SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEPOSITION OF: GEORGE DOUGLAS SMITH, JR.

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Washington, D.C.

The deposition in the above matter was held via Webex, commencing at 10:09 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL:

[redacted] STAFF ASSOCIATE
[redacted] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
[redacted] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
[redacted] SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

[redacted] Let's go on the record at 10:09 a.m.

Good morning. This is the deposition of Doug Smith, conducted by the House Select Committee to investigate the January 6th attack on the United States Capitol, pursuant to House Resolution 503.

This deposition is being conducted via Webex. This will be a staff-led deposition, though Members may choose to join the meeting and ask questions.

Do I still have you there, Doug?

The Witness. Oh, yeah, yes, yes.

[redacted] Okay. So I'm going to ask you just for the record to state your name and then spell your last name.

The Witness. George Douglas Smith, Jr., last name is S-m-i-t-h.

[redacted] Great. And then we talked on the phone before and just met off the record, but just one more time, my name is [redacted] I'm an investigative counsel with the Select Committee. And with me from the committee staff is [redacted], also investigative counsel.

The Witness. Yeah.

[redacted] And like I said, Members might choose to join the Webex, I don't expect that to happen today, and I'll let you know if somebody else does join the meeting.

And then, I also just want to make it clear that you do have the right to have an attorney present today, but I take it that you've chosen not to retain counsel for this deposition. Is that right?

The Witness. Yes.

[redacted] Okay. And then under House rules, neither committee members, nor staff, may discuss the substance of the testimony unless the committee approves

release. So that basically just means that we're not going to go talking to the press about what you said today.

The Witness. Okay.

[redacted] And this will only be released once the members of the committee approve that release.

The Witness. Thank you. Will I get a copy of it?

[redacted] You will have the ability to review the transcript if you want to, but we won't be giving you a copy. At some point, the transcript of your interview will be part of the Congressional Record, and you'd be able to have a copy of it. But until the investigation concludes, we're going to keep the transcript just within the committee.

The Witness. Yes.

[redacted] And then, I'll also note for the record that what's been previously marked as exhibit 1 is the Select Committee's March 23, 2022 subpoena for Mr. Doug Smith, and that is the subpoena under which you're testifying today. The House deposition rules were also included in that exhibit, in that subpoena to you.

As I mentioned earlier before, as we were talking, there's an official reporter that's transcribing everything that we're saying today.

The Witness. Yeah.

[redacted] So just to make their job a little bit easier, make sure to let me finish my question before you start answering it, because it's very hard for them to record or transcribe two people talking at the same time.

The Witness. I understand.

[redacted] And then sort of, in the same vein, just make sure you're using a verbal response to my questions instead of, like, a head nod. They can only transcribe things that we actually say.

The Witness. Right.

[redacted] And then, we talked about this a little bit also off the record, but all that I'm asking for today is an answer to the best of your recollection. So feel free to let me know if you're not sure, or if you don't know the answer to a question. And then, also, if you don't understand something I ask you, I'm always happy to rephrase the question or just restate it or provide some kind of clarification. So just let me know.

The Witness. I understand.

[redacted] Okay. And then we also talked for a second off the record about your right to invoke the Fifth Amendment.

The Witness. Yes.

[redacted] There are limited objections that the committee recognizes, and one of them is that right to invoke the Fifth. And like we said, we can cross that road -- or cross that bridge when we get to it. But if you do invoke that right, you're essentially telling us that you believe the answer to that question could be used against you in a criminal case, so different than if you're just not sure of the answer, you just don't remember, and we can make that distinction when we come to those sorts of questions.

The Witness. I understand.

[redacted] Okay. And then we provide every witness that we talk to with a warning, and that's that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to congressional investigators like myself --

The Witness. Yes.

[redacted] -- or [redacted]. And then also today is a deposition. So, in addition to that law, it's also -- you know, you could also be exposed to criminal liability for perjury for lying in a deposition.

The Witness. Yes.

[redacted] So I just want to make sure you understand that, and that all we're here today to do is to get the truth. I know you understand that, but I just want to make sure that that's explicitly clear.

The Witness. Yes, sir.

[redacted] Okay. And then one other distinction. I just want to make sure you also know that this is a congressional investigation, different than the DOJ and FBI investigation. That is a criminal investigation.

We're not partners with the DOJ or FBI as evidenced by the fact that we did not receive your transcript of your deposition with the FBI. So just want to make sure you understand the distinction between those two.

The Witness. Yes, sir.

[redacted] And then throughout today, I'll try to take a break about every hour, and hopefully we don't go too much over 2 or 3 hours, but if you need a break at any other time, just to take a sip of water or go to the bathroom, do whatever, just let me know. Always happy to take a break.

The Witness. I understand.

[redacted] Okay. And then, as I mentioned earlier also, I'll be leading most of this conversation, but [redacted] or other members of the staff, or members of the committee that join, might ask you a couple follow-up questions.

The Witness. Okay.

[redacted] And then lastly, because this is a deposition, you will be under oath. So if you could please raise your right hand to be sworn.

The Reporter. Do you solemnly swear and affirm under the penalty of perjury that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

The Witness. I do.

EXAMINATION

BY [redacted]

Q Great. Now that we've got all that out of the way, we can start with some easy stuff. If you can tell me just a little bit about your background, where you grew up and your educational background.

A Yes. I'm from southeastern North Carolina, here in Columbus County. And I went to high school in Georgia, but anyway, I come back home after high school.

I went in the military. I served with the 2nd Ranger Battalion. I served with the 82nd Airborne. Also, I served in the North Carolina National Guard. I worked for -- retired with International Paper Company and the military after being injured in Iraq. And I don't have a degree. I have some college, but no degree.

Q Okay. And what's your birthday?

A It's M[redacted]

Q Great. Were you ever at Fort Bragg with the 82nd?

A Oh, yes, yes. Briefly.

Q I grew up there. My dad was in the 82nd also.

A Yeah, you told me. When you said you had been through a couple of times, I figured he was either in the 82nd or one of the special operations --

Q Yeah, 82nd and 18th Airborne Corps, also, for a little bit.

A Oh, yeah.

Q Great. And then, I believe when you were in the Army and you were in the 82nd, you were a ranger, right? I took that from your email address.

A Yes, yes.

Q Okay. Great. And then when did you get out of the Army? When did

you retire?

A It been in July of 2010, I had -- I'd -- I was out of the Army and was approached by the North Carolina National Guard and, anyway, I went back in -- I was employed with International Paper and went back in and deployed twice.

In fact, my last tour, I was a 51-year-old infantry squad leader, if you can believe that, but --

Q Wow, yeah.

A -- but I was injured and was medically retired in July of 2010.

Q Okay. Well, thank you very much for your service, sir. I appreciate that.

A Thank you.

Q Okay. And then if you could -- well, actually let me know, what rank did you retire at?

A Staff sergeant.

Q All right. And then let's talk a little bit about -- oh, actually, sorry. Are you still currently employed?

A No. I'm retired.

Q Retired. Okay. All right. Then let's talk a little bit about how you came to find out about the Oath Keepers and how you joined that organization. You can just kind of start from the beginning when you first heard about them.

A Yes. Actually, I first heard about the Oath Keepers, I was in the Wounded Warriors at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and someone had come through the barracks there and just had some information on it and reading through it. And at the time just read it and joined up. Really didn't think much about it. You know, thought it sounded like a good organization, but -- in 2010. But I wasn't active through all those years until the last couple of years.

Q Okay. And when you said it sounded like a good organization to join, what attracted you to the organization?

A Their community services and helping with, like, hurricanes, things that would help our local authorities.

Q Okay. Any other aspects of the organization, was it particularly political when you joined, or how would you describe the political --

A No, no --

Q -- orientation of the group?

A No, [redacted] it -- it changed. I watched it change a lot over the years, and like I say, I wasn't never really active, but I'd get emails, you know, and I'd read them and -- but I watched it over the years get more political, especially right before the events leading up to these last few months of January 6th. I mean, it went -- yeah, it changed big time, yeah.

Q Okay. And I just wanted to check. I was -- you were a little bit choppy there. Is that my internet connection -- or can the reporter just let me know, were you able to hear Mr. Smith?

The Reporter. I can hear him, yes.

[redacted] Okay. Great. That's probably me then.

BY [redacted]:

Q Okay. Then maybe if you could just tell me, what do you think changed the organization?

A Stewart Rhodes. The man created something that, if used properly, it would've been one of the biggest assets to law enforcement in our country, you know, to our society, it'd been a good thing.

But Stewart -- Stewart definitely changed -- changed it. And he had, I mean, it

was obvious when I come in and took over, the reason we did, I mean, I talked with past board members and other chapter leaders from other States, and Stewart was in it for the money.

And, you know, when I originally grabbed hold of the North Carolina chapter, you know, I was going to wrestle it from him and make it what we thought it ought to be.

And then Stewart come to North Carolina, I got to know Stewart, he showed up at my place. I never -- I never should've let him get into my life, our lives, down here, but it was the promise of, you know, this big money was coming, these billionaires were all in this.

And in the back of my mind, I said, if you play your cards right, you could get the whole State of North Carolina armed up here, in every county, where, you know, your biggest thing is your local law enforcement doesn't even have the assets, the money to get what they need.

But if we were able to go in, in every county, if the equipment was paid for, and, you know, if it was well regulated, it would be a lot better received from our county sheriffs, you know. It would be an asset to them and --

Q I understand.

A But being around Stewart in the months leading up to what went on there, he -- he was -- he's way off base. I mean, it's -- it's crazy.

Q I have a couple questions about a few things that you've said. The first one is, you mentioned that you talked to a couple of board members who had some things to say about Mr. Rhodes. One, who are those board members, and two, what was the board of the Oath Keepers, or when did that exist?

A [redacted] I'd have to do some research and go back.

Q Okay.

A I can't recall their names at this time, but, you know, over the years of it, we've had some fine board members, like Sheriff Mack and a lot of people who had left the organization due to Stewart's not having accountability for, you know, the funds and getting us involved in national stuff, whether it be that stuff out in Arizona or anything, you know, getting us involved in stuff like that.

Q Okay. And you mentioned Sheriff Mack. Can you tell me who that is?

A I've never met Sheriff Mack, but I mean, you know, he's a popular conservative sheriff here in the United States that believes that, you know, the sheriffs' departments, you know, wield, a lot of tremendous power in the country.

Q That's the Richard Mack, Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association? Okay.

A Yes, sir. Yes.

Q Okay. Great. And then you also mentioned that when Stewart Rhodes came down at some point, you know, he made the promise of kind of big money coming to the Oath Keepers, and you mentioned some billionaires that were involved in that, or that he was going to get donations from. Do you know who those billionaires were?

A I do -- I do not. I don't recall any names. I believe that he had used a name, but I don't recall who it was. It certainly wouldn't have been anyone that was -- you know, widely publicly known or I'd have grasped onto that, remembered that.

Q When was this that he told you about this money that was going to come in?

A It would've -- it would've been after July of 2020. In fact, I traveled to Texas with him to meet up with these people, but it never -- it never happened. It was always excuse or something happened. I mean, you know, he really just wanted somebody traveling with him, driving him. That's what it appeared to me.

[redacted] I think [redacted] might have a question for you.

The Witness. Yes, sir.

BY [redacted]:

Q Hi, Mr. Smith. Did Stewart Rhodes explicitly suggest that there would be big money coming, or was it kind of just a sideways thing he suggested might happen?

A No, sir. He was adamant that there was money coming, and that would be neat to meet with these people, but it never came to pass. But he was adamant that there were people there.

Q Got it.

A But I never saw anybody.

Q Did you have a sense that Mr. Rhodes had a lot of money himself?

A No, sir. I knew that it was pretty obvious he was living off of the money that was coming in the Oath Keepers. And, you know, I just don't believe that the bank accounts was that large. I didn't have access to know, but -- I mean, he had money to get around and do what he wanted to do and buy what he wanted to buy. But, you know, he should've had vehicles and stuff like that, you know. So I don't think he had a lot of money.

[redacted] Got it. That's helpful. Thank you.

BY [redacted]:

Q And so you mentioned a trip in July of 2020 to Austin, Texas, where he had promised some meetings with some of these donors. Can you tell me what ended up happening if those meets didn't materialize?

A Actually, it was after July. I'd have to go back and look too. It was in -- actually, we went out twice, [redacted]we went twice. And I would have to look back, but that would've been probably late August, September, and again, there at the beginning of October, along right through there -- or the end of October, closer to

November coming up. It wasn't long after that, I mean, we split completely. I mean, after being on the road with him and being in it, I knew that he wasn't a --

Q Okay. Well, we'll talk a little bit more about Stewart Rhodes obviously the rest of today, but that's helpful background information.

I wanted to ask you about a couple other members of your chapter, who we'll probably also talk about a little bit more today, but in particular Mr. Paul Stamey.

A Yes.

Q Do you know Mr. Stamey?

A Yes, very well.

Q Okay. And when did you first meet Mr. Stamey?

A I met Paul in July of 2020.

Q Okay. And how did you meet him?

A He -- he came to an Oath Keepers meeting that was down in Columbus County.

Q Okay. Got it. And do you know -- do you know how he came to -- did you recruit him, or did he just hear about the Oath Keepers and come to a meeting?

A Yeah. That time we had the Oath Keepers -- I had been able to get in, and that's why Stewart had showed up, but I got hold of the Oath Keepers' website, the official State website, and he had -- we had put on there that we were having a meeting and inviting -- you know, just went out for all of North Carolina, and, you know, the people shown up, and that's when I first met him.

Q Okay. And then just another individual, Mr. Steve Kwiatkowski --

A Yes.

Q -- do you know him?

A Yes, I do.

Q Okay. And when did you meet Mr. Kwiatkowski?

A That would've probably been in earlier of 2020, in maybe March or April. So Steve actually approached me at -- and I had met Steve before. He was a law enforcement officer in Lake Waccamaw, North Carolina, and I had briefly met him.

But he had approached me and, you know, said he'd heard that I was heading up the Oath Keepers or getting it going and wanted to join, so he got on board then.

Q Great. And then another individual that we're going to talk about a little bit is Mr. Thomas Caldwell.

A Yes.

Q Are you familiar with him?

A I know him, yes.

Q Okay. And am I right that he's not an Oath Keeper?

A No. He -- he was -- he was going to join up the Oath Keepers when we met him, but he wasn't an Oath Keeper when I met him.

Q Okay. It's my understanding that he never did officially become an Oath Keeper. Do you know why that is?

A Probably the time of it. I mean, he had just run into the Oath Keepers and we had met him up in Virginia. And he was -- he said he wanted to be an Oath Keeper.

In fact, I was going to send him some -- when I quit, I was going to send him some material up there, and I still have that box of Oath Keeper stuff. I have no need for it, and I thought he was going to join. So I had expressed to him that briefly that I didn't think that -- that each State should be Oath Keepers -- joining the national Oath Keepers was not a way to go with this thing.

Q Okay. And do you know who his, you know, like, first contact with Oath Keepers was, or who kind of brought him, if not into the organization, but got him

involved with you all?

A Yes. He was a speaker at a Stop the Steal rally in Virginia. And we had gone to Virginia, Stewart and I had gone to Virginia. Stewart knew some people up there and -- anyway, we went and met up with them, and we went to the Stop the Steal rally, and Caldwell was speaking there, and that's when we met him. And that would've been just a few days after the election.

Q Okay. So shortly after November 3rd?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And then let's see, when you first met Mr. Stamey, I think you might've mentioned -- or am I correct that that was at a meeting that was on your property?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And can you just describe your property for me. Is it a farm? What's the -- what is it, and is it a common meeting place for North Carolina Oath Keepers?

A Well, a lot of people met there. In fact, our county, you know, they filmed their -- the Tourism Board filmed our tourist promotional on my property. A lot of churches use my property.

It's sitting along the Waccamaw River, so I've got about a mile of river front, and I lease property that meets up with me goes on the river front. We do a lot of canoeing and kayaking, and that's basically what it's for, is outdoor stuff.

I have a shooting range because I have a berm complex, it just turned out to be a naturally good place for a shooting range with the berm behind it. So we do some shooting here.

Q Okay.

A And all kind of people from the community, husbands with their wives or whatever need a place to go out in the country.

Q Okay.

A But it's basically for my canoeing and kayaking operations.

Q Great. And do you have a business, like, a tourism-type business?

A Well, I'm going to get it started back. We had such a -- we just had the river cleaned up. The river's been shut down for about 5 years due to the hurricanes, and we just got it opened up a few weeks back.

So I'm thinking about getting something started here and getting some of the younger fellows in the community here involved in that business. But officially, no, sir, I'm not -- don't have the business going.

Q Great. Okay. And then just also sort of generally before we get into specifics about events that we're going to talk about, I wanted to ask you about communications with other Oath Keepers and how you primarily communicated with them. I take it that you used Signal with Oath Keepers?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And when did you first start using Signal with Oath Keepers?

A It would've been in the fall of 2020. Facebook had, you know, done a purge of all -- any conservative sites, and Oath Keepers was one of them. So we'd always been on Facebook, and after they put everybody off, there was a big rush to get, you know, everybody where they could communicate.

Several sites were used right quick, and I don't even remember when they are. I believe when the FBI asked me had I been on any other, I told them no. But after I thought about it after that meeting, I think we'd been on a couple of sites, but -- Signal, we got on Signal, and that seemed to work, but that would've been probably September

2020, maybe, somewhere along there. I believe that's right. Somewhere along there, [redacted]

But it was after we lost access to Facebook that we got on that. And that was all new stuff to me. I'm not very well versed in, you know, all that stuff until we got on Signal. I didn't even know stuff like that existed.

Q And I think, you know, we've talked a little bit about whether or not you still have those messages, but I just wanted to ask you, just for the record, and to make sure I understand. So do you still have the Signal app?

A Yeah, I do. The one we looked at, yes, sir.

Q Yeah. And I know that we've looked through some of your messages. I think -- well, just tell me, so obviously, there were some Signal chats with Oath Keepers that you were on at one point, and am I right that those are no longer appearing in your Signal application?

A Yes.

Q And you think that's just because somebody either removed you from the apps or you might've deleted them at some point?

A Correct. And a lot -- a lot of them I removed myself. I mean, here a while back, just a few weeks back, I was being put on, you know, some kind of groups, and then I got right off of them, you know.

Q When was it that you started deleting Signal messages?

A Well, I'd always deleted them, or they self-deleted, and -- you know, prior to that. But I stopped deleting them after -- you know, I said, wait a minute, you know, somebody's probably going to come asking for these, but -- and so I hadn't deleted anything off my phone, you know.

Q Okay.

A It's piled up with stuff.

Q When did you realize that or what was the event that made you realize people might want to collect your Signal messages?

A Well, that would've naturally been after January the 6th, you know --

Q Okay.

A -- some weeks after that. I mean, it was pretty obvious this thing was -- you know, people were in trouble.

Q And then did -- let's also quickly talk about kind of a connected issue, but interviews that you've done with the FBI. So I know we talked about one that was transcribed. How many times have you met with the FBI?

A Just one time.

Q Just the one time. And when was that again?

A This past August -- this past August or September.

Q Was it around --

A I'm not exactly sure, but I did meet with them in Wilmington.

Q Was it around the same time that Mr. Stamey met with the FBI, do you know?

A Yes, yes.

Q Okay. Yeah, he was early September. He met on September 9th with the FBI.

A Okay. Yes, sir. It was around that time.

Q Okay. And then, when you met with the FBI, we'll talk a little bit more about what you talked about with the FBI, but did you give them any documents when you met with them?

A No, not when I met with them. I did give them the same thing I give to you,

a couple of my emails and -- you know, and they didn't seem to want my phone. I brought my phone with me, so, you know, they could do whatever they done with that, and they said they didn't need it, so. They hadn't been too -- really pushing for any documents, [redacted]

Q Yeah. Okay. Just making sure I'm getting that. So they did not collect your phone. Got it. And then did they take any other devices or anything else from you, laptop or anything like that?

A No, sir.

Q Okay. All right. And then when you met with the FBI, do you remember about how long you met with them?

A Yes, sir. Probably roughly 4-1/2 hours or a little bit more maybe. Less than 5 hours.

Q Okay. And then when you -- when you concluded that interview, have you talked to the FBI since then at all, or have they reached out to you?

A No. No, they have not.

Q Did they tell you anything at the end of the interview, like, did they -- sometimes they'll categorize folks as, like, a witness or a subject, or will just give you an idea of where the case is going in relation to you? Did they tell you anything like that?

A No, sir, they didn't, [redacted]

Q Okay. All right. Well, then let's quickly talk about the election in 2020.

A Okay.

Q And this is really just to kind of understand your mindset, really to understand your mindset going into the events of late 2020. And I'm just curious, what were your views on the election?

A Well, I mean, I was definitely a Trump supporter, no doubt. I've always been active in the Republican Party here in the county and the State. I'm a, you know, delegate for my -- our county and I thought that -- I thought that Trump would win it, hands down.

Q And, again, just to say, you know, we're not interested in your politics or to cast any views about that. Really just trying to understand your motivation for attending some of the events in D.C.

A Yes.

Q So did you have concerns about election integrity or the fairness of the election?

A I did.

Q Okay.

A I did.

Q And can you describe some of those concerns for us?

A Yes, sir. I felt like there should've been investigations going on as to, you know, some of the complaints that were being put out on television. I felt like they should be investigated. I felt like the Supreme Court should've grabbed hold right quick there, somebody, and -- and look at it.

I believe now, in retrospect, I believe a lot of problems would've never happened if it would've looked like that somebody took an interest in it. But, you know, they just blew it all off as nothing to see here, but --

Q Were there any particular States or particular incidents that stand out in your mind as things that concerned you? I know it's a year later and it's hard to remember.

A Yeah. I mean, I just heard stories, like, you know, in Georgia, you know, the

count being shut down, water main breaks.

Nothing comes to mind at this time. I just remember that there were reports of stuff going -- that had gone on.

Q Sure, sure. And then kind of on that topic, where were you seeing these reports, or what were your kind of common sources for news or information about the election?

A Well, probably from Fox News.

Q Fox News.

A And more conservative, you know, news outlets.

Q And how about social media, did you get any of your news from social media?

A Not -- not really since -- after I got -- got off Facebook, I didn't -- I wasn't on social media as much anymore, which was a Godsend really. I'm off of it, and I'm going to stay off that thing, but --

Q I think a lot of us feel that way sometimes. And then just as another source of information about the election and election integrity issues, did you follow President Trump, like, his Twitter account or anything like that?

A No, sir. I've never been on Twitter. I've been watching the last few days, you know, about Elon Musk buying it out and that caused uproar, but -- I've never -- I've never been on it[redacted] I don't know what all that's about.

Q Sure. Well, like, I don't go on Twitter either really, but I did at that time often see his tweets on the news, or, you know, they'd pop up on websites or articles that you were reading about. Did you see many of his tweets or didn't -- not a big thing that came up for you?

A Yeah. I saw news reports, you know, where the President said that, you

know, he thought that -- yeah, that something happened, but, yeah, I mean, I saw news reports of it, yeah, [redacted]

Q Okay. All right. Then let's talk about, so between -- we're going to get to the events in D.C. on November 14th in a minute. But I wanted to ask about, between the election and November 14th, any events that you participated in with Oath Keepers that we should talk about?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A I did.

Q And what were those events?

A Stewart wanted North Carolina to go up and help Alex Jones, to back his security up at the speech in front of the Supreme Court Building. And we -- we agreed to go. A lot of the guys --

Q Hold on. Just to pause you for 1 second. Are you talking about November 14th?

A Is that the first -- it was the first deal in Washington, yes, sir --

Q Yes.

A -- the 14th.

Q Yes, that's November 14th. So I wanted to quickly check and see, was there anything before November 14th that you -- any big events that you did with any Oath Keepers?

A No. Just go to the Stop the Steal rally up in Virginia where we met Thomas Caldwell.

Q Okay. And when was that, do you remember?

A It would've been within a week of the 3rd. It was probably the following

weekend.

Q Got it.

A I believe. I believe. I'm not 100 percent sure.

Q And you said that was in Virginia. Was that in Richmond?

A No, sir.

Q Do you recall where that was?

A It was -- it was out in the country at a farm, a large farm. I don't know what county it was in. I'd have to go back and look, but it was in the county where Caldwell's from.

Q Okay. Got it. And which --

A If it's not that county, it will be a surrounding county. It was very close to his home there.

Q Do you recall where is Mr. Caldwell's farm?

A I've been there, but I don't -- I don't recall the name of the town where it's at.

Q Okay. All right. So one event, a Stop the Steal event, kind of more in rural North -- or rural Virginia, a week within the election. Anything after that, before you went up to D.C.?

A No, sir. Not that I recall, [redacted]

Q Okay.

A If -- if -- not that I recall. If you have something that's different, says I did, I mean, if you tell me, it would bring me back though.

Q Oh, no. I'm not hiding the ball here. Just asking --

A Okay.

Q -- just wondering if you went to anything else.

A Right.

Q Okay. So then, let's talk about sort of the -- well, actually, one other question. Did you meet with North Carolina Oath Keepers regularly? Did you have set meetings or anything like that?

A Yeah. I met more with the leadership around the State. We'd had some of the local guys would utilize my property at times, but I never trained anybody on what -- and I'd go by to the meetings, but I really didn't -- the membership, I really didn't know as much as I did the leadership, which was my purpose, trying to put leadership in place.

In fact, trying to find -- had been trying to find somebody to replace me, you know, and -- but that was my concern was the leadership mostly.

Q And when you say leadership, you're talking about leadership of the North Carolina Oath Keepers?

A Yes, sir. And all the county chapters.

Q Right. Leaders in the different chapters. Okay.

And can you tell me, so I know Mr. Stamey, at some point, became one of those leaders, right? He was the western State -- or western side of the State leader?

A Yes, sir. I -- I appointed Paul to that.

Q Can you just describe generally the leadership structure? It sounds like maybe there was you, then like a level between you and the county leaders. Is that right?

A Yes, sir. I had a western leader, which had been Paul, and an eastern leader, which was Steve Katai --

Q What -- Steve, what was his last name?

A Kwiatkowski.

Q Oh, okay.

A The one you called out earlier.

Q Yeah, Kwiatkowski. Got you.

A Kwiatkowski, there you go.

Q Okay. And then when did Paul become the western State leader?

A I'd probably say around August of 2020, pretty quick. I like Paul. Paul had a willingness, he was a good recruiter. He brought in a lot of people. He traveled around, you know, had time to travel and talk with a lot of people. I was impressed with Paul's ability to recruit and --

Q And then how about Mr. Kwiatkowski, when did he become the eastern State leader?

A About the same time officially, even though Steve had been with me basically since, I would say, the very beginning, when we got hold of the State website. Steve was with me when Stewart called down and come down to North Carolina to talk with us, which had been the end of June, I would think, somewhere in there that you're --

Q June of 2020?

A -- Steve had been with me since the beginning. Steve was pretty good -- you know, good about computer stuff, doing the websites and things. We were trying to redo that and get a website in every county.

Q And that June 2020 meeting, where Mr. Rhodes came down, is that also the same first meeting that Mr. Stamey came to?

A No. No, sir.

Q Okay. When was -- you might've said this already, I'm sorry if I just forgot -- when was the first meeting Mr. Stamey came to?

A That would've been in July, the beginning of July there, in the first week or

so.

Q Okay. So later after the Rhodes. Did Mr. Rhodes come down for that meeting also?

A Yes, sir. In fact, [redacted] when he showed -- I met him in Fayetteville, and he had a rent-a-car. But to make a long story short, I ended up bringing him home with me and put him up in my building down at the river.

My mother was staying with me at the time for a couple of months. I get her during the summer every year, and so I just let him stay down at my place down at the river. He stayed for a couple weeks there. He really don't have anywhere to go, it didn't seem like.

But, anyway, that's -- I met Paul, we had a -- I called a State meeting, and that's when Paul come down and he met Stewart then and -- yeah, a lot of guys come down.

Q Okay. So just to clarify that a little bit. So Stewart Rhodes came down for a meeting in June, and at that meeting, you invited him to stay with you for a couple weeks?

A Yeah. That's the way it worked out, yes, sir.

Q And so then, there was another meeting in July, and Mr. Rhodes was just still staying with you at that point, I take it?

A Yeah. He was there and then left right after that, but yes, sir.

Q Okay, got it, understood. That makes sense.

And then it sounds like with appointing the eastern State lead and the western State lead, and having Mr. Rhodes around in June and July, that that was kind of a busy time for you and the Oath Keepers. Is that right? Was the organization growing at that time?

A Yes. And I'd been on a -- going out, trying to talk with different sheriffs in

the State. But, yes, it did, Oath Keepers was growing, especially on the internet.

Q Okay.

A And --

Q What, just from your observations and your understanding, what do you think caused that growth in the Oath Keepers?

A People watching the riots on television, watching these cities get burnt down, law enforcement being attacked. People were scared.

Q Any particular riots stand out in your mind, or ones that you're remembering kind of spurred a lot of interest in Oath Keepers?

A Not really, [redacted] It seemed like it was almost just one continuous riot every weekend or, you know --

Q Right.

A -- every week, but --

Q And then -- sorry, not to rewind a little bit, but am I right that at some point, you also went to Louisville --

A I did.

Q -- in relation to some riots? Okay.

And who -- just tell me about that trip. When was that? Who went with you? What was the purpose of the trip?

A Kentucky, I guess the Kentucky membership had gotten up with Stewart and, you know, and asked for some help up there guarding some buildings with businesses. And anyway, Stewart wanted to know if north -- you know, if North Carolina could help participate. So I said, yeah, I made that decision. I said, Let's go, so it would kind of be a learning situation, let's go see what's going on here.

And we went up to Louisville and, you know, talked with the business owners, and

it was obvious they were scared, and they had a lot of video, a lot of things. They were scared of their businesses being burnt down.

One of the business owners owned a smoke shop, he was a recently an immigrant from Syria to this country, you know, they burnt down one of -- his new shop, and he still had one shop left.

But just talking with the business owners, you know, how scared they were for their, you know, property. And they had all been threatened. I guess they didn't get a good review. They said they had Black Lives Matter representatives come around and then give them, like, a grade and stuck signs on their businesses, giving them a racial grade.

And these business owners didn't want nothing to do with them, so they had been marked to be burned down.

Q And when was -- when was this trip?

A Whenever all the trouble was. When that was? September? Was it September?

Q There was a large, yeah, a large protest in September. And so was it --

A Right.

Q -- was it for that event?

A Yes -- yes, sir. We went up and North Carolina went up, there were people from Kentucky, other States that had come in around probably Virginia, Ohio. And we guarded these businesses for probably 4 or 5 days, 6 days maybe.

Q How did you -- how did you find the businesses that you were going to -- or how did you first come in contact with these business owners?

A The -- the Kentucky chapters had originally talked with them, and when -- when we went to town, we visit Kentucky, people, you know, carried us around

to the businesses.

Q Okay. And then this is probably a good time to introduce a term and talk about it. Are you familiar with the term QRF, or quick reaction force?

A I am.

Q Okay. And can you tell me what that means to you?

A Yes, sir. From a military standpoint, you know, if you have somebody in trouble, you know, you have a force to go get them out of trouble, or support them.

Q Okay. And you said, as a military term. Did it have a different meaning for the Oath Keepers?

A No. Roughly the same thing, [redacted]

Q Okay.

A Yeah, it'd be the same.

Q And then, you know, obviously relevant to the story that we're going to be talking about today, but our quick reaction forces armed? With firearms, I mean?

A You talking about the Oath Keepers or talking about the military? The Oath -- the military, no doubt. Oath Keepers have some weapons, but I don't know of any -- and I know we're going to talk a lot about this today, but, you know, nobody had any plans to have any weapons, to go on any attacks or anything, not from North Carolina.

Q And -- did I just lose you there? Do we still have --

[redacted] Okay. Let's go off the record at 11:01, while we try to get him back.

[Discussion off the record.]

[redacted] Then let's go back at 11:07.

BY [redacted]

Q So I think you were telling me about the term quick reaction force, and I had

asked you if they're typically armed, and you said in the military context, yes, definitely. And that you made the distinction that for the Oath Keepers, they might be armed, but there was no intention to use the firearms to go and I guess --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- attack something.

A The -- the QRF that went to Virginia, I sent that up there. I sent Paul and I sent Randy Earp, that was for up there. We weren't -- we weren't part of Oath Keepers then.

Q Are you talking about the January 6th --

A Yes.

Q -- one? Okay. We'll get to that in a little bit. We're going to kind of get there chronologically.

A Okay.

Q But I'm interested, when you went to Louisville, did you have a QRF for Louisville?

A Yeah, there might have been a team there that kind of went around, because we had some spots that were away from each other that we were guarding, but most of the people were on site. I mean, they were armed. I mean, we were in constant contact with law enforcement, and were right down the street from [inaudible] blockades though. But we were armed then. I mean, everybody was armed.

Q Yeah. Got it. So personally, you were -- when you were doing the work in Louisville, you were armed --

A Yeah.

Q -- and, you know, that's your right.

A Okay.

Q I'm just asking, you know, where -- want to understand where things were and how things were unfolding.

And so you said that there were also some people that were offsite, not exactly where you were doing the work that you planned to do in Louisville. Is that right?

A There was another pawn shop that was probably about a mile away, and there had been a motel room rented right there at the corner while all this was going on. I didn't stay there. We stayed out at the campground.

Q Okay.

A But there were some people over there. I mean, I don't know if they were considered QRF. Really there was no need for QRF, because it was -- everybody was heavily armed, and, like I say, we were in constant contact with law enforcement.

[11:10 a.m.]

BY [redacted]

Q Did you use the term "QRF" when you talked about that motel room at all when you --

A I don't recall that, [redacted] I don't. It could've been, but I don't recall. QRF, in my mind, wasn't a necessary thing. You know, we were basically all there.

And the guys that were at this other pawn shop down the road, I know that they had a vehicle that go check on them and all, you know? And I assume everybody was armed, yeah.

Q And when you say they had a vehicle that went to check on them, what do you mean?

A They just -- they had a vehicle they would drive -- they would go drive over and check on them. Nothing in particular. I mean, there were a lot of people -- there were a lot of, you know, vehicles there.

Q So, you know, obviously, you can only carry so many firearms, right? You know, you've probably got your personal handgun. And did you normally carry something in addition to just, like, a side firearm? Like, would you carry a long gun or a rifle?

A Oh, yes, sir. I did.

Q Okay.

A Yes. I had an AR-15. Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And so, in Louisville, did you carry that with you personally?

A Yes, sir, I did.

Q Okay. Did you bring any additional firearms when you went to

Louisville other than -- did you say you had -- you did have, like, a handgun, a side arm, and then also the AR-15? Did you bring any additional firearms?

A I believe I had a shotgun with me.

Q Okay. And what did you -- and were you carrying both the AR-15 and the shotgun the whole time?

A No, not at one time.

Q Okay. And so what did you do with the other one when --

A It would've been in somebody's vehicle, parked over in the parking lot --

Q Okay.

A -- at the motel.

Q So was that normal, that, you know, whatever extra firearms you had would just be collected in either a vehicle or a hotel room?

A Never thought about it, but I -- yes, sir, I guess that'd be normal. I mean, you couldn't carry but so much. And normally people had just what they carried, [redacted]

Q Right. Yeah. So, just practically, you can't carry that many, so you put them somewhere to be stored while you're not using them?

A Well, you know, I -- the truck we drove up there, that's where I kept mine.

Q Okay.

A And it was within eyesight of where we were, you know.

Q Okay.

Were there any specific vehicles or in the motel room where other people who either didn't own the vehicle or weren't staying in the motel room would put their extra firearms?

A Now, the motel rooms in Louisville, I would -- yeah, I would think that there were probably some weapons put up there. I know that the on-site commander, which I

guess y'all are familiar with, Whip, he had a motel room up there. I guess they had some guns there. I guess some of the people were staying there. I just don't know what everybody's situation was.

Q Okay.

A couple questions. Whip -- so Whip was there for Louisville. Do you know, is that Michael Simmons? Do you know his actual name?

A That's what I understand it to be now, having read reports about it.

Q Okay.

All right. And then these -- okay. So you had stored extra firearms in your vehicle that you had traveled in. Some other people had stored in another one. And that vehicle that some people stored their weapons in drove around and checked on different people in different locations, is that right, either at the pawn shop or wherever there might've been other Oath Keepers?

A Yeah, I'd say that'd be fair to say. I just didn't know what everybody's situation was with guns, you know, because I didn't know everybody.

Q Right.

A Like, the people from Kentucky up there, I don't even know where them guys stayed, if they stayed around the motel, and don't know what their situation was with their guns or storage.

But, for us, we just kept them in the vehicles that we rode up there in. And like I say, it was always within eyeshot of where we were at there.

Q How many vehicles did you take up to Louisville?

A Maybe three or four.

Q Okay. And ballpark is fine. If it was about three or four, yeah --

A Yeah.

Q -- that's fine. Ballpark's good.

And so, when you stored your extra firearms, was it just in whatever vehicle you drove in, or did you pick one car to put them all in?

A I would probably say whichever one we drove in. Yeah.

Q Okay.

Just trying to understand -- you know, because I just want to make sure I get what the term "QRF" means when we use it later.

A Uh-huh.

Q And so, you know, if all it is is a collection of the extra firearms that you brought, and sometimes it's a car, sometimes it's a hotel, that's useful to know. If there's something more that has to -- you know, that needs to happen to qualify it as a QRF, I'd be interested in that too. Just kind of want to understand what that term means when people use it.

A Okay.

Q So, with that, you mentioned the one vehicle that did have some folks' firearms stored in it, and then it drove to the pawn shop, for example, to check on the folks that were there. Did you ever hear anybody refer to that as a QRF, or would that be something that would be called a QRF?

A It possibly could've been, [redacted] I didn't have any part of checking on that team that was over there.

Q Okay.

A Even though I did ride over there one night with somebody to see what was going on, I never had a position there. And I don't -- you know, I don't remember exactly which group had that building out by itself.

Q Okay. Got it. All right. And I don't mean to belabor the point. Just

trying to understand the term.

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. So anything else before we move on from Louisville of note that we should talk about?

A Nothing I can think of at this time, [redacted]

Q Okay. Great.

Oh, and then I just want to ask you quickly about Mr. Simmons, Whip. Was he an Oath Keeper?

A I thought that he was. You know, I've read since then that he was a paid contractor, but I thought he was a member of the Oath Keepers.

Q How was he introduced to you? Just as Whip? Or what did people tell you his role was?

A Yeah, that it was Whip. I think I may have heard him been called Michael, I'm not sure. But Whip's the way I was introduced.

And met him up there for the first time at Louisville. Stewart said that, you know, he was going to be the ground commander up there and, you know, said he had all this experience, and I said, good enough.

He went up there -- you know, he went some on his own, from what I understand, you know, and he talked with the business owners and had went up and recon'ed the area on his own, is what we were told.

Q Okay. And was Stewart Rhodes also there in Louisville?

A Oh, yes.

Q And was Whip normally with Stewart Rhodes?

A Yeah, a lot. Yeah.

Q Did Stewart have anybody else that was sort of like that kind of detail that

was normally with him?

A I was with him, around him, on that operation there. You had the guys who initiated all the Kentucky guys; they were with him a lot.

Q Okay. And I was more, actually, just talking kind of in general, just at lots of different events. Am I right that Whip was frequently with Mr. Rhodes at different events?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was there anybody else that kind of played that same role, you know, was designated as sort of a commander or operations leader and that was frequently with Mr. Rhodes?

A No, sir, not that I can recall at this time.

Q Okay. Okay.

All right. Then let's move on from Louisville. And we talked about the Virginia Stop the Steal event. So let's talk about November 14th then.

A Yes, sir.

Q Can you just kind of start at a high level and just tell me about that trip, when you went up to D.C., and what -- just generally describe the trip for me?

A Okay.

So we had met Caldwell the week before at the Stop the Steal rally, and then they were gonna have the November the 14th thing. Stewart had talked with Caldwell. Anyway, we were gonna stay at Caldwell's farm, ranch.

So he wanted to know what North Carolina -- I said, well, let me ask the guys. And I asked -- a lot of the guys were interested in going. Believe it or not, they'd never been anywhere -- been to Washington, you know. Just wanted to go up. I told them it was just going to be backing up security for Alex Jones's security team.

And we got up there. There was other people come in from other places. But, anyway, we assembled down at Caldwell's farm.

The next day, we went up there. It was a massive -- it was messed up. Nothing went to plan. Cars got split up, us getting up there. Had guys scattered all around the city due to the traffic. It was a bad situation, [redacted] because it just wasn't -- you know, I had guys spread out everywhere.

Well, anyway, what we did have we got assembled. Stewart was there. And we walked up and went to the Supreme Court building. And we were running late when we got there, but Stewart went up and he talked with Alex Jones. He went up and talked with him. Most of us stood back. We really didn't do nothing. We just stood there.

And Stewart wanted to walk around. Walked around, and, you know, it was like he had his own entourage, probably maybe 15 of us or so. But walked -- you know, he just wanted to walk around and be seen, like he had him a little army there. I didn't like what was going on, and a few people didn't like what was going on, but -- he started talking about we were gonna assemble, you know, reassemble there, take a break, get ready for the night.

Well, I had a guy there with us, he wasn't from North Carolina, but he was having some leg problems. And we were gonna get him, walk him down, and try to get a car to pick him up and get him out of there.

And on the walk down, Stewart started talking about us providing security for people going to their cars. What it was amounting to is just going out and meeting up with antifa or Black Lives Matter. I'm like, well, no, no, no, no, you know. That's not why we've come.

Well, by that time, we get a phone call. And John Shirley -- he was a constable

from Texas -- I guess his motel room, he had left a pistol out. Something had happened along that lines. And Stewart got a call that the police officers were at the motel. I guess housekeeping had seen a weapon or something, a holster. I don't know what it was. But, anyway, Stewart got -- had called. And Caldwell had come up to get this boy that was injured. But Stewart jumped in the car with Caldwell and was going to go back to the motel.

Well, I told my boys, what was around me then. We got on the phone, and I started calling everybody and said, we're getting out of here, we're going back out there. We're not going to go up there and fight in the darn streets of Washington, you know? Number one, it's against the law. That ain't what we do.

And I was seeing -- I'd already been seeing a lot of stuff in Stewart. He was wanting publicity. Publicity meant contributions. And he had seen the -- you know, it's always -- he watched Proud Boys, you know. They were always out street fighting and all, and that's what Stewart wanted.

Well, [redacted] the guys I have with me from North Carolina, these are good old boys that -- there was some volunteer firemens, just regular working -- everybody there had a job, you know, had families. And there was no way, you know, we were going to be involved in street fighting. That ain't what we do.

So, anyway, I was able to get everybody rounded up and got them back out to Caldwell's. Left Stewart and all them uptown. Well, needless to say, he was pretty hot about it. And when I talked to fellas that night, I said, well, we're through with him, you know. This is it for us. And we should've already been gone.

But the next morning -- you know, we talked on the phone that night, Stewart --

Q Let's stop right there. We'll pick up at the next morning in a minute. I just had some followup questions about the things you just said.

A All right.

Q So, a couple of questions.

First, do you remember about when you actually did arrive in D.C. on that day? Like, when you got dropped off near the event?

A I'm gonna say close to 12:00, somewhere in there. I know that the Alex Jones event there at the Supreme Court building was ongoing when we got there.

Q Okay. And do you know --

A And that's just a guess.

Q That's fine.

A I would have to check when he was talking, you know, when that was.

Q That's fine. A ballpark figure is good.

And do you know when you were supposed to get to D.C. and meet Alex Jones?

A A lot earlier than we got there, that's for sure. We had such a hard time getting everybody in vehicles.

Caldwell was supposed to -- they had local drivers, and that didn't pan out. I think they had one or two maybe. But it was gonna be local guys that drove us up there. But it ended up, a lot of our guys having to drive.

And even though we convoyed up there, once we got in D.C., man, they just got split up -- boom -- everywhere. We weren't able to keep them together.

But we were supposed to have been there a lot earlier than what we got there. I would say --

Q Okay.

A -- a couple hours.

Q So if Oath Keepers were supposed to provide security for Mr. Jones but you were there too late and his event had already started, do you know who did provide

security for Mr. Jones?

A He had a security detachment. We were actually gonna just more or less back up his security. We weren't the main security push there, but we were gonna support his guys. And it didn't end up happening.

Q When you arrived and, you know, you guys weren't there to back up his security team, had somebody else -- did somebody else do that?

A These guys, the ones I did paid attention to, could see, they appeared to be paid security, [redacted] more of a professional-looking crowd --

Q I'm just asking --

A -- from what I seen. If they were, in fact, his guys. They could've been government guys up there, you know? But they appeared to maybe paid security or something.

Q I'm just asking because we've heard from other witnesses that sort of as a last- -- or maybe as a last-minute thing, but, eventually, for whatever reason, Proud Boys ended up actually providing some security for Alex Jones and backing up his smaller professional security team. Did you see any Proud Boys around Alex Jones that day?

A No, sir, not that I recall. And I didn't know them boys. What I'd see on television about them. And I've learned a lot since then, you know, reading newspaper articles and all. But I wasn't aware of them being there. They could've been, but I wasn't aware.

Q At the time, so in November, when you were there, did you know who Proud Boys were at that time? Like, you understood what the organization was?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. Did you know how to recognize Proud Boys? So they wear certain things, certain colors, and sometimes you can identify them just by what they're wearing.

Did you know some of those visual signs at the time?

A Just from what I saw on television, you know, where they're out fighting with guys or whatever. You know, I'd seen them on television.

Q What do you know as signs that somebody's a Proud Boy? Or, like, what --

A Oh, gosh.

Q Do you know the colors that the Proud Boys wear?

A What is it? Is it -- I don't -- is it red? I'm not sure, [redacted]

Q They mostly wear --

A I do remember they --

Q They mostly wear black and yellow.

A -- had something, but I'm not sure.

Q They mostly wear black and yellow.

And I was just asking because --

A Okay, black and yellow.

Q -- I wanted to -- I was trying to figure out, you know, if there were Proud Boys around them, would you have been able to identify them. And it sounds like maybe, but, also, there could've been Proud Boys there and you just weren't aware. Is that possible?

A If there were a large contingent of them there, I would -- in fact, now that you talk about it, you know, I believe I saw some of them guys marching that day. But I don't recall -- I don't recall them up there around at the Supreme Court building. And they could've been, but --

Q Okay.

A -- we didn't have contact with them.

Q Okay.

And, then, I want to understand a little bit more about what you said about Mr. Rhodes kind of almost being jealous of the Proud Boys. Is that -- would you describe it that way?

A Yes, sir.

Q He wanted --

A He talked about them a lot, especially there, you know, during that time period. It seemed like they had been involved in something. But I could tell that they were getting all the limelight and he was wanting it, you know?

Like I say, he survived off of contributions to the organization. And I think that just, to him, if we were showing up there, you know, involved in stuff, the contributions would pick up. But I believe it was mostly financial jealousy.

Q Do you remember any -- you said he talked about Proud Boys a lot at that time. Do you remember anything in particular that he said about them?

A Nothing other than, you know, their willingness to get out there and mix it up and fight, you know. He seemed to -- that seemed to impress him, you know, that they were out there fighting all the time.

The morning we split up, I mean, he made -- the following morning, he made comment about, you know, us being scared to get up there, that Oath Keepers wasn't this and that. And I'm like, man, we're not -- if somebody gets broke up, you know, who's paying for this? If somebody's forced to harm somebody else, who's paying to get them out of jail, you know? But he wanted that publicity.

Q Okay.

[redacted], did you have any followup questions about the Proud Boys?

[redacted] I don't. Thanks.

[redacted] Yeah.

BY [redacted]

Q Okay. And then you also mentioned that Stewart wanted you to escort folks from the rally to their cars, but you understood that that actually meant go out and confront antifa. Is that right?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. What made you think that what he actually meant was he wanted you to go confront antifa?

A It was just the way he was talking, you know, that we'd be seeing plenty of them up there and all. And, you know, people getting back to cars, and we were just getting into conversation when that phone call came from the motel. That really stopped a lot of all that.

But that's certainly what he -- you know, the point come across that that's what he wanted, us to just stay up there and mix it up with them guys that night.

Q And, sorry, tell me one more time, what was the call from the motel that you're talking about?

A It was John Shirley, that they had found a weapon or something, a holster or something in his room.

Q And --

A There was a lot of police there, and Stewart went back, for whatever reason, to straighten that out. It's -- glad he did.

Q Okay. So that whole situation was avoided because Stewart got distracted by the situation with John Shirley.

A Yes, sir. It was like a godsend, really. I was able, without a bunch of, you know, arguing and carrying on, getting my guys put back together and getting them out of

there.

Q Did he want you to stay and still try to escort people and confront antifa?

A Yeah, that's what he was wanting that night. But, like I say, we got out of there. And then I didn't talk with him till we got back out to CAG's farm out there. You know, we were out of there, went back.

Q On the 14th, did you see individuals that you identified as antifa or believed were antifa?

A Yes, sir, there were some there. Not any large crowds that I saw there, even though, you know, obviously there was later on that night, from we were seeing, the fighting in the streets. But up where we were at that day, they'd, you know, been overwhelmingly Trump supporters up there. So they were on the fringes, I would guess you'd say.

Q Okay. And how do you identify a member of antifa, or what does a member of antifa look like when --

A Well, a lot of times, you know, they're dressed in black, and they'll wear one of them mask things, the little opera masks, you know, a lot of times when they're throwing rocks or doing stuff like that. But, yeah, you can spot them.

Q Okay.

All right. And then we didn't cover something, kind of, before the November 14th rally: Did you guys spend the night at Mr. Caldwell's farm in Virginia before the November rally?

A When we first met him the week before?

Q No. Did anybody stay at the Caldwells' farm for the November 14th event?

A Yes. Yes.

Q And did you all stay there, the North Carolina Oath Keepers?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay.

And I think this maybe is where Mr. Stamey comes into the story a little bit too? Was he designated or did you ask him to act as sort of the mayor of the camp or the camp leader?

A Right. They were vetting people that were coming in, because, you know, there were people coming in we didn't know. So Paul was in charge of vetting and making sure who was coming into our camp.

[redacted] We've been going for about an hour and a half now. Before we start talking about Mr. Caldwell's camp, do you want to take a break, or are you good to keep going?

The Witness. Sure. Yeah. Let's take us a little break here.

[redacted] Okay. It's 11:37. Let's come back at 11:45. How's that?

The Witness. Okay, that'll work. I'm gonna just leave everything like it is, right?

[redacted] You can -- if you don't want us to hear -- and, sorry, we can go off the record at 11:37.

[Recess.]

[redacted] We'll go back on the record.

BY [redacted]:

Q All right. So I think we were just talking about Mr. Caldwell's farm, and let's just pick up from there.

So you guys -- so Mr. Caldwell offered up his farm, and you had either appointed or asked Mr. Stamey to sort of run the camp. Is that right? And he was doing some vetting work for new Oath Keeper members that were arriving?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay.

And that's -- a couple different questions, I guess. Who all went to Mr. Caldwell's farm? About how many people were there?

A No more than 30. Twenty to 30.

Q Okay. And how big was your group from North Carolina?

A Let me see. I'd -- roughly 15.

Q All right.

And so Mr. Stamey was helping out doing vetting. Am I right that he did not go into D.C. for the November 14th event?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. What did Mr. Stamey do instead?

A I found out later that he had gotten in a van, and they, I guess, went to Arlington Park or somewhere.

Q Okay. And what was the purpose of that van, or what was the van doing?

A I guess that van has been marked a QRF van, you know. That's the same questions the FBI was asking. I really wasn't paying that much attention to what they were doing that day. I just -- I know they were on standby, but, you know, nobody had planned on going into Washington or anything like that. Just to help get us out of there in whatever way. But, you know, there was no plan to go in with any firearms.

Q Right. Understood.

A And none of us brought firearms, you know, into Washington that day. You know, we knew the law, so --

Q Understood.

I just kind of want to understand what the purpose of that van was. And similar to the questions that I had about the Louisville trip, was the van a place that people put

firearms, where the firearms were collected?

A I'm not sure about that. There were probably some firearms in there, I'm sure, with the guys that were in the van. But I don't think there were -- I don't think, [redacted] there were firearms put in there, you know, other than the people that were in the van had their personal firearms.

Q Okay.

A I don't believe, I mean, best of my recollection.

Q Okay.

And then just as a -- the purpose of the QRF, when it's staying outside of D.C. -- how would the QRF be activated, or how would it be used?

A I'm not sure. I really didn't -- I wasn't concerned that much with the operation, what was going on. You know, I was just thinking about getting us all into Washington. And it's like I feared the whole time, it ended up being one massive, you know -- trying to keep my language good here. You know, it was messed up. And that's what I was concerned with the whole time. And never even put much thought, or any thought, into the QRF, if that's what we want to call it.

Q When you went to Mr. Caldwell's farm, did you bring firearms that time as well? So I know for Louisville --

A I did.

Q For Louisville, you said you had brought a handgun, an AK-47, and a shotgun. Did you bring all of those to Mr. Caldwell's farm also?

A No, sir, in Louisville, not an AK-47. An AR-15.

Q I'm sorry.

A Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I had a rifle and a pistol with me.

Q Okay. And what did you do with those firearms while you were in D.C.?

A They were there at Caldwell's building.

Q Okay. And what building was that? Was it the barn -- there's a barn and a garage, right?

A Yeah. It would've been the garage. Or, you know, we may have locked them in Bill's truck. To tell you, I haven't thought about it. I'm not sure exactly what we did with them.

Q Is Bill's truck the vehicle that you were talking about that might've been the QRF?

A No, no, no, no. Huh-uh. No. I rode up there with Bill Abshire, and we drove his pickup truck.

In fact, I pulled my trailer up there. I didn't know what the living circumstances were there at Caldwell's, and I actually brought up a GP medium tent with us, you know, in case we needed to stay outside. I mean, he said he had some buildings, but brought a tent with us just in case.

Q Whose vehicle was it that was acting as the QRF outside of D.C. on the 14th?

A John Zimmerman.

Q And who is Mr. Zimmerman?

A Mr. Zimmerman is from Fayetteville, and he was a member of our Oath Keepers.

Q And do you know, Mr. Zimmerman and -- for both Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Stamey, did they bring firearms, as well, up to Mr. Caldwell's farm?

A Yes, sir. I mean -- yeah, I'm quite sure they did. Yes, sir.

Q And do you have any idea what sorts of firearms they brought or how many?

A No, sir.

Q You didn't see --

A I mean, I can guess, you know. I would guess that everybody had a sidearm and a rifle.

Q Was that the standard, kind of, what everybody brought, one sidearm and one rifle?

A Yeah, [redacted] Yeah.

Q And do you know what Mr. Stamey and Mr. Zimmerman would've done with their sidearm and rifle while they were in the QRF?

A I would assume that they brought them with them.

Q Okay. Did you have any conversations with them about, you know, them being in that van and being in the QRF and what they were planning to do that day?

A Not that I recall, [redacted] Like I say, my concerns were around us getting into Washington.

Q Were you --

A So I really -- I didn't put that QRF together, you know -- or whatever they are. That seems to be the big word now. But I didn't put that together.

Q Were you in contact with Mr. Stamey during the day while you were in D.C. and he was at the QRF?

A I don't recall if I talked with him that day or not. Possibly so.

Q So I'll represent to you that when Mr. Stamey spoke to the FBI, he mentioned, same as you did, that on the way into D.C. a lot of folks in the caravan got separated, a couple different cars got lost, and that the core group kind of splintered off, and there were a lot of folks around D.C. trying to locate each other, and that he, as part of the QRF, was in contact with a lot of those individuals and trying to redirect them to the main group.

Do you --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- remember that?

A I believe that being correct.

And I would've had to have talked with Paul that day, you know, when I was trying to -- in fact, when I was trying to get everybody back together to get out of Washington, yeah, I had talked with Paul during that period. So, yes, I certainly talked with him, now that I think about it.

Q So, at the QRF, he was also providing some sort of logistical support and direction for you all, helping to reunite?

A I would -- yeah. I would think he'd been in that conversation, yeah. Because they were able to -- we were able to get some guys over to where we were at. Had been split off from us all day, a couple of carloads. So I think he was probably instrumental in making that happen.

Q Okay.

So I just want to understand a little bit -- it seems to me -- so you said that the purpose of the QRF was to potentially help with extraction if that was needed, right? To get folks out of D.C. if something went wrong?

A I would -- I would say that, but I don't recall the planning that went into any of that, if there was any planning.

Q And -- yeah. And if you don't recall the specifics of planning -- but just as the general purpose of the QRF, I thought you said the reason you have a QRF in general is to help people get out of a situation, right, or to extract them?

A Yes. Yes.

Q Okay. And so I guess I'm just confused about the utility of -- or the use of weapons in that situation, because if they're in a van in a QRF outside of D.C. with

weapons in the car --

A Right.

Q -- and what they're supposed to do is help you get out of D.C., the fact that they've got weapons in the ca means that they can't come into D.C. to get you. Is that right?

A I -- yes, that's right.

Q Okay. So doesn't that -- that seems a little counterproductive, right?

A Yeah.

Q And so why have the firearms in the car?

A It wasn't anything I planned or had any part of, you know? I don't understand either [redacted] I mean, because they weren't supposed to come into town, and, you know, what are you gonna do with the weapons?

I understand where you're coming from, but, like I say, I didn't help plan any of that. That's -- if I recall, Stewart was instrumental in throwing that stuff together there. It wasn't part of my planning.

And I'm glad that there was somebody out there to make the calls and get everybody in together, but, you know, other than that, it was for nothing, you know?

Q Did Stewart --

A It did get them closer to D.C., because we were a long ways out at his farm. It was over an hour's drive. So it did get him closer up that way. But, you know, like you said, you can't go into Washington.

But -- I don't know, [redacted] Like I say, I didn't plan all that. And stuff -- really, I need to think about and kind of process, think back over it.

Q Fair enough.

Did you ever have any conversations with Mr. Rhodes about these QRFs, either for

the November 14th event or for the Louisville event, what he thought the purpose of the QRF was?

A I don't recall any kind of conversation like that.

Q So let's talk about how you did end up leaving D.C. for the 14th. Did your group ended up -- you ended up getting reunited with most of the rest of the group?

A Yes, sir. We got back to Caldwell's farm that night. You had everybody made it back.

Q Okay.

And I think, earlier, you had told me about the situation with Mr. Rhodes wanting you to escort folks back to their cars, and you interpreted that as him wanting you to confront antifa, and I know you weren't happy about that.

So did that at some point come to a head with Mr. Rhodes? Did you have a conversation with him about that?

A It did.

Our relationship was already very, very strained, very strained. I knew -- just the whole thing was scary [redacted] I mean, the way Stewart was talking and acting, he was just trying to use North Carolina, you know, to make it look like -- he liked to have an entourage. Anytime he'd introduce people, he liked to have people around him like combat vets. You know, "This is Ranger Smith, three tours of combat" and stuff like that. But I don't know. He was out there about this stuff. I knew we were headed for trouble. And, like I say, everything was strained.

Well, you know, he had called that night. He was mad and everything. Told us to stay up there; he'd be there, like, 5 o'clock the next morning or something. He ended up getting there at 12:00. You know, that's par for the course for him.

Most of the guys had went on back. We'd already said, you know, to all the

leadership that that was it, we were through with him. He got back that morning, and we just basically had a throw-down. He was trying to say that Oath Keepers didn't back up and run and all this. I'm like, look, that's not what we do. We're not coming up here fighting in the streets, you know.

[redacted] how can I do that? I've been approaching sheriffs all over North Carolina wanting to work. Each sheriff be able to call me in from his county that's trusted and vetted and has some kind of -- a little bit of training that could help the sheriff, and then he sees you on TV and you're up there fighting. No.

We had our words, and that was it. We were through. We split that morning. And, you know, come back to North Carolina, started putting the words out. In fact, Stewart was contacting a lot of my people from North Carolina trying to get them to stay with him and all.

Q Let's pause there for one second. We'll talk a little bit more about how the split from Stewart Rhodes evolved, but I want to ask specifically about the conversation that happened on the morning of the 15th, I think.

And let me just make sure I understood this correctly. You returned to Caldwell's farm on the night of the 14th. You received a call from Mr. Rhodes where he was angry that you didn't stay in D.C. to either fight antifa or escort people back to their cars. And he asked you to say at Caldwell's farm until the following morning so that he could come and have a conversation with you. Is that right?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

And then he arrived late that morning. Can you just tell me how that conversation went? What did he tell you?

A Well, when he showed up, he had Whip with him. He also had, from

Alabama, James --

Q Joshua James?

A Joshua James, yeah. First time and only time I've ever met him. I've talked with him on the phone in a group conversation since then when we were trying to get the States to split up. In fact, he brought Stewart on that phone call. Anyway, messed our call up. But he had him in tow with him.

Stewart was just trying to act like a big guy, you know, trying to put us down, to make cowards out of us because we didn't go up there, you know. I'm like, no, no, no, no. I mean, you know, that's not what we're doing. It was like I told you; I told him the same thing. If one of these guys get hurt, beyond it being against the law, who's going to pay for this stuff, you know, if he's laid in intensive care or he kills somebody?

And, yeah, that's the way we busted heads, you know. We was through with each other right then.

But I could tell from that morning that -- he was really bragging about Joshua James. I'd never met this guy. He just -- boom, there he is on the scene. And, you know, it didn't take long to see that was going to be Stewart's, you know, new boy. Trying to get some troops in there to back him up because he knew North Carolina wouldn't want to do it any longer.

Q What was he bragging about Joshua James? What did he say about him?

A Just, you know, he was a combat veteran too, been wounded too. You know, more or less running off his military experience.

Q And then I think you mentioned that Whip was also there?

A Yes.

Q Did Whip participate in that conversation?

A Whip didn't really have anything to say, no.

Q Okay. How did he seem? Was he just hanging out, or did he have --

A Yeah, he was there with Stewart. Whip was a good guy. You know, he's a kinda quiet guy, but very approachable individual. He just, you know, kicked back and was taking it all in.

Q And I know you've said that, since that time, you realize that Whip was not actually a member of the Oath Keepers. During that conversation, you thought -- did you think he was a member of the Oath Keepers?

A I did. I did. And, you know, I've read in newspaper articles and all where it said he wasn't. I did think he was, along with -- oh -- um -- can't remember -- Greg -- anyway, one of the board members was a Black guy. And when Stewart showed up, I mean, that was the appeal of him and hanging with him that long, that we were a diverse group. You know, you had like-minded individuals. And I know Black Oath Keepers, you know.

So I thought that Whip was, you know, that it went along with the philosophy of it. I didn't know until reading, until recently, that he was more or less just paid to be there.

Q So are you saying that it was your impression that Mr. Rhodes kept Whip around because it made the Oath Keepers seem more diverse, or that --

A It --

Q Okay.

A It is now, [redacted] It is.

Q Knowing now that Whip was not a member of the Oath Keepers, is that sort of consistent with how he interacted or dealt with the other Oath Keepers? Was he a little detached from -- you know, obviously, there's infighting going on between you and Mr. Rhodes, and he's there for the conversation but he doesn't partake.

A Right. Yes.

Q So did he seem just kind of disinterested in the inner workings of the Oath Keepers?

A Well, yeah, you could put it that way. I mean -- but -- he didn't get involved. And Stewart may have asked him something or tried to bring him into it, but he wasn't involved in it that morning, but --

Q And then how about Mr. James? Was he involved in that conversation?

A Yeah, he had some stuff to say. I don't remember exactly, you know, what he was saying. It had -- probably something -- who will -- you know, something high speed. But I wasn't really paying him no mind. It was just getting the word through to Stewart that we were through with him, you know.

Q Did anything about the Proud Boys come up during that conversation? I know you mentioned that he talked a lot about them at that time. Did he talk about the Proud Boys' activities on the 14th when you talked to him on the morning of the 15th?

A Yeah, I believe -- you know, the reports were coming out that there had been fighting that night, you know, people injured, all that stuff. And, yeah, he said something about, yeah, the Proud Boys were, you know, in there mixing it up and all.

I'd have to, you know, sit down and really think about and try to recall a lot that was said. But, yeah, he did say something about that, [redacted] And I hadn't thought about that, but -- yeah.

Because it was just coming out just like I predicted, you know, if you go up there. There was some stabbings and, you know, quite a few people hurt, if I recall. Exact same thing I didn't want no part of.

Q Right. And so your concerns about what would happen that night if you stayed kind of bore out for the Proud Boys at least.

A Absolutely. Yes, sir. It did.

Q And when Mr. Rhodes was talking about the Proud Boys and the violence that happened that night, what was his demeanor? Was he -- he was wishing the Oath Keepers had done that?

A Yeah. I would -- I would think so. You know, some of the other guys was there. I'd like to talk -- I haven't asked them, but I'd like to ask them what they remember about that. Something was said, [redacted] It's just so long ago. But you best believe I'll think about it over the next several days and try to recall off everything that was.

But, yeah, he was hot because we weren't involved and then Proud Boys were.

Q Sure. Well, if you think of anything else from that conversation as we're talking, feel free to let me know.

A Okay.

Q And then, just following up, so how did that conversation end? What was the conclusion there?

A Well, I told him, you know, we're through with you, we're not getting in this mess up here.

I didn't know how far they were gonna go with it, until, you know, everything we've read and seen develop there. But I knew it was headed in a bad way, and I was, you know, glad we were through.

Well, the next thing was to talk with the members in North Carolina. I know that he was trying to grab hold of, you know, some of our members and get them to stay with national. In fact --

Q Who were the members that he was trying to get to stay with national?

A Out of Fayetteville, you had Steve --

Q Is that Mr. Kwiatkowski?

A No, nuh-uh. No, this was another Steve. I can't recall his last name now. It'll come to me though. But he was from Fayetteville. And he did go back up there with him, I believe, on the 12th and went with him down to Georgia on December the -- I believe it was the 12th.

And the reason I bring that up is, the next demonstration in Washington I believe was -- wasn't that the 12th, December 12th?

Q That was December 12th, yep.

A Well, I called and talked with Paul, talked with Steve and the guys, and I said: Look, I know they're trying to get these people to go up there. They don't need to be up there. Let's call a State training. So we said, all right, we'll do that.

So we put the word out and, you know, we had a big announcement, you know, what we were going to rename ourselves and all, but for everybody to come on the 12th down to my place.

That way, we'd keep them from going up there and getting -- Stewart, I didn't know how many he could pull. But I figured, if them boys would come down there and have a good weekend of shooting and camp out down there and, you know, have some fellowship, then we could keep them out of that.

And that's what we did. We went down on the 12th and got the people from North Carolina, made the announcement, you know, officially we were no longer with the national organization of Oath Keepers. We wanted to re-brand.

And, you know, I'd been in conversations with several other States, and we were trying to re-brand ourselves as, like, North Carolina Oath Keepers, South Carolina, and split off -- something I wanted to do from the beginning, but people I talked to said, well, Stewart has the rights, he owns this thing. But, you know, I was willing to -- more or less trying to steal the name. And, instead -- which was a mistake. I mean, Lord, that

name's ruined now.

Q I'll have a couple more questions for you about that in a second, but I just want to close up on the 14th.

One person that we haven't talked about in connection with the 14th is Mr. Kwiatkowski. Did he travel with you for the 14th?

A To -- on, on November?

Q November for D.C. -- yeah, for the D.C. trip on November 14th?

A No.

Q Okay. And what was he doing --

A No, I don't think so. I don't think Steve was there. He -- I don't think he was there. He could've been. But I don't recall him being there.

Q Do you recall him being part of the conversation with Mr. Rhodes or part of that confrontation on the 15th?

A No, sir. I don't think he was there.

Q And then one other question about the 15th. So I know you said Mr. Rhodes was talking a lot about the Proud Boys at that time and that he might've mentioned in the morning conversation on the 15th. Did he ever mention any specific Proud Boys by name?

A No, sir.

Q Okay. Did you know any specific Proud Boys by name?

A No, sir. I know no Proud Boys that I know of.

Q And I don't mean did you meet them necessarily. I just meant, in conversation with other Oath Keepers or with Mr. Rhodes, was anybody mentioning any specific Proud Boys?

A No, sir. If there was, I didn't realize it. I mean, I know now, from news

broadcasts and all, who the players were and that they supposedly met, you know, stuff I've read, but before -- you know, if I hadn't read it in the paper, I wouldn't know any of it.

Q All right. Yeah. And we'll talk about some of that in a little bit.

And so let's just make sure to keep that distinction between what you've learned since January 6th and what you knew at the time when we had conversations. And if you know something -- if you've learned something relevant since then that sheds some light on things you observed at that time, you know, feel free to let me know, and we can discuss that.

A Sure.

Q But I just want to make sure I know what you knew at the time and what you know now.

A I gotcha. I gotcha.

Q Okay.

Then I think I'm done with questions on the 14th, unless there's anything else that kind of stands out in your mind from that trip.

Actually, you know what? Sorry, one other thing I want to follow up on: Mr. Caldwell. So I know how you met him and how he was kind of introduced to the group. Can you describe his farm a little bit more for me? Was it a big property?

A Yes, sir. It was -- looked like an older family farm maybe. It was a really pretty piece of property. Sure was, [redacted] It was back up off the road. And it had a home there and had a nice size barn in the back. And then the building we stayed in, the garage, I think he kept a classic car in there generally, but he had pulled it out for us to stay in there. But it looked like a well-kept place.

Q What was Mr. Caldwell's profession, or what did he do?

A You know, from what he had told us, he was a retired Naval commander and

had been in intelligence and then worked, you know, defense contract work. And, you know, seemed to have a pretty close contacts, the way he talked and all, still with the, you know, government or that community.

Q What was your impression of him? Did you have any kind of thoughts coming away from the 14th or your initial conversations with him?

A Yeah. After getting through all that up there and all that day, I like Caldwell, but he was -- and I got to know more later -- but he was, I don't know, kind of living out a fantasy or something. I knew there was something right off about him to begin with. You know, since then, I've learned that, you know, he's wrote stories, you know, spy novels or some kind of mess or whatever.

But Caldwell had got up with us. I had told him that we were no longer -- you know, we weren't in the Oath Keepers, you know, and told him, you know, that we were out of it.

Q Did he take --

A You know, and I told Paul -- when I sent Paul and them up there to get up with Caldwell, fight out the story, he had gotten up -- Paul said he'd gotten up with him and they were staying up there. And I told Paul, you know, to get up with Caldwell and see where they were staying.

Well, in fact, he told him about where they were at, and then, you know, my guys got some rooms up there. Well, Caldwell found out that --

Q We're talking about -- sorry, just to --

A Pardon?

Q -- pause you for one second. Are you talking about January 6th now?

A Yes. Yes. I'm jumping ahead there.

Q Okay. Let's hold off on that for one second.

A All right.

Q We'll move there in a minute.

I just want to ask a little bit about the relationship between Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Rhodes. When you guys had your falling out with Mr. Rhodes, did Mr. Caldwell take a side or did he express an opinion on that conflict?

A No. I don't think he was in there. I don't think he was --

Q Was he aware -- and I don't necessarily mean at the moment of the conversation, but did he become aware that there was a rift between you and --

A Oh, yes.

Q Okay.

A Yes, because he had called me at some period right after that, you know, and I had talked with him. I told him then, you know, and on another occasion that we weren't involved with him.

But he -- you know, I thought that -- going back, I thought that he was gonna join them, and that's why I was -- I had a box of material I was going to send to him. And -- but, you know, I figured he'd end up joining them because he just seemed like he wanted to be a part of something, you know?

Q And not to belabor the point or the question, but, again, did Mr. Caldwell, like, take a side? Did you get the sense that he agreed with Stewart that you guys should be going out and confronting antifa? Or was he more on the side of, you know, we need to be keeping to ourselves and just be doing a more simple security mission?

A I don't really recall. I really don't recall what his position was on that right off here. I don't know. He was kind of a -- you know, mouthy about stuff, though. I would say that he'd probably be more for confronting or more saying that he would. But, you know, I don't really remember the conversation, you know, going -- I don't

remember that, [redacted]

Q Okay.

All right. Well, let's, then, move on quickly to December 12th.

I think you mostly -- well, first, did anything happen -- did you have any other big meetings or going to any large events with Oath Keepers between November 14th and when you had your training session in North Carolina on December 12th?

A No. Huh-uh.

[12:21 p.m.]

The Witness. No. Uh-uh. No, sir.

BY [redacted]:

Q And how about the kind of evolution of the rift with Mr. Rhodes, did anything notable happen with Mr. Rhodes? Did you have any conversations with him in between -- after November 14th and before December 12th?

A No. I've never spoke with him again since.

Q Since December 12th?

A Since November the --

Q Sorry. I meant November 14th.

Okay. I wanted to ask you, and we can -- we can pull up some records if I need to show you, but I'll just let you know, or I don't know if you're aware, but we have phone records -- not records of the substantive calls or what you talked about, but just records of the actual call itself, who you might've made a call to or who might've called you.

And it looks like there is a call and a text from Mr. Rhodes to you on December 9th. Do you recall Mr. Rhodes trying to reach out to you in early December?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that about?

A I had some -- some stuff of his, and he wanted Steve -- the one I was trying to think of his name a while ago, to get it, pick it up.

Q Was it the Steve that kind of sided with Mr. Rhodes or that Mr. Rhodes was trying to recruit?

A Yes. Let me see, let me see if I can get a name here right quick.

Q Sure.

A Steve Cochran.

Q Steve Cochran. You said that Mr. Rhodes had left -- had some stuff at your house -- or left some stuff on your property?

A Yes.

Q Is that right?

And what did he leave?

A He left some personal clothes, some ammunition, and two firearms.

Q And was it left over from the time that he stayed with you for a few weeks that summer?

A Yes. And when we made that trip out West there, stopped at gun stores and stuff and bought him some ammunition and gun parts, just mess like that.

Q The trip out West, is this the one to Texas that you were talking about that was the fundraising, sort of a fundraising trip?

A Yes -- yes, sir.

Q How did that all end up back at your property? I can't remember now the timing of the fundraising trip. Was that during the period of time that he was staying with you, you took a trip out to Texas?

A Yes. In fact, we went out there twice.

Q And if you can remember, what were the two dates of those trips? Approximate is fine.

A The first one would've been in -- I'm saying -- thinking September, and the other one was in the first of October. And --

Q So it would've been -- those would've been after he left? He wasn't living on your property anymore at that point, right, or wasn't staying at your property?

A He come back and stayed one more time, till Election Day there. And --

Q When did he arrive at your property for that second stay?

A We got back -- it was the end of October.

Q And how long did he stay with you that time?

A In that period there, well, he ended up staying about 2 weeks, and he had more people come than that. I mean, my wife, she's still hot about this stuff. But he come back when the election didn't go off, you know, Trump didn't win. Kellye SoRelle was in Michigan and -- anyway, you know, there'd been some problems in Michigan.

He sent -- which Whip was one of them, but Whip didn't come all the way to my house -- a couple people to get up and get her and then brought her to North Carolina, to my home.

Q And Ms. SoRelle stayed at your House with Mr. Rhodes?

A Yes.

Q Had she stayed that first trip, the June, July time that he stayed with you for a few weeks?

A No. She had come down, but she stayed in a motel up with -- had been security for a Trump rally at the airport in Fayetteville and -- yeah, I'm trying to think back, but that was earlier in the summer. That was the first time I met her, but she's in Fayetteville then.

Q I think you said the first time he stayed, you indicated maybe that you didn't think he had anywhere else to stay. Was he basically homeless at that time?

A Well, that's -- yeah, that's the way it seemed, [redacted] I mean, he was -- you know, when I come to learn him, yeah, he stayed around at different places. He didn't have a permanent residence.

Q And we haven't talked about Ms. SoRelle yet. What did you know of her? What was her role in the Oath Keepers?

A Well, she was the counsel for the Oath Keepers, is my understanding.

Q Right. That's my understanding as well. And did -- what was the relationship like between Ms. SoRelle and Mr. Rhodes during the time that they were both staying with you? Were they romantically involved?

A I -- I was making the assumption, yes. I mean, I didn't see any intimacy between them, but I believe that to be the case.

Q Was anybody else -- did he bring anybody else with him when he stayed with you that second time? I think you said he might've brought a couple of people.

A Yes. He was from Florida. Jeff --

Q Jeff Morelock?

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q And did he say why Mr. Morelock was coming up to stay with him there, too?

A He was on the personal security detail that went and picked Kellye up.

Q Oh, he was with -- that's right. Okay. He was with her in Michigan, with Whip?

A Yes.

Q Got you. And do you know what Whip was doing at this time? He didn't come with them?

A No. He never showed up at my house. He's got off and went home or something, but he never made it to North Carolina.

Q Okay. And then you mentioned that during those sort of -- and tell me if I'm mischaracterizing this -- when you went out to Texas with him, I know you said you were going to meet with some donors and that he was promising you that there was big money coming into the Oath Keepers. Would you describe those trips out to Texas as

kind of fundraising trips?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And then you said at some point during one of those trips, he stopped and he purchased a bunch of gun paraphernalia, firearm paraphernalia, parts of weapons. Is that right?

A Yes, sir.

Q And where did that happen?

A Oh, it wasn't just one stop. It was several. I mean, he even bought some ammunition like you saw on Craigslist, you know, and picked up -- there were several thousand rounds, you know, and -- the weapons he had left, I raffled those off and split the money between those guys that's had to pay for lawyers, and give the bullets and all, you know, give them away to the boys that need them.

Q Did he -- did you -- I know you were kind of concerned about his use of Oath Keeper money at that time. Did you ever have any conversations with him about how he was paying for these and -- well, I'll guess I'll stop there. Did you have any conversations about how he was paying for those weapons?

A No. I never talked with Stewart about any of the financial dealings of Oath Keepers, other than us trying to get the donations. He didn't -- he didn't, you know, get into the inner workings of it. I mean, he'd say -- tried to make out like he was broke all the time, but there always seemed to be money there.

Q Do you have any idea about how much he spent during that time in, I believe it was September time frame up to, I guess, did you say -- October, November, sorry -- that October, November time frame when he was making a couple stops and purchasing, do you know about how much he spent?

A How much he spent on the paraphernalia there, firearms, bullets, or

whatever?

Q Yeah, exactly.

A I could probably come up with a ballpark figure.

Q Just a ballpark would be helpful, yeah.

A I'd -- I'd safely say $5,000.

Q How much -- you said you raffled it off or auctioned it off. How much did you collect when you sold that stuff?

A Raffled one off -- I raffled one off on a football raffle there. Didn't get all of them sold. Made about $5,000 raffling one off, and then I sold one for $2,000.

Q And what were they exactly, what was it that you were selling, or raffling off?

A It was -- one of them was a AR-15, and one of them was an AR-10. It'd been a -- AR platform that shot a 308 round instead of the smaller 556.

Q So back to my original question -- sorry for such a long detour -- but on the 9th of December, he called you to try to get that stuff back? Is that correct?

A I didn't talk with him. He left a message or something, but I never talked with him. And he had called -- Steve had called Cochran, you know, saying that he wanted it. But I never talked with him.

Q Okay. So I'm understanding correctly that he asked for it back, Steve, and then you decided that because he had likely misspent Oath Keeper funds, you were going to keep it, sell it, and then distribute the funds among --

A Well, not really at that time. When he come for it, wanted it, well, one thing I was wanting was to talk with him, and, you know, I'd sent word with Steve. When Steve come, I give him, you know, personal clothes and stuff like that.

And I knew Steve wanted to get his hands on all this stuff. I just knew how he

was. I told Steve, I said, I ain't giving you this stuff. You know, I had rode around with him and all that. I said, tell him to come down, to stop by, and come get it his self. And you know, I wasn't going to give it to him until he stopped by and got it.

And then after all this is happening, all this, you know, he ain't getting it back. It's gone. And --

Q So, did you ever -- or when was the next time you spoke to Mr. Rhodes after that confrontation on November 15th?

A I've never spoken with him again. He was got in on a phone call, but I didn't speak with him then, that conference call when we was trying to get everybody to split up from him, and Joshua James brought him in on that call.

But he got on there and the fellow that had put it together out of Mississippi, Jim Donaldson, he got on there and talked to Jim about, you know, Oath Keepers was run by him and blah, blah, blah, and whatever. And that was -- that was the end of that. But I didn't say nothing to him.

Q All right. There was an event in Atlanta on November 18th, a Stop the Steal rally. Did you go to that?

A No, sir.

Q Did you hear about that or know about it?

A I did, because that's when some of the guys from North Carolina went -- Steve Cochran went and another boy out of Fayetteville, his sidekick, but they went, and I believe that was the only two that went.

But Stewart was trying to, you know, through Cochran, get to people in North Carolina and get them down there. And that's probably, I was starting to see, you know, whoa, wait a minute, you know, I got to stop this, him reaching into North Carolina, which I pretty much figured I'd lost Cochran.

But, no, sir, we didn't go down there, [redacted] Are you talking about Stone Mountain? Is that where that was at?

Q I believe it was in Atlanta.

A Yeah, it's probably the same deal. But no, sir, we didn't go down there.

Q And then let's talk about a little bit of your efforts to kind of circle the wagon and bring the North Carolina Oath Keepers together and separate them from the national organization. Did you end up losing, in your mind, Steve Cochran? Did he stay with Stewart Rhodes?

A Yes, he stayed with Stewart.

Q And then was there -- I know you also mentioned that there were kind of efforts to get other States to disaffiliate from the national group. Is that right?

A Yes, sir.

Q And were there particular States that you focused on when you did that?

A Yes, sir. Florida, Alabama was in on the call, I believe some guys from Georgia once or twice, Virginia and Mississippi. In fact, Jim Donaldson in Mississippi put the calls and all together.

Q Is this the call that you mentioned Joshua James was also on, and then he brought in Stewart Rhodes?

A Stewart. Yeah, that was -- yes, sir. That was one time there. We -- we talked maybe three or four or five times, but it wasn't all -- always the same ones on there all the time. Florida was always on there, Kelly Meggs. That's how I got to know him.

Q And had you met Meggs before at that point?

A I don't think so. There was some boys from Florida that went up to Louisville, but if Meggs was there, I don't recall meeting him. I got to know him over the

telephone, talking with him, and, you know, he was -- Florida, he was saying Florida was all with -- they were splitting from the national and all this, and I've come to find out later he was lying the whole time. So I'm sure he was talking with Stewart about, you know, what we were doing to split it up.

Q All right. So now, knowing what you know, you think that Meggs was sort of a mole in that situation, that he was --

A Oh, absolutely, yeah. Yeah. He was telling Stewart what was going on, yeah, when he called me up and asked me could they stay in North Carolina on the way to Washington, you know.

And I don't recall if he told me then or if he told me when he got to North Carolina that night, but they were going up there to be security for Roger Stone. I'm like, Roger Stone? You talking about Roger Stone? Yeah. I'm like, what in the world? And then he, you know, he told us all, Well, we pulled security -- yeah. I'm, like -- you know, I'm thinking, what's going on here. But obviously they had been pretty tight in there with Stewart or national, you know, the whole time, and didn't have no intentions of leaving.

Q All right. We'll circle back to some of those conversations closer to the 6th. I'm interested -- so I know you listed a few States. Was South Carolina one of the States that you were talking to or trying to get them to disaffiliate?

A South Carolina really wasn't that organized down there. They didn't have a leader. In fact, I was trying to get somebody to organize in South Carolina, but they weren't instrumental in -- anybody from South Carolina, any of this really.

Q And then --

A You got to understand that South Carolina's been real strong in Oath Keepers. You know, a lot of stuff I learned after getting back in contact, but South

Carolina had split with Stewart also. And they had had a large contingent, but them guys down there didn't -- didn't seem to be interested in Oath Keepers for the most part.

Q You mentioned a couple other States, and I just wanted to ask you if you had, sort of, like, a primary point of contact. It sounds like Meggs obviously was the one you were communicating with about getting Florida to disaffiliate, and was it -- Joshua James was the main one for Alabama?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And then how about for Georgia?

A I -- I don't recall that boy's name. I don't know if he was on there every time. Jim Donaldson from Mississippi is one that put it together. Jim could -- could be the one to tell you all the names of the boys that were on them meetings.

Q So was Jim sort of your partner in trying to get people to --

A Yeah. Jim had always -- or for the last few years, had done all the -- like when hurricanes or any natural disaster, Jim was taking care of that. He was a real good man at that, going in and getting food and going into communities and all. And he knew a lot of people around and -- Jim would be the man. He knew everybody there.

But he had come to the conclusion, too, you know, he had been with Stewart a few years, but, you know, I'd seen the way Stewart talked about the boy behind his back, and he didn't have much -- Jim's an old country boy like myself, you know, and just -- I was trying to tell him, you need to get away from Stewart, you need to get away from Stewart.

And he had some other -- Jim had some other good influences too from his community down there, you know, that were telling him the same thing, that that got him listening. And he agreed and that's when we -- you know, he got these States together. But Jim put everybody together to begin with. He could tell you the names,

but those are the ones I recall, [redacted]

Q All right. And then this last one, you had mentioned Virginia. Was there somebody in particular from Virginia?

A What was his name? His name was Paul, I believe. But Virginia, they got -- got out of it, too. They didn't -- I remember them boys didn't want no part of national or getting involved in any of that mess. But I believe his name -- first name was Paul. But, yeah, Virginia was splitting off from him, though, from national.

Q Okay. In Florida, there was a president before Mr. Meggs. Do you know who I'm talking about? And Mr. Meggs, I believe, took over the presidency right around this time, in November, December. Does this ring a bell?

A Yeah. Because reason being, in Louisville, there was somebody from Florida that come up there. It wasn't Meggs. I don't know if Meggs was there with him, but there was somebody else other than Meggs. But you're right, yeah, but I don't know -- recall at this time.

Q Was his name Adams? Does that ring a bell?

A Yeah -- yeah. I believe it does. I believe it does, [redacted]

Q Do you know what happened, why there was the transition from Adams to Meggs in Florida?

A I -- I certainly don't. And I don't know what the other fellow's qualifications was, but, you know, after -- yeah, I mean, Meggs -- and I know a lot more about him now, but I mean, he was living out some kind of fantasy too. This boy had no police experience or military experience or anything, you know, and the next thing you know, he's running these boys down there. I -- I don't know how Meggs got into that, if Stewart put him in it or how that happened.

Q Couple questions for you about Mr. Meggs. Did he, in your conversations

about changing the Oath Keeper organization in Florida, did he ever talk about kind of allying with or working with other groups in Florida, like other militia groups or any other kind of similarly aligned organizations?

A [redacted] I know I've read that in -- in some court documents or an article.

Q And I'm asking --

A And I don't -- I'm -- I don't know if he told me or if I read it. I'm confused about it, but I have heard that.

Q Maybe if we can just kind of think about some of the -- were there -- were there specific conversations that you're remembering from this time frame with Meggs about disaffiliating, or was it kind of an ongoing conversation? Give me an idea of how frequently you were talking and what these conversations looked like.

A When I talked -- I talked with Meggs a couple times independent from not being, you know, on a -- on a conference call there. And everything he was saying, they were through with him and everything.

And if he said anything about meeting with other groups, it would've been to get them to join in with him, you know, to be one of their numbers. And that's why I say, he may have said something, you know, about talking with some guys, but I would've took it as trying to get them to join in the Florida Oath Keepers.

Q And I just want to make sure, did Meggs -- did you see Meggs on November 14th in D.C.?

A No. Uh-uh.

Q Okay. I just wanted to make sure that part.

Okay. And then the conversation with -- the big group call with all the State kind of leaders and Meggs that Mr. Rhodes came in on --

A Yes.

Q -- can you just tell me about that conversation? Do you know when that happened?

A Well, it definitely been after November the 15th there. I don't, [redacted] I don't recall the days.

Q Do you remember if it was before or after the 12th, when you did that training session?

A Well, I -- I don't, [redacted]

Q That's all right. If, you know, as we talk, if something jogs your memory --

A Yeah.

Q -- and you remember when that call was, let me know.

Was it a phone call, or was it a video conference?

A Oh, it was a phone call.

Q Okay. So then the 12th, it sounds like you organized your own training session with North Carolina, Proud Boys -- or Oath Keepers. Did any other State Oath Keepers join you for that?

A No.

Q Okay. And that was basically in an effort to keep them occupied and away from D.C., and what Mr. Rhodes wanted to do with the Oath Keepers at that time?

A That's correct, yes, sir.

Q Okay. And then, what were you -- what was the training? What were you training for?

A They set -- two or three different chapters there set up some training. I know they had to go to communications, commo training, and they had the medical training. They did that a lot anyway. They were going to extract, like, if somebody had been -- you know, shot and wounded in a vehicle, extract them out the vehicle.

And I believe that the next morning, I just run it -- or I didn't run any of the classes that day. I talked to a lot of people. That had been on Saturday. Now, they stayed over -- I had people stay over, but the next morning, they did some shooting out on the range and all. But what they trained in, I don't know. Other than shooting on the range, I don't know if they trained on anything.

But the first day, there was, like I say, commo and medical, and they were going to extract, like, a wounded person out of a car. But that's about all I remember of it, [redacted]

Q My internet connection -- okay, got you. Thought you froze for a second.

Around this time, and so I've seen, I think I told you that I've seen the transcript of Mr. Stamey's interview with the FBI. We weren't able to get your transcript, but I did see Mr. Stamey's. And he mentions in his interview that at some point around this time, that Caldwell had reached out to him and sent him, like, a long email -- or not long, but 3- or 4-paragraph long email about hunting antifa, and that he had bought a Tomahawk, and I think maybe had shown Mr. Stamey a picture of this Tomahawk. Do you remember this communication from Mr. Caldwell to Mr. Stamey? Does that ring any bells?

A Caldwell sent me something along that time, too, and it was about -- he was calling it operations order, and it was about going up to -- that would've been on the -- on the December the 12th, but I had the cars lined up or something.

And I opened the thing up and -- and glanced over it, and I don't remember if I called him then, or typed him back -- or, you know, text him back, but I told him that we wouldn't be going up there, and, you know, and emphasized again we weren't members of it. And that's probably the same time that he's talking -- that Paul's talking about it, too.

Q Sorry, I think my connection was. Sorry, 1 second. All right. Am I back?

All right. So I think you were saying that you got a similar sort of email from Mr. Caldwell and it was about December 12th. And did you say you called him?

A I don't remember if I called him or text him back. I believe I called him, though. I believe I did.

Q And what --

A And, you know, told him that, you know, we weren't Oath Keepers and weren't going to be back up there on the 12th.

Q And you said, I think you said that, in the email that he had, on the December 12th, that he had the cars lined up, or did you say cards lined up?

A Yeah. It was like an operations order or something of how we were going to get back in the city or go in the city. I really didn't read over it. I wasn't interested in and --

Q Was this sort of the same thing he had messed up in November, because I thought you said that he --

A Yeah, yeah. Yeah, but --

Q Because he was supposed to have some people over --

A -- he was trying had to get the transportation straightened out, as far as I remember. Like I said, I didn't read all the way through it, [redacted] I just glanced at it and I wasn't interested in it, you know.

Q Got you. Did you ever talk to Mr. Stamey about that email or communication from Mr. Caldwell?

A Yeah. I'm pretty sure we did talk about it, yeah.

Q And what do you remember about that conversation?

A Not much really, [redacted] other than, you know, we're not going back up there, you know. No need for this mess, you know, we're not going back.

Q Yeah. Would you say Mr. Stamey and Mr. Caldwell, they kind of bonded in November, right? They were somewhat close or they were friends?

A Yeah. Paul talked with Caldwell a little bit. Paul liked him. But they both liked to take a drink of liquor. And at that time -- thank the Lord Paul's quit drinking though, you know, about quit. But Paul was bad for -- he wanted to call you up late at night, had a drink and talk and all. So I assumed that he had called Caldwell, talked with him some.

Q So Caldwell is sort of a drinking buddy of Stamey's?

A Well, I wouldn't say a drinking buddy. I know they had a drink that time we were up there. And I believe Paul did say when they seen him in Virginia, they had a drink up there. But, you know, knowing Paul, he was probably drinking and called him up or something. But, yeah, he'd answer your questions. Yeah, I knew that he had kept up with him a little bit there.

Q Hold on just one second, sorry.

Okay. So I guess I'm just a little bit curious. You know, it was the desire to hunt antifa or to confront antifa that led you to split from Mr. Rhodes.

A Yeah.

Q And I take it Paul felt the same way. Did he --

A Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Paul's -- he ain't going to get involved in nothing like that.

Q Well, then I'm just asking because, you know, then obviously Caldwell was sort of interested in doing the same thing, or was sending you emails that indicated that. So was it just that Paul liked Caldwell better and was willing to overlook that a little bit because they were friends?

A I wouldn't know [redacted] I mean, I don't know to what extent they

were -- you know, this was being discussed or anything, other than, you know, he had made mention that he had talked with him, you know.

Q I guess I was just asking, you know, if you ever had a conversation with Paul that was, like, Hey, you know, we're not messing with Rhodes because he wants to hunt antifa, Caldwell always wants to hunt antifa, and we shouldn't be associating with Caldwell either. Did that sort of conversation ever happen?

A Well, we knew we wasn't going up there to, you know, on the 12th to get in any stuff. I guess that would be a conversation, but, yeah, we certainly had no plans to go, you know, getting involved if any of it.

Q Yeah. And I understand for the 12th, but then obviously -- and we'll talk about it in a little bit, but for the 6th, obviously Mr. Caldwell was then involved in --

A Yeah.

Q -- in your planning. So were you worried at all that, you know, continuing to associate with Mr. Caldwell would lead down this road of either hunting antifa or just in a direction that you didn't want to go?

A No, I wasn't worried, because we wasn't going to go in that direction, you know. I've -- I've read into stuff, you know, where it says that Caldwell was talking that stuff, I don't recall reading that when I read that, exactly what -- what it was. But I knew that when -- he called it an operations order, I believe, but like I say, I didn't read all the way through it.

Q It had more to do -- in your memory, it had more to do with transportation and cars for the 12th than it did with fighting antifa?

A That's what I recall of it, [redacted]

Q Okay. Do you still -- this was an email from Caldwell?

A I don't know if it was an email, or it may have come across on Signal.

Q Okay. If there was an email, would you still have it, do you think? Or do you normally delete your emails?

A At that time, I was deleting a lot of stuff. Like I say, I stopped deleting. I don't recall.

Q Would it be -- if he emailed you -- or did he ever email you on your Ranger Doug email?

A I don't know. I can look back through --

Q Yeah. Why don't we -- well, you can look on -- we'll probably take a break for lunch in a minute.

A All right.

Q And so maybe when you take that break --

A Okay.

Q -- we can look and see if you have any emails from --

A I will. I'll sure do it, you know.

Q Okay. I think that we're done basically with the 12th, and all we have left is the 6th. So would you -- I'm happy to do whatever you would like to do. And actually let me talk to the -- let's go off the record at 1:00 right now real quick just to talk about our schedule for the day.

[Recess.]

[redacted] Let's go back on the record. It's 1:32.

BY [redacted]

Q Okay. So you were just telling me, Mr. Smith, that you had something you wanted to revisit about emails and texts with Caldwell?

A Yes, yes. Yeah, I -- I need to change my testimony on that, because, you know, sitting here thinking, yeah, yeah, I remember getting the email and it -- it wasn't right. You know what I mean? Whatever he was saying, he was saying something wild there about hunting something, and had this plan laid out there, but, no, I didn't -- we didn't want no part of it, I didn't, and I'm sure that I did talk with Mr. Stamey about it and --

Q Okay.

A But, yeah, after thinking about that, but, no, he was, you know, wasn't our cup of tea.

Q I think that's -- sorry, let me just shut this door. I think that's generally what we had understood. So he sent you this email that had a plan for December 12th, and it involved some comments about hunting antifa or wanting to fight antifa.

A Yeah.

Q But you and Mr. Stamey disagreed with that?

A That's right.

Q Okay. Yeah, I think we got that. And were you able to check and see if you had emails -- that email from him?

A I've looked back and I can't even get that far back, but I believe that I deleted that email or whatever it was. I'm pretty sure I did.

Q Okay. But you think it was an email?

A Poss -- yeah, possibly so.

Q Okay. Great.

A Whatever it was, I deleted it. I believe I did, [redacted]

Q All right. That's fine then.

All right. Then let's talk about -- so we've discussed December 12th, you know, and we've talked about the evolution of your split from the national Oath Keepers and also efforts to get some other States to split from the Oath Keepers. Anything else about Mr. Meggs, or the Florida organization, or that whole situation that we should talk about, or you think we kind of covered that ground?

A Yeah. Up to the point of, you know, why and how he come about stopping at my place and all.

Q Yeah. Okay, yeah. So we're about to get to that. So let's talk about right before the 6th, and what your plans were, how they involved Mr. Stamey, and the meeting at your farm with Mr. Meggs. Let's cover that and then we'll move on to the actual 6th.

So how did Mr. Meggs come to stop at your farm on the way up to D.C. for the 6th?

A He had called me a few days prior to then and, you know, and asked me, said, Hey, we're going up to D.C., can, you know, stop by your place overnight, asked where I was at. You know, I told him, Hey, we're down near the coast, you know, near Myrtle Beach. He said, good enough, and asked me if it would be all right. I said, Well, it's real wet, and my place is in a low-lying area along the river swamp there.

And, you know, he said he had RVs coming. I told him they probably wouldn't be able to pull down in, you know -- well, I'd like for them to stay, but they could stay across the river there at where my home was at. I still own the home, but I hadn't been in it

since it was flooded.

And I was going to park them up there, but that's the first, you know, I heard about him going to Washington. In fact, we wasn't even have went to Washington if it wasn't for them people from Columbus County. You know, they were going to put together a bus ride down here. I mean, advertised it out, and I believe we got 15 seats is all the Oath Keepers that rode up there [inaudible] that day, but -- if it hadn't have been for going up there with, you know, and worried about this crowd from, you know, my home county down here, we wouldn't have went.

And, you know, I knew a lot of people were going, but up until, you know, finding out he had worked for Stone and then, you know, said they're going to D.C. to be on Stone's bodyguard, you know, detail, it was all new to me right then, but --

Q Okay.

A -- you know, that's how he come about being there.

Q Okay. So I just want to understand. So basically just on the -- you'd been communicating with him already. So you were already kind of friendly, and you want -- at this point, are you still trying to get him to disassociate from the national group, or have you realized that he was in contact with Rhodes?

A Well, I'm -- I'm realizing it then, and, you know, tell you the truth, hadn't put much thought into it. I mean, we were going to ride up there and go to Washington. I was worried about, you know, a big antifa presence there then, and I really hadn't put, like, that much thought into it. Just getting these people from the county up there and back.

Q So it was him providing personal security for Roger Stone, that was your first tip-off that something else was going on here?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Q And you said he was coming up from Florida through Myrtle Beach and then wanted to stop at your place. Did I catch that correctly? I got --

A Yeah, no --

Q -- distracted there for a second. I'm sorry.

A No, sir. I mean, he wasn't coming through Myrtle Beach. You know, when he called and asked where we were at and stay, you know, he didn't know where I was at. You know, I was telling him, you know, that we were down closer to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, you know, off of I-95.

Q Okay.

A But that didn't seem to bother him. He said it would work out good.

Q Okay. So was that a little bit of a detour for him to come to your place?

A I would think that it would be.

Q Do you have any idea why he wanted to come and stop by your farm?

A He said that they were going to link up -- somebody else was going to link up, and they would link up there.

Q And was this --

A They was going with them.

Q How many people did he arrive at your farm with?

A They were 6 or 7 or 8. They had one RV come in, and Paul was ready to go and go back to the motel room. He left and I stayed around a while longer. And another RV come in. I believe there were two people in that and --

Q How far is Paul's house from yours?

A Oh, it's a long ways. He lives up in the mountains, but Paul had come down to Whiteville and was staying overnight because of Randy -- him and Randy Earp were going to go up to Virginia and --

Q Why did they -- just out of curiosity, why did they get a hotel room, or a motel room, instead of staying on your property?

A Who? Paul?

Q Paul.

A Oh, I don't know. He just, you know. That's what they wanted to do. That's what they did.

Q And then is it -- so Mr. Meggs said that he was going to meet some other folks at your farm, or they were going to join together at your farm. Is that the two individuals that arrived in the RV?

A Yes, sir. I assume so, yes.

Q And at the time, did you know who those people were? Other than Meggs -- and Meggs was with his wife, Connie, as well, right?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A No. No, I didn't know who it was.

Q How about the -- was it -- it was Meggs' car, another car, and then the RV arrived later?

A Well, one, you know, and a RV was with them. There were two RVs.

Q Okay. So two cars --

A And then a RV come later.

Q Okay.

A I parked one RV over -- over there on the higher ground where my home is aside the river, but they were staying -- where I had them staying was down on my other property across the river. I have a building and all there, and they were going to stay there.

And then when the other one come, I went up and met with them, but got him pulled in -- it was a real tight area to get these big RVs in -- got him pulled in there, and we rode back across the river, you know, said our goodbyes, and I went home to the house.

Q And was that the 4th, was that January 4th?

A Yes, sir, I believe that would've been, yeah.

Q Okay. And then Meggs left the morning of the 5th?

A Yeah. Some point there, yeah, during the night.

Q And then --

A I told them, just lock the gate back up there.

Q And then Mr. Stamey was at your property earlier. Was he there when Meggs arrived?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so he and Meggs and you all talked when Meggs arrived?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was your conversation about when that happened?

A Just general stuff, you know, politics -- what was going on, the election, just talk along there, you know. And I guess that's probably when, you know, I find out, sure, I asked him, you know, what's going on with the Roger Stone deal. And that's probably when I found out that they had already done something for him, you know, in Florida.

So really it was -- it shocked me, [redacted] I'm, like, How in the world is this boy a car salesman down here, you know, and all of a sudden they're high-speed security for, you know, an individual like Roger Stone. You know, just kind of -- I was taken aback by it, and I didn't know the Oath Keepers had the mission of it, and I sure didn't know that he

was involved in it. I mean --

Q Let's --

A Kind of funny in a way, to tell you the truth. It's real funny.

Q This brings up a question that I meant to ask you earlier, and that's, when you described the Louisville trip, the purpose of that trip kind of was to protect the property and to protect some folks, but just the general public and businesses that might be affected by the protests that were there.

But then when you went to D.C. for November 14th, I think the purpose was to provide private security for Mr. Jones. Is that right? Alex Jones?

A Yeah. To link up with his security, yes, sir.

Q And at that time, did that bother you? Were you okay with doing this private security detail work for Mr. Jones?

A I really didn't give it any thought. I knew it was something Stewart, you know, was on fire to do. You know, he didn't need us up there. He -- he had his people, and, you know, I don't feel like that's why we were there to begin with. I mean, that's what Stewart wanted to get us to Washington, get us involved in that mess and --

Q So just to be clear, if all that had happened was that Stewart Rhodes wanted Oath Keepers to provide some supplemental security for VIPs or celebrities, that wouldn't have been so bad. It was just that he also wanted you to go out and confront antifa that kind of pushed it over the line for you?

A Oh, absolutely. Yes.

Q And so, why was it so odd to you that Meggs was providing security for Mr. Stone? Because you guys had just planned to provide security for Alex Jones, right? That's kind of the same thing.

A Because of -- of who it -- you know, his political stance, because you know

who it is, Roger Stone, it's connection to Trump and, you know, his -- his place on the world stage, you know.

Q Did --

A First of all, I -- I thought -- I thought it was a joke. I mean, you would think that Stone would -- would have a good private security firm, you know, retired Delta Force boys or SEAL guys or something, you know. It just -- it was a joke, and it was mind-boggling. I mean, what's going on here, you know?

Q Maybe -- maybe we just had different -- well, I'll just ask you this question: Could you, for me, compare how you feel about Alex Jones and whether or not he's like a big deal celebrity or not, as you compare it to Roger Stone? And how do you feel about the two of them?

A Hell, Alex Jones is a nut, you know, really. I mean, he's, you know -- no, I don't go to -- no, I've never been -- other than, you know, being around Stewart and letting him talk about Jones, I've never listened to his program anything with what I have.

He's -- he's way off line, all the way back to, you know, the Columbine School shooting. I mean, how in the world can you say something like that? You know --

Q Yeah.

A -- what kind of person are you. So, you know, going up there, that was just something for -- for Stewart, you know, so he said, but really it was just to get up there in it, to help -- you know, you look at Roger Stone, you see him on the nightly news, and he goes to jail, gets a pardon by the President and all this stuff, you know. He's a Trump guy, you know. You would think that if you were going to have security detail for this man, it wouldn't be this crew.

Q Okay. Got it. So you saw Roger Stone as a much bigger deal than Alex Jones?

A Oh, yes, yes. Yes.

Q And then, did Mr. Meggs ever talk about any fundraisers by Mr. Stone? So I'll represent to you that Mr. Stone hosted, on December 30th, a fundraiser that he was going to do for protective gear and communications for people that were coming to the rally on January 6th.

It might've been for him. He didn't clarify whether it was for him or for some group that was associated with him. Did you ever hear Meggs talk about anything like that?

A I don't -- no, I don't recall him saying nothing about it. I assume that would've been the time that they worked for him then, you know. I read about it or he told me about it. I don't recall him saying nothing about no fundraiser.

Q This was the time in Florida that they had provided security for Mr. Stone?

A Okay. No. That's new to me.

Q Sorry. That was a question. You mentioned that Mr. Meggs had told you about another time in Florida that he provided security for Mr. Stone. Is that --

A No. I'm assuming that's the same time you talking about there. You know, I found out that he had done it in Florida already prior to them going to Washington. So I guess that's the same time you're talking about. But, no, he didn't say anything about what it was for.

Q Okay. So later, you found out that Meggs had also provided security for Mr. Stone on a different occasion?

A No. Them were the same occasions, I believe, what we're talking about here.

Q So let me clarify. The thing I was talking about was just a fundraiser. It wasn't -- I didn't mean it was an event. It was, like, a posting online, like a crowdsource,

you know, kind of like [inaudible] go or one of those online crowdsourcing.

A I reckon.

Q So it wasn't an event. So I'm asking you, was there a time that Meggs told you about a different event where he provided security for Mr. Stone?

A No.

[1:51 p.m.]

BY [redacted]

Q So there was the 6th. And then do you know of another time that Meggs provided security?

A I just know that they had done security for Roger Stone prior to going up there on --

Q Okay.

A So I'm assuming it's the same thing you're talking about.

Q And you don't know any more details about that?

A No, sir, I don't.

Q Okay.

So, knowing what you know now -- and I think you've said that you think that Mr. Meggs was feeding information to Mr. Rhodes about what you guys were doing, right? Or he was --

A I believe that to be true.

Q Do you think, is it a possibility that Mr. Meggs stopped at your farm to, like, collect information or to get to have a conversation with you and figure out what you guys were doing for January 6th?

A No. I think that he was there to make that link up with the other people that come through.

Q And where were they coming from? Do you know?

A No. I want to say that they were coming out of North Carolina, but I don't know where he said they were coming from.

Q Not Florida, though?

A I don't remember, [redacted] where the second crowd was coming from. I want to say North Carolina for some reason.

Q Fair enough.

A I'm not sure.

Q Okay.

And, then, let's talk a little bit about the -- let's put a pin in this January 4th meeting, because we're going to come back to it. But I want to talk a little bit about Mr. Stamey and the hotel rooms at the Comfort Inn.

A Right.

Q Why don't you tell me the story of how he came to book those rooms.

A When I decided to send some guys up to Virginia, I told him, I said, get up with, you know, with CAG there and, you know, see where they're staying and whatever. Well, anyway, he found out he had some rooms, he got a couple of rooms there.

At that time, I was only sending him and Randy Earp up there, but I guess there was, you know, a couple other guys that wanted to ride with him. And, you know, I just assumed what rooms he got. I didn't know how many he got really, just that he got some.

But, anyway, he told Meggs when he got there, and Meggs was talking about going up there, and he told him where we was staying, and told Meggs that he could have one of the rooms, two of the rooms, whatever. But that's where that come from, is, you know, he told him he'd let him have a room.

I don't see your picture no more.

[redacted]. [redacted] are you there?

I think we might have lost him. Let's take a pause and go off the record.

[Recess.]

[redacted] Let's go back on the record at 2:01.

Sorry for that interruption. I think I'm fine now. I think my internet connection is fine.

BY [redacted]:

Q So you were just telling me about how Mr. Stamey came to book the rooms. And if you could just start over there. Sorry about that.

A Yes. I told, you know, that I wanted Paul and Randy to go to Virginia, to be right outside if something happened with the bus. But, anyway, I knew he had talked with CAG, and I said -- and he said that CAG was gonna stay up there or something. But I told him, I said, find out where they're at, get a room. And he did. And I guess he got several.

And then when Meggs and he got to talking, Meggs didn't have any rooms or, you know, they didn't know where they were going. But they ended up getting two of the rooms or one of the rooms from Paul.

Q Okay. Were you calling Mr. Caldwell "CAGS" or "CAG"?

A Yeah. CAG.

Q Is that his nickname?

A Yeah, that's what he went by.

Q And was Mr. Meggs planning on staying in the RV before that, or do you know if he had a plan?

A Say it again now?

Q Was Mr. Meggs planning on staying in the RV before that, or do you know if he had some sort of plan for where he was going to stay?

A You mean in Washington or up that way, or down my way?

Q Yeah, in D.C.

A No.

Q I was just a little surprised that he would make that long trip and not have, you know, an idea of where he was going to stay.

A Yup.

Q It seemed odd to you too?

A Well, you know, it seemed like to me, though, that he said something about him and his wife was gonna be in Washington.

Q Oh, so they were originally planning on staying inside Washington, D.C.

A Yes, if I recall, I believe he said that they were staying up there. But other people come and he -- you know, he was getting for other people coming from Florida or whatever were those with him. But, yeah, I believe he said him and his wife were staying in town.

Q So was Mr. Caldwell just kind of, like, your D.C. expert? He was the one that was kind of telling you where to go or stay, and that's why you told Stamey to meet with Caldwell about where they should stay?

A Well, yeah. In addition to that, you know, I told him, when he got there and seen Caldwell to get Caldwell to drive him into the city and go by the parks and all and see if there was antifa, what was up with antifa. And that's what he done. Caldwell drove him down there.

And when they got back, Paul called me, and I told him, you know, I said, put Caldwell on the phone. And I asked him then, I said, exactly how far a walk are we talking about if you had to come back to that bridge? And he told me it was 3 miles. And, you know, he said they didn't see anything. And that was the end of our conversation.

Q And you were asking about the walk to the bridge from where?

A From up around the Capitol area.

Q Okay.

A My worry was, there was a [inaudible] bus getting off that. You had all these people from Columbus County here, you had a lot of them that, you know, not wanting to be out walking and a lot of stuff. But just getting them back down to the Virginia line there, once you get back there, we could, you know, get everybody back to Whiteville, North Carolina.

Q Okay.

I want to ask a little bit about the bus itself. Do you know who organized the bus?

A Yes.

Q Who was that?

A Kevin Harrelson.

Q Kevin Harrelson?

A Yeah. And Mike Walker.

Q Okay. Mr. Harrelson is an Oath Keeper? Is he the same Oath Keeper --

A No, he's not Oath Keeper.

Q Okay.

A He's a local businessman.

Q Okay. And was it, like, a particular group or just, you know, a bunch of people that all independently wanted to go up? What was the --

A Yeah. They had put it out on Facebook, from what I understand, and put the word out around, you know, whoever wanted to go from the community. They didn't know -- you know, they thought maybe several busloads would go, but they ended up, you know, getting enough for one busload.

Q Okay. So that was organized through Facebook.

And then you got your guys on the bus and Mr. Stamey, and there was another person -- was there another person that was with Mr. Stamey, other than Caldwell, when he went up to D.C.?

A Yes. Randy Earp.

Q Earp. Okay.

Does the name Livengood -- do you know --

A Livengood? Yeah. He went up there with Paul.

Q Okay. So it was Mr. Earp, Mr. Stamey, and Mr. Livengood?

A Yes, and one more. Randy -- another Randy.

Q Right.

A There's two Randys and a Randall.

Q If you think of it, let me know.

A Okay.

Q But I know that there's a second Randy, yep.

A Yeah.

Q Okay. So those four went up.

And did Mr. Stamey express any apprehension about the situation with Mr. Caldwell from earlier, where he was talking about hunting antifa, or had Mr. Stamey gotten over that?

A Yeah, I mean, you know, we knew we weren't gonna get involved in anything like that.

Q Yeah. Okay.

A And we just figured Caldwell was just full of it, you know.

Q Okay.

And then I also want to ask about firearms that were brought up to D.C. I understand that you're saying your intention wasn't to ever bring those -- wasn't ever to bring those into D.C., but I do want to know what sorts of firearms you brought up to D.C.

So can you tell me, did you bring any firearms up to D.C.?

A No, sir, not to D.C.

Q Okay. And you didn't give any firearms to Stamey?

A Oh. Yes, sir, I did, but -- yeah. To Virginia? Yes.

Q Yeah, sorry, that's what I mean. I should've been more clear.

A Yes, sir. As far as I know, they had their personal weapons, and I did send mine. But, as far as I know, that was all, you know, the weapons that were brought up there.

Q Okay. We're going to come back to that. I think [redacted] has some questions for you.

A Okay.

BY [redacted]:

Q Yeah. Mr. Smith, do you remember Mr. Rhodes talking about the Insurrection Act and wanting Trump to invoke it?

A No, sir. I had split from Mr. Rhodes, so, you know, I wasn't aware of what he was telling his people. I wasn't following him.

Q Got it. Yeah. And I think this actually started in summer 2020, but then, after the election, he started saying it a lot more, he wanted President Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act. Does that ring any bells?

A Yeah, I mean, he -- yeah. I probably heard him say that, yeah. But, you know, leading up to anything that was close to 6th, I wouldn't have known, you know.

Q Got it. Fair enough. So do you remember him talking about it in the

summer of 2020 at all?

A I can't recall a specific time.

Q That's okay. We can --

A But, you know -- I really can't recall a specific time.

Q No worries.

BY [redacted]:

Q Okay. Let's come back to -- oh, sorry, [redacted] did you have more questions?

[redacted] No.

[redacted] Okay.

BY [redacted]:

Q Let's come back to the issue of which firearms were brought up to the Comfort Inn.

So I think you said Mr. Stamey and the three other individuals that he was with, the Randys and the fourth individual, did they all, do you know, did they all bring firearms?

A Yes, sir. As far as I know, they did.

Q Okay. And then you gave Mr. Stamey -- what did you -- what sort of firearms did you give Mr. Stamey to bring?

A I give it to Randy. I give him a travel bag or a carrying bag that had a AR-15 and a pistol in it.

Q And then do you know if any of the other Oath Keepers -- you said, were there about 15 on the bus?

A Yes, sir. No, sir, nobody else sent weapons that I'm aware of.

Q If you knew that you couldn't bring weapons into D.C. and the event was in

D.C., what'd you bring your weapons for?

A Well, if it was bad enough where our bus was burning, whatever, and if we had to make it back and walk, and walk that far, you know, I don't know if the fight would be carried over into Virginia.

I didn't have to worry about having weapons in D.C., because we actually did have a weapon with us in D.C., because we had a retired FBI agent with us who was armed. And his job was to stay with the bus up there and protect it, you know, that day.

But I knew if it got bad enough -- and I talked with Kevin and the guys on the bus. I said, we don't know what you're getting into. If it hadn't been them -- when Kevin told me they were going, I said, I'm never going back to Washington. When I went the 14th, I made a statement and told everybody. Well, when Kevin said they was going, I said, man, if you go up there, y'all boys are gonna get in a mess now. If you get up there with antifa and all, I said, they're gonna tear you up.

But -- and that's when I decided, I said, well, I'll go with you and talk with Paul. Went up. Like I said, it was about 15 head going with us, but we didn't have no big fighters or anything like that. We're just a bunch of old men too, but just wanted to watch out for Kevin and them boys. And I'm glad I was there with them.

But if there had've been a fight and it spilled over into Virginia, then, you know, the weapons would've been useful.

Q Got it.

And then I want to ask -- Mr. Caldwell also had a room at the Comfort Inn. And I guess I'm just a little bit surprised by that, or I'm curious if you know why or had any conversations with anybody about why. Because he didn't live that far out of D.C., right? He was about an hour outside of D.C.; is that correct?

A Yes, sir. Probably a little over an hour.

Q So do you know why he booked a room at the Comfort Inn?

A No. Because, you know, that's how we found out, you know, when he told us he had rooms, where they was at. And, you know, Paul went and got a room, and we found out he was there.

Q And, then, do you know of any other Oath Keepers that booked rooms at the Comfort Inn hotel?

A I didn't at that time, to the extent of it, but I understand now that quite a few.

Q Okay. And who were the other Oath Keepers that you know of that booked rooms at the Comfort Inn?

A I read about the boy from Arizona.

Q And are these the -- these are the Oath Keepers from Arizona that took another one of Mr. Stamey's rooms?

A I believe they -- I believe they did get a room.

Q As I understand it -- and tell me if I'm wrong, but, as I understand it, Mr. Stamey booked three rooms. He occupied one of them. Mr. Meggs took the other two and paid for those, and the Florida Oath Keepers stayed in one room, and then the Arizona Oath Keepers stayed in another room.

A I believe that's the way it turned out, [redacted] yeah. Yeah.

Q And then, other than those individuals, do you know any other Oath Keepers that stayed at the Comfort Inn?

A No, sir.

Q Okay.

A I just heard from him, you know, that there were others there.

Q Were you aware of South Carolina Oath Keepers that went up for

January 6th?

A No, sir.

Q Okay.

Do you know a man named Frank Marchisella?

A I don't think I do.

Q Okay.

Then let's talk about -- or, oh, and -- let's move on.

There is -- maybe tell me what you know of, at the time -- I'm sure you've heard a little bit about it now, afterwards -- but there was this issue of Mr. Stamey communicating with Mr. Caldwell about arranging boat transport that could potentially help with extraction from D.C. Does this ring a bell? Do you know what I'm talking about?

A Paul had said something and we were talking about -- but, just briefly, he said something, if we got people out of there with a boat. And we were like, man, where are we gonna get a boat? Whatever. We don't know what the landings are like, anything like that. But that was just farfetched, kicking stuff back and forth. You know, if that bus got destroyed, you know, how would we get the people out of there?

That was my biggest fear, [redacted] that that whole thing was gonna turn into a fight between the left and the right. And, you know, in my wildest dreams I never thought it'd turn out the way it did. But I thought all along it would be a battle royal up there with antifa, Black Lives Matter, and whoever.

Q Have you since learned about -- you know, this is in the indictment of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Meggs, but there's a conversation or some facts about an exchange between Mr. Meggs and Mr. Stamey on a Signal chat for Oath Keepers called "DC OP JAN 6." And, essentially -- I can pull up the exact message, if you'd like me to, in a minute.

But, essentially, Meggs makes the suggestion that they could use boats to extract people if they needed to and potentially bring weapons into D.C. with these boats. And Mr. Stamey says that he's working with his D.C. contact, who we believe is Mr. Caldwell, to try to procure these boats or get some boats to carry out that mission.

Have you ever talked to Mr. Stamey about those messages?

A No. I'm not aware of that, what you're talking about.

Q Okay. Fair enough.

And so it was just a one-time conversation you had with Mr. Stamey about the idea of -- kicking around this idea of using boats as part of the QRF?

A Yeah, because it was just something just brief in a passing conversation. I believe Paul said something to me about it, but it --

Q Seemed like a crazy idea?

A I mean, you know, we'd be real analytical of it. You know, how -- you can see right off the bat where that's a non-player right there, just the logistics of it, not knowing what landings are like over there. You know, I had no idea. I'm sure I could've -- I reckon you could Google Earth it or whatever, but, you know, we didn't do nothing like that. There just being so much into something like that, it wasn't even something to be considered.

I've read since then, you know, in the papers and all, but I don't know any plot or plan to move no mess or anything across there. But it was mentioned between me and Paul briefly about, you know, what if we had to get them out of there, what if the bridge was shut down. A lot of things. I didn't know what would happen, what the law would do if people got to fighting or whatever.

In fact, I didn't know if -- you know, we talked about the Insurrection Act. I thought if there'd been an Insurrection Act that the military got involved with it[redacted]

That's the one thing -- I've watched that the whole time. I said, Lord, I don't know if the military gonna show up and shut this stuff down or what. I never thought it'd be a bunch of damn idiots up there, but it -- anyway.

Q Were you also in contact with Mr. Caldwell this whole time, or was Mr. Stamey mostly the one that was talking to Mr. Caldwell?

A It -- Paul talked with him. Only time I spoke with him is when they went over and drove into D.C., you know, and looked at the parks, which would've been on the 5th, and come back. I spoke with him just briefly and asked him how far it was and did he see anything. That was it.

Q All right.

So Mr. Stamey goes up ahead of you guys, and he checks in to the hotel room. And then when did your bus leave North Carolina?

A We left at, like, after midnight, maybe be 1:00 in the morning or so, something like that.

Q Okay. And then just drove straight into D.C.? When did you arrive in D.C.?

A Seven, 8, 9 o'clock? It was early, pretty early there.

Q Okay.

And in your conversations with Mr. -- did you just talk to Mr. Stamey the one time, on the 5th, or were you kind of in contact with him more frequently than that?

A Yeah, I called him, and then -- and then the day when we were going down there, he'd left the speech and was going to the Capitol, which -- we had already stopped. I could see what was happening. But Paul had called and said, man, you know, they're raising the hell, people up there trying to get in. I said, I can see tear gas and hear explosions and all. And he said he was gonna have the bus, you know, get pulled back

down to where we were at closer.

Q Did you ever talk to Mr. Stamey about any other Oath Keepers that he met or saw at the Comfort Inn?

A No, sir. Far as I know, he didn't. Oh. No, well, no, that ain't true. He did talk -- Caldwell come by his room.

Q Uh-huh, right, Mr. Caldwell. From his testimony with the FBI, he also mentioned that he saw Mr. Meggs there and his wife, Connie. Did you ever talk to Paul about meeting Mr. Meggs at the Comfort Inn?

A I don't recall him saying that. No. I mean, if he told the FBI he did, he did.

Q And then do you know Oath Keepers or associates of the Oath Keepers by the last name Watkins and Crowl?

A I do.

Q Okay. And had you met them, or you just know them now from the news?

A I had met them on two prior occasions.

Q When did you meet them?

A The first time was at Louisville.

Q In Louisville? Okay.

A In Kentucky.

Q And where are they from?

A They're from Ohio.

Q Okay. And are they -- they are both Oath Keepers?

A No. Which they might be adjoined to Oath Keepers but they were -- they called themselves something else, something -- Ohio something.

Q Were they like an Ohio militia of some sort?

A Yeah, something along that lines. Yeah.

Q Do you know how they became involved with the Oath Keepers or what the connection was?

A First knowledge we had of them, for whatever reason they had seen it or heeded the call about the Louisville thing and they showed up at Louisville.

Let's see. Crowl wasn't at Louisville. Crowl come down -- the next time I seen Watkins was at Caldwell's. They come down there for the November the 14th thing, and that's the first time I met Crowl.

Q And so Ms. Watkins was at the Louisville rally and then both Ms. Watkins and Mr. Crowl were there for the 14th at Caldwell's farm?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did Ms. Watkins know the Oath Keepers before she went to Louisville or did she meet them there, if you know?

A I don't know what extent her knowledge was of the Oath Keepers, but that was her first time of starting to -- you know, obviously, she had more dealings with them, but, far as I know, that was her first contact with them.

Q Okay. I guess what I'm trying get at is, did they just happen to meet in Louisville and then that started the relationship, or did, like, Mr. Rhodes or somebody else know Ms. Watkins and invite her to Louisville?

A No. They met there, far as I know.

Q Okay. Gotcha.

And then do you know an Oath Keeper on the Signal chats that goes by the user name Marlin? M-a-r- --

A Marlin?

Q Yeah, Marlin.

A No, sir, not that I can recall.

Q Okay.

All right. Then let's go through your day on January 6th. So you're on the bus, you drive up, you arrive I think you said around 6:00 in the morning. And then what happened?

A We were let off the bus right at the Washington Monument. And we got off the bus there, and the bus driver was gonna go park somewhere. He knew the area pretty well. But he was gonna leave from where he dropped us off, and I don't know where he went.

But we, the busload of us, moved up to the Washington Monument, and I don't know what cardinal direction it would be but kind of set up right there right at the monument, looking toward the White House. And the speech was actually on down the hill from where we were at.

Most of the people went and walked around to the speech and listened. I never walked down there [redacted] I stayed up where we were at. They were probably half a dozen, maybe a dozen, that didn't go down there, and we just stayed right there at the monument.

Q And how long did you stay at the monument?

A Until the end of the speech. And everybody was coming back up, and, you know, we said, well, we're gonna go to the Capitol. We went -- they called the bus, and, anyway, we went and boarded the bus, and it brought us -- it brought us down -- I'm not exactly sure where, but it dropped us off again, and we got out, but not everybody got out then. A lot of people stayed on the bus. At least a dozen stayed on the bus, you know, didn't want to make the walk.

And we started walking from there, which brought us out into the -- what they call The Mall, the long, green, grassy area.

Q Yup. Yup.

A And we started walking up to there and got to -- 3rd Avenue is when my attention was brought to what was going on at the Capitol. I heard what must've been flash-bangs. And when I looked at the streamers, must've been tear gas.

But 3rd Avenue is probably, I don't know, 500 yards, it's a good ways, [redacted] from the Capitol. I didn't know -- the Oath Keepers didn't get any closer than that. We stopped right there.

There was some boys, the people that were on the bus from Columbus County, that wanted to walk up there. I told them all then, I said, boys, don't go up there, don't go get in that mess, don't get in it. Well, we not gonna get in -- you know, everybody promised, we ain't getting in nothing, we want to get closer and see. I said, I advise against it. But there were probably another dozen, maybe, or more that walked up.

But, at that time, since there were people on the bus, John Roper had gotten off the bus, a retired FBI agent. Roper followed that -- the ones from Columbus County that walked up there, Roper followed them up there. And he stayed up there. I guess they walked up close enough they got a whiff of tear gas, and they all come back.

And that's what John told me -- Roper -- that he didn't see anybody do anything. You know, nobody was -- they just -- boys were just looking. And once they got back, well, Paul had called, and, you know, just tell him what they was seeing. And, anyway, once they got back, we walked back and got on the bus and left.

It really wasn't until the ride home, you know, looking at the news and what was going on, [redacted] that me, personally, I mean, there was already a state of shock, but started to get a sense of what had just happened, you know. I didn't have sense enough to see it while I was there, but I seen it on the way home.

Q So I'm kind of curious -- that incident, obviously, and the attack on the

Capitol seems like the sort of dangerous incident that you might need to call on the QRF or have them support you. Did the QRF get activated in any sort of way? Or what was your conversation with --

A Yeah. I mean, as far as -- Paul called the bus to come, you know, move back down to get us. Yeah, it got -- he activated to get us out of there. But, no, not to go nowhere or nothing like that. You know, never intended to be there, anything, you know. And them boys weren't coming. But, yeah, Paul called the bus driver and got it back down there. But that's all they did.

Q Okay. Was there ever any conversation about Paul coming into D.C. or any of the --

A No, absolutely not. Nuh-uh, nuh-uh.

Q And I don't necessarily mean with the weapons. I just mean, were they gonna come in at all and help you guys?

A No, huh-uh.

Q Okay.

And so was there, like, some sort of -- was there, like, a -- when you say it's activated, what does activating the QRF mean?

A Well, really, for that purposes there, nothing. I mean, when I used the term "activate," you know, the biggest thing the QRF done was seen what was going on and he went ahead got the bus back down there and got us in position to get us out of there.

You know, Paul took the initiative. You know, I didn't -- when the bus dropped us off, see, they were to go somewhere else. But, you know, he took the initiative to get it on down there. So that's why I say -- used that term.

Q Okay. Got it.

And, then, about what time did you, you know, activate the QRF and decide that the bus needed to be, you know -- needed to come pick you up? How much time passed between that decision point and when you actually got out of D.C. and left?

A No more than an hour. Those guys who'd walked forward, that was the only really thing -- if they hadn't have wanted to walk up there and get a closer look, we'd have been gone before then. You know, I'd seen enough. So I'm gonna say an hour. It could be less, could be more, but just guessing.

Q Okay. Got it. And so, then, about what time did you guys actually leave D.C., do you think, on the bus?

A I think it was around 4 o'clock [redacted] I think it was.

Q Okay. All right.

And then I just want to ask: So I know on November 14th obviously there was an antifa presence that was obvious at night. And I think you said you had seen a few antifa kind of on the fringes of the crowd on November 14th. Did you notice any of that on January 6th?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. Have you talked to any other Oath Keepers about whether or not antifa had a presence on January 6th?

A Yeah, I hadn't heard anybody say that they seen antifa, you know. I mean, if anybody was dressed up in the crowd, I'm sure it'd have been isolated. That wasn't a -- as bad as I hate to say it, that wasn't an antifa event there.

Q Okay. Yeah. And that was my question. I was just wondering if you had any belief that antifa was there --

A Huh-uh.

Q -- or, you know, if they had an impact on that day.

A No, I don't [redacted]

Q Okay.

[redacted] I think we're getting close to being done here.

[redacted], do you have any more questions for Mr. Smith?

I think that's a no.

BY [redacted]:

Q A couple other questions about what conversations you've had with Mr. Stamey about his experience at the Comfort Inn hotel.

I think -- it sounds like you were -- you're aware of this meeting between Mr. Stamey and Mr. Caldwell at the hotel?

A Yes. After the fact, yes.

Q Okay. And who told you about that? Was it Mr. Stamey?

A Paul. Yes.

Q Okay. And what did he tell you, as far as you can remember, about what happened at the QRF with Caldwell?

A He said that Caldwell come down the room, I guess -- something about a bottle of liquor them boys had had. I don't know if Paul left it at the farm there or if Paul had took it with him or something, but it was an open bottle of whiskey. But he come down there and had that.

And he also had a -- said he wanted to show Paul his rifle and had, like, a mockup of an AR with a -- it was a -- shot a .22 caliber bullet. But said he'd brought that into the room down there and just looked at it. And, in fact, when he left, he forgot it and left it that night, which I know pissed Paul off.

But, anyway, that's about extent of the meeting. I guess they drank some of that liquor.

Q And why did it piss Paul off?

A Because they were wanting to leave, and he didn't tell him he was gonna leave his gun or nothing; he just left it there. Well, Paul didn't want to leave the man's gun in the room. And they were trying to get out of D.C., you know, and here he is, he's got that rifle left there in the room.

And like he said, why in the world did he even bring it? It was a .22. He said, you know, it didn't have enough bullets in it. I believe he said it looked brand-new.

But, you know, Paul wasn't -- they were packed and ready to leave and trying to get out of there, and he had to wait on Caldwell.

Q Okay.

I wonder if I can just ask you, kind of, for your general thoughts. I'm sure you've heard from the FBI and then also from the reporting that, in the indictment, Mr. Stamey was identified as Person No. 3 and sort of identified as the leader of the QRF at the Comfort Inn or the person who managed the QRF basically.

Are you kind of familiar with those --

A Yes.

Q -- assertions? Okay.

And, you know, given some of the facts that we've discussed, you know, the fact that Mr. Meggs -- and, sorry, just to clarify, I think the important part of the allegation by the FBI is that there was coordination among the different States' Oath Keepers to meet at the Comfort Inn and have a QRF there.

And, you know, given some of the information that we've discussed -- that Mr. Meggs stopped at your farm, that Mr. Stamey had reserved the hotel rooms, that Mr. Caldwell had left a gun or a rifle in Mr. Stamey's room, that there was a discussion between Mr. Stamey and Mr. Meggs and Mr. Caldwell about using boats to either bring

weapons in and/or bring people out of D.C. -- given all those facts, I think, you know, there's some confusion on some people's part about the denial of coordination.

And I understand your perspective, I think, but one thing I want to ask is, how do you feel about this characterization? Tell me if I'm getting something wrong here.

You don't believe that you and the North Carolina Oath Keepers were coordinating to establish a QRF in support of stopping Congress's certification of the electoral votes. And I think that's --

A Absolutely not. No, sir.

Q -- clear. I think that's clear.

Is it possible that there was some level of coordination to find a place to store weapons in case there was a violent interaction with antifa that spiraled out of control and those weapons would then be needed somehow? Whether or not it was in D.C. or in Virginia, but there was an agreement among a couple different Oath Keepers from different States that weapons would be stored at the Comfort Inn and may or may not be used if something went wrong -- "if shit hit the fan" is the term I've seen -- if shit hit the fan with antifa.

A I wasn't privy to any of that and didn't talk with any of those players.

Now, what they did as far as their QRFs -- I didn't know they were gonna have QRFs in Virginia, his guys there. I never heard the term "QRF" used from Meggs, I don't believe. And he may've did. The QRF that we had was for that North Carolina bus.

What I believe happened with all this is, Caldwell started using our names, is what I was unaware of at the time, in his Facebook traffic and all, saying that, yeah, North Carolina's coming up here, and this and that. There was 15 head of us, with a bunch of citizens from my county. The only reason I was there -- I wouldn't have been there, which, you know, is putting us right in the middle of this, you can believe that, because of

it.

But, no, nobody's ever said nothing about -- to me about stopping anybody from doing anything. I can't believe what we witnessed that day, you know.

Q Yeah. And I've heard that, certainly, in your testimony today.

I guess one other possibility that I want to have you give me your thoughts on: You know, we talked about how in Louisville you had, kind of, excess firearms and they ended up getting stored in a car and that there were some other groups of Oath Keepers there that also might've stored their weapons somewhere else, like at a motel near the pawn shop or in another car.

And so was it just standard practice for Oath Keepers, when they went to these sorts of events, to bring extra firearms, and they needed to be stored somewhere? So it happened to be that there were multiple States of Oath Keepers who all stayed at the Comfort Inn and all stored their weapons at the Comfort Inn?

Does that sound accurate? I mean, that --

A I don't see the tie-in with Louisville, you know. I don't understand.

Q I just mean, as a practice --

A I mean --

Q -- if it became a habit and it was kind of a practice that, whenever there would be a big group that would go to a rally, there were excess firearms and they all needed to be stored in one place.

You know, for -- at least according to Mr. Stamey's testimony, for the 14th, that also happened; there were some common weapons stored in the van that he was in for the QRF. I think he told the FBI there were about 10 rifles, or 10 -- not handguns -- some sort of AR-15 or shotgun or rifle.

A Okay.

Q And so I'm just wondering, if three or four different groups of Oath Keepers arrive at the Comfort Inn on the 5th and 6th and they all bring their excess weapons and they all store them in their individual rooms, is that something that you -- does that sound more like what actually happened?

Because we do know, right, we do know it's a fact that multiple groups of Oath Keepers were there at the Comfort Inn and multiple groups of Oath Keepers brought weapons and stored them at the Comfort Inn.

A I don't know if you could say that's a practice. I mean, you know, I certainly can't speak for them guys that come, you know. I don't know that guy from Arizona. I met Meggs, you know, and knew Meggs through that. And because of Meggs, I'm sitting here today, I feel like, and Caldwell. Anyway --

Q Yup.

A I don't know that it's a practice, I mean, but -- you know, our guys brought their personal weapons. As far as I know, my weapon up there with them. There wasn't no overwhelming stockpile of weapons or nothing, by any means. I don't know what these other guys brought. Have no idea.

Q Right. Okay.

And then one other question. We talked a little bit about some of the South Carolina Oath Keepers. And I'll tell you that I've spoken to some of the South Carolina Oath Keepers who also stayed at the Comfort Inn. And, of that group, each one of them also brought, I believe, an AR- -- it was either an AR-15 or an AK-57.

And, actually, when asked about why they brought those weapons there, they said it wasn't for the purpose of a QRF or to use in D.C. or even in northern Virginia, but that they were told that they were gonna go to a shooting range after with some other Oath Keepers.

Have you heard anything about that, or do you know anything about that?

A No, sir. I've never heard that before.

Q And they were gonna do some -- like, it was gonna be, like, a training or, like, a -- they were all just gonna have fun at the shooting range with other Oath Keepers, and so they brought their guns for the activities after the 6th.

You've never heard anything like that?

A I don't know anything about that. Don't know anybody from South Carolina that went even.

Q Okay.

I just have a couple final followup questions, and then I think we're about done. So I think I'm going to make good on my 3 o'clock promise, hopefully.

A Well, hey, time is no issue. If you need to get it out there, don't worry about the 3 o'clock deadline.

Q Okay. I appreciate that. But I do want to, you know, be sensitive to your time, and I think I'm done anyways.

So, a couple other questions.

Do you know a woman named Marcia Strickler?

A I don't -- where is she from?

Q She's from Texas. And on the Signal chats, she went by the username "Texas HorseWhisperer."

A Yeah, I believe I've seen her on there before.

Q Okay. But you don't -- you've never met her or had a conversation with her?

A No, not that I can -- no and yeah. No and yeah.

There was a situation up here in Wilson, North Carolina, where a small child,

5-year-old child, was murdered. And we had gone up -- there was a lot of tensions in Wilson. We had gone up to be with the family.

And -- I'm trying to get this right. There was a lot of intel coming in from all around. Seems like this woman -- let me get this right here. Seemed like she called this family in North Carolina. Anyway, I had some heartburn about it. I didn't know why this person from Texas would be, you know, calling, getting in that.

And then -- I really need to think about it a little bit, [redacted] That's the first time I thought about that. But, yeah, that's who that was, I believe. I'm pretty sure.

Q When was that incident?

A That would've been around July or August.

Q Of 2020?

A Yes.

Q And why was it that Ms. Strickler became involved in that?

A I'm not sure. She was -- I believe she was involved somehow with the Texas Oath Keepers, maybe as their intel person or something, maybe? I know I'm speculating. Because I remember seeing her online at times back then.

Q What was the Oath Keepers' interest in this instance? Sorry, can you tell me how -- do you -- can you tell me the child was killed?

A Yes. He was shot. It was a racially motivated shooting. Just walked up and shot him dead, out playing on his bicycle.

Q And how was it racially motivated? What was the race of the child and the --

A Well, it was a White child and a Black perpetrator. It was just a kid on a bicycle. Just walked over and shot him down.

It was during the heighth of, you know, a lot of that stuff going on, fighting, all

over the country. There was certainly a lot of tension in the community up there. And there were some Oath Keepers from that area, and, you know, they had asked -- they had talked with the family.

So that must be -- and then that lady, or that woman, called the family or got up with them somehow. But, anyway, it created some confusion and whatever. But that's how she got involved in that.

Q Okay.

A But that's about all I know about her.

[2:52 p.m.]

BY [redacted]:

Q Okay.

A That's about all I know about her.

Q Okay. I'm just trying to -- that's obviously, you know, a shocking story, and I hadn't heard that, so just trying to wrap my head around that a little bit and sort of understand why she became involved. But maybe that's not a question for you. Sounds like you're just as confused as I am.

A I am.

Q Okay.

A I'd have never -- if you hadn't brought it up, I'd have probably never remembered it again in my life. Maybe not.

Q Well, sorry to make you think about that [inaudible].

A I have to do a lot of mind searching here.

[redacted] Why don't we, let's take a quick 5-minute recess. I'm just going to look over my notes, make sure I don't have any more questions for you.

The Witness. Sure.

[redacted] We can probably end after that.

The Witness. Sure. Will I be allowed to make a statement on the record?

[redacted] Sure, yeah. I'll absolutely give you an opportunity to make any comments that you want at the end. So let's take a break. It's 12:54 right now, let's come back at 3:00, and we can wrap things up, and I'll let you have your opportunity to --

The Witness. Okay, [redacted]

[redacted] Okay.

The Witness. Thank you.

[redacted] Thanks very much, Mr. Smith. See you in a few.

[Recess.]

[redacted] And let's go back on the record at 3:03 p.m. I was able to look through my notes, and I don't think I have anything else for you, but I know I think you have a statement that you'd like to make, and I'm happy to give you the opportunity to make that.

The Witness. Yes, sir, I'd like to make two. First of all, my mother, she's 85. Anyway, [redacted] I'm all right. [redacted]

And then on the 2009 deployment, [redacted] I've tried to recall everything that I possibly can, and if anything, you know, that I recall in the future, I have no problems talking with you again, or if y'all need to talk with me.

I would like to say, though, [redacted] about the whole January the 6th incident, that the biggest thing I'd like to see come out of this is, North Carolina -- people, you know, realize that North Carolina was not a part of what went on up here.

I've talked with a lot of sheriffs around North Carolina, knows me, you know, that I

have a dream of the citizens being able to support the sheriffs in this country, as I've mentioned.

Definitely naive in some ways, but, sir, we had never heard of anybody trying to stop anything that happened up there that day. What them other boys, whether they had it planned or whatever, I don't know. But North Caro- -- we weren't in it. But anyway, [redacted] y'all feel free to call on me in the future.

I want to end by saying what I -- I witnessed and seen up there that day is a despicable act. You don't do that. You don't -- if I could have got out of there a lot quicker that day, I'd have got out of there. I just can't believe.

In my eyes, if -- if the Capitol Police -- we should've been standing shoulder to shoulder with the Capitol Police, not having somebody up there attacking them. Those men had to go home every night, like policemen all over this country.

But had the Capitol Police handled that differently, and opened fire on the crowd that day, I think they'd have been justified. You don't go -- you don't bust the damn doors down on the Capitol and go in. Stop it.

Do I like the outcome of the election? No, sir, I don't like it. I think there's something funny there, but you don't handle things the way we witnessed.

And that's about it, [redacted] That's the way I feel about it. And if I can help in any way, y'all feel free to contact me at any time.

[redacted] Well, Mr. Smith, I'll just say, first, on the first point you made, that, you know, as far as I can tell, certainly your recall was excellent today, and I was certainly impressed by it and appreciate you being forthcoming with your answers.

And, you know, as -- if you ever think of anything that we discussed today that you feel like you didn't get totally accurate and you want to correct something, feel free to reach out to me and let me know.

Like I said at the beginning of this process, this isn't -- really just our main, and really our only goal here is to get to the truth, not to trip you up or anything like that.

The Witness. Right.

[redacted] So we appreciate your efforts today and you spending so much time with us. I'm sure it's not your first choice of activity for the day. And so that's all -- that's all to say that, you know, I just want to ease any concerns that you have that you might've made an accidental incorrect statement or something. You shouldn't worry about that.

The Witness. All right.

[redacted] Just let me know if you need to amend anything that you've said or if you think of something else that we talked about and something pops into your mind. I'm here, always happy to take an email or a phone call if you need that.

The Witness. All right.

[redacted] And then secondly, I just want to say thank you again for your time, and I appreciate your comments at the end -- at the end there. And I hope you -- I appreciate your involvement in this process and helping us get to the truth, and I think that's a comment that the committee would agree with and thank you very much.

The Witness. All right. I appreciate your professionalism, [redacted] Have a good one, buddy.

[redacted] Okay, thanks. You too, Mr. Smith, and thanks very much, [redacted] and [redacted] and [redacted] for being on the line and helping us out.

Thanks. And we're going to put the deposition in recess at 3:09.

[Whereupon, at 3:09 p.m., the deposition was recessed, subject to the call of the Chair.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

_____

Witness Name

_____

Date