then it got
10 postponed and then so he was doing a lot of work
11 in the office as far as taking stuff down off the
12 walls or moving things and he would go to events.
13 He was kind of, essentially, a field rep, but
14 there was never an official title put on that.
15 And Michele said --

16 MR. BROWN: Let me --

17 FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, go ahead.

18 MR. BROWN: Let me interrupt you one
19 second. So he is doing official work in the
20 official office?

21 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes. Let me back
22 up a little bit. When I was asked about the

1 communication with him, he did tell me at one
2 point -- he emailed me -- no, he text me and
3 said, Hey, I am taking over Bridgette, Bridgette
4 Jones, who used to handle -- I believe she would
5 campaign. She -- she would come and go a lot.
6 She had been -- she had quit. She was full-time,
7 quit, came back and then was gone again.

8 And he said, I am taking over her
9 email. So if you are going to email me, you can
10 email me on that.

11 So at that point I assumed he was, you
12 know, working on the campaign side. But he would
13 go to a lot of events and -- sorry.

14 (Thereupon, a brief break was taken,
15 and the interview continued as follows:)

16 FORMER STAFFER B: So she told me that
17 they had gone to an event in -- I want to say it
18 was in Jackson. Michele had gone and she had
19 explained to me that Kyle was going to go to the
20 event, as well. And so she had asked him if he
21 wanted to ride together. And they did not ride
22 together -- maybe they did ride together. I

1 can't remember the -- the actual details of that.

2 But Leslie Churchwell -- Bridgette had
3 gotten a job elsewhere and she was going to be at
4 this event was in Jackson. And Leslie had been
5 out for several days with strep but ended up
6 going to -- she missed a day of work but ended up
7 going to that event, as well.

8 And Michele either went with Kyle or
9 was supposed to meet up with Kyle and on several
10 points he would disappear for long periods of
11 time and she wasn't able to make contact with
12 him.

13 And so she told me, she said, Former
14 Staffer B, I have concerns that, you know, he
15 is -- he is back on drugs, like, you know, just
16 from his behavior is erratic and weird.

17 And I told her, I said, Well, Michele,
18 I don't -- I don't like drama, I don't like
19 gossip, but him and Leslie are an item and, you
20 know, that's where they were at.

21 And that's when, you know, I
22 explained, Well, everybody knows that Leslie went

1 to that event and her and Kyle are an item. So
2 of course he is going to disappear before you
3 drive him back to the hotel because he doesn't
4 want you to know, you know.

5 And then so, anyways, we had that long
6 discussion and she told me she felt she wasn't
7 part of the in crew and that we needed to be
8 careful and this and that. And, you know, that
9 was it. And I told her -- you know, and she
10 thanked me for telling her and bringing it to her
11 attention.

12 But she did tell me, You know, we
13 really just got to do what the Congressman asks
14 us to do and you continue driving forward with
15 what you think is right and that way, you know,
16 we would have -- you would have the paperwork to
17 back yourself up of, you know, this is you were
18 doing the appropriate steps.

19 MR. BROWN: Well, let me -- let me ask
20 you this. You have this conversation with
21 Michele and then, as I understand from the
22 submission you sent us later, I think it's two

1 days later Kyle sent you a text. Can you tell us
2 about the text and what that said? Or do you
3 need me --

4 FORMER STAFFER B: I don't remember
5 that.

6 MR. BROWN: Do you need me to jog your
7 memory a little further?

8 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

9 MR. BROWN: Yeah, I think you -- you
10 stated -- two days later, after you had a
11 conversation with Michele, you said, I received a
12 text from Kyle stating I guess he -- I believe
13 the he is the Congressman -- decided to go about
14 it the right way.

15 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. That I do
16 remember. Okay. So there is a little bit of
17 story that has to go with that to understand that
18 whole aspect.

19 I think the very next day after I had
20 that conversation with Michele she explained to
21 me that she was trying to get in touch with
22 somebody with the Department of the Army because

1 her son, who either was a lieutenant or a
2 captain, was requesting to get out of the Army
3 early because the Congressman had offered him a
4 position in his office in D.C.

5 And I told her, I said, Michele, I
6 don't know why you would try to do this on your
7 own. I make things happen. Let me handle it.

8 And she said, I don't know why I
9 didn't ask you, but you are right. Go ahead. If
10 you think you can handle it, handle it.

11 Within 24 hours or maybe it might have
12 been 48, it was within a few days, he had orders
13 and was able to separate from the military. And
14 Michele had apparently been working on this for a
15 long time.

16 And so she told me that she had told
17 the Boss that, you know, Former Staffer B is a
18 beast. She was able to get -- I can't remember
19 his name, her son -- out of the Army. She made
20 this happen. I have been trying to make this
21 happen. She made this happen in less than -- I
22 will say -- 72 hours.

1 And after that, that's when I received
2 the message from Kyle. And then Michele had --
3 Kyle told me that the Congressman had forwarded
4 the response from the Secretary of the Navy to
5 Michele. And Michele and I had a big, long
6 conversation about that.

7 And she said, I truly think that when
8 I told him you were a beast that's when he
9 decided that he should let you handle this.

10 Well, no, it was because the Secretary
11 of the Navy's letter came back and said this is
12 the process of how you go about requesting an RE
13 Code change. And I don't -- I -- I want to say
14 that this email was actually sent from my
15 personal email, but I can't -- I know that I got
16 an email either a day or two later from the
17 Congressman asking me, you know, what was my
18 thought on their response.

19 MR. BROWN: Before we get to that --

20 FORMER STAFFER B: And I explained --

21 MR. BROWN: Before we get to that --

22 FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, sorry.

1 MR. BROWN: -- Former Staffer B, can I
2 interrupt for one second?

3 FORMER STAFFER B: Yeah.

4 MR. BROWN: I want to ask -- I want to
5 unpack some of that.

6 FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

7 MR. BROWN: The text from Kyle where
8 he said something along the lines of, I guess, he
9 decided to go about it the right way, what was
10 your understanding of what Kyle was trying to
11 convey with that text?

12 FORMER STAFFER B: That he was no
13 longer going to request for the Secretary of the
14 Navy to just change -- do a personal favor and
15 change his RE Code.

16 MR. BROWN: In other words, it
17 would -- it was now the -- the thought that --
18 that we would go about it the right way through
19 the formal channels?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. That,
21 Former Staffer B, the way that I was -- the way
22 that I was originally approaching it is how we

1 would continue to drive forward --

2 MR. BROWN: Okay.

3 FORMER STAFFER B: -- and go about it
4 the right way.

5 MR. BROWN: And then you mentioned
6 there is a letter from the Secretary of the Navy.
7 Is this letter that you were forwarded and you
8 saw, correct?

9 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

10 MR. BROWN: Okay. Is this letter a
11 direct response to what we were talking about
12 earlier, the request from Patrick and the
13 Congressman for a meeting?

14 FORMER STAFFER B: Yes. So that
15 letter was -- it was a formatted like it would be
16 a -- like the letters that I would have sent out,
17 like a form letter, but very detailed information
18 of the process and the steps that needed to be
19 taken.

20 MR. BROWN: So it wasn't an -- it
21 wasn't an -- it wasn't an email that was a
22 response to Patrick? It was a formal letter sent

1 to the office, but it was -- it was certainly in
2 response to Patrick's and/or the Congressman's
3 request?

4 FORMER STAFFER B: I -- I mean, to be
5 honest with you, I think that the letters would
6 look the same. I am just saying that it wasn't
7 like an email. It was an actual, like -- like
8 the letters that I would send out. It looked
9 exactly the same, the letterhead, that, you know,
10 block. It was -- it was a very official letter,
11 not just an email response. It was -- it was a
12 very official letter saying these are the
13 appropriate steps that need to be taken for this
14 to happen.

15 MR. BROWN: So as I understand then,
16 this is sort of the Secretary of the Navy's way
17 of saying what you asked for would not be
18 appropriate; here is the appropriate way to go
19 about it?

20 FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. I interrupted you.
22 You were starting to talk about the fact that the

1 Congressman came to you, was it in your office,
2 later to talk about all of this --

3 FORMER STAFFER B: No, it was an
4 email -- it was an email and he asked me what
5 was -- you know, what -- what's your opinion of
6 the response from the Secretary of the Navy.

7 And I explained to him that it was
8 exactly what I had tried to explain to Kyle and
9 that's why we were taking those steps, that in
10 order to get his RE Code changed or even attempt
11 to get his RE Code changed we would have to first
12 get his separation changed.

13 And, you know, I told him and I
14 think -- and this is just me assuming, but I was
15 a paralegal in the military. I have a huge JAG
16 family, you know. And I told him that I asked,
17 you know, without any names or any scenarios or
18 telling them, you know, anything about that, that
19 I had talked to some of my JAG lawyers that --
20 you know, and asked them do you think fighting to
21 say that he could have received a entry-level
22 separation where he could have rehabilitated and

1 given the opportunity to come back into the
2 military was the right way to go, and that they
3 had all advised that yes.

4 And I -- I believe, and I -- this is
5 speaking from memory, that I even sent him the
6 actual Army regulation or Navy regulation --
7 sorry. I sent him a couple different Navy
8 regulations, I do remember, ways that we could
9 approach this. And that was the -- I never got a
10 response from him.

11 MR. BROWN: Just real quickly, what
12 are your thoughts on the likelihood that Kyle
13 would have been able to be successful in -- in
14 regards to changing his RE Code?

15 I mean, when I am on the Secretary of
16 the Navy's website and I am looking at this
17 stuff, I -- you know, I saw some stuff on there
18 that said like, you know, the Discharge Review
19 Board has no authority to upgrade a discharge for
20 the sole purpose of enhancing re-enlistment
21 opportunities and that they don't have the
22 authority to upgrade a discharge based solely on

1 the passage of time or of good conduct subsequent
2 to leaving Naval service.

3 When I read these sort of things and
4 I -- I hear you talk about Kyle's situation, it
5 seems to me like this is definitely an uphill --
6 uphill fight.

7 A Correct. I mean, it is -- in my
8 opinion, it was not going to happen, but, you
9 know, that -- and that Board is created for
10 people who are -- you know, you get -- obviously,
11 I did a lot of military justice. You get victims
12 of military sexual trauma who then have a mental
13 breakdown and then get separated. You know, they
14 get punished for the behaviors that they are
15 displaying while they are going through all this
16 and mental health stuff and they end up getting
17 kicked out of the military, you know, with an
18 other than honorable discharge because, you know,
19 they have gone off the deep end and done some
20 crazy stuff.

21 And -- and that's really what -- what
22 that Board is for, where this situation is

1 somebody who truly was -- their entire situation
2 wasn't looked at and they were separated and it
3 was unjust and, you know, somebody needs to take
4 a -- a second look at it. That's really what
5 it's intended for.

6 So people just wanting to come back in
7 the Navy after they have, you know, been kicked
8 out is very -- I mean, even -- even some of these
9 cases where, you know, women, you know, get
10 orders to deploy and they just had a baby and,
11 you know, they don't want to leave their baby so
12 they go AWOL for a few days, you know -- there
13 is just situations where it's -- it's a lot
14 different situation than, hey, I did drugs, lie
15 about doing drugs and, you know, two days into
16 the military I was kicked out and now all of a
17 sudden my brother wants me to serve because he
18 thinks that it would be good for me. You know, I
19 just don't -- I know that's a very detailed, long
20 explanation.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. Very, very helpful.
22 So I -- I think what I would like to do next is