

# **EXHIBIT 9**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS (OCE)  
of the  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCE Review 20-2124

Interview of FORMER STAFFER A

Conducted Virtually

Friday, July 31, 2020

5:50 p.m. EST

Job No.: 312913  
Pages: 1 - 116  
Transcribed by: Lee Ann Nussbaum, CET

1 Interview of FORMER STAFFER A, conducted  
2 virtually.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12 Pursuant to agreement, before Kevin Kiser,  
13 Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of  
14 Virginia

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS OF  
THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

JEFFREY BROWN, ESQUIRE  
HELEN EISNER, ESQUIRE  
ANNA ELLISON, LAW CLERK  
425 3rd Street S.W.  
Suite 1110  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.225.9739

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. BROWN: This is Jeff Brown with the  
3 Office of Congressional Ethics. With me is my  
4 colleague, Helen Eisner, as well as Anna Ellison.  
5 Before us we have Former Staffer A, and we are  
6 undertaking a remote video interview. It is July  
7 31st. It is about 5:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

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

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

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yeah, that's fine.

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm a unit program  
21 coordinator with the 81st Medical Sports Squadron  
22 at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay. And is that the -- is  
2 that the role you've had since you left the  
3 Congressman's office?

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

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

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

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

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I actually had just  
19 separated from the military September of '16. I  
20 was -- worked at the Armed Forces Retirement Home  
21 down here in Mississippi, and I was just looking  
22 for other opportunities, applied for a position

1 through Indeed, and I actually received a call from  
2 Bridgette. I apologize, I don't remember her last  
3 name, but she worked in the office and offered me a  
4 position.

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

7 FORMER STAFFER A: As the military and VA  
8 caseworker.

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

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

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

1 and how the representative could assist them.

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

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

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

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. Was Leslie Churchwell,  
22 was she in that office as well?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, she was. She was  
2 our scheduler. And at the time of my hiring, TJ  
3 Moran was one of the representatives who would go  
4 out, as well as -- we called him Hass (phonetic).  
5 I'm trying to think of his -- Mr. Ladner. I don't  
6 remember his first name.

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

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

14           MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

1 that you remember.

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

11 FORMER STAFFER A: My birthday's February  
12 1st, so it was around my birthday.

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

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

22 So I contacted Michele and told her I

1 needed to leave and go see him at least before time  
2 had passed and I was no longer able to. So she  
3 said that was fine.

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

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

20 So they told me go ahead, just take the  
21 time you need for the funeral but keep me updated.  
22 So we had the funeral the following Wednesday, and

1 then I headed back home and I started that Monday  
2 after.

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

11           So after that I went back to my office and  
12 I started an Excel spreadsheet, because I'm very  
13 much about lists, very Type A, and I recorded  
14 everything I did at every moment every day for  
15 those 30 days. If I went to the restroom, if I  
16 picked up the phone in the middle of working on a  
17 case I recorded it. So that way at the end of the  
18 30-day period I could substantiate and show them  
19 the level of work that I was doing.

20           Towards the end I kind of was keeping  
21 track of it about the three-and-a-half, four-week  
22 mark and I had performed actually even more cases

1 during that time than I had been doing previously.

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

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

1 coming.

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

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

21 So I packed everything and I -- my office  
22 was close to the back door. I set everything

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

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

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

22 I didn't say anything to anybody. I had

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

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

9 You said that you were offered two months  
10 severance.

11 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

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

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: The conference room,

1       yes, sir.

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

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

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

19                  FORMER STAFFER A:  I was not given  
20      anything to take home.  I cannot recall whether or  
21      not I signed anything.  But they did inform me I  
22      would get some documentation from the Human

1 Resources Department, an individual there.

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

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

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

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Two months' pay.

15 MR. BROWN: Two months of pay.

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: None.

20 MR. BROWN: -- during those two months?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: None. I was told to  
22 not come back to the office.

1 MR. BROWN: And this was two months of pay  
2 at your -- whatever the salary was that you were  
3 making at the time?

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

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

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

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

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

22 MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.

1 MS. EISNER: Did you -- so with the  
2 paperwork that you received about 30 days later  
3 approximately, did that include a non-disclosure  
4 agreement?

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

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

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

17 MS. EISNER: That would be great.

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I'm sorry.

19 MS. EISNER: Oh, no, that's fine.  
20 Sometimes -- this happens all the time. People  
21 just recall things as they're going through the  
22 process. That's completely fine.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

22 MR. BROWN: So this is a non-disclosure

1 agreement that you signed when you started in  
2 Representative Palazzo's office?

3 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

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

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: After reading it,  
20 though, we are required to sign a non-disclosure  
21 agreement, and then that is kept on file.  
22 Bridgette was holding onto them, but I think it

1 went into Michele's office eventually.

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

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Not around me.  
11 Obviously there are conversations that they have  
12 privately amongst, you know, the Congressmen,  
13 Michele and whatnot. But it was never mentioned  
14 after me from that point. I did deal with a lot  
15 of, you know, PI, HIPAA information, just because  
16 of the release forms. But I think it was just  
17 implied that I would understand after that point,  
18 especially being prior military.

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I do want to say yes,

1 but I didn't see a copy, so I don't -- my  
2 assumption is it might have been something that I  
3 kept in my office there. But I don't have it on  
4 me. I'm going to try looking one other place to  
5 see if I could find it for you.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

7 FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

8 MR. BROWN: Go ahead, Helen.

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: So I know Mississippi  
22 is a -- I think the word's like a no fault state --

1 they don't have to really give a reason before they  
2 terminate you. I know I was the only caseworker  
3 down there initially for a while, and I was  
4 handling all the -- all the cases for Hancock,  
5 Harrison, and Jackson County that were related to  
6 military and VA. So I had a substantial workload  
7 on me.

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

17           Again, like I said, there were -- you  
18 know, there was a couple times I would be a few  
19 minutes late here, a few minutes late there. I  
20 would always text and let somebody know, because  
21 even being military it was just kind of ingrained  
22 into me. There were times that, you know, I was

1 five minutes late coming in and Leslie wasn't there  
2 yet either. But it was okay if Leslie wasn't there  
3 because she's the one who would open up. She's the  
4 only one with a key, her, Michele, and Bridgette.  
5 So if we got there earlier, we would just wait for  
6 her anyways.

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

14 So I don't fully know why I was fired  
15 other than, you know, I was late. But I felt like  
16 my performance had shown otherwise. I was able to  
17 substantiate it. I know they were monitoring  
18 everything that I was doing on the computer during  
19 that last 30 days because we did have one situation  
20 where a constituent -- I had reached out to the  
21 Social Security office and I had sent them a letter  
22 on letterhead, Congressman Palazzo's letterhead,

1 just stating that they did have an open case with  
2 us and that we were looking into the information  
3 for their child support case.

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

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

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, ma'am.

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I was never given a  
22 real reason.

1 MS. EISNER: Okay. And one of the things  
2 you said was there was sort of a cattiness in the  
3 office. If you could break that down a little bit  
4 for me. You said, you know, they were talking  
5 about what they're going through. What are the  
6 things that they were talking about in the office?

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

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

22 MS. EISNER: Did you feel that the tone in

1 the office or the environment changed roughly  
2 around when your grandfather got ill or was that  
3 more during the 30-day probation period?

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

17 And I do want to mention -- I apologize.  
18 I forgot this. Prior to my grandfather passing --  
19 it seemed like I had multiple events -- I actually  
20 had to have emergency surgery -- they found a cyst  
21 right above my tailbone -- and had it at the VA.  
22 And I was out for a couple days for convalescence

1 -- convalescent leave for [audio cuts out] --

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

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

15           So I don't know if they thought it was a  
16 problem but, I mean, it was all legitimate reasons  
17 that I was having to take leave for. So when that  
18 30-day period came up, I mean, I was paranoid.  
19 I've got one income. I can't afford to lose this  
20 job. So I am crossing every T, dotting every I,  
21 just hoping I can continue on and get past this 30  
22 days.

1 I was speaking to Anita, probably about  
2 three days before this happened, because she came  
3 down to the Biloxi office. We had a little  
4 luncheon. And Anita pulled me aside and said, you  
5 know, I've been doing awesome. She's seen how many  
6 cases that I've been going through and, you know,  
7 to keep up the good work. She thinks that  
8 everything's going to be okay. And then three,  
9 four days later I was let go.

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

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Very much.

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

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie and Bridgette.  
16 I mean, they were thick as thieves. They would go  
17 out. Even after work they would do a lot of stuff  
18 together. They were part of the Krewe of Medics  
19 down here, a Mardi Gras event. I don't think they  
20 were very close with Michele outside of work, but  
21 at work the impression was it was the three of them  
22 and then the rest of us.

1 MR. BROWN: I want to take one step back  
2 and ask you one more thing that you had said to us  
3 originally, and then I want to give you an  
4 opportunity to finish the story about the severance  
5 and --

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

1 package.

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

6 FORMER STAFFER A: No.

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

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

16 So from my understanding, Lela said there  
17 was conversations, whether -- I don't think it was  
18 everybody together talking. I think it was she  
19 overheard it, that they made a comment about I  
20 better not be talking about her congressman or, you  
21 know, I'm going to regret it. But obviously there  
22 was some cuss words in there.

1           MR. BROWN: When I was asking you about  
2 the prior comment that was made to you while you  
3 were, you know, while you were in the conference  
4 room during your termination discussions I was  
5 wondering if -- if that was more of a remember you  
6 signed this non-disclosure agreement and you cannot  
7 talk about the cases that you were working on or  
8 that's a don't talk about the things that happened  
9 in this office and with respect to this  
10 congressman.

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

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

22           FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir. So again, it

1 was 30 days from the point that I had had the  
2 conference with them and they had let me go.  
3 Again, I didn't make any attempts to talk to Lela,  
4 I didn't talk to any of the other coworkers. I  
5 honestly thought Lela was part of the reason why I  
6 was fired.

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

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

20 Again, 30 days after I left I contacted  
21 Human Resources because I still had not received  
22 any paperwork. I was waiting for my SF-50 so that

1 I can update it in USAJOBS to actually start  
2 looking for another government position. And  
3 that's when they advised me that paperwork would be  
4 coming pretty soon with it. I opened up the  
5 package that I got and it was paperwork talking  
6 about the unemployment.

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: As far as what, sir?

20 MR. BROWN: Well, I think you said to us  
21 that the promise was you'd be paid two months of  
22 severance.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

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

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

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

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

20 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

1 severance package.

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

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

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

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

20 MR. BROWN: Then I'm going to move on to  
21 another topic, unless you had anything else there  
22 that you wanted to touch on, Former Staffer A.

1           FORMER STAFFER A: No, sir. I think we  
2 touched on all of it.

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

10          FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

11          MR. BROWN: -- tell me about that.

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

20          MR. BROWN: And when you -- when you say  
21 "errand boy," did you ever witness or did TJ ever  
22 tell you about specific errands that he was doing?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: He would do the dry  
2 cleaning, he would go to storage a lot to go pick  
3 up stuff from the storage unit. At the time we  
4 weren't going for an election, so it wasn't related  
5 to the election, but stuff had to be taken to  
6 storage or picked up from storage.

7           MR. BROWN: And the --

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

10          MR. BROWN: Go ahead. No, no. You go  
11 ahead.

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

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

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

21          MR. BROWN: Okay. Go ahead.

22          FORMER STAFFER A: There -- shortly after

1 I got hired on, probably -- I'm trying to think --  
2 maybe May or June, Bridgette and Leslie went out  
3 for about two days getting some supplies for his  
4 children to start camp. They came back with all  
5 the supplies, and they used the conference room to  
6 get everything organized, boxed up, labeled to get  
7 shipped out for his children.

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

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

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Shopping.

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

1 hours --

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: The rest of the day.  
20 You know, they would spend the morning pretty much  
21 shopping, come back, bring everything in in the  
22 afternoon that first day. If they had more stuff

1 that they had to go get, they would go out and get  
2 more the next day.

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

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

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

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I was there.

1 MS. EISNER: And what types of materials  
2 were we talking about? What was on the table?  
3 What were they organizing?

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: They would label the  
21 bags just to separate whose clothes they were to  
22 another's. Even though it was going in the trunks,

1 everything had to be labeled for the actual summer  
2 camp for the counselors so that nothing got  
3 confused.

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

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

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

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

20 From my understanding, because I did  
21 question, you know, [REDACTED]

22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Transcript of Former Staffer A  
Conducted on July 31, 2020

1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
2 [REDACTED]  
3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
5 [REDACTED]

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

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1 MS. EISNER: -- picking up the kids,  
2 anything along those lines, if you could tell us  
3 about that.

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

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

21 MS. EISNER: And based on your awareness  
22 of that, what's your impression of how frequently

1 that was occurring?

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

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

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

16 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie.

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

18 FORMER STAFFER A: Leslie, yes, sir.

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: I never visually saw

1 it, but that's just what I had been told, what I  
2 kind of heard. Because, I mean, some of it, I'm  
3 sure, was rumors. You hear rumor mills. But it  
4 was just kind of know that this is -- this is what  
5 we do. This is kind of part of the job. If we're  
6 asked, we just do it, no questions. But I did not  
7 ever physically see anybody driving the kids  
8 without him.

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

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Right. Correct.

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

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

1 to make sure that that happens we do.

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

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

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

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

11 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

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

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

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

4 FORMER STAFFER A: No. Never.

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

12 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, it was.

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

16 FORMER STAFFER A: They're supposed to.

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

18 FORMER STAFFER A: I know Gabbi read it, I  
19 got it. And that's what I was told when I was  
20 given it, that this is something that every staffer  
21 has to go through and read and then we sign the  
22 non-disclosure agreement at the end.

1 MS. EISNER: Okay. And, you know, when  
2 you witnessed these types of activities during work  
3 hours, did anyone ever raise the question of, you  
4 know, ethics rules and how this related to the  
5 reading of the House ethics manual and the guidance  
6 in that?

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

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

21 MS. EISNER: Understood.

22 MR. BROWN: So the impression I'm

1 gathering from this conversation is that it's  
2 Leslie, Michele and Bridgette who are sort of  
3 recognized that part of their job entails making  
4 the Congressman's life, his personal life, run  
5 smoother.

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

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

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

19 MR. BROWN: And how about grocery  
20 shopping?

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I never witnessed that.

22 MR. BROWN: Did you ever hear about

1 anybody doing grocery shopping for the Congressman  
2 or for the kids?

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

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

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

21 MR. BROWN: Patrick?

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Patrick, yes, sir.

1 They were talking --

2 MS. EISNER: Patrick Large?

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

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

14 FORMER STAFFER A: I have no idea. I  
15 assume they were at the river house, but that was  
16 just my assumption because I didn't know of any  
17 other properties. I just was told that they lived  
18 with -- [REDACTED] lived with his grandparents and that  
19 the two younger kids were with the mom. I don't  
20 know where the mom lives. But he would go to  
21 Louisiana a lot to pick up the kids, so I assume  
22 that's where she was.

1 MS. EISNER: Did you ever hear of the  
2 Congressman staying in a hotel while he was in the  
3 district?

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

6 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

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

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Lela, not Leslie. Lela  
22 Bremen.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

5 MS. EISNER: -- not Leslie? Okay.

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

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

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

11 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

15 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

19 MS. EISNER: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MR. BROWN: So I know, Former Staffer A,  
21 at some point you chatted with Brian Rose and got  
22 quoted in an article that --

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Oh, my gosh, yes.

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

20 MR. BROWN: -- would assist the  
21 Congressman with the children during work hours for  
22 summer camp or otherwise.

1           FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. For that first  
2 incident with the summer camp, Michele was not  
3 employed yet, so it was just Bridgette and Leslie.  
4 The following year when it was Bridgette and Leslie  
5 assisting, I did not see anything come in the  
6 office, and I think that's because Michele had  
7 taken over that role.

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

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

15          MR. BROWN: Okay.

16          FORMER STAFFER A: If I'm saying that  
17 correctly. Forgive me if I'm getting her role  
18 mixed up. But prior to me leaving my position and  
19 hearing those conversations about them talking  
20 about it again, nothing was ever brought into the  
21 office, and I just assumed it was because Michele  
22 was there and things were running a little bit

1 differently, they didn't want to bring it into the  
2 office that time.

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

5 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

18 MS. EISNER: No. Go ahead.

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

22 MR. BROWN: Just generally, what is the

1 river house?

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

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

22 MR. BROWN: I think you said previously

1 that staffers were heading to the river house.

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

3 MR. BROWN: Why were they going there?

4 How was it used? Can you elaborate?

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

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

14 FORMER STAFFER A: Bridgette and Leslie.

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

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

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. That's what I  
22 was told.

1 MR. BROWN: And how do you know -- yeah,  
2 how do you know this? Who's telling you that?

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

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

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

21 MS. EISNER: Okay.

22 MR. BROWN: Did that happen?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: I was not privy to  
2 those conversations. I'm not sure.

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

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

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

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

18          But I was told he also has two to three  
19 storage units -- or he did at the time -- and the  
20 one that I had been going to -- or the one that I  
21 went with them to is not the same that they were  
22 going to because they had mentioned the street that

1 it was on and the company that owned it. It wasn't  
2 the same [audio cuts out] -- yes, but that's not  
3 where we kept the -- the signs. It wasn't at that  
4 facility.

5 MR. BROWN: Is that where they --

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

10 MR. BROWN: Okay. And do you --

11 MS. EISNER: Did you --

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: No.

20 MS. EISNER: Okay. So when you would go  
21 to the storage locker and you found the signs, what  
22 -- what capacity was that in?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: We had an event coming  
2 up at one of the restaurants. The Congressman was  
3 inviting different people from the community, just  
4 a way to kind of I guess get the buzz out. So I  
5 went with them to get the signs so that we could  
6 drive them over to the event, and then we had signs  
7 there for people to take home with them.

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

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

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

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

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

20           FORMER STAFFER A: We went to the storage  
21 during official work hours, but the event was  
22 outside of work hours. So we went to the storage

1 to get the campaign items to bring back and get  
2 them loaded into the vehicles that were going later  
3 on, and then we just finished up our work for the  
4 day.

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

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

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

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

1 don't know what they were doing.

2 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

6 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, he does. Yes.

7 MR. BROWN: And what are those?

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

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

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

14 MR. BROWN: But it didn't?

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1           MR. BROWN: You know, again, you said you  
2 were -- you were told that you had to do that. Was  
3 -- you know, did you feel like you were acting in a  
4 volunteer capacity to do that or that you felt like  
5 that was a responsibility that you needed to take  
6 care of that day?

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

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

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

19          MR. BROWN: Okay. And everybody, as you  
20 understood it, was told we got to go get these  
21 signs and deliver them to wherever this campaign  
22 event was going to be held?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: We brought them back  
2 and just put them in the Congressman's vehicle.  
3 But yes.

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

6           FORMER STAFFER A: At the office, yes.

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

9           FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. Correct.

10          MS. EISNER: And can you give us a sense  
11 of the approximate time period when that event was?  
12 Was that in 2018?

13          FORMER STAFFER A: It was in 2018. I  
14 really don't think Lela was on board yet. And she  
15 came on -- I don't recall exactly when she came in  
16 there. But I do want to say it was 2018, because  
17 when I was terminated in -- hold on. Let me  
18 backtrack. I got hired in 2017. It was probably  
19 2017 time frame --

20          MS. EISNER: Okay.

21          FORMER STAFFER A: -- towards that.  
22 Because I know when I got terminated in 2018 I

1 wasn't part of any of that stuff, and then I think  
2 the following year they were working on campaign  
3 stuff again.

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

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

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

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

1 what we told them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 But as I would drive past, you actually  
21 have to go over a bridge -- it's hard to explain.  
22 The house is kind of surrounded by trees, so you

1 can't see the house from the road. But as you  
2 cross over the bridge where the bay is, you can see  
3 the back of the house. And he had his big Palazzo  
4 flag right there by the bay, and then eventually it  
5 was just gone.

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

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

14 MS. EISNER: No. You can continue.

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

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

20 MR. BROWN: Was he living outside of  
21 Mississippi at the time you were working for the  
22 Congressman?

1           FORMER STAFFER A: I'm not sure. I had  
2 actually never heard of him until after I was  
3 terminated, and then Lela had explained to me some  
4 of the tasks that she was given to work and do for  
5 him.

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

8           FORMER STAFFER A: No, you're fine.

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

16          FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

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

20          FORMER STAFFER A: I wasn't given a whole  
21 lot more details than that other than Tyler's going  
22 to be in town; he's going to be at the river house.

1 I know Tyler has family here in town, but he's more  
2 so in the Hattiesburg area, which is about another  
3 hour and a half away. So when he was down here on  
4 the coast, I was told that he was staying at the  
5 river house while he was here.

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

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

11 MS. EISNER: And when --

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

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

20 MS. EISNER: And when he came down every  
21 other month, how long would he stay at the house?  
22 Or at --

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Just --

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

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

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

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

14 MS. EISNER: You said --

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

1 MS. EISNER: What was it about staying at  
2 the river house that made it easier to help the  
3 Congressman?

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

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

15 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: No. No. I only talked  
20 to Tyler when he was in an internship capacity.  
21 Once he became an official staffer I'd say hi to  
22 him, and it would be kind of cordial, but we really

1 didn't have any discussion.

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

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

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

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

17 MS. EISNER: Okay.

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: Just working together.  
21 I was actually one of the individuals who  
22 interviewed her when she got the pos -- when she

1 was applying for the position. Me and TJ did the  
2 interviewing. We gave our recommendation, and then  
3 based off of that they decided to hire her. So I  
4 did train her in some of the case work, and then  
5 once she started doing the projects we really  
6 didn't do a whole lot together event-wise.

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

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

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

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

7 FORMER STAFFER A: It was a couple months.

8 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

1 would give her those cases.

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

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

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

21 MR. BROWN: And so your impression of the  
22 work that she did was positive; she -- she did good

1 work in the office?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely. Yes.

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

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

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

19 Lela wasn't fully hired on as a  
20 caseworker; she was caseworker, events,  
21 coordinator, project manager. I mean, she did a  
22 little bit of everything. And Michele made that

1 very clear when she got hired. She would assist  
2 me, but she would also be doing a lot of other  
3 events relating to military affairs.

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

7 FORMER STAFFER A: No. I was already  
8 terminated.

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

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

20 I know when they changed offices she was  
21 part of helping them locate new furniture for it.  
22 So I think they trusted her with some stuff, but

1 they were still very careful with some of the more  
2 private, personal things. Because Lela was very  
3 outspoken. And being that she came from a legal  
4 background, she had no problem telling somebody if  
5 they were doing things wrong.

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

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Absolutely.

9 MS. EISNER: Okay. What --

10 MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

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

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

18 Lela did that, but she also was very, very  
19 outspoken when it came to military members, the  
20 veterans. If it wasn't right, it wasn't right.  
21 She called out the VA; she called out many agencies  
22 for not doing the right thing.

1           So I think because they saw that she was  
2 willing to do that there, there was this we need to  
3 be careful because she might do it here type of  
4 feeling.

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

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

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

21          FORMER STAFFER A: I'm getting it from the  
22 calls and I'm hearing the conversations from

1 Michele just telling her how awesome she's doing  
2 and what we're -- what we're getting back  
3 feedback-wise.

4 MR. BROWN: Did --

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

7 MR. BROWN: No, that's okay.

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: She did mention to me

1 -- I don't recall the reason that we might have  
2 talked about for the administrative leave. I know  
3 it did happen very shortly after them moving  
4 offices and her assisting with all the furniture.

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

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

17 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

1 against her morals?

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

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

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

1 passing on that toxic leadership.

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

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

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Gulfport, yes, sir.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

20 So I went with her, didn't say anything,  
21 but the appearance was -- it was really odd. Mr.  
22 E. Brian Rose met us there because he wanted to

1 talk to us. So I did, and I made it very clear to  
2 him, you know, I'm -- I'm not willing to go on your  
3 show. I'm not willing to speak up about this. I  
4 do not want this to be documented, because it's my  
5 livelihood. And again, my assumption was if I  
6 spoke up I'm -- it could come back on me. And even  
7 though enough time had passed, I'm a government  
8 employee by this point. So he assured me he  
9 didn't. Obviously that was not true.

10 But me and Lela, as we were approaching  
11 the entrance all the staffers came outside that  
12 were there, Tyler -- I cannot think of her first  
13 name -- Ms. Duckworth, she was there. There was a  
14 couple other individuals. And forgive me, I don't  
15 remember who they were, but they all came outside  
16 and they were just asking how we were doing, trying  
17 to do some small talk. And they had brought Lela's  
18 leftover -- some of her stuff from her office.  
19 They had it in a box there for her on the bench.

20 And we went in and we looked around.  
21 Because we're both veterans. I mean, we weren't  
22 doing anything malicious. We were seeing the

1 event. We very clearly could have been there for  
2 our own services, but we had watchful eyes on us  
3 the entire event until we left. And that was the  
4 first interaction me and Lela really had face to  
5 face. And we had talked on the way there, we  
6 talked on the phone probably the day before, and  
7 she had explained to me everything that had  
8 transpired.

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

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: I think it was just the  
22 fact that he was pushing that she help Kyle get

1 back into the military. Based off of what she read  
2 and saw from a legal standpoint, it didn't merit  
3 him getting back in there. The military did  
4 nothing wrong. It was his fault entirely for being  
5 kicked out.

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

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

22 MR. BROWN: And so you guys are talking

1 about this right after she's terminated, and that's  
2 right around the time of this claims clinic that  
3 you went to?

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

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

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

19 We had two events that the VA was hosting  
20 in a pavilion at the cemetery that we went to as  
21 well, and one of them E. Brian Rose was there. So  
22 I basically knew who he was, but my role was not

1 politics. My role was helping the constituents.  
2 So I made sure to separate myself. I didn't want  
3 to be part of it.

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

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

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

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

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: So when I found out I

1 was connected to comments that he said I made, I  
2 was actually very upset because I did not give  
3 permission to release anything. And my name was  
4 specifically mentioned in the article that he had  
5 published.

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

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

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

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

22 But I know when she left she had mentioned

1 to me she did not take a severance package, she did  
2 not want the hush money, and that she was going to  
3 make sure that what was not ethical and what was  
4 not right got to the right individuals and that the  
5 Congressman -- somebody did something about what  
6 the Congressman was doing.

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

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

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

19 MS. EISNER: Yeah.

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

1 MR. BROWN: Everybody -- I just want to  
2 have a quick chat with Helen, and then I think we  
3 can come back and wrap this up.

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

5 MR. BROWN: Does that work?

6 MS. EISNER: Okay.

7 FORMER STAFFER A: That works.

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

10 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

1 lines?

2 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct. When it  
3 first --

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

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

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

1 do it.

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

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

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

21 It wasn't publicized. We didn't have a  
22 big old meeting about it. It was just the main

1 people who were part of the military, VA spectrum,  
2 knew that it's not supposed to be given out.

3 MR. BROWN: It wasn't --

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

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

9 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

10 MR. BROWN: -- that this book couldn't be  
11 handed out by either the Congressman or by his  
12 staffers?

13 FORMER STAFFER A: Correct.

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

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

21 MR. BROWN: Okay.

22 FORMER STAFFER A: He's at the very high

1 -- he's one of the individuals that we can go to if  
2 we're having any questions or issues. I don't  
3 think he has a whole lot to do with the Wounded  
4 Warrior program, but I know he's somewhere in  
5 there. His office works with them as well.

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

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

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

22 FORMER STAFFER A: Lela would mention to

1 me that, you know, we were taking these books out  
2 there. I saw them taking them. I heard Michele  
3 mention, "Don't forget to grab some of the A Time  
4 for Honor books for the Congressman."

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

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes. Yes.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

21 The only other question I have for you  
22 just really quickly is you mentioned TJ Moran a

1 couple of times at the beginning of this interview.  
2 What exactly was TJ's role in the office as you  
3 understood it?

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

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

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

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

21 MS. EISNER: I just have a few, few more  
22 questions and I think we're almost done. We won't

1 take anymore of your time.

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

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

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

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

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

20 FORMER STAFFER A: She did work a lot with  
21 -- I don't remember who was it -- the deputy -- the  
22 wing deputy? The wing commander. Because some of

1 our case work went that way. But she was also  
2 working a few other issues such as the Housing  
3 Department, Hunt Housing, they were having issues.  
4 She went to a few town halls where she was  
5 interacting with the deputy commander of the wing.

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

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

18 MS. EISNER: What about a Captain [REDACTED]?

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I never heard of a  
20 Captain [REDACTED].

21 MS. EISNER: Okay. I just have one other  
22 question. Jeff, is there anything you want to add?

1 MR. BROWN: Go ahead.

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

8 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes.

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

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

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

21 FORMER STAFFER A: It felt like it was  
22 more of a pers -- like I was more going to be

1 personally attacking her if I said anything about  
2 my time or if I tried to bash the Congressman in  
3 the media afterwards.

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

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

16 But when I met her at one of the events,  
17 the imp -- the feeling I got from her is it was  
18 more of a termination and she had kind of bitter  
19 feelings about it. We had talked about Bridgette  
20 and, you know, some of the stuff that I was getting  
21 trained on. And she was like, yeah, just be  
22 careful. And that was about as much as I was told.

1 MS. EISNER: Besides sort of Angeline and  
2 Lela and, you know, what you've told us about the  
3 way in which you were asked to leave the office --

4 FORMER STAFFER A: Uh-huh.

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

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

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

21 [REDACTED] left very suddenly, and then I  
22 was told she's just doing part-time work. She's

1 only going to work on certain things for the  
2 Congressman. She'll be back for the campaign  
3 season. So we didn't see her for a time period,  
4 but when we did she was either working campaigns or  
5 she was working on the academy stuff.

6 [REDACTED]  
7 [REDACTED]  
8 [REDACTED]  
9 [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED]  
11 [REDACTED]  
12 [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED]  
15 [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED].

18 So I was told he was terminated because of  
19 that unprofessional relationship, but I'm not sure  
20 what happened to [REDACTED], why she went on  
21 half-time and -- I understood that she got employed  
22 somewhere else but she was still doing stuff on the

1 side for the Congressman.

2 MR. BROWN: You were told that about [REDACTED] by  
3 Lela?

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

14 MR. BROWN: Anything else there, Helen?

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

17 MR. BROWN: I -- just to wrap it up,  
18 Former Staffer A, I want to say thank you again for  
19 taking the time to speak with us. I always want to  
20 give witnesses in your position an opportunity to  
21 talk, you know, about anything else that you feel  
22 like maybe we didn't ask you questions about that

1 you expected us to ask questions about or if  
2 there's anything you felt like you wanted to or  
3 needed to elaborate on.

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

12 [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
15 [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED]

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

1 privy to those conversations.

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

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

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

19 FORMER STAFFER A: I don't know how much  
20 you would get from TJ if I offered TJ. I feel like  
21 there's still that level of protection almost. And  
22 I think part of it's because some of the stuff he

1 was doing it wasn't supposed to be done. You know,  
2 he was doing stuff outside of his parameters.

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

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

11 MS. ELLSION: No, thank you.

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

17 One thing I will close by saying is just,  
18 you know, I'm sure you and Helen have talked about  
19 the confidential nature of this investigation, so  
20 we do ask you to keep this confidential, you know,  
21 both for the sake of the investigation and for the  
22 sake of the individual who is under investigation.

1 FORMER STAFFER A: Yes, sir.

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

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

8 (Off the record at 7:43 p.m. EST)

9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER - E-NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, Kevin Kiser, the officer before whom the  
3 foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify  
4 that said proceedings were electronically recorded  
5 by me; and that I am neither counsel for, related  
6 to, nor employed by any of the parties to this  
7 case and have no interest, financial or otherwise,  
8 in its outcome.

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

12  
13 Notary Registration No.: 7637508

14 My Commission Expires: 9/30/2024

15

16 *Kevin James Kiser*  
17

18

19 \_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Kiser, Notary Public

20 for the Commonwealth of Virginia

21

22

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, Lee Ann Nussbaum, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record of the recorded proceedings; that said proceedings were transcribed to the best of my ability from the audio recording and supporting information; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this case and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.



---

LEE ANN NUSSBAUM, CET  
Certified Electronic Transcriber  
August 4, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject to the Nondisclosure Provisions of H. Res. 895 of the 110th Congress as Amended

**ERRATA SHEET**

Page	Line	Correction	Reason
5	21	"Sports" should be "Support"	
13	13	"branch" to "office"	Reads like I am speaking about military branch
9	4	"Hass" should be "HOSS"	
11	1	"before time had passed" should be "before he passed"	
17	8	"her" should be "me"	
23	14	"after" should be "to"	
23	15	"PI" should be "PII"	
35	18	"enfolded" should be "unfolded"	
36	15-16	Remove sentence "I got my SF-50..."	I thought I received it but didn't
42	21	extra "in"	
56	11	"but he did have a couch in his office"	I recalled incorrectly, he had 2 chairs and not a couch at this office
57	7-14	remove sleeper sofa conversation	I recalled it from my conversations with Lela, not not have at Biloxi office

This errata sheet is submitted subject to 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (commonly known as the False Statements Act).

**Witness Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Witness Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# **EXHIBIT 10**

The Honorable Steven Palazzo  
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

**Re: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**  
**Review No. 20-2124**

(8) All documents and communications related to services Kyle Palazzo provided to Palazzo for Congress and efforts made to establish the fair market value of such services.

*Affirmation of our firm –*

Kyle Palazzo was employed as a political coordinator for Palazzo for Congress to support the 2018 general election and to maintain campaign continuity of operations for the 2020 election cycle. In his employment with Palazzo for Congress his responsibilities included:

- Attending and speaking at public and political events as a representative of Palazzo for Congress;
- Volunteer coordination for door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, and get-out-the-vote efforts;
- Coalition building;
- Sign maintenance, delivery, installation, and storage;
- Monitoring and advising on south Mississippi political activity;
- Reelection planning;
- Assisting in managing 11072 Old Highway 67, Palazzo for Congress campaign office.

His pay was commensurate with responsibility and consistent with the pay of others that have been employed by Palazzo for Congress since 2010.