EXECUTIVE SESSION

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: STEPHEN BANNON

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 9:31 a.m.

Present: Representatives Conaway, King, Rooney, Ros-Lehtinen,

Wenstrup, Stewart, Gowdy, Hurd, Granger, Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson, Speier, Swalwell, and Castro.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[redacted]

For STEPHEN BANNON:

ALLISON L. MCGUIRE, ESQ.

WILLIAM BURCK, ESQ.

QUINN EMANUEL

1300 I STREET NW, SUITE 900

WASHINGTON, DC 20005

[redacted] All right, everybody. Let's get started.

Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of Steve Bannon.

Thank you for speaking to us today.

For the record, I am [redacted] [redacted] at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the majority. There are a number of other members and staff present today who will introduce themselves as the proceedings get underway. But before we begin, I wanted to state a few things for the record.

The questioning will be conducted by members and staff. During the course of this interview, members and staff may ask questions during their allotted time period.

Some questions may seem basic, but that is because we need to clearly establish facts and understand the situation. Please do not assume we know any facts you have previously disclosed as part of any other investigation or review.

This interview will be conducted at the unclassified level.

We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions based on your best recollections. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You are entitled to have lawyers present for you for this interview, and I see that you have brought two with you.

At this time, if counsel could please state their names for the record.

MR. BURCK: William Burck, Quinn Emanuel, in Washington, D.C.

MS. MCGUIRE: Allison McGuire, Quinn Emanuel, Washington, D.C.

[redacted] Thank you.

The interview will be transcribed. There is a reporter making a record of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers later. Because the reporter cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer verbally. If you forget to do this, you might be reminded to do so. You may also be asked to spell certain terms or unusual phrases.

Consistent with the committee's rules of procedure, you and your counsel, upon request, will have a reasonable opportunity to inspect the transcript of this interview in order to determine whether your answers were correctly transcribed. The transcript will remain in the committee's custody. The committee also reserves the right to request your return for additional questions should the need arise.

The process for the interview will be as follows. The minority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions, then the majority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Immediately thereafter, we will take a 5-minute break if you desire, after which time, the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the majority will then be given 15 minutes to ask questions.

These 15-minute rounds will continue until questioning has been exhausted by both sides. Time will be kept for each interval, and I will be giving warnings for the 5- and 1-minute marks, respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone other than your counsel.

You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

Lastly, sir, the record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be under oath. If at this time, Mr. Bannon, you could raise your right hand to be sworn.

Do you swear or affirm the testimony you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, sir.

MR. BANNON: I do.

[redacted] Thank you very much.

Just a last reminder, sir, if you could make sure the green light is on on the microphone by just pressing that little button so everybody can hear what you're saying.

Mr. Chairman, over to you for any opening remarks.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. No opening remarks.

Mr. Bannon, any brief statements you'd like to make --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. CONAWAY: -- or do you want to go straight to questions?

Adam, comments?

MR. SCHIFF: Welcome. Appreciate you coming in,

MR. BANNON: Thanks. Thank you for having me.

MR. CONAWAY: Adam, your team is recognized for 45 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Quigley.

MR. QUIGLEY: Good morning, sir. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Bannon, prior to appearing today, were you asked to produce all communication relevant to the investigation to the committee? Did the majority ask you to produce any and all communications?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And specifically what did they ask you to produce? Because at this point, we're under the belief that you haven't produced anything.

MR. BURCK: Would you like me to answer that question for him?

MR. QUIGLEY: Yes. Sure, that's fine.

MR. BURCK: I was the one that received a letter from the majority. The majority asked for the standard all documents, correspondence in his possession, custody, or control that would be relevant to the committee's investigation.

And I wrote a letter back to the majority on behalf of Mr. Bannon, which I believe they shared with the minority, that he's not aware of any communications or any documents he has in his possession, custody, or control that would be responsive to the issues before the committee. And also that we understand the campaign has produced documents in response to the committee's requests over the course of the last several months.

MR. QUIGLEY: And certainly he's included in some of those emails?

MR. BURCK: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Which begs the question that it's just hard to imagine that there's absolutely nothing that doesn't include some aspects of this during the course of the campaign and afterwards.

MR. BURCK: We have answered the letter, and I think we stand by the letter, that he is not currently aware of anything in his possession, custody, or control that would be responsive to the committee's requests.

MR. QUIGLEY: And you've reviewed all emails, texts, phone records, encrypted apps, and any other forms of media, and nothing is germane?

MR. BURCK: We have responded to the majority's letter saying that he is not aware of any material that's in his possession, custody, or control that would be responsive.

MR. QUIGLEY: And, Mr. Bannon, counsel, obviously, during the course of the questioning here there may be issues that come up and we would ask you to

present that information if it's applicable.

MR. BURCK: Sure, of course.

MR. BANNON: Sure.

MR. QUIGLEY: Mr. Bannon, obviously, you've probably heard reports that -- and this relates to your counsel -- that the counsel you've retained -- and whether it's true or not, I just want to find out -- may have ties as well to other Trump associates, including -- and, again, it's just reports -- White House Counsel Don McGahn, former White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus.

As you can imagine, this raises questions about whether -- if this reflects an effort to coordinate defense strategies and responses. So I would ask you, did you receive a recommendation or direction to retain your counsel?

MR. BANNON: I had -- I talked to a number of lawyers about folks who would be, you know, the best to represent me, and Bill's name came up with other people. I talked to some other people and decided on Bill Burck.

MR. QUIGLEY: Was anyone at the White House or a former campaign associate part of those suggestions?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Have you entered formally or informally into any joint defense, common interest, or information-sharing agreements with any other individuals who have been or may be subject to interviews by Congress or the special counsel?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Thank you.

Interesting book, Michael Wolff's "Fire and Fury." Obviously, it isn't the subject of the investigation, but it raises questions, whether or not these quotes by

yourself are truer these things. But let me begin by asking the focus on money laundering.

Wolff quotes you as saying, "This is all about money laundering. Mueller chose Weissman, special counsel prosecutor, first, and he is a money laundering guy. Their path is -- to fucking Trump goes right through Paul Manafort, Don Jr., Jared Kushner. It's as plain as the hair on your face.

"It goes through Deutsche Bank and all the Kushner shit. The Kushner shit is greasy. They're going to go right through that. They're going to roll those two guys up and say play me or trade me.

"But executive privilege, we've got executive privilege. There's no executive privilege, explanation point. We proved that in Watergate."

Do you believe that Donald Trump, the President, has laundered money through personal or professional means?

MR. BANNON: No, absolutely not.

MR. QUIGLEY: Do you believe that's true for Donald Jr.?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe Donald Jr. has, no.

MR. QUIGLEY: Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge, no.

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, the reference in the book, is that accurate?

MR. BANNON: I don't actually remember saying all of that, but if it's in the book, it's in the book.

MR. QUIGLEY: Do you recall what you said about -- as close to that quote as possible?

MR. BANNON: I would think that that quote is probably pretty accurate.

MR. QUIGLEY: So why would you say it's all about money laundering?

MR. BANNON: It's just, you know, the stories I've read in the paper and, you know, things I've seen from what the -- Mueller, the types of people Mueller's hired, like Weissman, their expertise.

MR. QUIGLEY: Just because they hired people who had some degree of expertise wouldn't indicate that's the entire subject of the probe, to your quote that it's all about money laundering. Was there anything in your experience during the campaign that led you to believe that that was accurate?

MR. BANNON: No, absolutely not.

MR. QUIGLEY: Was there anything after that --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: -- after the campaign that led you to believe anyone associated with the campaign, anyone associated with the White House was involved in money laundering?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: And the reference to Deutsche Bank?

MR. BANNON: It's just from the Deutsche Bank -- I remember reading years ago the Deutsche Bank money laundering situation in Moscow.

MR. QUIGLEY: The fact that they were fined $630 million for their role in money laundering with a $10 billion scheme the Russians were using --

MR. BANNON: Right. And I think the chairman and CEO got fired.

MR. QUIGLEY: For those very efforts?

MR. BANNON: [Nonverbal response.]

MR. QUIGLEY: But you're also aware of the President's long-time use of Deutsche Bank to secure loans, correct?

MR. BANNON: I was not, no.

MR. QUIGLEY: Have you ever talked to the President about his use of Deutsche Bank?

MR. BANNON: Never.

MR. QUIGLEY: Have you ever talked to the President about his personal finances as it relates to these matters?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Have you ever talked to anyone from the Trump financial world or their family about their financial dealings with Deutsche Bank?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Including loans or money obtained from Deutsche Bank?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: When did you first meet President Trump?

MR. BANNON: August of 2010.

MR. QUIGLEY: And you would describe your relationship with the President in that course of time, while varied, what was the range of that relationship with the President?

MR. BANNON: In 2010, I came up for, it was about a 2-hour briefing somebody else gave, they asked me to be a part of. And from that time to the time I joined the campaign, I probably didn't spend 20 minutes with him total.

MR. QUIGLEY: When did you officially become part of the Trump campaign?

MR. BANNON: Officially August, the evening of the 13th or the afternoon of the 14th, Sunday the 14th.

MR. QUIGLEY: I'm sorry, what year, just to be sure?

MR. BANNON: Of 2016.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. And by officially, that means you signed on and you started -- you received pay for working the campaign, correct?

MR. BANNON: I think -- I think I was a volunteer. I'm pretty sure I was a volunteer.

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, did you ever receive any money from the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I don't think I did. I stepped in as a volunteer. Maybe later I got expenses paid or something like that, but I think I was a volunteer. I started basically on the 14th.

MR. QUIGLEY: You were never on a payroll?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: You would have remembered, obviously, getting a check from somebody --

MR. BANNON: Well, I wouldn't remember, but my business manager would. I can check with him, but I think it was just expenses only. If it was compensation, it was de minimus. At the beginning there was no talk of compensation, I was just stepping in, because it was only for 80 days, 85 days.

MR. QUIGLEY: Now, when you say you officially signed on, what did you do to sign on? Did you sign any other documents with --

MR. BANNON: Never signed a document, anything.

MR. QUIGLEY: Never signed --

MR. BANNON: Maybe later, after I started, they had some sort of personnel thing my assistant brought to me, but I just came to a verbal agreement with the candidate.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did they ask you to sign a nondisclosure agreement?

MR. BANNON: They did, eventually, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And when did you do that?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember. It was sometime in the campaign. I think everybody signed a nondisclosure.

MR. QUIGLEY: Now, that document, is there anything about that document that would make it, in your mind, impossible to answer any questions you might be asked today?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Were you asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement after the inauguration?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And is there anything about that document that would inhibit your ability to answer any question today?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Did you ever ask the President why he refused to release his tax returns?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did you ever just talk with the President or any of the staff about the issue of his refusal to release his tax returns?

MR. BANNON: The entire subject of releasing his tax returns?

MR. QUIGLEY: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And who was that with?

MR. BANNON: I think it was probably Jared, myself --

MR. QUIGLEY: Mr. Kushner, you mean?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, excuse me, Mr. Kushner, myself, probably Steve Mnuchin.

MR. QUIGLEY: And were they -- did they explain to you, or did you ask why the President -- the candidate at the time -- wasn't going to release his tax returns?

MR. BANNON: It was just pretty straightforward. He didn't feel he needed to and was not going to release his tax returns.

MR. QUIGLEY: And you never asked the President or the President never told you directly why he didn't release his tax returns?

MR. BANNON: No. It was just the statement he was not going to release them.

MR. QUIGLEY: The book also quotes you discussing Kushner's finances. "Charlie Kushner -- the father of Mr. Kushner -- he's going crazy because they're going to get down deep in the shit about how he financed everything. The rabbis with the diamonds and all that shit coming out of Israel, and all these guys coming out of Eastern Europe, all these Russian guys, and guys in Kazakhstan, and he's frozen at 666." I assume 5th Avenue. "When it goes under next year. The whole thing is cross-collateralized. He's wiped. He's gone. He's done. It's toast. It's over. Toast."

Is that quote accurate?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if it was totally accurate, but I stand by it.

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, do you believe that Russia or any individuals or entities connected to the Russians or the Russian Government or any of their financial sectors have any kind of leverage over the President?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. QUIGLEY: His businesses?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. QUIGLEY: His family?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. QUIGLEY: Jared Kushner in particular?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. QUIGLEY: So your responses today juxtaposition with quotes from the book, they seem to deviate somewhat. One's much more out there and definitive. How do you explain that?

MR. BANNON: Like in what regard?

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, just reading this last quote and the one I referenced earlier, seems to be pretty obvious that there are issues with finances and the connection with the Russians, and today you're pretty clear that you don't believe that there are any.

MR. BANNON: How is that tied to the Russians?

MR. QUIGLEY: As I said in this quote, "And all these guys coming out of Eastern Europe, all these Russian guys, and guys in Kazakhstan, and he's frozen. When he goes under next year, the whole thing is cross-collateralized. He's wiped." What did that mean when you said that?

MR. BANNON: I think this is the general comment about, you know, individual Russian businessmen or guys in Eastern Europe or wherever, and this is just from things I've read, right, that's been out there in the press over the last couple of years.

It has nothing to do with the Russian Government or anything of leverage, just, you know, various either businessmen, business parties in Eastern Europe, or whatever. And to the factual basis of that, I can't attest, right, it's just what I've

heard.

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, let me ask it more broadly. Are you aware of any information to indicate that anyone affiliated with the Trump business world or political world or official world was involved in laundering money for any country or entity?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: The President has often said he has no money invested in Russia. That doesn't mean it's not perfectly clear that Russia doesn't have significant financial leverage over him in the form of loans, real estate, any other purchases.

Just to reiterate, are you aware of any financial relationships between the President, his properties, his companies, Trump Organization, his family, and Russia or any Russian financial institution?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Same question for the President's son -- sons -- Trump Jr. or Eric?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Ivanka Trump or Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Ivanka, no. Just -- Jared, just the things I've read in the press.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what are you referencing when you mention that in the press?

MR. BANNON: I think, you know, Financial Times, I think Guardian, other newspapers have had various stories about their issues in trying to finance 666 or refinance 666. It's just general media, you know, business press.

MR. QUIGLEY: And your reaction to those stories?

MR. BANNON: It's, you know, just -- what do you mean reaction, like how so?

MR. QUIGLEY: Did you believe those stories to be true?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if they're true or not. It's what's reported in the media.

MR. QUIGLEY: Was there anything in any of those stories that you knew to be -- from your own personal recollection or communications you had in the campaign -- that led you to believe that there could be some truth to those matters?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: One minute.

Have you ever heard of Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what was the connection with Mr. Smith, if any?

MR. BANNON: Not a connection. I just remember reading one time in the press about a guy named Peter Smith.

MR. QUIGLEY: You never met him?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did you ever communicate with him?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Do you know anyone in the campaign who communicated with Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did anyone ever, from the campaign, talk to you about Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: When did you first read about this issue with Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: I think this was the first couple days it was in the press. I think it was this summer or this spring sometime. I just remember seeing the story, this guy Peter Smith's name came up.

MR. QUIGLEY: So nothing prior to the inauguration? You never heard about Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: I had never heard of Peter Smith.

MR. QUIGLEY: Very good. I'll pass this onto Mr. Swalwell for a moment -- or, I'm sorry, Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, I just want to follow up on a couple things my colleague asked you about.

During the campaign, how many email addresses did you use?

MR. BANNON: I think two, whatever the Trump campaign email was and my private email.

MR. SCHIFF: And you used your private email to correspond on matters pertaining to the campaign at times?

MR. BANNON: If guys sent me emails that were about the campaign and I had the email, I would send it back on that email, yeah.

MR. SCHIFF: And, in fact, some of the production that we received comes from your personal campaign -- or your personal email address in the document production. Have you gone through the document production?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, I went through the document production.

MR. BURCK: Well, production that he received from the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: Your personal emails that you wrote during the campaign, did

you delete those from your email account?

MR. BANNON: No, I've never deleted an email.

MR. SCHIFF: Why aren't those emails then produced to this committee?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Schiff, we've already answered the question. We've responded to the request from the majority about documents in his possession, custody, and control that are responsive to the request from the committee. The campaign has produced documents that are responsive to the committee, and we believe there's an overlap between what he has and what the campaign has produced and nothing else.

MR. SCHIFF: Counsel, there may be an overlap, but that doesn't relieve your obligation to produce the documents in your client's possession.

MR. BURCK: I don't have an obligation. I don't have a subpoena. I have a request.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, then, you're telling us something different today. You're telling us today then you do have documents that are responsive, but you're refusing to turn them over because you haven't been subpoenaed?

MR. BURCK: No. We are not going to turn over -- we're not going to take the expense out of Mr. Bannon's pocket to reproduce documents you already have from the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: And you've gone through all the documents in Mr. Bannon's possession to determine whether they have been simultaneously produced in exactly the same form from the campaign?

MR. BURCK: I've responded to the majority's question and responded in writing to their request.

MR. SCHIFF: Your only response in writing that you've acknowledged to us

today is that you've said you don't have any documents responsive to the request. You seem to be saying something different today, that you do, in fact, have documents responsive to the request but you believe that some portion of them are duplicative of what we received from the campaign.

MR. BURCK: We have no reason to believe the committee does not have every document that is responsive to the request that would be involved -- that would be relevant to the campaign from the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: But, counsel, I think you're telling us that you haven't gone through Mr. Bannon's materials to determine whether we have each and every email, text message, or other communication. Have you?

MR. BURCK: I'm not answering that question.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

Mr. Conaway, I think we're going to need to subpoena this witness.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, it is troubling, apparently being disrespectful of the committee, to tell us that you don't have documents responsive to our deal as opposed to you just saying: We're not going to answer that question at all.

So to tell us that you don't have documents leads us to believe that you've made some sort of a review, professional review, that I assume most -- now, I'm a CPA, not a lawyer -- that when you get a request from Congress, which we take really serious, even though it's a request, and then get a letter back that says we don't have any of the documents responsive to your request and then present today that it's something different than that is troubling.

And so my colleague and I will discuss a compulsory response to the -- a subpoena, response to that straightforward request that you give us documents.

And the other question I would have is, how do you know what the campaign

gave us? How do you know what other sources we have to know that they were duplicative?

MR. BURCK: We asked the campaign for what materials were produced to the committee.

MR. CONAWAY: And who else did you ask? You're assuming that the only documents relevant to this investigation are between him and the campaign, your client and the campaign?

MR. BURCK: Well, the only thing that Mr. Bannon is authorized to speak about today is the campaign.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, that's not what the subpoena -- that's not what the letter asked for.

MR. BURCK: Well, the White House has informed us that Mr. Bannon is not authorized to speak about the White House.

MR. CONAWAY: Is he still an employee of the White House?

MR. BURCK: No, he's not.

MR. CONAWAY: And how does that -- how does a -- how do they compel your client not to speak to us?

MR. BURCK: We understand that there could be an assertion of executive privilege by the White House as to --

MR. CONAWAY: Has there been an assertion?

MR. BURCK: I do not know. I have spoken to the White House.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So you're, to the extent you're officially on notice, your client is here to answer our questions.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Conaway, there is -- we have -- I spoke to the White House yesterday. The White House informed us -- informed me -- that

Mr. Bannon is not authorized to speak about times that he was at the White House or during the transition.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So you also told us that you didn't have any documents responsive to our request. So do you have the White House's statement in writing that he's not supposed to talk to us?

MR. BURCK: No. But you can speak to Uttam Dhillon at the White House.

MR. CONAWAY: That's not my job. My job is to ask your client questions.

MR. BURCK: And I'm going to have to instruct my client that the White House has informed him that he's not authorized to speak about these topics.

MR. CONAWAY: So we'll go back on Mr. Schiff's time, but we will get these documents the best we can.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOWDY: Can I ask my friend from California to try to gain clarification. You're telling us that he's not going to answer any questions from his time at the White House based on what, the assertion of what privilege?

MR. BURCK: My understanding, Mr. Gowdy, is --

MR. GOWDY: Well, it would only be your understanding. You're the only one who's talked to the White House.

MR. BURCK: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So how did that conversation go?

MR. BURCK: I asked the White House, the counsel's office, Uttam Dhillon in the White House counsel's office, whether or not Mr. Bannon was authorized to speak about his time at the White House or during the transition given that there is a potential assertion of executive privilege, and he informed me that he is not authorized to speak about it by the President.

MR. GOWDY: Was he authorized to speak when he was being interviewed for the book?

MR. BURCK: I did not ask him that question.

MR. GOWDY: So you think Congress is bound by some White House counsel's assertion that a former employee can't discuss his time there? Is that your legal position today?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I'm not here to provide advice to Congress. I'm just telling you what the White House has informed me about my client's authorizations to speak about certain topics.

I also have had conversations with staff about this topic, so I'm somewhat surprised that it's not -- it's coming up for the first time.

MR. CONAWAY: You weren't on record with those folks. We are on record right now for having this conversation. So that may be redundant, but nevertheless, it's important to get on the record.

MR. BURCK: I understand. We are happy to, if there's a request for us to duplicate production of documents that Mr. Bannon may have that has already been produced, we're happy to consider that.

The conversations I've had with staff had suggested that -- I've made it clear that there was going to be -- the White House position is that he is not authorized. And I've also made it clear that the campaign has produced documents that we understand to be duplicative of what Mr. Bannon would have.

Now, if the committee would like us to produce documents that are, again, duplicative of what the campaign -- the committee already has, we can certainly take that -- we can certainly do that. And it's not -- I don't think there would be a necessity for a subpoena, just that it was not clear to us that was what was required.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. So we would – in response to our letter, we would like all documents, even those that may be duplicative of what was already provided to us, all documents in the command and control, whatever the phraseology was, in your client's possession. We would like to have those documents produced to the committee based on our request. And that would be a little easier than going to a subpoena but we can --

MR. BURCK: Sure. That's fine. Mr. Conaway and Mr. Schiff, that's fine. Again, I think there may have been a misunderstanding between my conversations with staff and what was expected.

But we certainly have no -- Mr. Bannon is certainly not trying to conceal anything from the committee. It was simply a question of, I guess, a misunderstanding. Again, I'm surprised also by the fact that the committee does not seem to know about the White House's position on this. Again, my understanding is that –

MR. CONAWAY: We don't talk to the White House.

MR. BURCK: Understood. But I did talk to staff.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Well, I have assiduously avoided the White House altogether since April. I've avoided any kind of issue. And so we don't talk to the White House about what might or might not be going on.

MR. BURCK: Understood.

MR. CONAWAY: Or I don't.

Back to Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I can assure you I don't either, Mr. Chairman.

So, counsel, we have agreement to provide any and all documents whether in the form of emails, text messages, any communications relevant to our

investigation, whether they're duplicative or not of what has been produced by others?

MR. BURCK: Absolutely. That's fine.

MR. SCHIFF: I want to understand, Mr. Bannon, though, what you're prepared to testify about today. Is it your position that you're going to decline to answer any question that's asked of you that -- during the time period in which you were in the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yeah. Upon advice of counsel, I was told that I couldn't talk about anything regarding the transition or the White House.

MR. SCHIFF: So if we asked you, for example, about conversations you had with others about the meeting in Trump Tower where you learned information about what took place in that meeting in Trump Tower, your position would be you would decline to answer those questions?

MR. BANNON: What meeting at Trump Tower was this?

MR. SCHIFF: The June meeting with Paul Manafort, Jared Kushner, Don Jr., as well as Natalia Veselnitskaya, and others.

MR. BANNON: I think that came out after I left the White House, didn't it? What's the date?

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I'm asking you a question about what you're prepared to discuss. If you've had conversations during your time in the White House that is directly pertinent to the issue of communications between the Trump campaign and the Russians that took place during the campaign, is it your position that you're going to refuse to answer those questions?

MR. BANNON: It is upon advice of my counsel that I -- we were told I was not supposed to talk about anything during the transition or my time at the

White House.

MR. SCHIFF: And so you're not asserting any privilege but you're saying that you're under instructions from the White House not to answer questions pertaining to transition and your time within the White House, regardless of whether they involved conversations with the President?

MR. BURCK: Just to be clear, Mr. Bannon is not asserting a privilege. It's our understanding the White House is taking the position that executive privilege could be asserted and that they are not authorizing him to speak about those topics at this time.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, just so that we're absolutely clear about this, you are going to refuse to answer questions pertaining to any conversations, anything you witnessed from the period beginning in the transition and continuing through your time in the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Whether they're conversations with the President or they're conversations with anyone else?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess we could continue but it's going to be dramatically incomplete, or we can use process and then have a more complete interview.

MR. CONAWAY: Let's go ahead and proceed with the interview and get the questions out that we believe are relevant.

And I'm, again, CPA not a lawyer, so I don't know how you -- how one person tells somebody else that they can't talk about something without asserting some sort of legal basis on that.

If we were asking specific conversations that Mr. Bannon had with the President during that timeframe or at least certainly once he was sworn in as President, then maybe I would understand some sort of a privilege there.

But just to have conversations about the conduct between the transition and when Mr. Bannon left the White House staff, I don't know what protections there are associated with that other than the assertion of some lawyer deep in the bowels of the White House who's made that assertion.

So let's go ahead and ask our questions and push forward and --

MR. GOWDY: Could I ask the chairman a question?

MR. CONAWAY: Sure.

MR. GOWDY: Given the fact that we're going to be here for at least a little while today, can we at least make a request of the White House that they let us know what non-assertion of a privilege they are asserting to deny Congress access to information that a witness has?

MR. CONAWAY: Sure.

MR. GOWDY: I've never heard this legal analysis in my life. So if we're going to be here today, I don't think it's too much for the White House to explain to us the legal basis upon which they have instructed a witness not to answer Congress' questions.

MR. CONAWAY: All right.

MR. GOWDY: So whoever the hell gave this advice -- what was his name?

MR. BURCK: Uttam Dhillon.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Whoever the hell that is needs to inform Congress what his legal basis is for denying us access to information.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. I'll ask one guy from you all's sides and one guy

from our side to go start that process. [redacted] and one of you all's guys.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me yield back to Mr. Quigley.

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Gowdy.

MR. QUIGLEY: I just have a clarifying question before I yield to Mr. Swalwell.

So given what you have just stated, sir, when I asked you questions about ever, does that mean you were only answering up to the point where the transition team started?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: So that would indicate that you just waived the heck out of everything you just talked about because you answered critical questions from the time that you met Donald Trump to the time that you served with him in the White House as President. Is that correct?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Quigley, I don't want to quibble with the legal analysis, but --

MR. QUIGLEY: It's not a quibble. It's --

MR. BURCK: -- but it's not a waiver. If you ask a factual question, did somebody speak about something, he says, no, he never spoke to somebody, that's not a waiver under anything --

MR. QUIGLEY: Yeah. But it's answering a question -- respectfully, it's answering a question about the timeframe involved, critical questions pertaining to the four elements of this investigation. And obviously, they were relevant certainly during the transition, but just as importantly during Mr. Bannon's time in the White House.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Quigley, if you'd like Mr. Bannon to simply answer questions, including ones that are factual questions about did he ever do X, and stop at the beginning of the transition, he can do that. But --

MR. QUIGLEY: But you can't selectively say, I'm going to waive this privilege that's not mine, that no one has exerted on this so you can selectively answer questions you just don't feel like answering and then answer ones you do feel like.

MR. BURCK: Just to be clear, Mr. Bannon has no particular preference one way or the other to answer. He will answer questions that he's allowed to answer. The White House has told him through me, and your staff is confirming this, that they are taking a position that he is not to answer -- to discuss his time at the White House or during the transition.

MR. QUIGLEY: But he clearly just did.

MR. BURCK: I respectfully disagree, Mr. Quigley. It's very clear in any case law about attorney/client privilege or any privilege that an assertion of a fact, if you say it did not happen, is not a waiver of any sort.

MR. QUIGLEY: Well, I'll just close by saying this. He answered -- he just acknowledged that he answered questions about the timeframe after the transition team started that were relevant to this. But I will -- we'll quibble later.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Quigley, but if you asked him -- if you asked him if his name was Steve Bannon, still to this day, it would still be, in your theory, a waiver. It clearly is not.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, when did you first meet General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: I think it was approximately a week or so after I started the -- on the campaign. So late August of 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: Who introduced you to him, or was it upon someone's suggestion?

MR. BANNON: Well, that's when I physically met him. I'd been not in contact, but email chain with him, I think, in September of 2015 by a guy named Owen Smith, who's chairman of IWP. It's a postgraduate school in Washington, D.C.

MR. SWALWELL: When you joined the campaign officially in August 2016, was General Flynn working out of Trump Tower?

MR. BANNON: No, he was not. He was frequently on the campaign and would be on the plane, but I don't think he had a spot on the 14th floor, no.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you typically communicate with General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: Basic conversation, you know, on the plane, conversation behind the scenes when we went -- when he was going to speak or something like that.

MR. SWALWELL: How about by phone?

MR. BANNON: By phone, yeah. It was not a tremendous amount of communication.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he have a campaign phone number?

MR. BANNON: A campaign phone number?

MR. SWALWELL: Meaning a phone or a device assigned to him by the campaign.

MR. BANNON: I don't know, but I don't think so.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you?

MR. BANNON: No, I did not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So if you were communicating with General Flynn or anyone, once you joined the team it was using your own personal or at least your business phone?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many devices were you using once you joined in August 2016?

MR. BANNON: I think two.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Was one personal and one for your business?

MR. BANNON: I had just two. I had an iPhone and a BlackBerry.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And did you have a campaign email address?

MR. BANNON: I did have a campaign email address.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Did General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And so if you were communicating with General Flynn by email, how would you email him?

MR. BANNON: I'd email him wherever the, you know, return -- I'd just hit the return and email him that way, however he had emailed me in the first place.

MR. SWALWELL: And have you reviewed in your personal email account -- well, let's go back. You said you have a personal email account?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. What's that email?

MR. BANNON: It's [redacted].

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how about a business email account?

MR. BANNON: That's basically it.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Do you use any other email accounts?

MR. BANNON: I have one but it's not very active. I think I have a Gmail account.

MR. SWALWELL: And did you ever correspond with General Flynn through your Gmail account?

MR. BANNON: Through the Gmail?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: I don't think so.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Have you checked that?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if I checked it or not. I think we checked it in the review because I turned over everything to him.

MR. SWALWELL: When you would communicate with General Flynn through a mobile device, would you ever text message with him?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many numbers do you recall General Flynn having at that time?

MR. BANNON: I think General Flynn had one number.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So there were text message exchanges between you and General Flynn at least from when you began?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember specifically, but I think so, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And have you reviewed those exchanges in preparation for today?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: No. Is that something that you can go back and do to see if there is anything relevant to questions we have regarding General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, sure. Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And produce them if there is?

MR. BANNON: Yeah.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you help General Flynn join the Trump campaign?

MR. BANNON: I made a contact, yes, with the campaign manager at the time. I don't know if that was the deciding thing about him joining the campaign, but I introduced him to Corey Lewandowski.

MR. SWALWELL: Why did you do that?

MR. BANNON: I think there was a sense that -- I think Corey told me, and I think also this guy Owen Smith -- that -- this was in early -- this was in 2015, I think, in August, September, that candidate Trump needed, you know, needed some expertise in foreign affairs.

MR. SWALWELL: And why did you choose General Flynn as someone you'd introduce to him?

MR. BANNON: Just Owen Smith had recommended him, and he was obviously a very big name in the -- on the right, given his -- everything he'd been doing about radical Islamic terrorism. He was a very well known guy.

MR. SWALWELL: And I want to be clear that when you say that it was August, September that you met General Flynn, are you talking about 2015 or 2016?

MR. BANNON: I never really met him in 2015 when I did these email exchanges. I never really met him until the following August.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And where did you first meet him?

MR. BANNON: I think it was either in Trump Tower or on the plane going to a rally.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times did General Flynn fly with Donald

Trump as candidate?

MR. BANNON: Pretty frequently. After I took over the campaign or after I stepped in as CEO, it was, you know, I'd say General Flynn was there for at least, you know, maybe a third of the rallies.

MR. SWALWELL: Did they appear to be close, candidate Trump and General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: As close as the candidate was to anybody that wasn't, you know, his family, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. So once you started interacting with General Flynn in the fall of 2016, how many in-person interactions do you think you guys had?

MR. BANNON: Well, you know, we were doing, you know, multiple rallies a day and going out for multiple days at a time and General Flynn would be there. So I had, you know, I had, I would say, quite a few.

MR. SWALWELL: Now, at this point in time the President's views on Russia were pretty widely known. Did you ever discuss with General Flynn General Flynn's views on Russia?

MR. BANNON: In the context of debate prep and the context of helping the candidate with a cohesive foreign policy, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: What were General Flynn's views on Russia at that time?

MR. BANNON: I think you see this in debate prep and in the debate, I think it's pretty standard. They're, you know, not an ally, they're an enemy, but somebody that you may be able to work with over time, and you certainly don't want more enemies in the world.

But I think pretty standard, pretty standard as far as, I think, people's thinking

in this town or in the national security community about Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: Did they align with your views on Russia?

MR. BANNON: Basically, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many debate prep sessions did you participate in?

MR. BANNON: Well, from August 14th on, all of them.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Approximately how many were those?

MR. BANNON: I would say, for all the debates, it's got to be 20.

MR. SWALWELL: And was the candidate always present?

MR. BANNON: Oh, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And during these debate prep sessions, did you ever hear candidate Trump express his views on Russia?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And what were those?

MR. BANNON: I think it was pretty much the same thing, is that, you know, they're, you know, they're not an ally, but you don't need to make them any more of an enemy than they already are.

MR. SWALWELL: At this point was it known within the campaign that Russia was alleged to have been hacking Democratic emails?

MR. BANNON: I don't think -- I think that was towards -- I think that was towards --

MR. SWALWELL: And it's not a trick question.

MR. BANNON: I think it was towards --

MR. SWALWELL: It was first reported in June of 2016, but was this something that was being discussed among the campaign that this allegation was at least out there?

MR. BANNON: If it was, it was not a big discussion.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it ever discussed during the debate?

MR. BANNON: Debate prep?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: I'm sure it might have come up, but it wasn't like a big deal.

MR. SWALWELL: Because I recall candidate Trump, during one of the debates with Secretary Clinton, making a reference that, you know, it could have been China, it could have been some guy on the couch, we don't know really who it was. Was that an answer that had been rehearsed in the debate, or was that something that he kind of ad hoc gave on the stage?

MR. BANNON: This was the one, the 400-pound guy?

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. BANNON: I think that was -- I would say that was ad hoc.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it ever discussed during debate prep about, you know, sir, you're going to be asked about these allegations with Russia, you know, we should talk about how you'd respond?

MR. BANNON: Allegations about Russia in what regard?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, it was widely reported at this point once the debate started that Russia was being accused, at least reports were coming out in October from our Intelligence Community that they could attribute hacking to Russia.

So was it ever discussed with the candidate that the Intelligence Community made this assessment and this may be a question in the debate?

MR. BANNON: About the hacking of the DNC?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes. Or just general Russian interference in the campaign.

MR. BANNON: I'm sure it came up, but it was not a big part of the -- in that regard, it was more -- in debate prep it was about how to turn everything and focus on candidate Clinton's, you know, the Clinton cash, the corruption, what the Clinton Foundation -- if there was any discussion of the hacking, it was very brief, to just pivot back to Clinton cash and her corruption and the Clinton Global Initiative and the Clinton Foundation, just to turn it back, so it was not to make a big deal about the hacking.

MR. SWALWELL: Now, were you aware while working with General Flynn throughout the campaign that in December 2015 he had visited Moscow?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Do you know if the President was aware of that at the time?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. BURCK: You mean you don't know?

MR. BANNON: No, not meaning I don't know, meaning I'd never heard it -- I never knew the President to know that.

MR. SWALWELL: Now, once Donald Trump was elected President, General Flynn was designated as the incoming national security advisor, at least the appointee that the President would make. Were you a part of that decisionmaking process?

MR. BURCK: Unfortunately, I think that will be during the transition since it's close to November 8th.

[redacted] Five minutes, Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: And, Mr. Bannon, I understand --

MR. BANNON: I'm prepared to answer, you know. This is not about me.

MR. BURCK: Yeah. It's not a question of whether he wants to answer. It's that he's been told that he can't answer it, so --

MR. SWALWELL: And even if the executive privilege has not been waived, I don't understand the transition privilege. I've never heard of that one.

MR. BURCK: According to the White House, there is a privilege that applies. And also I believe the transition has taken a position, according to Michael Hoffberg (ph), the attorneyfor the transition, has taken a position that a privilege applies to documents, testimony as to that period as well.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first --

MR. GOWDY: Given the fact that you represent him and not the White House, what has your independent research uncovered for you? Is there a privilege that applies during the transition?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I don't think I'm at liberty to discuss my -- that's attorney work product. I don't think I can --

MR. GOWDY: You represent Mr. Bannon. You don't represent the White House.

MR. BURCK: I agree. But I don't represent the Congress either or this committee. And I can't disclose my --

MR. GOWDY: Hence my question, did you do independent research to see whether or not there is a privilege, or are you just taking some White House lawyer's word for it?

MR. BURCK: I can say I've done independent research.

MR. GOWDY: And what case told you that he cannot answer questions during the transition?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I am not at liberty to disclose attorney/client or

attorney work product.

MR. GOWDY: You can't tell me the case that you are citing in support of White House counsel's position that he cannot answer questions about the transition?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, it is my professional judgment that if the White House says that there is a privilege that applies, that the President of the United States takes the position that there is a privilege that applies to the transition when he's President-elect, which is an office created by statute, and he's also President thereafter, and if he says that there is, he has independent authority to say that he has such a privilege. And I believe the Department of Justice has written opinions inside of OLC that support that. That's all I can say.

MR. GOWDY: I'd love to see those opinions, and I'd love to know how a White House counsel can bind you from giving what you think is the right legal advice to your client.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, all I can say, again, this is a question of Mr. Bannon is in a position where he has been asked to appear before the committee on a voluntary basis. He's agreed to do that.

His former employer, who's the President of the United States, has informed me through his counsel, through one of his lawyers in his White House counsel's office, that his position is that Mr. Bannon may not breach executive privilege, which the White House counsel's office has informed me applies to both the transition and to the White House.

If there was compulsion of some sort, that might be a different story. I don't know the answer to that question. But the point is that in this particular setting --

MR. GOWDY: We're probably going to find out.

MR. BURCK: You may. But the point is that this is not a decision that Mr. Bannon can make or that I can make on his behalf without the White House, the President of the United States, taking a position.

MR. GOWDY: How would compulsory legal process change the analysis if a privilege applied?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I know that there has been quite a bit of precedent with respect to how compulsory process plays with an assertion of executive privilege and then how that plays throughout the Congress and how that plays with the Department of Justice. There's a history and a precedent to that that goes back many, many decades.

This is currently in a voluntary request scenario. If this was a compulsory process, there are many cases, including ones I've been involved with when I worked for President Bush, in which there is a process. That process has not been triggered so far.

MR. SCHIFF: If Mr. Swalwell will allow.

White House counsel, though, didn't say they were invoking executive privilege, did they?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Schiff, again, this is based on -- they did not say they were invoking, but I think I can somewhat, again, from my personal history working in the White House for President Bush, there is no invocation of executive privilege unless there is a compulsory process brought to bear upon a document -- documents or a person. So that has been the history of how the White House has traditionally -- including President Obama, President Bush before that.

MR. SCHIFF: And it's your position today that executive privilege would cover not only the time that the President is the President but the time of the

transition, and not only conversations with the President or President-elect but conversations that Mr. Bannon had with anyone during the entire period. Is that your position?

MR. BURCK: It is not my position. It is the position that I've been communicated to by the White House that Mr. Bannon is not authorized to speak about anything relating to his time at the White House or the transition. And so it is not my position, it is the position that the White House is invoking.

And I cannot put my client -- and I don't think any lawyer would put their client in a position where a former employer, especially one who has legal authority of the magnitude of the President of the United States, to violate that instruction unless there's a compulsory process brought to bear, in which case there would be a process between the White House and the Congress --

MR. SCHIFF: Well, if I could, just to clarify further, counsel, so while the White House has not invoked privilege, they have instructed you to have Mr. Bannon refuse to answer any question concerning any conversation he had with anyone after the election?

MR. BURCK: With respect to anything relating to the White House or President Trump or President-elect Trump, that is my understanding, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. So -- well, I'll yield back to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

Mr. Bannon, did you ever use any encrypted or non-encrypted messenger apps during your time with the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of whether General Flynn did?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of whether any other principals on the campaign were? Hope Hicks?

MR. BANNON: I have no idea.

MR. SWALWELL: Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: Any -- how about Paul Manafort?

MR. BANNON: Don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first learn that General Flynn had traveled to Moscow in December 2015?

MR. BANNON: Sometime after the campaign, so I don't know if I can answer or not, but sometime, you know, reading the press accounts.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Did you ever discuss this with Donald Trump, that General Flynn had traveled to Moscow?

[redacted] One minute.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BURCK: So, unfortunately, he can't answer that question because it would call for disclosure of information that occurred or may not have occurred, given Mr. Quigley's point about no information at all post transition. He can't answer the question.

MR. SWALWELL: So I have just 1 minute left.

Mr. Bannon, would you advise Donald Trump, if you were working at the White House today, to assert executive privilege regarding this matter if you were still there?

MR. BANNON: That's the White House counsel and the President's call.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay.

MR. BANNON: I'm fully prepared to stay as long as it takes and answer everything you guys want, but it's -- you know, I've got to play by the rules laid out.

MR. SWALWELL: I'll yield back. Thank you.

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Gowdy, 45 minutes.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, did you participate in media interviews on or off the record during the period between the election and the inauguration, the transition?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Any interviews, on or off the record, during the transition?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Did you participate in any interviews, on or off the record, after the inauguration before you left the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Chairman, I am stumped as to how you can participate in interviews on and off the record during the transition and on and off the record after the inauguration but you cannot answer congressional questions during the exact same time period.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, all I can say to that is that obviously I was not -- he did not have a lawyer at the time that he was speaking at that timeframe, and the White House was not apparently asserting any kind of privilege at that timeframe. I don't know what else you want me to say.

The White House has told us --

MR. GOWDY: You just gave me a textbook answer for waiver, which is the selective invocation of privilege, depending on the circumstances and depending on

who's asking. But we'll take that up with White House counsel.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, exactly. My point is that this is not Mr. Bannon's privilege. It belongs to the White House. And so the White House, if they've waived it, the White House has waived it. It's not him. He's happy to answer any and all questions --

MR. GOWDY: What are the consequences that would befall Mr. Bannon if he decided he wanted to answer these questions?

MR. BURCK: I don't know, but I don't think I'd want to find out, so --

MR. GOWDY: All right.

MR. BURCK: We are talking about the President of the United States. It's not simply --

MR. GOWDY: We're also talking about the transition.

MR. BURCK: I understand that.

MR. GOWDY: And we're talking about a witness who is more than happy to talk on and off the record to non-Members of Congress, both during the transition and after the inauguration before he left the White House, but yet something talismanically changes when he comes before a committee of Congress and now he can't answer them. That's the look right now. That's the look.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, the position, I think, is one that's best taken up with the White House.

MR. GOWDY: All right. I think that's what we're in the process of doing.

Mr. Bannon, you said you met Donald Trump August of 2010. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: Yes, sir.

MR. GOWDY: Donald Trump Jr., when did you meet him?

MR. BANNON: In New Hampshire during the New Hampshire primary. So

that would be January, February of 2016.

MR. GOWDY: Ivanka Trump?

MR. BANNON: June, July of 2016.

MR. GOWDY: Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: June, July of '16.

MR. GOWDY: George Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: Never.

MR. GOWDY: Paul Manafort?

MR. BANNON: August the 14th, 2016.

MR. GOWDY: Carter Page?

MR. BANNON: Never.

MR. SWALWELL: Roger Stone?

MR. BANNON: As far as met telephonically or things with Roger, maybe 2014. Physically, sometime in '16, I think.

MR. GOWDY: Mike Flynn Sr.?

MR. BANNON: Through emails in, like I said, in August or September of 2015, and then personally, physically in late August of 2016.

[10:31 a.m.]

MR. GOWDY: Mike Flynn Jr.?

MR. BANNON: I don't think I've ever met.

MR. GOWDY: When you were contacted about a role with the campaign, what specifically were you contacted about or asked to do?

MR. BANNON: I didn't hear the question.

MR. GOWDY: When you were contacted about a role with the campaign, what specifically were you contacted about or asked to do?

MR. BANNON: To -- when I talked to Mr. Trump that night, to come in as -- basically as CEO, with Kellyanne Conway coming in as campaign manager.

MR. GOWDY: Had anyone from an intermediary standpoint reached out to you before now-President Trump to ask you whether or not you would be open to that if you were contacted?

MR. BANNON: Yes. In fact, I think it was the opposite. I think somebody contacted -- I had conversations with Rebekah and Bob Mercer, and I think they actually contacted then-candidate Trump.

MR. GOWDY: Did you have any foreknowledge or preknowledge the DNC server would be accessed unlawfully?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: Did you have any foreknowledge John Podesta's email would be accessed unlawfully?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know of anyone with the Trump campaign, in either an official or unofficial capacity, that did have foreknowledge or preknowledge of the DNC hack?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know of anyone with the Trump campaign, officially or unofficially, who had fore or preknowledge that John Podesta's email would be accessed unlawfully?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: When did you learn of the DNC intrusion?

MR. BANNON: Whenever it came out to whatever the media was. Whenever it came out in the press.

MR. GOWDY: When did you learn that John Podesta's email had been hacked?

MR. BANNON: I think whenever -- I don't know if it was WikiLeaks or whatever put it out and made a big public statement about it. That's when we found out.

MR. GOWDY: Were you part of any discussions on how to take advantage of the materials obtained from either the DNC server hack or the John Podesta email hack?

MR. BANNON: In what regard?

MR. GOWDY: In any regard. How to take advantage of the fact that there had been two intrusions and that there were proceeds from those intrusions.

MR. BANNON: I think on the campaign, it was -- we had discussion to let it come out. In my personal opinion, it might be some embarrassing things, but it wasn't -- it wasn't going to be a big deal, so we should not -- I think in the stack of stuff that's there, I said: Don't step on the lines or whatever, just let those -- let those emails speak for themselves.

MR. GOWDY: I want to show you what I hope will be marked as committee

exhibit No. 2, and give you a copy and give Mr. Schiff a copy and whoever else wants a copy.

[Bannon Exhibit No. 2
was marked for identification.]

MR. GOWDY: Let me know when you've familiarized yourself with that exhibit.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Gowdy, can you just describe what the exhibit is, just for --

MR. GOWDY: It's a series of emails. For purposes of the record, it is Bates stamped 2979.

Who is Jason Roys?

MR. BANNON: I have no idea.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Jason Miller?

MR. BANNON: He was our comms director.

MR. GOWDY: I'm assuming that that would be General Mike Flynn. Does that look right now?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I don't know if this is his son or General Flynn.

MR. GOWDY: What does LTG mean?

MR. BANNON: Lieutenant general.

MR. GOWDY: Was Flynn Jr. a lieutenant general?

MR. BANNON: But that's -- it's cc to the lieutenant general.

MR. GOWDY: Right. That's where we are right now, we're in the cc's.

MR. BANNON: I'm saying cc is -- down here --

MR. GOWDY: We're not there yet. Was Flynn Jr. a lieutenant general?

MR. BANNON: Are you starting on the last page or the top page?

MR. GOWDY: I'm starting on the very first header on the very first page. Just asking you whether or not you know people.

MR. BANNON: Yeah. Jason Miller. Michael Flynn I think is the son. Jason Roys I never heard of. Jason Miller, the comms director. Lieutenant General Flynn. Scavino is the Twitter social media guy. And Manafort at that time was the campaign chairman.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Now, I want you to flip to the second page. Near the bottom, right after it says, "adding in Dan Scavino," do you see a paragraph that's indented that begins "Jason"?

MR. BANNON: Uh-huh.

MR. GOWDY: First, I've been involved in a lot of things in my days regarding cyber and social media, comma, as well as smart application of open-source information. Won't get into my in-depth knowledge here. Parenthetically, that is not the point.

New paragraph: There are a number of things happening -- parenthetically, and will happen -- this election via cyber operations by both activists, hactivists, nation-states, and the DNC.

And the date of this is July of 2016.

Did you ever have any conversations with General Flynn or Michael Flynn Jr. about whether or not WikiLeaks or any other entity had possession of the Podesta or DNC emails and, if so, how to disseminate them?

MR. BANNON: Not particularly to that point, but let me state something: When I came on the campaign, it's 84 days to go or 85 days to go, we're down by 16 points, double digits down in every battleground State. Not particularly -- not a big organization, not a lot of money. It was about focus.

General Flynn, on a couple of occasions, not at this level of detail but in passing, was talking about, you know, social media expertise or other expertise in that regard. And what I saw General Flynn as is just had two functions. And he really only provided two functions in my direct span of control, which was to help the President get a better understanding of national security issues, both in debate prep and also in the speeches and parts of the speeches that dealt with national security; and, number two, to travel on the plane and be there to talk to the President about these things and also to participate in certain rallies. But that had nothing to do -- we had a digital operation that was run by a guy named Brad Parscale and reported up to Jared.

And what General Flynn did in regards to talking about social media, that type of things, I'm not familiar with. But his role in the campaign after I got there was not to do things, you know, to get into areas like this.

MR. GOWDY: Did you ever have any conversations with General Flynn about the DNC hack, the hack of Podesta's email, or how to take advantage of those hacks?

MR. BANNON: Not to my -- not that I remember, not a detailed conversation. If it was, it was something in passing, not a detailed conversation.

MR. GOWDY: How about with Jason? I believe that would be Jason Miller.

MR. BANNON: Jason Miller, the comms director. I think that always how -- if those things were going to happen, how do we try to at least let him get out in the media and not step on them.

MR. GOWDY: Now, from a chronology standpoint, July the 15th, 2016, is about a month before you joined the campaign, right?

MR. BANNON: That is correct.

MR. GOWDY: It's about a week before WikiLeaks released its first batch of hacked emails. So I'm trying to gain a little bit of clarity into what Michael Flynn could have been talking about: There are a number of things happening -- parenthetically, and will happen -- this election via cyber operations by hactivists, nation-states, and the DNC.

Have you ever seen this email before?

MR. BANNON: No, I have not.

MR. GOWDY: So you joined the campaign in August of 2016. I want to show you what's been marked as committee exhibit 1, give you a copy of that, and give our friends on the other side, and ask you to familiarize yourself with this email.

[Bannon Exhibit No. 1
was marked for identification.]

MR. GOWDY: It looks like it's Bates stamped five zeros and a 77.

MR. BANNON: I see it.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Lisa Fleischmann?

MR. BANNON: I'm not absolutely sure, but I think she's a person that had a startup idea called Constellation, a website that she went around and talked to people about financing over a couple of years.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Rebekah Mercer?

MR. BANNON: Rebekah Mercer is Bob Mercer's daughter, somebody that's a donor, and also an investor in Breitbart and a donor in a couple of not-for-profits.

MR. GOWDY: Does she go by --

MR. BANNON: Oh, and also an investor in Cambridge Analytica.

MR. GOWDY: Does she go by Bekah?

MR. BANNON: She does.

MR. GOWDY: So this is an email addressed to Bekah. Second paragraph: There are a lot of useful emails already out there that other people have already hacked.

And then the second to the -- third to the last paragraph: I sent this idea to Steve.

Do you know who that Steve could be?

MR. BANNON: That's probably me.

MR. GOWDY: Probably or is it you?

MR. BANNON: It's probably -- I think it's probably me, yeah.

MR. GOWDY: Did you receive an idea from a Lisa Fleischmann?

MR. BANNON: I received a couple ideas from her, but it's nothing I could -- could pinpoint today.

MR. GOWDY: And how would you best describe this idea that she had?

MR. BANNON: This idea that -- about -- about getting the emails?

MR. GOWDY: The thing that she thought enough of to send to Bekah Mercer.

MR. BANNON: You know, the -- the search for the 33,000 emails that were off the server had people coming around and pitching lots of ideas. So --

MR. GOWDY: Right. But that 33,000 off the server didn't have anything to do with the DNC or congressional Dems. It might have been Hillary's time at the State Department, which, interestingly enough, wasn't referenced in that paragraph.

A lot of useful emails already out there that other people have already hacked: Soros, DNC, congressional Dems, Hillary.

I don't see anything about the State Department.

MR. BANNON: Right.

MR. GOWDY: So let's operate under the assumption that maybe she wasn't exclusively talking about the 33,000 that were missing. Do you recall having this conversation with her and connecting her to your, quote, digital guy?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. GOWDY: Who was your digital guy?

MR. BANNON: It would have been -- in this regard, on the 26th, it would have been Brad Parscale.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Alexander Nix?

MR. BANNON: He's the CEO of Cambridge Analytica.

MR. GOWDY: What role, if any, do you have with Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: None today. I used to be a shareholder on the board. I think I was vice chairman.

MR. GOWDY: What percentage shareholder?

MR. BANNON: Two and a half percent.

MR. GOWDY: This is what, less than 2 weeks after you came onto the campaign?

MR. BANNON: This is about 2 weeks, right. Ten days.

MR. GOWDY: Do you recall having a conversation with either Brad Parscale, Bekah Mercer, Alexander Nix about how to compile a searchable database for the emails that had been hacked?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Is that a conversation you think you would have recalled if you'd had it?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: I want to ask you a series of questions that I ask every other witness, so we'll treat you no differently than we do them.

Do you have any evidence, regardless of the source and, frankly, regardless of whether or not you believed the source of that evidence, that Donald Trump knew about the hack of the DNC server or Podesta's email before they took place?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you have any evidence that anyone connected officially with the campaign of Donald Trump in either the primary or the general election had foreknowledge that the DNC server or John Podesta's emails would be hacked?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you have any evidence, regardless of the source and regardless of whether or not you even believed it at the time, that anyone unofficially connected to the Donald Trump campaign, a hanger-on, someone who represented himself or herself as being part of the campaign but really was not, that they had fore or preknowledge that the DNC server or John Podesta's email would be hacked?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know whether Roger Stone sent anyone to talk to Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: Sent anyone from the campaign or sent anyone?

MR. GOWDY: Period.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Have you ever had a conversation with Roger Stone about sending someone to talk to Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Did the campaign send anyone to talk to Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Was the campaign in contact with WikiLeaks or Julian Assange up until the day of the election?

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge.

MR. GOWDY: I want to ask you about the meeting at Trump Tower. When did you learn about that meeting?

MR. BANNON: The meeting in July -- in June of 2016?

MR. GOWDY: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Whatever day it came out in the press.

MR. GOWDY: So you didn't know about it until you read about it?

MR. BANNON: Exactly.

MR. GOWDY: Subsequent to reading about it, tell me the full extent of the conversations you had with Donald Trump Jr. about it.

MR. BANNON: I don't think I've ever talked to him about it.

MR. GOWDY: How about Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Never talked to him about it.

MR. GOWDY: How about Paul Manafort?

MR. BANNON: Never talked to him about it.

MR. GOWDY: How about Natalia Veselnitskaya?

MR. BANNON: I don't know her, so I've never talked to her.

MR. GOWDY: How about anyone else that was present for that meeting?

MR. BANNON: Never talked to them.

MR. GOWDY: You are quoted -- well, let me ask you this: Do you know -- did you know at the time you learned of it or have you subsequently learned

whether or not then-candidate Trump knew about that meeting?

MR. BANNON: Knew about the meeting? No. To my knowledge, he didn't know about the meeting.

MR. GOWDY: Before or after?

MR. BANNON: Before or after, no.

MR. GOWDY: It's your testimony that Donald -- that you have no information or evidence that now-President Donald Trump knew about the meeting at Trump Tower in June of 2016 either before or after the meeting?

MR. BANNON: That is correct.

MR. GOWDY: I want to read you a quote and ask you whether or not it is fairly attributed to you: Kushner was taking meetings with Russians to get additional stuff. This tells you everything about Jared. They were looking for the picture of Hillary Clinton taking the bag of cash from Putin. That's his maturity level.

Did you say that?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if exactly I said it that way, but that's generally correct, yes.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Kushner was taking meetings. That's plural. What other meetings were you referencing?

MR. BANNON: I was probably -- I meant -- I meant the meeting of -- at Trump Tower.

MR. GOWDY: Why did you say "meetings" instead of "meeting"?

MR. BANNON: I think I said meeting, but I don't know how it was interpreted. It was meant meeting. It was talking about that singular meeting.

MR. GOWDY: Why did you single out Jared Kushner in that quote since the meeting was offered to Donald Trump Jr.?

MR. BANNON: Because in the -- in the -- I thought -- I thought it said all three of them and then particularly Manafort. I didn't know I singled out Jared. That's the first time I've seen the quote.

MR. GOWDY: Well, accepting that that is the quote, why would you single out Kushner?

MR. BANNON: I don't know why I singled out Kushner.

MR. GOWDY: Was the meeting offered to Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge. I only know what I read in the press.

MR. GOWDY: Well, we'll distribute what's been marked as committee exhibit 3, DJTJR00469.

[Bannon Exhibit No. 3
was marked for identification.]

MR. GOWDY: Are you familiar with this email string? Are you familiar with this email string?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you want to take a second to familiarize yourself with it? Have you read it?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Going back to your quote: Kushner was taking meetings with Russians to get additional stuff.

This meeting offer was made to whom?

MR. BANNON: It looks like to Don Jr.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know Rob Goldstone?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know if Jared Kushner has any relationship with Rob

Goldstone?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Why would you single out Jared Kushner for taking the meeting when the meeting wasn't offered to him?

MR. BANNON: I didn't know at the time. I've never seen this email before. I didn't know it was offered to Don Jr.

MR. GOWDY: Well, accepting the fact that you didn't know any of that before you made the quote, why would you single out Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: Jared and Manafort were in the meetings.

MR. GOWDY: How did you know that?

MR. BANNON: It was in the press. I only made this quote after reading stuff that was in the press.

MR. GOWDY: What did you mean by "this tells you everything about Jared"?

MR. BANNON: Maybe lack of -- lack of maturity in something like this.

MR. GOWDY: In what way?

MR. BANNON: To -- to actually have a meeting where you would, you know, sit in for something like this.

MR. GOWDY: What did you believe the "something like this" was?

MR. BANNON: Just what I was reading in the press, some sort of search for information about Hillary Clinton.

MR. GOWDY: Were you fired from the White House, or did you leave voluntarily?

MR. BANNON: I voluntarily left. You can talk to General Kelly and John Dowd, who were informed on 7 August, 2016, both John Dowd personally and

General Kelly over the phone in Bedminster that I was going to resign as of the following Monday, the 14th, which would basically be 1 year from the time I left my endeavors to join this.

Had a very specific conversation with General Kelly. Then I met John Dowd personally one-on-one at the executive office building. He was en route to Bedminster, of which he was going to -- both he and Kelly were going to talk to the -- talk to the President that afternoon, and I would talk to the President that night.

MR. GOWDY: So, if someone, hypothetically, were to represent that you were fired as opposed to leaving voluntarily, that person would be mistaken?

MR. BANNON: They would, yes.

MR. GOWDY: I want to read another quote to you and ask you whether or not this is fairly attributed to you: Three senior guys in the campaign thought it was a good idea to meet with a foreign government inside Trump Tower in the conference room on the 25th floor with no lawyers. They didn't have any lawyers. Even if you thought that this was not treasonous or unpatriotic or bad shit -- and I happen to think it's all of that -- you should have called the FBI immediately.

How did you know there were no lawyers in the room?

MR. BANNON: I think from the press accounts.

MR. GOWDY: Why would it matter whether there were lawyers present or not?

MR. BANNON: I think if you were going to do something like this, you would have your -- you know, you'd have lawyers vet it first.

MR. GOWDY: What do you mean "something like this"?

MR. BANNON: I mean, I think if you were going to -- which I obviously don't

agree with, but if you're going to talk to foreign nationals during a campaign, because foreign nationals can't make campaign contributions to campaigns, you might have your -- you might have your -- your attorneys, who are your experts on the campaign, in campaign finance and campaign law, either there first to talk about it or to meet them and see if you can even have this meeting.

MR. GOWDY: What do you mean by the word "treasonous"?

MR. BANNON: You know, I put out a statement on this afterwards. That might be a little bit of hyperbole. But, you know, I don't think it's appropriate or proper during a Presidential campaign to be meeting with foreign nationals to get -- to get information about -- about a candidate.

My point on this is that, you know, we had spent at this nonprofit foundation, Government Accountability had done a number of books and studies over the last 5 years on crony capitalism and corruption in Washington, D.C., on insider trading, and the abuses of the super PACs or these leadership PACs. And they had done this thing called Clinton Cash, right, which is a very detailed analysis of the Clintons. I'd actually made a film that came out in July of that year about this very topic, Clinton Cash.

My feeling was that there was enough information out there vetted by third parties and indexed that that information was all the information you needed and more to make the case of candidate Clinton's corruption and that you didn't need to -- one wouldn't need to, as I think the comment I made in there, people looking for a picture of Hillary Clinton taking a bag of money from Putin; it's just something you don't need to chase. You've got more than enough information, more than enough information to weaponize in a campaign.

So that discussion there I think was my frustration of the -- where you

could -- if this had come out, it would have been I think very -- very negative about the whole -- to the whole campaign and our ability to win.

MR. GOWDY: Well, why don't we look at exactly what Rob Goldstone sent to Donald Trump Jr., which is at the bottom on the second page? Let me know when you're there.

MR. BANNON: I'm here.

MR. GOWDY: You got it.

MR. BANNON: Uh-huh.

MR. GOWDY: Good morning. A man just called and asked me to contact you with something very interesting. The crown prosecutor of Russia met with his father, Aras, this morning and in their meeting offered to provide the Trump campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia.

Do you see the word "official documents"?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Do you think it's treasonous to meet with someone to get official documents?

MR. BANNON: With -- as I said in my statement, in my second statement, I think for -- I think "treasonous" is probably hyperbole, but unpatriotic and definitely unwise and maybe unlawful, and that is for -- I singled out Paul Manafort, a professional that would have known that.

I wouldn't hold that to Don Jr. or even to Jared Kushner to a degree, since they were not professionals. But I think, yes --

MR. GOWDY: I appreciate that, Mr. Bannon, but your quote says "the three senior guys in the campaign." It doesn't say Paul Manafort. And I appreciate that

you are now saying you used the word "treasonous" in a hyperbolic way, but you actually led with that word. You used that word before you said "unpatriotic." So what are the elements of treason?

MR. BANNON: The elements of treason I think are -- are, you know, selling out your country.

MR. GOWDY: And it's punishable by what?

MR. BANNON: I think in some regards, it's life imprisonment or a capital crime.

MR. GOWDY: It's the only crime for which you can be sentenced to death where you don't take a life as a part of the underlying crime. It's a pretty serious accusation.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So what in this email that Donald Jr. received from Rob Goldstone do you think rises to the level of treason?

MR. BANNON: I don't -- I don't think.

MR. GOWDY: Well, then why did you say it?

MR. BANNON: Like I said, I think it was a little bit of hyperbole.

MR. GOWDY: Well, now we've gone from there's nothing in the email that is treasonous to a little bit of hyperbole and calling it treasonous. That sounds like a lot of hyperbole. Is there anything in this email that meets the elements of treason?

MR. BANNON: You know, I'm not a lawyer, and I don't know the actual clarification -- the definition --

MR. GOWDY: You were not a lawyer when you used the word "treasonous."

MR. BANNON: That's why I said there was -- I said there was maybe a little

hyperbole.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Is it fair to say you don't think that that meeting now was treasonous?

MR. BANNON: I don't think the meeting was treasonous. I think it was stupid and unpatriotic, yes.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Well, how was it unpatriotic?

MR. BANNON: Like I said, I just don't think you ought to be -- for an official -- for officials in a campaign like Paul Manafort in a Presidential campaign should be meeting with, you know, foreign nationals to get information I think is not -- I think it's not -- you know, there's restrictions on foreigners about financing campaigns, and I think it's just not right.

MR. GOWDY: Tell me how it's different from benefiting from the proceeds of someone hacking a server and an email?

MR. BANNON: Like in what regards?

MR. GOWDY: I don't know. Coordinating on how to have a searchable database for the emails taken from the DNC server or Podesta's email account.

MR. BANNON: I think something like that is where it's going to be out there in the public domain anyway. And so you -- you -- you know, you see what -- I'm not saying you actively --

MR. GOWDY: I understand that, Mr. Bannon, but this email says "official documents." So how do you know those documents weren't also in the public domain?

MR. BANNON: I don't.

MR. GOWDY: So what is the difference?

MR. BANNON: I just think it's -- I think it's a -- I think -- I think it's a big

difference.

MR. GOWDY: I appreciate that you think it's a big difference, which is why I'm asking you, what is the difference? What is the difference between Donald Trump Jr. meeting with someone to get official documents and a searchable database where stolen documents can be reviewed more easily?

MR. BANNON: In the second one, you're not soliciting it. I mean, somebody -- in the email you're talking about, somebody had an idea that I just -- I don't remember it, and I just passed on to somebody to review it. I'm not saying, "Hey, you should do it," "You shouldn't do it," et cetera. You don't know if it's real or not real. Here, you're actually taking a meeting with people you know that are foreign nationals for the purpose of actually getting information. I think it's a big difference.

MR. GOWDY: Are you aware of any roles that Hillary Clinton had with the U.S. Government aside from being the First Lady, a United States Senator, and the Secretary of State?

MR. BANNON: Any roles she had?

MR. GOWDY: Any official role she had, other than First Lady, United States Senator, Secretary of State.

MR. BANNON: I don't know if she was sent as a special envoy any places, but those are the three I remember.

MR. GOWDY: In this email, it says "official documents," right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So how did you know those documents didn't already exist and weren't already publicly available?

MR. BANNON: I didn't.

MR. GOWDY: Well, then why would you use the word "unpatriotic" if you didn't know whether or not the material was already available?

MR. BANNON: Well, from the press accounts, it was --

MR. GOWDY: Please tell me you don't label someone treasonous based on press accounts.

MR. BANNON: Like I said, the word "treason" was probably hyperbole.

MR. GOWDY: How about unpatriotic, do you feel comfortable labeling someone as unpatriotic based on press accounts?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Looking at the email now, the precise offer from Rob Goldstone to Donald Trump Jr., what specifically in that email do you consider to be unpatriotic?

MR. BANNON: I mean, this -- it doesn't read like it's public information, right. It just doesn't. It reads like it's information that's coming from, you know, a crown prosecutor or some official function of the Russian Government.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know if there is a crown prosecutor in Russia?

MR. BANNON: I have no idea.

MR. GOWDY: Well, if you learned that there was no such thing as that, would that impact your belief that it wasn't publicly available?

MR. BANNON: Yes, but they say -- they say in here official doc -- information that will incriminate her dealings with Russia would be very useful. It's obviously very high-level sensitive information, but it's part of Russia, and it's government support for Mr. Trump.

MR. GOWDY: We hadn't gotten to that part. The Russian Government support for the Trump campaign.

MR. BANNON: I'm just saying that that's what the press report said.

[redacted] Five minutes.

MR. GOWDY: Right. Well, I thought we had just established she only had three official roles with the United States Government: First Lady, U.S. Senator, Secretary of State. The email says official documents and information --

MR. BANNON: But the implication is official documents from. Not her official documents; it's official documents from them.

MR. GOWDY: When you say the chances of something not happening are zero, what do you mean by that?

MR. BANNON: That they're not going to happen. Something not happening, that they're not going to happen.

MR. GOWDY: Zero is a pretty specific number.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So, if the chances that something was not going to happen are zero, that necessarily means that that thing happened. Do you agree with that?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: The chances that Don Jr. did not walk these Jumos up to his father's office on the 26th floor is zero. Do you have any evidence that he walked them up to his father's office?

MR. BANNON: No, none.

MR. GOWDY: Then why would you say it?

MR. BANNON: I -- like I said, I don't dispute that I said it, but I don't remember saying that.

MR. GOWDY: Well, let's operate under the assumption that you said it. Why did you say it?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. GOWDY: Do you have any evidence that the three walked --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Do you have any evidence that Donald Trump, President, now President Trump, then candidate Trump, was aware of this meeting?

MR. BANNON: None.

MR. GOWDY: Did you ever ask him about it?

MR. BANNON: Never.

MR. GOWDY: When all this email stuff came out, broke in the media, were you still working for the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I think it came out in -- I think it came out in June.

MR. GOWDY: And what was your title?

MR. BANNON: Chief strategist and senior counselor.

MR. GOWDY: Wouldn't you want to strategize on a pretty big development? It's about the single best piece of evidence of a willingness to collude, and you mean to say you never had a conversation with President Trump about how to handle this?

MR. BANNON: No, I don't remember ever having a conversation with him about this.

MR. GOWDY: Did you ever have a conversation with Donald Trump Jr. about how to handle it?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Ivanka Trump?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Who did you talk to about how to handle it, as the chief strategist of the White House?

MR. BANNON: I think I talked to Reince Priebus and Sean Spicer.

[redacted] One minute.

MR. GOWDY: I'll wait and get into it next round. Yield back.

MR. CONAWAY: We'll take a brief recess real quick. We need to confer about the White House stuff.

[Recess.]

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Schiff, 15 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to ask you a few followup questions, and then we'll probably go over these areas in much greater detail, but just based on the questions that my colleagues asked.

Mr. Gowdy asked you whether you had met a number of people, and at times you answered that you had never met, and other times you spoke more broadly about never meeting or never communicating with them in any way.

I want to ask you, with respect to Mr. Papadopoulos, is it your testimony that you've never met Mr. Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: Never met like never met face-to-face or in person. I think he sent me some emails before.

MR. SCHIFF: So you have received email communication from him?

MR. BANNON: I think. I think I got some from Papadopoulos, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the subject of the email communication you had with Mr. Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: I think, if I remember correctly, when we were -- decided to -- when the candidate, when we decided he was going to go to the U.N. and meet some people, I think Papadopoulos was sending some emails back and forth to a couple of people about potentially setting up something with the Egyptians.

MR. SCHIFF: Setting up a meeting for the candidate with President el-Sisi?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you participate in those logistical arrangements at all?

MR. BANNON: I did participate in the logistical arrangements, but Papadopoulos was not part of that. The emails -- I remember, not specifically, but I think there were some emails sent from him recommending we should do it or he had some sort of relationship or something. And I was either -- I was on an email chain or a couple emails, but he was not involved in that.

MR. SCHIFF: He was not involved in the actual setting up of the meeting?

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you involved in actually setting up the meeting?

MR. BANNON: I was involved in kind of a tangential way. It was really -- I think it was General Flynn and Jared that were taking the lead on all that -- Kushner, Jared Kushner and General Flynn and were taking the lead on most of that stuff.

MR. SCHIFF: Did they take the lead, that is, Flynn and Kushner, in setting up a meeting for candidate Trump with President el-Sisi?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know if Mr. Papadopoulos interacted with the Egyptian Embassy in connection with that meeting?

MR. BANNON: I don't -- I don't remember. I don't recall.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you interact with the Egyptian Embassy in connection with that?

MR. BANNON: The -- I think that -- I think, as I remember it, there was communication with the Egyptian Embassy, and I think one of the individuals on the staff over there, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So that is, you communicated with the Egyptian Embassy regarding the meeting, potential meeting?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if I directly communicated by email, but I think I was contacted through General Flynn by one of the people on the -- on the Embassy staff over there. One of the -- I think it was one of the officers over there.

MR. SCHIFF: And so how was it coordinated? If Mr. Papadopoulos is making outreach to the Egyptian Embassy and you, Flynn, and Kushner are doing the same, how was that coordinated?

MR. BANNON: That was my point. I don't think Papadopoulos was really -- I just remember these emails coming in from Papadopoulos, like it would be a good idea and I think I've got a relationship or something like that. I didn't really know Papadopoulos. I didn't -- you know, I knew he was one of these guys that had been on this committee or this thing early on. But he didn't have -- in August, he didn't have a role or wasn't a part of the campaign, and I think he was actually not even living in the country.

So it was not something we had like -- this decision to go to the U.N. and actually have these kind of meetings was a pretty significant decision, since it took the candidate off the campaign trail. So I wanted to make sure the meetings were the right meetings.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever speak to Mr. Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So any communication you had with him would have been by email?

MR. BANNON: It would have been by email, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And were you emailing Mr. Papadopoulos through your personal account?

MR. BANNON: I think both the personal and the -- and the -- if it was, it was the personal and the campaign, because I think -- I think he would have got me through the campaign account.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, if he emailed you through his personal account and you emailed him through your personal account, that would not involve the campaign, would it, at least the campaign email infrastructure?

MR. BANNON: That would be correct, I think, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So, if there are emails from your email address to his or in the reverse direction, that would not have been produced as part of the campaign production.

MR. BURCK: If these exist, right. But if -- we don't know if it was the campaign --

MR. BANNON: I said if he had sent it to my campaign account, then it would have been.

MR. BURCK: Or if a campaign person was copied.

MR. SCHIFF: But you can't tell us that's the case at this point?

MR. BANNON: I cannot, no.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned --

MR. BANNON: But in this regard, I thought -- in this regard, I thought I saw

an email chain about this specific topic.

MR. SCHIFF: About the Egyptian meeting?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. BURCK: That was produced by the campaign.

MR. BANNON: It was produced by the campaign. There's six -- five or six emails.

MR. SCHIFF: And what other topics did you communicate with Mr. Papadopoulos on?

MR. BANNON: The only other time with Papadopoulos besides this is I'd mistaken him -- and I think it's like two emails or three emails -- with George Jijikos (ph), who was our advance guy. And I thought that somehow Papadopoulos and Jijikos (ph) were the same guy, and I think I sent him a couple of -- there should be an email chain in there that doesn't make a lot of sense, because it's about advance work for big -- for some rallies.

That was my only -- the only time I ever remember with Papadopoulos was this -- was the Egyptian.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever receive any communication from Mr. Papadopoulos about his discussion with the Russians that he had met?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Did Mr. Papadopoulos ever communicate to you that Russian sources had informed him that they were in possession of stolen DNC or Clinton emails?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Prior to the Papadopoulos guilty plea becoming public, were you aware that the Russians had informed Mr. Papadopoulos that they had emails

that had been stolen from the DNC or Clinton or any hacked emails?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned with respect to the Trump Tower meeting that although "treasonous" may be hyperbolic, that it was unpatriotic and possibly unlawful. And you also mentioned that you thought there ought to be lawyers present.

Was your concern over whether it was unlawful because receiving assistance from a foreign government during a Presidential campaign could violate campaign election laws?

MR. BANNON: That would be my -- yeah. That would be my concern, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So, if the Russian Government were offering something of value, like opposition research, that could be a violation of law?

MR. BANNON: I think I would talk to my campaign lawyer and let him advise me, but I would think, as a civilian, that that might be, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And you have attempted to put Mr. Manafort in a different category than Mr. Kushner and the President's son, because of his experience. Is that the only reason?

MR. BANNON: Yes. He was a professional, you know, does this for a living. He's a campaign consultant and should know that, you know, very intimately.

MR. SCHIFF: And as you read the email -- and do you want it back in front of you, the email chain involving the Trump Tower meeting?

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Schiff, could we suspend for a second and go off the record?

MR. SCHIFF: Sure.

[Discussion held off the record.]

[Recess.]

[1:07 p.m.]

MR. CONAWAY: Back on the record. Mr. Bannon, earlier in our conversation, Bill, you had mentioned that your answers to your client with respect to his testimony might be different if he were here under compulsion, and so we would like to change the status. And I will ask the clerk, [redacted] to serve you and your client with a subpoena for this testimony today, and we can perhaps proceed under different timeframe -- or different circumstances than we were when you came here voluntarily.

So, with that, Mr. Schiff is recognized for 15 minutes.

MR. BURCK: So the subpoena is for testimony regarding all topics today?

MR. CONAWAY: Yes.

MR. BURCK: So I would then need to have time to discuss this with the White House.

MR. CONAWAY: Why?

MR. BURCK: Because the subpoena would then potentially trigger an indication of executive privilege according to what the White House told me.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. This meeting is for 1:30. So if we can be back in here by 1:30.

MR. SCHIFF: Before -- I just want to see if I understand the position that counsel is taking here. Prior to being subpoenaed, you stated that the White House counsel had advised you to instruct your client not to answer any questions during the transition or thereafter, on the basis there may be some claim of privilege down the road. How does the subpoena change that? If there is a privilege, there is a privilege whether there is a subpoena or not. So why does this change the position of your client's willingness to speak to us or even potentially.

MR. BURCK: Certainly. It is a question of -- again, as the process has worked historically with the invocation of executive privilege, that once compulsion is served on a former White House or current White House official, at that point, the White House makes a determination as to whether or not executive privilege would apply to the questions or the answers that would be forced from the witness. And so, at that point, the White House makes a decision whether or not executive privilege should be invoked as to particular questions and answers.

MR. SCHIFF: So was the instruction from the White House then, "Don't answer any question about transition or administration if you don't have to, but call us back if you get a subpoena"?

MR. BURCK: The answer was that he's instructed by the President not to answer questions about the -- voluntarily about matters related to the transition or the White House and that if the subpoena -- there was no discussion of what happens if there is a subpoena, but I'm just giving you what I know to have happened in the last 150 years with these type of subpoenas.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CONAWAY: So 1:30?

MR. BURCK: Potentially.

MR. CONAWAY: Thanks everybody.

[Recess.]

[2:00 p.m.]

MR. BURCK: First, apologies, because I was talking to the White House about the current situation and also I alerted Special Counsel Mueller to the subpoena.

The White House has told me that they are standing on their instruction to him not to answer questions relating to the transition or to the White House. They've told me that their position with the staff -- that I believe staff has tried to contact staff or has spoken to staff -- again, I'm just relaying to you what they told me, is that the White House position is that there has to be an accommodation process in advance of questions being asked about these topics because they could either definitely or naturally lead to disclosure of executive privilege information, and that process has not begun. So their instruction to Mr. Bannon remains not to answer these questions, including in response to the subpoena.

Mr. Bannon understands the consequences of not being responsive to a subpoena from Congress and understands the potential for contempt, fully understands that, but intends to respect the White House's request, at least for now, that he not answer these questions. And, again, he fully understands the potential consequences of contempt.

Again, his position is that he'd be happy to cooperate and answer questions, but he is not free to do so given the instruction from the White House.

And as to Mr. Mueller's office, who I spoke to as well to alert them to this, they again said they would be in contact with the staff to explain their position. I don't know what their position is. They did tell me that they were concerned about a

subpoena that was broad enough to cover topics that they also intend to ask him about, pursuant to the grand jury subpoena, but that they had hoped to confer with the committee before Mr. Bannon would be subject to such questions. They said they have not done so. I don't know if that's true or not; I am just telling you what they have told me. And so they have also expressed concerns.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. So if you would excuse us for a second and let minority and I and our team discuss -- is he willing to stay and address questions outside this timeframe?

MR. BURCK: Yes, of course. He would be happy to. The -- and also just to make it clear, if there's an accommodation or if there's -- he's happy to answer the questions or if after he's cooperated with Mr. Mueller and the White House has -- if the White House agrees to allow him to talk to you about these topics, he would be happy to talk to you about all these topics and answer any questions you have. The problem is he's in a constitutional crisis so that he can't resolve himself.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So, if you will allow us to consult real quickly, we will get back to you real quick.

Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

MR. CONAWAY: Yes, sir.

MR. BURCK: So I thought the committee was going to confer.

MR. CONAWAY: We have. We're ready to continue. What we'd like to do is ask all the questions we're going to ask and you and your client decide which ones you can and can't answer and will or won't answer to create the record so we can then have something to vet with the White House to narrow down what the actual privileges are. So I think my colleague, Mr. Gowdy, has something he wants

to get on the record as well.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Chairman. I just want to let my colleagues know, our usual course of dealing has been to notify the Special Counsel's Office when we were going to do interviews. There is an email Friday, January 12, 6:24 p.m., listing four names of individuals that we intend to interview this week. Of course, Mr. Bannon, being the first interview and the first name on the email, as of 2 minutes ago and the email is to [redacted] who has been our point of contact with the Special Counsel's Office. As of now, 2-1/2 minutes ago, there have been no emails, no voicemails, no communication from the Special Counsel's Office expressing any reluctance, concern, questions whatsoever about us going forward with the interview. So I want to make the email part of the record.

[The information follows:]

******** COMMITTEE INSERT ********

MR. SCHIFF: I'm going to ask as well for clarification: The instructions that you've been given not to answer questions regarding transition and administration, those two time periods, are those the same instructions the White House has given with respect to your client answering questions to special counsel?

MR. BURCK: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So the White House is willing to have your client answer questions during those two time periods, does not believe a privilege applies there, only you can't answer them to Congress for some reason?

MR. BURCK: I don't know the – I couldn't give you the reason, but that's correct. There's no restriction on answering questions to the special counsel.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, how is that even theoretically a legal defense to refuse to answer questions? How does a privilege apply against answering questions in Congress, but allows you to answer these questions to a special counsel?

MR. BURCK: There is actually case law, Mr. Schiff, on this, United States v. Nixon, regarding the grand jury and the prosecutors are part of the executive branch, and so, therefore, executive privilege would not apply within the executive branch.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. So your instructions are only to refuse to answer these questions to Congress.

MR. BURCK: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. If you would ask Mr. Bannon to come back in, and we'll proceed.

[Recess.]

MR. CONAWAY: We'll go back on the record.

Adam, when we last stopped you had 6 minutes left on your 15, so we'll start from there.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a couple of questions to clarify the situation. The advice you got not to answer questions during the transition and thereafter came from Uttam Dhillon in the White House Counsel's Office.

MR. BURCK: He was the person who expressed it to us, yes. But I understand it is the White House's position.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you also represent someone in the White House Counsel's Office?

MR. BURCK: I do, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: You represent the White House counsel?

MR. BURCK: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So you are taking advice from one client to instruct the other client not to answer questions?

MR. BURCK: I am not taking advice from any client. It is coming from the President of the United States, as I understand.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, Uttam Dhillon works for your client, does he not?

MR. BURCK: He does.

MR. SCHIFF: So if he's getting instructions from your client to tell this client not to answer questions that might place him in contempt, isn't there a conflict of interest between your two clients?

MR. BURCK: Not that I'm aware of, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Did Mr. Bannon waive any conflict that might exist between you clients.

MR. BURCK: I think that would be privileged.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

Mr. Bannon, I think I was asking you about the emails that set up the Trump Tower meeting with Mr. Manafort, Kushner, and the President's son, Don Jr., when we exploring I think when we broke the how these could be potentially unlawful if the campaign were obtaining the assistance of a foreign government. My colleague asked you about the language in that email offering official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary, further described as very high-level and sensitive information. Does that indicate to you that this might be in fact information the Russian Government had gathered on Hillary Clinton.

MR. BANNON: I would have had a lawyer take a look at this. I don't know.

MR. SCHIFF: With your experience, though, in the military and vis-à-vis Russia, would you expect that the Russians would do research on a candidate, a nominee who might be President of the United States.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And if they were to offer that information, incriminating information, to one of the campaigns, that could possibly violate the law?

MR. BANNON: Potentially, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Now this email also describes it as part of Russia and its government support for Mr. Trump. If you had received that email, would that have set off some alarm bells for you?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And you think someone with Mr. Manafort's experience should have set off alarm bells for them?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And I think you have told the author of the book "Fire and Fury" that essentially had it been you, you would have alerted the FBI immediately?

MR. BANNON: Or words to that effect, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, in the language that you're quoted on in the book, the chance that Don Jr. did not walk these Jumos up to his father's office on the 26th floor, zero. Was that based on your understanding that this was not the kind of a meeting that Don Jr. would take without notifying his father?

MR. BANNON: No. I don't -- no, it has nothing to do with him notifying his father.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, you said that you don't have personal information about whether he walked these Russians -- and by Jumos is that -- what is the word you were using there, was it Jumos or --

MR. BANNON: I have no idea. I've never heard that word.

MR. SCHIFF: When you told the author this, were you lying to the author?

MR. BANNON: No. I don't actually remember having this kind of detailed conversation with the author, to be blunt.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, did you make this statement on the basis of your expectation of the relationship between Don Jr. and his father and what he would share with the father?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, in your experience in observing Don Jr. and his father, would Don Jr. take a meeting with Russian nationals that were represented to be part of the Russian Government in an effort to help Mr. Trump with incriminating information and not tell his father about it?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

[redacted] One minute.

MR. SCHIFF: In your experience, is this the kind of -- well, in your experience, would Don Jr. take serious steps affecting the campaign without informing his father or seeking his father's permission?

MR. BANNON: Yes, I've seen, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And give us an example of that.

MR. BANNON: You know, Don Jr. is a good man. He's a patriot. He was used in the campaign extensively, particularly to tour the Western States and tour places where there were hunters and people like that. And there were a number of occasions where he went on the radio a number of times and did things or said things that were not run by the campaign. I mean, Don Jr. was a guy that was on the campaign and pretty active in going out and doing a lot of one-on-ones and mini rallies, et cetera, in Western States and up in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and places like that. And he did a lot of stuff, and not just book himself or schedule himself, but also talking to groups and talking on topics that he didn't run by. So I think it is 100 percent likely that, particularly with somebody like Manafort there that I'm sure they bounced it off of, that he would do this without any notification of his father.

MR. SCHIFF: So now you're saying it is 100 percent likely he wouldn't notify his father whereas you told the author there was zero chance he wouldn't have brought these Russians up to meet his father. How do you explain that discrepancy?

MR. BANNON: I think one is, you know, talking offhand with an author, and the other is here thinking it through.

MR. SCHIFF: Is it yet another when you've been condemned by the

President and removed from Breitbart? Does that have an influence on your --

MR. BANNON: It has absolutely no influence at all.

MR. CONAWAY: Fifteen minutes, Tom.

MR. ROONEY: I'm going to ask you a few questions which I will try to limit what I'm asking you for the campaign so we don't get into the whole privilege problem, but obviously some of these things do bleed into the transition and the White House, but I mean, as far as you can limit them, to your knowledge, during the campaign, I have to ask because that's part of the report that we're charged with writing.

So, during the campaign, were you aware of Russian cyber activity and other active measures directed against the United States and its allies?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. ROONEY: So, while you were with the Trump campaign, there was never any indication to you as -- was it CEO of the operation -- that there may be an issue with Russia trying to infiltrate the American electoral system in some way, shape or form, whether that be your campaign, Hillary's campaign or the Okachobee (ph) County electoral office?

MR. BANNON: I think it was a number of -- I think it started to be a news story, so whatever I was reading in the media. But no briefings by any intel people or no briefings by anybody, anybody that would come by or talk to us that had, you know, any knowledge of that.

MR. ROONEY: There's no briefings, but was there any reaction for you as the CEO of the campaign to justify or so to speak in any way with regard to what you were doing because there might be this influence, whether it be through Facebook or social media or anything like that, to try to get ahead of it or anything like that?

MR. BANNON: No, like I said, the digital operation reported up, you know, potentially to me, but it was run by other guys that I thought, you know, they knew what they were doing, so they just did it.

MR. ROONEY: So there was no reaction by you with regard to what you heard in the media during the campaign that you might have to react to with regard to Russian influence?

MR. BANNON: I think there was one time, maybe two times that I think Reince mentioned something about the software they had done at RNC. This might have been afterwards, but I just remember one time somebody -- it was Reince particularly about how they'd upgraded RNC firewalls to be that to the best around, et cetera. And the -- I think Brad Parscale one time was saying the same thing about what they had done at the campaign, that they had put up firewalls or something like that. That actually might have been after the stuff really broke in transition. But I remember there was a discussion about how firewalls had been put up so that there wouldn't be a problem with being hacked.

MR. ROONEY: Did you know of any Russian active measures, including links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any other U.S. person? So this bullet goes to directly, during the campaign, were you aware of the Russian Government trying to coordinate, collude, or conspire with anybody, whether it be with your campaign that you were in charge of or any other U.S. person? Were you aware of that during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. ROONEY: With regard to the -- whether it be reports or just sort of general impression that Mr. Trump, whether it be in the campaign or as President, seemed to distance himself or flat out deny that there was any Russian influence in

the election -- I'm not talking about collusion with your campaign; I'm talking about at all -- would you agree with that, that Mr. Trump, whether it be in the campaign or as President, distanced himself from admitting that there was any Russian influence or attempt at influence?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if I would say he distanced himself, I think he -- maybe except for one of the two times, I think he has been pretty adamant about no Russian influence in the campaign even on the other side.

MR. ROONEY: Or how about any Russian influence even in voter databases and things like that?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, I think he's been pretty -- if I remember correctly, I think he's been pretty straightforward on that.

MR. ROONEY: Do you have an opinion as to why he seemed to be --

MR. BANNON: I think he's had the presentations and come to his own conclusion about what he thinks the veracity or what they actually mean.

MR. ROONEY: Can I ask you as to your opinion as to what you think the Russian influence was?

MR. BURCK: The witness can answer that as to the campaign, but he can't --

MR. ROONEY: How about as to like now, as to private citizen?

MR. BURCK: To the extent you can extract information you learned from having a top secret and SCI --

MR. ROONEY: I'll take it. It sounds good.

MR. BURCK: -- in the transition of the White House.

MR. BANNON: Do what?

MR. BURCK: Can you answer the question.

MR. BANNON: Without talking about the briefings or any --

MR. ROONEY: What's your opinion as to what Russia's intentions are to try to infiltrate our electoral process or other countries' electoral process for that matter?

MR. BURCK: I also caution you this is an unclassified setting, so to the extent you are relying on classified information --

MR. ROONEY: That's fine.

MR. BANNON: I think you've got to be cognizant at all times of foreign players, foreign nationals trying to intrude in the electoral process. But I would still say that's an open question about their involvement in the 2016 -- I, quite frankly, have taken this in the -- about the 2006 -- election really was an attempt to try to delegitimize President Trump's election, and I think he took it as that also.

MR. ROONEY: The reason I ask this and I ask it of a lot of our witnesses, but you testified to me earlier that you, with regard to our second bullet, that you did not see any Russian active measures with regard to collusion, coordination, or conspiracy with regard to the Russian Government and your campaign, the Trump campaign that you ran, and that there may be some attempts by Russia to try to interfere with our elections. Could both be true that Russia is attempting to influence our election process in some way, shape, or form and that there was also no collusion between your campaign, the Trump campaign, and the Russian Government in the 2016 campaign? Can both those things be true?

MR. BANNON: Could they be true?

MR. ROONEY: Yeah.

MR. BANNON: That's a hypothetical?

MR. ROONEY: Yeah, your opinion. And based on what you saw in the

campaign as campaign CEO, where you testified that you didn't see any active measures between people in your campaign and the Russian Government, but that the Russian Government is trying to influence our elections.

MR. BANNON: As a theoretical question or a -- yes, that could happen, yes.

MR. ROONEY: This is really probably a transition and/or government question, but I will ask it anyway just so see if you have any input. During the campaign, did you talk about what your response would be, I guess should you win, to what the response to the Russian active measures would be in the future so that we could protect ourselves and our allies so that's -- again, I keep using my local county's electoral board -- that the people that are in my district feel safe that when they get the result tallies from the elections, that they have not been hacked in some way by a foreign government, specifically Russia, that the actual numbers that they are seeing are true and real numbers? Did you all talk about that at all during I guess the campaign as to what you would do to try to protect this government against that in the future?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. ROONEY: I only have one sort of question with regard to the Trump Tower meeting that I am kind of interested in. Were you aware of what they actually talked about in that meeting?

MR. BANNON: No. I mean, just whatever in the press.

MR. ROONEY: Were you also -- do you have an opinion as to why it didn't -- they didn't talk about what was alleged to be the purpose of that meeting?

MR. BANNON: I don't --

MR. ROONEY: Do you have any theories on that?

MR. BANNON: No. It's not something I thought about a lot.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. Trey.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, who do you think hacked into the DNC server?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. GOWDY: You don't have an opinion?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: You haven't seen any evidence suggesting it may have been one party or another?

MR. BANNON: I think I've seen some evidence, but I don't have a firm opinion on that.

MR. GOWDY: Well, who were the suspects? Maybe we can approach it that way.

MR. BANNON: I don't want to -- this is all classified --

MR. GOWDY: Well, did you do it?

MR. BANNON: Excuse me?

MR. GOWDY: Did you do it?

MR. BANNON: To the DNC?

MR. GOWDY: Yeah.

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: So we can rule you out. I don't know if we can go through everybody in the country and rule them out. You don't think Russia did it? You don't think Russian Government had anything to do with hacking the DNC server?

MR. BANNON: I don't have enough information.

[redacted] Five minutes.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, that has not kept you from opining on a number of different topics. A lack of information has never prevented you from opining on

them. Do you have an opinion as to who hacked it into the DNC server?

MR. BANNON: I do not.

MR. GOWDY: Do you have an opinion on who hacked John Podesta's email?

MR. BANNON: I do not.

MR. GOWDY: Do you disagree with the intelligence assessment of the Intelligence Community that it was Russian state actors?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if I disagree, but I don't fully agree, let's say.

MR. GOWDY: So you think there's enough of a question that it warrants looking into.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Did you say the following, "I said the establishment is trying to nullify your election; forget the Democrats, we got our own thing with the three committees investigating Russia collusion"? Did you say that?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: If there is uncertainty as to whether or not Russia hacked into the DNC server and John Podesta's emails, then why would you question the three congressional investigations into Russia collusion?

MR. BANNON: Because I think the process has become too politicized, and it's about taking away the legitimacy of his election.

MR. GOWDY: Do you think the meeting at Trump Tower evidenced a willingness to collude with the Russians?

MR. BANNON: I think it showed a lack of judgment.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. We'll go with that. But let me ask you, more specifically, do you think it evidenced a willingness to collude with the Russians?

MR. BANNON: I think it showed a lack of judgment.

MR. GOWDY: A lack of judgment in what way?

MR. BANNON: A lack of judgment of what the optics would be, and should you be doing that, and should you have it vetted by your attorneys, was it even legal to have the meeting, et cetera. That's what I mean by lack of judgment.

MR. GOWDY: Well, Mr. Bannon, you used the word "treasonous." You used the word "unpatriotic." Those are a little different from an exercise of poor judgment. So was it poor judgment? Was it treasonous? Or was it unpatriotic?

MR. BANNON: I think I answered that question earlier.

MR. GOWDY: I actually -- okay. You have disavowed the word "treasonous," but you have maintained --

MR. BANNON: I did not disavow it. I said I used it as hyperbole.

MR. GOWDY: So you do not disavow it?

MR. BANNON: If I used -- if that is an accurate portrayal, then I used it as hyperbole.

MR. BURCK: I think what he's saying is he --

MR. BANNON: Yeah --

MR. BURCK: -- that he agrees with your prior question that "treasonous" is probably not the right word to use, but he is not disavowing that he said it.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. I think you have avowed that your use the word "unpatriotic" you stand by.

MR. BANNON: Yes, sir.

MR. GOWDY: What was unpatriotic about that meeting?

MR. BANNON: The lack of judgment that it could be construed that you were, you know, having foreign nationals in to give you information.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. So, if it had merely the optic of having a foreign government come in and give negative information, does that warrant being investigated by Congress?

MR. BANNON: I think it can be investigated by other people, Department of Justice or others. It doesn't necessarily have to be Congress. In this situation, it's become overly politicized. To wit, I was just standing out there when I saw on TV that we were served a subpoena. So, yeah, I think things have become overly politicized. Not trying to be argumentative, but that's just my belief.

MR. GOWDY: When you said, "I said the establishment is trying to nullify your election," who is the establishment?

MR. BANNON: I take the establishment as the kind of corporate interest, the lobbyists, what I called the uniparty, the Wall Street, Washington, D.C., uniparty that runs this city, runs this country.

[redacted] One minute.

MR. GOWDY: Are there Members of Congress in particular that you think of when you use the phrase "establishment"?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Who are they?

MR. BANNON: Generally the leadership in Congress.

MR. GOWDY: Who in particular?

MR. BANNON: Well, the leadership in Congress.

MR. GOWDY: Paul Ryan?

MR. BANNON: I would say Speaker Ryan, and I would say Mitch McConnell, yes. Also --

MR. GOWDY: Kevin McCarthy?

MR. BANNON: I think everybody that's in leadership essentially.

MR. GOWDY: The majority leader specifically, Kevin McCarthy, do you consider him to be part of the establishment that is trying to nullify the election?

MR. BANNON: I think that there are -- the leadership of both the Democrats and the Republicans have done this to try to put -- how do I say this -- cast aspersions in a nullification project on his election, yes.

MR. GOWDY: And I'm asking you specifically, the only person elected on our side of the aisle to represent the Republican Conference is Kevin McCarthy.

MR. BANNON: I would have to think about that.

MR. GOWDY: How long do you need to think about it?

MR. BANNON: A while. I have to think about it. I haven't gone through specific names, so I have to think about it.

MR. GOWDY: How much time do I have, [redacted]

[redacted] That's --

MR. CONAWAY: Fifteen minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, during the campaign, did you ever speak to candidate Trump by telephone?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And when you wanted to reach him, did you call him directly on his cell, or did you call through Rhona in his office? How did you reach him?

MR. BANNON: I would say 90 percent of the time -- I would say 80 percent of the time, it would be directly on the cell phone or to Hope, who had a cellphone nearby, 10 percent into directly up to the President's, and 10 percent through Rhona to the 26th floor.

MR. SCHIFF: And how often would you talk to him during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Oh, every day.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you recall his cell phone number?

MR. BANNON: I don't?

MR. SCHIFF: And do you still have it in your phone or in your possession?

MR. BANNON: I think I have his original cell phone number somewhere, yes. I'm not sure it is the one that works anymore?

MR. SCHIFF: I'm more particularly interested, if it is not the one that works anymore, if counsel could provide that to us?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. BURCK: The phone number?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

Well, let me ask you this, on June 7th, this would have been 4 days after Don Jr. accepted this meeting, the email chain which you reviewed, but prior to the meeting itself, candidate Trump gave a speech in which he proclaimed at a campaign event: I'm going to give a major speech on probably Monday of next week, and we are going to be discussing all the things that have taken place with the Clintons. I think you're going to find it very informative and very interesting.

Now he never ended up giving that speech about Clinton later on in the week. Do you know what he was referring to on June 7th when he was forecasting a speech he was going to give in what would be the days after the Trump Tower meeting about the Clintons?

MR. BANNON: I don't know, but it may have been the film we had done on Clinton cash. The timing would have been right, because we took it out to show it at Cannes in France, I think the third week of May, and it was just starting to get buzzy, you know, stories, et cetera, about this. So I would think he would be talking

about that.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever discuss with him that speech he was teasing on June 7th?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So you don't know what he was referring to then?

MR. BANNON: No, sir, not specifically. I kind of think what he was referring to.

MR. SCHIFF: You didn't help him craft that statement?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned earlier that you discussed the Trump Tower meeting with Reince Priebus. When did that discussion take place?

MR. BANNON: That would be during my time at the White House?

MR. SCHIFF: And when during your time at the White House?

MR. BURCK: You can say when.

MR. BANNON: It was right after -- I think it was right after the press release or the statement came out when the -- I think it was The New York Times broke the -- broke the story about it early June.

MR. SCHIFF: Was that the same day -- the same day the story broke in The New York Times?

MR. BANNON: It would have been the same day or the next day, I think.

MR. SCHIFF: And when you had this discussion with Reince Priebus, was that in person, by telephone?

MR. BURCK: You can answer.

MR. BANNON: I think it was by telephone.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you call Mr. Priebus, or did he call you?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. SCHIFF: Was there anyone else on the phone?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And what did you discuss?

MR. BANNON: I'm trying to remember. Yeah, I'm trying to remember, there was a Washington Post and a New York Times, just the story that had broken. I'm pretty sure that's it. The story broke in June on a Saturday? Whatever -- it was related to that. It was related to that news event.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you discuss both what happened at the Trump Tower meeting and how the White House ought to characterize that.

MR. BURCK: I instruct you not to answer that question. I'm instructing the witness not to answer that question.

MR. SCHIFF: So, Mr. Bannon, you're going to refuse to answer that question?

MR. BANNON: I think anything about this during my time at the White House, I just -- I apologize, but I just can't answer.

MR. SCHIFF: And just so that we have a clean record, are you refusing to answer any question about the contents of your discussion with Mr. Priebus about the Trump Tower meeting?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned you also discussed with Sean Spicer the Trump Tower meeting. When did that discussion take place?

MR. BANNON: About the same time.

MR. SCHIFF: Was that also on the telephone?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Was there any one else on the line with you, to your knowledge?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: And was the purpose of that discussion also to determine how the White House ought to respond or frame a response to the disclosure about the Trump Tower meeting?

MR. BURCK: I'm going to instruct the witness not to answer that question.

MR. SCHIFF: And so, Mr. Bannon, are you refusing to answer that question on the advice of counsel?

MR. BANNON: Yeah. And from what I understand, the White House wants.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're refusing to answer the question on the basis of the White House instructions?

MR. BANNON: And the interpretation by my counsel.

MR. SCHIFF: And who else did you discuss the Trump Tower meeting with?

MR. BANNON: I would have to think about that.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you discuss the Trump Tower meeting with any reporters on the record or off the record?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Apart from Mr. Wolff.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So you never called a reporter to give your thoughts on what the Trump Tower meeting meant or didn't mean?

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge, no. I did talk to one other person I

remember, Mark Corollo (ph).

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Corollo (ph) was a press person for White House counsel, or what was his position?

MR. BANNON: He was the person, the media person that was hired along with Jay Sekulow and Marc Kasowitz (ph) to deal with -- to deal with everything coming in about the Mueller investigation.

MR. SCHIFF: In the book "Fire and Fury," Mr. Corollo (ph) -- it is reported that Mr. Corollo (ph) left the White House because he was concerned that the false statement that the White House was putting out on the Trump Tower meeting might amount to obstruction of justice. Did you discuss that with Mr. Corollo (ph)?

MR. BURCK: I am going to instruct the witness not to answer that question.

MR. SCHIFF: So, just for the record, Mr. Bannon, are you refusing to answer a question about whether you were privy to a conversation in which Mr. Corollo (ph) expressed concern over obstruction of justice?

MR. BANNON: I'm not answering questions about the transition or my time in the White House.

MR. BURCK: Just to be clear, the line that we're trying to draw based on discussion with the White House is that substance, content of discussions, is forbidden but the fact of some sort, like did he speak to a certain person, that could be fair game depending on the context.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, my question is did you ever discuss with Mr. Corollo (ph) -- were you ever present for a discussion with Mr. Corollo (ph), the Trump Tower meeting, and whether the statement put out by the White House might constitute obstruction of justice?

MR. BURCK: I instruct the witness not to answer the question.

MR. SCHIFF: I will yield to Mr. Quigley.

MR. QUIGLEY: And I apologize if this has been asked in a different way. But to your knowledge, do you know how The New York Times got ahold of information about that Trump Tower meeting?

MR. BANNON: I do not.

MR. QUIGLEY: And to your knowledge, the Trump Jr.'s initial statement on July 8th of 2017, to your knowledge, who participated in putting that statement together?

MR. BANNON: That statement would be what statement?

MR. QUIGLEY: The Trump Jr. statement after The New York Times story came out.

[redacted] Five minutes.

MR. BANNON: That's a White House question.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BURCK: You don't know the answer.

MR. BANNON: I don't know the answer.

MR. QUIGLEY: Were you aware -- you don't know if anyone in particular, you don't know that the President was involved with that?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: There was an August 1st, 2017, acknowledgment that the President was involved in crafting the July 8th, 2017, statement. You're aware of that fact as well?

MR. BANNON: Where did you get that from?

MR. QUIGLEY: There is an August 1st White House acknowledgment that the President was involved in crafting the July 8th, 2017, statement.

MR. BURCK: Can you show us that?

MR. QUIGLEY: Do we have that somewhere? We'll get it to you.

Anyway, to you knowledge, was Hope Hicks involved with putting together that statement?

MR. BURCK: I think unfortunately the safest course the White House assertion is that he cannot answer the question.

MR. BANNON: Until I get better guidance, I don't feel comfortable.

MR. QUIGLEY: I get it. Well, let me just finish the list. It will only take a second. The same question, Jared Kushner.

MR. BANNON: Same answer.

MR. QUIGLEY: Ivanka Trump?

MR. BANNON: Same.

MR. QUIGLEY: Josh Russo (ph)?

MR. BANNON: Same.

MR. QUIGLEY: As you know, or may have heard, there are four prongs to this investigation. One involves what possible leaks of classified information took place relating to this Intelligence Community assessment of these matters and expanded to sort of leaks in general. During the campaign, did you at any time leak information about the campaign to the press?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: During your time at the White House, did you ever reveal any information about what was going on at the White House to the press or any other source?

MR. BURCK: Same indication, the White House privilege not to answer questions related to the transition.

MR. QUIGLEY: So I just can't help myself. I quoted this before, but: Executive privilege, we've got executive privilege, exclamation point. There is no executive privilege, exclamation point. We proved that in Watergate.

That's your statement you acknowledged. Was that hyperbole too?

MR. BANNON: I believe so, yeah?

MR. QUIGLEY: Thank you. I yield.

MR. SCHIFF: One followup question before I yield to Mr. Swalwell.

During your time at the White House, did you ever make any unauthorized leaks or statements to reporters?

MR. BANNON: I think that was a question I was just asked.

MR. SCHIFF: Actually, he asked either authorized or unauthorized. My question is, did you ever make any unauthorized statements to reporters while you were at the White House?

MR. BURCK: Same admonition. I instruct the witness not to answer the question.

MR. SCHIFF: So it's the White House's position, in your view, Counsel, that the statement this witness made to a reporter that was not authorized by the White House is somehow protected by privilege?

MR. BURCK: I'm just relaying back to you the position the White House has given me, which is that any substantive discussion of anything relating to his time, anything related to his time at the White House or the transition is off limits.

MR. SCHIFF: I will yield to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you. I want to be clear. Counsel, you had stated earlier that you had guidance that he could acknowledge the existence of a conversation but not the substance. And Mr. Schiff's question and Mr. Quigley's

question was just the existence of an unauthorized conversation with a reporter. So are you changing that guidance now?

MR. BURCK: I said within the context of the question. When you asked for unauthorized leaks, which means information that was allegedly not authorized by the White House to provide to the press or to others, that that would clearly call, in my view, for substantive information.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, did you ever have off-the-record conversations with reporters while you were at the White House?

MR. BANNON: Same question, same answer.

MR. BURCK: The same, same.

MR. SWALWELL: No. "Unauthorized" means the White House did not authorize it. "Off the record" means that Mr. Bannon did not want it to be attributed to him.

MR. BANNON: Anything during transition in the White House, until I get further guidance is -- I can't -- I can't answer.

MR. SCHIFF: If I could interject, Mr. Swalwell. You're willing to say that you had a conversation with Mr. Priebus but not what the conversation contents were, but you won't say whether you had a conversation with a reporter that was unauthorized.

MR. BANNON: I just think that's what I was just asking my attorney. I just think, you know, given today that I just got subpoenaed by the grand jury and I was told nothing on the transition, nothing on the White House, I just think we shouldn't touch that.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, even by the standards of the rather broad gag rule, it doesn't seem to be consistently applied here, if you're going to say, "I will talk about

when I talked to Mr. Priebus, what the general subject matter was, but I won't tell you whether I talked to a reporter about the same subject."

[redacted] One minute.

MR. SCHIFF: Is that the position of counsel?

MR. BURCK: The position is that the White House has asked us not to discuss anything relating to the transition of the White House. We will get additional guidance from the White House. I assume the committee will also talk to the White House, and if the White House authorizes him to discuss those topics.

MR. SCHIFF: I think you said, Counsel, just a moment ago that the instruction from the White House was you could mention the fact of a conversation as long as you didn't get into the contents of the conversation. So we're asking you.

MR. BURCK: The context in which the question is asked and whether or not it would call for the fact -- the exposure of fact would call for the disclosure of substance.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, how is it different, Counsel, if I'm asking whether he had a conversation with Mr. Priebus about the Trump Tower meeting, which you can answer, "Yes, I did," and if I ask you, did you have a conversation with a reporter on the same subject, you can't answer that question? How is that consistent?

MR. BURCK: Well, on the first one, you're asking him questions about an event that occurred before he was on the campaign and during the campaign. And you asked him a question as to whether or not he spoke to somebody at the White House about that topic. And the answer he gave was yes, he did, and he spoke to Reince Priebus.

The question that you're asking now is a more broad-based question as to,

did he ever speak to anyone, any reporter, any other person, about anything regarding anything off the record, on the record, authorized, unauthorized. Because of the broad scope of that, I would take the position -- at least until the White House tells me otherwise -- that he's not authorized to disclose that. You were linking it back up to an event that occurred during the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: So you'll allow your client to answer the question if it's -- we ask him, did you ever discuss with a reporter the meeting at Trump Tower or any other specific conversation? As long as we specify the conversation, you'll let him answer; is that what you're saying?

MR. BURCK: Only if -- not the content of the conversation, but did a conversation occur about an event that occurred during the campaign, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: No.

MR. GOWDY: I really am trying to gain some clarity as to what the ground rules are. Is it your position that executive privilege applies to a conversation that a White House employee has with a non-executive branch person that the White House did not authorize or know about?

MR. BURCK: My position is not particularly relevant at this point, Mr. Gowdy. The issue at the White House --

MR. GOWDY: It is because you're the one advising your client.

MR. BURCK: Based on what the White House has told me, their position is that topics -- anything related to his time at the White House, transition, anything, is off limits until they have an accommodation process with the committee.

MR. GOWDY: So, if he had a conversation with a family member, the fact

that he was employed at the White House at the time, we cannot ask him about that? What's talismanic is where he was working at the time, not who he was talking to?

MR. BURCK: In part, yes.

MR. GOWDY: What privilege exists to protect that?

MR. BURCK: Again, I'm really relaying back to what the White House --

MR. GOWDY: You are relaying back bogus legal counsel from the White House, and you can barely get it out with a straight face, and I don't blame you because you know better. There is no protection that allows him to not answer questions about non-executive branch communications he had that he wasn't even authorized to have in the first place.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, as I said, I'm telling you what the White House has told me, and I'm instructing my client. And as I said, we have -- you understand – we understand the accommodation process that is supposed to occur. We understand that hasn't happened. Again, we are just simply relaying back to you the position the White House has relayed to me. And Mr. Bannon is in a difficult position because he would like to answer your questions, but he's being instructed not to.

MR. GOWDY: Well, if he would like to answer the questions, there is nothing that keeps him from answering the question.

MR. BURCK: Except that he has an obligation as a former senior White House official.

MR. GOWDY: To abide by a privilege that does not exist.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I don't know if it exists or not.

MR. GOWDY: No. We both know that there is nothing protecting a

conversation a non-executive branch person that the White House didn't know about and still doesn't know about.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, again, I'm going to have to repeat myself. Going back to the general prohibition that was placed on Mr. Bannon's ability to speak about these topics, until there can be discussion between the committee and the White House about what topics the White House would not have a problem with, that may fall within it, but I don't know the answer to that.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, you are quoted as saying: It's the dumbest political decision in modern political history, comma, bar none, a self-inflicted wound of massive proportions.

First of all, did you say that?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BURCK: Would you repeat the question?

MR. GOWDY: Sure. You are quoted as saying: It's the dumbest political decision in modern political history, comma, bar none, a self-inflicted wound of massive proportions.

My question was, did you say that?

MR. BURCK: I'm going to instruct the witness not to answer that question because it would go to a topic of events of the Comey firing --

MR. GOWDY: We haven't gotten to that yet. I'm just asking him whether or not he said it.

MR. BURCK: Well, I'm basing my memory of the quote, but that would be the --

MR. GOWDY: Shouldn't that come from him? We haven't even established whether or not he said it yet, much less when he said it or what he said

it about. I'm just asking him, did you say that? There's no time associated with that question. So, unless you are a witness, I think I'm entitled to an answer on whether or not he said it.

MR. BURCK: If you said it, if you said it at a time that you were in transition or at the White House, I instruct you not to answer the question. If you did not, you're free to answer the question.

MR. BANNON: Yeah, that was during my time at the White House so --

MR. GOWDY: Is it counsel's position -- is it counsel's position that he can make certain comments to noncongressional inquisitors, but he cannot make that same comment, affirm that comment, or explain that comment when Congress asks? Is that the privilege that you are describing, one that exists only for Congress but does not exist if he is talking to anyone else?

MR. BURCK: No. That's not what I'm saying, Mr. Gowdy. I'm saying that, again, the White House has told me that he is not to answer questions related to two topics, transition and the White House, until there is an accommodation process between the committee and the White House on what he can and cannot answer. That's the position we have.

To the extent that, as we have talked about before, it was in the news today, there is a subpoena, a grand jury subpoena to him from the special counsel, the White House's position, as I understand it, has been that there is no assertion of executive privilege within the executive branch. To the extent that an executive branch official asks Mr. Bannon or anyone else questions under obligation, under compulsion, or voluntarily, that person is free to answer the question as long as it's truthful.

MR. GOWDY: I don't know this for certain, but I'm almost positive that is it

wasn't Bob Mueller that asked him the question that led to this answer. So it wasn't anyone connected with the executive branch that asked him this question.

MR. BURCK: The question that led to the answer that you just --

MR. GOWDY: Yes. So I guess what I'm trying to understand is, when does privilege apply, and when does it not apply?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, again, it is not my call, and it is not Mr. Bannon's call to make that determination. As we understand it, the White House has a privilege. The committee has questions to put to this witness. They are coequal branches of government. One is saying don't answer; the other is saying answer.

MR. GOWDY: But I want to make sure that I understand the "don't answer." It is the White House's position that Mr. Bannon cannot answer any questions regardless of the subject matter that relate to his time during the transition and when he worked at the White House, regardless of whether or not it's about an NFL game, regardless of whether or not it is about work, regardless of whether or not it is about he talked to a reporter or not; that whole timeframe is off limits?

MR. BURCK: Until, and according to the White House, until there can be an accommodation reached between the committee and the White House about what topics are fair game and what they would not exert executive privilege as to --

MR. GOWDY: But I asked him earlier whether or not he had any conversations while he was at the White House about the June 2016 meeting, and he answered the question.

MR. BURCK: He said, yes.

MR. GOWDY: And then I asked him who he talked to, and he said Sean Spicer and Reince Priebus.

MR. BURCK: And the distinction I was drawing there was because you

were asking about a time -- a topic that happened before the transition, which was the June 2016 meeting that was --

MR. GOWDY: I don't know what he meant by this, so I don't have a clue what that-- it could relate to Michael Dukakis riding a tank. I don't know. That's why I'm asking. We haven't even established that he said it yet.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, that's why I asked you the question and I asked the clarifying question for him, which is that if he said something like that during the transition or during the White House, that he couldn't answer it, but if he didn't, he said it outside of those periods, either at the White House or before transition, he could answer the question.

MR. GOWDY: So, Mr. Bannon, you're not going to tell me whether or not you said, "It's the dumbest political decision in modern political history, bar none."

MR. BANNON: Until I get further guidance. This I think the first one I answered was before the subpoena to the grand jury and subsequent multiple phone calls to the White House. So --

[redacted] 5 minutes,

MR. BANNON: -- until I get further guidance.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Gowdy, sorry to interrupt.

Counsel, it was reported that you learned about the subpoena last week. Is that right? To play that you're just learning about it right now is probably misleading, wouldn't you agree?

MR. BURCK: The leak of the subpoena.

MR. SWALWELL: But you learned about the subpoena last week. Is that right?

MR. BURCK: I'm not -- I'm not -- I will make a determination that I may tell

you the answer to that is yes.

MR. SWALWELL: I don't understand what that means.

MR. BURCK: There is a rule 68, which applies to grand jury --

MR. SWALWELL: I understand, confidentiality.

MR. BURCK: And it does not apply to nongovernment workers. I just have to --

MR. SWALWELL: So you did learn of that last week?

MR. BURCK: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Mr. Gowdy?

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, there is a quote that has been attributed to you: Three senior guys in the campaign thought it was a good idea to meet with a foreign government inside Trump Tower in a conference room on the 25th floor.

When was that quote by you uttered?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. GOWDY: Was it while you were at the White House?

MR. BANNON: It could have been, yes.

MR. GOWDY: We've spent the better part of that morning discussing that quote. So which quotes uttered while he was at the White House are fair game, and which ones are not?

MR. BANNON: I think until I get further guidance, none of them are.

MR. GOWDY: Guidance from whom? Who are you seeking guidance from?

MR. BURCK: From the White House. Again, they have told us they intend to discuss with the committee and then come back to you us and inform us what their position is as well as what your position is.

MR. GOWDY: "The chance that Don Jr. did not walk the Jumos up to his father's office on the 26th floor is zero." When was that comment uttered?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. GOWDY: Was it while you were at the White House?

MR. BANNON: It could have been, yes.

[3:11 p.m.]

MR. GOWDY: But yet we've discussed it extensively this morning.

MR. BURCK: Again, these are -- I'm repeating myself, but these are all --

MR. GOWDY: I'm just trying to understand it.

MR. BURCK: These are all relating to an event that occurred during the campaign, comments he made about an event that occurred during the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: This is also true about the conversations with Priebus and Spicer, though.

MR. GOWDY: I guess I'll have to come up with questions that fit through the narrow timeframe.

I yield back.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, earlier when we were talking about General Flynn's role in the campaign, you told Mr. Gowdy that he had a couple different of buckets that you put him in, but digital operations was not one of them. Do you remember that conversation?

MR. BANNON: Not that I put him in. I think --

MR. SWALWELL: Or that you felt that were his best expertise and that he should be focused on?

MR. BANNON: Right. I think when -- yes, was giving -- helping with debate prep, giving national security, you know, knowledge and information to the candidate, and also traveling on the plane, talking to the candidate about those things so that he get more knowledge, more information, and then being at rallies. And actually on a number of rallies he actually spoke or kind of opened.

MR. SWALWELL: And you referenced that it was of discussion among the campaign team or even people outside the campaign team to have ideas pitched to

you or others as to how to obtain the 33,000 deleted emails. Do you remember that conversation?

MR. BANNON: I think I've said it about me, people had been pitching those ideas about how to do it since the spring of 2015.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was pitching those ideas to you?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Is there anyone that you remember?

MR. BANNON: In spring of 2015?

MR. SWALWELL: Or just through the course of the campaign, anyone that you recall.

MR. BANNON: During the course of the campaign, I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: How about prior --

MR. BANNON: I mean, people were, you know, every now and again talking about these 33,000 emails.

MR. SWALWELL: What were some of the ideas?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember, you know. They were on some server somewhere, the NSA or whatever. It's just not -- it was not serious stuff. It was not stuff we pursued.

MR. SWALWELL: Were they pitched to you via email?

MR. BANNON: No. I think this is all like -- you know, when I said pitch, it's not like somebody comes in and makes a presentation and said, hey, let's go do this. There was no formal -- you know, just people talking, either on the plane or on the 14th floor when we were there, about the 33,000 emails.

MR. SWALWELL: Did General Flynn ever mention to you his relationship with Peter Smith?

MR. BANNON: Never.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever mention to you his desire to obtain Hillary Clinton's deleted emails or mention around you or to you?

MR. BANNON: I think there were a couple times we had conversations that was about the 33,000 emails.

MR. SWALWELL: What was the nature of the conversation?

MR. BANNON: Just general that, you know, they were -- you know, they would be something that would put a lot of light on particularly her -- the pay-for-play aspects or allegations about her time at the State Department.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever talk about any active steps or manners in which those emails could be obtained?

MR. BANNON: Not that I remember, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Did General Flynn ever talk to you about his relationship with Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you know that he had a relationship during the campaign with Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first learn that General Flynn had a relationship with Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BURCK: I think that would call for disclosure of information that he learned during the transition or White House.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you refusing to answer the question?

MR. BANNON: I'm not refusing. I'm just saying on the advice of counsel.

MR. SWALWELL: Just for the record.

MR. BURCK: He's refusing to answer on advice of counsel.

MR. SWALWELL: On May 26th, The Washington Post -- on May 26th, 2017, The Post reported that Jared Kushner held a meeting with Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak with General Flynn.

According to the report, it took place at Trump Tower in New York and included a discussion about using Russian diplomatic facilities in the United States for secure communications. It was alleged to have occurred on December 1st, 2016.

Were you aware of this meeting at the time that it took place?

MR. BURCK: I'm going to instruct the witness not to answer anything relating to the transition or the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you refusing to answer the question, Mr. Bannon?

MR. BURCK: He is refusing to answer the question on advice of counsel.

MR. SWALWELL: All right. I just need Mr. Bannon to --

MR. BURCK: No, I understand.

Just say yes.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware as to whether Jared Kushner had a relationship during the campaign with Russian Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you attend this meeting on December 1st?

MR. BURCK: Let me preface this by saying that this is why it's very important to get advice from the White House, because we don't want to leave an impression that he did or did not attend the meeting. But I expect we cannot answer that question without advice from the White House about whether or not he

can answer the question.

But I want to make it clear that that kind of question, please I ask the committee not to assume that he did attend the meeting simply because he was not answering the question.

MR. SWALWELL: I understand, counsel. But the danger of you following this bogus White House privilege is that there will be a number of perverted impressions or nefarious impressions that could be left if Mr. Bannon does not clear them up.

MR. BURCK: Understood. And I hope that the committee and the White House will come to an agreement soon.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, are you refusing to answer whether you attended?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you tell The Washington Post about that meeting prior to them reporting it on May 26th, 2017?

MR. BANNON: Again, because it's a transition, White House timeframe, he's not -- I'm going to instruct him not to answer the question.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you refusing to answer, Mr. Bannon?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met in person Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BURCK: The answer -- as to up to November 8th, have you ever met him?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: So up to November 8th, you've never met Ambassador Kislyak. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you ever talked to him on the phone up to November 8th?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you ever corresponded with him by email?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you ever been on an email where others were corresponding with him?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: After November 8th, have you -- after November 8th, did you meet with Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BURCK: I'm going to have to instruct the witness not to answer that question because it falls into the time periods that the White House is objecting to. But, again, I would ask the committee to keep an open mind on what the answer to that question may be.

MR. SWALWELL: Again, Mr. Bannon, are you refusing to answer?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: On December -- on March 27th of last year, The New York Times reported that in mid-December 2016 Jared Kushner held a previously undisclosed meeting with Russian bank chairman Sergei Gorkov of VEB. Were you aware of this meeting?

MR. BURCK: Again, it comes during the period in time that the White House has objected to, so I'm going to instruct the witness not to answer the question.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, are you refusing to answer?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you attend the meeting?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BURCK: Can you repeat the question?

MR. SWALWELL: Did you attend the meeting?

MR. BURCK: The --

MR. SWALWELL: December 2016 meeting that Jared Kushner had with Sergei Gorkov.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Bannon is instructed not to answer the question because it falls into the timeframe the White House has objected to.

And as to any question that the committee may pose that calls for information that he learned as a result of his time at the White House or the transition or events that occurred during the transition or the White House, he is given a general instruction that he may not answer those questions until the -- he gets a different instruction from the White House or that the committee and the White House worked out in combination.

MR. SWALWELL: And, Mr. Bannon, I saw that you were consulting with your lawyer after I asked you that question. And candidly, sir, if your concern is that this will make you look really bad, it looks really bad if you can't answer the question. But I will move on.

Were you aware ever of Mr. Kushner having a relationship with Sergei Gorkov prior to November 8th?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of Mr. Kushner having any relationship with Russian bankers prior to November 8th?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Sergei Gorkov prior to November 8th?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: On April 3rd, 2016 -- well, actually, I'm going to go back to this. Were you the person who disclosed to the New York Times for their March 27th story that Jared Kushner had met with Sergei Gorkov?

MR. BURCK: Same general admonition that the witness is instructed not to answer that question, and it stands for all questions that fall into that timeframe.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, just for our record, are you refusing to answer the question?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, on April 3rd, 2016, The Post reported that Erik Prince was involved in a secret meeting with a Russian close to Vladimir Putin in the Seychelles on January 11th, 2017. Who's Erik Prince?

MR. BANNON: Erik Prince is a former, I think, founder of Blackwater.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you know him prior to November 8th?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. When did you first meet him?

MR. BANNON: 2009, or 2009, 2010.

MR. SWALWELL: Prior to Mr. Prince going to the Seychelles in January 2017, did you confer with Mr. Prince about that trip?

MR. BANNON: Upon advice of counsel, I can't answer, because that, I believe, what you're talking about, took place during the transition.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Prince talk to you about that trip once he

returned to the United States?

MR. BURCK: Same admonition.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you refusing to answer, Mr. Bannon?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Prior to November 8th, did you ever talk with --

MR. SCHIFF: Would you yield for one minute?

MR. SWALWELL: I'll yield to the ranking member.

MR. SCHIFF: One other foundational question.

To your knowledge, did Mr. Prince have any role in the administration?

MR. BANNON: The administration?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: The current administration?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Well, that would -- the answer is no.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're refusing to answer a question about a conversation you had with someone who is outside the administration not conducting business for the administration?

MR. BANNON: Until I get clearance -- until I get -- talk to people. Given the subpoena to the grand jury and the White House, I just am not -- don't feel comfortable talking about anything during the transition or the White House at the time.

MR. SCHIFF: I'll yield back to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Mr. Bannon.

Prior to November 8th, did Mr. Prince ever talk to you about any relationships that he had with Russians?

MR. BANNON: Before November 8th?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware, other than conversations with Mr. Prince, about relationships that he had with Russians, something you read, something you heard?

MR. BANNON: Can you give me that question again?

MR. SWALWELL: You said that Mr. Prince did not directly tell you about any relations he had with Russians prior to November 8th. But did you have other knowledge of any relations that Mr. Prince had with Russians?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Press reports indicate that -- actually, let me back up. Were you in Mar-a-Lago on December 29th, 2016?

MR. BANNON: That's a transition question.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And are you refusing to answer?

MR. BANNON: I'm refusing to answer on the advice of counsel.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware on December -- around the time period of December 29th, 2016, that General Flynn was in contact with Ambassador Kislyak?

MR. BANNON: Once again, I can't answer that, refusing to answer because of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware that on December 21st, 2016, General Flynn was in contact with Ambassador Kislyak about a pending vote at the U.N. Security Council?

MR. BANNON: I refuse to answer because of advice of my counsel and the

White House.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you describe Mr. Papadopoulos' role on the campaign's foreign policy team?

MR. BANNON: To my knowledge, a non-event.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, he was somebody who was able to email you, right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And you responded to him?

MR. BANNON: I think I did, yeah.

MR. SWALWELL: So he was at least -- you're a pretty important person on the campaign, and I imagine you were probably receiving a lot of emails from a lot of people?

MR. BANNON: Yeah.

MR. SWALWELL: And he was able to get a response?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And is it fair to say that not every person that emailed you during that time period was worthy of a response or at least you weren't capable of responding to?

MR. BANNON: Or what they were talking about, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Right. So is it fair to say he was more than a coffee boy for the campaign?

MR. BANNON: What would be the definition of coffee boy?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, the President has described him as a low-level volunteer. Michael Caputo described him as a coffee boy, which, I think, suggests that he played an insignificant role. The President named him to his foreign policy

or national security advisory council. So I'm just trying to clarify that --

MR. BANNON: I think the President and Caputo's is pretty accurate. I think the President's low-level volunteer.

MR. CONAWAY: Excuse me, Eric. The ranking member and I discussed going to 30-minute segments instead of 15, so you all will have 30 minutes on this section to ask your questions.

MR. BURCK: Can we take a break at some point?

MR. SWALWELL: So I've got 15 left and then we can do --

MR. CONAWAY: Yeah. We'll take a break as soon as they finish.

MR. SWALWELL: But, Mr. Bannon, this coffee boy or low-level volunteer was able to email you and get a response on a matter as important as visiting the President of Egypt. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever communicate with Mr. Papadopoulos by telephone?

MR. BANNON: I don't think so.

MR. SWALWELL: How about by text message?

MR. BANNON: I don't think so.

MR. SWALWELL: Is that something you can check for us and to produce if it exists?

MR. BANNON: Sure.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you communicated with Mr. Papadopoulos since he pleaded guilty?

MR. BANNON: When did he plead guilty?

MR. SWALWELL: In December.

MR. BANNON: The answer is no.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the last time you communicated with Mr. Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: I think the last time I communicated with Papadopoulos was either right around the Egyptian thing or it might be slightly thereafter.

MR. SWALWELL: And it's your testimony, Mr. Bannon, that you have never in person met Mr. Papadopoulos?

MR. BANNON: Not that I remember, no. He may have come by the 14th floor or something, but not -- let's say this: Definitely not -- pretty sure not before November 8th. After we won, it's a different deal. But before November 8th, I don't think I ever met him in person.

MR. SWALWELL: So you come on board in August 2016 and Mr. Papadopoulos is still on the campaign. Is that correct?

MR. BANNON: I think he's still on this -- whatever this foreign policy advisory board was.

MR. SWALWELL: And he was making media appearances on behalf of the campaign. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: That I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever seek permission from you to make a media appearance?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe so, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Witnesses have informed the committee that you and Mr. Papadopoulos were involved in the earlier-referenced meeting with President Sisi and that you were viewed, both, as the main Trump campaign points of contact. Would that be accurate?

MR. BANNON: I don't think so because I didn't actually go to the meeting. I think it was General Flynn.

MR. SWALWELL: But --

MR. BANNON: I was involved, but not -- I think it was General Flynn was most involved.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever know General Flynn and Mr. Papadopoulos to communicate?

MR. BANNON: That I don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: Can you describe in detail how candidate Trump's meeting with President Sisi was organized, particularly what you understood Mr. Papadopoulos's role to have been?

MR. BANNON: If I remember from the emails or everything, I think he had a couple of recommendations. But I don't remember him being actively involved in it. I remember General Flynn and I think Jared and myself kind of taking the lead on that.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you and Mr. Papadopoulos travel together to Washington to meet with Egyptian officials at the Egyptian embassy to organize the meeting?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: The British Government has acknowledged a working-level meeting with Papadopoulos in his role as a campaign representative about 2 months before the election. Were you aware of his relationship with the British Government?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Papadopoulos ever receive any direction from

the campaign to focus on outreach and get-out-the-vote efforts within the United States prior to election day?

MR. BANNON: Outside the United States?

MR. SWALWELL: No, within the United States.

MR. BANNON: Not to my knowledge, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Other than the Egyptian correspondence you had with Mr. Papadopoulos, what else did you talk to him about?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember. Like I said, I think the only other time that comes to mind on Papadopoulos was when I misidentified him as George Jijikos (ph), who was our advance guy.

I think there's a couple emails back and forth -- I think there were a couple emails back and forth between myself and Papadopoulos when he finally asked, I think it was, what are you talking about, and that's when I realized I had the wrong guy, the wrong George.

MR. SWALWELL: To your knowledge, did Mr. Papadopoulos have any designated role during the transition?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, that would be a transition question, so I'm refusing to answer on guidance of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: On January 20th, 2017, prior to the inauguration, public reports indicate that Mr. Papadopoulos and Reince Priebus met in Washington with Greek Defense Minister Panos Kammenos. Were you aware of this meeting?

MR. BANNON: That's -- once again, I have to refuse to answer on the guidance of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: On January 27th, 2017, Mr. Papadopoulos was contacted by the FBI. You were working at the White House that day. Was there

any discussion at the White House or had Mr. Papadopoulos made any contact to anyone at the White House that he'd been approached by the FBI?

MR. BANNON: Once again, I've got to refuse on the advice of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Mr. Papadopoulos' approach by the FBI that day communicated to Donald Trump?

MR. BANNON: Once again, I have to refuse to answer on guidance of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you have any knowledge of the April 27th, 2016, Mayflower Hotel event where candidate Trump laid out his foreign policy priorities?

MR. BANNON: What was the date?

MR. SWALWELL: April 27th, 2016.

MR. BANNON: Am I aware of it?

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of that meeting or that foreign policy speech?

MR. BANNON: I think after it happened and the coverage of it, I believe, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you attend?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of any of Mr. Papadopoulos' meetings in London with Russian cutouts offering dirt on Hillary Clinton?

MR. BANNON: During the campaign?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you learn of those?

MR. BANNON: I think in press reports after he pled guilty.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware that Mr. Papadopoulos had been traveling to London as a senior foreign policy adviser and was working to arrange for a Donald Trump-Vladimir Putin meeting?

MR. BANNON: During the campaign?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Can you repeat that back?

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. In March and April of 2016, in Mr. Papadopoulos' statement of offense, he pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI in part about travel he had taken while he was working for the campaign to London and that he was attempting to connect Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Were you aware of that?

MR. BANNON: My understanding is that Mr. Papadopoulos lived in London.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Papadopoulos also would travel to the United States to meet with campaign officials. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: In what timeframe was that?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, we have a photo of Mr. Papadopoulos meeting with Donald Trump in April of 2016.

MR. BANNON: I don't remember any of that happening after I took over on the 14th or the 15th.

MR. SWALWELL: Was there any discussion when you were leading the campaign about Mr. Papadopoulos' prior travel to Russia?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Was there any discussion once you took over the campaign about connecting Donald Trump to Vladimir Putin?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did anyone inside or outside the campaign suggest to you or through information you would learn that there were efforts to connect Donald Trump to Vladimir Putin?

MR. BANNON: During the campaign?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Can you rephrase that? Let me hear that again.

MR. SWALWELL: Once you were CEO of the campaign, were you aware of any efforts by people inside the campaign, family members, or people outside the campaign to connect Donald Trump to Vladimir Putin?

MR. BANNON: What do you mean any? What do you mean by any?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, what do you think it means?

MR. BANNON: I don't know. I think there may -- the answer is no, except with one caveat. I think maybe somebody mentioned -- and I can't rule this out 100 percent -- during that U.N. time when the el-Sisi and, I think, Netanyahu meeting took place, somebody might have mentioned, you know, is that time to meet President Xi and President Putin and people like that.

I mean, it was not something that took more than 30 seconds or a minute or a couple minutes to go in one ear and out the other, but somebody may have mentioned that.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was that somebody?

MR. BANNON: I have -- I don't remember. It's one of those conversations you have that -- of somebody throwing out an idea.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it ever recorded in email?

MR. BANNON: No. It didn't raise itself to that, that level of seriousness,

but since you said "any."

So the answer is no, but I think in passing somebody might have mentioned. And it was not President Putin individually. It was in a collection of should he meet other potential world leaders if they were going to, in fact, be there.

MR. SWALWELL: You said that you'd never met Carter Page before. Have you ever communicated with him by email or telephone?

[redacted] Five minutes.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: When?

MR. BANNON: It was during the transition, so it's --

MR. SWALWELL: You're refusing to answer when you communicated with Carter Page?

MR. BANNON: Right. Right. Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the last time you talked to Donald Trump?

MR. BANNON: In December.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you talk to him at all about the Russia investigation?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: After --

MR. BANNON: Post my leaving the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: So you left the White House in August. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: August 14th or 18th, depending on the day.

MR. SWALWELL: So from August 14th to today, have you talked to President Trump about the Russia investigation?

MR. BURCK: So he can answer the question to the extent that the President was not seeking his advice on any matter, regardless if it's Russia or

something else. But –

MR. SWALWELL: What privilege would that possibly be?

MR. BURCK: Again, according to the White House, the privilege -- the President can assert executive privilege when he seeks advice from people who are not necessarily White House officials. So he can answer your question as to other conversations he had with the President.

MR. SWALWELL: Did the President ever seek your advice about what to do with the Russia investigation after you left the White House?

MR. BURCK: Consistent with the White House guidance thus far, he is not -- he's instructed not to answer questions about whether or not and what topics he was -- the President may have sought advice from him about even post White House.

MR. SWALWELL: So, Mr. Bannon, you're refusing to answer post your time at the White House any conversations you had with Donald Trump, President Trump, about advice on the Russia investigation?

MR. BANNON: I am, on guidance from my attorney and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times have you talked to Donald Trump since you left the White House?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Is it more than 10?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Was the Russia -- aside from any advice that President Trump may or may not have sought, was Russia discussed during these more than 10 conversations?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: When you would call the President after you called the White House, would you call him directly on his cell phone or through the White House switchboard?

MR. BANNON: The White House switchboard, I believe. I'm trying to remember. I think it was both. I think it was White House switchboard and a couple of times he would call me on the -- from the cell.

MR. SWALWELL: All right. I'll yield back.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Before I turn it over to Mr. Gowdy, so this transition period and White House employment period and apparently beyond that is germane. Let's agree on the specific dates of each of those.

The transition period lasted from when to when?

MR. BURCK: November 9th through January 20th.

MR. BANNON: November 9th through noon on the 20th.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. And the White House employment period lasted from --

MR. BANNON: January 20th to August, I think, 18th.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. And then, counsel, you're extending that to any conversations he had with the President as a citizen?

MR. BURCK: Where the President was seeking his advice, seeking his advice.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. All right.

Mr. Gowdy, we're 30 minutes on our side.

MR. GOWDY: And we promised him a break.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, that's right. Sorry about that. So let's take a break.

[Recess.]

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Gowdy, 30 minutes.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, I want to go back to what's marked as committee exhibit No. 1, which is -- the front page purports to be an email from a Peter Schweizer, if I'm pronouncing his name right.

Do you have that in front of you?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: I may have asked you this, but it was a long time ago, and if I did, I can't remember the answer. Who is Bekah Mercer?

MR. BANNON: She's the daughter of Bob Mercer and is a board member of the Government Accountability Institute, which Peter Schweizer is the head of.

MR. GOWDY: So to the extent this email references GAI, that is the Government Accountability Institute?

MR. BANNON: That's correct, yes.

MR. GOWDY: Does she have any role with Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: She's on the board there also and an investor, I believe.

MR. GOWDY: And you are an investor and on the board as well or just an investor?

MR. BANNON: Not anymore. I'm totally out.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Before we go back to this, I want to try to put as fine a point as we can on this June 2016 Trump Tower meeting, which you had referred to alternatively as treasonous, unpatriotic, and bad shit.

I think we've dealt with the treasonous part of it. Can you tell me what led you to use the word "unpatriotic"? What was it about that meeting that is unpatriotic, specifically to you?

MR. BANNON: Just getting a -- you know, having a meeting with foreign

nationals during a Presidential campaign when you're associated with that Presidential campaign, or in Manafort's case, heading up the campaign, to have a meeting with foreign nationals in essentially the campaign headquarters with the purpose to -- at least the printed purpose to get opposition research or get something on the opposition.

MR. GOWDY: All right. So it wasn't the meeting that's unpatriotic, and it's not the identity of the person with whom you're meeting that's unpatriotic. It is the willingness to take negative information on an opponent?

MR. BANNON: Well, no.

MR. GOWDY: Clearly, all meetings with foreign nationals during the pendency of a campaign don't qualify as unpatriotic.

MR. BANNON: No, I think, but a, like I said, I think a meeting where a senior campaign official -- and he knows the purpose of that meeting is to get opposition research from foreign nationals and potentially a foreign government -- is what I would deem to be unpatriotic.

MR. GOWDY: Right. Excepting that in the email from Rob Goldstone to Donald Trump Jr. it doesn't say opposition research.

MR. BANNON: But I think the way the press played it, it had --

MR. GOWDY: Right. But you have it in front of you now, and I'm sure you wouldn't use the word "unpatriotic" or "treasonous" without knowing all the facts.

MR. BANNON: I think this was quoted -- I think this memo was -- email was quoted in the -- or parts of it were put in the press --

MR. GOWDY: All right. So you would have had access to part of this email before you made those comments?

MR. BANNON: Well, I think it had it in whatever the press accounts were.

MR. GOWDY: Right. But you'll agree with me this email references official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia and be very useful to your father.

There's another paragraph, which we'll get to in a minute, but that's official documents and information incriminating Hillary and her dealings with Russia. And I think we previously established those dealings would pretty much have to center around three things: first lady, U.S. senator, secretary of state.

MR. BANNON: Well, you're implying that they're official U.S. Government documents.

MR. GOWDY: I'm not implying anything. I'm reading from the text of the email.

MR. BANNON: No. But the official documents could be official documents from --

MR. GOWDY: Of course they could.

MR. BANNON: -- from Russia.

MR. GOWDY: We don't know, which is why we probably wouldn't use words like "treasonous" or "unpatriotic" until we figured it out.

I'm trying to establish what made this meeting unpatriotic in your mind. And I think what we've established is it is the willingness to meet to take what could be negative information from a foreign source. Is that a fair way of phrasing it?

MR. BANNON: Not just foreign source. I mean, actively to have a meeting with foreign nationals where that's going to be the purpose of the meeting.

MR. GOWDY: Well, whether you met with them or got it some other surreptitious way is irrelevant, isn't it? I mean, it's not the face-to-face part of it. It's the willingness to take information from a foreign source to use against a political

opponent. How you got that information really is of no consequence, is it?

MR. BANNON: Well, it depends on, if the information was already in the public domain, I think it'd be different.

MR. GOWDY: Yeah, but you didn't know that. You didn't know whether this information was in the public domain or not.

MR. BANNON: No, that's what I'm saying. That's what I thought that this -- you're talking about for the meeting on the 25th?

MR. GOWDY: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Right. Well, I mean, I think it lays out pretty clearly that the purpose of the meeting, the contents of the meeting with foreign nationals that were -- and Manafort should have understood -- there to potentially talk about, discuss, or hand over sensitive information.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Now I want to go back to exhibit 1, the email from Lisa Fleischman to Bekah Mercer.

"There are a lot of useful emails already out there that other people have already hacked."

What does the word "hacked" mean to you?

MR. BANNON: It means, you know, getting something off a server without --

MR. GOWDY: Lawfully or unlawfully?

MR. BANNON: Depends on the country, but principally unlawfully.

MR. GOWDY: All right. So when you read "already hacked," you think negative connotation, perhaps criminal?

MR. BANNON: It depends on what the jurisdiction is.

MR. GOWDY: How about the United States?

MR. BANNON: I think in the United States would be a crime, yes.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. So there are a lot of useful emails already out there that other people have already hacked, Soros, DNC, congressional Dems, Hillary. And then we go to the bottom, "I sent this idea to Steve." And I think you have previously testified you believe that Steve to be you?

MR. BANNON: I think so.

MR. GOWDY: "And he connected me to his digital guy," and that would be Brad Parscale?

MR. BANNON: I said I didn't totally remember. I said I thought, if it happened, it would be Brad Parscale. Like I think -- I told you at the beginning, this is the first time I've seen this, and I don't really remember this.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I don't think you were on the email string, so I don't know that you would remember it.

MR. BANNON: No, but even this conversation. This thing, "I saw Steve and he connected me to the digital" -- or "I sent this idea to Steve."

MR. GOWDY: But you know Bekah Mercer?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: You know Lisa Fleischman?

MR. BANNON: Like I said, I said I thought I'd met Lisa Fleischman once. I don't know her. I think I know who she is.

MR. GOWDY: Well, she knows enough to say Cambridge Analytica or someone similar can handle the big data. And then Bekah Mercer forwards it and says, "Is this something that CA" -- and would CA be Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: Yes, that would be Cambridge Analytica.

MR. GOWDY: -- "or GAI can easily do?" Question mark. And that would

be the, what, Government Accountability Institute?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. GOWDY: All right.

Now, flip to the first page. "I think Peter has already amassed" -- I think that should be "the key, parenthetically, negative data on Hillary. However, I will task to the team and assess the feasibility of expanding on his work and revert ASAP."

Here is the important part: "FYI, two months ago, CA" -- and again, that would be Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. GOWDY: -- "contacted Julian Assange directly to ask for him to share Hillary's hacked emails."

Who is Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: I think he's the head of WikiLeaks.

MR. GOWDY: What else is he? Do you think he's a friend of the United States?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. GOWDY: Of course you do. He leaks stolen government information. Do you consider that to be -- that's almost the definition of treason, isn't it? Is there another definition that I'm missing of someone taking stolen national security secrets and disseminating them publicly? Is that a close question as to whether or not Julian Assange is a friend of the United States?

MR. BANNON: I think his definition would be he's not a friend of certain aspects of the United States Government, not the United States. I'm not arguing his case. I'm just saying how he would lay it out.

MR. GOWDY: Well, how do you view him?

MR. BANNON: Assange is a guy that, you know, I think is potentially a dangerous guy.

MR. GOWDY: Potentially?

MR. BANNON: Potentially, yeah.

MR. GOWDY: How about what he's done in the past? How about the leaks to our national security tools? You think those damaged the United States?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So he's already someone who has manifest both in intent and in actuality has harmed the United States?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. And, oh, by the way, he's not an American either, is he?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. GOWDY: He's also under indictment. Can we add that too, just to kind of put a third point on it? Not a friend of the United States, not an American, oh, by the way, currently under indictment. Does that about summarize it?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: So why would it not be equally unpatriotic, to use your word, for Cambridge Analytica to contact him and ask him to share the proceeds of a criminal act?

MR. BANNON: I think it would be a big lack of judgment, extreme lack of judgment.

MR. GOWDY: How about unpatriotic? It checks every box that you said existed for the Donald Trump meeting. These are stolen emails. They're the proceeds of a crime held by someone who's not a friend of the United States who

has leaked national security tools in the past. And Cambridge Analytica is contacting him directly to ask for him to share her hacked emails with us to disseminate?

MR. BANNON: I think it's actually Alexander Nix, the CEO. I think that's who's making the statement.

MR. GOWDY: I don't care who's making the statement. I'm asking you, is this not equally unpatriotic, given the definition that you gave me for the Trump Tower meeting?

MR. BANNON: I think it's equally bad judgment.

MR. GOWDY: Well, you're going to have to help me, Mr. Bannon, understand why you would use the word "treasonous and unpatriotic" in connection with Donald Trump Jr., but you won't go any farther than "bad judgment" on someone who is reaching out to an enemy of the United States to try to acquire information that was unlawfully acquired about a political opponent?

MR. BANNON: Because I think, in one regard, it's different. This stuff is -- she's purporting that this is already publicly out there, whether it's the source, the DNC, the Dems, or Hillary.

MR. GOWDY: Well, then why would you need to contact him to ask him to share Hillary's hacked emails with us to disseminate if it's already disseminated.

MR. BANNON: As I said, this is the first time I've ever seen this.

MR. GOWDY: Well, but you're looking at it now. So we can't say that anymore. This would be the second or third time you've looked at it.

MR. BANNON: On the June meeting, you know, I've read a lot of the press reports of that, that have formed my opinion about that, and this is the first time I'm seeing this.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. Well, today may be the first time you're seeing it, but right now is not the first time you've seen it. We have been over the email. So you are now sufficiently familiar with the content of the email.

In fact, I would argue, you have had just as much time to analyze this email as you did the actual email in the Donald Trump meeting, and that did not keep you from opining treasonous, unpatriotic, and bad shit. You didn't say anything about lack of judgment.

MR. BURCK: Actually, just to correct the record, he said that many times, Mr. Gowdy.

MR. GOWDY: In the quote I read he said it many times?

MR. BURCK: You asked him about his testimony --

MR. GOWDY: I'm talking about today, counselor. I'm talking about when it mattered. When it was first disseminated to the public the quote was treasonous, unpatriotic, bad shit, should have called the FBI immediately. And I'm asking you to distinguish this email from that one, and the most I can get out of you is bad judgment.

MR. BANNON: Yeah, I think it's bad judgment.

MR. GOWDY: Is it unpatriotic?

MR. BANNON: Alexander Nix is not an American citizen. He's British.

MR. GOWDY: How about Cambridge Analytica? Where is that company domiciled?

MR. BANNON: I think it's domiciled here in the United States.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. "Two months ago CA contacted Julian Assange directly to ask for him to share Hillary's hacked emails with us to disseminate, and he said no."

So, again, what's the distinction? Why is this just bad judgment?

MR. BANNON: I just think it's a big distinction.

MR. GOWDY: Well, then you won't have any trouble telling me what it is.

MR. BANNON: I think the distinction is this is about information that looks like it's out there and --

MR. GOWDY: But if it were out there, you wouldn't be asking Julian Assange directly for it, would you? I'll give you another hint that it might not be out there: But it looks like he intends to do it himself.

MR. BANNON: I just think it's a difference. I think there's a difference between having a meeting with foreign nationals, particularly, you know, Russian foreign nationals in the heat of a campaign, that a professional like Paul Manafort knows the purpose of which is to talk about information, and to have somebody forwarding an email talking about some -- could be a harebrained scheme, which sounds like a harebrained scheme --

MR. GOWDY: Oh, nothing could have been more harebrained than what they discussed at Trump Tower, Mr. Bannon.

MR. BANNON: But my point is they didn't know that at the time. I'm saying this is a harebrained scheme --

MR. GOWDY: No. No. No. No. You're right. They didn't know the Trump Tower.

MR. BANNON: This is an email on a person that you don't know and I don't know has any expertise or anything -- I'm seeing it for the first time -- that there's any validity to any of this stuff. I've never heard about sourced, hacked, or DNC or --

MR. GOWDY: You don't know anything about the validity in the email for Trump Tower. You don't know whether there's a crown prosecutor in Russia. You

don't know what the official documents were. You don't know what the information was. You didn't know any of that.

MR. BANNON: No. But I knew, at least in the press reports, there were people that proposed that they were, you know, somehow tied to some sort of Russian Government thing like crown prosecutor --

MR. GOWDY: Right. And this is somebody not proposing; this is somebody flat out saying they contacted Julian Assange directly about hacked, also read illegally obtained, emails and tried to get him to provide them. So those are the proceeds of a crime held by a non-American who is an enemy of this country, and the most you can come up with is bad judgment?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Alexander Nix?

MR. BANNON: He's the CEO of Cambridge Analytica.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Peter Schweizer?

MR. BANNON: Peter is the head of -- the president of Government Accountability.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Emily Cornell?

MR. BANNON: I don't know. I think at the time she might have been an employee of Cambridge Analytica, but I'm not sure.

MR. GOWDY: Who is Julian Wheatland?

MR. BANNON: Don't know. I think Wheatland and Tayler may have been employees of Cambridge Analytica.

MR. GOWDY: How about Livia Krisandova?

MR. BANNON: Never heard of her.

MR. GOWDY: So I want us to be clear about this. You see a distinction

between a face-to-face meeting with Natalia Veselnitskaya to obtain official documents and information that can incriminate Hillary, you see that somehow distinguished from a company that I think you have a financial interest in contacting Julian Assange directly to ask him to share Hillary's hacked emails so we can disseminate?

MR. BANNON: Like I said, it was very poor judgment.

MR. GOWDY: On both or just the latter?

MR. BANNON: What do you mean?

MR. GOWDY: I'm trying to -- you used three really specific terms in connection with the Trump Tower meeting. You won't use any of those three terms in connection with this.

MR. BANNON: I said the treasonous is probably hyperbole, unpatriotic and dumb or bad shit.

MR. GOWDY: Yeah, and I guess that's what I'm struggling with, Mr. Bannon, is Julian Assange --

MR. BANNON: I tell you what, Congressman, I'm just not going to agree that it's unpatriotic. Can we agree to that and go on to the next topic? We can continue to do this, but I'm not going to agree it's unpatriotic. It's stupid. I don't even know the context of this. It sounds like another --

MR. GOWDY: We can move on --

MR. BANNON: I see half-baked schemes all the time.

MR. GOWDY: But you didn't know this was a half-baked scheme because you didn't know about it until today.

MR. BANNON: I'm just saying, in reviewing it, right, in reviewing it, in the limited time I've had to review it, it looks like another, you know, half-baked -- when

you're either in a campaign or business you get tons of half-baked ideas.

The thing I was talking about earlier with, you know, Vladimir Putin and President Xi was another half-baked idea that somebody just pitched, right, probably along -- it seems like along the lines of this. The first thing of this right here looks like another half-baked idea with a mash of misinformation, so you don't take it that seriously.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I guess this is the line that I find most troubling, and it doesn't appear to be half baked: "Two months ago, CA contacted Julian Assange directly to ask for him to share Hillary's hacked email."

MR. BANNON: I have no idea whether that's true or not.

MR. GOWDY: Right.

MR. BANNON: Whether he's making it up, whether he's promoting himself, whether he's trying to be a big shot. There's a whole host of things that happened on an email, somebody is maybe trying to impress somebody. Maybe he's trying to impress Bekah Mercer.

MR. GOWDY: Right. But, Mr. Bannon, you didn't know the authenticity or accuracy of anything in that email related to Trump Tower and that did not keep you from commenting on it. You didn't know whether there's a crown prosecutor. You don't know whether the information was provided.

MR. BANNON: There is one big difference: It was a global media story that was played out day after day after day in excruciating detail, not on an email from people I don't even -- you don't even know who they are or how real they are. It's a big difference. It's a fundamental --

MR. GOWDY: How was how widely disseminated something is, how does that impact whether or not it's unpatriotic or treasonous?

MR. BANNON: Well, the level of detail that was in there. Once again, you know, for a campaign official like Paul Manafort to go to the meeting that's outlined here with this type of information here I think is unpatriotic. I understand that --

MR. GOWDY: You're assuming that he knew what the meeting was about before he attended. Are you not?

MR. BANNON: Yes, that's correct.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Do you know --

MR. BANNON: And I'm getting that from press information.

MR. GOWDY: Do you know whether or not he knew it?

MR. BANNON: Do I know that for a fact that he absolutely knew it, the answer is no.

MR. GOWDY: So when Jared Kushner testifies that he had no idea what the meeting was about when Donald Jr. asked him to attend, do you have anything to dispute that?

MR. BANNON: Jared Kushner, no.

MR. GOWDY: When Jared Kushner says that about 10 minutes into it he started asking his receptionist to call him to get him out of the meeting, did you know that?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: Contacting Julian Assange directly does not strike me as, to use your phrase, a half-baked idea. That's pretty specific. It's pretty direct.

MR. BANNON: No, I think it's --

MR. GOWDY: Pointing right to the source.

MR. BANNON: I totally disagree with you. It's another half-baked idea. If somebody told me they were going to call up Julian Assange, I'd say that's

ridiculous. It's a half-baked idea. It's the definition of a half-baked idea.

MR. GOWDY: How?

MR. BANNON: Because it's a half-baked idea.

MR. GOWDY: He's the keeper -- he's the holder of the hacked emails. He's the disseminator of the hacked emails. How is that a half-baked idea?

MR. BANNON: Because I think it's a half-baked idea for some guy to say, "I'm going to call Julian Assange," and what does he say, "ask him to share Hillary's hacked emails with us to disseminate"? That, by definition, Congressman, is a half-baked idea.

Now, we can sit here all night and debate that, and I'm prepared to do that --

MR. GOWDY: Well, I don't want to do that.

Some of my colleagues have mused that you are something of a horse whisperer for the Speaker of the House and that you control what he investigates and the extent to which he investigates it. I think this is the same Paul Ryan that earlier you testified was part of the establishment and sought to undermine the legitimacy of the President's election. So I'm going to read you a tweet from one of my colleagues, okay?

"The responsibility to conduct a thorough investigation or to prevent one ultimately falls on Speaker Ryan. I'm concerned he's heeding the calls of Bannon and the President to, quote, 'do something' by closing down the Russia investigation and opening up another investigation of Hillary Clinton." And he misspelled Hillary, but I'm sure that was an oversight, and it doesn't detract from his support of her one bit.

Have you ever had a conversation with Paul Ryan about the Russia investigation?

[4:22 p.m.]

MR. BANNON: Not either during the campaign or the time -- since the time I left the White House. I can't comment on the transition and/or the time at the White House, on advice of counsel and the White House.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I think this is the same Paul Ryan that you said was part of the establishment and was trying to undermine the legitimacy of Donald Trump's election. Those would be one and the same, right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: "I said the establishment is trying to nullify your election. Forget the Democrats, we got our own thing with the three committees investigating Russia collusion."

So I'm trying to reconcile how Paul Ryan can be part of the establishment that is trying to nullify Donald Trump's election, but at the same time, according to some of my Democrat colleagues, you're pulling his strings and telling him what to do with respect to the Russia investigation.

To the extent any of my Democrat --

MR. BANNON: Could you repeat that? This is what I'm confused about. You said someone's saying I'm a horse whisperer to Speaker Ryan?

MR. GOWDY: Well, that's my word. What's not my word is the tweet I read you. That belongs to a Democrat colleague of mine.

"The responsibility to conduct a thorough investigation or prevent one ultimately falls on Paul Ryan. I'm concerned he's heeding the calls of Bannon and the President to do something by closing down the Russia investigation." It wasn't through yet. He said: "Committee Republicans are acting on the President and Steve Bannon's injunction."

So the not implication, the clear accusation of my Democrat colleague is that you are directing the Russia investigation and/or Paul Ryan.

And I'm just struggling to reconcile that with, number one, reality; but, number two, with your belief that Paul was part of the establishment who is seeking to delegitimize the President's election.

MR. BANNON: So, number one, I'm not and have not tried to, since leaving the White House, had conversations with or direct Speaker Ryan on anything regarding the Russia investigation. But I have been pretty adamant and I've gone out and made a number of speeches all over the country that one of the tenets are that this committee should be -- should have been wrapped up -- I think I was specific -- before Christmas of 2017, and a report issued and kind of get on with it. And I've been very vocal about that and very public about that.

MR. GOWDY: And that is fine, you are entitled to your opinion. My Democrat colleagues are not -- they're also entitled to their opinion, but they're not entitled to their own version of the facts.

MR. BANNON: I'm sorry, Congressman.

MR. GOWDY: It's hard for me to ask questions when your lawyer keeps interrupting us. So –

MR. BURCK: I'm trying to help.

MR. GOWDY: So my question is this. Are you pulling Paul Ryan's strings? Are you directing him on what to do and how to do it? Or is it possible that my Democrat colleagues are wrong in the accusation they leveled against the Speaker?

MR. BANNON: I think that your Democrat colleagues are wrong, sir. I do not pull the strings or try to pull the strings.

MR. GOWDY: Okay.

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Schiff, 30 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just so credit where credit is due, that's my tweet that my colleague is referring to. And I thank you for proving my point.

Mr. Bannon, did you say words to the effect when you left the White House that you thought you would be more influential outside the White House than inside the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And was that because you had access to the Breitbart publication and the bully pulpit you would have, untethered to constraints from the White House?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Why did you think you would be more effective or influential outside the White House then?

MR. BANNON: Because in the White House, I was just a staffer, and, you know, outside the White House I could get back to doing what I'm doing: giving speeches, being on radio, doing Breitbart, but also nonprofits. I would be able to, you know, just kind of go do my thing like I was doing before August 14th of 2016.

MR. SCHIFF: And one way to influence the Speaker's actions might be, as my colleague says, to call him on the phone. Another might be to rally the support of the Trump base against the Speaker, is that also correct, or to pressure the Speaker?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And by going around giving speeches saying that the

Democrats are running the Intelligence Committee, Republicans need to wrap this up, were you hoping to put pressure on congressional Republicans to wrap up the investigation?

MR. BANNON: To bring it to a timely close around Christmas of -- I think I'm on the record as saying Christmas of 2017.

MR. SCHIFF: So around the time of the tweet my colleague is referencing, you were doing your best to put pressure on congressional leadership to bring this to an end by the end of last year?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if it's to put pressure, but to make it into -- to put it into the public conscience that it was time to wrap this up by the end of the year. They had gone on for a year; it was time to wrap it up.

MR. SCHIFF: In the hope that the Republican base would pressure the Speaker and other congressional leadership to do so?

MR. BANNON: In the hope that the Republican base would start to get energized about exactly what -- about the length and duration and what this was doing as a -- as a committee, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And that might be a more effective way for you to exercise leverage than calling the Speaker's office?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: I'll yield to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

Mr. Bannon, on September 21st, 2016, Donald Trump Jr. emailed several campaign officials, including you, with the subject line WikiLeaks. I'm going to show you a Bates stamped number ending in 909.

And if we have copies for -- and I'll let counsel on the other side.

[redacted] do you want to --

MR. SWALWELL: Please review it first.

Are you familiar with that document?

MR. BANNON: I've seen this before, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Do you recall receiving that email?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you see your email address or your name on the email?

MR. BANNON: I do.

MR. SWALWELL: And it was sent from Don Jr. to you, right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And at the time, you were CEO of the campaign?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Don Jr. is -- would you agree that he is playing an active role in the campaign at that time?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And your testimony today is that you did not see that email?

MR. BANNON: I did not -- I said I don't remember seeing this email.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Well, in the email, he wrote: "Guys, I got a weird Twitter DM from WikiLeaks. See below. I tried the password and it works and the about section they reference contains the next pic in terms of who is behind it. Not sure if this is anything, but it seems like it's really WikiLeaks asking me, as I follow them and it is a DM. Do you know the people mentioned and what the conspiracy they are looking for could be? These are just screenshots, but it's a

fully built out page claiming to be a PAC. Let me know your thoughts and if you want to look into it."

Now, at this point in time, it's in the public domain that WikiLeaks is releasing hacked Democratic emails. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: The first hacked -- the first hacked emails were released when?

MR. SWALWELL: Approximately June-July of 2016.

MR. BANNON: Okay.

MR. SWALWELL: So you would agree. And you said you first learned of them when they were reported in the press. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And just to go back a little bit, in -- during the summer of 2016, candidate Trump had stated at a public rally: "Russia, if you're listening, you would be mightily rewarded if you produced Hillary's deleted emails." Do you remember that?

MR. BANNON: I think -- I didn't see it -- I wasn't on the campaign, but I think I remember seeing it on TV and people commenting on it.

MR. SWALWELL: So, looking at this email, who is David Bossie?

MR. BANNON: David Bossie was the deputy campaign manager.

MR. SWALWELL: And Brad Parscale is the --

MR. BANNON: Ran digital operations.

MR. SWALWELL: And Jared Kushner is also on the email. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: That is correct. And Kellyanne Conway.

MR. SWALWELL: Why do you think WikiLeaks was contacting Donald Jr.?

MR. BANNON: I have no earthly idea.

MR. SWALWELL: Had Donald Trump Jr. ever discussed with you WikiLeaks prior to this email being sent?

MR. BANNON: In what regard?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, did he discuss WikiLeaks -- let's more broadly, did he discuss WikiLeaks with you at all?

MR. BANNON: I don't specifically remember, but a lot of people were talking about the -- the -- you know, just in passing, the WikiLeaks, you know, Podesta emails, things like that.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Donald Trump Jr. tell you prior to this email that he had been in contact with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Following this email, did he ever talk to you about any contacts he had with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of any followup discussions with Don Jr. about this email?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know whether Brad Parscale responded to this email?

MR. BANNON: I have no idea.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know whether anyone responded to this email?

MR. BANNON: I have no idea.

MR. SWALWELL: And it's your testimony today that you did not respond?

MR. BANNON: I did not respond.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you ever contacted by WikiLeaks, Julian Assange,

or anyone else with the organization?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you ever contacted by WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, or anyone with the organization after November 8th?

MR. BURCK: To be consistent, he is directed not to answer that question.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Bannon, you're refusing to testify whether you were contacted by WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: On the advice of my counsel and the White House, because of the timeframe, not the content.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you familiar during the campaign whether anyone other than Donald Trump Jr. was in contact with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: Was I --

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of anyone else other than Donald Jr. being in contact with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: No. I'm not -- that presupposes he was in contact with WikiLeaks off this. I'm not agreeing to that. I don't think that says this.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, if you read the email, he says: "Guys, I got a weird Twitter DM from WikiLeaks." Is that right?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: So they are at least contacting him. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: I have no earthly idea Don Jr.'s expertise in this. It could really be WikiLeaks; it could be something false. I have no idea. I don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: And are you familiar with public reporting and a public acknowledgement by Donald Trump Jr. that he, in fact, was in touch with the Twitter verified handle @WikiLeaks throughout the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: You're not? You haven't read about that?

MR. BANNON: No, I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you known that, is that something that would have concerned you?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Why?

MR. BANNON: I just -- I would want to -- I would have had one of the lawyers or somebody just check into that.

MR. SWALWELL: Going back to what you acknowledged you said to the author of "Fire and Fury," that the June 9th meeting is something that should have been reported to the FBI, do you think that the President's -- a Presidential candidate's son being in contact with an organization like WikiLeaks is something that also should have been passed along to the FBI?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: Why not?

MR. BANNON: I just don't know. I have to think about it.

MR. SWALWELL: Does it meet the same criteria of what you thought justified reporting the June 9th meeting, or the June 9th approach at least, to the FBI?

MR. BANNON: I think the June 9th would be much worse than WikiLeaks, contact with WikiLeaks. I just don't -- I just think it's not comparable.

MR. SWALWELL: And, again, to be clear, at this point in time WikiLeaks is alleged to have been disseminating hacked Democratic emails, stolen Democratic emails.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you familiar with Donald Trump Jr. going to Paris in October of 2016?

MR. BANNON: Was I aware of it?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: After the fact.

MR. SWALWELL: When after the fact?

MR. BANNON: Do you have -- when was it reported?

MR. SWALWELL: You know, that's something I don't have in front of me right now, but I'm just asking, to your knowledge, were you -- at the time that he went, were you --

MR. BANNON: It was -- I believe he gave a paid speech or he gave a speech where he took payment. I think it was an article I read. That's when I became aware that he had gone to Paris and had -- he had given -- it was a paid event, I think.

MR. SWALWELL: So he didn't ask you before he went?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: And he didn't report back to you when he got home?

MR. BANNON: He -- no.

MR. SWALWELL: And just to go back to Mr. Schiff's questions about Donald Trump Jr. and his father, would you agree that they had a rather close father-son relationship, from your observations?

MR. BANNON: Yes. As a father and son, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Would you observe them when you were working at Trump Tower to engage with each other in one another's offices, Don Jr. if Mr.

Trump was in the building would go visit with his father?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Would you observe candidate Trump, if Donald Trump Jr. was away from the office, to speak to Don Jr. by telephone?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And would they discuss the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I think half and half. I think half of it was family and half of it was, from what I remember, Don Jr.'s travels, particularly Don Jr.'s principal role or the role -- and this was not it, right, so I don't know what this stuff is.

His principal role was going throughout the country and talking to groups of hunters, and particularly in battleground States of, you know, upper Michigan or Colorado or places like Nevada. And so virtually all the conversations I remember that Don Jr. ever had with his father was in something of where he was going, the group he was speaking to, how enthusiastic they were, and how they were giving money.

MR. SWALWELL: Did candidate Trump ever discuss to you any conversations he learned about his son having with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: How about after the election?

MR. BURCK: He has to -- he can't answer that question because of the timeframe that it would call for information from.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you refusing to answer, Mr. Bannon?

MR. BANNON: On the advice of my counsel and the White House.

MR. SWALWELL: I'll yield back to Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Just to follow up on that last point, you said that typically you

observed Don Jr. discussing with his father where he was going, what States he was going to, who he was going to be speaking with, how excited he was.

This confuses me because earlier, in answer to my questions, you said these were the kind of things that Don Jr. would do without discussing it with his father.

MR. BANNON: I didn't say discussing. The question before was, was he looking for approval and sign-off or would he just go do it, right, and set it up himself. It's fundamentally different. He would definitely come back and talk about it or saying the groups he was going out to. He wasn't looking for guidance. There was no sign-off procedure that we had. He had this kind of role that we gave him and he just did it. So it's a fundamentally different thing.

MR. SCHIFF: But it wouldn't be out of character for Don Jr. to discuss with his father meetings that he was having, the contents of the speeches he was giving, or the events he was going to?

MR. BANNON: That would be correct. Not all the time, but he was, you know, particularly if, you know, something in Colorado or Nevada or there was a group that was particularly enthusiastic or more people showed up, et cetera, he would tell his father.

MR. SCHIFF: Or if there was something unique or striking about one of the events he went to?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So it wouldn't be out of character for him to have discussed this proposition by the Russians and the meeting that took place?

MR. BANNON: What proposition?

MR. SCHIFF: That they would give him incriminating information about Hillary Clinton.

MR. BANNON: That I don't know. That's -- that -- that meeting and everything about it is so out of the ordinary of what Don Jr., at least the Don Jr. -- remember, I came in in August 16th -- August 14th. The Don Jr. I knew and what he did when I was there, it had nothing to do with that and nothing to do with this kind of stuff. He was literally on, you know, either on a plane or out meeting people nonstop. So --

MR. SCHIFF: So this would have been a unique undertaking for him, a meeting of this kind?

MR. BANNON: What meeting, the meeting on June --

MR. SCHIFF: On June 9th.

MR. BANNON: To my knowledge of everything that happened after August 14th of 2016, yes, it would be.

MR. SCHIFF: Ms. Speier.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Bannon.

I have a couple of clarifying questions.

Did you say earlier today that you were asked to sign an NDA after you joined the White House?

MR. BANNON: The answer is affirmative. It is during the time of the White House, not the transition. And so I shouldn't have answered it, but I did, and it's correct.

MS. SPEIER: All right. And was it the practice that everyone in the White House would be required to sign an NDA?

MR. BANNON: That's actually -- now it's more defined, so I've got to refuse to answer that on the grounds it took place during the time I was at the White House.

MS. SPEIER: All right.

Did you ever meet with Devin Nunes about the Russia investigation?

MR. BANNON: That would -- I have to refuse to answer that, because it would -- that would entail the transition or the time I was at the White House, on advice of counsel and the White House.

MS. SPEIER: When you were the CEO of the campaign starting August 14th and through the rest of the campaign, the then-candidate Donald Trump spent a lot of time talking about the election being rigged. Can I assume that that was -- that you were involved in coming up with that strategy to talk about that to discredit the election?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if he was saying the election was rigged. I think he was saying the system's rigged. And he would talk a lot about Bernie Sanders and the primary, Democratic primary.

I believe it was only towards the last debate when something came up, and it was -- and they asked him a question where the President answered. But I think up until then, if you go back and check, it was that the system's rigged. And the specific example he would use I think would be Bernie Sanders and the Democratic primary.

MS. SPEIER: Well, my recollection -- we can all go back and review it -- he kept saying this election is rigged, and then he stopped saying it after he got elected, is my recollection. But we'll take that --

MR. BANNON: I believe it was the system's rigged. And I think he said something about the election when they asked him the question in the last debate.

MS. SPEIER: You became affiliated with the campaign on August 14th, correct?

MR. BANNON: 13th, 14th, yes, ma'am.

MS. SPEIER: And you had no involvement with the campaign before then?

MR. BANNON: No.

MS. SPEIER: But you were somehow involved with the campaign, because you were involved with the super PAC, were you not?

MR. BANNON: No, I wasn't really involved with the super PAC, I don't believe.

MS. SPEIER: Let me possibly --

MR. BANNON: I think the super PAC was set up in June of 2016, and I don't believe I had any affiliation with it.

MS. SPEIER: There is an email that Mr. Nix emails to you and Rebekah Mercer on June 1st saying: "We have submitted a proposal to the campaign that ensures enough staff remain free to support the PAC. I'm also free to give 100 percent commitment to the PAC. However, because I am U.K., I cannot be the strategic lead."

Bannon replies: "Just get me the names and the billets on the PAC team and the campaign team ASAP," prompting Nix to task Cambridge Analytica employees Alex Tayler and Matt Oczkowski to do so.

MR. BANNON: Yeah, I was just -- what I did is help the Mercers with their lawyer just kind of set up the original PAC, but I had no -- after that no involvement. And my involvement in that was de minimus.

MS. SPEIER: So did you or Rebekah Mercer connect Cambridge Analytica to the Trump campaign via Jared Kushner?

MR. BANNON: I think both of us connected Cambridge to the campaign via Jared Kushner, yes.

MS. SPEIER: Did you exert any special influence or urging the Trump campaign towards Cambridge Analytica's services?

MR. BANNON: What would your definition of special urging be?

MS. SPEIER: Well, did you speak to anyone, write emails, speak about the urgency?

MR. BANNON: I think I talked to Jared maybe once. I'm not sure. Actually, it was not Jared. I think it was in June. If you check the date of that email, I think it was Corey Lewandowski, that I just talked to him about whatever their data operation was in San Antonio.

And I knew they had a -- supposedly a fairly sophisticated data operation, that I knew they were looking for other contractors, is what Corey told me, and I think Jared did too, and that they should take a look at Cambridge.

No special urging. I don't think any sense of -- I remember any sense of huge urgency, but that they should -- this was before the convention -- that they should definitely, you know, look at Cambridge Analytica thoroughly as a part of the portfolio they had down there, which was essentially a combination of contractors.

MS. SPEIER: So from the rest of the pitching process to when Cambridge Analytica was officially brought on in July of 2016, did you remain involved, whether by consultation or direction, to Mr. Nix or others at Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: In what regard? In regard to the Trump campaign?

MS. SPEIER: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Tangentially. I think they had a -- I think they got a meeting or they met with Corey or Parscale or one of these guys in the June timeframe, and I think it was basically they were going back and forth after then. I might have sent an email or two, but nothing that strikes my -- nothing that gets me that a huge effort.

I mean, it was, you know, we wanted them to take a look at them.

MS. SPEIER: So do you know how much Cambridge Analytica was paid for running the PAC?

MR. BANNON: For running the PAC?

MS. SPEIER: Yes.

MR. BANNON: No.

MS. SPEIER: And you weren't paid for any involvement in the PAC?

MR. BANNON: No.

MS. SPEIER: So throughout the Trump campaign, either before you became CEO or after, you never got paid, outside of expenses?

MR. BANNON: By the PAC?

MS. SPEIER: No, by the campaign.

MR. BANNON: I have to check that. I don't know. I know at first it was expenses. It might have been $10,000 a month or something later on. I want to check that. I'll ask. If it was, it was not more than like $10,000 a month. I think it was nothing, but I'll check that.

MS. SPEIER: So there's a telephone call, conference call that's scheduled for mid-May, and it looks like Kellyanne Conway encourages that Rebekah should be involved and you agree.

So what is your relationship at this point with the campaign, with Kellyanne and others?

MR. BANNON: Is this about Cambridge Analytica?

MS. SPEIER: Well, this is -- this is a call that's being set up, and you are evidently on this email train or thread.

MR. BURCK: Can you give us a date or --

MS. SPEIER: I don't have it in front of me. Do we have it? This is May 11th.

MR. BANNON: Kellyanne ran the PAC for -- the super PAC, whatever you call it -- for the Mercers, for the Ted Cruz effort. I believe Cruz dropped out in the May timeframe, and I think that there was a -- Trump was obviously the victor. And I think there was some effort or some discussions about getting Kellyanne into the -- get her to sign up for the Trump campaign as a pollster.

MS. SPEIER: So your involvement is through the Mercers at this point or through Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: Involvement in what?

MS. SPEIER: Well, you agree that this phone call should take place, so you're somehow cc'd in this.

MR. BANNON: I don't think it has anything to do with Cambridge Analytica. I think it's just --

MR. BURCK: Also, it's impossible to know what you're referring to, because we don't know what the email is, we don't know the timeframe.

MS. SPEIER: I understand. We're trying to locate it.

MR. BURCK: And also, the May timeframe seems to be when Kellyanne Conway was working for Ted Cruz. So we're not sure what campaign you're referring to.

MS. SPEIER: So there's an email to you and Rebekah Mercer on June 1st saying, "We've submitted a proposal to the campaign. I'm also free to give 100 percent commitment to the PAC. However, because I'm a U.K., I cannot be the strategic lead." I think I just already went through that with you.

Alex Tayler emails Cambridge attorney Larry Levy and Nix and other

Cambridge Analytica employees on June 14th about the Defeat Crooked Hillary contract. Following a call between you, evidently, and Alexander Nix --

[redacted] Four minutes.

MS. SPEIER: -- this morning, "Defeat Crooked Hillary is going to launch tomorrow and Steve has asked us to finalize a contract with the PAC before launch."

Nix emails you on June 20th, just to confirm the super PAC is launching today. You reply: "Announce tomorrow, but you and Bossie need to get this thing up and running ASAP."

So I'm still trying to understand how you were not involved with the PAC and the campaign at that point, and yet you were calling the shots in some respects and telling people what to do.

MR. BANNON: I'm certainly not involved in the campaign, because that's May of, you know, 2016. And anything I did on the PAC was just to help the Mercers get this thing stood up. Like I had no affiliation. There was just -- I think their lawyer was Larry Levy. Just to give him some advice of how to get this thing stood up. I think Dave Bossie and -- I believe the name of the PAC was actually Defeat Crooked Hillary.

MS. SPEIER: Right.

MR. BANNON: They were changing the name of it. And I think that Dave Bossie and I believe Kellyanne were going to be the people that ran it until she went into the campaign. But I had no affiliation with the campaign.

MS. SPEIER: So you had no affiliation, but you were assisting the Mercers in setting up this PAC because they wanted to do this?

MR. BANNON: Yeah. They -- I think it was -- and I think it's been in the press that after Ted Cruz withdrew in I believe it was around mid-May, that they

wanted to and were going to put their efforts into a PAC that was, you know, maybe not -- not -- it was a PAC, you know, to help Trump, but maybe something not the genesis, and I think if you look was not doing pro-Trump stuff but doing anti-Hillary stuff.

And so that's why I believe they pulled the name Defeat Crooked Hillary, which I think was the -- was the -- as a matter of fact, I think they just took their old -- if I remember correctly, and I didn't spend a lot of time -- is I think what they did is just I think they took the old name of the Ted Cruz PAC and just changed the name of it, because they had already spent all the money for Ted Cruz. And Kellyanne ran that, and I think it was going to be Kellyanne and Bossie or -- Kellyanne and Bossie were going to run it. It was, I mean, it was pretty straightforward.

MS. SPEIER: So I'll follow up with this. On August 14th, there's an email thread in which Nix emails you with the subject line Trump cost, where he lays out how CA will reassign its personnel between the Trump campaign and the PAC, concluding: "It will cost Trump campaign $650,000 to $800,000 per month to have everyone at CA on the campaign."

[redacted] One minute.

MS. SPEIER: "It would be about $100,000 a month to leave a small team in place to service the super PAC. It would cost about 300 to 350K per month to move the rest of the D.C. team onto the Trump campaign."

So this is right as you're becoming CEO of the campaign. And there's a conversation by CA, with you on the thread, talking about moving people from the super PAC to the campaign. And there's supposed to be this ironclad firewall that exists between the two.

So as you become the CEO, I'm curious as to how that firewall is protected.

MR. BANNON: I don't think there -- I think it turned out that there were no changes. I don't think CA sent people down or whatever. I think this was one of Alexander's ideas, I believe. I don't think -- and I think the rule is -- and I'm not an expert at this -- that you can go from a -- I think you can go from a PAC into a campaign or a campaign into a PAC. I forget what it is, but one way or the other.

I'm not sure that was ever implemented. I think it was an idea of his to add more of these data scientists or whatever to the operation in San Antonio.

Like I said, I had -- and the way that we operated -- remember, on August 14th, we're 85 days out of getting the biggest landslide in history against us. So we were divide and conquer. The digital operation was really run by a guy named Brad Parscale, who reported up to kind of Jared, and they kind of ran that. All those decisions, everything like that, were Jared and Brad Parscale's.

So I don't know if there's a ton of emails of me saying, hey, a great idea, let's sign a contract tomorrow. I'd be very surprised if there was. Once again, I'm a recipient of a lot of people pitching what I call half-baked ideas. Sometimes they turn out and most times they're just half-baked.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you.

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Bannon, we're almost through on our side, but I do have one series of questions I'd like to ask you. It's going to seem a bit self-serving. But your speeches you're making that our committee should have already been through by December, trying to flush out what's informed you or how you formed that opinion.

Your background, your history, have you ever led a congressional investigation like we're doing right now that should give you a basis to say we should

be through?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Do you have any -- have you got an insider over here on one side or the other that's keeping you up to date on what we've done or not done?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Do you know who we've interviewed, who we haven't interviewed?

MR. BANNON: Just what I've read in the media.

MR. CONAWAY: You haven't seen me on TV at all?

MR. BANNON: I watch very little television. No, I have not seen you on TV.

MR. CONAWAY: You wouldn't see me anyway had you watched it all the time. In all of my public comments, I've said nothing but getting this investigation over as quickly as we can, getting these things answered.

Is there something else about what I've done that led you to believe that somehow the committee is slow-walking this investigation?

MR. BANNON: I don't know the inner workings of the committee, but my strong belief was that, particularly given 2018 is an off-year election, that this thing, you know, work nights and weekends, drive a stake in the ground, have it wrapped up in December, issue your report, and get on with it.

MR. CONAWAY: So are you aware of the hours that my team has put in --

MR. BANNON: I am not, sir.

MR. CONAWAY -- between Thanksgiving and Christmas?

MR. BANNON: I am not, sir, no.

MR. CONAWAY: How long have we been at this?

MR. BANNON: I think you started in -- was it May?

MR. CONAWAY: March.

MR. BANNON: March.

MR. CONAWAY: So less than a year.

I understand personal opinion, and I understand that the rationale may -- the '18 elections, et cetera, et cetera. I just wanted to make sure I understood how you came by that conclusion.

MR. BANNON: There's no -- there's no -- here's the conclusion. There's no higher stakes than I think what this committee is doing. I think this committee -- and I'll say it again -- is I think looked at, you know, by some people, particularly given the amount of television that, you know, some of the opposition have done, the Democrats have done, is about -- and look, this is a personal belief -- but delegitimizing the election of President Trump.

And that's why I felt that when this thing was impaneled, I didn't agree with it at the time, and I just think that it should be -- and I've said and I think I've said in every speech I've given and every time I've talked about it, not to cut down its work, not to cut down its scope, to go with the original mandate it had, but that you got to work 24/7, that it was imperative to get this thing done and to issue your report to the American people.

The more it lingers, and particularly if it lingers into 2018, it's going to have a major impact or potentially could have a major impact, because of the -- just the way it's gone on and the publicity that it's stirred up.

MR. CONAWAY: All right.

MR. BANNON: And I cite today that where I was sitting with you guys and the next thing I know I'm hearing -- you know, I'm seeing that I've been issued a

subpoena in the room.

MR. CONAWAY: You were in the room when we issued it.

MR. BANNON: I know, but I'm saying the media picked it 30 seconds -- 30 seconds after I got it, it was on the media.

MR. CONAWAY: That's embarrassing.

MR. BANNON: But, sir, that's --

MR. CONAWAY: It's over us, not you.

MR. BANNON: I know that. But that is exactly my point. I've been going around the country saying that. It's not a slight on anybody in this committee. It's not a slight on the hard work. I can tell today that it's highly professional and quite focused. I have no problem with any of that.

It's just the fact that something like this is so large, I think potentially, on the delegitimization of President Trump's election that it's got to be sorted out, got on with. The report's got to be done and gotten out there.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, we agree on that we ought to be working real hard, and we agree that there are certain questions we got to answer. I don't think our charge has anything to do with the delegitimization of a duly elected President of the United States. But we have important questions to answer.

So, Adam, we are through on our side. You are recognized 30 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Chairman, just out of the interest of consistency, the Benghazi investigation lasted, among its many iterations, 3 or 4 years. Did you raise any public objection to the length of the Benghazi investigation while it was going on?

MR. BANNON: I think at the time I actually thought it went on too long, it should get to the point and get on with it. But that's also not -- there's a

fundamental difference with the Benghazi. It's also not about an election that we just had, right?

Benghazi was a serious matter. I think it was handled appropriately. I think I actually argued in my radio show and other things that we should concentrate it so that the facts can get out there while it was in memory of certain things.

I know there's some controversy about did it affect the 2012 outcome, but I don't think that was the major part of it. The major part of this is about the delegitimization or the questioning of -- you know, I've called this in these speeches I've given part of the nullification project.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, you just raised a concern that this investigation not go on during an election year. Benghazi ran during election years and nonelection years, did it not?

MR. BANNON: I believe it did, sir. Yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And you mentioned you had private reservations about the length of the Benghazi investigation.

MR. BANNON: No, I think I was public in those reservations, I think on my radio show, et cetera, that the Benghazi should -- should -- the same thing. These things should get on with it. They should be more tight and get to the point.

And I think in Benghazi -- this is all from memory -- I think it took a while, actually, to get, you know, Secretary Clinton there. I think in these things, they're so electric that they ought to just be gotten into.

But you can't -- I think it would be an unfair comparison to say, oh, I was good with Benghazi, because it went after Democrats or potential Democrats and not good with this.

MR. SCHIFF: That is, of course, the implication, Mr. Bannon.

The chairman asked you whether -- how familiar you were with the workings of this committee investigation. But, as I understand it, you're not permitted to or you won't respond to any questions about whether you met or discussed with Chairman Nunes the investigation during its pendency. Is that correct?

MR. BANNON: Because of the potential timeframe that you're talking about, when I was in the White House.

MR. SCHIFF: So in terms of the questions my colleague was asking earlier, whether you had given your opinion as to the length of the investigation or how the majority ought to handle the investigation, at this stage you're not prepared to answer any questions along those lines if it refers to conversations you had with Chairman Nunes?

MR. BANNON: That is correct, on advice of my counsel and the White House, given the timeframe that it happened.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, did you ever while you were in the White House, were you ever instructed to take any action that you believed could hinder the Russia investigation in any way?

MR. BANNON: I can't answer that.

MR. BURCK: I'm not going to allow him to answer that question today.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, were you ever given any instruction while you were in the White House that you felt might amount to an effort to obstruct justice?

MR. BANNON: The same answer.

MR. SCHIFF: So even if it might involve a criminal offense, your position is that that would still be covered by privilege?

MR. BURCK: I think you can take maybe a negative implication from your question.

MR. SCHIFF: My question is, are you taking the position that even if it involved a potential criminal obstruction of justice that the privilege would preclude you from testifying to it today?

MR. BURCK: I do not believe that if a crime was committed that it would necessarily -- that the privilege would trump that.

But his answer to you is that he cannot answer the question. So I think that one implication you could draw from that is that he was not asked, in his mind, to commit any crimes.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I don't have to draw implications. Were you ever given an instruction while you were with the administration that you believed might be -- might amount to an act of obstruction that could violate the law?

MR. BANNON: Upon advice of counsel and the White House, I can't answer that question.

MR. SCHIFF: And I do wish to put on the record, we've consulted with House counsel. House counsel knows of no precedent that would allow a witness to invoke executive privilege as against Congress while not invoking it regarding a special counsel. And that was not the holding of the Nixon case.

I'm going to go through a series of questions now, Mr. Bannon, some of which may be quick if you are unwilling to respond at this point, but I want to be a little more --

MR. BANNON: Do they all have to do with the time of transition or the White House?

MR. SCHIFF: No, they don't.

MR. BANNON: So we could give a blanket answer and move on.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, this could be very quick, especially the latter questions,

for that reason. But as we do need to establish the full record of what you'll answer and what you won't, we'll need to go through them.

Have you ever been to Russia?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: What travel did you take during the course of the campaign, international travel?

MR. BANNON: During the course of when I was -- I was -- from the time I was CEO to the end?

MR. SCHIFF: Let's say during 2016.

MR. BANNON: I believe I went to London for a week. Oh, you know, I went to -- yeah, I made a film. So I went to Rome, the Vatican. I made a movie. So I went to Rome, Athens, Auschwitz, and Paris for the film. I was making a documentary. And then I went to –

MR. SCHIFF: Was that all on one trip?

MR. BANNON: It was all in one trip, for about 4 weeks.

MR. SCHIFF: And during what month of 2016 would that have been, month or months?

MR. BANNON: I think it was in February-March. It was early.

MR. SCHIFF: And during the time you were working on the film or during that trip, did you meet with any foreign nationals and discuss the Presidential campaign, apart from a generalized what's happening in America kind of a question?

MR. BANNON: No, no, no. It was all film crew guys.

And then I went to London for a week, I'm pretty sure around Brexit. We did live coverage from that. So that was in late May or early June.

MR. SCHIFF: So you went to London to cover it for Breitbart or --

MR. BANNON: Yes, Breitbart and Sirius XM. We had live radio coverage, I'm pretty sure, live radio coverage and also for Breitbart. And I didn't meet any foreign nationals and talk about the Presidential election.

MR. BANNON: Did Breitbart take a position on Brexit?

MR. BANNON: Well, I mean, Breitbart London and Breitbart -- when you say take a position, we don't take editorial positions, but we, you know, we were considered -- if we're considered the populist, you know, news platform or nationalist news platform here, I think we're considered the UKIP, you know, leave platform there. It's kind of the angle of attack of like the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times would be looked at as remain, guys; we were looked at as leave guys.

MR. SCHIFF: And during your time in London, did you meet with Nigel Farage?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you provide any political consultation or support of the Brexit effort through your discussions with Mr. Farage?

MR. BANNON: No. Just news. Breaking news and getting -- getting him on radio I think a couple of times.

MR. SCHIFF: So in your meetings with him, it was in your capacity as a reporter/publisher?

MR. BANNON: Well, yes, executive of a news organization and a host of a radio show, a news show.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you meet with Mr. Farage again after you joined the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the context of that meeting?

MR. BANNON: He was in the United States -- this is probably late August-early September -- he was in the United States with a couple of guys and just called up and came by the tower I think on a Saturday at like 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

MR. SCHIFF: And for the purpose of meeting with who?

MR. BANNON: For the purpose of meeting with me.

MR. SCHIFF: To your knowledge, was he meeting with other campaign officials as well?

MR. BANNON: It was the purpose of meeting with me. I found out later, you know, looking at the papers, that somehow he got up and saw President Trump -- or President-elect Trump -- unbeknownst to me.

MR. BANNON: Was he President-elect Trump at the time?

MR. BANNON: It must have been candidate Trump. Candidate Trump. I'm trying to think. Yes, then-candidate Trump.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you recall what month that was that he -- this was in Trump Tower?

MR. BANNON: This was in Trump Tower. I'm trying to think. Was it with President-elect or -- I think he came by on the campaign. I think it was like late August-early September. It was a quick casual meeting to say, you know, congratulations on being the CEO, et cetera, et cetera.

And I'm pretty sure it was that time he saw Trump. It might have been right after he won the same thing happened, but I think it was that time that somehow in the lobby he met somebody and they took him up to see the candidate.

MR. SCHIFF: And the nature of the meeting that you had with him was along the lines of a congratulatory meeting?

MR. BANNON: Congratulatory meeting and saying that, you know, I felt the same -- and I've said this publicly -- that the same forces that drove Brexit were at work here in the United States and that we would win the -- although we were way behind, that we would win this election.

MR. SCHIFF: Did he offer to help the campaign in any way?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever get a readout on his meeting with Mr. Trump?

MR. BANNON: No. Just from him later, I think it was just cordial, say hi.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether Mr. Farage has any relationship with WikiLeaks or Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: I don't.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether he was ever a conduit of information to WikiLeaks from Russian sources?

MR. BANNON: No, do not.

MR. SCHIFF: And apart from the film trip and the London trip, did you have any other international travel during 2016?

MR. BANNON: No, no. On the film trip -- actually, there was another foreign travel. We took the -- the other film I made, we took the "Clinton Cash" film to the Cannes Film Festival for like 3 days in May, right before Brexit I think it was. So I went to Cannes for 3 days in May.

MR. SCHIFF: And I take it during none of these three trips that you took during 2016, that during none of these did you have any meetings with any Russian nationals?

MR. BANNON: No, no.

MR. SCHIFF: What is your relationship, prior to the transition, with Jeff Sessions?

MR. BANNON: I had a very close relationship with Jeff Sessions.

MR. SCHIFF: And when did that begin?

MR. BANNON: 2010, 2011.

MR. SCHIFF: Was he a frequent visitor at what you described as Breitbart embassy?

MR. BANNON: Senator Sessions would come over. I don't know how frequent, but he would -- every time I could get him over to dinner or come by. And if we had folks over to come by, we'd try to get him over. Once a quarter maybe. Once every 6 months.

MR. SCHIFF: And prior to his involvement with the Trump campaign, did he ever express any views on Russia, to your knowledge?

MR. BANNON: Never. Never asked him.

MR. SCHIFF: And when he became part of the Trump campaign but prior to your joining the campaign, did you ever have any conversations with him about his work on the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Not his work on the campaign. We talked a lot before he gave the endorsement and, you know, kind of joined the campaign, a lot of discussion, and not much discussion after he did it.

MR. SCHIFF: Was he seeking your advice about whether he should join the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I don't know if seeking advice about whether he should join, but just bouncing ideas off me about kind of this populist movement in the country.

He didn't ask my opinion whether he should do it or not, just how real this was.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have any conversation with Mr. Sessions after the foreign policy team was announced March 21st, 2016, about his leading this group or being part of this group?

MR. BANNON: I actually don't think, and I may be incorrect, but I don't think he was named as the leader of the group. I did have a conversation, but it was not with him. It was with, I think, Corey at the time. This is the first time they announced they had Papadopoulos and those guys on there?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: I don't believe Jeff Sessions. I think Jeff Sessions came on as the leader of it afterwards.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the conversation you had with Mr. Lewandowski about it?

MR. BANNON: That you shouldn't -- you shouldn't do something like this until you have real people take a look at it, and it's worse to put out what you put out than to not put out anything.

MR. SCHIFF: So this conversation --

MR. BANNON: I was quite critical.

MR. BANNON: This conversation you had with Lewandowski was after the foreign policy team was announced by the President -- by the candidate?

MR. BANNON: When that list came out, whatever that list was, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you call him or did he call you?

MR. BANNON: I think I called him.

MR. SCHIFF: And it was his view that basically, if you're going to put out a group of this caliber, you're better off not putting out a group?

MR. BANNON: That was my opinion, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, now, when you say that was your opinion, was that your opinion of the group, or was that his opinion and your interpretation of --

MR. BANNON: Oh, no, that was my opinion of the group. That was my opinion to him.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was his opinion?

MR. BANNON: Check the box and get it out. He was not -- he was not, I think, particularly familiar with a lot of the people on there.

MR. SCHIFF: Have you met Walid Phares --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: -- or had any conversations with him during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Not during the campaign, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Have you had any conversations with him after the campaign?

MR. BANNON: The same.

MR. BURCK: The same, unless you're talking about after the White House time.

MR. BANNON: Which I haven't.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, I think you mentioned that you had not met Carter Page. Is that correct?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SCHIFF: And you haven't met him at any time?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SCHIFF: And you had no communication with him during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever contact Dr. Page and tell him not to talk publicly about his work at the campaign?

MR. BANNON: That would be covered in the transition and the White House, so I can't discuss it.

MR. SCHIFF: And what about Joe Schmitz? Do you know Joe Schmitz?

MR. BANNON: I do know Joe Schmitz.

MR. SCHIFF: And how do you know him?

MR. BANNON: I believe I met him through -- he was chief operating officer of Blackwater, and I think I met him along the time I met Erik years ago. And I've kind of kept in contact with him on and off, one of those every-6-month things, over the years.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the nature of your communication with him during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe I -- if Joe contacted me or whatever, from my time, it was -- I don't ever remember talking to Joe. Maybe he did when I first came on.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you recall ever emailing him or text messaging him?

MR. BANNON: I might have.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you use text messages?

MR. BANNON: Somewhat. Not huge.

MR. SCHIFF: But you don't use encrypted apps, so you just use your phone text message?

MR. BANNON: Right.

MR. SCHIFF: And how about Lieutenant General Keith Kellogg, do you

know him?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And how do you know him?

MR. BANNON: I met him on the campaign and served with him in the White House.

MR. SCHIFF: And what role did he play during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: He played – he and General Flynn played the equivalent, in my mind, played the equivalent role, to prep the President on national security affairs for the debate prep, and also to be on the plane to brief him on those types of aspects of what were in the news, et cetera, and to -- General Kellogg did not take a -- he did not go on stage or talk or participate in any of the rallies. But he would be on the plane and he would be behind the stage with me at the rallies.

MR. SCHIFF: So in terms of the people that were named to this foreign policy team, those that played the most significant role would have been Jeff Sessions and Keith Kellogg?

MR. BANNON: When you say the foreign policy team, are you talking about the first one? I think we redid it just around the time I came, because I think we had a meeting shortly after I got there and it was more expansive.

I think we had Andy McCarthy. I think that's where, if memory serves, I think that's where Sessions really got involved. I think that's where Kellogg got involved. I think it was very different than the Walid Phares, Papadopoulos, Carter Page crowd. Joe Schmitz. I don't know if those other guys dropped off, but it was -- I think it was a pretty fundamental redo of this national security advisory panel.

MR. SCHIFF: On March 21st is when candidate Trump announced his foreign policy team, including Sessions, Phares, Papadopoulos, Schmitz, Page,

Kellogg. And then a few days – 10 days later Sessions presided over a meeting of the foreign policy advisory committee. Does that help refresh your recollection about --

MR. BANNON: Well, I wasn't involved in the campaign then. So I actually didn't even remember Sessions being on the first one. I just remember I think if you look in -- I think there was another session, I think it was like the 20 -- it seemed to me it was in the first week or the second week I was there, they had another meeting with an expanded -- expanded advisory board that had more, I think, substance to it.

MR. SCHIFF: And that would have been in late August of 2016?

MR. BANNON: Yes, late August.

MR. SCHIFF: Where did that meeting take place?

MR. BANNON: On the 25th floor. I attended it.

MR. SCHIFF: And who was present at that meeting?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember. I think it was people like Andy McCarthy. And there were a bunch of people that had either been anybody but Trump or, you know, had not been on the Trump campaign that now were all coming together.

But it had -- I actually thought it was the first time that Keith Kellogg had been to this thing. But it had, you know, a lot more prominent people, the types of people you would normally see on Presidential campaigns that would be on those types of advisory committees, where I think the one in March was a little -- stuck out in the fact that you had guys like Papadopoulos and Carter Page that, you know, to professionals in the business, right, it would stick out as these guys were not as prominent and bring as much gravitas to the situation.

[5:22 p.m.]

MR. SCHIFF: Tell us, if you would, who you can remember being present at that other foreign policy advisory committee meeting in August.

MR. BANNON: I don't remember, but it was pretty prominent -- I mean, it was people like Andy McCarthy, who in the conservative movement is a pretty established name.

MR. SCHIFF: Was Jeff Sessions there?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I think Sessions -- I think Sessions chaired the meeting.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you recall whether Walid Phares was there?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe Walid was there, no.

MR. SCHIFF: J.D. Gordon?

MR. BANNON: I do not believe J.D. Gordon was there, no?

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Mizusawa.

MR. BANNON: The general, Mizusawa? I think he's an Army general, yes, he was there.

MR. SCHIFF: What was the subject matter of the August foreign policy meeting?

MR. BANNON: It was an agenda. I think it took like an hour. The President came down. It was, you know, radical Islam terrorism, the Iran deal, you know, NATO, China, Russia Syria, things like that. It's pretty standard stock. It was not -- I wasn't really that happy with it, taking everybody's time, the President's time. It was only an hour. It should have been longer, and it wasn't particularly substantive, but it was not bad. Not bad, but not great.

MR. SCHIFF: Was there press at the meeting?

MR. BANNON: I believe they brought press in to do a spray and maybe throw a couple of questions at the candidate and that was it.

MR. SCHIFF: What was the discussion about Russia in that meeting?

MR. BANNON: Standard stock Russia. I mean, people around the table were principally people who had been in Washington or done things during the Cold War, so pretty standard.

MR. SCHIFF: So the discussion at that meeting was more "Russia's our adversary, not our friend."

MR. BANNON: Yes, definitely. Potential to be a friend, but an adversary. Some discussion of Syria and certain elements of the Middle East. But Russia did not dominate; it was just one of many in the punch list of national security.

MR. SCHIFF: Were there dissenting voices on Russia?

MR. BANNON: The structure of it didn't give time to kind of go through the same really substantive discussion on anything, because it was only an hour long, and I think there were a number of topics. And the President – excuse me, the candidate talked I think at length at the beginning.

MR. SCHIFF: And did the candidate in his remarks at all discuss Russia?

MR. BANNON: No, not that I remember, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Neither at the beginning nor later in the meeting?

MR. BANNON: No. And I don't think even when they went to the Russia thing, I don't remember him chiming in then. It was much more, since we had people like Andy McCarthy and things like this, much more of the time I think it was spent on the radical Islamic terrorism part of it.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever get a readout of the March meeting after you joined the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: There was a reference made I think in one of the emails surrounding the platform debate on Ukraine to a decision that had been made earlier vis-à-vis defensive weapons. Was that ever brought to your attention?

MR. BANNON: No. In March, they talked about the platform. That wasn't going to be done until June or July.

MR. SCHIFF: I believe around the time of the convention, there was a reference to a prior agreement --

MR. BANNON: March? No.

MR. SCHIFF: It appeared to refer to the earlier get-together with foreign policy.

MR. BANNON: Right, no.

MR. SCHIFF: But you had no readout on that?

MR. BANNON: No, didn't hear anything about it.

MR. SCHIFF: The meeting that Mr. Papadopoulos revealed in his statement of the offense with the professor and the woman who was purportedly Putin's niece, this took place before you were on the campaign, according to the dates of --

MR. BANNON: What's the date?

MR. SCHIFF: The -- I think the first interactions would have been in -- Papadopoulos was formed in late April of 2016, that the Russians had dirt on Clinton in the form of thousands of emails. That would have been April 26, 2016, when he met the professor for breakfast at a London hotel. So that took place well before you were with the campaign. Do you know who Papadopoulos reported to on the campaign?

MR. BANNON: You say "reported," I think those types of advisory committees, right, they should report up to the campaign manager. Obviously, Senator Sessions looks like he chaired it, and he ultimately I guess reports up to the campaign manager.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know what relationship --

MR. BANNON: And I think "reports" is probably a broadly defined term.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know Sam Clovis?

MR. BANNON: I do know Sam Clovis. I think I met him once.

MR. SCHIFF: Was that during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No. It was years ago in Iowa.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have any interaction with Mr. Clovis during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No, I think -- when you was on the campaign, no. I think maybe in March, Corey might have had him call me about the list, because then Corey told me he was the guy who put it together.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm sorry. Corey might have had you call --

MR. BANNON: No, no, no. In March, I believe --- I think Corey had Sam Clovis call me in March, around the time that this committee came out, because I had raised some concerns with Corey and I think he had Clovis call me because I believe he told me Clovis was the guy that had actually pulled this thing together.

MR. SCHIFF: So you expressed concerns to Lewandowski after the meeting was announced when you saw who was part of this group?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And he said you should talk to Sam Clovis, he put it together?

MR. BANNON: Or "I will have Sam Clovis call you," or "Clovis did this," or

words to that effect. And I don't remember even talking to Clovis. It wasn't -- at that time it was already done, so it was not -- I'd already opined to what I thought about it. And it wasn't going to be changed so it was not a big deal.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you recall whether you ever did speak to Clovis?

MR. BANNON: I might have, but it wasn't memorable.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you know whether Mr. Papadopoulos had any relationship with Lewandowski?

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. SCHIFF: Or communicated with him had at all?

MR. BANNON: That, I don't know.

MR. SCHIFF: Or Carter Page?

MR. BANNON: Carter Page with Lewandowski?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: I don't know.

MR. SCHIFF: And I think you testified earlier that Papadopoulos never informed you in writing or otherwise of what he had learned from the Russians about their possession of the hacked emails.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: During the time you were on the campaign, did anyone else from the campaign inform you that the campaign was aware that the Russians were in possession of stolen DNC or Clinton emails?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever discuss whether the Russians might be in possession of this during your time on the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Russians may be in possession of what?

MR. SCHIFF: Possession of the stolen DNC, Podesta or Hillary emails.

MR. BANNON: The Hillary 30,000 emails?

MR. SCHIFF: Any of the Hillary emails.

MR. BANNON: I think, on a couple of occasions, I might have had discussions about the 33,000 emails, not the other emails that didn't concern me, the 33,000.

MR. SCHIFF: So is your testimony, Mr. Bannon, that, during the time you worked on the campaign, the only discussions you had with other campaign personnel on the subject of hacked emails was on the subject of the 33,000 emails?

MR. BANNON: No, no, no. You said the Russian involvement, I think your question was Russian involvement and having it.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes. So --

MR. BANNON: Right. It is very different than just talking about the emails or the broader emails, et cetera. You said Russian involvement and having them.

MR. SCHIFF: Correct. So let me ask it again. Is it your testimony that the only conversations you had during the campaign on the subject of potential Russian possession of Clinton, DNC, or Podesta emails was solely on the subject of 33,000 Hillary emails?

MR. BANNON: As I remember, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you said that you wanted to be careful that this was regarding Russian possession of this.

MR. BANNON: Right.

MR. SCHIFF: What conversations did you have then about potential Russian possession of the 33,000 emails?

MR. BANNON: Just in passing that, you know, Russia might be somebody

that had the 33,000 emails.

MR. SCHIFF: And did those conversations --

MR. BANNON: No, this is all in -- this is in another -- in passing, maybe on the plane or something like that, not serious.

MR. SCHIFF: You say "on the plane," you mean on the plane with Mr. Trump?

MR. BANNON: On the plane, on the campaign plane, or in Trump Tower, just kind of in passing.

MR. SCHIFF: Prior to --

MR. BANNON: Nothing that led to any action or any, you know, any planned or organized effort to do anything, just in passing.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, in passing, did you discuss with Mr. Trump on the campaign plane whether the Russians were in possession of these hacked or Hillary emails?

MR. BANNON: I don't think I ever brought it up to the candidate, no.

MR. SCHIFF: So who would you have been discussing this with on the plane?

MR. BANNON: Oh, people like, you know, Dave Bossie, Kellyanne, Jason Miller, people like that, Steven Miller.

MR. SCHIFF: And was this in the category of speculation about whether the Russians have it, or were you talking about reports that the Russians were in possession of Democratic emails?

MR. BANNON: Not Democratic. There's a big difference. I never put much stock in the Podesta and all that stuff. The 33,000 is something that's a big deal. And it is something I've, you know, followed over the years. So it was just in

passing about the 33,000 in Russian or NSA or other government or hackers that, you know, could possibly have them.

MR. SCHIFF: And would Mr. Flynn, General Flynn, ever ride on the President's plane on these trips?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Is it possible these conversations took place in the presence of Mr. Flynn?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether Mr. Flynn was in contact with Peter Smith or anyone else attempting to find via the dark web Russians who may be in possession of these 33,000 emails?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you aware of any attempt by the campaign to obtain, apart from the Cambridge Analytica emails that have been shown to you, to obtain any of the Clinton emails?

MR. BANNON: When you say "Cambridge Analytica," what specifically are you talking about? Because I haven't seen anything that said they are trying to get -- I think there's an email that says he had talked to Julian Assange or something.

MR. SCHIFF: Correct.

MR. BANNON: Not for Cambridge Analytica to go out and get emails. The basis of the question I don't understand, because that's not an actual statement of fact.

MR. SCHIFF: Let me ask it again a different way the. During any of these conversations on the plane or any other conversations you had during the

campaign, did you discuss whether the campaign would make efforts to try to find locate, obtain --

MR. BANNON: No, no.

MR. SCHIFF: The 33,000 emails or any other --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Hillary Clinton -- please let me finish the question -- or Democratic Party emails?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Adam, let us take 30 minutes real quick.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

MR. GOWDY: Mr. Bannon, I want to ask you about then-Senator Sessions, now Attorney General Sessions. Did you discuss the potential need for him or contingency of recusal at any point prior to his being named Attorney General?

MR. BANNON: It's right in the transition period so I can't answer.

MR. GOWDY: Did you discuss him becoming Attorney General during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I believe we had a short conversation about that, yes. It wasn't a long conversation because we -- the perception was and reality was we were pretty far behind until the end. So it was not like having an hour conversation with Jeff Sessions about what billet he wants, but I think in passing we talked about it.

MR. GOWDY: I am just trying to stay within the strictures set by your counsel and White House. Without going into the details of any conversation that you may have had with then-Senator Sessions, can you simply say whether or not you discussed recusal at all, without going into the details?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: You can't say, or you did not?

MR. BANNON: At that time, it was not -- that concept was not -- it was not a concept. We didn't bring it up. This was not a serious -- it was not a serious, you know, it would have been pretty ludicrous for us to have a serious conversation about Senator Sessions being Attorney General given that we were pretty far behind until the closing weeks, and even until probably the last weekend. All right. So I think, in passing, I talked to Senator Sessions because he was on the plane with us quite a bit there towards the end.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Fast forward to after the election. You've won, so it now becomes relevant. Without going into the details of what was discussed, did you have any conversations with then still Senator Sessions about whether or not he would need to recuse himself?

MR. BANNON: I have to answer the same question about the timeframe, on the advice of counsel.

MR. GOWDY: I'm not asking you about the content; I'm just asking you whether or not the topic came up.

MR. BANNON: I think it is the same answer. It's a substantive topic.

MR. GOWDY: Did you have any conversations with then-FBI Director Comey during the campaign about whether or not he would remain as the FBI Director?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. GOWDY: Did you have any conversations with then-FBI Director Comey after the election, after you won, about whether or not he would remain the head of the FBI?

MR. BANNON: Same answer, sir. Same answer. I can't discuss that because of the time of the transition, during the time I was at the White House.

MR. GOWDY: I've been trying for the better part of the day to understand executive privilege, and when it's appropriate and when it's not, whether it applies to the transition, whether it applies to after you separate from service. One thing that is beyond question is that Director Comey apparently has a different perspective on executive privilege than White House counsel or your lawyer because he memorialized conversations that he had with the President, and then some of them have been disseminated publicly. Were you present for any of the conversations between President Trump and then-FBI Director Comey?

MR. BANNON: Same issue, Congressman.

MR. GOWDY: Well, Mr. Bannon, you see how it could not just hamstring the President, but hamstring those who are trying to figure out what happened when one party to the conversation does not consider itself bound by executive privilege.

MR. BANNON: Congressman --

MR. GOWDY: And writes memos and then disseminates those memos, and other parties to the conversation say they can't answer the question.

MR. BANNON: I empathize with you, and I'm sure we'll get this worked out.

MR. GOWDY: Does the privilege exist for the chief executive or for the person to whom the chief executive is talking?

MR. BANNON: I mean, I'm not a lawyer.

MR. GOWDY: No, but you've got one on either side of you.

MR. BANNON: He can answer for me. It is beyond my pay grade.

MR. GOWDY: Who does the privilege exist for?

MR. BURCK: The privilege belongs to the President of the United States.

MR. GOWDY: If that is true, then could the President assert executive privilege to quell the memos that Director Comey drafted memorializing what he purported to be conversations between he and the President?

MR. BURCK: I understand that Director Comey leaked those memos to the press without authorization, so I'm not sure the President could subsequently --

MR. GOWDY: How about the drafting of the memos period, whether they are leaked or not?

MR. BURCK: He wouldn't know they had been drafted.

MR. GOWDY: No, but he's memorialized a conversation he had with the chief executive. Does that violate executive privilege?

MR. BURCK: Not if it's not shared beyond the person who had received the information.

MR. GOWDY: So at least three of us have read those memos, where Director Comey is giving us his interpretation, his view of conversations he had with the President, but your position is we cannot ask another witness whether or not he was even present for those conversations?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, you can ask, but he can't answer without the President's authorization.

MR. GOWDY: The President didn't give Director Comey authorization.

MR. BURCK: Director Comey seems to have ignored the President's prerogatives.

MR. GOWDY: What will the consequence be -- what will befall him for not honoring executive privilege?

MR. BURCK: I think it's widely reported that Director Comey is under investigation by the inspector general of the Department of Justice, so I don't know

the answer to that question.

MR. GOWDY: Boy, that's really going to sting, isn't it, when the inspector general writes a report? There's nothing Michael Horowitz can do to Jim Comey, and we both know it. Nothing. He's not even an employee of the Department of Justice anymore. He can't even interview him unless Comey agrees to it. So there is no consequence that will befall Jim Comey for violating the executive privilege.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I can assure you that Mr. Bannon and his counsel sincerely hope that the White House and this committee can work out an agreement that Mr. Bannon can answer questions that would be appropriate to answer.

MR. GOWDY: But Mr. Bannon has the benefit of two very, very competent attorneys. And you will have forgotten more about executive privilege than just a low level back bencher Member of Congress will ever know, which means that you probably know that it doesn't apply all the time and it doesn't apply in every circumstance, so why invoke it for that entire time period?

MR. BURCK: Mr. Gowdy, I cannot speak for the White House. I don't work for the White House. I don't work for President Bush -- excuse me, President Trump. I did work for President Bush. I don't work for anybody in the White House in their official capacity. I'm telling you what they instructed Mr. Bannon. And based on that instruction and given it's a coequal branch of government with this branch and that branch is telling him don't answer questions about this topic until we can work out something with your branch of government, I can't put him in a position where he is violating one side to help the other until the both sides can come to an agreement or there's an effective compulsion of some sort. Otherwise, I can't put him in that position.

MR. GOWDY: But how would the executive privilege apply to conversations if the executive did not even know those conversations took place? And they weren't about work?

MR. BURCK: The White House may very well take the position that you have laid out very eloquently, Mr. Gowdy, that if a conversation occurred between my client or anyone who worked at the White House the President was not aware of or it did not lead to any advice to him or any piece of information going to him, that that's fair game. My point is the White House has told me today that, from their perspective, because they don't have a sense of what all the topics are and all the different issues that could arise, they don't want him to talk about any of these issues.

MR. GOWDY: Given that it is a testimonial privilege and not, shall we say, a mere presence privilege, can your client answer whether or not he was present for any conversations between then-Director Comey and President Trump? That's not testimonial; that's just mere presence.

MR. BURCK: I think it is testimonial in the sense that he is testifying to a fact of whether or not he was present for an event that happened between the President and another person during the course of the Presidency.

MR. GOWDY: But I'm not going to ask him a word about what was said, just trying to establish whether or not he was a witness.

MR. BURCK: I'm sorry, Mr. Gowdy. I think that the admonition from the White House was very clear that topics --

MR. GOWDY: If the White House told you to assert attorney-client privilege over someone who is not your attorney -- not your client, you wouldn't do it.

MR. BURCK: But that would be the client's privilege. So, in other words, it

would be his privilege to tell me what to do if it's not their privilege. This belongs to the President. This privilege is not his or mine. It belongs to the President of the United States. I agree with you if they were telling me whether or not I could assert a privilege as to Mr. Bannon, attorney-client privilege, that would be inappropriate, and I wouldn't follow that. But they are telling me that they don't know yet the full scope of the privilege that might be asserted as to all the topics that this committee is interested in and whether or not there can be an accommodation worked out. So they wanted us to have a full prohibition for now on answering questions about those two time periods. Again, it's a coequal branch of government telling me don't do it. The other one is telling me to do it. And the only one that loses an equity if I agree to that is the executive branch. So, until there is an accommodation, then Mr. Bannon is in a position where he can't answer the question. Keep the status quo.

MR. GOWDY: Well, the position that we're in is that Jim Comey, who also worked for the executive branch, has talked a lot to our committee and others. He apparently memorialized what he believed to be conversations with the President. We've read them. The President himself has spoken on his version of what those conversations were like. And I'm just trying to figure out whether or not there's an eyewitness to it that might can shed some light.

MR. BURCK: Understood, Mr. Gowdy. And I think the analogy would be if I was dealing with -- if Mr. Bannon was an attorney -- this is a hypothetical -- and he had a client that he had been advising and that client, you were asking him questions about advice or information he'd given to that client or discussions he'd had with that client, I would not be in a position to make a legal judgment on behalf of that client about whether or not he can waive the privilege on behalf of the client.

The only person who can tell that client whether or not the privilege should be maintained or not is his own lawyer. So I am not in a position as a member of the bar to tell my client that another person's assertion of privilege is inaccurate, unless that person can then make an accommodation with you or a court of law tells me that I have to answer the question.

MR. GOWDY: Other than that as a member of the bar with access to a LEXIS and Westlaw, I am sure you have searched to find whether there is any case law to support the notion that the transition period is protected by executive privilege. Have you been able to find that case?

MR. BURCK: Well, I can tell you that the White House has informed me that there is an OLC opinion that says --

MR. GOWDY: Would that be considered binding authority, persuasive authority, or no authority to a court?

MR. BURCK: To a court? Well --

MR. GOWDY: It's not binding authority.

MR. BURCK: The reason I struggle --

MR. GOWDY: I know we're not in court. I know we're not in court. But, ultimately, the question of executive privilege may wind up in court.

MR. BURCK: It may.

MR. GOWDY: So I'm asking you whether or not the opinion of an OLC lawyer is binding authority, persuasive authority, or might not even get read?

MR. BURCK: On a court?

MR. GOWDY: Yes.

MR. BURCK: It's certainly not binding authority.

MR. GOWDY: Probably not even persuasive, is it?

MR. BURCK: Probably not. But if a court ordered Mr. Bannon to answer your questions, he would certainly do it immediately.

MR. GOWDY: Does that OLC opinion also say that he cannot answer questions about conversations he had with non-executive branch people that the chief executive did not even know about?

MR. BURCK: I don't know. I haven't read the opinion. What I can tell you is that the White House has taken the position that the entire timeframe, until they have an accommodation with this committee, they've asked us not to -- instructed Mr. Bannon not to answer the questions. And once there's an accommodation, he will be happy to answer the questions --

MR. GOWDY: When did Mr. Bannon start taking counsel from the White House on when to talk or not talk to other people? Because I can think of a couple of examples where he might not have followed that advice.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BURCK: Do you want an answer to that question?

MR. GOWDY: Yeah. I think we've established he's given interviews; there is a book floating around. I apologize for saying I haven't purchased it, but all my Democratic colleagues have. Those would have been conversations that either took place while you were an employee of the executive branch or after you left the employment of the executive branch, I assume. Those were not campaign conversations, were they?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. GOWDY: So they would have been either transition, while you were at the White House, or after you left the White House, all three time periods that are now off limits to us. Is that right?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. GOWDY: So the White House has told you today that you cannot talk to people about those three.

MR. BANNON: They told us -- not correct. The staff -- this was -- I was told this last week. This is not something that came up. And no offense, my attorney talked to your staff attorney, and we were told it was perfectly okay.

MR. GOWDY: I don't take any offense.

MR. BANNON: So we notified you guys, I think last Wednesday or Thursday.

MR. GOWDY: If the privilege has always existed since this OLC opinion was drafted, there was necessarily a time when you did not follow or honor that privilege, because you talked to others about what happened during the transition or during the time you were at the White House, right?

MR. BURCK: We can continue down this path, but the point is obviously that the White House has instructed him now not to answer questions from this committee about these timeframes until there's an accommodation between the committee and the White House. So that's the fact that exists. Regardless of what's happened in the past, the point is that is the instruction --

MR. BANNON: And I'm confused why this is such a big deal today. This was the White House --

MR. GOWDY: I think it's a big deal -- not to be disrespectful -- because every member of this committee is going to be asked at some point, whether it is by a constituent or a colleague, whether or not you answered all of the relevant questions, and the answer is going to be no. And I'm sure they are going to follow up by saying: Well, if he can submit to interviews by book authors and journalists,

why won't he answer questions of Congress?

And that's what I'm struggling with the answer to.

MR. BURCK: The answer is that the White House has instructed him --

MR. GOWDY: No, no, I know the answer. I was just answering Mr. Bannon's question. He was wondering why this is a big deal, and I was trying to help him understand --

MR. BANNON: I said a big deal today. You've known about this for a week.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I haven't. I'm not disputing that you told others. I haven't known about it.

Let me ask you about one quote you made that maybe you can address, which was about -- I think it was about Donald Trump Jr., opening him up like an egg on television. Do you remember making that --

MR. BANNON: I don't remember saying it, but I know it's in the book, so we'll leave it as --

MR. GOWDY: If you didn't say it, I'm not going to ask you about it.

MR. BANNON: Assume I said it.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. I will assume you said it. What did you mean by it?

MR. BANNON: I think what I meant by it, if there was an open hearing and tough questions, that it would be very tough, it might be very tough to get through that -- about that meeting, of which I said I put the blame on Paul Manafort for that.

MR. GOWDY: I thought the quote was in connection with Bob Mueller, opening him up like an egg on television.

MR. BANNON: I thought it had to do with the meeting -- the meeting and this committee.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. "They are going to crack Don Jr. like an egg on national television." You were referring to a congressional hearing that might be televised.

MR. BANNON: This committee, which I think Don Jr. had been at.

MR. BURCK: For the record, Mr. Mueller does not hold hearings.

MR. GOWDY: No, I know that. That's why I was going to ask. I didn't think that one would be on television.

MR. BANNON: I was referencing this committee.

MR. GOWDY: Okay. That's all I have.

MR. CONAWAY: Adam, 3 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: We may have gotten into this briefly before, but just to button it up, were you present for any discussion during the campaign of whether the candidate Trump should meet with Putin?

MR. BANNON: I believe I said earlier, and I think it was just in passing, and I don't think it was very serious, during that U.N. visit where we did the OCC -- and I think Bebe Netanyahu was on the other end of that -- I think there was some passing conversation of, you know, if they came, President Xi, President Putin, some of the people of that stature, but it was a very quick -- it was not Putin individually; it was in a collection of those types of heads of state, whether it would be advisable, and it was just dropped as not something we should do.

MR. CONAWAY: Adam, if we can break real quick. If we can get back in 5 minutes. Literally, let's start at 6 o'clock, literally.

Sorry about that, Adam.

[Recess.]

MR. CONAWAY: Back to work.

Adam.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you. So, just to finish this topic, the discussion you had around the United Nations meeting of a possible meeting with Putin and other world leaders, who was that conversation with?

MR. BANNON: I think it was like Jared, General Flynn, Jason Miller, people like that. I don't ever remember having it in the candidate's presence, talking about these other alternatives. I think we talked about it at that level, and it was just not going to be doable.

MR. SCHIFF: Was anyone in that group advocating for such a meeting?

MR. BANNON: No. It was just a, should we do this? And really the question, would Hillary Clinton do it and look like more of a world leader?

MR. SCHIFF: Were you present or privy to any other conversation or communication about a possible Trump-Putin meeting during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No, sir. No, sir, and I never heard of anything like that.

MR. SCHIFF: The April 27th speech, foreign policy speech at the Mayflower Hotel, I know it was before you were with the campaign; were you consulted at all on what he should say in that speech?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you ever back briefed on -- you didn't attend the speech, or did you?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you ever informed by anybody from the campaign or Mr. Trump about any meeting between Ambassador Kislyak and Jeff Sessions at that speech?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: I take it you're cabining your answer to that based on what you may have been told during the campaign but not thereafter?

MR. BANNON: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, do you know who Alexander Torshin is?

MR. BANNON: Alexander who?

MR. SCHIFF: Torshin.

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware during the campaign of a -- this would have predated your time on the campaign -- a May NRA annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky?

MR. BANNON: Is it Alexandra Torshin?

MR. SCHIFF: No, Alexander Torshin, and his assistant Maria Butina.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware during the campaign of any outreach by the Russians through the NRA to the Trump campaign?

MR. BANNON: Not the Russians. I know that we have had -- we had conversations with the NRA, but not anything related to Russia or through Russians coming through them.

MR. SCHIFF: So it never came to your attention during the campaign that the Russians were making outreach to the campaign through the NRA?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you aware of any support that Mr. Torshin or any other Russian nationals gave the campaign through the NRA?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: In November of 2016, November 28th, 2016, Rhona Graff

sent you an email forwarded from Rob Goldstone, in which she wrote, and this is Bates stamp DJTJR245-248: "The PE," President-elect, "knows Aras," meaning Agalarov, "well. Rob is his rep in the U.S. and sent this on. Not sure how to proceed, if at all." And attached is a document that appears to be the same or very similar to the document that Natalia Veselnitskaya provided to Trump Jr. at the Trump Tower meeting.

Do you recall this email?

MR. BANNON: No. This email has no response from me.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether you didn't in fact respond to Rhona Graff?

MR. BANNON: I don't know. This is the first time -- I saw this in the package. I didn't see the attachment. But when I saw it in the package is the first time I saw it.

MR. SCHIFF: Did anyone ever explain to you how the President-elect knew Aras Agalarov?

MR. BANNON: No, I never heard that name until the press reports came out about the meeting.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you have any recollection of reading either the email or the attachment?

MR. BANNON: No, I don't remember getting it.

MR. SCHIFF: And so you're not able to tell us, I would imagine at this point, whether you understood the back history of this particular request?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether you took any followup with Rhona Graff about it, if not by email, whether you called her to ask anything more about it?

MR. BANNON: Since I don't remember getting it, don't remember ever seeing it, I took no action regarding this.

MR. SCHIFF: And I take it, Mr. Bannon, you're going to refuse today on the same basis to discuss anything that went into the formation of Donald Trump Jr.'s misleading statement about the June 9th meeting after it became public.

MR. BANNON: The statement that was done on the airplane?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Yes, because on the advice of counsel and it was during the time I was at the White House, from the White House.

MR. SCHIFF: On June 9th, 2016 -- so this would have been prior to your time on the campaign -- Mr. Trump made a tweet. This was within minutes of the Trump Tower meeting ending. Candidate Trump issued a tweet that said: How long did it take your staff of 823 people to think that up? And where are your 33,000 emails that you deleted?

It purports to be a tweet at Secretary Clinton. Did you ever discuss this tweet or what went into this statement at any later point after you joined the campaign?

MR. BANNON: With the candidate?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you discuss did with anybody else on the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you attend the Republican National Convention?

MR. BANNON: I didn't attend. I had a -- I mean I was -- I wasn't a participant. I had a radio show, and our news organization was there. So I wasn't

an official conventioneer. We did media and interviews and radio and all that around it.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you present at the convention, though?

MR. BANNON: It's kind of hard to say. I never actually went in the convention hall. We did stuff -- I was so busy doing stuff with radio and everything like that. We were there in Cleveland and there working 20 hours a day, but we had TV going, radio going. I never physically made it into the hall. Around the hall, but never to the hall. We were in our studio.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you cover at all the platform debate over Ukraine?

MR. BANNON: No, I don't think we covered any of the platform debates.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware of the effort by one of the delegates to insert a plank in the platform that Ukraine be provided defensive weapons?

MR. BANNON: I was not, no, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Was the first time you learned anything about the debate over the Ukraine provision at the convention sometime after the election?

MR. BANNON: Yes, whenever it came up in the media.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Bannon, are you familiar with the allegation concerning a communication between Trump Tower and Alfa Bank during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: This is the secondary server or the server that goes – it's a server? Is that the --

MR. SCHIFF: Correct. It's apparently a communication between the server at Trump Tower and the Alfa Bank server.

MR. BANNON: Yeah, I remember reading the articles about it or hearing about it. Yes, I think it was during the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you have any knowledge about whether Alfa Bank

was in communication with any server at Trump Tower during the campaign, any flow of data from Alfa Bank or from Trump Tower to Alfa Bank?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: During the course of the campaign, Mr. Bannon, were you aware that the Russians were doing a social media campaign designed to hurt Hillary Clinton or help Mr. Trump?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware of the coverage on RT Sputnik that was very pro-Trump and anti-Clinton?

MR. BANNON: I want to go back to that, if you don't mind, the first question. I'm not sure that's actually a fact, what I answered no to. I dispute that as a fact. I don't want to answer no to the fact that they had a social media campaign. I dispute the fact. I'm not knowledgeable. It hasn't been shown to me they actually had a social media campaign or whatever campaign of negative news. However you stated it, I don't agree with the premise of the question. I will challenge the premise of the question instead of answering no.

MR. SCHIFF: So you dispute the idea that the Russians were involved in a social media campaign designed to influence the election?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I don't know that for a fact, so I can't answer no to it.

MR. SCHIFF: And I think earlier, when you were asked, you also took issue with the Intelligence Community assessment that the Russians were involved in hacking the DNC and Mr. Podesta. You weren't convinced of that either.

MR. BANNON: Not to 100 percent, no, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: But you're aware that the Intelligence Community reached that conclusion, the FBI and the CIA and DNI?

MR. BANNON: That come comes from times during -- in the White House, so I will refuse to answer.

MR. SCHIFF: During the campaign, the Intelligence Community issued a statement in October, while you were on the campaign, that the Russians had in fact been responsible for the hacking of the DNC and the publishing of these emails, and this campaign, active measures campaign, was ordered at the highest levels of the Kremlin. You were aware of that when that statement came out, weren't you?

MR. BANNON: I think I remember it, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: That was a pretty big deal, wasn't it, when the Intelligence Community said, "Hey, the Russians are involved in our election, and they are involved by hacking and dumping these documents"?

MR. BANNON: I mean, it's a piece of information. I have big reservations about our Intelligence Community. So just because it's in the paper doesn't make it a statement of fact to me.

[6:19 p.m.]

MR. SCHIFF: And your reservations, are they on the basis that you think that the Intelligence Community would make it all up?

MR. BANNON: No, not that at all, not no conspiracy theory, just basic, did they get it right, did they fully understand it, do they understand it 100 percent. The Intelligence Community is the same intelligence -- not to make a disparaging remark but helped get us in the Iraq war and other wars and missed the rise of China and everything else.

No, if you state it as fact, I read it in the paper that the Intelligence Community has come out and said it's 100 percent this or that, on the face of that, I don't sit there and go, "Okay, I believe it," because I don't.

MR. SCHIFF: But even to this date, after receiving all of the briefings that you did during your time in the administration and your time during the transition, it's still your position that you don't know whether the Russians were involved in the hack of the DNC or the publication of any of these stolen emails?

MR. BANNON: What do you mean by "involved"? Define involved.

MR. SCHIFF: You're asking me what the definition of "is" is?

MR. BANNON: No. Because it could be -- were they involved? I don't know. Did they control it? I'm uncertain.

MR. SCHIFF: And you say this not because there's any division of opinion within the Intelligence Community but because of your generalized distrust of the Intelligence Community?

MR. BANNON: No. I think it's maybe complete -- some division inside the Intelligence Community and -- it's not my distrust. I don't distrust the Intelligence Community. I'm just -- I look at things with a jaundiced eye, given results.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, let me get back to the campaign period. Was there any discussion in the campaign of sharing campaign analytical data with outside parties that could amplify the campaign's message?

MR. BANNON: Outside parties being defined as what?

MR. SCHIFF: Outside --

MR. BANNON: Like RNC and people like that?

MR. SCHIFF: Meaning foreign actors, whether they were foreign state actors or foreign nonstate actors?

MR. BANNON: No. No. I mean, I think there was discussions with the RNC and people like that that the digital people had because we were using data from the RNC and people like that, but nothing on foreign actors or foreign nationals.

MR. SCHIFF: And are you aware of whether Cambridge Analytica ever provided data analytics to any foreign nationals for their use?

MR. BANNON: I'm not.

MR. SCHIFF: And are you aware of anyone with the campaign or affiliated with the campaign in any way who provided information to the Russian Government or an agent of the Russian Government during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Can I have the question again?

MR. SCHIFF: Are you aware of anyone who provided information to the Russian Government or an agent of the Russian Government during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And are you aware of anyone, apart from the emails concerning the meeting at Trump Tower, are you aware of anyone from the campaign who received information from the Russian Government or Russian nationals that was designed to be of service to the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you aware of any foreign nationals supporting the Jill Stein campaign?

MR. BANNON: The Green Party?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: What do you mean "aware"?

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I'm not sure how much more clear to be. Did it ever come to your attention that a foreign power, the Russians or anyone else, might be supporting the Stein or Green Party campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: And why do you ask the definition of "aware" then?

MR. BANNON: Well, I think there is -- I think a bunch of articles -- I remember, I think, reading that maybe green parties in other countries or whatever were trying to give some assistance or some help. Not foreign national governments but other affiliated green parties. I'm not sure it came to anything, but I thought I read that.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you know whether the Green Party received any outside help in this campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you ever approached during the campaign by any individual claiming to have information about Hillary Clinton or other entities related to the Democratic Party?

MR. BANNON: Any individuals or foreign individuals?

MR. SCHIFF: Well, let's start broadly and then move more narrowly. Any individuals?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And who was that?

MR. BANNON: The women that came to the -- that I brought to the second debate that had -- Bill Clinton had sexually assaulted and Hillary Clinton had been the enabler, and particularly also the woman who had been raped and Hillary Clinton had been, I think, the defense counsel of the rapist. They brought information -- it was one of the ways we could get them to the -- I could get them to the second debate.

MR. SCHIFF: And are you aware of any other instances in which people brought you information about Hillary Clinton or the Democratic Party during the campaign, derogatory information that you could use?

MR. BANNON: Not to my recollection, no. Democratic Party, definitely no; Hillary Clinton, I'd like to bifurcate that between the typical, you know, crazy rumors you hear and then information that's like the women that you can actually use and do something with.

You know, as a campaign -- you know, I have never been in a campaign before, but, you know, a lot of people call you up and say a lot of things and pitch a lot of things. I think I took some calls or I think people were telling me at the time that Hillary Clinton froze up during the 9/11 ceremony, and she had to be taken away by Secret Service.

I think I got some calls from people about her health that just went in one ear and out the other. It was a scuttlebutt, but it was not anything we took action on, but that would be the kind of thing I'm talking about, on the Democratic Party not --

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware that the Russians were pushing out through their paid media the idea that Clinton's health was failing?

MR. BANNON: I was not, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you ever approached by any foreign nationals claiming to have information about Hillary Clinton or any entities related to the Democratic Party or Clinton campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Did Cambridge Analytica do work on the Brexit campaign?

MR. BANNON: I think they pitched the leave -- official leave campaign, Leave.Com, which is the Boris Johnson part of it, the one that was funded. I think they pitched them, and I'm not sure they got signed up.

MR. SCHIFF: So you don't know whether they ever went on to do work for Brexit?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe -- I think that they -- I heard some things that they pitched -- they actually say that they did some work. But I think if you -- there were two leave campaigns: One was official; one was unofficial. I think they may have pitched both. I'm not sure they actually did any what we'd call technically got a contract and actually did work. So I'm not certain that they did work.

MR. SCHIFF: But it sounds like you don't know for sure?

MR. BANNON: Don't know for sure. Well -- don't know for sure.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Wolff quotes a conversation you had with the President on July 20, 2016 -- I guess it should be 2017 -- in which you discussed with him a statement he made in an interview that his family's finances were off limits for investigators.

Quote: I went right into him and said, "Why did you say that?" And he says, "The Sessions thing." And I say, "No, that's bad, but it's another day at the office." I said, "Why did you say it was off limits to go after your family's finances?"

And he says, "Well, it is." I go, "Hey, they are going to determine their mandate. You may not like it, but you just guaranteed that if you want to get somebody else in the special counsel's -- well, in the slot, every senator will make him swear that the first thing he's going to do is to come in and subpoena your fucking tax returns."

Is that what you told Mr. Wolff?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember, but that's also the -- on advice of my counsel and the White House, that's during the period I was at the White House, July 20 of '17.

MR. SCHIFF: So, for the record, Mr. Bannon, at this point, you're not willing to answer any questions about whether you discussed with the President what his tax returns might show in terms of evidence of interest to special counsel?

MR. BANNON: That's correct.

MR. SCHIFF: And why did you believe investigators might focus on money laundering?

MR. BANNON: That's also during the period of -- on advice of counsel --

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I'm not asking you -- unless it comes from those discussions -- about conversations. I'm asking you, why did you believe investigators would focus on money laundering?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. BANNON: It's during the time that I was at the White House. So, upon advice of counsel and the White House, I have to not answer.

MR. SCHIFF: So the concern you had based on -- the concern you had on money laundering was not based on press reports, but it was based on communications which you're exerting a -- the advice of counsel?

MR. BANNON: It was also upon press reports, but I'm exerting the counsel

because of the time.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know what travel Michael Cohen undertook during the campaign, foreign travel?

MR. BANNON: No. Let me make a -- let me go back on that answer. It was during the time I was on the campaign, from August 14 to --

MR. SCHIFF: Well, yeah.

MR. BANNON: -- November 8. Michael Cohen was not part of the campaign, so, therefore, I would not know anything about his travel.

MR. SCHIFF: Well --

MR. BANNON: Michael Cohen was a lawyer for The Trump Organization. I was very specific about that when I first came on board.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're saying that Mr. Cohen's tenure with the campaign ended before you joined the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I don't believe -- I'm not certain he ever had any role in the campaign. That I can't opine to. I'm just going, from August 14 to November 8, he had no role in the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: So, during the time that you were the executive of -- what was your title with the campaign? I'm sorry.

MR. BANNON: Chief executive officer, CEO.

MR. SCHIFF: At the time you were CEO of the campaign, Mr. Cohen had no official role or no role with the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No official role, but I was very specific about that, that he was a Trump -- worked for The Trump Organization and had responsibilities at The Trump Organization and not with the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: And, well, whether he was working officially with the

campaign or with the organization, are you aware of any international travel that Michael Cohen did during 2016?

MR. BANNON: Do I know now, or did I know at the time?

MR. SCHIFF: Either way.

MR. BANNON: At the time, no. At the time, no.

MR. SCHIFF: And now?

MR. BANNON: And now, yes, through press accounts that he took a trip or something.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever discuss with Mr. Cohen what travel he did during the course of the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I'll have to invoke the -- that was during the -- that was all transition and the White House, so I'll have to invoke my counsel and the White House. Can't talk about it right now.

MR. SCHIFF: Can you tell us whether you had a conversation with Mr. Cohen regarding his travel without going into the contents of that conversation?

MR. BANNON: No. I just -- I can't answer that. I didn't have any conversation with him during the campaign on travel.

MR. SCHIFF: When you came onto the campaign, what role did Mr. Manafort have?

MR. BANNON: He remained as chairman for a couple of days.

MR. SCHIFF: And was that the extent of your overlap?

MR. BANNON: Yes, 100 percent. He was -- it was actually no overlap. He was actually -- the 14th, I saw him -- first time I ever met him -- briefly. And then he was essentially gone the next day. But I think they announced that Jared -- Jared Kushner met with him, and I think they made the official

announcement, I think, on Thursday.

MR. SCHIFF: And prior to your coming onto the campaign, was it the expectation that when you came on the campaign, he was going to be leaving the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Were the two related to each other?

MR. BANNON: I think the timing of the -- yes, to a degree.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the relationship between the two?

MR. BANNON: The relationship was I was going to come on as CEO and -- initially. He was going to stay on as chairman with no real authority or power and then leave him some week or 10 days to make some announcement he was going to go do something else.

MR. SCHIFF: And were you -- so you were told before you joined the campaign that he was leaving?

MR. BANNON: Essentially, I had already accepted the job on the campaign, you know, theoretically from the candidate. That decision was made after a meeting we had kind of collectively that he would be leaving.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you discuss with Mr. Trump the reasons why Mr. Manafort was going to be leaving?

MR. BANNON: It was essentially that it would be -- it was my recommendation that there be some sort of face-saving time, that we would both -- I would be CEO; he would be chairman -- because we had only 84 days left. But there would be some -- he would have no authority but would be able to somehow out-place himself.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you discuss with Mr. Trump why Mr. Manafort was

leaving?

MR. BANNON: Really, Trump discussed it with me.

MR. SCHIFF: And what did he have to say?

MR. BANNON: I think that he was not happy with the performance of the campaign and thought the thing was, you know -- he was, you know -- the polling showed he was down so many points and the thing was kind of a mess.

I think that's why he want -- and they had a bunch of negative articles coming out over the weekend, not related to anything else except how bad -- how poorly the campaign was managed and how poorly the campaign was running.

MR. SCHIFF: Wasn't this also though around the time articles came out exposing potentially illegal payments to Mr. Manafort coming out of Ukraine?

MR. BANNON: That's what changed it from 10 days to like the next day. That article, I think it was in The New York Times, accelerated that process.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you discuss that with Mr. Trump?

MR. BANNON: I did not. That was, I think, Paul Manafort went to see the candidate, and I think Jared came back and he dealt with Manafort and Trump. He had brought Manafort onto the campaign. I think he and the candidate dealt with it, that it was going to be -- there was no doubt that there was going to -- something was going to happen. It was going to take a week or 2 weeks or whatever, and that got consolidated down to days.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you discuss with Mr. Kushner the issue of Mr. Manafort and his financial ties to Ukraine?

MR. BANNON: I did.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the nature of that conversation?

MR. BANNON: It was just -- I repeated what I saw in The New York Times.

That story, I think it came out Sunday night, which was the first day I kind of took over, and then it was in the paper on Monday morning.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was Mr. Kushner's reaction?

MR. BANNON: That he was going to talk to the candidate, and clearly, you know, something would have to happen.

MR. SCHIFF: Was he recommending that Manafort go sooner?

MR. BANNON: I think he opined to me and I agreed that it was probably the candidate would want him to go sooner, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you have any discussions with Mr. Trump about Mr. Manafort and the Ukraine problem?

MR. BANNON: Never, no.

MR. SCHIFF: And how about -- when you say "never," I just want to make sure we're --

MR. BANNON: Yeah. Let me --

MR. SCHIFF: -- you're not stating more than you're --

MR. BANNON: Let me hang on with that. Let me take that back. I think, if I can correct that, it's -- I think, on Tuesday or Wednesday, when the decision was made, we had a general conversation about how bad the story in The New York Times read.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was Mr. Trump's view?

MR. BANNON: That he didn't know anything about this. He didn't know the guy worked overseas. It was complete shock to him. It had never, you know, never come up, never been an issue, never been anything -- you know, kind of caught him totally by surprise. You know, he doesn't like surprises.

MR. SCHIFF: And did this come up prior to Mr. Manafort leaving the

campaign?

MR. BANNON: Yeah. I think Mr. Manafort left on -- I think he technically left on Thursday morning at 9 o'clock, because they put a press release out and -- but I think the decision was already made. I think he had actually already been told. I believe he'd already been told. It wasn't -- I didn't deal with it.

MR. SCHIFF: You've been very critical of Mr. Manafort's conduct during the Trump Tower meeting or taking the Trump Tower meeting. Were there other aspects of his conduct during the campaign that raised a similar concern?

MR. BANNON: Regarding Russians or something --

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: No. For me, no. Just the campaign was a debacle. It wasn't really a campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: Unrelated to Russia but of the same nature in the sense that you had concerns about the lawfulness of that meeting, were there any other actions Mr. Manafort took during the campaign that raised a question about legality in your mind?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was that?

MR. BANNON: In going through the cashflow -- I sat with the COO, and I think Jared was part of it. In going through the cashflows of the campaign, on the, either the 15th or 16th, it had come up that somehow there had tried to have been a transference of -- I think the number is $5 million.

It hadn't happened, but there had been some effort to transfer $5 million into some sort of media account that, I think, the CFO and the COO thought that Manafort might control, and it had been stopped.

But I was talking about controls, how you make sure controls the money. And there was another -- there was another entry for, I think, $850,000 to a joint venture that I couldn't figure out, that was somehow associated with another guy that had worked on the campaign, but that it looked like the ownership of it was Manafort or Manafort had some sort of ownership of it. And that was for some -- it was a series of mailings, mailers.

There was just a couple of things that looked untoward and could be deemed a problem. The 5 million turned out to never happen. They didn't authorize it. They tried to, but it got back.

And the $750,000, we actually continued to pursue to get that cash and actually got -- lawyers looked at it and then finally convinced us that I think that thing was already -- they could justify the money got spent somehow, and we couldn't get it back, so we just let it go.

MR. CONAWAY: Adam, we need to go vote. We will recess for a few minutes, get that done and come back, and you can take up your line of questioning.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Chairman.

MR. BURCK: Mr. Chairman, can I just ask a question? We've been here for over 10 hours.

MR. CONAWAY: Yep.

MR. SWALWELL: Also because of your shenanigans with the White House.

MR. BURCK: Well, actually, the shenanigans of the White House were actually discussed with the staff who understood this last week.

MR. CONAWAY: Hang on.

MS. SPEIER: Let's not go there.

MR. BURCK: My question is, can we have some sense of how long do we think this is going to go on?

MR. CONAWAY: We're through on our side. They may have more questions.

MR. SCHIFF: I would imagine we should wrap up within an hour.

MR. CASTRO: I have a series, shouldn't take too long.

MR. BURCK: Thank you.

[Recess.]

[7:06 p.m.]

MR. CONAWAY: Mr. Schiff, you're back on the clock.

MR. SCHIFF: So, Mr. Bannon, when we broke off, we were talking about concerns you had about some of the financial transactions involving Mr. Manafort. Was this in the August timeframe that this came to your attention?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I think you mentioned -- I thought you said criminal activity or potential criminal activity. It was just in doing a review of the cashflows that that came up, and it was sorted very quickly. The first one hadn't really happened. It was attempted. It was stopped. And the second one had happened, and we pursued it and tried to get the money back and just didn't, you know -- didn't work out.

MR. SCHIFF: And the first transaction that concerned you in terms of potential unlawful conduct involved $5 million?

MR. BANNON: It was like $5 million. I think it was moved over to some media account, outside media account. They tried to send an email to send over $5 million to the -- that the COO, CFO at the time, stopped.

MR. SCHIFF: And were you able to learn anything more about this media entity the money was supposed to go to?

MR. BANNON: No. It was a quick thing to make sure we had controls that nobody could -- that like only Jared -- we put in controls that like only Jared -- I had to totally authorize it, but we had a guy in -- also in Boston that did some financial stuff for us, so we had to have like two approvals from now on. You just couldn't -- some person just couldn't send an email and money could go around.

MR. SCHIFF: And what, if anything, were you able to learn about this media entity? Was there any connection to any Manafort --

MR. BANNON: I think it was a -- it was a -- like a Manafort-controlled entity.

MR. SCHIFF: Was it a shell company?

MR. BANNON: I think it was like a media-buying company that these -- the consultants used to do the media buys for spots, 30 seconds, or for the TV advertising.

MR. SCHIFF: And was it your concern that either some or all this money would go to Manafort?

MR. BANNON: Well, this had happened sometime in the past. This was -- I was going through the cashflow statements and seeing different entries. This is an entry that came up that got unwound. And it was something they had tried to send but they had stopped.

The $750,000 or $850,000 was something that actually did get sent. That was to a mailing organization. And so my thing at the time -- you asked about -- I was just trying to make sure there was no chance that you could have any activity that people could just have money, you know, sloshing around. You actually had to have a process where people signed off on it.

MR. SCHIFF: But the transaction involving the 5 million, that was already stopped before you came on board?

MR. BANNON: Yes, stopped --

MR. SCHIFF: And what time period was that request for the transfer made?

MR. BANNON: Like in -- I think it was when he first took over. I think it was in the first couple days, like end of June. I think he took over the 21st of June or something. It got brought up the fact that it was one of the first actions he tried to do.

MR. SCHIFF: And the second action involving, was it 750,000 or 850,000?

MR. BANNON: Like, I think it was $850,000.

MR. SCHIFF: That was a transfer to what kind of entity?

MR. BANNON: Turned out it was a joint venture that was a -- one of these people that pay for mailings.

MR. SCHIFF: And was he one of the partners of the joint venture?

MR. BANNON: I think he was one -- he and Rick Gates were two of the guys that were the partners in it, with another guy, whose name I forgot.

MR. SCHIFF: And when did that transaction go through?

MR. BANNON: I think that took place in like the July timeframe also, I think right after the convention. It was something about mailers. They were doing mailers for something.

MR. SCHIFF: And there was an unsuccessful effort to --

MR. BANNON: Oh, I'll tell you what it was. I think it was -- he did it -- it was going to be a mailer or something for -- or material mailers actually for the -- there was some problem with the vote count at the convention.

They were going to try to take the vote away from Trump, these Never Trumpers. And this is the reason Manafort was brought in. My understanding is, as I remember, that this money was going to be in some mailers they were going to send out for some people associated with that. So, when he first came on the campaign, it really took charge.

MR. SCHIFF: And did the mailers ever go out?

MR. BANNON: That was the big debate. The big debate was whether they printed. I think they showed us invoices later. We had enough -- they showed us enough stuff that we decided that we'd just drop pursuing it like towards the end of the campaign. It was actually Don McGahn -- and the lawyers took a look at it, and

accountants got involved, and it was one of the ones that would be too tough to chase.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was it that concerned you about these two transactions that led you to think it may -- there may have been an unlawful aspect to it?

MR. BANNON: Well, I just thought that they were -- they were not authorized. These were unauthorized transfers that nobody had signed off on.

MR. SCHIFF: Any other conduct of Mr. Manafort that concerned you in terms of legality during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: I think I know the answer to this question, but, Mr. Bannon, were you aware of a December 2016 UAE meeting that The Washington Post reported on in Trump Tower?

MR. BANNON: That's during the transition period, so I can't -- upon advice of my counsel and the White House, I can't answer.

MR. SCHIFF: And are you aware of public reports of a February 2017 Ukraine peace plan proposal involving Michael Flynn, Michael Cohen, Paul Manafort, Felix Sater, and Andrey Artemenko?

MR. BANNON: February of '16?

MR. SCHIFF: February of '17.

MR. BURCK: Are you aware of public reports? That's a little different.

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware of --

MR. BANNON: Paul Manafort in February of '17 -- I just want to make sure I got the date -- not '16?

MR. SCHIFF: February '17. Well, let me just exclude Mr. Manafort then from it. Are you aware of a proposal shepherded by Felix Sater and Andrey Artemenko involving Mike Flynn and Michael Cohen and a purported Ukraine peace plan?

MR. BANNON: No, that would be during the time of the -- my time at the White House, so I can't discuss.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're not saying you're unaware; you're just saying you can't respond to the question?

MR. BANNON: I'm actually unaware. Was this the one in the papers that Michael Cohen personally came down, as reported in the papers, personally came down and walked into the Oval Office?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. BANNON: I know about it from the press reports then.

MR. SCHIFF: I don't know whether it was walked in the Oval Office, but he was involved --

MR. BANNON: Yeah. Words to that effect.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're aware of it from the papers, but --

MR. BANNON: I can't discuss it.

MR. SCHIFF: You can't discuss it, all right.

I have a series of questions, Mr. Bannon, about the firing of James Comey. Is it your position today that you won't answer any questions concerning the firing of James Comey?

MR. BANNON: That's correct, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: I'll yield to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

Mr. Bannon, did candidate Trump ever express an opinion about FBI Director Comey prior to November 8 to you?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: What was his opinion?

MR. BANNON: I think, if I can summarize, it was that, from a distance, he looked -- I don't want to say skittish or erratic, those are probably too harsh of terms, but didn't have the gravitas or the solidity that you would expect of J. Edgar Hoover or one of the -- somebody who was FBI Director. I think it was because of the -- some of the press conferences and the things going on back and forth with the emails and the investigation and all this.

MR. SWALWELL: Was this opinion expressed before or after Director Comey announced that the FBI was reopening its investigation into Secretary Clinton's emails?

MR. BANNON: And that was in late October? That was -- what was the date of that?

MR. SWALWELL: That was mid-October.

MR. BANNON: Mid-October. Yes, but it wasn't something obsessed upon. It was said and -- I'm not saying said in passing but said in just discussion --

MR. SWALWELL: Do you recall --

MR. BANNON: -- on the plane.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you recall candidate Trump, once Director Comey announced that the email investigation was going to be reopened, declaring at a public rally words to the effect of, you know, "Don't we love Director Comey," or "Isn't he a great guy?" Do you recall that public statement?

MR. BANNON: It was in a rally right after the mid-October?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. BANNON: Yes, I do.

MR. SWALWELL: After candidate Trump made that declaration, did you hear him make any opinions about Director Comey?

MR. BANNON: I don't think -- I think the rally was the kind of thing you say at a rally speech that comes -- I believe that was done -- I think it was in New Hampshire, and I think it was immediately after the announcement of when that happened.

And I think that's in the exuberance of the moment and with the rally speech of getting people up, what you would say at a rally speech. Because I believe it happened right at the -- that comment happened right after the announcement came across.

I don't think it changed President Trump's opinion too much. And it wasn't -- I'm not saying it was a negative on Comey or real negative on Comey. It was just, you know, he had -- President Trump or at that time candidate Trump had certain ways I think he feels certain positions comport themselves. And he's -- you know, thinking of the FBI Director, he just didn't -- he was always a little bit of a -- Director Comey's, you know, hopscotching around.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you present when candidate Trump received a national security briefing prior to November 8?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you aware that one occurred?

MR. BANNON: Yes. I think we designated -- I believe we designated the campaign, I think it was Governor Christie and Rudy Giuliani, I think, were the two designees that would go with the candidate to the national security briefings.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you get a readout of how that briefing went?

MR. BANNON: Not the details of the briefing, but from -- I think it was Governor Christie or from Rudy that it was a good thing for him to start to see these.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you learn whether or not candidate Trump was briefed on defensive tactics for being approached by Russians?

MR. BANNON: I do not know that.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you familiar with what a defensive briefing is?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Did candidate Trump or anyone in the meeting talk about anything discussed regarding Russia in that national security meeting?

MR. BANNON: I think there were two or three -- I think they had actually three briefings.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So, during all -- any of the three, did you ever learn whether candidate Trump was briefed on Russian threats?

MR. BANNON: No. We didn't -- the campaign was the campaign. Those guys had, I think, already had security clearances. They were on there, and it was pretty tight-lipped about the content.

MR. SWALWELL: With respect to Michael Cohen, do you know who Felix Sater is?

MR. BANNON: Just from press accounts.

MR. SWALWELL: Was he ever discussed during your time with the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Never heard his name mentioned, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware of any efforts that Michael Cohen was taking to try and arrange a meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin?

MR. BANNON: I was not.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware that Felix Sater had told Michael Cohen during the campaign that he could arrange a meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin and that they could, quote/unquote, "engineer this and get our boy elected President"?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware that Michael Cohen had even gone as far as to start the visa application process in the summer of 2016 for Donald Trump to travel over to Russia?

MR. BANNON: No, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: With respect to Mr. Manafort, it sounds like, based on your assessment of the books, that there could have been other -- prior to you arriving -- money issues with the campaign, meaning dollars that could not be accounted for. Does that sound accurate?

MR. BANNON: I think those two were the -- the COO, CFO was pretty good. Those were the two. He brought them up in the fact of kind of controls and mechanisms and putting -- making sure we had total controls and, now that Manafort was gone, that we had, you know, controls in place that would basically be double key.

MR. SWALWELL: Was there any --

MR. BANNON: So I was pretty -- I think in the -- we did a pretty thorough thing because I had to figure out where the cash was, being it was tight. And so I think that was the only two issues.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you conduct any audit with respect to deposits into the campaign?

MR. BANNON: "Audit" being defined as?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, a review. You reviewed the expenditures of the campaign and you found these two suspicious expenditures. Did you ever conduct a review of the accounts to see if there were any suspicious deposits or contributions to the campaign?

MR. BANNON: We had a pretty good control system about the high net worth coming in through Steve Mnuchin. People had to be signed off in advance. And the other stuff was essentially just over the transom, people sending in, you know, really through the mail bags, you know, $50 checks, $25 checks. There was a, you know, real bifurcation here. So I think the system was pretty good.

No, but we didn't go back and do an independent audit. The campaign may have done that after I left. But, as of November 8 or 9, it had not.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know who arranged the April 27, 2016, Mayflower event? Who was responsible for the campaign for setting that up?

MR. BANNON: I don't -- I assume -- all those events were directed and run at that time by Corey, but that's just my belief. I don't know that for a fact.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know who Dmitri Simes is?

MR. BANNON: No, I do not.

MR. SWALWELL: Is that a name that you ever heard during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: No. That's what I'm thinking. No, I do not.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times did you talk to Roger Stone throughout the campaign?

MR. BANNON: I don't remember ever talking to him at all, but I think I may have taken a call after I was first there. Been one time, maybe saw a couple emails, but it wasn't -- I mean, it wasn't more extensive than a congratulatory call

and a couple emails.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you describe the relationship during the campaign that Donald Trump had with Hope Hicks?

MR. BANNON: Very close, the closest on the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: She was closer to the President than anyone else on the campaign?

MR. BANNON: By an order of five.

MR. SWALWELL: Why do you think that was?

MR. BANNON: She's -- if you think about our campaign, it was driven by media, right. We didn't have any money, not a lot of organization. We had to get on top of things quickly.

She was, not the comms director, but she was the body man for stories and media, and she had a way of being able to walk him through, because virtually every story was negative and, I mean, really negative. And that has a cumulative effect. And she was amazing about how she did it.

And she could put up with -- as you can imagine, sometimes the response on those negative stories, you know, when you start with "Morning Joe" in the morning and go all the way through The New York Times, Washington Post, can be quite powerful. She just did an incredible job.

She had that ability to really work with the candidate and kind of pick out the stuff we needed and -- to get stuff out, et cetera. So to just take that psychological pounding every day was pretty extraordinary, so there's nobody on the campaign closer.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it common for individuals to communicate to the candidate through Hope Hicks?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How often?

MR. BANNON: Daily, all the time. It's one of the things -- I mean, you've got to -- with 85 days left and 16 points down, you know, I had to be realistic about what could be done. That couldn't be changed.

It actually worked, but it's not -- if you're going to try to be some, you know, madman and try to, you know, lock him down and not have any access, you are just going to lose. So that continued, but it was, you know, a continual thing.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Keith Schiller?

MR. BANNON: The second closest person. Actually, the closer because he's the body man, but Hope was more engaged in the actual activity of the media so -- but those two, 24/7.

MR. SWALWELL: Would you often communicate -- would you observe individuals communicate to the candidate through Keith Schiller during the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Yes. And I would.

MR. SWALWELL: You would?

MR. BANNON: Yes, if I had to get something to them right away and get their attention, get to Keith or get to Hope.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you do that?

MR. BANNON: I would call them on their cell phone or text them or, you know, have somebody -- if I was talking to somebody, I'd just grab them.

MR. SWALWELL: Who's the third closest person?

MR. BANNON: There's a big gap --

MR. SWALWELL: So it's those two and then --

MR. BANNON: There's a big gap, and then you've got, you know, obviously, Jared and Ivanka, but they're not -- that's not a daily thing. I mean, Jared had a very -- Jared Kushner has a very special relationship with him, but it's not a daily, you know, around all the time.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Rhona Graff?

MR. BANNON: Yes, that's a different deal. That's his secretary that's been there forever, but quite -- and that's another thing that, you know, of information coming to him.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you observe Rhona and the candidate to be quite close?

MR. BANNON: As you would any executive assistant you had for 25 years or 20 years or however long it was, yes, quite close.

MR. SWALWELL: Did she appear to be somebody who knew her boss quite well?

MR. BANNON: Very well. And more importantly, she knew the people that were trying to get to him all the time, so she had a very good, you know -- whereas Hope was in with this new media and campaign, Rhona knew everybody in his life and how they would try to get to him and things like that.

MR. SWALWELL: So would it be fair to say that Rhona had kind of deep knowledge or deep reach into who was important to him and who was not?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And you can only be effective at that if you have a pretty good recall. Would you agree?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

[7:25 p.m.]

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever talk to Roger Stone after the campaign?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times?

MR. BANNON: Well, that goes into the transition and things, so I can't -- on advice of counsel and the White House, I'm not going to talk about that.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you talked to Roger Stone since you left the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times?

MR. BANNON: A half a dozen.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you talked to Roger Stone since you left the White House about the Russia investigation?

MR. BANNON: Never. He named me the top of his worst-dressed list.

MR. SWALWELL: He's got a book coming out that will help all of us, I understand.

I yield back to the ranking member.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you.

Just a clarification on Roger Stone. Are you able to share what conversation you had with Roger Stone after you left the White House?

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what did they involve?

MR. BANNON: You know, normal things on what's happened politically. You know, I met with him one time and talked to him, you know, four or five times on the phone, I think.

MR. SCHIFF: And did Mr. Stone ever discuss with you at that time or at any other time his communications with WikiLeaks?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Or his communications with Julian Assange?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Never raised that with you?

MR. BANNON: Never mentioned it.

MR. SCHIFF: How about his communications with Guccifer 2?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Castro.

MR. CASTRO: Thank you. I guess let me start with a basic question. Is there any reason -- are you on any medication that you think would affect your answers today?

MR. BANNON: No, I'm not on any medication.

MR. CASTRO: Okay. I have some questions in the time period of the campaign. First, who's Daren Blanton (ph)?

MR. BANNON: Daren Blanton (ph) is a private equity -- runs a hedge fund or a private equity firm out of Dallas, Texas.

MR. CASTRO: And are you familiar with him personally?

MR. BANNON: Yes, yes, know him.

MR. CASTRO: And how do you know him?

MR. BANNON: Just a guy I've done -- you know, I've known him for 15 years, done some -- I think done some transactions with him.

MR. CASTRO: How about John Iandonisi?

MR. BANNON: John who?

MR. CASTRO: Iandonisi. I'll spell it for you. I-a-n-d-o-n-i-s-i.

MR. BANNON: No, not familiar.

MR. CASTRO: How did you come to know about their companies? Their companies are Call Ventures (ph) and Vizsense (ph).

MR. BANNON: Well, Call Ventures (ph) I've known, it's been around for 15 or 20 since. Viz -- the second firm I've never heard of.

MR. CASTRO: Okay. Did the campaign utilize the services of Call Ventures (ph)?

MR. BANNON: No. I think we -- I think we -- I think Daren came -- as you can imagine, after I got there, in the line of half-baked ideas I talked about earlier, I think Daren had some idea of something to do with the digital guys. And he came -- Daren's also very close to Tommy Hicks and I think Don Jr., very close.

MR. CASTRO: I guess let me give you some context or some information that may refresh your memory. The Federal Election Commission report showed that the Trump campaign paid $200,000 on December 5th for, quote, data management services to Call Ventures (ph). Do you know what that expenditure was for?

MR. BANNON: I don't. When he came up, he pitched some idea about data, and I had him go to talk to Brad Parscale and Jared, the guys that make those decisions. I didn't really have -- I kind of cut myself -- I didn't have authority to kind of -- and I didn't want authority. The digital thing's a whole different deal.

MR. CASTRO: What do you remember about his pitch or his --

MR. BANNON: I don't even remember. It's one of these things like the memo there. He had some idea on -- on data that they could do.

MR. CASTRO: Did he approach you, do you remember, was it by

telephone, by email, in person?

MR. BANNON: No, I think he emailed and said he wanted to come up and see me. All of a sudden, I had a lot of long lost friends. And I think he came up later the first week or the second week. He had some idea.

MR. CASTRO: Did he present that in writing, or how did he --

MR. BANNON: I don't think it was even a pitch. I think it was a concept.

MR. CASTRO: But did he present it in writing or just verbally?

MR. BANNON: No, I think for me it was verbally. Like he was making some pitch on data. And, you know, I heard it and said, "Hey, fine, I'll put you in touch with" -- it's along the lines of this, "I'll put you in touch with the digital guys."

MR. CASTRO: Earlier, you said that you don't delete emails. Is that correct?

MR. BANNON: Yes, I don't delete emails.

MR. CASTRO: So you said earlier that he probably emailed you. Is that an email that you could produce for the committee?

MR. BANNON: Yeah, we'll find it. Yeah. Is there an email that you're looking at I should see?

MR. CASTRO: Well, how about any emails from Mr. Daren Blanton (ph).

MR. BANNON: If I'm going to answer a question about it, can I see the email?

MR. CASTRO: We don't have it. That's why I'm asking you if you --

MR. BANNON: I'm just asking you, are you reading from something?

MR. CASTRO: No.

MR. BANNON: Okay. Oh, just the Federal Election Commission, okay. Like I said, I think he emailed me to set the meeting up. It might have had an

attachment of a PowerPoint or something. I'm not saying it did. He came up. He was in New York, not specially to come up for this.

MR. CASTRO: No, whatever was part of it, whatever it has.

MR. BANNON: He came to the 14th floor. And it's one of those ones, I hear it -- this digital stuff and data stuff you got to understand is quite technical and everybody's got -- everybody's got a -- you know, everybody's got a great idea. They're all geniuses. Just you shove them down to the guys that make decisions. That's Parscale and Jared.

If it's $200,000 -- that's the first I've heard it, by the way -- then it had to be -- I talked about the controls early on. It had to be signed off by Brad Parscale and Jared Kushner.

MR. CASTRO: So they would have authorized, you think, this $200,000?

MR. BANNON: 100 percent. $200,000 in the Trump campaign is a lot of money. That had to be signed off by Jared and Parscale both.

MR. CASTRO: And you said Daren Blanton (ph) was close to Tom Hicks and who else?

MR. BANNON: Tommy Hicks and Don Jr. They're big hunting guys down in Texas. And Eric too, I think.

MR. CASTRO: To your knowledge, did Daren Blanton (ph) or anyone else affiliated with him ever meet with Russians or anyone affiliated with the Russian Government, as far as you know?

MR. BANNON: As far as I know, no.

MR. CASTRO: And I know I said I was going to ask you about during the campaign period, but how long had you known Daren Blanton (ph)?

MR. BANNON: Like I said, 15 years.

MR. CASTRO: So I guess during those 15 years, did you know him to have any business connections or any affiliations with Russians or --

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. CASTRO: Did he have -- did he ever bring Russians to any meetings that you were part of or introduce you to anybody that was affiliated with Russians?

MR. BANNON: No, no.

MR. CASTRO: Are you aware of Mr. Blanton (ph) ever giving anything to the campaign on Russia's behalf?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. CASTRO: Was Mr. Blanton (ph) a contributor, as far as you know? Did he personally contribute money?

MR. BANNON: I don't think he ended up contributing. I think he was supposed to. I'm not sure it ever got done, but that would be in an FEC file. If it was a contribution, it was not a big one.

MR. CASTRO: Just a few more questions. You described yourself as being the CEO of the Trump campaign starting in August of 2016. Is that correct?

MR. BANNON: That is correct.

MR. CASTRO: What was your prior campaign experience before that?

MR. BANNON: I had never walked into a campaign office in my life.

MR. CASTRO: So, at this point, the Presidential campaign you would agree is the biggest campaign in the land, right? Nothing bigger than that.

MR. BANNON: Yes.

MR. CASTRO: You've got a rookie digital director who is doing the Facebook ads and so forth, a rookie candidate who has never run for office before, and a rookie CEO or campaign manager in yourself that put together an amazing

winning strategy and formula, but before you get to that point, how does Donald Trump pick you to be the campaign manager?

Now, some context here. You said earlier that you met him in 2010, and that before you started as CEO of the campaign, you'd only spent 20 minutes or less in person with him. So how does Donald Trump pick a guy who has never run any kind of campaign before to be the CEO of his campaign in the homestretch of the election?

MR. BANNON: Remember, Kellyanne was a rookie too. She was a junior pollster. She'd never done a campaign manager.

I think it shows you on that Saturday and that Saturday night and then Sunday halfway through it the desperation. I mean, it was -- it was, you know -- we talked about it. I told him on Saturday night all the bad poll numbers. I told him he had a 100 percent, 100 percent metaphysical certitude of winning if he just did the following. And --

MR. CASTRO: Well, but let's back up a little bit. How do you even get into a position of being able to pitch him or present to him?

MR. BANNON: Oh, the Mercers, I think. I think I talked about this earlier. The Mercers called him early on -- or reached out to the -- reached out to the -- didn't call him. Reached out to the fundraising guys early on Saturday morning.

MR. CASTRO: Who were the fundraising guys?

MR. BANNON: I think it was Steve Mnuchin's team, I think. Somehow there was a fundraiser that was going to take place in the Hamptons at Woody Johnson's home I think on Saturday afternoon. And I think the Mercers contacted -- they had been invited but were not going to go, because I think they'd

already given enough money or they were tapped out. And I think that they called and they sat down and spent about 20 minutes with Trump.

MR. CASTRO: Now, did the Mercers tell him, you're going to hire this guy?

MR. BANNON: I think they strongly recommended it would be myself and Kellyanne coming as a team. Didn't tell him. It was not -- I think they made a strong recommendation.

MR. CASTRO: And how did the Mercers pick you? I mean, the Mercers know a lot of people. They're considered a godfather family in conservative circles. I'm sure there's people they knew that had run Senate campaigns, other critical campaigns. Why you?

MR. BANNON: I don't know. You have to ask them. We just had a conversation on Saturday morning and kind of talked to them about how bad it looked from the outside and from this thing. Made some phone calls around about how bad it was. Some people thought it was even worse. And got on the phone, and, you know, the conversation came up and it was -- and they asked if I would do it, if I could do it, and I said yes.

And Kellyanne I think got -- we -- Kellyanne agreed too. And I think they set up -- they called Mnuchin's operation somehow. They went out. They spent about 30 minutes with the candidate at Woody Johnson's home, and then I talked to Trump that night.

MR. CASTRO: And just a few final questions on Breitbart. How long were you working at Breitbart?

MR. BANNON: I was on the board for a number of years. I helped do the financing. And then I basically stepped in as executive chairman the day after Andrew -- Andrew died of a massive heart attack, and I stepped in the next day as

executive chairman.

MR. CASTRO: In 2012, is that correct?

MR. BANNON: 2012. March 2nd of 2012, first.

MR. CASTRO: During your time at Breitbart, did you ever commission any investigations or any attempts to recover any kind of information of Hillary Clinton's that was not public?

MR. BANNON: No.

MR. CASTRO: You never worked with any other groups to accomplish that?

MR. BANNON: Not at Breitbart. And it wasn't about searching. But after -- in 2015, after Tom Finton (ph), the Judicial Watch thing came out on the 33,000 emails, I had a couple of people come by and pitch me on their idea about how to -- how to get the 33,000 -- how the 33,000 emails were out there.

MR. CASTRO: Did you bite?

MR. BANNON: I came to a very quick conclusion it was impossible, that it would have to be some sort of -- the NSA or somebody would have to do it. It would be impossible for any -- you couldn't do it. You could never validate it. It would be -- it's a ridiculous wild goose chase.

MR. CASTRO: Who were these people that approached you?

MR. BANNON: Different -- you know, different people that have worked with security agencies or, you know -- you know these guys in town. People have worked at NSA or been contractors at NSA, and they know all this great stuff. It turns out most of it's BS.

MR. CASTRO: Well, if any of them solicited you in writing or in any method that would have left a record, is that something that you would be willing to produce

to the committee?

MR. BANNON: I would, but I wouldn't have it. I mean, first off, nobody produced anything in writing. They came by. And I think I had two or three meetings with different people, and I heard the pitches. And, you know, I'm a pretty practical person about what's doable and what's not doable, and I just -- I never followed up even after the first meetings. I realized it was basically a wild goose chase.

MR. CASTRO: And then, finally, why did you leave Cambridge Analytica?

MR. BANNON: I had to. I stepped down immediately upon taking the Trump -- the CEO job. And then, in the transition, it was one of those assets you had to -- you had to sell. So the ethics, whatever -- the government ethics team came back to me with the things that you had to sell, so I just sold it.

MR. CASTRO: I yield back.

MR. SCHIFF: We're almost at the end. Jackie Speier.

MS. SPEIER: What would you say was the secret sauce for the campaign?

MR. BANNON: What do you mean "the secret sauce"?

MS. SPEIER: Well, what really went -- took you from being 16 points down to winning it in 85 days?

MR. BANNON: Just -- it was very simple. The two underlying numbers that are important are right track/wrong track. I think two-thirds of the people thought the country was on the wrong track. And President Obama, even the guys that liked him didn't think he brought the change. And the 75 percent of the people -- I think it was 75 percent think America's in decline, and the deplorables don't think that.

So just get very simple, very basic. You know, three messages: stop mass

illegal immigration and limit legal immigration, get our sovereignty back; number two, bring back manufacturing jobs; number three, get out of these pointless foreign wars. And just take those three themes, hammer it every day.

I think you see the next day, it was the first time he came out and said -- really framed it as Clinton Cash. Just focus on the global initiative and the Clinton Foundation and how corrupt they are and Uranium One and just compare and contrast her. She's the guardian of a corrupt and incompetent elite, and he's an agent of change. And all you have to do is give people permission to vote for him and you'll win, 100 percent. Every day it was just that. That's -- the underlying numbers were all there, the math.

MS. SPEIER: And the Mercers, they weren't all that engaged in politics before this 2016 election cycle, were they?

MR. BANNON: I think they're probably the biggest donor to really the conservative movement, you know, smaller groups and things like that. I think in active politics, as far as a Presidential election, when they got so involved with Ted Cruz was probably the first time for that. But I think they've been involved in funding right-to-life groups and smaller groups like that through donations, the GAIs of the world, where you give a million dollars, things like that. They were historically a pretty big -- I think a pretty big contributor and just getting into giving money to candidates. And Cruz is -- I think the $15 million they put in the super PAC for Cruz was the first time they stepped forward into a Presidential campaign.

MS. SPEIER: And how much did they put into the super PAC?

MR. BANNON: For Cruz?

MS. SPEIER: No, for Trump.

MR. BANNON: I don't know. I was on the campaign at the time. But I

don't think it was more than 5 million bucks, $10 million maybe, maybe $5 million. I think some other people came in. I don't think it was a huge amount of money. I mean, I think it was big, but I don't think it was the size of the Cruz, but I never went back and checked it.

MS. SPEIER: But you've known the Mercers for some time, have you not?

MR. BANNON: About 7 years, yes.

MS. SPEIER: So they would fund lots of kind of grassroots type of organizations that were conservative in nature, but they really didn't weigh into Presidential campaigns before they were into Ted Cruz's campaign. And then they came into Donald Trump's campaign in a really big way. What --

MR. BANNON: Well, I think they gave money also to Carly Fiorina. They put some money into a super PAC for her.

MS. SPEIER: And --

MR. BANNON: Their super PAC was called Defeat Crooked Hillary. I think the Trump thing, at least at the beginning, was an "anybody but Hillary" more than a pro-Trump.

MS. SPEIER: So it was more -- they were more motivated at defeating Hillary than electing Trump?

MR. BANNON: At least initially. I think after the Cruz -- remember, the Cruz thing ended kind of vitriolic, where Cruz tried to do stuff at the convention, et cetera. So there was a lot of hard feelings. So I think their -- I think -- when you talked earlier about the super PAC being formed, I think the title of it was actually Defeat Crooked Hillary.

MS. SPEIER: Right.

MR. BANNON: So it was looked at as a -- as a, you know, pitching the

negative versus saying the affirmative. I think over time, they, you know, start to get more comfortable with candidate Trump and then President-elect Trump and then President Trump.

MS. SPEIER: So what was their motivation about Hillary? What did Hillary do to them that made them feel so --

MR. BANNON: I just think they're conservatives. That, you know, it's -- if you're a conservative, I think the Clintons hit a certain hot button. I don't think it's anything personal. Just a tradition of, you know, being anti-Clinton. It's not personal. It's just I think they viewed her as -- with the Supreme Court and all those other issues.

MS. SPEIER: So, if President Obama was running, they'd probably do the same thing?

MR. BANNON: No. I don't think they ever put money into a super PAC against President Obama. I think they put it into grassroots groups. They may have given some money to the -- some of these other groups. I think they gave money to Mitt Romney, but they didn't do anything to the scale that they did in this election cycle. So I think it -- I think it was different.

MS. SPEIER: I yield back.

MR. SCHIFF: I just have a couple last questions just for the record. During the transition, were you part of any discussion about how to urge the Russians not to react to the Obama sanctions?

MR. BANNON: Once again, on advice of counsel and the White House, I can't answer that, because it was in transition.

MR. SCHIFF: And, similarly, once you were part of the administration, were you part of any discussions about how to approach the Russians vis-à-vis the

sanctions, whether to do away with them or in any way minimize the effect of the sanctions?

MR. BANNON: The same answer.

MR. SCHIFF: When is the last time you spoke with General Flynn?

MR. BANNON: When I shook his hand the day he left the White House.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you have any conversation with him prior to his leaving the White House about the circumstances in which he was leaving the White House?

MR. BANNON: That's -- also, I can't answer that, because of the time period.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. We are almost done. Mr. Bannon, thank you for an extended day.

MR. BANNON: Sure.

MR. CONAWAY: Obviously, the issue we have to confront is the privilege. It's not yours to assert; it's the White House's to assert, and I have to figure out some way to force that.

So, Mr. Burck, I need to get you on the record, if you wouldn't mind answering some questions to try to get it in one specific spot on the record, what you told your client to do today.

MR. BURCK: Yes, Mr. Conaway. You would like me to just --

MR. CONAWAY: Yes.

MR. BURCK: I had a discussion with the White House -- I can't remember if it was last week, late last week, or early this week, or both -- about the position they would take with respect to the White House time period and the transition period.

I had understood that the campaign was not asserting any kind of privilege and they had produced materials to the committee. The White House informed me that the position was that Mr. Bannon was instructed by them not to answer questions relating to the transition or to his time at the White House in totality because the White House was not aware of what questions would be asked, the substance of what the answers would be, and until they were aware of that, they couldn't take a position on executive privilege, and that they could foresee that many of the questions and many of the answers, if not most or all, could call for executive privilege.

MR. CONAWAY: So did your client have a separate conversation with the White House in reference to this issue?

MR. BURCK: I'm sorry, say that --

MR. CONAWAY: I was asking you the question, did the White House specifically talk to your client about this issue as well, or just through you?

MR. BURCK: Not that I'm aware of, no. The White House, as far as I know, has only spoken to me.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Thank you. Who at the White House counsel office did you have these conversations with?

MR. BURCK: Uttam Dhillon.

MR. CONAWAY: Would you spell that?

MR. BURCK: Yes. U-t-t-a-m, last name D-h-i-l-l-o-n.

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you. And you said earlier in your conversation you spoke to them late last week or early this week?

MR. BURCK: Right. I just can't remember which.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Do you know how many times you spoke with

counsel about this issue?

MR. BURCK: Twice.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. And did you talk to them after we subpoenaed Mr. Bannon today?

MR. BURCK: Yes. I called them to find out what their position was in light of the subpoena.

MR. CONAWAY: Did the White House ask you -- or ask your client to refuse to answer any specific questions, or was it a blanket statement?

MR. BURCK: Blanket, that they did not want him to answer any questions relating to those two timeframes until there could be an accommodation between them and the committee.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Well, here's how we intend to proceed. The subpoena remains in effect. We'd like to reconvene Thursday, the 18th, at 2 p.m. We would like for you to -- we'd like for Mr. Bannon to reappear and answer our questions that they refused to answer today.

And we want you to request that the White House get this resolved between our committee and them as to exactly what is a privilege and how we can get the answers to the questions that Mr. Bannon was instructed, on advice of counsel from the White House, to not answer. So --

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Chairman, just to I would say amend, I think there's a third category that we went into, which was post Mr. Bannon's employment, about conversations where he perceived he was giving advice to President Trump.

MR. CONAWAY: Right. That is correct. Thank you for that.

So the transition, while you were at the White House, and then any subsequent direct conversations you had specifically with the President, answering

our questions.

So, unless there's some comment you'd like to make, we will stand in recess until 2 p.m. on the 18th.

Thank you, and we're off the record.

[Whereupon, at 7:51 p.m., the interview was concluded.]