

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW OF: JONATHAN SAFRON

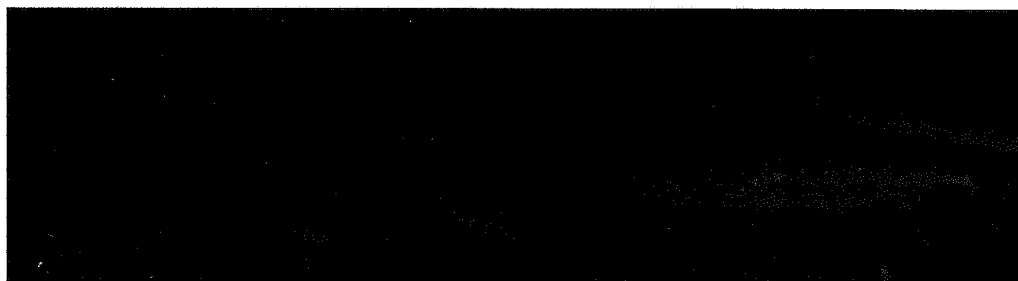
Thursday, October 12, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol,
commencing at: 4:20 p.m.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:



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██████████ Okay. Good afternoon, Jonathan.

This is a transcribed interview of Mr. Jonathan Safron. Thank you for speaking to us today. For the record, as I said, I'm ██████████ senior counsel for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the majority.

Before we begin, I wanted to state a few things for the record. The questioning will be conducted by staff. During the course of this interview, 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.

During the course of this interview, we will take any breaks that you desire.

We do 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.

This entire interview will be conducted at the unclassified level. You are entitled to have a lawyer present for this interview, and you have informed us you have selected not to. You have also informed us that your father is in the office with you.

As I said, the interview will be transcribed. There is a reporter here with us in Washington making a record of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers.

Because the reporter cannot record gestures, and in this case can't even

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see you, 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 may wish to -- and 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, and the committee also reserves the right to request you return for additional questions should the need arise.

The process for the interview is 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 short break if you wish. After which, the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions. These round will continue until the questions have expired.

These time limits will be strictly adhered to by all sides with no extensions being granted. Time will be kept for each portion of the interview with warnings given at the 5 and 1-minute mark respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone else. Our record today will reflect that you have not been compelled to appear. You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

Lastly, we will swear you in so this interview can be under oath. Though we cannot see you, we ask that you raise your right hand and be sworn.

Mr. Safron, do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth?

MR. SAFRON: I affirm.

██████████ Thank you. The witness being sworn, over to the minority for their 45 minutes of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY ██████████

Q Jonathan, on behalf of the ranking member, Congressman Adam Schiff, and the other Democratic members of the committee, we appreciate you getting on the phone with us today. Again, my name is ██████████ and I'm with my colleague, ██████████ and we will both be asking you questions.

A Okay.

Q As you probably know, this is a bipartisan investigation looking into four areas. The first area is what Russian activity and other active measures were directed against the United States and our allies. We are also looking into whether Russian active measures included links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any U.S. persons.

We are also looking into the U.S. Government's response to the Russian active measures and how to protect ourselves going forward. And finally, we are looking into possible leaks of classified information related to the Intelligence Community's January 2017 assessment of Russia's interference.

So we will get started. We are in receipt of a number of emails that you provided to the committee, and we appreciate you sending those to us. The email accounts we have for you are ██████████, ██████████, and ██████████.

Were there any other email accounts that you used during your, you know, communications with Mr. Smith and his associates related to the activities of

2016?

A No, ma'am.

Q And why did you set up the Proton mail account?

A It seemed like it was a time where commercial -- or not commercial. It seemed like a time where regular email accounts were being hacked into, and I just didn't want anyone to look at my email address.

Q Did someone ask you to set that up, or did you just happen to know about Proton mail?

A Peter told me to set it up.

Q Did he explain why he wanted you to set it up?

A He was -- I think it was for investment reasons. He just knew someone who was an investor in Proton mail, and he told a bunch of -- I don't have any record of this, but he told a bunch of people he knew to set it up.

Q Would it ring a bell to know that Michael Flynn or Flynn Intel Group recommended that you set up these accounts?

A No, not to my recollection.

Q One of the first emails we received from you is an exchange between yourself and [REDACTED] from the House Oversight Committee. Did you ever speak with [REDACTED]

A Yes, I believe I did.

Q Have you spoken with other congressional committees?

A I have spoken with the Senate Intelligence Committee, but I -- I spoke with the lawyers, and I provided a written statement. I didn't speak with anyone else.

Q Okay. Mr. Safron, in your -- when did you first meet Peter Smith?

A In 2015.

Q When in 2015?

A I don't remember. Sorry. Early? I don't remember.

Q Okay. And then did you know him basically until he passed away earlier this year?

A Yes. I spoke to him on the day before he passed away, over the phone.

Q In all of your conversations and your communications with Mr. Smith, did you ever get the impression that he was mentally unbalanced or that he wasn't sort of in control of his life?

A I'm not really sure if I understand the question.

Q In the years that you knew Mr. Smith, did it concern you that he might take his own life?

A Oh, no.

Q Did it concern you -- did you feel like he was a competent human being?

A I'm sorry. Could you rephrase that, I guess.

Q Sure. Was he a functioning human being? He was -- what did he do for a living?

A Oh. He was definitely a functioning human being.

Q And he had his wits about him. He wasn't crazy or anything. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q It sounds like a crazy question, but, you know, I just want to establish that he was --

A Okay.

Q I don't -- I never had the opportunity to meet him, so -- when you met him in 2015, what were the circumstances? Like how did you come to meet him?

A Sure. So I currently am a law student, and I was not in law school yet, and I was looking for a job. And I was employed through a tutoring service known as Varsity Tutors. I think I'm still employed by them, but I get their emails.

But I was working with fifth graders and younger on test prep. And one day I saw in my inbox that Peter Smith needed help and basically with like basic computer things. Like, the first day I met him, I helped him set up his LinkedIn profile. So that was the circumstance.

Q I see. And then did Mr. Smith essentially hire you to help him with computer things?

A I want to just be really clear that he just didn't know how to use his internet. Like, he didn't know how to use LinkedIn, and he didn't know how to use this dictation software called Dragon. I think it was Dragon.

Q I totally believe you.

A So he just wanted me to show him those basic things at first.

Q Sure. I 100 percent believe you. He's probably about the same level as my own mother.

A No worries.

Q And so you helped him set up his LinkedIn account. At what point did you become involved in some of the activities in the 2016 election?

A So I think, to my recollection, I showed Peter the website 270ToWin.Com in spring 2016. I think that was the first time that Peter and I spoke about the 2016 election. And I printed out for him a bunch of Wikipedia

pages about which States have gone to which party. Honestly, that's the only thing that I actually did with the election, I mean, to my understanding. So --

Q Okay. I think my colleague has a question.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Hi. It's [REDACTED] and I just would like to backtrack to get there. So you were at the tutoring service and you went -- so when you came to him, you were their employee. They were paying you to do this, correct?

A They being Varsity Tutors?

Q Yes.

A If you mean that I was the employee of Varsity Tutors, yes.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Is someone speaking to you?

A My dad.

Q Is he giving you your answers, or are you testifying?

A No.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay. So before we get to the 270ToWin, at some point in time did you become an employee of Mr. Smith?

A No. I became an employee of Corporate Venture Alliances, LLC.

BY [REDACTED]

Q What is corporate -- what is this LLC?

A Corporate Venture Alliances, LLC, is incorporated in Delaware. It had offices in Wilmington. It was the vehicle by which Peter and his colleagues invested in various startups and kept tabs on various investing companies that they had aligned with over the decades, through which Peter became a respected

businessman.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So then Mr. Smith was the CEO of this company?

A No. He was the chairman.

Q Okay. So he was the chairman. And you were paid by Corporate Venture Alliances?

A That is right.

Q And you were -- and was this in a full-time capacity?

A No, because I eventually starting going to law school, and I didn't work full time. But I worked, I don't know, part time.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]

Q When did you first hear about -- there is another LLC called KLS Research. When did you first hear about that LLC for Mr. Smith?

A I think it was in fall 2016. And -- so you guys said to let you know of the basic facts, so he told me the initials were Keep the Spread Low. And then he went with John Szobocsan, who was the other person who worked in the Chicago office.

And then he came back, and it was KLS, LLC. So if you were following that, Peter told me it was going to be called one thing and then -- I'm just saying, like, I wasn't involved in starting it. All I ever heard about it was the initials, why they were named that. And then that wasn't even it.

Q Were you ever paid from KLS?

A No, ma'am.

Q Did you ever sign a nondisclosure agreement with Peter Smith or

KLS or Mr. Smith's colleague?

A No, ma'am.

Q Did he ever present you with a nondisclosure?

A No, ma'am.

Q And did you -- I guess you worked with John Szobocsan. Is that right?

A No, it's not right, ma'am. It's Szobocsan.

Q Szobocsan.

A Correct.

Q Okay. He also works for Corporate Venture Alliance?

A Correct. To the best of my knowledge, he was one of the members of the LLC. And to the best of my knowledge, he was the other member of KLS, along with Peter. I might be wrong about that though.

Q What was your understanding of the reason KLS was formed?

A I don't have any understanding. I mean, I think Peter wanted to feel like he was doing something with the election, having been a Republican for his whole life. And I think he wanted to, you know, just kind of feel like he was doing something, and he just wanted to make a company. And I didn't know why. That's my answer.

Q What is the extent of your communications with Matt Tait regarding Mr. Smith's activities?

A So initially, when I was talking to other -- the Senate, for example, and I guess the Wall Street Journal reporter, I told them that that I had never even spoken with him, with Tait. I believe though that one time I sat in on a call with Peter and Matt Tait, and I didn't remember what it was about or when it took

place.

I didn't have any conversations with him. I may have been on emails with him, but I don't remember.

Q We are in a receipt of a number of emails actually from Mr. Tait surrounding his communications with both yourself and Mr. Smith. Is there any reason why you did not provide those emails to us?

A I don't know if I got them.

Q Would you be willing to go back and take a look at your email accounts to see if you have additional responsive documents related to our investigation?

A Yeah, I will look.

Q Because we do have emails that are actually from you to Mr.

A Tait. Could you tell me what they said?

Q I'm not going to go into Mr. Tait's emails, but they are certainly emails from you passing on materials related to the activities that you were involved in.

So would you be willing to go back and take a look at your emails and see if you have those as well?

A Sure, I will look.

Q Did you ever communicate with retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn or his son Michael G. Flynn?

A No, ma'am.

Q Have you ever heard of them?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q How did General Flynn fit into Mr. Smith's activities?

A I don't know.

Q Mr. Smith never talked about it?

A I'm sorry?

Q Did Mr. Smith ever talk about Lieutenant General Flynn?

A Yes, but I don't remember exactly what he said. I do remember it was more at the beginning of our -- like when I knew Peter, and I don't remember him talking about him related to the election at all.

Q One of the documents that you provided to us appears to be related to KLS Research. Do you recall that document?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Where did that document come from?

A From Peter.

Q Did you help him put this together?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q You wouldn't have helped him with any links, internet links, links to bios?

A Oh, I remember that he provided me with the document, like he wrote it. And then I -- he wasn't good enough with PDFs to put links on it, so I overlaid it in this program. I put hyperlinks on top of what he wrote. So I guess I should have said when you said put together, I did help with that part, but I didn't write it.

Q Did you read it?

A Sorry?

Q Did you read the document?

A Did I see it?

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Q Yes. Did you read it?

A I think at a cursory level.

Q Did you ever communicate with Brian Robins of AlienVault?

A No, but I know who he is.

Q Who is he?

A He went to Vanderbilt, didn't he?

Q Who is Brian Robins?

A All I remember about him was that he was another person that Peter knew that went to my alma mater, Vanderbilt University. I just remember he has an unusual spelling of his last name.

Q Who was your understanding of his role in Mr. Smith's operation?

A No idea. Sorry. I just recognize his name.

Q You're not -- are you aware of Mr. Robins' involvement searching the dark web for Hillary Clinton's emails?

A Not at all.

Q Have you ever communicated with Mr. Robins?

A Never.

Q Do you know who Royal O'Brien is?

A Yes.

Q Who is he?

A That's a good question. I think Peter told me that he worked with Royal when Peter's company in the 1990s was investing in a video game company. And that was -- I never spoke with Royal, and that's all I ever heard about him.

Q He's a programmer based out of Florida, and Mr. Smith apparently

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described him as a dark web expert. Do you recall talking with Mr. Smith about Mr. O'Brien's assistance?

A No.

Q Did you ever communicate with Eric York?

A Yes.

Q Tell me about Eric York.

A Okay. So I don't remember exactly when this was, but there was the denial of service -- like DOS attack, and that happened when our company, Corporate Venture Alliances, was interested in the internet of things, doing some sort of investment with the company. And Eric York got on the phone with John, Peter, and me, and we spoke with him about the security of home devices like smart refrigerators.

And I know that Eric worked at IBM, I think it was in Atlanta, and I'm LinkedIn connected with him.

Q Are you aware of his involvement searching the web for Secretary Clinton's emails with Mr. Smith?

A No, ma'am.

Q When is the last time you have been in contact with Mr. York?

A I think that I emailed him pretty soon after that, after our phone conversation with a Law 360 article about some sort of internet of things thing. And I think he responded to me, but it was completely unrelated to the election.

Q Two of the individuals reportedly involved in Mr. Smith's activities to track down Secretary Clinton's emails are Charles Johnson and Pax Dickerson. Do you recall these gentlemen?

A I recall Charles Johnson but not Pax.

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Q Did you ever work with Mr. Johnson or talk with him?

A He tried to get Peter to invest in his company and made a trip to Chicago, and I met him for about 5 minutes, Charles Johnson. And if I'm not mistaken, Pax is his business partner, Charles Johnson, but I never met him at all.

That was -- also, just to clarify, that was probably in fall of 2015, so that was very early on in my knowing Peter. I've -- now that I know who Charles Johnson is, I would have probably run out of the room.

Q Mr. Johnson is actually quoted as saying, regarding Peter Smith, he said, quote, "The magnitude of what he was trying to do was kind of impressive. He had people running around Europe. He had people talking to Guccifer."

Do you recall who Mr. Smith had working in Europe?

A Not at all. That's very interesting to know. I've never heard that.

Q Did you personally ever communicate with Guccifer 2.0?

A Never.

Q Do you know anyone who did?

A No, ma'am.

Q Do you have a Twitter handle?

A Not at the moment.

Q Have you ever had a Twitter handle?

A I had one that -- when I was in college that I deleted, which a reporter for Politico told me that was now tweeting Russian, but I didn't do that. And I got rid of the account in 2014.

Q What was that Twitter handle?

A I think it was [REDACTED]. If it's not, then I might be mistaken, but I think that was it.

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Q So let me understand. You closed that account, or did you stop using it?

A Yes, ma'am. I was doing activities related to my college, and I graduated from college and I quit the account. And I thought I deactivated it right after I graduated.

Q But you didn't deactivate it. Is that right?

A What?

Q I'm trying to understand --

A No. I mean, I'm saying that, to the best of my knowledge, I deactivated it. And the fact that somebody else took it actually lends credence to that, because I am not using that account. And I hadn't even thought about it until earlier this summer when the Politico reporter told me about it.

Q So your account was [REDACTED]?

A It was when I was in college.

Q How do you think it was taken over by someone who speaks Russian?

A That is completely out of my knowledge. I'm really sorry. I can't answer that. I have no idea.

Q What did Mr. Smith tell you about his connections with the Trump campaign?

A I don't know. I mean, he -- could you be more specific in your question, I guess?

Q It's not a specific question. The question is, what did Mr. Smith tell you about his connections with the Trump campaign?

A I don't really know. I mean, he has said that he knew Sam Clovis,

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who was apparently somehow related to Trump, and that was pretty much the extent. Aside from he would always say that he knew Kellyanne Conway, but I don't know if that's true.

Q Did he speak about his communications with Lieutenant General Flynn?

A I know how this sounds, but he never talked about him after the first few months after I met Peter. I remember after Flynn got -- whatever happened to him, Peter might have mentioned him in the news, like when he came up in the news.

Q Do you know -- go ahead, [REDACTED]
BY [REDACTED]

Q Just to follow up on that, so if he was mentioning that, are you talking about General Flynn's departure from the White House?

A That is right.

Q Okay. So that was well after. So that's in 2017 you continued -- you had contact with him until the day before he died. But how often was this contact?

A I'm sorry. Are you talking about my contact with Peter Smith?

Q Yeah.

A Did you -- are you saying how often did I talk with Peter?

Q Yeah.

A Hello?

Q Yes. I'm sorry. In 2017, because the development you're talking about occurred in 2017 after the inauguration.

A Yes. I talked with Peter until the day he died.

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Q Okay.

A From 2015 to 2017, hardly a day went by that I didn't hear from Peter via email or on the phone or in person, work.

BY [REDACTED]

Q You spoke with him and communicated with him almost everyday?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Were you aware if you spoke with him everyday of activities he was involved --

A Wait. I wasn't saying that Peter talked to Flynn everyday. I'm saying that I talked to Peter everyday.

Q I understand.

A I really -- I asked you to clarify it like three times. I'm sorry.

Q That is exactly how I understand what you just said.

A Okay. Okay.

Q So you spoke with Peter Smith almost on a daily basis?

A Correct.

Q So were you aware in all of these communications with Peter Smith of his efforts to find these 33,000 emails that he believed were stolen from Hillary Clinton's server?

A I was aware that he had some notion that they were out there. I was not aware of his efforts to obtain them.

Q Did you read the Wall Street Journal article regarding Mr. Smith's communications with the Wall Street Journal reporter?

A Yeah, Shane Harris.

Q Were you surprised when you read the article?

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A I would say I was really surprised, because I spoke with Mr. Harris too, and he didn't really tell me what was going to happen, and he just kept asking me to explain my side of the story. And especially as this was very soon after Peter had died, and I didn't know why, I was very reluctant to go in the press about anything.

And then the story came out, and I was mentioned in it. So then later I found out that Shane Harris' main source was Matt Tait, and that was more -- it made more sense. But until I found that out, I was confused, yes, and surprised.

Q Were you surprised that Mr. Smith spoke to a reporter, or were you surprised at the content of what Mr. Smith communicated?

A Oh, no, I was surprised at the content.

Q So you'd never heard of any of those things?

A Sorry. Peter would love to, like, talk in the press. He was used to working the media, so I was not surprised that he would want to self-aggrandize.

Q Why would he do that so long after the election? Why wouldn't he have done that earlier then?

A Do what?

Q Go to the press?

A Talk to a reporter?

Q Right.

A No reporter had spoken with him. I mean, actually the reporters from the New York Times spoke with him during the election cycle about how Peter's emails were hacked. So she actually -- in response to your question, he did talk to the press earlier.

Q Were you aware of activities by Russia-linked hackers who were

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working to find Secretary Clinton's emails?

A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did you search -- this is Linda again. Did you search WikiLeaks regarding the emails that had been disseminated, published by WikiLeaks of Secretary Clinton's emails?

A I believe I looked at them for personal reasons. I mean --

Q So you read --

A Sorry.

Q Okay. You read Hillary Clinton's emails for personal reasons, and did you tell Mr. Smith this?

A It was -- oh, no. I remember I wanted to look -- I just had seen that many of the emails were like, "Print this," and it reminded me of something that Peter would send to me, kind of. I just thought it was funny, I mean, how like -- that I connected with that personally. And I told Peter, like, there's so many of these emails that just say, "Print." I don't know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So, Jonathan, I just want to reference an email that you sent to Peter Smith on October 31, 2016. Do you have a copy of the emails that you provided to us?

A I remember them. I could look at it if --

Q So you address all in the email to Mr. Smith. Can you tell me who "all" is?

A No. I don't recall.

Q Do you recall what the subject line of that email is?

A No. Hold on. Could I just look? Sorry.

Q Yeah, go ahead. Look at it.

A Okay. Do you remember which document this was in the ones that I sent?

Q I'm looking at an email dated Monday, October 31, 2016, at 6:31 a.m.

A Hold on. Oh, yeah, I see it. State Department on a single PC.

Q Could you tell me about what this email is and what type of work you were doing for Mr. Smith?

A Let's see. Sorry. I'm reading the --

Q Take your time.

A Well, this was part of Peter's political analysis that he really honed towards the later parts of his life via the internet. And it was an exercise in, I think, I would say, like, how is the FBI functioning. It was maybe a tongue-in-cheek criticism of the FBI must not have done all of the work. It was just a commentary on the FBI's search and, yeah.

Q If it's a commentary, why did you conclude by saying, "We very much welcome observations"?

A Observations on the writing style. I actually don't know.

Q It almost looks like you were drafting this email for Mr. Smith to send to someone. So I'm just trying to understand, like --

A That looks -- that's entirely possible.

Q So you just don't remember?

A Yeah.

Q Boy.

A I don't -- I remember writing it. I don't remember, like, why I said the last part or to whom I was -- like, I sent it to Peter I see in the subject line, or to the "To."

Q So I'm going to turn to another email, from John Szobocsan to Peter Smith, and yourself, dated Thursday, October 6, 2016. Subject is, "There must be more to the story."

A Wait, hold on. Sorry. Okay.

Q Do you recall this email?

A I recall -- yeah.

Q So it appears that you all are looking through, you know, WikiLeaks and emails. Is that -- is that fair to say, that was part of what you all were working on?

A I wouldn't include myself in the you all. I see myself in the subject of this. I would say, the reason is, I would sometimes be with Peter when John wasn't, and I would just tell Peter, hey, look at your email.

So I'm not trying to deny what you're saying completely, but I'm saying that I wasn't very much involved in it, except maybe in an administrative role for Peter.

Q Okay. Fair enough.

Now, if you had sent Matt Tait emails, would that also have been sort of in your role just as an administrative person basically working for Mr. Smith?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. Well, if that's the extent of your role, I'm not sure I have anymore questions. [REDACTED] do you?

BY [REDACTED]

Q I'm just curious, have you ever met Donald Trump?

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A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did you attend the inauguration?

A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did Mr. Smith?

A No. I was with Peter on the day of. We went to Frankie's bar -- or not a bar. It was just like a pizza place and we had pizza and watched people throw stones at Republicans -- on TV, of course.

[REDACTED] We can go off the record.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And one quick question. One more. Sorry.

The Politico article that you mentioned said that you had told them -- told the reporter that you were copied in on all of the emails related to the election. I think you termed them the election emails. Is that correct?

A I don't really know. I don't know to what you're referring, but I don't -- I don't think that fact would be correct or that statement. I don't know if I said it in the article. I may or may not have said that in the article, but it's not true.

Q Okay. And do you know if Mr. Smith -- when, if ever, Mr. Smith stopped his effort to hunt the Clinton emails?

A I didn't even know when he started it, so that's just an aside. But, no, I don't know that. I do not know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And, Mr. Safron, I just have -- actually, I'm going to just reference one other document that you don't necessarily have in front of you, but it is from

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yourself, from your Proton mail account to Peter Smith and Matt Tait.

A Okay. I don't have access to that account.

Q Well, I will tell you about the email.

A Thank you.

Q It's from you, and it says, "Matt, here are some additional materials we feel you may like to review." And then the first line is, quote, "Much public attention is being given to the recovery of the 30,000 or so emails, which Secretary Clinton said she deleted because their content was personal in nature."

And you go onto say that, you know, clear evidence exists, that various individuals have obtained those emails. Do you recall sending that email to Matt Tait?

A It probably was very soon after the phone call, but I don't really remember when that was. But I do remember sending that, but I don't remember ever hearing from him personally. Now, when I say that, that, you know, that I sent was definitely in the administrative role.

██████████ Do you have any questions?

██████████ Do I?

██████████ Yes.

██████████ Just a couple.

██████████ I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, ██████████

BY ██████████

Q Hey, Mr. Safron. ██████████ again for the majority. Thanks on behalf of the chairman and the committee for taking the time to speak with us today. I'm not going to be that long at all.

A couple quick questions regarding your relationship with Peter Smith.

During your relationship with Peter Smith, did you have any information to suggest that Mr. Smith was involved in any illegal activity?

A No, sir.

Q During your relationship with Mr. Smith, do you have any information to suggest or know that Mr. Smith acted as a go-between, between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government to help him get elected?

A No, sir.

Q Do you have any information in your possession or that you have come across to suggest that the Donald J. Trump campaign for President colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russian Government during the elections?


A No, sir.

Q Do you have any information in your possession that you, Mr. Smith, Mr. Tait, or anyone of the other individuals that you communicated with or for on Mr. Smith's behalf conducted that role, that is to say, they acted as a go-between between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government during the 2016 election?

A No, sir.

Q And in the entire universe of your relationship with Mr. Smith, Mr. Tait, and any of the other individuals referenced herein, do you have any information to show that any of those individuals, including yourself, colluded, conspired, or coordinated with the Russian Government on behalf of Donald Trump and/or his associates to have him elected?

A No, sir.

 I don't have anything else.

MR. SAFRON: Well, thank you for allowing me to do this over the phone. I really appreciate it. I actually have a meeting with a professor at 5:45 our time, and it's really a great benefit to be able to help the committee and to be able to go to law school. So thank you.

██████████ Thanks for your time. And if we need anything, we will get back in touch with you, and best of luck in law school.

MR. SAFRON: Thank you.

██████████ Bye.

[Whereupon, at 5:05 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW OF: JONATHAN SAFRON

Thursday, October 12, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol,
commencing at: 4:20 p.m.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:



██████████ Okay. Good afternoon, Jonathan.

This is a transcribed interview of Mr. Jonathan Safron. Thank you for speaking to us today. For the record, as I said, I'm ██████████ senior counsel for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the majority.

Before we begin, I wanted to state a few things for the record. The questioning will be conducted by staff. During the course of this interview, 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.

During the course of this interview, we will take any breaks that you desire.

We do 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.

This entire interview will be conducted at the unclassified level. You are entitled to have a lawyer present for this interview, and you have informed us you have selected not to. You have also informed us that your father is in the office with you.

As I said, the interview will be transcribed. There is a reporter here with us in Washington making a record of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers.

Because the reporter cannot record gestures, and in this case can't even

see you, 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 may wish to -- and 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, and the committee also reserves the right to request you return for additional questions should the need arise.

The process for the interview is 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 short break if you wish. After which, the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions. These round will continue until the questions have expired.

These time limits will be strictly adhered to by all sides with no extensions being granted. Time will be kept for each portion of the interview with warnings given at the 5 and 1-minute mark respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone else. Our record today will reflect that you have not been compelled to appear. You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

Lastly, we will swear you in so this interview can be under oath. Though we cannot see you, we ask that you raise your right hand and be sworn.

Mr. Safron, do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth?

MR. SAFRON: I affirm.

[REDACTED] Thank you. The witness being sworn, over to the minority for their 45 minutes of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY [REDACTED]

Q Jonathan, on behalf of the ranking member, Congressman Adam Schiff, and the other Democratic members of the committee, we appreciate you getting on the phone with us today. Again, my name is [REDACTED] and I'm with my colleague, [REDACTED] and we will both be asking you questions.

A Okay.

Q As you probably know, this is a bipartisan investigation looking into four areas. The first area is what Russian activity and other active measures were directed against the United States and our allies. We are also looking into whether Russian active measures included links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any U.S. persons.

We are also looking into the U.S. Government's response to the Russian active measures and how to protect ourselves going forward. And finally, we are looking into possible leaks of classified information related to the Intelligence Community's January 2017 assessment of Russia's interference.

So we will get started. We are in receipt of a number of emails that you provided to the committee, and we appreciate you sending those to us. The email accounts we have for you are [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED].

Were there any other email accounts that you used during your, you know, communications with Mr. Smith and his associates related to the activities of

2016?

A No, ma'am.

Q And why did you set up the Proton mail account?

A It seemed like it was a time where commercial -- or not commercial. It seemed like a time where regular email accounts were being hacked into, and I just didn't want anyone to look at my email address.

Q Did someone ask you to set that up, or did you just happen to know about Proton mail?

A Peter told me to set it up.

Q Did he explain why he wanted you to set it up?

A He was -- I think it was for investment reasons. He just knew someone who was an investor in Proton mail, and he told a bunch of -- I don't have any record of this, but he told a bunch of people he knew to set it up.

Q Would it ring a bell to know that Michael Flynn or Flynn Intel Group recommended that you set up these accounts?

A No, not to my recollection.

Q One of the first emails we received from you is an exchange between yourself and [REDACTED] from the House Oversight Committee. Did you ever speak with [REDACTED]

A Yes, I believe I did.

Q Have you spoken with other congressional committees?

A I have spoken with the Senate Intelligence Committee, but I -- I spoke with the lawyers, and I provided a written statement. I didn't speak with anyone else.

Q Okay. Mr. Safron, in your -- when did you first meet Peter Smith?

A In 2015.

Q When in 2015?

A I don't remember. Sorry. Early? I don't remember.

Q Okay. And then did you know him basically until he passed away earlier this year?

A Yes. I spoke to him on the day before he passed away, over the phone.

Q In all of your conversations and your communications with Mr. Smith, did you ever get the impression that he was mentally unbalanced or that he wasn't sort of in control of his life?

A I'm not really sure if I understand the question.

Q In the years that you knew Mr. Smith, did it concern you that he might take his own life?

A Oh, no.

Q Did it concern you -- did you feel like he was a competent human being?

A I'm sorry. Could you rephrase that, I guess.

Q Sure. Was he a functioning human being? He was -- what did he do for a living?

A Oh. He was definitely a functioning human being.

Q And he had his wits about him. He wasn't crazy or anything. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q It sounds like a crazy question, but, you know, I just want to establish that he was --

A Okay.

Q I don't -- I never had the opportunity to meet him, so -- when you met him in 2015, what were the circumstances? Like how did you come to meet him?

A Sure. So I currently am a law student, and I was not in law school yet, and I was looking for a job. And I was employed through a tutoring service known as Varsity Tutors. I think I'm still employed by them, but I get their emails.

But I was working with fifth graders and younger on test prep. And one day I saw in my inbox that Peter Smith needed help and basically with like basic computer things. Like, the first day I met him, I helped him set up his LinkedIn profile. So that was the circumstance.

Q I see. And then did Mr. Smith essentially hire you to help him with computer things?

A I want to just be really clear that he just didn't know how to use his internet. Like, he didn't know how to use LinkedIn, and he didn't know how to use this dictation software called Dragon. I think it was Dragon.

Q I totally believe you.

A So he just wanted me to show him those basic things at first.

Q Sure. I 100 percent believe you. He's probably about the same level as my own mother.

A No worries.

Q And so you helped him set up his LinkedIn account. At what point did you become involved in some of the activities in the 2016 election?

A So I think, to my recollection, I showed Peter the website 270ToWin.Com in spring 2016. I think that was the first time that Peter and I spoke about the 2016 election. And I printed out for him a bunch of Wikipedia

pages about which States have gone to which party. Honestly, that's the only thing that I actually did with the election, I mean, to my understanding. So --

Q Okay. I think my colleague has a question.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Hi. It's [REDACTED] and I just would like to backtrack to get there. So you were at the tutoring service and you went -- so when you came to him, you were their employee. They were paying you to do this, correct?

A They being Varsity Tutors?

Q Yes.

A If you mean that I was the employee of Varsity Tutors, yes.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Is someone speaking to you?

A My dad.

Q Is he giving you your answers, or are you testifying?

A No.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay. So before we get to the 270ToWin, at some point in time did you become an employee of Mr. Smith?

A No. I became an employee of Corporate Venture Alliances, LLC.

BY [REDACTED]

Q What is corporate -- what is this LLC?

A Corporate Venture Alliances, LLC, is incorporated in Delaware. It had offices in Wilmington. It was the vehicle by which Peter and his colleagues invested in various startups and kept tabs on various investing companies that they had aligned with over the decades, through which Peter became a respected

businessman.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So then Mr. Smith was the CEO of this company?

A No. He was the chairman.

Q Okay. So he was the chairman. And you were paid by Corporate Venture Alliances?

A That is right.

Q And you were -- and was this in a full-time capacity?

A No, because I eventually starting going to law school, and I didn't work full time. But I worked, I don't know, part time.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]

Q When did you first hear about -- there is another LLC called KLS Research. When did you first hear about that LLC for Mr. Smith?

A I think it was in fall 2016. And -- so you guys said to let you know of the basic facts, so he told me the initials were Keep the Spread Low. And then he went with John Szobocsan, who was the other person who worked in the Chicago office.

And then he came back, and it was KLS, LLC. So if you were following that, Peter told me it was going to be called one thing and then -- I'm just saying, like, I wasn't involved in starting it. All I ever heard about it was the initials, why they were named that. And then that wasn't even it.

Q Were you ever paid from KLS?

A No, ma'am.

Q Did you ever sign a nondisclosure agreement with Peter Smith or

KLS or Mr. Smith's colleague?

A No, ma'am.

Q Did he ever present you with a nondisclosure?

A No, ma'am.

Q And did you -- I guess you worked with John Szobocsan. Is that right?

A No, it's not right, ma'am. It's Szobocsan.

Q Szobocsan.

A Correct.

Q Okay. He also works for Corporate Venture Alliance?

A Correct. To the best of my knowledge, he was one of the members of the LLC. And to the best of my knowledge, he was the other member of KLS, along with Peter. I might be wrong about that though.

Q What was your understanding of the reason KLS was formed?

A I don't have any understanding. I mean, I think Peter wanted to feel like he was doing something with the election, having been a Republican for his whole life. And I think he wanted to, you know, just kind of feel like he was doing something, and he just wanted to make a company. And I didn't know why. That's my answer.

Q What is the extent of your communications with Matt Tait regarding Mr. Smith's activities?

A So initially, when I was talking to other -- the Senate, for example, and I guess the Wall Street Journal reporter, I told them that that I had never even spoken with him, with Tait. I believe though that one time I sat in on a call with Peter and Matt Tait, and I didn't remember what it was about or when it took

place.

I didn't have any conversations with him. I may have been on emails with him, but I don't remember.

Q We are in a receipt of a number of emails actually from Mr. Tait surrounding his communications with both yourself and Mr. Smith. Is there any reason why you did not provide those emails to us?

A I don't know if I got them.

Q Would you be willing to go back and take a look at your email accounts to see if you have additional responsive documents related to our investigation?

A Yeah, I will look.

Q Because we do have emails that are actually from you to Mr.

A Tait. Could you tell me what they said?

Q I'm not going to go into Mr. Tait's emails, but they are certainly emails from you passing on materials related to the activities that you were involved in.

So would you be willing to go back and take a look at your emails and see if you have those as well?

A Sure, I will look.

Q Did you ever communicate with retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn or his son Michael G. Flynn?

A No, ma'am.

Q Have you ever heard of them?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q How did General Flynn fit into Mr. Smith's activities?

A I don't know.

Q Mr. Smith never talked about it?

A I'm sorry?

Q Did Mr. Smith ever talk about Lieutenant General Flynn?

A Yes, but I don't remember exactly what he said. I do remember it was more at the beginning of our -- like when I knew Peter, and I don't remember him talking about him related to the election at all.

Q One of the documents that you provided to us appears to be related to KLS Research. Do you recall that document?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Where did that document come from?

A From Peter.

Q Did you help him put this together?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q You wouldn't have helped him with any links, internet links, links to bios?

A Oh, I remember that he provided me with the document, like he wrote it. And then I -- he wasn't good enough with PDFs to put links on it, so I overlaid it in this program. I put hyperlinks on top of what he wrote. So I guess I should have said when you said put together, I did help with that part, but I didn't write it.

Q Did you read it?

A Sorry?

Q Did you read the document?

A Did I see it?

Q Yes. Did you read it?

A I think at a cursory level.

Q Did you ever communicate with Brian Robins of AlienVault?

A No, but I know who he is.

Q Who is he?

A He went to Vanderbilt, didn't he?

Q Who is Brian Robins?

A All I remember about him was that he was another person that Peter knew that went to my alma mater, Vanderbilt University. I just remember he has an unusual spelling of his last name.

Q Who was your understanding of his role in Mr. Smith's operation?

A No idea. Sorry. I just recognize his name.

Q You're not -- are you aware of Mr. Robins' involvement searching the dark web for Hillary Clinton's emails?

A Not at all.

Q Have you ever communicated with Mr. Robins?

A Never.

Q Do you know who Royal O'Brien is?

A Yes.

Q Who is he?

A That's a good question. I think Peter told me that he worked with Royal when Peter's company in the 1990s was investing in a video game company. And that was -- I never spoke with Royal, and that's all I ever heard about him.

Q He's a programmer based out of Florida, and Mr. Smith apparently

described him as a dark web expert. Do you recall talking with Mr. Smith about Mr. O'Brien's assistance?

A No.

Q Did you ever communicate with Eric York?

A Yes.

Q Tell me about Eric York.

A Okay. So I don't remember exactly when this was, but there was the denial of service -- like DOS attack, and that happened when our company, Corporate Venture Alliances, was interested in the internet of things, doing some sort of investment with the company. And Eric York got on the phone with John, Peter, and me, and we spoke with him about the security of home devices like smart refrigerators.

And I know that Eric worked at IBM, I think it was in Atlanta, and I'm LinkedIn connected with him.

Q Are you aware of his involvement searching the web for Secretary Clinton's emails with Mr. Smith?

A No, ma'am.

Q When is the last time you have been in contact with Mr. York?

A I think that I emailed him pretty soon after that, after our phone conversation with a Law 360 article about some sort of internet of things thing. And I think he responded to me, but it was completely unrelated to the election.

Q Two of the individuals reportedly involved in Mr. Smith's activities to track down Secretary Clinton's emails are Charles Johnson and Pax Dickerson. Do you recall these gentlemen?

A I recall Charles Johnson but not Pax.

Q Did you ever work with Mr. Johnson or talk with him?

A He tried to get Peter to invest in his company and made a trip to Chicago, and I met him for about 5 minutes, Charles Johnson. And if I'm not mistaken, Pax is his business partner, Charles Johnson, but I never met him at all.

That was -- also, just to clarify, that was probably in fall of 2015, so that was very early on in my knowing Peter. I've -- now that I know who Charles Johnson is, I would have probably run out of the room.

Q Mr. Johnson is actually quoted as saying, regarding Peter Smith, he said, quote, "The magnitude of what he was trying to do was kind of impressive. He had people running around Europe. He had people talking to Guccifer."

Do you recall who Mr. Smith had working in Europe?

A Not at all. That's very interesting to know. I've never heard that.

Q Did you personally ever communicate with Guccifer 2.0?

A Never.

Q Do you know anyone who did?

A No, ma'am.

Q Do you have a Twitter handle?

A Not at the moment.

Q Have you ever had a Twitter handle?

A I had one that -- when I was in college that I deleted, which a reporter for Politico told me that was now tweeting Russian, but I didn't do that. And I got rid of the account in 2014.

Q What was that Twitter handle?

A I think it was [REDACTED]. If it's not, then I might be mistaken, but I think that was it.

Q So let me understand. You closed that account, or did you stop using it?

A Yes, ma'am. I was doing activities related to my college, and I graduated from college and I quit the account. And I thought I deactivated it right after I graduated.

Q But you didn't deactivate it. Is that right?

A What?

Q I'm trying to understand --

A No. I mean, I'm saying that, to the best of my knowledge, I deactivated it. And the fact that somebody else took it actually lends credence to that, because I am not using that account. And I hadn't even thought about it until earlier this summer when the Politico reporter told me about it.

Q So your account was [REDACTED]?

A It was when I was in college.

Q How do you think it was taken over by someone who speaks Russian?

A That is completely out of my knowledge. I'm really sorry. I can't answer that. I have no idea.

Q What did Mr. Smith tell you about his connections with the Trump campaign?

A I don't know. I mean, he -- could you be more specific in your question, I guess?

Q It's not a specific question. The question is, what did Mr. Smith tell you about his connections with the Trump campaign?

A I don't really know. I mean, he has said that he knew Sam Clovis,

who was apparently somehow related to Trump, and that was pretty much the extent. Aside from he would always say that he knew Kellyanne Conway, but I don't know if that's true.

Q Did he speak about his communications with Lieutenant General Flynn?

A I know how this sounds, but he never talked about him after the first few months after I met Peter. I remember after Flynn got -- whatever happened to him, Peter might have mentioned him in the news, like when he came up in the news.

Q Do you know -- go ahead, [REDACTED]
BY [REDACTED]

Q Just to follow up on that, so if he was mentioning that, are you talking about General Flynn's departure from the White House?

A That is right.

Q Okay. So that was well after. So that's in 2017 you continued -- you had contact with him until the day before he died. But how often was this contact?

A I'm sorry. Are you talking about my contact with Peter Smith?

Q Yeah.

A Did you -- are you saying how often did I talk with Peter?

Q Yeah.

A Hello?

Q Yes. I'm sorry. In 2017, because the development you're talking about occurred in 2017 after the inauguration.

A Yes. I talked with Peter until the day he died.

Q Okay.

A From 2015 to 2017, hardly a day went by that I didn't hear from Peter via email or on the phone or in person, work.

BY [REDACTED]

Q You spoke with him and communicated with him almost everyday?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Were you aware if you spoke with him everyday of activities he was involved --

A Wait. I wasn't saying that Peter talked to Flynn everyday. I'm saying that I talked to Peter everyday.

Q I understand.

A I really -- I asked you to clarify it like three times. I'm sorry.

Q That is exactly how I understand what you just said.

A Okay. Okay.

Q So you spoke with Peter Smith almost on a daily basis?

A Correct.

Q So were you aware in all of these communications with Peter Smith of his efforts to find these 33,000 emails that he believed were stolen from Hillary Clinton's server?

A I was aware that he had some notion that they were out there. I was not aware of his efforts to obtain them.

Q Did you read the Wall Street Journal article regarding Mr. Smith's communications with the Wall Street Journal reporter?

A Yeah, Shane Harris.

Q Were you surprised when you read the article?

A I would say I was really surprised, because I spoke with Mr. Harris too, and he didn't really tell me what was going to happen, and he just kept asking me to explain my side of the story. And especially as this was very soon after Peter had died, and I didn't know why, I was very reluctant to go in the press about anything.

And then the story came out, and I was mentioned in it. So then later I found out that Shane Harris' main source was Matt Tait, and that was more -- it made more sense. But until I found that out, I was confused, yes, and surprised.

Q Were you surprised that Mr. Smith spoke to a reporter, or were you surprised at the content of what Mr. Smith communicated?

A Oh, no, I was surprised at the content.

Q So you'd never heard of any of those things?

A Sorry. Peter would love to, like, talk in the press. He was used to working the media, so I was not surprised that he would want to self-aggrandize.

Q Why would he do that so long after the election? Why wouldn't he have done that earlier then?

A Do what?

Q Go to the press?

A Talk to a reporter?

Q Right.

A No reporter had spoken with him. I mean, actually the reporters from the New York Times spoke with him during the election cycle about how Peter's emails were hacked. So she actually -- in response to your question, he did talk to the press earlier.

Q Were you aware of activities by Russia-linked hackers who were

working to find Secretary Clinton's emails?

A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did you search -- this is Linda again. Did you search WikiLeaks regarding the emails that had been disseminated, published by WikiLeaks of Secretary Clinton's emails?

A I believe I looked at them for personal reasons. I mean --

Q So you read --

A Sorry.

Q Okay. You read Hillary Clinton's emails for personal reasons, and did you tell Mr. Smith this?

A It was -- oh, no. I remember I wanted to look -- I just had seen that many of the emails were like, "Print this," and it reminded me of something that Peter would send to me, kind of. I just thought it was funny, I mean, how like -- that I connected with that personally. And I told Peter, like, there's so many of these emails that just say, "Print." I don't know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So, Jonathan, I just want to reference an email that you sent to Peter Smith on October 31, 2016. Do you have a copy of the emails that you provided to us?

A I remember them. I could look at it if --

Q So you address all in the email to Mr. Smith. Can you tell me who "all" is?

A No. I don't recall.

Q Do you recall what the subject line of that email is?

A No. Hold on. Could I just look? Sorry.

Q Yeah, go ahead. Look at it.

A Okay. Do you remember which document this was in the ones that I sent?

Q I'm looking at an email dated Monday, October 31, 2016, at 6:31 a.m.

A Hold on. Oh, yeah, I see it. State Department on a single PC.

Q Could you tell me about what this email is and what type of work you were doing for Mr. Smith?

A Let's see. Sorry. I'm reading the --

Q Take your time.

A Well, this was part of Peter's political analysis that he really honed towards the later parts of his life via the internet. And it was an exercise in, I think, I would say, like, how is the FBI functioning. It was maybe a tongue-in-cheek criticism of the FBI must not have done all of the work. It was just a commentary on the FBI's search and, yeah.

Q If it's a commentary, why did you conclude by saying, "We very much welcome observations"?

A Observations on the writing style. I actually don't know.

Q It almost looks like you were drafting this email for Mr. Smith to send to someone. So I'm just trying to understand, like --

A That looks -- that's entirely possible.

Q So you just don't remember?

A Yeah.

Q Boy.

A I don't -- I remember writing it. I don't remember, like, why I said the last part or to whom I was -- like, I sent it to Peter I see in the subject line, or to the "To."

Q So I'm going to turn to another email, from John Szobocsan to Peter Smith, and yourself, dated Thursday, October 6, 2016. Subject is, "There must be more to the story."

A Wait, hold on. Sorry. Okay.

Q Do you recall this email?

A I recall -- yeah.

Q So it appears that you all are looking through, you know, WikiLeaks and emails. Is that -- is that fair to say, that was part of what you all were working on?

A I wouldn't include myself in the you all. I see myself in the subject of this. I would say, the reason is, I would sometimes be with Peter when John wasn't, and I would just tell Peter, hey, look at your email.

So I'm not trying to deny what you're saying completely, but I'm saying that I wasn't very much involved in it, except maybe in an administrative role for Peter.

Q Okay. Fair enough.

Now, if you had sent Matt Tait emails, would that also have been sort of in your role just as an administrative person basically working for Mr. Smith?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. Well, if that's the extent of your role, I'm not sure I have anymore questions. [REDACTED] do you?

BY [REDACTED]

Q I'm just curious, have you ever met Donald Trump?

A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did you attend the inauguration?

A No, ma'am.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did Mr. Smith?

A No. I was with Peter on the day of. We went to Frankie's bar -- or not a bar. It was just like a pizza place and we had pizza and watched people throw stones at Republicans -- on TV, of course.

[REDACTED] We can go off the record.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And one quick question. One more. Sorry.

The Politico article that you mentioned said that you had told them -- told the reporter that you were copied in on all of the emails related to the election. I think you termed them the election emails. Is that correct?

A I don't really know. I don't know to what you're referring, but I don't -- I don't think that fact would be correct or that statement. I don't know if I said it in the article. I may or may not have said that in the article, but it's not true.

Q Okay. And do you know if Mr. Smith -- when, if ever, Mr. Smith stopped his effort to hunt the Clinton emails?

A I didn't even know when he started it, so that's just an aside. But, no, I don't know that. I do not know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And, Mr. Safron, I just have -- actually, I'm going to just reference one other document that you don't necessarily have in front of you, but it is from

yourself, from your Proton mail account to Peter Smith and Matt Tait.

A Okay. I don't have access to that account.

Q Well, I will tell you about the email.

A Thank you.

Q It's from you, and it says, "Matt, here are some additional materials we feel you may like to review." And then the first line is, quote, "Much public attention is being given to the recovery of the 30,000 or so emails, which Secretary Clinton said she deleted because their content was personal in nature."

And you go onto say that, you know, clear evidence exists, that various individuals have obtained those emails. Do you recall sending that email to Matt Tait?

A It probably was very soon after the phone call, but I don't really remember when that was. But I do remember sending that, but I don't remember ever hearing from him personally. Now, when I say that, that, you know, that I sent was definitely in the administrative role.

██████████ Do you have any questions?

██████████ Do I?

██████████ Yes.

██████████ Just a couple.

██████████ I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, ██████████

BY ██████████

Q Hey, Mr. Safron. ██████████ again for the majority. Thanks on behalf of the chairman and the committee for taking the time to speak with us today. I'm not going to be that long at all.

A couple quick questions regarding your relationship with Peter Smith.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

During your relationship with Peter Smith, did you have any information to suggest that Mr. Smith was involved in any illegal activity?

A No, sir.

Q During your relationship with Mr. Smith, do you have any information to suggest or know that Mr. Smith acted as a go-between, between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government to help him get elected?

A No, sir.

Q Do you have any information in your possession or that you have come across to suggest that the Donald J. Trump campaign for President colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russian Government during the elections?

A No, sir.

Q Do you have any information in your possession that you, Mr. Smith, Mr. Tait, or anyone of the other individuals that you communicated with or for on Mr. Smith's behalf conducted that role, that is to say, they acted as a go-between between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government during the 2016 election?

A No, sir.

Q And in the entire universe of your relationship with Mr. Smith, Mr. Tait, and any of the other individuals referenced herein, do you have any information to show that any of those individuals, including yourself, colluded, conspired, or coordinated with the Russian Government on behalf of Donald Trump and/or his associates to have him elected?

A No, sir.

██████████ I don't have anything else.

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MR. SAFRON: Well, thank you for allowing me to do this over the phone. I really appreciate it. I actually have a meeting with a professor at 5:45 our time, and it's really a great benefit to be able to help the committee and to be able to go to law school. So thank you.

██████████ Thanks for your time. And if we need anything, we will get back in touch with you, and best of luck in law school.

MR. SAFRON: Thank you.

██████████ Bye.

[Whereupon, at 5:05 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

