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EXHIBIT 6
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
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
228-207-5138 Fax

WWW.PALAZZOTAX.COM

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EXHIBIT 8
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 <jsoileau@breazeale.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2020 2:31 PM
To: Steven Palazzo <spalazzo@breazeale.com>
Cc: Paul Breazeale <breazeale@breazeale.com>
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
Office Manager
Breazeale, Saunders & O'Neil, Ltd.
120 North Congress Street, Suite 300 (39201)
Post Office Box 80
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
Telephone: (601) 969-7440
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Interview of FORMER STAFFER A, conducted virtually.

Pursuant to agreement, before Kevin Kiser, Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia
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MR. BROWN: This is Jeff Brown with the Office of Congressional Ethics. With me is my colleague, Helen Eisner, as well as Anna Ellison. Before us we have Former Staffer A, and we are undertaking a remote video interview. It is July 31st. It is about 5:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yeah, that's fine.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I'm a unit program coordinator with the 81st Medical Sports Squadron at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.
MR. BROWN: Okay. And is that the -- is that the role you've had since you left the Congressman's office?

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I actually had just separated from the military September of '16. I was -- worked at the Armed Forces Retirement Home down here in Mississippi, and I was just looking for other opportunities, applied for a position
through Indeed, and I actually received a call from Bridgette. I apologize, I don't remember her last name, but she worked in the office and offered me a position.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: As the military and VA caseworker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

    FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

    MR. BROWN: Okay. Was Leslie Churchwell, was she in that office as well?
FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, she was. She was our scheduler. And at the time of my hiring, TJ Moran was one of the representatives who would go out, as well as -- we called him Hass (phonetic). I'm trying to think of his -- Mr. Ladner. I don't remember his first name.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

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

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

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

So I contacted Michele and told her I
needed to leave and go see him at least before time
had passed and I was no longer able to. So she
said that was fine.

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

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

So they told me go ahead, just take the
time you need for the funeral but keep me updated.
So we had the funeral the following Wednesday, and
then I headed back home and I started that Monday after.

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

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

    Towards the end I kind of was keeping track of it about the three-and-a-half, four-week mark and I had performed actually even more cases
during that time than I had been doing previously.

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

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

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

So I said, "Okay."

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

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

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

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

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

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

You said that you were offered two months severance.

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: The conference room,
yes, sir.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I was not given anything to take home. I cannot recall whether or not I signed anything. But they did inform me I would get some documentation from the Human
Resources Department, an individual there.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Two months' pay.

MR. BROWN: Two months of pay.

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: None.

MR. BROWN: -- during those two months?

FORMER STAFFER A: None. I was told to not come back to the office.
MR. BROWN: And this was two months of pay at your -- whatever the salary was that you were making at the time?

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.
MS. EISNER: Did you -- so with the paperwork that you received about 30 days later approximately, did that include a non-disclosure agreement?

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: That would be great.

FORMER STAFFER A: I'm sorry.

MS. EISNER: Oh, no, that's fine. Sometimes -- this happens all the time. People just recall things as they're going through the process. That's completely fine.
FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

MR. BROWN: So this is a non-disclosure
agreement that you signed when you started in Representative Palazzo's office?

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: After reading it, though, we are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement, and then that is kept on file. Bridgette was holding onto them, but I think it
went into Michele's office eventually.

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

   FORMER STAFFER A: Not around me.

Obviously there are conversations that they have
privately amongst, you know, the Congressmen,
Michele and whatnot. But it was never mentioned
after me from that point. I did deal with a lot
of, you know, PI, HIPAA information, just because
of the release forms. But I think it was just
implied that I would understand after that point,
especially being prior military.

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

   FORMER STAFFER A: I do want to say yes,
but I didn't see a copy, so I don't -- my assumption is it might have been something that I kept in my office there. But I don't have it on me. I'm going to try looking one other place to see if I could find it for you.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: So I know Mississippi is a -- I think the word's like a no fault state --
they don't have to really give a reason before they terminate you. I know I was the only caseworker down there initially for a while, and I was handling all the -- all the cases for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson County that were related to military and VA. So I had a substantial workload on me.

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

Again, like I said, there were -- you know, there was a couple times I would be a few minutes late here, a few minutes late there. I would always text and let somebody know, because even being military it was just kind of ingrained into me. There were times that, you know, I was
five minutes late coming in and Leslie wasn't there yet either. But it was okay if Leslie wasn't there because she's the one who would open up. She's the only one with a key, her, Michele, and Bridgette. So if we got there earlier, we would just wait for her anyways.

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

So I don't fully know why I was fired other than, you know, I was late. But I felt like my performance had shown otherwise. I was able to substantiate it. I know they were monitoring everything that I was doing on the computer during that last 30 days because we did have one situation where a constituent -- I had reached out to the Social Security office and I had sent them a letter on letterhead, Congressman Palazzo's letterhead,
just stating that they did have an open case with
us and that we were looking into the information
for their child support case.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I was never given a
real reason.
MS. EISNER: Okay. And one of the things you said was there was sort of a cattiness in the office. If you could break that down a little bit for me. You said, you know, they were talking about what they're going through. What are the things that they were talking about in the office?

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

MS. EISNER: Did you feel that the tone in
the office or the environment changed roughly
around when your grandfather got ill or was that
more during the 30-day probation period?

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

And I do want to mention -- I apologize.
I forgot this. Prior to my grandfather passing --
it seemed like I had multiple events -- I actually
had to have emergency surgery -- they found a cyst
right above my tailbone -- and had it at the VA.
And I was out for a couple days for convalescence
-- convalescent leave for [audio cuts out] --

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

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

So I don't know if they thought it was a
problem but, I mean, it was all legitimate reasons
that I was having to take leave for. So when that
30-day period came up, I mean, I was paranoid.
I've got one income. I can't afford to lose this
job. So I am crossing every T, dotting every I,
just hoping I can continue on and get past this 30
days.
I was speaking to Anita, probably about
three days before this happened, because she came
down to the Biloxi office. We had a little
luncheon. And Anita pulled me aside and said, you
know, I've been doing awesome. She's seen how many
cases that I've been going through and, you know,
to keep up the good work. She thinks that
everything's going to be okay. And then three,
four days later I was let go.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Very much.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie and Bridgette.
I mean, they were thick as thieves. They would go
out. Even after work they would do a lot of stuff
together. They were part of the Krewe of Medics
down here, a Mardi Gras event. I don't think they
were very close with Michele outside of work, but
at work the impression was it was the three of them
and then the rest of us.
MR. BROWN: I want to take one step back and ask you one more thing that you had said to us originally, and then I want to give you an opportunity to finish the story about the severance and --

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No.

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

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

So from my understanding, Lela said there was conversations, whether -- I don't think it was everybody together talking. I think it was she overheard it, that they made a comment about I better not be talking about her congressman or, you know, I'm going to regret it. But obviously there was some cuss words in there.
MR. BROWN: When I was asking you about the prior comment that was made to you while you were, you know, while you were in the conference room during your termination discussions I was wondering if -- if that was more of a remember you signed this non-disclosure agreement and you cannot talk about the cases that you were working on or that's a don't talk about the things that happened in this office and with respect to this congressman.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. So again, it
was 30 days from the point that I had had the conference with them and they had let me go.
Again, I didn't make any attempts to talk to Lela, I didn't talk to any of the other coworkers. I honestly thought Lela was part of the reason why I was fired.

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

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

Again, 30 days after I left I contacted Human Resources because I still had not received any paperwork. I was waiting for my SF-50 so that
I can update it in USAJOBS to actually start looking for another government position. And that's when they advised me that paperwork would be coming pretty soon with it. I opened up the package that I got and it was paperwork talking about the unemployment.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: As far as what, sir?

MR. BROWN: Well, I think you said to us that the promise was you'd be paid two months of severance.
FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

    FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

    MR. BROWN: Then I'm going to move on to
another topic, unless you had anything else there
that you wanted to touch on, Former Staffer A.
FORMER STAFFER A: No, sir. I think we touched on all of it.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

MR. BROWN: -- tell me about that.

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

MR. BROWN: And when you -- when you say "errand boy," did you ever witness or did TJ ever tell you about specific errands that he was doing?
FORMER STAFFER A: He would do the dry cleaning, he would go to storage a lot to go pick up stuff from the storage unit. At the time we weren't going for an election, so it wasn't related to the election, but stuff had to be taken to storage or picked up from storage.

MR. BROWN: And the --

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


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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay. Go ahead.

FORMER STAFFER A: There -- shortly after
I got hired on, probably -- I'm trying to think --
maybe May or June, Bridgette and Leslie went out
for about two days getting some supplies for his
children to start camp. They came back with all
the supplies, and they used the conference room to
get everything organized, boxed up, labeled to get
shipped out for his children.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Shopping.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: The rest of the day. You know, they would spend the morning pretty much shopping, come back, bring everything in in the afternoon that first day. If they had more stuff
that they had to go get, they would go out and get more the next day.

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: I was there.
MS. EISNER: And what types of materials were we talking about? What was on the table? What were they organizing?

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

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: They would label the bags just to separate whose clothes they were to another's. Even though it was going in the trunks,
everything had to be labeled for the actual summer
camp for the counselors so that nothing got
confused.

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

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

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

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

From my understanding, because I did
question, you know, well, where's their mom in all
of these arrangements? And from what I was told,
after her stroke a few years ago that she was not
ing a condition to be able to really take care of
them and that I know [redacted] lived with his
grandparents. I think the kids lived with her, but
she just was not able to do these tasks.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.
MS. EISNER: -- picking up the kids, anything along those lines, if you could tell us about that.

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

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

MS. EISNER: And based on your awareness of that, what's your impression of how frequently
that was occurring?

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie, yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I never visually saw
it, but that's just what I had been told, what I
kind of heard. Because, I mean, some of it, I'm
sure, was rumors. You hear rumor mills. But it
was just kind of know that this is -- this is what
we do. This is kind of part of the job. If we're
asked, we just do it, no questions. But I did not
ever physically see anybody driving the kids
without him.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Right. Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No. Never.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, it was.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: They're supposed to.

MS. EISNER: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: I know Gabbi read it, I got it. And that's what I was told when I was given it, that this is something that every staffer has to go through and read and then we sign the non-disclosure agreement at the end.
MS. EISNER: Okay. And, you know, when you witnessed these types of activities during work hours, did anyone ever raise the question of, you know, ethics rules and how this related to the reading of the House ethics manual and the guidance in that?

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

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

MS. EISNER: Understood.

MR. BROWN: So the impression I'm
gathering from this conversation is that it's Leslie, Michele and Bridgette who are sort of recognized that part of their job entails making the Congressman's life, his personal life, run smoother.

FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

MR. BROWN: And how about grocery shopping?

FORMER STAFFER A: I never witnessed that.

MR. BROWN: Did you ever hear about
anybody doing grocery shopping for the Congressman
or for the kids?

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Patrick?

FORMER STAFFER A: Patrick, yes, sir.
They were talking --

MS. EISNER: Patrick Large?

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I have no idea. I assume they were at the river house, but that was just my assumption because I didn't know of any other properties. I just was told that they lived with -- [redacted] lived with his grandparents and that the two younger kids were with the mom. I don't know where the mom lives. But he would go to Louisiana a lot to pick up the kids, so I assume that's where she was.
MS. EISNER: Did you ever hear of the Congress­man staying in a hotel while he was in the district?

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Lela, not Leslie. Lela Bremen.
MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

MS. EISNER: -- not Leslie? Okay.

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

MS. EISNER: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. BROWN: So I know, Former Staffer A, at some point you chatted with Brian Rose and got quoted in an article that --
FORMER STAFFER A: Oh, my gosh, yes.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: -- would assist the Congressman with the children during work hours for summer camp or otherwise.
FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. For that first incident with the summer camp, Michele was not employed yet, so it was just Bridgette and Leslie. The following year when it was Bridgette and Leslie assisting, I did not see anything come in the office, and I think that's because Michele had taken over that role.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: If I'm saying that correctly. Forgive me if I'm getting her role mixed up. But prior to me leaving my position and hearing those conversations about them talking about it again, nothing was ever brought into the office, and I just assumed it was because Michele was there and things were running a little bit
differently, they didn't want to bring it into the
office that time.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: No. Go ahead.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: Just generally, what is the
river house?

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

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

MR. BROWN: I think you said previously
that staffers were heading to the river house.

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Why were they going there? How was it used? Can you elaborate?

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Bridgette and Leslie.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. That's what I was told.
MR. BROWN: And how do you know -- yeah, how do you know this? Who's telling you that?

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

MR. BROWN: Did that happen?
FORMER STAFFER A: I was not privy to those conversations. I'm not sure.

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

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

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

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

But I was told he also has two to three storage units -- or he did at the time -- and the one that I had been going to -- or the one that I went with them to is not the same that they were going to because they had mentioned the street that
it was on and the company that owned it. It wasn't the same [audio cuts out] -- yes, but that's not where we kept the -- the signs. It wasn't at that facility.

MR. BROWN: Is that where they --

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. And do you --

MS. EISNER: Did you --

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No.

MS. EISNER: Okay. So when you would go to the storage locker and you found the signs, what -- what capacity was that in?
FORMER STAFFER A: We had an event coming up at one of the restaurants. The Congressman was inviting different people from the community, just a way to kind of I guess get the buzz out. So I went with them to get the signs so that we could drive them over to the event, and then we had signs there for people to take home with them.

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: We went to the storage during official work hours, but the event was outside of work hours. So we went to the storage
to get the campaign items to bring back and get
them loaded into the vehicles that were going later
on, and then we just finished up our work for the
day.

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, he does. Yes.

MR. BROWN: And what are those?

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: But it didn't?

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.
MR. BROWN: You know, again, you said you were -- you were told that you had to do that. Was -- you know, did you feel like you were acting in a volunteer capacity to do that or that you felt like that was a responsibility that you needed to take care of that day?

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay. And everybody, as you understood it, was told we got to go get these signs and deliver them to wherever this campaign event was going to be held?
FORMER STAFFER A: We brought them back and just put them in the Congressman's vehicle.

But yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: At the office, yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

MS. EISNER: And can you give us a sense of the approximate time period when that event was?

Was that in 2018?

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: -- towards that.

Because I know when I got terminated in 2018 I
wasn't part of any of that stuff, and then I think
the following year they were working on campaign
stuff again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

    But as I would drive past, you actually
have to go over a bridge -- it's hard to explain.
The house is kind of surrounded by trees, so you
can't see the house from the road. But as you
cross over the bridge where the bay is, you can see
the back of the house. And he had his big Palazzo
flag right there by the bay, and then eventually it
was just gone.

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

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

MS. EISNER: No. You can continue.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Was he living outside of
Mississippi at the time you were working for the
Congressman?
FORMER STAFFER A: I'm not sure. I had actually never heard of him until after I was terminated, and then Lela had explained to me some of the tasks that she was given to work and do for him.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No, you're fine.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I wasn't given a whole lot more details than that other than Tyler's going to be in town; he's going to be at the river house.
I know Tyler has family here in town, but he's more so in the Hattiesburg area, which is about another hour and a half away. So when he was down here on the coast, I was told that he was staying at the river house while he was here.

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

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

MS. EISNER: And when --

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

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

MS. EISNER: And when he came down every other month, how long would he stay at the house? Or at --
FORMER STAFFER A: Just --

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: You said --

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.
MS. EISNER: What was it about staying at the river house that made it easier to help the Congressman?

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No. No. I only talked to Tyler when he was in an internship capacity. Once he became an official staffer I'd say hi to him, and it would be kind of cordial, but we really
didn't have any discussion.

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Just working together.

I was actually one of the individuals who interviewed her when she got the pos -- when she
was applying for the position. Me and TJ did the
interviewing. We gave our recommendation, and then
based off of that they decided to hire her. So I
did train her in some of the case work, and then
once she started doing the projects we really
didn't do a whole lot together event-wise.

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: It was a couple months.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: And so your impression of the
work that she did was positive; she -- she did good
work in the office?

FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely. Yes.

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

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

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

Lela wasn't fully hired on as a caseworker; she was caseworker, events, coordinator, project manager. I mean, she did a little bit of everything. And Michele made that
very clear when she got hired. She would assist me, but she would also be doing a lot of other events relating to military affairs.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: No. I was already terminated.

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

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

I know when they changed offices she was part of helping them locate new furniture for it. So I think they trusted her with some stuff, but
they were still very careful with some of the more
private, personal things. Because Lela was very
outspoken. And being that she came from a legal
background, she had no problem telling somebody if
they were doing things wrong.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

MS. EISNER: Okay. What --

MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

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

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

Lela did that, but she also was very, very
outspoken when it came to military members, the
veterans. If it wasn't right, it wasn't right.
She called out the VA; she called out many agencies
for not doing the right thing.
So I think because they saw that she was willing to do that there, there was this we need to be careful because she might do it here type of feeling.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I'm getting it from the calls and I'm hearing the conversations from
Michele just telling her how awesome she's doing
and what we're -- what we're getting back
feedback-wise.

MR. BROWN: Did --

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

MR. BROWN: No, that's okay.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: She did mention to me
I don’t recall the reason that we might have talked about for the administrative leave. I know it did happen very shortly after them moving offices and her assisting with all the furniture.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Gulfport, yes, sir.
MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

So I went with her, didn't say anything, but the appearance was -- it was really odd. Mr. E. Brian Rose met us there because he wanted to
talk to us. So I did, and I made it very clear to him, you know, I'm -- I'm not willing to go on your show. I'm not willing to speak up about this. I do not want this to be documented, because it's my livelihood. And again, my assumption was if I spoke up I'm -- it could come back on me. And even though enough time had passed, I'm a government employee by this point. So he assured me he didn't. Obviously that was not true.

But me and Lela, as we were approaching the entrance all the staffers came outside that were there, Tyler -- I cannot think of her first name -- Ms. Duckworth, she was there. There was a couple other individuals. And forgive me, I don't remember who they were, but they all came outside and they were just asking how we were doing, trying to do some small talk. And they had brought Lela's leftover -- some of her stuff from her office. They had it in a box there for her on the bench. And we went in and we looked around. Because we're both veterans. I mean, we weren't doing anything malicious. We were seeing the
event. We very clearly could have been there for our own services, but we had watchful eyes on us the entire event until we left. And that was the first interaction me and Lela really had face to face. And we had talked on the way there, we talked on the phone probably the day before, and she had explained to me everything that had transpired.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was just the fact that he was pushing that she help Kyle get
back into the military. Based off of what she read
and saw from a legal standpoint, it didn't merit
him getting back in there. The military did
nothing wrong. It was his fault entirely for being
kicked out.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

MR. BROWN: And so you guys are talking
about this right after she's terminated, and that's
right around the time of this claims clinic that
you went to?

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

We had two events that the VA was hosting
in a pavilion at the cemetery that we went to as
well, and one of them E. Brian Rose was there. So
I basically knew who he was, but my role was not
politics. My role was helping the constituents. So I made sure to separate myself. I didn't want to be part of it.

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

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: So when I found out I
was connected to comments that he said I made, I was actually very upset because I did not give permission to release anything. And my name was specifically mentioned in the article that he had published.

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

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

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

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

But I know when she left she had mentioned
to me she did not take a severance package, she did
not want the hush money, and that she was going to
make sure that what was not ethical and what was
not right got to the right individuals and that the
Congressman -- somebody did something about what
the Congressman was doing.

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Yeah.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.
MR. BROWN: Everybody -- I just want to have a quick chat with Helen, and then I think we can come back and wrap this up.

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: Does that work?

MS. EISNER: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: That works.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. When it first --

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

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

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

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

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

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

It wasn't publicized. We didn't have a big old meeting about it. It was just the main
people who were part of the military, VA spectrum, knew that it's not supposed to be given out.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't --

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: -- that this book couldn't be handed out by either the Congressman or by his staff members?

FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER A: He's at the very high
-- he's one of the individuals that we can go to if we're having any questions or issues. I don't think he has a whole lot to do with the Wounded Warrior program, but I know he's somewhere in there. His office works with them as well.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Lela would mention to
me that, you know, we were taking these books out
there. I saw them taking them. I heard Michele
mention, "Don't forget to grab some of the A Time
for Honor books for the Congressman."

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

The only other question I have for you
just really quickly is you mentioned TJ Moran a
couple of times at the beginning of this interview. What exactly was TJ's role in the office as you understood it?

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: I just have a few, few more questions and I think we're almost done. We won't
take anymore of your time.

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: She did work a lot with
-- I don't remember who was it -- the deputy -- the
wing deputy? The wing commander. Because some of
our case work went that way. But she was also
working a few other issues such as the Housing
Department, Hunt Housing, they were having issues.
She went to a few town halls where she was
interacting with the deputy commander of the wing.

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

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

MS. EISNER: What about a Captain [redacted]?

FORMER STAFFER A: I never heard of a
Captain [redacted].

MS. EISNER: Okay. I just have one other
question. Jeff, is there anything you want to add?
MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

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

FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER A: It felt like it was more of a pers -- like I was more going to be
personally attacking her if I said anything about
my time or if I tried to bash the Congressman in
the media afterwards.

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

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

But when I met her at one of the events,
the imp -- the feeling I got from her is it was
more of a termination and she had kind of bitter
feelings about it. We had talked about Bridgette
and, you know, some of the stuff that I was getting
trained on. And she was like, yeah, just be
careful. And that was about as much as I was told.
MS. EISNER: Besides sort of Angeline and Lela and, you know, what you've told us about the way in which you were asked to leave the office --

FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

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

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

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

left very suddenly, and then I was told she's just doing part-time work. She's
only going to work on certain things for the
Congressman. She'll be back for the campaign
season. So we didn't see her for a time period,
but when we did she was either working campaigns or
she was working on the academy stuff.

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

So I was told he was terminated because of
that unprofessional relationship, but I'm not sure
what happened to [redacted], why she went on
half-time and -- I understood that she got employed
somewhere else but she was still doing stuff on the
side for the Congressman.

MR. BROWN: You were told that about [redacted] by Lela?

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

MR. BROWN: Anything else there, Helen?

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

MR. BROWN: I -- just to wrap it up, Former Staffer A, I want to say thank you again for taking the time to speak with us. I always want to give witnesses in your position an opportunity to talk, you know, about anything else that you feel like maybe we didn't ask you questions about that
you expected us to ask questions about or if 
there's anything you felt like you wanted to or 
needed to elaborate on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

    FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know how much you would get from TJ if I offered TJ. I feel like there's still that level of protection almost. And I think part of it's because some of the stuff he
was doing it wasn't supposed to be done. You know, he was doing stuff outside of his parameters.

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

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

MS. ELLSION: No, thank you.

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

One thing I will close by saying is just, you know, I'm sure you and Helen have talked about the confidential nature of this investigation, so we do ask you to keep this confidential, you know, both for the sake of the investigation and for the sake of the individual who is under investigation.
FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

(Off the record at 7:43 p.m. EST)
CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER - E-NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Kevin Kiser, the officer before whom the foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify that said proceedings were electronically recorded by me; 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.

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

Notary Registration No.: 7637508
My Commission Expires: 9/30/2024

Kevin James Kiser

Kevin Kiser, Notary Public
for the Commonwealth of Virginia
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

LEE ANN NUSSBAUM, CET
Certified Electronic Transcriber
August 4, 2020
## ERRATA SHEET

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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
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
Mobile videoconference interview of
FORMER STAFFER B, conducted virtually:

Pursuant to agreement, before Peggy L.
Dingle, E-Notary Public of the State of Maryland.
APPEARANCES
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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PROCEEDINGS:

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes, that's fine.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: I am not.
MR. BROWN: You are not. Okay. Let me ask you, you -- you served in the military. Are you -- are you currently active duty?

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

MR. BROWN: Okay. Reservist?

FORMER STAFFER B: No.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, thank you.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Just -- just roughly.

FORMER STAFFER B: 2000 -- January -- might have been February 2018 to -- it was February 2018 to January 2019.
MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay. You worked in the -- you worked on the official side in the official office. Did you have any role on the
Congressman's campaign?

    FORMER STAFFER B: I did not.

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

    FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

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

    And I was like, Okay.

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

    So I looked at it. And in the meantime another person wrote me and said, Hey, I have talked to people in Congressman Palazzo's office and told them that you are a voice for veterans and you are the perfect candidate for this job and you should email this person, which
1 was Michele Gargiulo, who is the District
2 Director.
3
4 And so I did that. And she said, Go
5 on and complete the U.S.A. Jobs Application. And
6 I explained to her that I did and I had submitted
7 it.
8
9 And so then she called me and we had a
10 phone conversation and then we did an in-person
11 interview, which I thought I was going to meet
12 with Michele, but I met with Jessica, who was
13 actually the Veteran Constituent Liaison at that
14 time, and T.J. Moran, who was the field rep.
15
16 So I had my interview with them and
17 then were told, you know, Hey, if you move to the
18 next step, we will have an in-person interview.
19 So then I went to a lunch with all of the local
20 staff.
21
22 And then about two weeks later -- we
23 kept getting ice storms so it kept getting pushed
24 back -- I met with the Congressman face to face
25 in the office. And there were several other
26 people that were supposed to be interviewed, but
he told Michele right on the spot that he wanted to hire me and start me that day.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Michele.

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

MR. BROWN: So you worked out of
Biloxi originally alongside Michele and then
Gulfport later when the offices moved to
Gulfport?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

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

MR. BROWN: And I was just going to
say that's Mac Tolar and Solomon Jennings are the
two individuals you just referred to?
FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Sorry.

FORMER STAFFER B: That's okay.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

So I was actually at home with my son, who was sick. He had a hundred and -- it's been over a year. So I think it was over a hundred and (inaudible) --

THE COURT REPORTER: Excuse me.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. So I was home. It's kind of a weird story, but I was -- I had arranged a veterans' Claims Clinic and I had set up where the Jackson VBA, so the Veterans' Benefit Administration, was going to come down to Pascagoula and I had got the Elk's Lodge and we were going to help veterans with their claims -- one-day claims processing. And then I had arranged for nonprofit organizations, as well as
the VA Medical Center, to be there to set up and help veterans any way that they could.

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

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

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

And so I became upset, plus my child was screaming and crying in the background, and I told them, I said, I can't even hear this conversation. And they told me it was based off an email that I had sent to a stakeholder. And,
you know, I said, What stakeholder? I asked questions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Before I do that, the one thing I want to ask you is, you know,
generally in your emails you refer to a RE Code.

That's a Re-enlistment Code, right?

FORMER STAFFER B: (Former Staffer B nodded.)

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

FORMER STAFFER B: It's an RE Code.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

The RE Code that Kyle Palazzo had is
non-waiverable. It is we don't want you in the Service; you are not welcome in the Service ever again.

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

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

So an RE Code, your Re-entry Code, you can't just ask the Navy, hey, change my RE Code, unless you are Congressman Palazzo. But, okay,
so by law and by Regulation, you cannot ask the Navy to change your -- to up your RE Code so that you are waiverable. You cannot do it.

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

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

I know that's very confusing. I
probably just confused you.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

A The Congressman came into my office
and said, Can you come here? I went into his
office and there was a young man sitting there
that I had never seen in my life. And he said,
Close the door. And, you know, I just -- I
closed the door and I set there.

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

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

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

And I said, No.

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

And I said, Okay.

And he said, I am not going to go in
to the details of it. I will let Kyle let you --
you know, tell you the story and give you all the
details. So I would like for you to take Kyle in
your office, sit down with him and he can explain
to you everything that has happened with him and
we can go from there and you can handle it.

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

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

So when you go to ship out for the
military you go through what's called MEPS and
that's the Military Entry -- Entry Processing
System like where they do all your physical and
they make you do a urinalysis. That is the
urinalysis that he tested positive on. By the
time he made it through his unit, with the traveling they had already -- he said it was two days later they notified him. And so then he was quickly processed out and separated.

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

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

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

And he said, I don't know what I have. So I told him the first step would be for us to request his records because there is a separation packet. No matter how long you are in, there is a separation packet. They have to -- you have been enlisted, you know, through the MEPS. You are property of the military at that point and so...
the fact that he made it to his duty station they
would have had to separate him.

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

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: That -- that is -- that was
very helpful. Let me unpack some of that.
FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: It was actually right before the Election because I -- I had to wait for the -- for the Election to be finished
to go back. So --

MR. BROWN: In an earlier --

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

MR. BROWN: In an earlier

submission -- in an earlier submission to us you
said it was around October of 2018. Does that
sound about right?

FORMER STAFFER B: That would be about
right. I just -- like I said, I don't know --
actually, it would be because I remember I was
texting with Kyle around my son's birthday and
that's in November. So that would be around that
time frame, yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. So the first
request, again, this occurs in the Congressman's
office. This is in the Gulfport office?

FORMER STAFFER B: This is in the
Biloxi office.

MR. BROWN: Biloxi office. Okay. And
this is -- there is no implication that this is
a -- a volun -- you know, that you are
volunteering to do this or anything like that?
This was an ask of you in your official capacity?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. You started talking

a little bit about you -- you had an initial

conversation with Kyle in which you -- he

essentially told you the story about how he was

kicked out of the -- the Navy. So you learn --

you learn all this stuff by Kyle telling you

about it.

Did you ever see any documentation on

all that? In other words, I am trying to

understand, you know, you learned he was kicked

out for cocaine and he had an RE Code 4. Did --
did you ever see any documentation about that or

was that just a conversation with Kyle?

FORMER STAFFER B: So we requested

Kyle's military records and they came back with
two sheets and one of them did confirm that.

The other thing is there was

Angeline -- I cannot remember her last name, and

I believe she was -- she was not hired as a

Wounded Warrior, but she worked as a veteran --
she had attempted to start the process with him.

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

MR. BROWN: And the notes said what?

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

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

MR. BROWN: Okay. And so during that initial conversation with Kyle he told you that it was drug-related discharge and that he has
since gone to rehab?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: That's okay.

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

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

Today I couldn't tell you what date
that would be. But if that email was sent back
then, then that would be the correct date.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: That sounds right,
correct.

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

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Let me back up again for just one second to unpack something that you said previously. You said when the Congressman first
approached you about this he called you in to his office, said, Close the door, and then he made a mention about keeping this confidential.

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

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

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

So but I think, you know -- and -- and I can -- I am going to elaborate on that a little bit. When I was put on administrative leave I
had put Kyle's name in there because in order to
keep track of all the cases I had put his name in
there and just said that I was working a case.
Everybody knew that I was working a case for Kyle
that the Congressman had had me do.
And Anita Bourn had contacted Michele
and asked, Hey, Former Staffer B's, got this case
in here. It says that it's for Kyle. Do you
want me to do it?
And Michele had called the Congressman
and he told her, No, nobody is to touch that
case. Wait until Former Staffer B gets back.
And so it was -- even the Privacy
Release Form, you know, I did have Kyle fill out
a Privacy Release Form because, you know, to get
the information from the Department of the Navy I
had to have a copy of that, but I didn't keep any
copies of that. I got rid of it immediately
because we had to put, you know, what we were
doing on that.
So I took extra -- extra steps to try
to make sure that everybody in the office wasn't
made aware because that is a personal matter
that, you know, you don't really -- you can't
control what your family member does, but it
could negatively affect, you know, the
Congressman and, plus, Kyle doesn't want
everybody to know his business. So I tried to
make sure that, you know, all tracks were covered
with that.

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

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

I don't -- and this is -- this is just
based off of all of the -- everything that
happened, I don't think when he made that statement that it was because he was going to go directly to the Secretary of the Navy and I think it was just, Hey, if anybody can do this, you can do this, but keep-it-quiet type thing.

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

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

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

MR. BROWN: Well, let's get --
let's -- let's jump ahead and get to that. So my understanding --

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

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

MS. EISNER: And how frequently were you in communication with him during this period of time?
FORMER STAFFER B: When it first
started we would communicate quite a bit just --
and we would talk, you know, kind of personally.
You know, I think he felt comfortable with, you
know, hey, this -- she knows a lot of my
business.

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

And so we would text, you know, about
just random stuff. He told me he had a daughter
and that. But he would come into the office --
it started out he was very -- not in the office
that often, but when we moved, then he came in
the office all the time. He started working in
the office and he was going to events just about
daily.
MS. EISNER: And that was when the
office moved to the Gulfport office? That was
the transition point?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Didn't come out.

Sorry.

MR. BROWN: Sorry to --

FORMER STAFFER B: Go ahead.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: I don't remember
the document numbers now, but what -- what the
only -- it would have been a DD293. The document
that I would have sent forward to reflect his
records from the Department of Navy I can't
remember whether it would be a DD293 request.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER B: Those are the --

those are the items I am trying to gather to be
able to submit. The only thing that was actually
submitted was the request for records.
MR. BROWN: Right. And as I understand from one of the submissions you sent to us early on was that, you know, you had sent an email to Kyle, I assume from your official account, listing all the things and all the steps that he needed to take in order to start get -- getting this process rolling?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

And he said, Okay.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. So the
Congressman called me, asked about the Privacy
Release Form. And then before I could hang up --
you know, I explained I didn't have it. Before I
could hang up the phone, Kyle called me on my
cell phone, asked if I was in the office and then he appeared in the office. And he shut the door and said, What is going on?

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

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

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

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

He -- Patrick Large had an appointment with the Secretary of the Navy and had been communicating with the Secretary of the Navy's Office to go and sit down and request for Kyle's RE Code to be changed.
And I told Kyle, I am not okay with this. And I said to him -- I explained, I said, Kyle, if we do this and somebody gets wind of this, I said, it's not going to be good, I said, especially because people are already -- this will lead in to another issue, but I said, People don't believe that your brother served and, you know, there is lots of accusations out there that he doesn't drill.

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

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

And he said, I know. I know. I am just -- I got to get the Privacy Release Form. I don't know. I don't really agree with it,
either. I hear what you are saying.

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

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

And so I went outside and I called Michele --

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

FORMER STAFFER B: -- and I told her, I said --
MR. BROWN: Former Staffer B, can I just (inaudible) --

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

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


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

FORMER STAFFER B: Yup.

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

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

FORMER STAFFER B: They were simply
requesting an appointment with that office to
talk to them about getting Kyle's RE Code 
changed. The exact wording I couldn't tell you, 
but that's -- that's what the email was -- that 
was what the request was.

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

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. So, I 
mean, really all they -- I mean, really what they 
were doing is asking to come in to sit down to
get Kyle's RE Code changed and to discuss Kyle's RE Code with the Secretary of the Navy, and that meeting specifically would have been held by Patrick Large. Does that make sense?

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

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

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

FORMER STAFFER B: Give me one second.

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

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

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

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

MS. EISNER: Okay. So the difference
between a form letter and something that's been
FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. And there is no email -- I mean, when we would email, we had liaisons that we would email with and they probably weren't even anywhere near that office. But, yes, I mean, it's a completely different office. Where it's very direct, this is more of a process that I would go through. Does that make sense?

MR. BROWN: So to be clear, this was not an email to a -- you know, a sort of prepopulated inbox or to one of the liaisons in the Office? This was an email to the Secretary of the Navy for personnel management issues?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. This was -- this was a request for a meeting to sit down face to face to discuss this RE Code in confidence for -- for Patrick on behalf of Kyle to -- well, not really on behalf, but to speak about his RE Code.

MR. BROWN: And I assume this was sent from Patrick's official accounts, his official
email accounts?

FORMER STAFFER B: And -- and that's the part that I can't -- I saw an exchange and -- but, yes, all of it was on their personal -- I mean, their professional accounts discussing this.

So what I am saying is is I can't remember if I saw the actual email, like the first email was the email directly to the Secretary of the Navy's Office, or if it was the exchange of him sending it -- their response to the Congressman to say, you know, I am going to give the appointment, only because it's been quite a while. But I know that the request was made and that's what the email exchange was about.

Does that make sense? I am sorry. I am probably confusing you.

MR. BROWN: No, that does make sense and -- and, you know, we are just trying to nail down the details. And I understand it's been a while, so I -- I -- I certainly understand if
it's hard to remember each and every specific
detail we may be asking you.

FORMER STAFFER B: I just don't want
to make -- I don't want to make a statement that,
you know, is not exactly what I saw. I mean, I
know that the detail of the email was -- of the
email exchange was we are requesting a meeting
with the Secretary of the Navy to discuss Kyle's
RE Code.

So, you know, who the first email was
to and all that, that's the part I can't 100
percent sure, but I know that there was a request
made to the Secretary of the Navy for that
meeting.

MR. BROWN: And -- and -- and that
email string may have later included
conversations between Patrick and the Congressman
about that request?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

MR. BROWN: Okay. So I interrupted
you previously and you were starting to talk
about how you saw that email and the email, you
know, upset you because you didn't think it was appropriate and that you then called Michele. So please elaborate on what your conversation with Michele entailed.

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. So I went outside the building and I told Michele. I called her and, you know, I started out by saying to her, You know that I am working on something for the Congressman.

And she said, I do.

And I said, And I know all about, you know, the privacy and this and that. And I said, But at this point I don't care, I said, about that. If I get fired because of this, I don't care because, I said, this is risking all of our jobs.

And I told her, I said, Michele, I respect you and I respect your position and I don't -- I think all of us will be on the line if somebody gets wind of this.

And she was like, Well, where are you at right now?
And I said, I am outside of the office.

And she said, Why don't you drive down the street?

So I got in my car and I drove down the street to talk to her and I explained to her, you know, what was going on and this and that.

And I, you know, told her, I said, Michele, we would never do this for another constituent and, you know, I was working all this stuff for him.

So I said, I don't know why all of a sudden the rush, what's going on, but I am not okay with this.

And I, you know, told her, I said, if this happens, somebody is going to look into it because the entire State of Mississippi talks about how the Congressman does not do his drills and how he is No-Show Palazzo when it comes to the Mississippi National Guard.

And I said, Imagine when you add another Palazzo to the ranks, that's going to raise eyebrows and people are going to start
investigating.

And I said, If they come back and find out that our office went directly to the Secretary of the Navy, got his RE Code changed without going through any process, even though he has an RE Code that is not waiverable, we are toast. Like, we are done. Our careers are over.

And I said, You know, if me coming to you about this I end up losing my job, I don't even care because, I said, this is wrong. And we had a very long, probably couple-hour-long conversation.

And she told me she agreed, that she didn't think it was right and that we wouldn't do it for any other constituents. And she told me, Continue doing what you are doing. Continue gathering the documentation for his packet the same -- drive on with what you were doing.

And She said, You know, sometimes you can't tell the Congressman what to do and, you know, this is the way that he wants to do this. We just kind of have to sit back and -- and --
and let it happen.

And I was like, Michele, it's wrong.

And she said, It is, but just continue driving forward.

So in the meantime she told me that she had major concerns with why Kyle was suddenly back in the office and that she thought that he was potentially on drugs.

I apologize. My seven-year-old is interrupting give me one second.

(Thereupon, a brief break was taken, and the interview continued as follows:)

MR. BROWN: And, Former Staffer B, I will -- I will let you continue on.

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. I couldn't even remember where I was.

MR. BROWN: Do you want me to remind you where we were?

FORMER STAFFER B: No. I drove down the street and Michele raised concerns. I remember now. Sorry. My son threw my head off a little bit.
So Michele said that she had some concerns with Kyle and that she felt like he could possibly be on drugs. He was spending a lot of time in the office and he was -- was being sent to a lot of events to represent the Congressman.

And she -- you know, he was also doing work on the new office and it was the -- the move was originally supposed to happen and then it got postponed and then so he was doing a lot of work in the office as far as taking stuff down off the walls or moving things and he would go to events. He was kind of, essentially, a field rep, but there was never an official title put on that.

And Michele said --

MR. BROWN: Let me --

FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, go ahead.

MR. BROWN: Let me interrupt you one second. So he is doing official work in the official office?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes. Let me back up a little bit. When I was asked about the
communication with him, he did tell me at one point -- he emailed me -- no, he text me and said, Hey, I am taking over Bridgette, Bridgette Jones, who used to handle -- I believe she would campaign. She -- she would come and go a lot. She had been -- she had quit. She was full-time, quit, came back and then was gone again.

And he said, I am taking over her email. So if you are going to email me, you can email me on that.

So at that point I assumed he was, you know, working on the campaign side. But he would go to a lot of events and -- sorry.

(Thereupon, a brief break was taken, and the interview continued as follows:)

FORMER STAFFER B: So she told me that they had gone to an event in -- I want to say it was in Jackson. Michele had gone and she had explained to me that Kyle was going to go to the event, as well. And so she had asked him if he wanted to ride together. And they did not ride together -- maybe they did ride together. I
can't remember the -- the actual details of that. But Leslie Churchwell -- Bridgette had gotten a job elsewhere and she was going to be at this event was in Jackson. And Leslie had been out for several days with strep but ended up going to -- she missed a day of work but ended up going to that event, as well.

And Michele either went with Kyle or was supposed to meet up with Kyle and on several points he would disappear for long periods of time and she wasn't able to make contact with him.

And so she told me, she said, Former Staffer B, I have concerns that, you know, he is -- he is back on drugs, like, you know, just from his behavior is erratic and weird.

And I told her, I said, Well, Michele, I don't -- I don't like drama, I don't like gossip, but him and Leslie are an item and, you know, that's where they were at.

And that's when, you know, I explained, Well, everybody knows that Leslie went
to that event and her and Kyle are an item. So
of course he is going to disappear before you
drive him back to the hotel because he doesn't
want you to know, you know.

And then so, anyways, we had that long
discussion and she told me she felt she wasn't
part of the in crew and that we needed to be
careful and this and that. And, you know, that
was it. And I told her -- you know, and she
thanked me for telling her and bringing it to her
attention.

But she did tell me, You know, we
really just got to do what the Congressman asks
us to do and you continue driving forward with
what you think is right and that way, you know,
we would have -- you would have the paperwork to
back yourself up of, you know, this is you were
doing the appropriate steps.

MR. BROWN: Well, let me -- let me ask
you this. You have this conversation with
Michele and then, as I understand from the
submission you sent us later, I think it's two
days later Kyle sent you a text. Can you tell us
about the text and what that said? Or do you
need me --

FORMER STAFFER B: I don't remember
that.

MR. BROWN: Do you need me to jog your
memory a little further?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, I think you -- you
stated -- two days later, after you had a
conversation with Michele, you said, I received a
text from Kyle stating I guess he -- I believe
the he is the Congressman -- decided to go about
it the right way.

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay. That I do
remember. Okay. So there is a little bit of
story that has to go with that to understand that
whole aspect.

I think the very next day after I had
that conversation with Michele she explained to
me that she was trying to get in touch with
somebody with the Department of the Army because
her son, who either was a lieutenant or a
captain, was requesting to get out of the Army
eyearly because the Congressman had offered him a
position in his office in D.C.

And I told her, I said, Michele, I
don't know why you would try to do this on your
own. I make things happen. Let me handle it.

And she said, I don't know why I
didn't ask you, but you are right. Go ahead. If
you think you can handle it, handle it.

Within 24 hours or maybe it might have
been 48, it was within a few days, he had orders
and was able to separate from the military. And
Michele had apparently been working on this for a
long time.

And so she told me that she had told
the Boss that, you know, Former Staffer B is a
beast. She was able to get -- I can't remember
his name, her son -- out of the Army. She made
this happen. I have been trying to make this
happen. She made this happen in less than -- I
will say -- 72 hours.
And after that, that's when I received
the message from Kyle. And then Michele had --
Kyle told me that the Congressman had forwarded
the response from the Secretary of the Navy to
Michele. And Michele and I had a big, long
conversation about that.

And she said, I truly think that when
I told him you were a beast that's when he
decided that he should let you handle this.

Well, no, it was because the Secretary
of the Navy's letter came back and said this is
the process of how you go about requesting an RE
Code change. And I don't -- I -- I want to say
that this email was actually sent from my
personal email, but I can't -- I know that I got
an email either a day or two later from the
Congressman asking me, you know, what was my
thought on their response.

MR. BROWN: Before we get to that --
FORMER STAFFER B: And I explained --
MR. BROWN: Before we get to that --
FORMER STAFFER B: Oh, sorry.
MR. BROWN: -- Former Staffer B, can I interrupt for one second?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: I want to ask -- I want to unpack some of that.

FORMER STAFFER B: Okay.

MR. BROWN: The text from Kyle where he said something along the lines of, I guess, he decided to go about it the right way, what was your understanding of what Kyle was trying to convey with that text?

FORMER STAFFER B: That he was no longer going to request for the Secretary of the Navy to just change -- do a personal favor and change his RE Code.

MR. BROWN: In other words, it would -- it was now the -- the thought that -- that we would go about it the right way through the formal channels?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct. That, Former Staffer B, the way that I was -- the way that I was originally approaching it is how we
would continue to drive forward --

MR. BROWN: Okay.

FORMER STAFFER B: -- and go about it the right way.

MR. BROWN: And then you mentioned there is a letter from the Secretary of the Navy. Is this letter that you were forwarded and you saw, correct?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Is this letter a direct response to what we were talking about earlier, the request from Patrick and the Congressman for a meeting?

FORMER STAFFER B: Yes. So that letter was -- it was a formatted like it would be a -- like the letters that I would have sent out, like a form letter, but very detailed information of the process and the steps that needed to be taken.

MR. BROWN: So it wasn't an -- it wasn't an email that was a response to Patrick? It was a formal letter sent
to the office, but it was -- it was certainly in
response to Patrick's and/or the Congressman's
request?

FORMER STAFFER B: I -- I mean, to be
honest with you, I think that the letters would
look the same. I am just saying that it wasn't
like an email. It was an actual, like -- like
the letters that I would send out. It looked
exactly the same, the letterhead, that, you know,
block. It was -- it was a very official letter,
not just an email response. It was -- it was a
very official letter saying these are the
appropriate steps that need to be taken for this
to happen.

MR. BROWN: So as I understand then,
this is sort of the Secretary of the Navy's way
of saying what you asked for would not be
appropriate; here is the appropriate way to go
about it?

FORMER STAFFER B: Correct.

MR. BROWN: Okay. I interrupted you.
You were starting to talk about the fact that the
Congressman came to you, was it in your office, later to talk about all of this --

FORMER STAFFER B: No, it was an email -- it was an email and he asked me what was -- you know, what -- what's your opinion of the response from the Secretary of the Navy.

And I explained to him that it was exactly what I had tried to explain to Kyle and that's why we were taking those steps, that in order to get his RE Code changed or even attempt to get his RE Code changed we would have to first get his separation changed.

And, you know, I told him and I think -- and this is just me assuming, but I was a paralegal in the military. I have a huge JAG family, you know. And I told him that I asked, you know, without any names or any scenarios or telling them, you know, anything about that, that I had talked to some of my JAG lawyers that -- you know, and asked them do you think fighting to say that he could have received a entry-level separation where he could have rehabilitated and
given the opportunity to come back into the
military was the right way to go, and that they
had all advised that yes.

And I -- I believe, and I -- this is
speaking from memory, that I even sent him the
actual Army regulation or Navy regulation --
sorry. I sent him a couple different Navy
regulations, I do remember, ways that we could
approach this. And that was the -- I never got a
response from him.

MR. BROWN: Just real quickly, what
are your thoughts on the likelihood that Kyle
would have been able to be successful in -- in
regards to changing his RE Code?

I mean, when I am on the Secretary of
the Navy's website and I am looking at this
stuff, I -- you know, I saw some stuff on there
that said like, you know, the Discharge Review
Board has no authority to upgrade a discharge for
the sole purpose of enhancing re-enlistment
opportunities and that they don't have the
authority to upgrade a discharge based solely on
the passage of time or of good conduct subsequent
to leaving Naval service.

When I read these sort of things and
I -- I hear you talk about Kyle's situation, it
seems to me like this is definitely an uphill --
uphill fight.

A Correct. I mean, it is -- in my
opinion, it was not going to happen, but, you
know, that -- and that Board is created for
people who are -- you know, you get -- obviously,
I did a lot of military justice. You get victims
of military sexual trauma who then have a mental
breakdown and then get separated. You know, they
get punished for the behaviors that they are
displaying while they are going through all this
and mental health stuff and they end up getting
kicked out of the military, you know, with an
other than honorable discharge because, you know,
they have gone off the deep end and done some
crazy stuff.

And -- and that's really what -- what
that Board is for, where this situation is
somebody who truly was -- their entire situation
wasn't looked at and they were separated and it
was unjust and, you know, somebody needs to take
a -- a second look at it. That's really what
it's intended for.

So people just wanting to come back in
the Navy after they have, you know, been kicked
out is very -- I mean, even -- even some of these
cases where, you know, women, you know, get
orders to deploy and they just had a baby and,
you know, they don't want to leave their baby so
they go AWOL for a few days, you know -- there
is just situations where it's -- it's a lot
different situation than, hey, I did drugs, lie
about doing drugs and, you know, two days into
the military I was kicked out and now all of a
sudden my brother wants me to serve because he
thinks that it would be good for me. You know, I
just don't -- I know that's a very detailed, long
explanation.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Very, very helpful.
So I -- I think what I would like to do next is