

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

INTERVIEW OF: BORIS EPSHTEYN

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 11:44 a.m.

Present: Representatives Rooney, Schiff, Himes, Speier, Swalwell, and

Castro.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]

For BORIS EPSHTEYN:

CHRISTOPHER AMOLSCH

██████████ Good morning. This is an unclassified, committee sensitive, transcribed interview of Boris Epshteyn.

Thank you for speaking to us today.

For the record, I am ██████████ a staff member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Others present today will introduce themselves when they speak.

Before we begin, I have a security reminder. If you haven't left your electronics outside, please do at this time. I'm sure you've all left your electronics outside.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

██████████ That includes BlackBerrys, iPhones, Androids, tablets, iPads, or e-readers, laptop, iPods, MP3 players, recording devices, cameras, wireless headsets, pagers, and any other type of Bluetooth wristbands or watches.

I also want to state a few things for the record. The questioning will be conducted by members and staff 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.

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

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

This 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. 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.

You are entitled to have a lawyer present for this interview, though you are not required to do so. I see that you have counsel present and would ask your attorney to make an appearance for the record.

MR. AMOLSCH: Christopher Amolsch, A-m-o-l-s-c-h.

[REDACTED] To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone other than your attorney.

Consistent with the committee's rules and procedure, you and your counsel, if you wish, 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 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 5-minute break, after which, the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions and the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions.

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

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, the record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be under oath.

Mr. Epshteyn, could you please raise your right hand?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure.

██████████ Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do.

██████████ Thank you. You may now begin.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will yield at this point to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Mr. Schiff.

Mr. Epshteyn, welcome.

Mr. Epshteyn, were you the source for the Steele dossier in any way or form?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, first of all, it's Epshteyn.

Absolutely not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Did you ever talk to Christopher Steele?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever talk to anyone who was involved in putting together that dossier?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Can you --

MR. SWALWELL: You're familiar with the dossier?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I am. I guess, let me answer, I did not -- I have no idea

who was or wasn't involved. I know nothing about it outside of what's out there in the public realm. So --

MR. SWALWELL: And you've read it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not read it.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. You have not read it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've read the reports of it. I have not read the whole thing.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. What have you read?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It's a little broad.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, what have you read of the Steele dossier?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've read certain parts of what has been in the public. I mean, it's been out there for a long time. I just, you know -- I couldn't conclusively and wholly tell you what I have and haven't read. It's a bit broad.

MR. SWALWELL: Is there anything that you have read that you have independent knowledge of, independent from the sources cited in news reports?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You've got to be a little more specific, Congressman. I'm sorry.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, you're not being specific with what you've read, so --

MR. EPSHTEYN: So let's just go back to the top. I have no knowledge of anything in the dossier from what I know of the dossier. I haven't spoken to anybody that I know was involved in organizing or writing the dossier. I have no relationship with what I know about the dossier whatsoever.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you been interviewed by the FBI with respect to its Russia investigation?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you been asked to?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Epshteyn, when did you come to the United States?

MR. EPSHTEYN: 1993.

MR. SWALWELL: In what circumstances?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was 11 years old. Our family are Jewish refugees to this country.

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. Where did you move?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We moved to Brooklyn, New York.

MR. SWALWELL: Why Brooklyn?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Because we had -- so, because as far as I understand -- I was a child back then -- immigration laws at the time, Lautenberg amendment being part of those, the way we came over is that my mother had family here in the U.S., and they were in Brooklyn. And, you know, Brooklyn, especially Benson Hurst, Bay Ridge, that area, Brighton Beach, notoriously, have a lot of Russian Jews.

MR. SWALWELL: Where were you born?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was born in Moscow.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the last time you were in Moscow?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not been to Moscow since we left.

MR. SWALWELL: And that was 1993?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Any other family come over with you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So here is the family that came with us. It was myself,

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my parents, my father's parents, and my mother's mother. We came over as a unit.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have any family living in Russia today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Extended family, sure.

MR. SWALWELL: Any family that you're in contact with?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Extended. Very extended family, not that I'm in close -- anything, even in the realm of close contact with. But it would be my grandparents, cousins, kind of thing.

MR. SWALWELL: And when you say you're in contact with them, is this through telephone? Email? Text messaging?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I -- it's nothing even resembling regular contact. If it's someone's birthday, I think, maybe -- I don't remember the last time I had actual contact.

MR. AMOLSCH: I think it might be easier to ask the question within framework, like since he's been 11 or in the last 5 years or last 3 years or -- it might be easier to do it that way.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the last Russian family member you talked to?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's in Russia or that's here?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes, in Russia.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I honestly don't remember. And to the best of my recollection, it has been longer than a year.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. How about any friends living in Russia today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah, there's some family friends.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the last time you talked to any of them?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I think there's a family friend that I spoke to in the fall, late fall of last year.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And so friends and some extended family that you have over in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, when people come over as immigrants, right --

MR. SWALWELL: Sure.

MR. EPSHTEYN: -- of course they have people in their former country. That's --

MR. SWALWELL: I'm just talking about you.

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's true for every country.

MR. SWALWELL: Right. But I'm just talking about --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Right. We have a very limited amount of distant relatives and a very limited -- a limited amount of friends, if any.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have any friends or family who are working in the Russian Government?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my knowledge, absolutely not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Do you have any friends or family who had worked in the Russian Government?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the -- give me a time period here.

MR. SWALWELL: Ever, that you knew of.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Since I've been alive?

MR. SWALWELL: Anyone that's related to you or anyone that's a friend of yours that has worked for the Russian --

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay. Well, again, the difficulty is in the entire history of

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his family? Like going back generations or the last 50 years or -- how far are we supposed to go back in terms of family?

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Epshteyn, anyone that you know in your family who has worked for the Russian Government or who has a friend that has worked for the Russian Government?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you send any money to Russia or have you sent any money to Russia, family members or friends?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: And have you in your lifetime ever received money from anyone who's a family member or a friend in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Nothing beyond a basic birthday gift of like 10 -- you know, of some nominal money.

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. When was the last time that you traveled to any country in the region where Russia is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was on a cruise. I believe it was 2012. I'm pretty sure it was -- it was either 2011, 2012. We were on a family cruise with my wife and her family, and we were in St. Petersburg for, I believe, one night or two nights as part of a Baltic cruise of Princess Cruises.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. But just so I understand, I asked you earlier if you'd been to Russia since --

MR. EPSHTEYN: You said Moscow.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Have you been to Russia since you left in 1993?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes, on that cruise.

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MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So other than going to St. Petersburg a couple years ago, have you been anywhere in Russia since you left in 1993?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So we're talking one night in St. Petersburg?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have to look at the itinerary of the Princess Cruise.

So it was either one night or two nights. You know how the cruises are.

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. EPSHTEYN: But it was one of those cruises that started in Denmark and then you all go all over and it stops in St. Petersburg and you go on a little tour and then you move on.

MR. SWALWELL: How about any countries that at one point were a part of the Soviet Union? Have you visited any of them since you left?

MR. EPSHTEYN: On the same cruise I think we stopped in Estonia.

MR. SWALWELL: Nowhere else?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, nowhere else, correct.

MR. SWALWELL: And --

MR. EPSHTEYN: And again, this is -- yeah, correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you retain your Russian citizenship?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did not. Again, I was a child when we came over when I was 11. So I think we automatically lost -- left the citizenship. It didn't take -- you know, I'm a U.S. citizen. That's the only country I'm a citizen of.

MR. SWALWELL: And do you know the Trump family?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How?

MR. EPSHTEYN: How do I know them? It's a little broad.

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MR. SWALWELL: Well, we can be here all day. I mean, you can answer or --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I met Eric Trump in college, and then since then I've obviously interacted with the Trump family as part of me being -- me knowing him and then me being part of the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Which school?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Georgetown University.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how did you meet? Was it a class, like a --

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was social. It's not a huge school, but I knew him. We weren't all, you know, the closest of friends, but we knew each other socially.

MR. SWALWELL: And what year were you when you met him at Georgetown?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't remember exactly what year, but it must have -- I was '04 and he was -- I think Eric was '06. So it must have been whatever -- you know, there is only, I think, a 2-year overlap.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how did this friendship materialize, if you could just kind of describe for us. I mean, was it someone you'd see like once a week? Once a month? Like how --

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was -- I think friendship would be a stretch. I think it was a -- you know, we knew each other socially. So I think that's how I would characterize it.

MR. SWALWELL: But he later hired you to work for the Trump --

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's incorrect.

MR. SWALWELL: -- charity. You never worked for any of the Trump

charities?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever work for the Trump Organization?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever worked for the Trump Foundation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you work for the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MR. SWALWELL: So would you consider it any connection from your friendship with Eric Trump to your being hired in the Trump campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. This was the third Presidential I've been a part of. I was on the McCain campaign. I was a surrogate for the Romney campaign. So I think, you know, on the merits I was fully deserving to be part of this campaign. So that's my answer.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, I guess my question is, had you not met Eric Trump at Georgetown, would have had a way into the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure. There are people, you know -- there are people in the Trump campaign who I knew from the McCain campaign. So there are other -- you know, the way the Republican Presidential or all campaigns go, I'm sure you're aware, people -- there's a -- there's sort of a set of political operatives who know each other. So, yeah, I think so.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever do any work for the Trump Foundation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Did I do any work? Not that I know of, unless you have something specific you're referencing.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, you're familiar with the Trump Foundation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I am.

MR. SWALWELL: You're familiar with Eric Trump's role in the Trump Foundation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Actually, Eric Trump has his own foundation? There is a separate -- Eric Trump has his own foundation, and then there's the --

MR. SWALWELL: What's the name of that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know offhand.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever done any work for Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever done any work for the Trump Organization?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not -- I have not. To the best of any recollection, I haven't done any work for anybody -- any Trumps outside of the campaign, again, to the best of my recollection.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever been to Eric Trump's home?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've been to Mar-a-Lago, but that's --

MR. SWALWELL: Did you go to Eric Trump's wedding in 2014?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's when I was at Mar-a-Lago.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So how many other weddings did you go to in 2014?

MR. EPSHTEYN: A good amount. I mean, you know, when you're in your late twenties --

MR. SWALWELL: How many weddings have you gone to this year?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, I'm 35 now, but when you're in your late twenties, early thirties, you go to a lot of weddings. But, listen, if the question is are me and

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Eric -- are Eric and I friends now, the answer is, of course. The answer is yes.

MR. SWALWELL: But in 2014, it sounds like you were friends too?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah. So we -- so here is what happened. We knew each other in college socially, and then we actually ran into each other in New York in the early 2000s and reconnected. And then, you know -- I still wouldn't say we were very close friends, but we became a bit closer, I guess.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So after college you reconnect. Where do you reconnect with Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: New York.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And what's the circumstances there?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was at a restaurant in New York. It was a completely chance meeting.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how would you describe your relationship once you reconnect?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would say somewhere between acquaintance and friend.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And did you have any business relationship with Eric Trump after you reconnected with him in New York?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We did not conduct any business. We discussed some business, but we never conducted any business.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how often would you see him during this time?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, I mean, a few times a -- you know, it's only been a few years, but once every several months maybe.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. But you stayed in enough contact with him and

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were close enough with him that he invited you to his 2014 wedding?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah. It was a big wedding, though, and there were a lot of people there from Georgetown. You know, it was a big wedding.

MR. SWALWELL: I wasn't invited to the wedding.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Did you go to Georgetown?

MR. SWALWELL: I wasn't smart enough to get into Georgetown.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm sure you were.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever meet Don Jr., Eric's brother?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I had met Don, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. When did you first meet Don?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think I met Don at some point as a passing by in 2013 and then I saw him again at that wedding.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. How about Don and Eric's father Donald Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The President?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have met the President, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first meet him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I briefly shook his hand at the wedding. And then I did not, you know, really spend any time with him until the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: So the first time you met President Trump, at the time Donald Trump, was at Eric's wedding?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It would be under 10 seconds. He would never remember it. I remember it because it's Donald Trump.

MR. SWALWELL: And I just want to make sure we're --

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I may not have introduced myself. I may have just said hello and congratulations and shook his hand. Again, it was a big wedding.

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. And I just want to make sure we're clear. Prior to joining the Trump campaign, you had never engaged in any business activity or relationship with Eric Trump, Donald Trump, the Trump Foundations, or the Trump Organization?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We never conducted any -- we had a business discussion, as I mentioned, but we never conducted or closed, to use business vernacular.

MR. SWALWELL: What's a business discussion?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Discussion about, you know, potential -- you know, my business has been, since 2009, has been investment banking, so real estate. You know. I'm also an investor in a restaurant in New York, and the Trumps obviously have restaurants in some of their locations. So those kind of discussions.

MR. SWALWELL: Did any of those business discussions ever include foreign projects?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Potential foreign projects, but not closed foreign projects. No specific project, just, you know, in the ether.

MR. SWALWELL: And where were some of those potential foreign projects?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Some of those -- yeah, we had very generic discussions based on, you know, again, my background, about potential projects in Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: When were you discussing potential projects in Russia? Can you give us a year?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I mean, it was, you know, time to time as a throwaway -- hey, maybe there could be something interesting -- sure -- and move on.

MR. SWALWELL: And was this before Eric's wedding or after?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't recollect exactly.

MR. SWALWELL: Was this before you had worked on the McCain campaign or after?

MR. EPSHTEYN: After the McCain campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So was it before you had worked on the Romney campaign or after?

MR. EPSHTEYN: '12, so I didn't reconnect with Eric until '13, so it would be after. But it was not during any of my involvement with the Trump campaign, I'll tell you that for sure.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. So how would you be able to, being someone who had not gone back to Russia and had limited family who were in Russia and limited connection to friends in Russia, how would you be able to be helpful in doing business in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, you know, I mean, first of all -- so nothing ever got done, so I wasn't helpful.

MR. SWALWELL: I mean, you were potentially helpful?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I mean --

MR. SWALWELL: I guess, I'm just trying to understand, what could you bring to the table or what were you even considering bringing to the table?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was just -- actually, it was really just more of a generic discussion. Hey, that's something we could potentially do. And then I said, oh,

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okay. It was, you know, it could be interesting, could be interesting, and then we moved on.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you speak Russian?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do.

MR. SWALWELL: And you left in 1993 when you were --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Eleven.

MR. SWALWELL: Eleven. How did you maintain your Russian language?

MR. EPSHTEYN: By speaking with my grandparents and parents.

MR. SWALWELL: Was that one way you thought you could be helpful with potential business?

MR. EPSHTEYN: As a translator, you mean?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, sure, you can navigate the language.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Maybe.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it also any contacts that you had at the time in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Through -- again, potentially, but nothing ever went anywhere.

MR. SWALWELL: So who were the contacts that potentially could have been helpful at the time for doing business with the Trumps in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was -- so the way I would put it is it would be contacts of, you know, a family friend. You know, again, you come over to this country, of course family keeps friends there and, you know, it would be business contacts.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever introduced Eric Trump or Don Jr. or the President with any of your Russian contacts who have traveled to the United

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States?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. How often --

MR. EPSHTEYN: And also -- let me be clear, and this is public information, right? In 2013, there was a panel which I completely for free helped moderate about doing some business in Russia. You know, that's very public knowledge.

MR. SWALWELL: The one called Investing in Moscow?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah. You know, I didn't get paid a dime for it. Just because of, as you mentioned, my language, I was able to moderate it and assist with it. And, you know, so obviously I made some relationships with that.

And the reason I did is because it's a country that is a member of the WTO, I'm a businessman, and it made some sense. So there were some relationships that I gained from that as well.

MR. SWALWELL: So let's just go back to 2013 forward. So from 2013, when you reconnect with Eric Trump, up until the time you joined the campaign, how many Russian nationals are you in contact with who are traveling to the United States for business or as friends of yours?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Who are traveling to the United States?

MR. SWALWELL: Who had come to the United States.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would say it's -- really, it's just the folks who were at that -- so the folks who were at that panel, and I saw them one other time. We had some phone discussions about potential business opportunities. And it was literally the entity -- it was not -- it was not the Russian Government. It is the entity in Moscow that's focused on foreign, you know, foreign business

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transactions, foreign investment.

MR. SWALWELL: Did they include Anatoly Valetov? Is that right? Is he one of them?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think he may have been there, but I -- you know, you'd have to look at the list. It's public. That's public information.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, who do you recall being there?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think there was Cheremin was one name.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think he was head of that Moscow office of foreign business --

MR. SWALWELL: What was his first name?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't -- I'm sure you've got the list.

MR. SWALWELL: You said Cheremin. Well, I'm asking you.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Cheremin is the last name, and I don't recall the first name.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you spell that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: C-h-e-r-e-m-i-n.

MR. SWALWELL: Any other individuals that you remember?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Last name Shutenko, S-h-u-t-e-n-k-o, I believe. And then there was one other individual who I just don't remember the name. Those are the only ones whose names I remember.

But there was, you know -- it was, again, well public, the people who were on that panel. And it was one of those things where I, 2013, it was probably one of, you know, 15 business events I went to in any certain given time period.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you establish these contacts?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: Somebody introduced me to the woman -- and I forget her name -- who was organizing it. And then she asked me to moderate. And then she asked me to moderate another one down the line and I said no.

MR. SWALWELL: Why would they think to introduce you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Again, I'm somebody who's an investment banker, who's a Russian speaker, and these folks were doing business. You know, some people who were at the meeting was the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Russia. There was somebody who was former head of American Express. There was U.S. business people who were at this event.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the person that suggested you do this?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't remember the name of the woman who ran the event.

MR. SWALWELL: So your recollection today is you can only name one Russian contact that you had at the time?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Come again?

MR. SWALWELL: So, as I said, the time from 2013 to the time you joined the Trump campaign, you only remember one Russian contact --

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's not the question you asked me, Congressman. You asked me who are the people that I've met with who've traveled from Russia to the U.S.

MR. SWALWELL: And you only gave me the name Cheremin --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I said those are the names I remember. I said it's well public who the other people who were there.

MR. SWALWELL: I understand you think it's well public, but I'm asking who do you remember.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't remember the other names. There were maybe four or five people on the dais. I don't remember the other names.

But, again, I'll tell you, as a businessman in New York City, as a Russian Jew, may I have run into other people who are from Russia? Of course, I may have. But in terms of any sort of contact, these are the -- and, you know, it was really a handful of discussions that never went anywhere.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever do business with any of these Russian nationals that you --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have never done any -- to the best of my recollection, I have never closed or conducted any business in the former Soviet Union.

MR. SWALWELL: Has a single cent or more gone into any financial account that you have that was sourced from a Russian national other than a birthday card?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my knowledge, absolutely not.

MR. SWALWELL: And did you ever -- were you ever present where any of these individuals met with or interacted with anyone in the Trump family?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my recollection, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever separately try and arrange for them to meet, meaning like, you know, putting them on a group text together, putting them on a group email together and saying, "Hey, you guys should talk"?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think so.

MR. SWALWELL: So when you're talking to Eric Trump about potentially doing business in Russia, other than just talking about it, what steps, if any, did you take to further that with him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We just had very generic discussions.

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MR. SWALWELL: How many?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Less than five -- I mean, less than a handful.

MR. SWALWELL: And were they by in-person discussions or over the phone, or how would they occur?

MR. EPSHTEYN: There were maybe a couple in-person. Again, but it wasn't as though we met to talk about it. It may have been a small part of a larger discussion, maybe a few emails. I think there may have been a couple of potential projects that folks had sent me in Moscow as a potential hotel and that I, you know, shared with them. None of it ever went anywhere.

MR. SWALWELL: So folks in Moscow contacted you about a potential hotel?

MR. EPSHTEYN: These folks, these specific folks, the folks I mentioned who were at that, you know, Invest in Moscow panel.

MR. SWALWELL: Did they know that you were friends with Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: They knew that we have a relationship, yeah.

MR. SWALWELL: Did they know that because you told them or they separately had found out?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't recall. I mean, I assume it was because -- I think they asked me if I knew him and I'm sure it was, you know, because I confirmed that's someone that I knew. And, again, as I said, I'm an investment banker, right --

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. EPSHTEYN: -- looking potentially to do fully transparent, good business with countries that -- the Courtyard Marriott Hotels are all in Moscow. I assume there are a good amount.

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MR. SWALWELL: Did Eric Trump ever express to you interest to do business in Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No interest that was high enough to ever go anywhere.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, just general interest.

MR. EPSHTEYN: As I already said, hey, potentially sure, maybe, and it never went anywhere. No documents were ever signed, nothing like that.

MR. SWALWELL: Was he doing this for himself or was he doing it on behalf of the Trump Organization?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I assumed it was on behalf of, you know, the entity that is in charge of the hotels, so Trump Org.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever meet Michael Cohen?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first meet Michael Cohen?

MR. EPSHTEYN: In August of 2016 as part of the campaign, when I was already part of the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: That was the first time you met him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: To the best of my recollection, yes. Again, I may have met him socially for 2 seconds somewhere, but the first real discussion I ever had with him was in the summer of 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever discussed any Trump Organization business dealings with Michael Cohen?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Generic, I guess. Nothing specific. Only as part of the campaign, not about doing -- and, you know, about me doing business with Trump Org.

MR. SWALWELL: What is Strategy International?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: It's a personal LLC. It's a family LLC of ours.

MR. SWALWELL: And you established it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, you know, it was actually -- I think it was a "doing business as" company. So I think the actual business was established probably in the '90s. But, you know, I gave it the name, I think, in -- I added that as a DBA, doing business as, in 2009, I believe.

MR. SWALWELL: And what's Smetlonka?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Smetana?

MR. SWALWELL: Smetana.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Smetana is a colloquial word in Russia for sour cream, and it's an LLC that my folks, me and my wife are a part of. And actually, it's my wife's nickname that we gave her when we first started dating at Georgetown because that was the first Russian word she could say.

MR. SWALWELL: Smetana?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah, because Smetama is the name for sour cream. Smetana is how you say it sort of in a colloquial, whatever the word is.

MR. SWALWELL: Right. Got it.

Where are those registered, those businesses?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I believe both are in New Jersey and Smetana is just -- the only asset in it is -- I'll bring you guys some. The only -- it's a sour cream joke. The only asset in that Smetana, LLC, is an investment in a restaurant.

MR. SWALWELL: In New York?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That one is in -- yes, that's in New York. We're invested in two, so that's --

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MR. SWALWELL: Any foreign nationals who own, manage, or are employed by these companies?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, it's all our family, so all U.S. citizens.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever conduct any business with Russia or with Russian nationals on behalf of this company?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No business that was ever closed.

MR. SWALWELL: Are these companies active today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Smetana is only active in that it receives a passive -- you know, it receives a passive dividend. You know, when you invest in a restaurant, every quarter they send some money and you put it into a bank account. So that's the only activity. Smetana Strategy, LLC, has been dormant for ages.

MR. SWALWELL: And are you in contact today with any Russian nationals who live in the United States?

MR. EPSHTEYN: My parents. So former Russian nationals, right?

MR. SWALWELL: Or dual citizens or people who --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think there's a dual citizenship between the United States and Russia, so --

MR. SWALWELL: Okay.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I am not, to the best of my knowledge. I'm not, again, to the best of my knowledge.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met --

MR. EPSHTEYN: To answer your broader question, I'm not, like, going to, you know, groups of Russians or interacting. And listen, I'll say, unfortunately, since this whole thing, you know, has started, I've even -- I've been scared to talk

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to my relatives, even distant relatives, because I just feel like you don't want to be under extra focus.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Sergey Kislyak?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have -- which one is he? I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: You don't know who Sergey Kislyak is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think he was part of the story of the meeting, right, in the Trump Tower? Is that the one?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, who do you think Sergey Kislyak is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't. You'll have to jog my memory.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Russia's Ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Oh, I'm sorry. The former Ambassador?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay.

What did you know about the 2013 Miss Universe contest held in Moscow?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Absolutely nothing except for what's publicly available.

MR. SWALWELL: But you're reconnecting in 2013 with Eric Trump. You were born in Moscow. Is that a yes?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was born in Moscow, and I did reconnect with him in 2013.

MR. SWALWELL: And it's a pretty exciting thing to have Miss Universe come to your -- to the city where you were born, right?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. I mean, we left in 19 -- that's, what, 20 years after we left?

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MR. SWALWELL: But you're --

MR. EPSHTEYN: But let me ask you a question, actually. When was the Miss Universe? Do you know when?

MR. SWALWELL: So in 2013 the Miss Universe contest took place in Moscow. And around this time --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Do you know when?

MR. SWALWELL: November. And around this time, you're reconnecting the Eric Trump and even talking about doing business with him in Russia.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Uh-huh.

MR. SWALWELL: And you never discussed the Miss Universe contest at all with Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We never discussed it at any length whatsoever. Maybe he told me it was in Russia. I really, until the campaign last year, I didn't even recollect that it had been in Russia. I mean, I'm admittedly not a follower of those contests. But, you know --

MR. SWALWELL: It was a Trump family business occurring in your birth city, right?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's correct, but it was not something that I paid any attention to or had any involvement with whatsoever. It may have come up as a throwaway line in a conversation.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know the Agalarov family?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you heard of him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Just in what has been in the public realm. Again, I think that's the same one we're talking about.

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MR. SWALWELL: Do you know Felix Sater?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know him. I think I met him once, again, at a random chance meeting at the Grand Havana Club upstairs.

MR. SWALWELL: When was this?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was in 2013.

MR. SWALWELL: Where is the Grand Havana Club?

MR. EPSHTEYN: 666 Fifth Avenue. It's a cigar club.

MR. SWALWELL: And what were you doing there?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Having a cigar.

MR. SWALWELL: With who?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Actually, believe it or not, I was with Eric Trump, and Felix came up and introduced himself. Eric's a member.

MR. SWALWELL: Is Felix a member?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know.

MR. SWALWELL: What did you guys talk about?

MR. EPSHTEYN: He came up and introduced himself. It was not a long conversation whatsoever.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it more than 5 minutes?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. Not to the best of my recollection, no.

MR. SWALWELL: And Felix Sater is someone that you knew Eric Trump to be friends with?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Would you describe them as friends?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to my knowledge. He was someone who came up who was just a gentleman who was a -- I had no idea who he was when he came

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up. I had no idea who he was when he left. You know, I'm a businessman, okay. Again, it's New York, right, it's chockfull of businessmen.

MR. SWALWELL: How many other people that night did Eric Trump introduce you to?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Eric didn't introduce me to Felix. Felix came up himself and introduced himself. So it wasn't as if Eric said, "Hey, come here," at all. It appeared as if Eric had no idea that Felix would be there.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know who owns the building at 666 Fifth Avenue?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Thank you. Of course, I know who owns the building.

MR. SWALWELL: Who?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, actually there are a lot of owners, but one of the owners is KushnerCompanies.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Jared Kushner there?

MR. EPSHTEYN: He was not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever seen Jared Kushner with Felix Sater?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the first time you met Jared Kushner?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't -- I think it was -- you know what? I said hello to him at that wedding, because he officiated the wedding of Eric and Laura Trump. And then I didn't have really any interaction with him at all until the campaign. I don't think he'd remember the meeting in 2000, you know, '14 at the wedding.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met a guy named Carter Page?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I met him briefly once.

MR. SWALWELL: When was that?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: During the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Where was that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was at a lunch event at the -- I guess it's the Waldorf Astoria.

MR. SWALWELL: In New York?

MR. EPSHTEYN: In New York.

MR. SWALWELL: And what was the nature of your conversation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was just part of the campaign. He asked to meet, and we just had a very generic chat for maybe a half hour at most. I didn't take anything away from it. And then, you know, we all know where the news went from there and I never had any interaction with him after that.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you talk --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Beyond, I think, telling him that he was not a part of the campaign at one point.

MR. SWALWELL: You told him he was not a part of the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We had a discussion about it on the phone once, I think.

MR. SWALWELL: But he was the senior foreign policy adviser when he was on the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That was way before my involvement with the campaign, so you'd have to ask, you know, specific titles of somebody else. He had no involvement with the campaign effectively once I became a senior adviser, which was in August.

MR. SWALWELL: So 2013 October is this Invest In Moscow conference, October 28th, 2013?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I guess, yeah. If that's what it says, that's what it says.

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It wasn't --

MR. SWALWELL: Who selected the panelists?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know. I was not a part of that.

MR. SWALWELL: You were just asked to --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Moderate.

MR. SWALWELL: Moderate.

Have you remained in contact with any of the other panelists?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Only -- you know, there was some contact -- you'd have to give me a little bit more of a time period, but I hadn't been in contact with them since my involvement with the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you get paid for your participation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did not, as I mentioned earlier. And, you know, and these folks from time to time, from 2013 on, you know, they reached out to me. We had some business discussions. And then once I got involved with the campaign, I think there was one email to me, which I didn't respond to, so I ceased all -- I ceased communications.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you join the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: How did I join the campaign? I was pretty active on television. I've been appearing on TV as a, you know, political strategist since 2009. I was a surrogate for the Romney campaign in 2012. So I started appearing on TV again in 2015.

MR. SWALWELL: I guess my question is, like, did you just send an email to info@DonaldJTrump.com --

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, no, no --

MR. SWALWELL: -- or did you apply somewhere? Like, how did you get

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hired?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think I went to an event, one of those election night events. Well, so it's -- you know, I didn't join the campaign until long after the -- until a month after the convention.

So I joined -- I started being paid by the campaign in August of 2016. So I was a surrogate at the convention. I got to know some of the surrogate team and then got to know some other folks at the campaign and then was brought on as a paid senior adviser -- not heavily paid either. That's public information.

MR. SWALWELL: So when did you first associate with the campaign, paid or unpaid?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I became a surrogate for the campaign. I signed an NDA in May.

MR. SWALWELL: May 2016?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How did that happen? Who asked you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was emailed a -- I think then it was Rick Gates who was -- you know, there was no campaign manager, remember. Corey was still the campaign -- Corey Lewandowski might have still been the campaign manager, but there's a little bit of a -- there were different titles, different roles. But Rick was, you know, acting as you'd maybe call it a COO type of the campaign. He emailed me an NDA. I sent it back and then --

MR. SWALWELL: No. No. I understand that an NDA was signed. But my question is, did someone approach you and say, "Hey, Boris, we want you to work on the campaign," or did you approach someone and say, "Hey, I want to be" --

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I approached -- at one of these election night events in New York, I think I talked to Rick, got his information, and then talked to him about being a surrogate.

MR. SWALWELL: What role, if any, did Eric Trump play?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Eric introduced me to some of these people over time, you know. I think he may have invited me to one of those election night events. But, again, you have to remember that I've been -- I was very active on television starting, I guess, in the spring, you know, really in the late winter and then in the spring of 2016. So I think folks saw me on TV themselves because, you know, there weren't a lot of Trump surrogates out there. There were not a lot of people, Trump supporters, out on TV.

MR. SWALWELL: What was your position prior to joining the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: My position?

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. EPSHTEYN: My business, you mean?

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was a managing director of business and legal affairs for TGP Securities, a firm that I am part owner in.

MR. SWALWELL: And once you were a surrogate, what was that title?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Surrogate is the title.

MR. SWALWELL: Surrogate.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah. So on the campaign surrogate is -- you know, when you appear you'll see someone's byline "surrogates," you know, Clinton surrogates, Trump surrogates.

MR. SWALWELL: Who did you report to?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I wasn't an employee or I wasn't an independent contractor of the campaign. It was I was a surrogate. So what surrogates are, they're not part of the campaign. They're sort of a satellite of the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, who told you where to go?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I booked my own bookings. I wasn't being booked by the campaign. Booked on television, I mean.

MR. SWALWELL: Did anyone report to you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: As a surrogate?

MR. SWALWELL: Yeah.

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: What was your compensation once you got paid?

MR. AMOLSCH: I'm sorry.

██████████ Mr. Swalwell, I just want to say, you've got 5 minutes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So it might be easy for me to explain what a surrogate is. A surrogate is somebody --

MR. SWALWELL: I know what a surrogate is.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Right. So goes on television, you book yourself, and then you call -- and then you -- and you're a surrogate. You know, we received some talking points and generic emails and things that I'm sure you all are familiar from your campaigns.

MR. SWALWELL: Once you joined the campaign, did you interact with candidate Donald Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. When did that begin?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: Mid-August 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: And how would you interact with him? Was it in person? Was it by phone? Was it by email?

MR. EPSHTEYN: To the best of my recollection, it was not by email, but in person and by phone.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And how would you make appointments to talk with him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would not make appointments. If it were by phone, it would be a phone call, either coming from me to him or from him or somebody who is working for him to me, something like that. And then if it were in person, you know, you could go up to 26.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you tell him about your Russian heritage?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think that's widely publicized. I don't think I told him. I think he knew.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever talk to you about it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, nothing in depth, no.

MR. SWALWELL: So what makes you think that he knew?

MR. EPSHTEYN: There were a couple jokes, you know, Russian bear, Boris, that kind of stuff like that.

MR. SWALWELL: That was your nickname?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, that was not my nickname. In my life it was said that -- you know, there were just some, you know, again, joking. I don't remember if he verbatim said those things. But it appeared to me -- I don't know what he -- I'm not in his mind, right, to know what he knows or didn't know -- it appeared to me that he was aware. And also, my name is Boris, so it's not like --

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MR. SWALWELL: How many times a week would you talk to candidate Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, I guess it would depend on which time period, but it wasn't constant communication but there was communication. You know, my job became head of surrogate messaging. So I wasn't the surrogate booker, but I was head of surrogate messaging. So I oversaw what, you know, the folks on TV were saying, and that's something that he was interested in. We developed a good relationship.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever express to you his views on foreign policy as it related to Russia?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my recollection. But we had a lot of discussions. But, you know, if I had to look back --

MR. SWALWELL: Well, being Russian, that's something you would probably remember?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm an American. I'm not Russian.

MR. SWALWELL: Being born in Russia, that's something you probably would have remembered, right?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not necessarily. You know, campaigns are a tough, long slog.

MR. SWALWELL: But your testimony is that he never talked to you about his --

MR. EPSHTEYN: My testimony is that I don't recall in the very, you know, very, call it, involved, very chaotic campaign time having -- I never had an in-depth discussion with him about Russia -- about Russia policy.

MR. SWALWELL: Did it ever come up?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I just don't recall, Congressman. I don't want to tell you more than I know.

MR. SWALWELL: What do you remember talking to him about?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, a lot of the conversation was about media, television, what was going on, what some of the surrogates were saying, what the media narrative was. You know, I was senior adviser in communications, so I'm a communications guy, right. That's what I did for the campaign. So we concentrated very much on what falls into communications.

MR. SWALWELL: How would you communicate with other members on the campaign? Was it by cell phone? Email?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Both.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you use any text messaging apps?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Apps, no. Text messaging, but not apps.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have on your phone WhatsApp?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do have WhatsApp on my phone.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have Telegram?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know what that is.

MR. SWALWELL: What other messaging apps do you have?

MR. EPSHTEYN: None that I remember using. WhatsApp is the only one.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And were you using WhatsApp at the time when you were on the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to communicate with anybody related to the campaign, just strictly personal.

MR. SWALWELL: You had at the time of the campaign a personal email

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account as well?

MR. EPSHTEYN: My Gmail.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. What was that? What is that Gmail address?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It's [REDACTED]

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever communicate with anyone working on the campaign at the time you were on the campaign with your Gmail account?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would think so. You know, I also had this generic -- back from when I was doing TV on my own, I had a generic list of hundreds of people who I would send an email to saying, "Hey, I'm going to be on TV." They were all bcc'd. Again, something I think that a lot of folks in the media do. So some people on the campaign may have been on that list.

But, yeah, I wouldn't be surprised if -- I don't think there was any -- there's no prohibition for --

MR. SWALWELL: No. I'm just asking.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So I think there may have been times when I used my Gmail.

[REDACTED] Mr. Swalwell, you just have 1 minute left.

MR. SWALWELL: Did those include communications with Jared Kushner on your personal Gmail account?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would have to look back. I just don't recollect. From my recollection, the limited amount of email discussions I had with Jared, which was very limited to a few communications points over the time of the campaign, it was on the Donald Trump email.

MR. SWALWELL: How about with Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my recollection. We didn't really

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email much, period.

MR. SWALWELL: How about with Rhona Graff?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think any of my -- again, this is to the best of my recollection, you know. Again, campaigns, as you know, are an extremely chaotic time. So may an email have slipped on my phone when I'm emailing from -- because it's the same -- my Donald Trump handle is the same. It was

██████████ I think it was ██████████ and ██████████.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Michael Cohen?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Again, same answer. And, you know, my discussion with Michael Cohen was also based -- only, you know, about business.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

██████████ Time is up.

Mr. Rooney.

MR. ROONEY: Mr. Epshteyn.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Epshteyn.

MR. ROONEY: Good. Welcome to the Intelligence Committee here in the House. I know it was said earlier that we can be here all day, but I do want to remind you and your attorney that you are our guests and you can stay as long as you like.

Now, of course, if there is information that we want to get from you that we feel like you're not being forthcoming with, obviously there can be a subpoena. But that is not the case here today, nor is this a court of law. So I just want to make that clear because some of us do have flights to catch.

But anyway, regardless, welcome.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Thank you.

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MR. ROONEY: And I have some very brief questions. And a lot of these probably could be yes or no, but if you do want to elaborate, feel free.

Are you aware of any Russian cyber activity or other activity measures that were directed against the United States or our allies?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. ROONEY: Do you know --

MR. EPSHTEYN: By the way, not outside of what has been in the public sphere.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. Besides what you've read. But you don't --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not personally. Not outside what has been in the media.

MR. ROONEY: Do you know of any Russian active measures that include links between Russia and individuals associated with U.S. political campaigns or any other U.S. persons?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. ROONEY: Did you coordinate with the Russian Government to help the Trump campaign in 2015 or '16 in any way?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I absolutely 100 percent did not.

MR. ROONEY: Did you conspire with the Russian Government to help the Trump campaign in 2015 or '16 in any way?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I absolutely 100 percent did not.

MR. ROONEY: Did you collude with the Russian Government to help the Trump campaign in 2015 or '16 in any way?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I absolutely 100 percent did not.

MR. ROONEY: Can you give us any insight as to whether the U.S.

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Government's response to the Russian active measures to disrupt our elections and what we need to do to protect ourselves and our allies in the future? Can you lend any insight into that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Nope, I cannot.

MR. ROONEY: I have no further questions. Yield back.

██████████ You have 15 minutes.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you, Mr. Epshteyn.

Just to follow up on a couple things for clarification purposes.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure, Congresswoman.

MS. SPEIER: You indicated you hadn't been to Moscow since you left when you were 11. But you were then a moderator for a conference that said Invest in Moscow. You know, it strikes me as being something that you would decline to do since you didn't have much experience in Moscow. Why did you agree to do it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It's a fair question. The reason I was asked is because of the language. The reason I did it is, as I mentioned to the Congressman, is it was business purposes, right. I'm an investment banker looking to grow a business. And there were a lot of people in the audience there who were businesspeople in the U.S., private equity investors, others. So I did it as a way of business development.

To be totally frank with you, I don't recall knowing that that was the name of the event before I showed up. If I had known the name of the event, I would have probably thought twice about it. And, of course, looking back on it, you know -- nothing came of the event. No, there's been no positive to me. It's only been a negative.

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MS. SPEIER: So you also said it would be a stretch to say you had a friendship with Eric Trump. Those were your words earlier?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, in college. I did not -- in college we were acquaintances. We reconnected in 2013. And then, as I said to the Congressman, after that I would put it somewhere between an acquaintanceship and a friendship.

MS. SPEIER: But you were still invited to the wedding in 2014?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We already covered this, Congresswoman. Yeah, I was, you know. And relationships ebb and flow. So I think when we first reconnected it maybe was a little bit more of a friendship and then, you know, it just --

MS. SPEIER: So between 2013 and 2014, how many times did you see Eric Trump?

MR. EPSHTEYN: A handful.

MS. SPEIER: Handful?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Maybe less than 10.

MS. SPEIER: Five?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Somewhere in that neighborhood. It may have been less than five.

MS. SPEIER: Less than five and you were invited to the wedding, okay.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was invited. But, again, you have to keep in mind, it was a big wedding.

MS. SPEIER: I understand it was a big wedding.

MR. EPSHTEYN: There was a lot of folks from Georgetown who I personally knew. And I'm not -- I don't know why I was or wasn't invited, but it

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was an honor being invited and an honor to attend.

MS. SPEIER: Okay. You have signed an NDA, correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: With the campaign?

MS. SPEIER: With the campaign.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did sign an NDA, that's correct.

MS. SPEIER: So under that NDA, you're not at liberty to talk about anything that would besmirch Mr. Trump. Is that correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't have the NDA in front of me. And I signed it, you know --

MS. SPEIER: Well, if you're subject to it, don't you think you should know what's in it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was a year and a half ago. I mean --

MS. SPEIER: Well, aren't you still under it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If you want to show it to me and take me through the NDA, I'm happy to go through it and answer any questions about it. But otherwise, I signed it in May of 2016.

MS. SPEIER: And is it an NDA that stays in effect for how long?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I would have to go back to the document and see what the term of the document is.

MS. SPEIER: Well, wouldn't you be concerned about being sued if you violated the NDA?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If you have specific questions about the NDA, Congresswoman, I'm happy to answer them. Otherwise, again, it was a document that was signed in May of 2016, last year.

MS. SPEIER: The question I asked you was, wouldn't you be concerned

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about whether you would be violating the NDA and subject to a lawsuit if you didn't know the length of the term of that NDA?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If any situation ever came up which I felt put the -- you know, had any impact on my obligation under the NDA, I would go back to that document, review it, and -- but, you know, again, being a businessman, I've signed a lot of NDAs. And I generally know -- and I'm an attorney by training as well. I know what would rise to a level impacting any obligation under an NDA. So if that happened, I would go back and take a look at the NDA.

MS. SPEIER: Well, okay. It's astonishing that as an attorney, coming to this hearing, you wouldn't have refreshed your recollection about that NDA.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not -- well -- I did not believe in coming here that any of the questions here would be impacting any of my obligations under the NDA, because, as I just answered to the majority, I have nothing to share.

MS. SPEIER: Okay.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So in terms of those four parameters that have been made public, I have nothing to share.

MS. SPEIER: Tell us about your wife. How did you meet?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We met in college.

MS. SPEIER: Is she of Russian descent as well?

MR. EPSHTEYN: She was born in Minnesota. And her parents, I think, one was born -- I think her parents were both born in Minnesota.

MS. SPEIER: Is she of Russian descent?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You mean, like, were some of her great-grandparents from some area?

MS. SPEIER: Well, that's what descent means.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I honestly have not done her genealogy. So maybe somewhere somebody were Jews from Eastern Europe. Could somebody have been from somewhere that would be some part of czarist Russia? Maybe.

MS. SPEIER: When did you become a U.S. citizen?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I became a proud U.S. citizen in -- I believe it was 1999. It was late in high school.

MS. SPEIER: So who were you hired by as senior adviser in the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The Trump campaign.

MS. SPEIER: No, who? What person?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I signed a document. You know, it's a process just like any -- there's not a person that hires you.

MS. SPEIER: Someone interviews you. Who interviewed you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. The folks who were running the campaign, I think Jeff Dewitt was the -- maybe COO was the name. I forget what the title was. He was head of operations. So the head of -- the folks in operation of the campaign gave me a document. I signed a document.

MS. SPEIER: You were compensated, you said?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was.

MS. SPEIER: How much were you compensated?

MR. EPSHTEYN: \$10,000 a month.

MS. SPEIER: And you got paid \$10,000 a month?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yeah.

MS. SPEIER: You indicated that during the campaign, starting in August, you interacted with then-candidate Trump frequently in person and on the phone.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I didn't say the word "frequent." But I had a good amount of interaction with him, just to be fair.

MS. SPEIER: So in a week, how many times did you interact with him either on the phone or in person?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Some weeks would be very little, and some weeks would be more, depending on what was in the news.

MS. SPEIER: When it was very little, was it twice a week?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It could have been -- there were probably 7-day stretches there where it would have been zero, and there are others when it would have been 10. But it was never hundreds.

MS. SPEIER: So it's interesting that you were in a position where you could in 1 week talk to him 10 times, because many people couldn't get through to him. So how is it you were able to --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not giving you exact numbers here. I'm not trying to get a, you know, kind of -- but I had a good amount of interaction with candidate Trump. I'm a senior adviser to the campaign, I would say part of senior staff.

MS. SPEIER: So you would call him to talk about what?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The campaign.

MS. SPEIER: What specifically?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Specifically what's going on in the media, how certain issues are playing out, what's working, what may not be working.

MS. SPEIER: And did you work in Trump Tower?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MS. SPEIER: And who were you mostly in contact with on a day-to-day basis in Trump Tower?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: The communication staffs, Jason Miller, Bryan Lanza. Bryan Lanza ran the surrogate booking operation of the campaign. Kellyanne. Folks who ran the campaign.

MS. SPEIER: You said you came on first as a surrogate?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's right.

MS. SPEIER: You know, it's pretty tough to get on TV, so you obviously have some inherent skills.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Thank you.

MS. SPEIER: What -- do you have media contacts, producer contacts at TV stations that you could access frequently?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So I'm glad to walk you through it.

So I was on the McCain campaign as a volunteer in 2008. I got to know some folks who are in the PR world through that. And my first appearances were on what's called Strategy Room, which was FOXNews.com's online TV. So, you know, I did some appearances there. That was, I think, '09. Then FOX & Friends a little bit, a little bit of MSNBC, so I developed some contacts.

And when I say doing -- and I did more TV through 2012. Like I said, I was a surrogate for the Romney campaign. And then after that '12 campaign I think I really slowed down and concentrated more on my business activity.

And then in late 2015 I was deciding whether to be on TV more around the 2016 election and decided that it would be something that I would want. And I actually paid -- there are businesses, which you may be familiar with, which do this. They book folks on TV. They're usually ex-producers.

So I hired one firm and then I hired a second. So it was okay, but didn't do that great. And then I hired a second firm which I had a lot of relationships and

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booked me on TV. So these are professional bookers.

[12:44 p.m.]


MS. SPEIER: I see. Okay, that makes sense then.

Let's go back to Strategy International. You created that in 2009.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MS. SPEIER: And it was a DBA for purposes of doing business in Eastern Europe, correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was overarching business, but I did have a thought at the time when I left my law firm, the law firm I was working at, that based on my, you know, where I am from, I could potentially look to do some business in -- Mark, are you --

 You have 5 minutes.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I could do some business in Eastern Europe. So that was part of my thought process, that I could help -- my thought was this: My thought was that I could help American businesses looking to do business in Eastern Europe.

MS. SPEIER: But --

MR. EPSHTEYN: But nothing ever materialized.

MS. SPEIER: But nothing -- so nothing materialized. But you did say on your LinkedIn page that you were providing consulting and liaising services for domestic and international transactions, with a focus on Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes, that is exactly what I was looking to do. But also, keep in mind, as any businessman, right, it was part of a combination of things I was doing. So I was also managing director of business and legal affairs at a firm

called West America beforehand.

So it was just a business undertaking that I thought could succeed when I was in my mid-twenties, and it just never really went anywhere.

MS. SPEIER: Okay.

MR. EPSHTEYN: And then I stopped focusing on it, frankly.

MS. SPEIER: So you said you left the law firm. What was the name of the law firm?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy.

MS. SPEIER: Have you practiced as lawyer since then?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've kept my licenses, but I -- you know, and I've done some legal work here and there, but I've not consistently -- I don't have a law firm that I'm associated with. But I'm still an attorney.

MS. SPEIER: Did you have any contact with DC Leaks?

MR. EPSHTEYN: DC Leaks?

MS. SPEIER: Yes.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not familiar. Not that I -- I'm not familiar with what you're referring to, but not -- so okay, no. I know -- it's ringing a bell, it's one of those stories in the campaign. But if you give me a little more information, I could answer you more in depth.

MS. SPEIER: Well, it was one of the websites that started making available all of the hacked emails.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Absolutely not.

MS. SPEIER: How about Guccifer --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Again, to the best of my knowledge, right. I don't know if I shook hands with somebody who may, you know. But no.

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MS. SPEIER: How about Guccifer 2.0?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. I had nothing to do with any of these leaks or any of that -- any of the, you know, hacked emails, nothing. I could barely work my own phone.

MS. SPEIER: But during the campaign, you were speaking on behalf of the candidate, so would be knowledgeable about these hacked emails that were dumped because you would be commenting on them, correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I had no interaction whatsoever with anybody conducting any hacking or any leaking, in terms of what you are referring to.

MS. SPEIER: So when you --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I knew some -- whatever was published in the media. Of course, I mean, I'm reading the same things you're reading. But I had no knowledge and, to my knowledge, nobody at the campaign had any knowledge of any of these leaks that you're referring to.

MS. SPEIER: Did you have any interaction with Cambridge Analytica?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, I've met Rebecca Mercer. I think she's on the board of it or some relationship to it. But I have not conducted any business or really know, frankly, in depth what the company does too much beyond what's -- I don't know anything beyond what's reported out in the media. I was not -- I was not in that part of the campaign.

MS. SPEIER: So that part of the campaign was run by whom?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It's digital, so I, you know, I think Brad Parscale played a pretty big role in the digital part of the campaign. He did a great job.

MS. SPEIER: You co-hosted Facebook Live and Trump Tower Live for the campaign. Is that correct?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MS. SPEIER: How did those activities arise?

MR. EPSHTEYN: They arose out of some discussions that, you know, we had internally about how to break through what we felt was very unfair coverage by mainstream media. And since I was somebody who was very visible on TV, I, you know, I was one of the hosts. It was a lot of fun.

MS. SPEIER: So was it your idea or someone else's idea?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It wasn't necessarily my idea, but it was -- you know, I was part of the team that executed the original Facebook Live which we did after the Las Vegas debate.

MS. SPEIER: Did you develop all the content on the show?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Content?

MS. SPEIER: Content, excuse me.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I didn't -- no, because there were other hosts and we had some greater discussions with the communications team. So no, it wasn't -- as you mentioned, I was a co-host. I was one of the people who was working on it.

MS. SPEIER: Did Steve Bannon provide content?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not too much. Steve didn't have a ton of -- I mean, he may have made a suggestion about, "Hey, you should do this or you should think about that," but --

MS. SPEIER: Who came up with talking points?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Who came up with -- it wasn't -- did you ever see any segments?

MS. SPEIER: No, I can't say that I did.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: It wasn't something you were interested in?

MS. SPEIER: Not especially.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So, generally, these were interviews that we conducted. So we'd have -- we had have Rudy Giuliani on. So it wasn't as if -- it wasn't a talking point-based, you know, based show. It was interviews with -- we interviewed Kellyanne. I had the great honor of interviewing then-candidate Trump for the show. So it was more of an interview-based show.

██████████ One minute.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you.

The media has estimated that you personally made over a hundred television appearances as a spokesman for the campaign. Is that accurate, would you say?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Between surrogate and senior adviser, I think, yeah, it was a lot.

MS. SPEIER: And did you develop all the content and messaging for those appearances?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. As I mentioned to the Congressman earlier, we did -- when I was a surrogate, we received some -- you know, some information from the campaign, just as campaigns do. And then when I was the senior adviser, I took part in crafting some of the messaging. But, you know, as on any campaign, messaging is a collaborative effort.

MS. SPEIER: And so when you were a surrogate, who provided you the talking points?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, there were a couple -- and this is all, again, public information -- there were a couple of folks who ran the surrogate operation

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before, Bryan Lanza. And I think at first it was a woman. I forget her name. It was public that she was there. Then she left. I think there was a gentleman who was there for a couple weeks, then he left. And then Bryan Lanza joined the campaign, and it was Bryan and his team who would distribute the talking points.

And at one point, I think once I became senior adviser, I helped distribute the talking points. I think some surrogates ended up getting them from me, which was interesting for them, because we were all surrogates together, now I was helping distribute some.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you. I yield back.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Thank you, Congresswoman.

MR. ROONEY: I want to talk about, well, the NDA a little bit, as much as you can recall off the top of your head. But before that, to get there, I just read some articles here about you leaving the administration. How did that happen, if you could walk us through that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, I had a good job in the administration, but I was interested in other opportunities potentially within the administration. And then it leaked. And then I had gotten to know folks from Sinclair a little bit in my job as communications director at the inaugural and senior adviser of the campaign and, you know, so we agreed on working together. And it was a decision between staying in the administration in some role or moving on.

MR. ROONEY: Would you say or would anybody else say that you were fired, or would you say that you left amicably, or how would you --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Completely amicable. I don't know what anybody else would say, but completely amicable.

MR. ROONEY: Would you say that today, as you've testified, that you felt

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like you needed to withhold or have withheld any information or answers to any questions because of your NDA?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have been 100 percent forthcoming, and I've not withheld any answers.

MR. ROONEY: You don't have to answer this question if you don't want to. I'm just curious. Do you hold any resentment towards the Trump administration?

MR. EPSHTEYN: None whatsoever.

MR. ROONEY: Do you hope that he is successful as you sit here, or is there sour grapes at all, I guess is my question?

MR. EPSHTEYN: As every American should be and a patriot, I absolutely hope that he is successful. But I have zero sour grapes and, you know, I've been supportive of the administration in similar things I've done.

MR. ROONEY: You're not just saying that because of the NDA?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. No. I continue to support the President. I will vote -- you know, I expect to vote for him in the reelect, and I am an ardent supporter of the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

MR. ROONEY: I yield back.

If you need a break at any time.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Isn't that it?

MR. AMOLSCH: It was 45 and 15, right? And then I think we are it.

MR. SCHIFF: No.

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay, I'm sorry.

MR. SCHIFF: No. Unfortunately, that has been communicated inaccurately from time to time.

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MR. AMOLSCH: What happens next?

MR. SCHIFF: We continue alternating until we are done.

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay. When I spoke with [REDACTED] -- hi, is that you?

Nice to meet you. I'm Chris.

We were supposed to start at 11 and go to 12, or I guess for 2 hours. And then this says we are going to go 45, 15. So we kind of organized our life around that.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I am sorry [REDACTED] has misinformed you. That has happened before. Our committee rules are we alternate 15 minutes, 15 minutes each side until we are concluded. So I'm sorry if you were informed that the interview would be over at a certain point or that there would be a limited number of --

MR. AMOLSCH: Yes. That actually went a little far, because he didn't tell me it was going to be over at 2, but then again, we looked at these rules ahead of time and it seems to describe exactly what I'm describing, the 15/15 break. So do you have a sense of, for our own scheduling purposes, how much longer we will be here?

MR. SCHIFF: I only have a few questions, and Mr. Swalwell I think will then have the balance of the time. So I don't know how long that'll be, but we'll try to get through as expeditiously as possible.

MR. AMOLSCH: Do you think it will be more than an hour?

MR. SCHIFF: I don't know. I wouldn't think so.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Okay. So we'll take a break.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

[Recess.]

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MR. SCHIFF: I apologize. Mr. Epshteyn, you pronounced your name at the beginning.

MR. EPSHTEYN: It's Epshteyn.

MR. SCHIFF: Epshteyn. I'm sorry, Epshteyn. I'll probably screw up again.

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's okay. It won't be the first time in my life.

MR. SCHIFF: I have a certain dyslexia about things like that. It's not diagnosed, but I'm sure I have it.

I just want to follow up on my colleagues' questions on the NDA. So there is nothing you've declined to say because you felt you were restricted in any way by the NDA today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've been fully forthcoming.

MR. SCHIFF: And the reason I ask is two or three times during the interview today you have said, well, that is a matter of public information, as if it's okay for me to answer that because this is public information.

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, that is not what I was saying. And I'll clarify. Thank you for the question. All I was saying is it's in the public domain, so if I don't recall, it's out there, it's public. I am not declining to answer anything. And if I said that I only know that from public information, that means I just -- I learned it. That's just my vernacular.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay, thank you.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure.

MR. SCHIFF: I wanted to ask you, one of the key issues that came up when you were in charge of surrogate messaging was obviously the issue of Russia, the issue of the hacked emails. What discussions did you have with

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then-candidate Trump about how you and he and the team ought to message Russia's intervention in the election?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So the time the hackings came up first I think was around the convention, the Republican. That was in July. So I was not a part of surrogate messaging at the time.

So going from August -- my answer will be limited from mid-August forward, and really maybe the beginning of September.

Frankly, our discussion fully centered on the content of the emails and not on anything about how they were put out, because, frankly, I had no idea. And from everything I know, no one else had any idea where they were coming from, again, outside of what's in the media. So our discussion was what was in the substance of the emails rather than, you know, where they were coming from.

MR. SCHIFF: Let's try to go through this chronologically as best we can. When do you recall the first conversation you had with then-candidate Trump about the hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't recall any conversation I had with him about that. I don't recall any specific one.

MR. SCHIFF: Not even about the contents of the hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't recall any specific discussion. And, again, you know, this was in the chaos of the campaign and a good amount of discussions that we had. It was not a big focus.

MR. SCHIFF: It was a big focus of the President's. The President talked about hacked emails almost every day they came out. Did you not discuss with him what he was messaging?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, I was not a communications director or the

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head communications adviser. I'm not saying we never discussed the substance of the emails. I just can't recall a specific time. I'm not -- you know, I'm trying to give you the information you're looking for. Just -- it may have been part of a -- it may have been part of other discussions, but it was never we sat down and, "Hey, let's talk about this." That's not how the discussions went.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. That's not how the discussions went. Well, within the context of how your discussions with him did go, discussions which you had periodically, perhaps even frequently, what conversations did you have on the subject of the hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do not -- I don't recall. It was about a year ago now. I don't recall any specific discussions we had about now let's get into the content, because I don't recall any discussions about the actual process that the emails got out there. I just don't. That's to the best of my recollection.

I don't recall discussions about what's in the emails. Again, you know, it's tough to remember what came out from hacked emails or from those 302 notes that the FBI put out there after their interview with candidate Clinton, Secretary Clinton.

So, you know, we had a lot of different discussions about information that was out there, but I just can't point you to a specific time and date.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm not asking for a specific time and date. What I am asking you is to relay the contents of any conversation you had with then-candidate Trump on the subject of the hacked emails, the contents of hacked emails, the hacking of the emails, WikiLeaks, Julian Assange.

Are you saying that, as the head of surrogate communications, you had no discussion with the President you can recall on one of the chief areas of his

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campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: What I'm saying, Congressman, is that as the person who was in charge of messaging for surrogates starting at about early September, I -- so, generally, I guess I'll -- and, again, I'm really trying my best to give you -- I'm being forthcoming here.

I'm sure we discussed what had come out in the emails. If you could reference any specific subject or issue that you are talking about, maybe I will -- it will -- you know, I can take you to a more specific conversation. But if we were talking about something, it was an issue of the day or what had been on TV. And if that was one of the issues on the day, I could say, well, "Hey, you know, this surrogate said that," or, you know -- again, I was not -- my job was not to advise the President on what to say. He is not a surrogate. The surrogates are the folks who are out there, you know, in the ether.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Epshteyn, I don't want to get into a game where I have to ask you about a specific conversation to get an answer.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not playing any games.

MR. SCHIFF: So my question is, did you -- and I'll break it down for you -- did you discuss with then-candidate Trump the stolen emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Stolen emails?

MR. SCHIFF: The hacked emails.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So it must have come up in conversations. And I'm sure that I -- you know, it was something that was in my job as overseeing messaging for surrogates I then put into some of the information that we sent to surrogates. So I'm sure we had -- I'm -- I would assume -- I mean, I don't have any specific recollection -- that we had a general discussion about it. I'm being as

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forthcoming as I can, to the best of my memory.

MR. SCHIFF: You were in charge of surrogate communications --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Surrogate messaging.

MR. SCHIFF: Surrogate messaging from August of 2016 through the end of the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think it was September, really. The exact date -- maybe was a couple of weeks into my being a senior adviser, I was asked to oversee the messaging of surrogates. And what that means is making sure surrogates have information, getting on the phone with some of the surrogates, having calls with the surrogates. And the surrogates are folks who are out there in the media supporting then-candidate Trump.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you saying that in the course of months of being in charge of surrogate messaging, having frequent conversations with the President, you don't recall a specific conversation you had with him on the subject of the hacked emails, which he was discussing on the campaign trail sometimes on a daily basis?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, we were honestly concentrating on our -- on the campaign, on the agenda of the campaign, on the policies of the campaign. And we were running a campaign based on what the policies of Donald J. Trump were.

Now, when this stuff came out, it then went into this bucket of information that's out there about the other candidate. But really, our focus was: What are we going to say about tax reform? What are we going to say about immigration reform? What are we going to say about inner cities? And just --

MR. SCHIFF: You didn't have a conversation, "What are we going to say

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about the hacked emails"?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We may have as part of the general conversation. I assume we discussed not the hacked emails, quote/unquote, but what was in there in terms of anything -- honestly, as far as I can remember -- and, again, it was over a year ago -- the most damaging information to the Clinton campaign came out from the 302, you know, the Clinton State Department destroying BlackBerrys with hammers. All that was public through 302 notes that the FBI put out.

MR. SCHIFF: That may or may not be true, but my question is, are you saying that you cannot recall a single specific conversation you had with the President and relay that conversation to us on the subject of hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I -- it just -- you know -- maybe this is why we are getting this bit of back-and-forth. With surrogates, really the information you send out to them is what the campaign wants to put out on their policies, on the message of the day. And our message of the day was never, "Hey, here's what came out in these emails."

And I'm really trying to get to the answer. And so it was just not something that I would speak to then-candidate Trump about. I'm sure -- I would assume there are other folks, right. I was not the campaign manager. I was not the chief strategist. I was not the communications director. So --

MR. SCHIFF: None of that is an answer to my question.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I cannot point you to a specific date and time of a conversation.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm not asking you for a specific date and time either. What I am asking you for now the fifth or sixth time, because I can't seem to get a direct

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answer, is, are you testifying that you don't remember a specific, a single specific conversation you had with the President on the subject of the hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: My testimony is, to the best of my -- my position, my point is, to the best of my recollection, I assume that we -- that some of the things that had been in those emails, I would -- and frankly, again, a lot has happened since then. I'd struggle to tell you what came out in the so-called leaked emails or what came out in the 302 notes.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Epshteyn, it's a yes-or-no question. You either do remember a specific conversation you had with the President on the subject of hacked emails or you don't.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do not remember a specific discussion.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you remember a specific conversation you had with the candidate on the subject of WikiLeaks?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Nothing specific. If I had to recall -- and, again, I'm not -- I couldn't say 100 percent it was him, but it was a -- it was -- if there was an exchange, it was an exchange to the point of we have no idea where they are getting this stuff from, and we are just going to move on with the campaign we're running, and whatever is put out there, it's none of our business.

MR. SCHIFF: And you have no specific recollection of a conversation you had with candidate Trump on the subject of Julian Assange?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do not. I do not have any specific recollection of that discussion. I don't.

MR. SCHIFF: So you never asked the President for his views on how you should talk about the allegations at that point that the Russians had hacked the emails and that the Russians were feeding them to the public through WikiLeaks?

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It never came up?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If I remember correctly from the campaign, the big focus of that all happened around July, before I joined. I don't -- and, you know, again, it's the fog of -- they call it the fog of war, right? There was a lot happening in that campaign.

But my job also wasn't -- you know, A, I think that happened before I became senior adviser. I think a lot of that concentration was in July, around the convention.

And B, my job was to more share, hey, here's what's going on in the news. Here's what, you know, here's what's going on out in the interviews, here is what the surrogates are saying, here's how it's going, here's the perspective, rather than have a discussion of specifically how we message something.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Epshteyn, let me get back to my question again, if you would please focus on my question. My question is, did you ever ask candidate Trump for his advice about how you ought to message the allegation that the Russians had hacked the DNC and were publishing documents through WikiLeaks or DC Leaks or Guccifer 2.0?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do not remember asking that.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you remember him expressing his opinion on that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: This would be something that I generically remember, and whether it came from him or people who are, you know, who are running the campaign, that permeating the campaign was that nobody related to the campaign had anything to do with it.

MR. SCHIFF: So the best of your recollection, the only conversation you would have had with candidate Trump was a denial that anyone in the campaign

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had anything to do with it. Why would that have been a message?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It wasn't a denial, because it wasn't like, you know, anybody was making an accusal. I think there may have been a situation where there was a narrative on one of the networks, on CNN, call it, or on NBC, whatever it may be, where there is this narrative that the campaign was somehow involved. And we said, we've got nothing to do with it, and then moved on and ran the campaign we were going to run.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have a discussion with Mr. Trump, either during the campaign or after the campaign, on the subject of the Russian hacking of the DNC or the Podesta emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If I -- if there was any discuss -- the only thing I remember out of any of these conversations was, again, a response to a narrative that's out in the media that somehow we won because of some foreign influence and a deep belief by the President and myself and all of us that that was not the case.

██████████ One minute, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm sorry?

██████████ One more minute from the 15-minute mark.

MR. SCHIFF: The same question about conversations with Eric Trump. Did you ever discuss with Eric Trump the hacking of the DNC?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I really don't think so. To the best of my recollection, the answer is no.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever discuss with other staff of the campaign the hacking of the DNC or the publication through WikiLeaks of the DNC or Podesta emails?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: As you mention, right, it was a part of the campaign. There were, again, things that came out from -- information that came out from those channels that we then discussed. So there, of course, were discussions in the communications team and otherwise, but those discussions were all, "Hey, here's the substance, is there anything to do with it?" And overarchingly, we again just concentrated on what -- on the information and the policies that we were putting forward about the President -- about the candidate.

MR. SCHIFF: Did anyone at the Trump campaign ever communicate to you that they knew of an impending dump of hacked emails?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

MR. SCHIFF: I have more questions, but I yield back.

MR. ROONEY: I'm going to yield right back, but I just wanted to let you know the reason I'm going through this is to preserve in case there's anything that I do want to piggyback onto, which I don't. So I yield.

MR. SCHIFF: Just a couple more questions before I hand it back to Mr. Swalwell.

Mr. Swalwell asked you at the outset about whether you were a source at all for any of the information in the dossier. I want to read you a couple of the allegations in the dossier and see if you can help in identifying who might be a source of information.

The dossier refers to a source called source E and provides: "Speaking in confidence to a compatriot in late July of 2016, source E, an ethnic Russian, close associate of Republican U.S. Presidential candidate Donald Trump, admitted that there was a well-developed conspiracy of cooperation between them and the Russian leadership. This was managed on the Trump side by Republican

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candidate's campaign manager Paul Manafort, who was using foreign policy adviser Carter Page and others as intermediaries."

Do you have any idea who that source E may be?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have no idea who it is. And I know there are some conspiracy theorists out there who have suggested it's me because my last name starts with E.

But, again, from what I know from the media about this dossier, I think the author labeled the sources A, B, C, D, E. So that's the only reason that I think, again, some people in the conspiracy theory world have tied me to it. I have no idea who source E is and I have no idea about anything that you just read.

MR. SCHIFF: Yeah. Well, unless the sources all had last names in alphabetical order, that seems like a rather implausible theory.

But it does refer to an ethnic Russian close associate of the President. That is a limited number, I would assume, maybe not as limited as we thought originally.

Can you tell us what ethnic Russian associates of the President you're aware of?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, first of all, I don't accept any of the premise of whatever this dossier says. To me, I've never seen a shred of evidence that anything in there is true. So to your question, I have no idea.

MR. SCHIFF: That's not really responsive to my question. My question is, what ethnic Russians do you know who are associates of the President?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have not done a -- first of all, my relationship with then-candidate Trump, now President Trump, was fully based on the campaign. I don't know his list of, quote/unquote, associates.

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MR. SCHIFF: I'm not asking you for a list of his associates, and I'm not asking you to tell us things you don't know. But there are things you do know. What ethnic Russian associates of the President are you aware of?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't know. I'm not aware of any, quote/unquote, close associates who are Russian, again, to the best of my knowledge. And also, it depends what -- is a Russian by birth or an American citizen. But nothing that is in that generic world springs to mind.

MR. SCHIFF: So you're not aware of any ethnic Russian associates of the President? Let's not get fixated on close. Are you aware of any ethnic Russian associates of the President?

MR. EPSHTEYN: None that I have a personal knowledge of. I mean, there's been other -- there have been reports in the media about folks that he may or may not know or may or may not have spent time with, you know, some birthday thing that -- again, it was all reported.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, don't exclude people who were mentioned in the press.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Do exclude or do not exclude?

MR. SCHIFF: Don't exclude people mentioned in the press. If there are people that you know are associates of his that also were mentioned in the press, I don't want you to exclude them.

MR. EPSHTEYN: There is no knowledge -- there is no knowledge I have outside of what's in the press is what I'm saying. I don't have any independent knowledge of any other Russian associates, you know, of the President outside of what's been out there. I've never -- I don't think I've ever seen him interact with anybody else who was born in the former Soviet Union outside of me. And I will

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tell you that I am not source E.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, you did mention that you had met Felix Sater. Felix Sater is, I think, Russian, is he not?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not sure. Actually, there's an interplay in there. I think he is from the former Soviet Union? He could be from one of the, you know --

MR. SCHIFF: I don't want to --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm not playing games. I'm just saying he's ethnic. I think he was probably -- he was -- to the best of my knowledge -- this is all public information out there -- he was born in the former Soviet Union. So --

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. Then you would have been aware of at least one associate of ethnic Russian background of the President's.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have never seen them interact.

MR. SCHIFF: You've seen him interact with the President's son, but not with the President?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The only time I ever saw, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. Sater was that one time.

MR. SCHIFF: And, again, I don't want you to limit things on the basis of what you have seen. If others in the campaign described an associate of the President's that is an ethnic national of any of the Soviet countries, that is the question.

So apart from Mr. Sater, are you aware of any other ethnic Russians, ethnic former Soviets, associated -- and let me broaden it -- associated with the President or the President's son or son-in-law or daughter?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm just taking a minute to recollect.

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MR. AMOLSCH: I am sorry. If I understand the question, you're asking him not just about his personal knowledge, but did he hear anybody else mention that. Is that kind of what you're looking for as well? I want to make sure we're answering the right question.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes. Yes. What I'm interested in is, is he aware of any ethnic Russian or ethnic former Soviet Union, former ethnic Soviet background who was an associate of the President, either because you saw this -- the President or his family -- either because you saw this, because you were told by others on the campaign, or you have some other basis of knowledge for it.

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, I -- it has been widely, again, reported, right, that the Trumps were look -- had potentially looked to do some business, and including the Miss Universe pageant. So I knew of that, not through personal knowledge, but I know of the Miss Universe pageant and some of those other interactions. So I know about that.

When Felix Sater introduced himself, he claimed that he knew the Trump family. I had no independent knowledge of that.

So, again, to the best of my recollection, I don't -- I can't talk about any close, I mean, associates, but, you know, that's a lot of -- that's a pretty big pool of people, especially if we expand it to the President's children and in-law, you know, his son-in-law, whatever it is. I just don't -- that's not something that -- I don't know whether they do or don't. But what I do know is that, to the best of my recollection, it's not something that we discussed.

MR. SCHIFF: Again, I'm not asking if it's something you discussed. But your testimony is then that you're not aware, other than Felix Sater, of anyone of ethnic Russian or Soviet background who was an associate of the President or his

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family.

MR. EPSHTEYN: My answer is that I'm not -- outside of what's in the media, what's been reported in the media, what I've seen on CNN or in The New York Times, whatever it is, I am not independently aware of anything beyond that, again, to the best of my recollection.

MR. SCHIFF: Let me ask you just about a couple of the other allegations pertaining to source E to see if that might refresh any recollection about who it might be.

Source E acknowledged that the Russian regime had been behind the recent leak of embarrassing email messages emanating from the Democratic National Committee to the WikiLeaks platform. Anyone in the Trump campaign or orbit ever relate that information to you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Finally, regarding Trump's claimed minimal investment profile in Russia, a separate source with direct knowledge said this had not been for want of trying. Trump's previous efforts had included exploring the real estate sector in St. Petersburg as well as Moscow.

Did anyone in the Trump campaign ever relate information along those lines to you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I mean, that goes back to what we talked about earlier. I think that it's widely known that the Trump Organization had looked into doing hotel projects in the former Soviet Union, I don't know the specific cities, as, you know, a lot of American hotel companies do, Marriott, Hilton, et cetera, but that none of those deals ever went through.

MR. SCHIFF: And you may have been asked about this already, but the

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allegations concerning Michael Cohen and Felix Sater's effort to develop a Trump Tower Moscow, I take it you were not involved with that in any way?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I'm glad you asked the question. I was not whatsoever and had no knowledge about it before it became public in the media.

MR. SCHIFF: Let me yield back to Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

Are you willing to turn over to us any Gmail correspondence you had with people on the campaign, whether it was your Gmail to their personal email or your Gmail to the campaign accounts, as it relates to our investigation?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If you would like to submit a request, feel free to submit it and we will assess the request.

MR. SWALWELL: In the last 5 years, have you had any contact while you've been in the United States with anybody who you knew to work for the Russian Government?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The Russian Government, no. But part of this entity, the Moscow foreign investment office, yes, as we discussed previously.

MR. SWALWELL: How about while outside the United States?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you been outside the United States and had contact with anybody with the Russian Government?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I -- in terms of maybe I got an email from one of these folks while I was on a cruise?

MR. SWALWELL: I mean an in-person contact.

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, no, not at all.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever do opposition research for the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not really, no.

MR. SWALWELL: How in any way did you --

MR. EPSHTEYN: My answer would be no, unless it's -- I formed messaging. So if you call forming messaging opposition research. But I never did research beyond, you know, Googling an issue that I thought may be interesting.

MR. SWALWELL: Did any group present to you, any group outside the campaign present to you the results of opposition research?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you ever involved in polling, data mining, or otherwise collecting or analyzing voter data?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, I was not, beyond taking polls that I believed were already public at the time and analyzing them, in terms of here's the trend that we should talk about, you know, we're trending up in Florida, you know, the usual campaign analysis.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever see any foreign nationals in Trump Tower during the course that you worked at the campaign, people who you knew to be foreign nationals either because you recognized them or someone said, "Hey, that person's from such and such"?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The only thing that comes to mind is after we won, during the transition, Nigel Farage came by once to meet with -- I think he saw Steve. But that's about --

MS. SPEIER: Steve?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Bannon. But he was a public persona who was around. "Oh, it's Nigel Farage, interesting." Not to the best of my recollection.

Hold on a second. I think Benjamin Netanyahu. You know, I think Benjamin Netanyahu came by during the campaign, at some point, I think there may have been a meeting. It was public information, so --

MR. SWALWELL: Were you familiar with the June 9th, 2016, meeting where Jared Kushner, Paul Manafort, and Don Jr. met with --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was not.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you work with Paul Manafort at all?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I interacted with Mr. Manafort to a limited degree.

MR. SWALWELL: How?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So, you know, I think I interacted with him a little bit at the convention when I was a surrogate and had a very, you know, had a few very brief discussions and congratulated on -- congratulated him on Mr. Trump becoming the candidate, you know, the official candidate.

And then very limited when I became -- I became a senior adviser and started working out of the Trump Tower within a few days of him resigning as the campaign chairman. So we had very limited interactions.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever talk to Paul Manafort about the platform change at the convention?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Absolutely not, no.

MR. SWALWELL: Now, that's something you probably followed, seeing that it invoked your birth country in some part.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Congressman, that's not the first time you've said this about the birth country.

MR. SWALWELL: So I'm from Iowa. If I see a story about Iowa, you know, I don't live in Iowa, but it's interesting to me because I had a connection for

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a long time there.

So I'm asking you, when you see that Ukraine and Russia are in the news at a convention that you're attending in a campaign that you are affiliated with, you can't say it's not interesting.

MR. EPSHTEYN: So that change, which I think I learned about later on, happened after -- happened before I went to the convention. The way the convention is, there was -- that platform meetings are the week before the convention.

So did I know about it? I think so. But was it a big focus for me? It really, really was not, because I was also figuring out how much involvement I was going to have with the campaign and I was focused on a lot of other things, frankly.

MR. SWALWELL: On July 31st, 2016, on CNN, you stated, "Russia did not seize Crimea. We could talk about the conflict that happened between Ukraine and the Crimea, it's an ongoing conflict, but there was no seizure by Russia. That is an incorrect statement, characterization of what happened."

Did you say that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: If that's the exact transcript, I did. So that was, I believe, a Sunday. It was my fifth interview of the day. And I have a foreign policy background. I graduated from School of Foreign Service. And I was -- and it was a mistake, looking back on it. I was trying to literally draw a distinction between annexation and seizure, probably trying to appear too smart by half, and that's all I was trying to say.

MR. SWALWELL: But you were somebody who was skilled in appearing on television and answering tough questions at this point.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure. I'm just saying, you know, nobody bats a thousand and that was not -- that was not something I should have said on air. I was -- it was something that's more befitting a foreign policy salon discussion than an on-air discussion which is, you know, 10-second little clips.

MR. SWALWELL: When you made that statement, try and go back to what your mindset was, whether it was a mistake or not. Was your mindset when you made the statement that you were stating a Trump campaign position?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. My mindset was -- again, I have a foreign policy background, and we could get into a long discussion about, you know, national identity and the rights of countries to -- of the rights of people to identify themselves with specific countries. And I literally went back to college in that moment and was just making that interplay between annexation and seizure.

MR. SWALWELL: And on the same day Donald Trump said on ABC, "Putin is not going into Ukraine, okay? Just so you understand, he's not going to go into Ukraine, all right? You can mark it down. You can put it down. You can take it anywhere you want."

Is it a coincidence that you and Donald Trump both made comments that same day about Ukraine?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It is a complete coincidence. I had no interaction with then-candidate Trump at that time or anywhere around those statements.

MR. ROONEY: I yield.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you also aware that your comments on Crimea at the time -- again, mistake or not, how you recognize it now -- fit into the Russian Government's narrative about the annexation of Crimea?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I was not aware of it at the time. I wasn't trying to fit

into any narrative. I was just, again, putting forward a very thin -- a very thin difference between a seizure and annexation, which does have an international relations definitional difference, which is not something I should have been doing on CNN. But, like I said, it was one of those get there 3 o'clock, do appearances on the hour, and it was my last one. Then I just, you know, I made a mistake.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever done an interview with RT, Russia Today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think so. I have done some interviews with a few Russia -- Russian outlets.

MR. SWALWELL: Which ones?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't -- there was like one which asked me some business -- you know, it's out there. There's one that asked me for my perspectives on business. And actually, I think the reporter had been at this event in 2013, and I gave some comments on that.

I don't remember talking to RT. But if I did at one point, they put a microphone in my face during, like, an event, that may have happened, or I may not recollect it, but I don't recollect going to RT and doing an interview like I did with a lot of other outlets.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Sputnik?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sputnik had that reporter at the White House who was kind of running around and trying to talk to people. I don't think I talked -- I don't think I ever talked to him.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you agree that RT and Sputnik are connected to Russia's intelligence services?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I agree that they are connected with the Russian



Government. I don't know what their relation with the President -- but yeah, I mean they are Russian Government entities. I never had any interest in dealing with either of them.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever meet Michael Flynn when you were working on the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times?

MR. EPSHTEYN: A good amount of times. General Flynn was an important part of the campaign.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you aware when you were on the campaign and interacting with General Flynn that he had traveled to Russia relatively recently to the campaign to attend an RT gala?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I --

MR. SWALWELL: Did he ever tell you about that?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Me and him never talked about it, to the best of my recollection. But, you know, there were times -- there was one trip we were on together on the plane, on the campaign plane, probably together for hours.

But I don't -- we never focused -- we never had a discussion about Russia at all, to the best of my recollection. And I may have known about his appearance at that, because I think that was already out in the media.

MR. SWALWELL: In December 2016, Jared Kushner told a group of business executives that the campaign had made a deal with Sinclair Broadcast Group to secure media coverage. He said that the agreement with Sinclair gave the campaign greater access to Donald Trump and, in exchange, that Sinclair agreed to broadcast their Trump interviews across the country without

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commentary. He pointed out that Sinclair in States like Ohio maintained a much wider audience, around 250,000 listeners, than networks like CNN, which only reached around 30,000.

Do you recall, while you were working with the campaign, any discussion with anyone on the campaign about a Sinclair agreement?

MR. AMOLSCH: Again, I am sorry, he was -- I missed the beginning of the question. I'm not -- if you can help me help him focus. How is that what we're talking about here today? I'm trying to figure out like how he can best answer that question for you. I don't know how that deals with what we're --

MR. SWALWELL: Sure. So you know who Sinclair is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And you know who Jared Kushner is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever talk to Jared Kushner about Sinclair when you were on the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Maybe about an appearance with a station.

I'll answer the question. The point is, in my view, that has nothing to do with what we're doing here. The relation -- the only -- there was no deal. Sinclair offered the same opportunity to the Trump campaign and the Clinton campaign, and it was to do interviews with these local stations that Sinclair either owns or has a relationship with. We took advantage. The Clinton campaign, from the best of my knowledge, did not. And that's all it was.

But I will tell you, I did interviews with Sinclair reporters and stations and they were never a lay-up. They were tough interviews. Sinclair is a completely fair news organization.

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MR. SWALWELL: You served on the inaugural committee as the director of communications.

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did.

MR. SWALWELL: While you were in that capacity, did you know a Leonard Blavatnik, B-l-a-v-a-t-n-i-k?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think I may have shaken his hand at one of the dinners, but I don't remember. He may not have been there. I may be wrong.

MR. SWALWELL: What does the name mean to you when I say it?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Lionel Bassett. He's the guy, he's the Russian oligarch -- Russian businessman who owns -- who used to own, I think, Lionel Bassett. I think he owned Time Warner Music. Access Industries.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever see him interact with anyone on the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever see him with the President?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not to the best of my recollection, no.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Victor Vekselberg, V-e-k-s-e-l-b-e-r-g?

MR. EPSHTEYN: What about him?

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've heard the name.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you met him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think so. Again, if there's any -- if the word "meeting" has any substance, the answer is no. I don't know if I shook someone's hand at some event or not. And it would be public if any of these people were at any of the events.

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MR. SWALWELL: I'm just asking about your --

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't remember talking -- ever meeting him.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Simon Kukes, K-u-k-e-s, do you know the name?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It does not ring a bell.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Andrew Intrater, I-n-t-r-a-t-e-r?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes. I shook -- he, I believe, was at one of the dinners around the inaugural and I shook his hand. I think he runs -- it's a fund. Columbia or something like that.

MR. SWALWELL: Is it Renova Group?

MR. EPSHTEYN: He may have something to do with Renova, but I don't think it is Renova. I think there's a different entity that Mr. Intrater runs.

MR. SWALWELL: What was his connection to the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think he had a -- I think he may have known folks -- he's a businessman in New York.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you know that he had given the campaign and the inauguration \$285,000?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I may have known that he gave money because he was one at one of those events. I didn't know the amount. The money didn't go through me. It wasn't as if I received, you know, the gift or anything like that.

MR. SWALWELL: Would it surprise you to hear that he had no record ever prior to the campaign of making a political contribution?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I have no -- I mean, that's up -- that's his business.

MR. SWALWELL: I'll yield back to the ranking member.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you.

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MR. AMOLSCH: Congressman, I apologize. Do you think you're going to go -- I need to use the restroom again. I don't want to interrupt your flow if it's going to be 5 minutes, but if it's going to be 20.

MR. SCHIFF: Less than 5 minutes.

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay, I'm fine.

MS. SPEIER: But I do have questions. I've got maybe 10 minutes.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Let's get it done.

MR. ROONEY: Do you want to take a break? If you got to go, you got to go.

MS. SPEIER: Go ahead and go, come on.

MR. AMOLSCH: I'm good.

MR. SCHIFF: I just want to follow up on a question that Mr. Swalwell asked. The committee had requested any documents that you had that were relevant to our investigation, and we received a letter back from your counsel that you had no documents at all relevant to the investigation.

Does that mean that you have no emails, no text messages, no written documents, no memoranda that are relevant to any of the questions you've been asked during the interview today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Thank you, Congressman, for the question. The answer that was provided by my attorney, and he can speak for himself as well, was based on the four parameters that were in the letter I received, and the response was completely true and forthcoming. So we had nothing to share in terms of the four parameters that --

MR. AMOLSCH: I won't speak for him, but I think it's fair to say, based on his testimony, his statements here today, if you want to refine your request for

specific documents, we can go back and look for those. That might be easier.

MR. SCHIFF: It's not so much I'm refining my request as I don't want you to take a narrow view of what you were asked to provide to the committee.

You were asked to provide any information, among other things, that was relevant to Russian cyber activity and other active measures directed against the U.S. The cyber activities obviously involved the hacking and the dumping of the documents. So anything relevant to the stolen emails, messaging around it, conversations you may have had with people on the campaign about Julian Assange, WikiLeaks.

Any of those things, really any of the questions we had today, were relevant to the investigation. So do you have documents that are relevant to our investigation, relevant to the questions we've asked you today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't believe so.

MR. AMOLSCH: And the only hesitation -- again, I'll not speak for him -- the questions went a little bit farther afield I think than maybe than we understood the questions were going to be.

So I don't believe he has any information -- he can speak for himself -- relevant to any of the discussions that you all have talked about that I may not have understood, again, given the narrow confines.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Again, our answer was specifically based on these four questions that we received in the letter. If you would like to follow up or any of your staff and, you know, expand on those requests, we're happy to evaluate that at the time. But as we took the requests, we absolutely don't have any or did not then and don't have now anything to provide.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm not sure that I'm completely following your answer, so let

me just ask it very simply. Do you have any documents, memoranda, recordings, or other tangible evidence that is in any way relevant to the questions we have asked you today?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Can we have a break?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

[Recess.]

MR. AMOLSCH: Congressman, just so we're clear, my hesitation was where you talked about where his wife was going, a cruise he took to St. Petersburg, like the Trump wedding. And we didn't respond in any emails. And those are questions that came up today. We didn't give you any emails about that.

So if your answer is about anything we discussed today, are there other emails, I mean, probably, as it relates to those ancillary topics, but nothing in terms of your more focused question, cyber activity, hacking, Julian Assange, WikiLeaks, any of that. He doesn't have anything on that.

So that was my hesitation. I'm not trying to nitpick. I'm just trying to make sure I understand.

MR. SCHIFF: Yeah. No, no, no, counsel, yeah, no, counsel, I appreciate you doing exactly as you should.

So let me just refine it a little more. With respect to the questions you've been asked today about the hacking of the emails at the DNC, the formation of message around the stolen emails, Julian Assange or WikiLeaks or the ethnic Russians that may be associates of the First Family, all those questions, excluding those that pertain to your family background or your wife or things of that nature, do you have any documents, memoranda, notes, recordings relevant to our

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investigation in your possession?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't believe so. My only hesitation would have been if there were, you know, there were talking points that we ever sent out as a campaign that would have just been about -- that then became public, in terms of the substance of anything that came out in the emails.

But -- because my messaging was nowhere on the list of questions that we received. But my overarching belief, in answer to your question, is, no, I do not have any such documents.

MR. SCHIFF: And I would encourage you to go back through your records and make sure that you've fully complied.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Sure. Absolutely.

MR. SCHIFF: With that, I'll yield to Ms. Speier.

MS. SPEIER: Thank you.

I'm trying to just be clear about your company, Strategy International. You created it in 2009, correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So it was created, I think, as an LLC. It was probably registered in the '90s. But I added the -- it was -- you know, it was a business that -- my mother is in real estate, so -- and, you know, so it was a business entity. It was pretty much -- I think it was dormant. And then I added Strategy International, because it was a name that sounds like a name that people would be interested in getting consulting services.

MS. SPEIER: But the purpose of that was to do business in Eastern Europe.

MR. EPSHTEYN: No. The purpose of that was to assist companies from the U.S. or somewhere else with potentially doing business in Eastern Europe.

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But it never materialized.

MS. SPEIER: Okay. So is it still in existence?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think the LLC is still filed. I don't know if we keep the name. I think it's 35 bucks a year to keep the name, so maybe.

MS. SPEIER: So why is it on your LinkedIn profile in 2016? You are still referencing it in terms of, you know, wanting to -- consulting and liaising services for domestic and international transactions with a focus on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

MR. EPSHTEYN: A couple answers there. One, I'm not that -- I'm a little better now. I definitely was not before I got -- you know, before -- before a year ago or so, I just wasn't that good at keeping up my social profile out there.

There is not a website, I believe, for the entity. I've never advertised. So I was just not that good at whatever I was doing.

But if you do look at my LinkedIn page, it may be there. I don't know if I took it off. I think I took it off since then. If you have a screen shot, you will see how far down it is on my LinkedIn page. It's probably pretty far down.

MS. SPEIER: Okay. So when did you become an investment banker? You left the law firm in what year?

MR. EPSHTEYN: '09.

MS. SPEIER: '09.

MR. EPSHTEYN: And I took my licenses, I took the FINRA licenses, you know, the State-based licenses I think in late '09.

MS. SPEIER: So you've been an investment banker since then?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Correct.

MS. SPEIER: And what's the name of the firm that you are?

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MR. EPSHTEYN: First I was with West America Securities Corp., which you probably have in the LinkedIn, and then at TGP Securities.

MS. SPEIER: Is that where you are now?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I am not affiliated with them now. I am a part owner of the firm. But I rolled off the firm when I joined the White House, you know, obviously per all the proper rules.

MS. SPEIER: And who were your clients during those years?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Overarchingly, you know, there were clients who are companies here, domestic companies looking to raise capital. So --

MS. SPEIER: From?

MR. EPSHTEYN: So the way investment banking works is that -- there's a lot of it, right. Some people do stocks. We didn't do any of that stuff. So all we did was advisory work. Say a healthcare business wants to grow, it wants to raise \$15 million from private equity, and we would be the investment banker that's in between those two. We would be hired by the entity then, you know.

██████████ One minute, ma'am.

MS. SPEIER: Do you know anyone by the name of Lavosh Levishaw?

MR. EPSHTEYN: No, not off the top of my head.

MS. SPEIER: You referenced Waldorf Astoria, meeting Carter Page at a lunch. Do you know when that was?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes, I think it was in September. Maybe -- yeah, probably early September. I don't remember exactly.

MS. SPEIER: Did you talk about his trip to Russia in July?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't recall that, no. I don't think we spoke about Russia at length at all.

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MS. SPEIER: Not at all?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think we spoke about it at length. I don't know if he referenced the trip. I think -- he may have, but I don't recall that.

I will tell you that it was a pretty brief conversation. I came out of it thinking that there is not -- this wasn't someone I was interested in speaking ever again, because there's not much there.

MS. SPEIER: What did he say that made you think --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Just the conversation. You talk to a lot of people in life and the conversation just wasn't one that I was particularly impressed with.

MS. SPEIER: And at TGP Securities, where you were part owner and you rolled off when you became part of the White House, how many persons in that company?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I think it's probably over 10 folks who are registered with the business as a broker-dealer. And what a broker-dealer is, it's as in real estate, right, if you're a real estate -- if you're a real estate professional, you have to be with a real estate brokerage. If you are a finance professional, you have to be with a broker-dealer. So that's what that is.

MS. SPEIER: Okay. Let's shift off to Sinclair Broadcasting.

Is my time up?

MR. ROONEY: Yield.

MS. SPEIER: Did you have any contact with Sinclair prior to the Trump campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I did not.

MS. SPEIER: Did you have contact with them during the campaign?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I may -- I think I met one of the reporters, Scott Thuman

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or something like that.

MS. SPEIER: And during the inaugural transition period, did you have contact with him?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Again, I think I had contact with folks who are -- who work for Sinclair, because I was the communications director.

MS. SPEIER: So reporters?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Reporters, producers, that kind of thing.

MR. AMOLSCH: I'm sorry. I'm trying to give you -- I'm not sure where we're going with this in terms of Sinclair versus cyber hacking. I'm not trying to cut you off if you're going to link it up. I just don't see where we're going with this.

MS. SPEIER: So we just -- we want to talk about it in terms of RT and Sputnik --

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay.

MS. SPEIER: -- and Russia.

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay.

MS. SPEIER: Did you have contact with them in the White House then?

MR. EPSHTEYN: [Nonverbal response.]

MS. SPEIER: Again, the same people or did you meet with other people?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I met the folks who are in the executive, I guess, level of Sinclair.

MS. SPEIER: So while you were in the White House, you met with executives at Sinclair. And how did --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Because that's their job, to meet people at the White House. I was the head of surrogate operations at the White House.

MS. SPEIER: Did you go to Sinclair seeking to work for them or did they

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come to you?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was a mutual -- we had a mutual discussion about, you know -- we had talked beforehand. They had expressed about what their thoughts were in terms of, you know, their business plans. And then when I was deciding whether to stay inside or outside, we had some followup conversations.

MS. SPEIER: So it was -- who initiated the contact?

MR. EPSHTEYN: It was mutual.

MS. SPEIER: And who did you talk to?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I spoke with David Smith, with Scott Livingston, I think Doreen Gordon, and some other folks.

MS. SPEIER: When did you start at Sinclair?

MR. EPSHTEYN: April 17th.

And to your previous comment, Congresswoman, Sinclair, to the best of my knowledge and from everything I know, has absolutely nothing to do with RT or Sputnik or any other Russian-controlled entity.

MS. SPEIER: So do you know what a must-run piece is?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Yes.

MS. SPEIER: And what is that?

MR. AMOLSCH: Again, Congresswoman, I'm sorry, I'm not seeing it in terms of the Russian hacking --

MS. SPEIER: Well, I've got a few more questions and I think you'll get to it, okay?

MR. AMOLSCH: Okay. I apologize for interrupting.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Honestly, I -- it's a -- it's a colloquial term, I think, that broadcast companies use in terms of content.

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MS. SPEIER: Okay. So you have "Bottom Line With Boris." Is that correct?

MR. EPSHTEYN: That's correct.

MS. SPEIER: And it runs eight to nine times a week on 173 local Sinclair TV stations?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Well, it runs on the entity, on the stations that have the news -- it runs during the local news. So I don't know how many of those 173 stations play the local news. Some of them are CW, which doesn't. And it's not usually -- sometimes it's six. Sometimes it's five. Sometimes it's, you know --

MS. SPEIER: Do you develop the content for these segments?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I do.

MS. SPEIER: And has the White House ever provided you content for these segments?

MR. EPSHTEYN: We get, just like any media outlet, we get information from the White House, but that's it.

MS. SPEIER: Have you coordinated content with Steve Bannon or Breitbart?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I've been in contact with Steve Bannon, obviously someone I know from the campaign, but I don't take -- there's no content I put out at their direction or anything like that.

MS. SPEIER: Have you used any content that's been broadcast on RT or Sputnik?

MR. EPSHTEYN: Not knowingly. So I haven't taken things from those outlets. You know, I'm sure that -- I didn't watch them, because -- or read them, because it's not my practice, but I imagine that they covered healthcare just like I

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covered healthcare. But I have not rebroadcast anything or taken their point of view on anything knowingly.

MS. SPEIER: Have you promoted better relations with Russia on a segment?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I don't think so. I have to recall each one. You know, I talk about my foreign policy views, I think, but, you know, I don't think I've used any of my segments to talk about Russia relations. I've talked about North Korea. I've talked about Middle East.

MS. SPEIER: Have you ever criticized Vladimir Putin or Russian policy?

MR. AMOLSCH: I think we're way off of cyber hacking at this point.

MS. SPEIER: All right. Let me ask you this question. During the campaign, on CNN News Day Saturday, you said -- you criticized Clinton's policy towards Russia and claimed she is a complete unhinged warmonger and is trying to start a war with Russia. You later said that she was negative, negative, negative, and absolutely not productive.

Is that true?

MR. EPSHTEYN: I -- you know, as I think we talked about earlier, I made over a hundred -- I made over a hundred appearances, probably more -- way more than that. So if you have a transcript of that or could show me a video, I, you know --

MR. AMOLSCH: If that's what the video shows.

MR. EPSHTEYN: If that's what the video shows, that's what the video shows.

MS. SPEIER: Okay. So was that a talking point or an opinion?

MR. EPSHTEYN: You know, I think you could talk -- go in length about

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Secretary Clinton's approach to Russia. They went from trying to get to a reset with Russia, and then she, when it became politically convenient for her, pivoted. And I think that's what I was trying to say. And, you know -- and that was my position.

MS. SPEIER: During a segment on the PBS NewsHour, you said --

MR. AMOLSCH: I'm going to say we're going to move off this topic.

MS. SPEIER: Well, I've got one last question, then I'm moving off the topic.

MR. EPSHTEYN: Let's do it.

MS. SPEIER: It's actually the Clintons who have been too cozy with Russians. What's that -- what do you base that on?

MR. EPSHTEYN: The fact that President Clinton made half a million dollars for a 90-minute speech in Moscow. The fact that -- the famous uranium deal that Secretary Clinton facilitated. All the business that John and Tony Podesta, and Heather Podesta have done in the former Soviet Union.

So I base that on the facts that have been out there about the relationships between the Clintons and their cohorts and Russia.

MS. SPEIER: So you can very easily remember those talking points.

MR. EPSHTEYN: They're not talking points, just what I remember from the campaign.

MS. SPEIER: John Podesta has been associated with Podesta Group for -- since early 2000s, was there briefly in 2014, and has not been associated. So --

MR. EPSHTEYN: Okay.

MS. SPEIER: It's a talking point.

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MR. EPSHTEYN: It's not a talking point.

MR. AMOLSCH: It's okay.

MS. SPEIER: I yield back.

MR. SCHIFF: I yield back.

MR. ROONEY: Thank you. Thank you very much. That concludes the interview.

[Whereupon, at 1:58 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

