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

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12 INTERVIEW OF: ANTHONY ORNATO

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Friday, January 28, 2022

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Washington, D.C.

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The interview in the above matter was held via Webex, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

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Present: Representatives Aguilar, Lofgren, and Cheney.

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Appearances:

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

KATIE ABRAMS, STAFF ASSOCIATE
BRYAN BONNER, INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
RICHARD R. BRUNO, ADMIN ASSISTANT AND SCHEDULER
SOUMYALATHA O. DAYANANDA, SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
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TIMOTHY HEAPHY, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
PERCY HOWARD, INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
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EVAN B. MAULDIN, CHIEF CLERK
JONATHAN MURRAY, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER
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AMANDA SCHLAGER WICK, SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL
JOHN F. WOOD, SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL AND OF COUNSEL TO THE VICE CHAIR

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2 For ANTHONY ORNATO:

3

4 TOM HUSE

5 RONALD ROWE, JR.

6 BEN KRAMER

1

2 Ms. Dayananda. Good morning. This is Soumya Dayananda. I am one of the
3 senior investigative counsels here on the Select Committee. This is a voluntary
4 transcribed interview of Anthony Ornato conducted by the House Select Committee to
5 investigate the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol pursuant to House Resolution 503.
6 Joining me in the room is Senior Investigative Counsel Sean Tonolli, as well as Percy
7 Howard, professional staff member, and Damon Marx. Joining me on video is Tim
8 Heaphy, our chief investigative counsel, as well as Robin Peguero, investigative counsel,
9 Jonathan Murray, who is also a professional staff member. I see Ms. Cheney is also
10 present. Good morning, Ms. Cheney.

11 Ms. Cheney. Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Ornato. Thank you for
12 joining us.

13 Mr. Ornato. Good morning. Thank you for having me.

14 Ms. Dayananda. And I believe Ms. Lofgren also has joined on the call, on the
15 video.

16 We appreciate your appearing voluntarily here today. Also joining me in the
17 room is John Wood, senior investigative counsel with the committee.

18

EXAMINATION

19

BY MS. DAYANANDA:

20 Q Mr. Ornato, can you state your full name on the record and let us know
21 who's in the room with you?

22 A Yes. Anthony Michael Ornato, Jr. And in the room with me is Tom Huse,
23 our chief counsel.

24 Q And then if you can tell us then who all from Secret Service is appearing?

25 A Yes. Good morning. So in my office right now with me is Assistant

1 Director Ron Rowe.

2 Q Is that it?

3 A That's it from my office.

4 Q Okay. Great. So just a couple of housekeeping items. We did provide a
5 number of exhibits to Mr. Ornato. Do you have those? Did you have the opportunity
6 to review those prior to this interview?

7 A I did review them, and I have them on a computer next to me. We were
8 unable to print them. So I have -- I can view them on a computer next to me.

9 Q Okay. Perfect. There is a court reporter present who will create a
10 verbatim record of what we discuss. With that in mind, it's important to respond to
11 questions verbally. And, although, this interview is not under oath, you are required to
12 answer questions before Congress truthfully. This requirement applies to questions
13 posed by congressional staff in an interview. Specifically, 18 U.S.C. Section 1001 makes
14 it a crime to make any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or
15 representation in the course of a congressional investigation. And that statute applies
16 here today. Do you understand that?

17 A I do.

18 Q We want you to answer these questions in the most complete and truthful
19 manner possible. If you have any questions, or need to take a break and consult with
20 counsel, please do so. If you need any of us to rephrase the questions, please allow us
21 to clarify.

22 A I understand.

23 Q There will be two primary questioners, myself and Sean Tonolli. Obviously,
24 the members have an opportunity to ask questions, and others may inquire also. But
25 we will do it in a topical fashion and try to do it chronologically?

1 A Okay.

2 Q Okay. Before we start, I want to acknowledge the January 25th letter from
3 the White House to Sean McDoss (ph) over at DHS, and this is concerning your interview
4 here today. So I'll keep that and make it part of the record.

5 Mr. Huse. Soumya, could I add one preliminary statement to the record?

6 Ms. Dayananda. Sure.

7 Mr. Huse. And for the record, this is Thomas Huse, H-u, s- as in Sam, e- as in
8 echo, Secret Service Chief Counsel. The Secret Service and the Homeland Security have
9 made available to the committee, consistent with requests from the chairman,
10 information and records that would not be publicly released. This includes information
11 and records covered under the Privacy Act, personnel and other personal privacy
12 information, For Official Use Only information, intelligence and law enforcement sensitive
13 records, and raw intelligence information.

14 While the Secret Service and the Department have made this information and
15 records available to the committee, we continue to assert that such information and
16 records provided to the committee, and any discussion of such information or records
17 during the course of the transcribed interview, is not intended for public disclosure. The
18 Secret Service and the Department are not waiving any protections, and for the purposes
19 of administrative efficiency, and to promote constructive dialogue during the transcribed
20 interview, are making this assertion at the outset of the transcribed interview, to
21 preserve all assertions or protection from public release, or disclosure over information or
22 records used or discussed during the interview.

23 The transcript and any attachments are protected from further dissemination to
24 the same extent as the documents and information that they are based on. Please
25 consult with the Secret Service and the Department prior to any public release or

1 disclosure of that information. Thank you.

2 Ms. Dayananda. Thanks, Tom. I appreciate you making that record. And we
3 will certainly do so before there is any publication of this transcript and its exhibits.
4 Anything else before we get started? Great.

5 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

6 Q Mr. Ornato, I know you've had almost a 30-year career in the Secret Service.
7 I was wondering if you could give us an overview of when you started and some of the
8 positions that you've held?

9 A Sure. Absolutely. You're making me older than I actually am, though,
10 only about 25 years.

11 Q Sorry about that.

12 A That's okay. I started in the 1997 under the New York field office, and a
13 resident office up in New Haven, Connecticut. I was there for approximately 3 to 4 years
14 where I then went to the George W. Bush detail. Since I was a resident of the New
15 Haven area, and timing worked out, his daughter Barbara Bush was going to college at
16 Yale, so I became a college student with Barbara Bush, and that was my 18 months or so
17 as -- they call it a satellite assignment on the Presidential detail.

18 So I did my satellite assignment first. And then I after the 18 months with
19 Barbara Bush at Yale, I then moved down to Washington, D.C. and was on George W.
20 Bush detail until approximately 2005.

21 In 2005 to 2007, I had a headquarters stint over in our Office of Protective
22 Operations. It's called our war room. It's our logistics and operations room.

23 From there, I was promoted and went back to the George W. Bush detail where
24 actually I ran operations for that detail. At the time, it was election 2008 election. And
25 President Obama was elected. And I worked on the transition of bringing the

1 Presidential, the new administration into the White House. So all the operations that
2 they needed to learn and everything, that was my part in that one.

3 President Obama I was with until 2010 or so, where I went back up to the New
4 York field office. I was a supervisor up in New York, ran the United Nations General
5 Assembly Operations for about 3 years.

6 And then after my stint in the New York field office, I was promoted back to the
7 Presidential Protective Division where I served as an assistant special agent in charge for
8 President Obama's detail. So I was on PPD through the time of President Obama as a
9 GS-15. I was promoted to the DSAC there, the Deputy Special Agent in Charge of the
10 White House Complex.

11 From there, I rose to the rank of the DSAC of Operations, which is basically the
12 number two on the detail for President Obama. And then the election was happening,
13 at which time once President Trump had won the election, I was, for the interim, sent up
14 to New York to bring transition in that new administration as the deputy special agent in
15 charge.

16 About 6 months into President Trump's new term, I then became the special agent
17 in charge for roughly about 2-1/2 years. I was then -- then came back to the
18 headquarters where then I was a deputy special agent in charge -- I'm sorry, a deputy
19 assistant director with the Office of Investigations.

20 After about a month or so there, I was let known from our director that I was
21 requested to be detailed back to the White House to run operations there as far as the
22 Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations for at least 6 months, possibly a year, to get them at
23 least through the next election. I transferred over to, as a detailee, back into that
24 Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations position. After that position was over, in January, I
25 came back to the Secret Service where, for the last year or so, I have been as the assistant

1 director of training. That's a lot in a nutshell.

2 Q Yes, that is a lot. That seems like 30 years, but it's 25 years.

3 A It does. It does.

4 Q And I won't get into your 18 months at Yale, but I wanted to recognize, you
5 have obviously worked two transitions with administrations from G.W. Bush to President
6 Obama. So it would be three, or do you see that as two?

7 A I see it as two. It's President Bush into President Obama, then President
8 Obama into President Trump.

9 Q And we'll talk a little bit more about what it means for the Secret Service to
10 do that transition. But can you just give an overview of, you said the Presidential
11 Protective Division and what exactly that is and what the role is of that division?

12 A Sure. The Presidential Protective Division serves as the men and women of
13 the Secret Service who are assigned to that division, protect the President of the United
14 States, the First Family, and also any executive orders of protectees, which would be the
15 Chief of Staff and the National Security Advisor, and sometimes the counselor, or senior
16 advisor to the President, depending on the administration's titles. And that's all up to
17 the President signing an executive order for who to protect.

18 But the men and women consists of approximately now, it's approximately 400 at
19 the time, during the Obama administration. We were approximately just at the top of
20 200s. Obviously, when President Trump came in, we have multiple children that we had
21 to pick up because you have the whole First Family, so we had to grow at that point.
22 And we got to about 360 or so with my time there.

23 Q So that's 360 line agents who are assigned to PPD. Is that correct?

24 A That's correct.

25 Q And they're not assigned to buildings, it's just the protectees of the

1 President and his family and whoever else?

2 A Correct. And so, under -- when you're the special agent in charge of the
3 Presidential Protective Division, you have kind of a dotted line reporting of the uniform
4 division that is on complex during -- those are the officers that protect the complex, the
5 buildings. They're the ones that do our special programs, our counter snipers, our K-9s.
6 When we go on trips, they do our magnetometers. So they have kind of a dotted line to
7 the SAC of PPD of how it's set up, but they report to a deputy chief over there at the
8 White House Complex, who the deputy chief and the deputy special agent in charge of
9 the White House are partnered up. And that's how that line goes to the dotted line
10 goes to the SAC.

11 Q And can you just explain that a little bit? How does that work with the
12 White House staff and the Secret Service staff in terms of what the delineation is in terms
13 of their duties in protecting the President?

14 A You said White House staff.

15 Q The PPD folks are not located at the White House, correct?

16 A I am sorry. So is your question, the Uniform Division Officers and the
17 agents, the difference between those?

18 Q Sure. We'll start with that.

19 A Okay. So the agents are -- we like to think of it as, our protection
20 methodology is like an onion, right? The outer rings, the inner rings. On the outer
21 ring, we have the officers at the White House. So they're our first line of defense.
22 Outside the fence line at the booths, White House access control. The agents would be
23 the inner ring, that they're going to be more around the Oval Office where the President
24 is. Or if the Vice President is in his office, they're around -- that's the Vice Presidential
25 detail, they're around his office. Those are the inner rings. They're responsible for the

1 moving of the protectees. So that's what they do. Where the officers are responsible
2 for the 18 acre, more than 18, but 18-acre fence line there around the White House in the
3 West and the East Wing. That's their responsibility as a whole. And they're
4 responsible for everybody on complex where the agents are kind of -- they traveled with
5 the protectee on the plane. The agents are around the protectee moving wherever they
6 move, where, again, the Uniform Division Officers take up more of a perimeter of
7 protection and assist with that access control protection.

8 Q So the special agent in charge of the PPD, the position that you had,
9 oversees both the uniform and the agents?

10 A I had direct report with the agents. I did have some oversee capabilities
11 with the officers, but, again, there wasn't a straight-line direct report, it was more of a
12 dotted line where they reported to a deputy chief that reported to the chief of uniform
13 division who are all under the Office of Protective Operations. So the assistant director
14 of Office of Protective Operations oversees every -- UD and all the agents on all the
15 details. That's where the straight-line reporting goes to.

16 Q Okay. So after you became the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at the
17 White House, so after December 2019, who was the point of contact at the Secret Service
18 that you would be in touch with?

19 A So I was in touch with a couple of people. So I would be in touch with the
20 assistant director to the Office of Protective Operations who was Kim Cheatle at the time,
21 and then I would be in touch with the deputy director, Leon Newsome. And then, on
22 campus, my, like, would be my liaison that I would deal with on campus for the Secret
23 Service would be the SAC of PPD who was Robert Engel.

24 Q And it's our understanding Robert Engel was the detail leader for President
25 Trump. Is that correct?

1 A He was after me, he became the special agent in charge, correct. That
2 is -- detail leader is the person that's right next to the President at that specific time. So
3 that could have been one of the DSACs on the trip. That could have been somebody
4 else. It could have been ASAC around the house. But the title Special Agent in Charge
5 is who was in charge of that detail at the time, and it was Robert Engel.

6 Q And he took over for you after you left. Is that right?

7 A That is correct.

8 Q And you had that position for 2-1/2 years?

9 A Yes, from June 1st, I believe, to November of -- so I think that was June
10 of '18, to November of 2020, if I can remember exact correctly, I am sorry, on my years.

11 Q I think it's June '17 to December 2019.

12 A Okay. There you go. Sorry about that.

13 Q No, it's okay. Can you just describe how those two and a half years, what
14 percentage of your time are you with President Trump?

15 A It all depends. So, I don't know percentage of my time. I can --

16 Q However you would want to describe to a non-Secret Service person?

17 A So 2-1/2 years, I was with the President on not every domestic trip. So any
18 time the President left the White House, it would have to be myself, or my deputy special
19 agent in charge who was Robert Engel. One of us would have to be with the President.
20 If we were on a foreign trip, unless it was an overnight that we did one time to
21 Switzerland, it would be both of us on the trip, because we would also work tantamount
22 when we were overseas. However, it was either or one of us always with him. I really
23 can't recall, you know, how much time I had. It was a lot to say.

24 Q Is it fair to say you developed a professional as well as a personal
25 relationship with the President during that time?

1 A I would say a professional relationship, yes.

2 Q Not a personal relationship?

3 A I would say as much as -- they're a protectee. So as much as you can be
4 personal -- it's really not always a back and forth with the protectee as a personal, as
5 friends, it's more of a business relationship, I would say.

6 Q Did you ever have any outside social interaction with the President outside
7 of your professional position with the Secret Service?

8 A No, not that I can recall.

9 Q So I want to talk about your appointment on December 7th of 2019. It
10 looks like there was a tweet from the President congratulating you as the new Deputy
11 Chief of Staff for Operations. Can you explain how that came about, you taking on this
12 position?

13 A I have what I know of -- how it came about in about 2 hours for me was on
14 the Friday prior to that tweet, I think that would have been -- that tweet, I think, was a
15 Saturday, if I'm not mistaken. The Friday night I received a phone call from the current
16 Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Dan Walsh, who was the former White House
17 Military Office director. He was in that spot. So I've known Dan because we've worked
18 together for -- he was a military aide prior. We worked together a while. So Dan had
19 called and said, Hey, your name just got floated from my position. And I said, well, I'm
20 over here at the headquarters, Dan, and I don't think that's possible. At which point, he
21 says, No, there's a phone call going to the director right now. You are SES. You can be
22 detailed across government. So I said, Well, I'll wait to hear from the director. In
23 which, at that point, I believe the director didn't get a chance to call me because I think
24 once he hung up with whoever, I received a phone call from the President, letting me
25 know that I'm coming back in Dan Walsh's position, and congratulated me in getting that

1 position. And it was a whirlwind of a Friday night at 7 o'clock or so.

2 Q Was Dan Walsh prior -- what job did he have prior to that deputy chief job?

3 A He was the director of the White House Military Office and then he was --

4 Q So he was not in the Secret Service at all?

5 A No, he was not. He was in the Coast Guard. And I think he was a
6 commander in the Coast Guard when he led the White House Military Office. And then
7 Joe Hagin, who was a previously Deputy Chief of Staff, and Dan took over for him. Joe
8 placed him in there.

9 The thing of why Joe placed Dan in there, and I believe why Dan brought my name
10 in for it, is because that position controls all the classified and top-secret programs. The
11 White House Military Office director and the Secret Service Special Agent in Charge are
12 heavily briefed into all those programs. So that was -- they saw it as a natural fit,
13 because then they would not have to get anybody up to speed on all the classified
14 programs, which are extremely daunting, and also, they wanted somebody that knew the
15 programs like the back of their hand, and that could activate the programs if needed be.

16 Q And when you say programs, you are talking about Secret Service programs
17 or just operations?

18 A Operations -- so this would be White House Military Office programs that are
19 directed from the deputy chief. They are actually ran by the Chief of Staff of the White
20 House. However, the Chief of Staff gives his authority to the Deputy Chief of Staff of
21 operations to run those classified programs.

22 Q Now, before you -- this Friday evening of December 7th, did you hear any
23 rumblings about the possibility of you getting this position?

24 A No.

25 Q Blindsided?

1 A I was blindsided.

2 Q Was there any sense that there was dissatisfaction with Dan Walsh at this
3 job?

4 A No, I knew Dan was leaving, and I knew they were having a hard time -- he
5 had announced he was leaving for a while. And they were backfilling him. I was
6 under -- sorry. I was under the impression that when I had left, the talk was that
7 another, I think, it was staff secretary Derek Lyons was getting that job, which, you know,
8 made sense. Derek was in a high-regarded position over there at the White House.

9 Q Did you seek out the job in any way?

10 A I did not.

11 Q And when you were appointed this position, obviously, the Secret Service is
12 known as an apolitical organization, and the agents pride themselves on that. Did it
13 make you uncomfortable in any way that you were taking a pretty political spot right
14 there in the White House?

15 A So I brought that up. I raised that with the director afterwards. I called
16 the director after I got off the phone. And his understanding is he told me was that this
17 was an operation position only. There would be no political things that I would have to
18 get involved with, and I was just going to be there for operations, and to run that side of
19 the house. And that the President and the Chief of Staff, I think, was Mick Mulvaney at
20 the time understood that, that I was not to be in a political role. I would just be, like the
21 White House Military Office director, is a -- he is an appointed officer in the executive
22 office of the Presidency, so he is a DAP, as they call it, a deputy assistant to the President.
23 I am sorry with the acronyms.

24 Q Yeah, it's a lot.

25 A I know. There is so many. I'll try to spell them all out. So he was a

1 general, and he still is a general with the military. He is just detailed over in the
2 operational role of the White House Military Office director, but he is still assigned a title
3 in the administration as a deputy assistant to the President. I was taking the same type
4 of role where I was detailed over, I would run operations, my title was an AP, was an
5 assistant to the President.

6 Q Why did you feel that you needed to bring up that concern?

7 A Just to show that the parallel there, that this is -- even though it was the first
8 time for this kind of role for the Secret Service, it's done across White House in many
9 roles where there are Federal agencies and military that are detailed over to take career
10 roles over there, or I'm sorry, in a political role. Because right now the head of the
11 White House Military Office wasn't a military, it was a political appointee. So those roles
12 have changed throughout the years.

13 Q I'm sorry. I missed who you had that conversation with. Who do you
14 speak with?

15 A I had that conversation with the director to make sure that it was
16 understood that this wasn't a political role. I'm not a political position. To make sure
17 this was on the political role, and that this was an operations only.

18 Q And you said he reassured you at that time. Did you receive any other
19 reassurance? You mentioned Mick Mulvaney or the President himself about this not
20 being a political position.

21 A I was told that was explained to them. Dan Walsh also reassured me that
22 everybody knows me coming over here that I would be in the operational role as well.

23 Q So you have mentioned the operations aspect of this job and the classified
24 programs. Can you just explain what the job is on a day-to-day?

25 A Yeah, sure. So the job basically is a liaison job with the Secret Service, the

1 White House Military Office. And right there, the White House Military Office covers the
2 White House Medical Unit, the White House Information and Technology, the White
3 House Communications Association -- I'm sorry -- the White House Communications
4 Agency, and also PAG, which is the Presidential Air Group under the WHMO, White House
5 Military Office. And that is -- PAG is Air Force One, and then HMX, which is the
6 helicopter squadron of Marine One. So it's all in making the planes and the trains run on
7 time. And also the job entails receiving information to pass to the Chief of Staff to make
8 sure the administration is aware of things that they need to be from either the Secret
9 Service or the White House Military Office.

10 We held meetings three times a week. In that meeting would be the 10 groups,
11 10 or so folks that represented everything, and we would coordinate. And that's
12 basically what it was, it was just coordinating any movements the President was having
13 with the rest of these folks in these units.

14 So everybody was on the same page of what we were doing, 2, 3 weeks out
15 sometimes, or sometimes, as we would call it, an off-the-record movement, this is the
16 group that would make that happen.

17 Q And that group consist of who?

18 A That would be the Secret Service. That would be the White House Military
19 Office which is in charge of all those things that I explained. And then it would be
20 Monica Block, who is the director of M&A. She assisted for ANK (ph) complex things as
21 well. And then staff, on the staff side was Director of Advance because, obviously,
22 wherever the President goes, and Advance team goes prior, and they were also in that
23 group.

24 Q Who was that person at that time?

25 A So we had a couple throughout, but at the end of the last year or so, it was

1 Max Miller, and then switched to Bobby Peede.

2 Q So let me just understand, did you have a staff that you oversaw?

3 A I had one assistant. Well, I did have a staff as far as -- I had Monica Block,
4 who was director of M&A had reported to myself. Also, Bobby Peede, who was director
5 of Advance would report to myself to my office. However, ultimately, everybody
6 reported to the chief. I was kind of the person that they reported to, so the chief is not
7 getting all the issues or everything on a daily basis, and I would basically funnel those
8 issues to him.

9 Q Who was the chief when you first started?

10 A Mick Mulvaney was the Chief of Staff, and it switched to Mark Meadows.

11 Q So your supervisor in a kind of non-White House way would be the Chief of
12 Staff?

13 A Correct.

14 Q Okay. So you mentioned this was a detailed position. And, obviously, as
15 part of the documents you handed over, we saw the Memorandum of Understanding that
16 the detailed position took. There was, I think, it's exhibit 14 or 15, there is the first 6
17 months, and then there was reupped, correct?

18 A Correct.

19 Q Was it viewed as a dual-hat position in any way with Secret Service and
20 being the Deputy Chief of Staff for operations?

21 A No.

22 Q And how did you make that clear --

23 A Any time --

24 Q -- given your experience with the Secret Service?

25 A Sure. Any time the Secret Service question that, obviously, I know where

1 the Secret Service should be answering and not myself. You know, I was that relay and
2 would go to the Special Agent in Charge if there was something, a movement or
3 something that the President wanted to do, and then I would get the answer from him,
4 because I would make that call. My job was to relay the information to the Secret
5 Service and to the White House Military Office. If they had concerns, they would bring
6 me the concerns. And then, at that point, we would talk about them, and then go to the
7 Chief of Staff with any concerns we had for any trip or anything like that. But if anybody
8 had asked me for my opinion or anything, I would always call over and putting the SAC of
9 PPD into the conversation.

10 Q Were you asked for your opinion in any kind of situation with dealing with
11 the movement of the President?

12 A No. As far as for trips or?

13 Q Correct. The way you described it as a messenger, a relaying of
14 information, were there ever times naturally where people would say, Hey, you know,
15 you have decades of experience with Secret Service, what do you think?

16 Mr. Ornato. There would be -- we would call, I don't know if you've heard this
17 term before, the good idea fairies. So the good idea fairies, they would dream up these
18 things and say, hey, do you think they would let us do that? And I would immediately
19 say no. The Secret Service isn't allowed to do that. No.

20 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

21 Q Okay. That's precisely what I am talking about. You paused, relay it, and
22 get an opinion and then --

23 A No, for something ridiculous, I would not even bother Mr. Engel with.

24 Q Fair enough. Okay. Were you involved, or did you get any of the briefings
25 on the events or intelligence or anything like that in your position for any given event?

1 A So mostly for -- yeah, for events or around the White House Complex, in our
2 morning meetings, the Secret Service would give us a briefing of, Hey, this is what we're
3 expecting today. They would let Monica Block know to make sure the staff knew that,
4 let's say, A lot of times there is going to be a protest on Pennsylvania Avenue. Make
5 sure for safety have the staff exit out the south gates, if they're going to leave. Make
6 sure the staff doesn't go out the front gates and walk right into a protest. Or if there's
7 going to be something going on, you know, on the Ellipse, or on 17th or 15th, make sure
8 staff avoids that. And they'll give us a briefing. And then if there was something on a
9 trip, like, Hey, yeah, we're getting reports, there's going to be three groups when we
10 landed outside the airport that are protesting, or those types of things, they would give
11 us a briefing in the morning meetings about it.

12 Q Who would be responsible for giving that briefing? Would it be Mr. Engel,
13 the SAC, or somebody else from the --

14 A It would be whoever could attend that day, which would be either Mr. Engel,
15 Mr. Cho, who is operations DSAC, or Mr. Arruda, who is the DSAC over the White House
16 Complex.

17 Q Sorry. Can you say those last two names again and spell them for the court
18 reporters, if you don't mind?

19 A Absolutely. So the Deputy Special Agent in Charge, David Cho, C-h-o, was
20 in charge of the operations, and then the other DSAC would be Ted Arruda, A-r-r-u-d-a.

21 Q Was this a daily briefing or would it be dependent upon if there was an
22 event or there has been a new President?

23 A It would be dependent on if there was something going on. It was three
24 times a week we met, Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays, is normally when we met.
25 And if they had anything, they would brief it. But, you know, it wasn't every day that

1 they had something.

2 Q I want to skip forward to a few months in, about 6 months into your position
3 there in the summer of 2020. I mentioned that your position got reupped after the
4 6 months. Was there any discussion for you to go back to the Secret Service in May?

5 A No, there wasn't.

6 Q Okay. And were you enjoying the job at that time enough to stay on for
7 another 6 months?

8 A I didn't have a choice, ma'am.

9 Q So around the end of May of 2020, with the murder of George Floyd, there
10 was civil disturbance protests across the country, and I wanted to take some time to
11 understand what the White House positioning was there in terms of its response and
12 your involvement, if any, in those discussions. Obviously, there was unrest here in D.C.
13 what was your visibility into kind of decisionmaking around the response for the civil
14 protesters?

15 A Basically, my immediate area of concern was the White House Complex.
16 And I would get daily updates from the Secret Service on what was taking place out there.
17 And then I would pass them along to the Chief of Staff. So we had, I believe, it was the
18 night before June 1st is when it first appeared. The Secret Service was holding the line
19 on Lafayette Park where they had protesters trying to come into Pennsylvania Avenue,
20 and that's where, I think, the first kind of outside the White House got physical, at which
21 point it was only a handful of officers from the Secret Service that was involved. So in
22 order to understand, outside the White House Complex, there is a lot of jurisdictions.
23 Though the Secret Service has -- please stop me, if you already --

24 Q No, please. Go on.

25 A The fence line -- to the fence line is the Secret Service. It has grown over

1 the years to include somewhat some of the sidewalk. The park, it's called President's
2 Park, which President's Park encompasses the Ellipse and Lafayette Park from 17th to
3 15th Street, from H down to Constitution. And that's President's Park, and that's
4 controlled by Park Police. So when the Secret Service is engaged in holding off people
5 trying to get Pennsylvania Avenue, which was closed at the time, because that's where
6 their line was, was Pennsylvania Avenue because of the construction taking place on the
7 fence, they had a hold on the sidewalk of Pennsylvania Avenue on Lafayette Park side.
8 That's technically Park Police's jurisdiction. However, they allowed the Secret Service to
9 also hold that for them as well.

10 Now, MPD comes into play because they have the streets. So that's where a lot
11 of jurisdictions get crossed. So that night, I did one -- I was involved with -- I received a
12 phone call from the Secret Service letting me know that our guys are out there and
13 they're doing the best job that they can do. However, they need help. They need Park
14 Police to come because they needed other resources and personnel. They asked me if
15 there's any way I can reach out to the Department of Interior to have them assist because
16 they were only mustering up so many people, and they were delaying showing up to the
17 next day.

18 And that's where I had hit up, I believe, it was the deputy to DOI, the Department
19 of Interior, and asked her if Park Police, or said Secret Service is kind of holding the line
20 there. They need help. Can we get Park Police out there to help them so they don't
21 lose the line that they are holding on Pennsylvania Avenue.

22 Q So just so I'm clear, this would be May 31st when this is happening?

23 A Correct. That was the first kind of outside of the White House, which the
24 White House was obviously my main concern.

25 Q So at that time, May 31st, Secret Service, because of jurisdiction, was the

1 only Federal entity at Lafayette Park?

2 A They were there. I think Park Police had a couple of people there, but they
3 weren't getting involved until they got more people, and that's what we were trying to
4 assist with.

5 Q And did you inform, would it be, it would be Mark Meadows at that time,
6 correct?

7 A Correct, yes.

8 Q And did you inform Mark Meadows about kind of what the security around
9 the White House was looking at around that time?

10 A Yes.

11 Q What advice, if any, did he provide at that?

12 A Keep me posted.

13 Q Did you reach out to anyone other than Department of Interior?

14 A No. I reached back to the Secret Service to let them know that I reached
15 out to him.

16 Q Did you reach out to MPD in anyway, or was it solely because it's Federal
17 grounds, it was only the Department of Interior?

18 A It was only to Park because that was their jurisdiction.

19 Q And just walk us through then the next day, it's June 1st, what, if anything,
20 changed? Obviously, there is the appearance of the President there. If you could walk
21 us through how that came about?

22 A Sure. So the -- if I'm remembering correctly, the morning of June 1st is
23 when the President put the Attorney General in charge of all Federal law enforcement. I
24 believe that was Attorney General Barr. And Attorney General Barr held a meeting over
25 at FBI headquarters with all the agencies and gave them what he wanted to see that day.

1 And that was at about 9 a.m. or so.

2 Q And let me just stop you there. So that would be the morning of June 1st.
3 Did you attend that meeting at FBI headquarters?

4 A I did.

5 Q And who -- when you say all the agencies, can you just kind of tell us who
6 was present?

7 A Yeah, from my recollection, MPD, it was Park Police, Secret Service, FBI, DHS
8 representatives were there. I remember National Guard representatives, I remember
9 Army representatives. I can't recall if the U.S. Marshals were there or not, but that was
10 kind of the gist of the agencies that were there. There were probably some more that I
11 just can't remember.

12 Q And do you know how AG Barr became kind of the lead in that effort?

13 A From my recollection, he was appointed by the President from what I
14 remember.

15 Q Were you present for that, or for that discussion?

16 A No.

17 Q Were you told that?

18 A I was told that.

19 Q Okay. You said that's a 9 a.m. meeting at FBI headquarters?

20 A Around 9 a.m. I can't remember exactly.

21 Q At that time, was the National Guard had it been deployed, or was there a
22 discussion to deploy the D.C. National Guard?

23 A I don't remember if they were already deployed or not. I would assume
24 that morning they were being -- the D.C. Guard was being deployed.

25 Q Do you know who made that request?

1 A I don't. I would assume -- I can't remember if it was the Mayor. I know
2 the Chief of Staff and the Mayor talked a lot about that, because I remember there were
3 just phone calls back and forth from the chief to the Mayor in getting the D.C. National
4 Guard activated.

5 Q And you think that was the same day of June 1st?

6 A I believe so, because I believe -- yes, because the National Guard was out
7 there June 1st because I remember General Milley going out to thank them.

8 Q So after this meeting, did you go back to the White House, or what
9 happened after that? I know that Lafayette Square walk with the President and General
10 Milley, as you mentioned, was around 6 o'clock. So if you can kind of walk us through
11 what happens and when was it decided that the President was going to make that
12 appearance?

13 A Sure. So after that meeting, I went back to the White House. Day's
14 events were going on. I had received, I believe there was a call from the outer Oval
15 Office that the President wanted to know if he can walk out and thank the law
16 enforcement for he was seeing on TV the confrontation between law enforcement and
17 the protesters on H Street and in Lafayette Park there.

18 So he wanted to go out there and thank them for what they were doing. I said,
19 Let me get you the special agent in charge of the Secret Service. I then called Robert
20 Engel and asked him to come over. That the President wants to go outside and thank
21 law enforcement. And then the SAC of PPD came over. And they had conversation
22 outside the Oval Office with the staff if Bob was going to allow them at that time.

23 Q What did you think about the idea when it was first presented?

24 A Oh, I thought it was a crazy idea to go outside the White House gates.

25 Q Did you say so at the time?

1 A To probably members of my staff that were present, but, obviously, not to
2 anybody else because that's pretty much what the SAC of PPD basically said was not right
3 now, it's too volatile outside, and we cannot allow the President to go out. We all knew
4 that at approximately from the meeting at 9 a.m., that the fencing that the Secret Service
5 had procured was going to go up at Lafayette Park. And Bob said, Let's look at it later
6 once we get a secure area, but not until -- that we can't even talk about him going outside
7 in this area.

8 Q So could you approximate what time it was that this idea was first floated?

9 A I want to say it was afternoon, so it was probably 1:00-ish or so, around that
10 time.

11 Q At some point, did the fencing go up?

12 A It went up later on in the evening of -- it was supposed to go up at 5:00, but
13 it was late, and that's, I know, the AG wanted to go out and see why it wasn't going up
14 yet. Probably around, I don't know, sometime after 4:00 or so, and himself, Milley, and
15 the chief, myself, we had walked out to Lafayette Park.

16 Q When you walked out to Lafayette Park, was it decided that the President
17 was going to make an appearance?

18 A No. It was still -- the Secret Service was still unsure if they were going to
19 allow him to go out because the fence wasn't up yet. They didn't have a secure area.
20 So, you know, it was -- if it was going to happen, it would be an off-the-record movement,
21 it would be an OTR. So it would be a surprise to everybody anyhow. They weren't
22 going to telegraph that.

23 Q Was it a surprise when it happened?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Did you, at any point before you got to Lafayette Square voice your concern

1 to either Mark Meadows or to the President himself about, Hey, this isn't a good idea?

2 A I did not to the President. I said to Mr. Meadows that, you know, I
3 wouldn't bring him out here at this point. Once the fencing and everything was up and
4 was in a more secure area to do so and it was contained, yes, it became so, and that's
5 when the SAC of the detailed allowed him to, and that I felt was reasonable at that time.

6 Q Okay. So by the time the President got there around 6 o'clock, the fencing
7 had gone up?

8 A They had started to move the protesters to put the fencing up, and they had
9 enough of -- enough of an area that they -- of a perimeter around the area that they could
10 allow him out there that was only law enforcement in Lafayette Park.

11 Q And was that decision ultimately made by Robert Engel at that time?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And apart from Robert Engel, did you have any contact with any other Secret
14 Service folks in making that decision?

15 A No.

16 Q What happened once the President arrived?

17 A Well, we then got word when President made remarks in the Rose Garden,
18 and we had gotten word that he wanted to go see the church as well to see if it was -- he
19 wanted to see the burned-out building, which was bathrooms on Lafayette Park, and he
20 wanted to thank law enforcement. And then he wanted to walk over to the church to
21 see if the church had been vandalized.

22 Q So were you at the -- sorry, were you at the Rose Garden at the time or at
23 Lafayette Square?

24 A I was outside the White House. That wasn't at Lafayette Square, it was on
25 the north grounds of the White House, and I had received that word. So I had a couple

1 of advance guys. I think it was -- I had Max Miller out in front to make sure that law
2 enforcement -- there was a path to get to the law enforcement to thank them, and then
3 there was a path for the President to be able to go to the bathroom building there, and
4 also knowing that on the other side of Lafayette Park there is a chain that -- there is a
5 space that if he does walk over to the church area, that he's able to get over there. And
6 so I sent Max out ahead to make sure that was all set. And Max was partnered up with
7 Secret Service as well, so they knew where he was going and everything.

8 Q Right. You anticipated my next question. What the coordination was
9 with Secret Service at the time?

10 A Right. So Secret Service was reeling the information to us of this is what he
11 wants to do, because they were inside with the staff and with him. And so, Max was
12 partnered up with Secret Service. So they went and made sure they had the proper
13 routes, and they were okay, meaning they were safe to do so. So they had supervisors
14 out there, and the Secret Service controlled the area.

15 Q In that situation, do you and Mr. Miller see yourselves secondary to Secret
16 Service or as partners to the Secret Service?

17 A I see us as partners. However, a lot of times even when I was a special
18 agent in charge, if you're around the Chief of Staff or the President, they're just going to
19 tell the special agent in charge direct what they want. And, you know, I'm going to get
20 that afterwards. And that's fine. That's the job. That's the nature of it. And they
21 may have the best and the newest information, because, you know, if you're standing
22 next to the protectee or the Chief of Staff, that's who they're going to listen to and also
23 talk to. At that point, I'd be out of it.

24 Q I just have a couple more questions about this, but I just want to understand,
25 is that initial call came in around 1 o'clock about President Trump's desire to go to

1 Lafayette Square. When it ultimately happened at 6 o'clock, was it unplanned, or it
2 appears that there is some hours beforehand so there was some planning that occurred?

3 A Sure. There was -- and I say 1 o'clock, it could have been 1:30, 2:00, it was
4 after 1 o'clock. It was kind of in limbo if it was going to happen. Because the SAC of
5 the detail said, No, not if it's looking like this, we're not going to do that. So it was kind
6 of in limbo the whole time. And then, I believe, the staff asked the chief, asked
7 Mr. Engel again. He checked on it later on again and said, You know, we're not looking
8 good still to be able to allow him to walk out. So then it wasn't until later that when the
9 AG's plan of the fencing going up and the perimeter being established, that's when the
10 SAC had said, if this is up here, if we have this perimeter, then I'm okay with him going
11 outside. And that's the delayed to do all that, the perimeter being put up was
12 happening, like I said, the AG in the morning said he wanted at 5:00, I believe it was.
13 And it got the perimeter ended up going at 6:00. Because to be honest, there was -- all
14 the Federal law enforcement was in Lafayette Park waiting to set it up. There was no
15 one giving directions in doing so. And the AG, when he went out there had to take
16 control and get direction of -- so that the Federal agencies can get that perimeter up.
17 Because it was decided on who would be on what corner, you know, hours before and
18 who would hold what. And they just weren't executing the plan. The AG kind of
19 whipped that when he went outside. And, ultimately, Park Police was responsible for
20 clearing the area as that is their jurisdiction.

21 Q Understood. So it wasn't unplanned as the press kind of reported about
22 that. But was the AG aware of the President's arrival to Lafayette Square?

23 A I'm not sure. I believe so because I believe he was with them. I believe
24 he was in the gaggle that came, but I can't be sure about it.

25 Q Obviously, this incident was criticized, for lack of a better word, optics, of

1 what it was perceived. General Milley, I believe, a few months later, even apologized at
2 a graduation about his appearance there. Did you have any qualms about that incident?

3 A I didn't have -- I'm sorry. Go ahead.

4 Q Go ahead. No, go ahead.

5 A So, I was just fulfilling my job and my role. I didn't -- I don't -- I'm not a
6 "should we do something?" That wasn't my office. My office is "can we do
7 something?" I take myself out of a should or should we not? That wasn't my role.
8 That's a political role that I didn't stick my foot in.

9 Q And before we move on off of this, did you see yourself as a decisionmaker
10 or a planner of this appearance for the President?

11 A I did not. Although, I know news reports and books did, and, obviously, I
12 don't have a platform to dispute that. I did not have -- I did not plan this event.

13 Q Right. And just on that, I just want to read to you a Washington Post
14 June 5th, 2020, a few days later of how it describes your role. It says, quote, "Around
15 the same time, a White House Deputy Chief of Operations, Tony Ornato, contacted the
16 Secret Service to arrange for the President to make a brief, unplanned appearance
17 outside St. John's Church, according to two people familiar with the plan. Following
18 protocol, the Secret Service alerted other law enforcement agencies that it would need
19 help clearing the area for the President's safety, they said."

20 Obviously, that puts you in an active role there. Do you want to -- can you clear
21 that up any way more than you did?

22 A Sure. That I called the Secret Service to ask them if the President can do
23 this, this is what the staff and the advisors are asking was my role. That was my role in
24 passing that information to the service, for then the service to make a decision if that
25 could be done. But that was basically my role in that whole day.

1 Q And it sounds like Robert Engel was the ultimate decisionmaker in terms of
2 the arrival of the President. Is that fair to say?

3 A He was in charge of the President's security that day, yes.

4 Q Any questions on that topic before I move on?

5 Ms. Cheney. Soumya, I have a couple of questions. Thank you. And, Mr.
6 Ornato, I first just want to say what tremendous respect I have for the Secret Service.
7 Having been a protectee myself for almost 8 years, I have to admit to you I was smiling
8 when you described the satellite assignment with Barbara Bush at Yale University. As
9 you know, a number of your colleagues had satellite assignments with my kids at
10 preschool and elementary school. So you may have gotten the better of the satellite
11 assignments. But just tremendous gratitude and respect for your service. So thank
12 you for what you do.

13 Mr. Ornato. Oh, thank you.

14 Ms. Cheney. Absolutely. I just wanted to understand, I had a couple of
15 questions just to clarify. In terms of the organizational structure, could you explain to
16 me the relationship between the Vice President's detail and the President's detail? So
17 the is person who is charge of PPD also responsible for the Vice President's detail?

18 Mr. Ornato. No, ma'am. So the Presidential Protective Division is run by a
19 special agent in charge. The Vice Presidential Protective Division is also run by a special
20 agent in charge. Those two special agent in charges report to a deputy assistant director
21 over here at headquarters in the Office of Protective Operations. And then over that
22 deputy assistant director is the assistant director to protective operations who oversees
23 both details. But those two details do not commingle.

24 Ms. Cheney. Okay. And then, you mentioned when Soumya asked you about
25 the extension of your detail, you said you didn't have a choice. And I just wondered if

1 you could expand on that a little bit?

2 Mr. Ornato. Sure. In my role as a government employee and in my role in the
3 Secret Service in taking an oath for this country, it is a salute and yes, sir. And so, I am
4 asked a question, but it's a rhetorical question. I was never asked if I would like to stay, I
5 was just extended.

6 Ms. Cheney. Then did Mr. Meadows talked to you about the extension?

7 Mr. Ornato. No.

8 Ms. Cheney. So when you came to the end of the detail, did you ask anybody if
9 you would be extended or?

10 Mr. Ornato. I actually didn't realize that the detail ended. I think on 6 months,
11 I think originally I was told it would be 6 months or a year, and I think I say just had the
12 year in my head and didn't even think of it. I did around August time let my deputy
13 director know that, come January, whatever happens, I need to come back to the Secret
14 Service. And the deputy director understood, and he would make that swap. He
15 would get me back come after the election.

16 Ms. Cheney. Okay. And then you also mentioned, just in terms of the
17 Lafayette Square discussion that we were just having, that the President had put Attorney
18 General Barr in charge, and that you were just informed of that. Can you tell us who
19 told you that he was in charge?

20 Mr. Ornato. I'm not sure if it was Chief Counsel to the White House, Pat
21 Cipollone, or if it was Mark Meadows at the time because there was people in that cross
22 hallway all the time. And I remember I went over to the FBI headquarters with Pat
23 Cipollone, chief counsel. I took him over there. So it could have been him, or it could
24 have been him explaining to me what just took place and why the AG was in charge of all
25 Federal enforcement, or if the chief had told me on the way out of his Oval back into his

1 office. I just don't recall.

2 Ms. Cheney. Okay. So when you went to the FBI with Pat Cipollone, that was
3 prior to the President walking to the church, just so I understand?

4 Mr. Ornato. Yes, ma'am. This was at approximately like 9 o'clock in the
5 morning.

6 Ms. Cheney. Okay. All right. Thank you.

7 Mr. Ornato. No, thank you.

8 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

9 Q Great. Anyone else before just moving on to the November timeframe?
10 Mr. Ornato, November 7th, Joe Biden was declared the President-elect by the major
11 networks. And then a couple of weeks later on November 23rd, GSA issued its
12 ascertainment, which green-lit the transition. Did that impact your job in any way, and
13 what new role did you take on?

14 A It did. I was placed on the transition team. I had the experience
15 transitioning a President, as we have noted before. And so I was asked obviously for the
16 operations part of it that I would -- I would work with the new Deputy Chief of Staff of
17 Operations coming in, General O'Malley Dillon and getting her up to speed and work with
18 the head of the transition team, which was Chris, I'm sorry, Chris Liddell, I believe, who is
19 head the transition team, and also our management and administrative director over the
20 Office of Administration, who is Monica Block. And those who I worked with for the
21 transition of the Biden administration coming in for the Trump administration.

1

2 [11:01 a.m.]

3 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

4 Q And so I'm clear, you're handling the operations. Just the White House
5 operations, correct?

6 A Correct.

7 Q Is it also handling the Secret Service aspect of the transition, or just the
8 White House operations?

9 A No. Just basically the Military Office classified program transition, because
10 there's a lot to brief Ms. Jen O'Malley Dillon into and getting her up to speed on as quick
11 as possible.

12 Q That's Jennifer O'Malley. Is that right?

13 A Jennifer O'Malley, correct.

14 Q Did you wait for the GSA ascertainment to begin that process, or did you
15 kind of start the process after November 7th?

16 A I don't remember exactly when I was given -- I was given her phone number
17 from the chief of staff, from Mark Meadows, who was talking with Chief of Staff Ron Klain
18 and said, "This will be the person coming in doing operations. Please coordinate
19 everything with her." And I don't remember if it was before or after the 20th, though.
20 I'm sorry.

21 Q Was it Mr. Meadows who assigned you to be part of the transition team?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And was it your -- when you took on this role, was it your understanding that
24 the Trump administration would be ending on January 20th?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Can you describe the process -- it sounds very complex -- of the transition?
2 Just generally --

3 A Yeah.

4 Q -- what do you have to manage -- and I'm asking specifically about the
5 relationship with the Biden-Harris folks.

6 A Sure.

7 So, with Ms. Dillon, we basically spoke often about what the role was as
8 operations, how advances work for trips, how does the President travel, how does the
9 President move around campus, what would be her role, you know, who does she
10 oversee, or who do I oversee.

11 And then I actually brought her into the White House because we had to bring her
12 into a SCIF and go through classified programs and to get her read in. So that is one of
13 the biggest hurdles -- and nobody sees that, obviously, in the outside world -- having
14 another person come in that never had experience with these types of programs, to be
15 read into all of them, because they're going to be somewhat of a possible decision-maker
16 in these programs.

17 So doing that took a while. But, also, if you remember, at the time in December,
18 the vaccines started coming out. So I worked with her as far as distributing vaccines to
19 careers. So the White House Medical Unit -- we vaccinated career staff that would be
20 here when the Biden administration came in so then they wouldn't have to do that. We
21 kept lists on that. It was any -- the military, the Secret Service, the Office of
22 Administration, the NSC.

23 What we also had to do was, people that were important to the classified
24 programs also had to be, obviously, vaccinated at that point in the COVID pandemic. So
25 very few politicals are in those programs or are read into those programs, so mainly only

1 those read in were afforded a vaccine if they wanted it. But that was to keep them so
2 we could still run. It's basically, you've heard the terms "COOP" and "COG," continuance
3 of government and continuance of the Office of the President.

4 And that's the roles that she had to come into and play and what we had to brief
5 her on going forward.

6 Q Did you hear of any criticism of what was occurring at the Department of
7 Defense in terms of their transition?

8 A No, I did not.

9 Q Are you familiar with Kash Patel?

10 A I am.

11 Q How do you know him?

12 A Kash worked at the White House. He worked, I think, for DOI. It would
13 be Department of Intelligence.

14 Q Uh-huh.

15 A He was there. He was in the NSC. And then I knew him from, obviously,
16 just being around the West Wing.

17 Q From the reporting, it sounds like you and Ms. O'Malley had a good
18 relationship in terms of making this as smooth as possible. Is that fair to say?

19 A Absolutely.

20 Q The same cannot be said, reporting-wise, of Mr. Patel and his counterpart
21 with the Biden-Harris transition. Did you learn of any of those challenges or did you
22 learn from Ms. O'Malley or anyone else about that?

23 A I did not.

24 Q I want to ask you about exhibit 16. That would be in front of you. This is
25 a December 18, 2020, email.

1 A This one here?

2 Q Let me know when you have it.

3 A Sure. We're pulling it up right now.

4 Q Sure.

5 A It can't come up, but I believe -- I see the title, OA --

6 Q Yeah.

7 A Oh, here we go. Yes. This was with Monica Block. Correct.

8 Q Right.

9 A Yep.

10 Q So this is a December 18th email from Monica Block to Kash Patel, who was
11 at DOD at the time, and you're CC'ed, "Help with OA + DCNG." And I'll just read part of
12 it.

13 "Kash, I'm sorry to ping you again, but I was hoping you could help me with
14 something with my Office of Administration hat on. Last year, OA cemented a
15 relationship with the DC National Guard through an MOU that allows these Guardsmen to
16 directly support the President through support for the EOP. Our first Guardsman arrived
17 last December and we have been working to try and grow the DCNG footprint on
18 Campus. Specifically, we think the best place for the DCNG to grow their initial support
19 is in our White House Operations Center. The White House Operations Center allows
20 these Guardsmen to essentially continue their Title 32 duties by supporting on Campus
21 operations."

22 I'll stop there. Can you explain why there was a desire to grow the D.C. National
23 Guard footprint on the White House campus?

24 A Sure.

25 So, from what I remember on this is, this was something they were trying for a

1 while. Back when the Secret Service had the Joint Operations Center in the Eisenhower
2 Building -- it was in the top floor of the Eisenhower Building -- there was always a seat for
3 White House Operations, which is under Monica Block in the Office of Administration.
4 There was always a staff seat.

5 It was never filled. They never had somebody -- because, under Monica Block, in
6 the Office of Administration, mostly are interns, and there is very few career people there
7 at all. So, in order for them to have the clearance to be in the Joint Operations Center,
8 they just didn't have it.

9 And what that position would do is, it would coordinate with OA on anything that
10 was going around the White House complex. The Secret Service is going to take care of
11 the protectees on the complex, but they're not necessarily going to be able to huddle all
12 the White House staff and make sure that they're getting to where they need to be, to be
13 out of danger, or not going into danger.

14 That was OA's job. That was the Office of Administration operations people that
15 would then help facilitate that in case of an emergency. They're responsible for all the
16 4,000 -- or anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 people on complex that aren't protectees.

17 So they were consistently trying to grow and develop a -- they wanted to call it a
18 WHOC, a White House Operations Center. And in the White House Operations Center
19 would be a member from the White House Military Office, a member from the Secret
20 Service, a member from OA -- which, they wanted that to be a National Guardsman who
21 would understand emergency situations, would understand how to push out information
22 and to who for a chain of command and assist in growing the relationship on complex for
23 a more secure environment and also a more communicative environment.

24 Well, they were trying to use different apps that would push out information to
25 your cell phones as well, and that's one way that they were able to overcome this. But

1 they still didn't have a great sight picture from one room at which the Secret Service
2 would stand up often the -- they called it the EOC, the Emergency Operations Center,
3 which was in the EEOB. It was in the Eisenhower Building on the first floor.

4 So, when they would stand that up, they would want somebody from OA in there.
5 But the problem is, with OA, they wouldn't have somebody in there that may be a
6 decision-maker or, you know, can tell the staff or the senior staff to do something. And
7 that's where they wanted more of a stance of help from -- because they had this -- and
8 it's also, being government, they're trying to save money and not hire people and be able
9 to do all that, because there was a policy of this Title 32, that they can use National
10 Guardsmen to fulfill some duties on campus. And that was one of the ways they were
11 trying to fulfill one of those duties.

1

2

BY MR. DAYANANDA:

3

4

5

Q And do you know what triggered this request? Just by the timing of it, December 18th, you're looking at, you know, the last 30 days of the Trump administration there.

6

A Sure. Monica --

7

Q Go ahead.

8

9

10

A Monica Block. And, knowing Monica, Monica dots her i's and crosses her t's. She's trying to do this to set it up for the future for the Biden administration. She was on the transition detail as well.

11

12

13

And she was trying to set this up because the careers that were staying in OA still need this, still need this operations center. And Monica was trying to continue that even through the transition.

14

15

Q Let me understand. The White House Operations Center is set up, but this would be to add more Guardsmen to it?

16

A I wouldn't say it's set up, no. She was trying to. And --

17

Q I see.

18

A And that's why -- she was never able to get it going to where they wanted it.

19

20

21

22

I believe the career Sam Price was there in OA, and he was kind of the head safety manager. Like, when we had, let's say, an Easter egg roll on the south grounds, they would set up decon tents on either side in case of any kind of mass casualty. They would set up these things. These were the preparedness people.

23

24

And this is what kind of is in the wheelhouse of National Guard. So that's why she wanted a member to represent that group.

25

Q Understood. Did it ever come to fruition before you left?

1 A Not that I remember.

2 Q And it sounds like this had been in the works for a while. The request had
3 been made earlier than last --

4 A She was trying, yes. For, I remember, my whole time there she was trying
5 to get this going.

6 Q During this time when you're obviously involved with the transition, in the
7 November time period, there was a number of election fraud claims that were being
8 purported after November 7th and that started before.

9 Did you have any knowledge of any of the investigations to investigate claims of
10 election fraud?

11 A No. Just what I saw on the TV.

12 Q Were you aware of any discussions that were going on in the White House
13 about the election fraud claims?

14 A No, I was not.

15 Ms. Dayananda. All right. I'm going to turn it over now to my colleague, who is
16 going to talk about the Ellipse event. It's 11:13. We could take a break now before he
17 starts, if you wish, or keep going.

18 Mr. Ornato. I'm good to keep going if you are.

19 Mr. Tonolli. Great.

20 Mr. Ornato, again, my name is Sean Tonolli. Thanks again for taking the time.

21 BY MR. TONOLLI:

22 Q Just a few questions at the outset to talk about the timeframe that we'll
23 cover, which is roughly November of 2020 to January of 2021.

24 A Okay.

25 Q The meetings that you talked about, three times a week, where you would

1 have Secret Service and the various other parts of the Military Office there present,
2 would the chief of staff attend those as well, Mr. Meadows?

3 A No, he would not.

4 Q Okay. Who would lead the meetings?

5 A I would.

6 Q Would you brief the chief of staff about the meetings afterwards as a
7 practice or only if necessary?

8 A Only if there was something, an issue we were made aware of or some big
9 event, but not necessarily.

10 Q Okay.

11 And it's our understanding that Max Miller, in the summer of 2020, transitioned
12 from director of advance within the White House to a campaign staff role. Is that right?

13 A Correct. He left the White House and went to work for the campaign.

14 Q And that's when Mr. Peede stepped into his shoes as director of advance?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And then Mr. Miller came back to the White House in roughly the middle of
17 November after the campaign and election were over?

18 A Correct.

19 Q And the title that he had when he returned, was it effectively assistant to the
20 President? Or do you know what it was officially?

21 A I don't. It wouldn't have been an -- I don't think he was an assistant.
22 You're only allowed to have 24 assistants to the President.

23 Q Okay.

24 A So, yeah, I don't think it was. I think he may have been a deputy assistant
25 to the President.

1 Q What was his role when he returned?

2 A He was basically an advisor to Bobby Peede. He helped out on advance.
3 That was Max's wheelhouse. He was an advance guy.

4 Q But, as we understand it, Mr. Miller did not report directly to Mr. Peede. Is
5 that right?

6 A He didn't -- I don't really know who Mr. Miller reported to, actually.

7 Q Did he report to you?

8 A He probably fell under me, because we had him in the advance type of
9 capacity, so he would've fell under my office.

10 Q And, speaking of offices, did Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede, respectively, have
11 offices in the Executive Office Building?

12 A Correct. They were in the EEOB, correct.

13 Q And is that where you were based as well?

14 A I was in the West Wing.

15 Q Okay.

16 When Mr. Miller returned in the role to the White House in November, would he
17 attend those three-times-a-week meetings?

18 A Sometimes. He would be there for Bobby, or maybe both of them would
19 be there together, but not all the time.

20 Q Okay.

21 And before we get to the rally topics in November and then through January, your
22 time with the President both on the PPD and then also in director of operations, I imagine
23 you had occasion to attend quite a number of his political rallies through the years?

24 A Yes.

25 Q All right. And in your time at those rallies, can you describe for us the

1 effect, so to speak, of the President on the crowds or how those crowds would resonate
2 to him, just in your experience in observing that?

3 A Sure. The crowds would be energetic and listening to him, as all, you know,
4 Presidential rallies are usually.

5 Mr. Tonolli. And I'd just note for the record that Mr. Aguilar has joined us.
6 Good morning and thank you, sir.

7 BY MR. TONOLLI:

8 Q And, Mr. Ornato, you said, "as all Presidential rallies." Are you speaking in
9 terms of just President Trump or across the various administrations you've served?

10 A So President Trump had probably a lot more rallies than President Obama or
11 President Bush. They would only mostly do them during campaign time. But those
12 types of rallies were usually all the same -- very energetic people, you know, responding
13 to the President speaking.

14 Q Okay.

15 When we move to November of 2020, are you aware of what I'll call the "Stop the
16 Steal" rallies, the first one occurring in D.C. on Freedom Plaza on Saturday,
17 November 14th of 2020?

18 A I remember a Freedom Plaza -- I don't know if there was an actual name for
19 it. I just remember Freedom Plaza. There was a heavy protest at Freedom Plaza.

20 Q And I'll refer to this November 14th one as the one where President Trump
21 drove by in the motorcade. Do you remember that?

22 A Yes, I do.

23 Q Okay. Now, again, this happened on a Saturday. And as you've described
24 the meetings you'd have three times a week -- roughly Monday, Wednesday, Friday?

25 A Correct.

1 Q All right. So do you remember that Friday or, you know, a day or two
2 before that rally on the Saturday that this came up as a topic of discussion?

3 A It did not come up at a meeting. This was an off-the-cuff kind of thing. I
4 remember receiving a phone call about it.

5 Q Okay. And you're talking about the motorcade. Is that right?

6 A To go by it, correct. I received a phone call on Saturday morning, it
7 would've been.

8 Q But the rally itself, were you --

9 A Oh.

10 Q -- aware of it before it took place?

11 A Oh, yes. Yes. The Service briefed us of the protest that would be taking
12 place outside the complex.

13 Q Did you have any conversations with the President about the rally before it
14 took place?

15 A Not that I can recall, no.

16 Q To your knowledge, did anyone within the White House coordinate with the
17 rally planners about that event on November 14th prior to it occurring?

18 A No, not to my knowledge.

19 Q And so could you describe for us how, so far as you know, it came to be that
20 the President drove by in the motorcade?

21 A Sure.

22 I was not at the White House. I was off on Saturday. I received a phone call. I
23 don't remember if it was from our staff person that was there or it was directly from
24 Dave Cho, who was the DSAC at the time, and he was working.

25 I knew the President was supposed to go to golf that day. That was the OTR, was

1 to golf. And I remember receiving a phone call saying he wants to drive by the rally.
2 And I don't remember if it was from staff that called and told me that or if it was Dave.

3 I just remember talking to Dave and saying, "Did he ask this?" And Dave said,
4 "Yeah, he asked me if we can do this." And I said, you know, "What can you do?" And
5 he said, "Well, I think we have a route that we can go to the golf course and just kind of
6 go by the -- he can see, you know, how many people are out there, and we're
7 comfortable in doing that." I said, "Well, Dave, just let me know -- obviously I'm at
8 home, but let me know whatever you need."

9 And that's typical, where the people there are going to just talk with the President
10 directly and work it out.

11 Q And do you remember how long before the drive-by, so to speak, happened
12 you were notified that this was possibly going to happen?

13 A Oh, probably within maybe 45 minutes to an hour or so before I was hit up.
14 It wasn't that far before.

15 Q And when that kind of a movement by the President takes place through the
16 streets of D.C., naturally, as we understand it, there has to be some coordination with the
17 Metropolitan Police Department?

18 A Correct. Well, in this kind of scenario, where it's an OTR, they would most
19 likely -- and I believe they did -- use a lot of Secret Service assets. Because on an OTR
20 there's not a heavy Metropolitan Police presence.

21 So the Service would -- if they were going to go that route, they would probably
22 have hit up Metropolitan Police to let them know that. Because they are -- I believe
23 they lead with Virginia troopers as well, because they go into Virginia for golf, and so they
24 would've assisted in the motorcade.

25 I don't know what they coordinated at that time, though.

1 Q And when the President makes a decision like this, that he wants to go by,
2 can the Secret Service ultimately tell him no, or just consult --

3 A Yes.

4 Q -- with him and he ultimately makes the decision?

5 A No, he doesn't ultimately make the decision. I've been in that seat
6 before -- it's not a fun seat to be in -- where you have to say no to the President of the
7 United States. But you have to say no if you can't do it safely. That's your job.

8 Q And if you only have less than an hour or so, or whatever the timeframe is,
9 but not days, in talking about this event, how is that assessment made, about whether it's
10 safe for the President to do this sort of a movement that quickly?

11 A So I don't know exactly what happened on that day. But in some scenario
12 like that, I imagine the Service would've asked their countersurveillance officers and
13 agents that are out on the perimeter, what does it look like? They probably sent a
14 couple of agents over from the field office.

15 What does it look like? Is it quiet? You know, is it everybody's being
16 civil -- there's no civil unrest? Everybody's being calm? How many people are there?
17 Is there 100 there, or is there 5,000 people there, you know?

18 And then they can basically make a decision on that, based on the real intelligence
19 that they're getting from people out there.

20 Q Another "Stop the Steal" rally happened on Saturday, December 12th of
21 2020. It's the one where the President flew over in Marine One?

22 A Uh-huh.

23 Q Do you remember this rally?

24 A I do.

25 Q Okay. And same types of questions. Do you recall this rally being a topic

1 of discussion before it occurred as part of your meetings with the Secret Service?

2 A So I remember the rally -- or, again, they didn't give it to us as a rally. I was
3 told there would be a protest on the Ellipse -- or, I'm sorry, not on the Ellipse -- on the -- I
4 believe it was near the Capitol. There'll be -- however many people -- I don't
5 remember -- is expected to attend.

6 I remember, you know, no -- they usually let us know if there's going to be
7 opposing groups, so is there going to be any civil unrest or not. And, you know, on any
8 of these, I don't think we had any civil unrest that was being reported. But that doesn't
9 mean anything.

10 That was leading up to it. And then, if I may go on, the -- before we were about
11 to -- I believe the President had a trip that day, was going to Joint Base Andrews to fly out
12 to a trip. And I remember a request was made that, hey, the President saw that he has
13 supporters up near the Capitol and wanted to know if he can now motorcade and not fly
14 and if he can drive by that.

15 So, at which point, I brought in, again, whoever was working -- I don't remember,
16 that day, who was working for the Secret Service -- I brought in the White House Military
17 Office director and said, hey, this was the request.

18 We're supposed to fly. I remember, the timing -- we did not have enough time
19 to get cars. We did not have enough time to do those types of things. Because there's
20 only a small motorcade on hand when it's a good weather call, as we call it if the
21 helicopters are able to lift. So I remember the Secret Service was like, "Yeah, after what
22 had happened in November, we're not looking to drive through any of that again. We're
23 not looking to do that."

24 So I remember relaying to the chief of staff that, hey, the Service is not
25 looking -- we don't have enough time to get a motorcade together here in order to get

1 out to Andrews, so all we are doing is lifting out to Andrews.

2 The request was, well, then, can we lift where he can see the people out at the
3 Capitol? So that request was made to the White House Military Office. Are we able to
4 talk with HMX Durham?

5 Obviously, for multiple of reasons, but there are multiple ways off of the south
6 grounds to Joint Base Andrews by helicopter. They have multiple routes. They choose
7 a route, and then they let people know which route they're going to go, so
8 everybody -- for -- I can't -- obviously, the classified stuff. So they choose a route to let
9 people know ahead of time, so then people that need to do their jobs on the specific
10 routes do so.

11 So we were before that. So they just picked a route closest to the Capitol, is
12 what HMX had done at the time. And, at that point, it was deemed that we would fly.
13 And I know the Service and HMX had a conversation about, "Hey, not looking to go in any
14 handgun range," you know, making sure we were still at a good altitude, that our safety
15 was not jeopardized in any way.

16 And I remember the Military Office passing that to HMX, HMX giving the
17 thumbs-up that they're all set, they're going to do their normal route, just that's closer to
18 the Capitol, in going to Andrews -- Joint Base Andrews. Sorry, I want to call it Andrews
19 Air Force Base, but Joint Base Andrews.

20 Q Okay. So there's a few things in there to unpack, but thank --

21 A Yep.

22 Q -- you for that.

23 Who relayed to you the request that the President wanted to drive to the Capitol
24 in the motorcade on December 12th?

25 A I don't remember if it was from outside Oval Office operations, which

1 would've been, like, a Nick Luna, or if it was the chief of staff.

2 I remember, ultimately, I did talk with the chief of staff about it, about that we
3 can't drive. Service has already said we can't get the cars. And so the chief, I believe,
4 asked, can we just fly but can he see it from the helicopter? And that was the
5 conversation.

6 Q Were you in the West Wing that day? Were you somewhere else? Do
7 you remember?

8 A I was in the West Wing that day, from what I remember.

9 Q And you said that the assessment that you then relayed back to the chief
10 was that they couldn't do the drive because of what had happened in November.

11 What had happened in November that gave concern, given that the President had
12 driven by Freedom Plaza on November 14th?

13 A Sure. From what I remember, the Service passed that the numbers that
14 they expected or were told were there had grown significantly by the time they went out
15 there, and they felt that people could've gotten hurt, because the cars had to go quicker
16 than they would've liked to to get through a crowded area, and there were no barricades
17 stopping anybody for coming out onto the street. And they didn't want to be in that
18 situation again.

19 Q The request about the President driving to the Capitol on December 12th,
20 was there any more specificity about what he wanted to do when he got to the Capitol on
21 that day?

22 A No. I was told he just wanted to see the crowd.

23 Q Okay.

24 Was any -- so, from what you described, it sounds like the good-idea fairy was
25 stopped right then and there. It didn't need to go out to Capitol Police or anyone else; it

1 was internally handled?

2 A Correct.

3 Q And who told you, Mr. Ornato, specifically told you, that this was a bad idea?

4 Do you remember who it was within Secret Service?

5 A To drive? I don't remember if it was the SAC of the detail, who's Bob Engel,
6 or Dave Cho that was working that day. But I just remember they didn't want to get
7 caught in the position that they were caught in last time.

8 Q And you mentioned, in talking about the flight path for the helicopter, you
9 know, concern of being out of handgun range.

10 A Uh-huh.

11 Q Was that concern specific to the event that day on December 12th and the
12 types of --

13 A No.

14 Q -- people that would be there, or is that a general concern?

15 A That's a general concern. Correct.

16 BY MR. TONOLLI:

17 Q Did you become aware of any violence that occurred in connection with the
18 rally on December 12th --

19 A I don't recall any.

20 Q -- after the fact?

21 A Yeah, I don't recall.

22 Q Do you remember when you first learned that there would be a -- what term
23 would you use -- protest or a rally on January 6, 2021, in D.C.?

24 A Both that day. I heard there was a rally on the Ellipse but also there would
25 be protests in the area.

1 Q Okay.

2 You know, there are several documents that you've probably seen that we've
3 given you as exhibits that I think help frame the timeline. And if you'll indulge me, I
4 think it's helpful to go through those first.

5 A Sure.

6 Q And then we can talk about, you know, what you know about those events.
7 Okay?

8 A Okay.

9 Q So, if you look at exhibit 1, it's a collection of the President's tweets from an
10 archive, since his Twitter was taken down, over the time of December 18th of 2020
11 through January 7th of 2021.

12 And, if you turn to the last page, which is page 12, or if you flip to it on the
13 screen --

14 Mr. Huse. Counsel, it's Tom Huse. Bear with us. We're --

15 Mr. Tonolli. Sure.

16 Mr. Huse. -- working on a really slow computer to pull these up.

17 Mr. Ornato. Actually, it only goes to exhibit 2. I don't see --

18 Mr. Tonolli. This is exhibit 1, so --

19 Mr. Ornato. Yeah, we don't have exhibit 1 on here.

20 Mr. Huse. Counsel, is it possible to share that on the screen?

21 Mr. Tonolli. Yes. That'll be easier.

22 Mr. Ornato. Oh, great. Perfect.

23 Mr. Tonolli. It will just take a moment for us to bring that up.

24 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

25 Mr. Tonolli. You know, while we're bringing it up, Mr. Ornato, we might as

1 well -- we can continue.

2 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

3 BY MR. TONOLLI:

4 Q Are you able to provide just an overview of your role in connection with
5 what I'll call the rally on January 6th at the Ellipse?

6 A Sure.

7 So we knew that an organization was permitted and taking place and organized a
8 stage and a rally type of event on the Ellipse on January 6th. But we didn't -- they
9 invited the President to speak, but, from what I remember, prior to even New Year's, we
10 did not know if the President was actually going to attend, because they didn't know how
11 many people were going to be out there, and they didn't want the President talking to
12 100 people. They didn't know what the rally would bring in.

13 Q Understood. But, in terms of ultimately, because it does end up
14 happening --

15 A Sure.

16 Q -- just at a high level, what was your role in connection with that event?

17 A Sure. Not much.

18 I, you know, held our morning meetings. Once we got word that there was going
19 to be an event, it's like any typical-event normal for us. Our advance staff links up with
20 the host committee and the Secret Service, and they start the planning of the event for
21 the President's piece of it. So it would be, like, walkthroughs. Secret Service will have
22 magnetometers, secure a perimeter.

23 If the President wasn't going, none of that would be done. So it was just making
24 sure the logistical aspect was taking place once we got word that the President was going
25 to attend.

1 Q Okay. And our understanding is that Jared Small on Mr. Peede's staff was
2 responsible for advance. Do you remember that?

3 A So I remember Jared Small left the White House, though, and went to work
4 for the campaign. I don't remember if Jared Small was back at that point or he was still
5 working. You all would know better than me --

6 Q Okay.

7 A -- if he was. But I just remember he had left work for the campaign. I
8 don't remember him coming back. I thought he was part of the organizers then.

9 Or Bobby Peede could've had him work for him as a volunteer staffer, which
10 happens all over the country. So that could've been the point as well.

11 Q Okay.

12 And then Max Miller, do you remember him being involved with the event?

13 A He was involved with Bobby, yes.

14 Q Okay. And so, in the normal operating procedure, given their roles on
15 advance and handling events, it was natural for the two of them to be hands-on with this
16 event?

17 A Correct. That's their job. Yes.

18 Q Right.

19 Mr. Tonolli. And I'll ask my colleague if we're ready to show.

20 Ms. Cheney. Sean, could I ask a question while we're trying to pull that up?

21 Mr. Tonolli. Yes, Ms. Cheney.

22 Ms. Cheney. Mr. Ornato, you mentioned that it wasn't clear before New Year's
23 whether the President would speak, and I think you said because they just weren't sure,
24 you know, it sounds like, whether the event would be worthy of him showing up.

25 Can you just explain, sir, how you knew that that was part of the assessment, the

1 crowd size?

2 Mr. Ornato. Sure. So we would ask schedule, you know, to ping the -- so the
3 scheduler would get from either the chief of staff or Hope Hicks or outer Oval the request
4 on what to put on the schedule. So we would ping the scheduler constantly of, "Hey,
5 what have we got? What have we got?" Or you're asking them, "What are we doing?"

6 Because we want the Service and the advance staff and the White House Military
7 Office to be on the ground as soon as possible to do something. We obviously want all
8 the time in the world for them to do an advance, not rush time. So that was our daily
9 routine of hitting schedule up for information.

10 And we kept being told what he was being told, like, "We haven't made a decision
11 yet. We don't know if it's going to happen, if there's going to be people there. We
12 don't know yet, and no one's committing to it."

13 This was pretty normal for big-size events, you know, these types of rallies, that, if
14 they wanted to commit the President to, there had to be enough people for the President
15 to actually -- it be worth the President showing up for.

16 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

17 So, when you were -- you knew this event was happening, but it wasn't clear
18 whether or not he would attend. And so it would've been Hope Hicks or Molly Michael?
19 Somebody --

20 Mr. Ornato. It would've been somebody -- it would've been Hope Hicks or the
21 chief of staff that would've made the final decision to tell the scheduler. That's who the
22 scheduler was required to wait for the okay from.

23 And if it was Hope Hicks, then the scheduler would check with the chief of staff to
24 make sure that the chief was aware and good with it.

25 Ms. Cheney. And so it was Hope Hicks or Mark Meadows --

1 Mr. Ornato. Correct.

2 Ms. Cheney. -- basically, who had final sign-off on what went on the schedule?

3 Mr. Ornato. Yes.

4 Ms. Cheney. And were there certain types of events that Hope would be signing
5 off on and some that the chief would be signing off on?

6 Mr. Ornato. Mostly, I think, Hope was during the campaign. She worked
7 closely with the campaign for the events and then would bring the ideas to
8 Mark Meadows, just from what I saw.

9 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

10 And so there came a moment, obviously, or point in time where they said to you
11 this is confirmed?

12 Mr. Ornato. Yes. The scheduler sent out an email to everybody that we are
13 confirmed for the Ellipse event.

14 Ms. Cheney. And did they tell you that they knew at that time that the crowd
15 would be a sufficient size?

16 Mr. Ornato. They still didn't know, but they figured it would be above -- I believe
17 I had heard numbers from 5,000 and then I heard early on to 20,000.

18 And that's what actually gave us angst for the Secret Service to be able to plan for
19 how many magnetometers they would need for the flow of people to get in. That's all
20 based off of time and numbers. So that's why we wanted to try to nail down on the
21 specific numbers, so they can do their job.

22 Ms. Cheney. Okay. Okay. And I'm sure that Sean and Soumya are going to
23 walk through all of that, but I appreciate it. That's helpful.

24 Mr. Ornato. Okay.

25 Ms. Cheney. Thank you.

1 Mr. Ornato. Thank you.

2 BY MR. TONOLLI:

3 Q And, on that point, Mr. Ornato, we'll show exhibit 1 and see if you can see it.

4 Are you able to see the exhibit?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. So what we're going to do is go down to the last page --

7 A Okay.

8 Q -- which is page 12. And, again, these are an archive of the President's

9 tweets.

10 And I'm just going to focus your attention on the one highlighted in yellow on the
11 screen, Mr. Ornato. Maybe you can see it on your computer now.

12 A Yeah. Our chief counsel was able to pull this one up on the last page here.

13 Okay.

14 Q So your technology is about in line with ours in terms of --

15 A Unfortunately, government -- yes, yes, we are.

16 Q So you see there, December 19, 2020, at 1:42 a.m., you know, the President
17 references a report by Mr. Navarro, but we'll focus on the second half of that tweet:

18 "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!"

19 Now, I'll tell you this is the first time he references in a tweet a protest in D.C. on
20 the 6th.

21 Do you remember this tweet when it went out?

22 A I don't. I don't remember this exact tweet. It just, obviously -- the Peter
23 Navarro name. Anything that had Peter's name attached to it wasn't taken seriously, as
24 far as with the operations staff.

25 Q It's -- what I'll say is, I am sure there will be questions by other of my

1 colleagues and the members on that point.

2 A Yes.

3 Q I'm going to stay focused on the rally for the moment, okay?

4 A Okay. Yeah.

5 Q But thank you for that.

6 A Sure.

7 Q Did you monitor the President's tweets, just to be aware of what he was
8 saying?

9 A No, I didn't monitor it every -- not in this position, I really didn't. When I
10 was the SAC, that's sometimes how I learned where our next trip was, so I did then, but
11 not in this position. I was too busy with things to monitor Twitter.

12 Q Okay.

13 Now, this was a Saturday, the 19th was, which means that your next daily meeting
14 would've been that Monday, the 21st.

15 A Sure.

16 Q And so I'll use that as a bookend. And if you can just go up two pages in the
17 exhibit, and I'll show you -- you see highlighted on that page 10 of exhibit 1, Mr. Ornato,
18 on December 27th at 5:51 p.m., President Trump -- this is the next time he tweets about
19 the event.

20 A Sure.

21 Q "See you in Washington, DC, on January 6th. Don't miss it. Information
22 to follow!"

23 And so, in terms of situating us, do you remember that the President was down in
24 Mar-a-Lago for the holidays and was scheduled to be there roughly December 23rd
25 through January 3rd?

1 A I do.

2 Q Were you with him down there?

3 A No. I remember, actually, because I was on vacation myself.

4 Q All right.

5 Between the time when he sends the tweet on the 19th before he left and when
6 he sends this tweet on the 27th when he's in Florida, do you remember any discussion
7 internally about the protest that was going to take place on the 6th and whether the
8 President would attend?

9 A I don't recall any. If I -- probably was made aware of this, that he tweeted
10 this, from Bobby Peede or Max. I probably -- I know Bobby Peede was down in Florida.
11 I probably asked him, "Hey, so do we have a confirmation he's going to this, or what?"
12 And Bobby said, "No" -- I'm sure Bobby would've said, "No, he's just tweeting. We have
13 no confirmation yet that he's actually gonna go."

14 From seeing this and knowing the history, I would think that they were trying to
15 draw numbers there in order to get him to go speak at that time. Because I don't
16 remember even before New Year's Day of having actual conversations about him
17 tweeting out that he's going.

18 Like, we would've been all over this if this was true. Like, I would've had the
19 Service and the military beating down my door, or my phone, actually, if this was a
20 confirmation from him. So I imagine we followed up on it, and it was not. They were
21 just trying to draw a crowd.

22 Q Okay. And we'll look at the followup. It's certainly different than the 19th
23 tweet --

24 A Yeah.

25 Q -- where the President just says, "Big protest in D.C." Here, he's saying, on

1 the 27th, "see you there" and "don't miss it," "information to follow."

2 A Right.

3 Q It certainly suggests that he would be in attendance, right?

4 A Right. It does suggest that, yes.

5 Q Okay.

6 Now, I know you weren't with him in Florida, but, as we understand it, he was
7 originally scheduled to stay in Florida until January 3rd but ultimately cut the trip short
8 and returned home on New Year's Eve. Do you remember that?

9 A I do. Yes.

10 Q All right. And, given your role and having to know when the President is
11 traveling and the details along that, do you know why he came home --

12 A Well --

13 Q -- sooner than he had planned?

14 A I don't remember. I do remember that they didn't want to go to
15 Mar-a-Lago from the beginning, because it was going to be the -- possibly be the -- it
16 was -- the last Christmas at the White House, and they wanted to stay there through the
17 end of the month of December. Because we were even going back and forth on leaving,
18 I remember. Were they going to go? Were they not going to go? That was still up in
19 the air. And then they ended up going.

20 But whenever the President got down to Mar-a-Lago during this timeframe, as
21 soon as -- from what I remember when I was with him as the SAC, as soon as he hit the
22 ground there, he'd be asking, "When am I going back? When am I going back? People
23 are going to think I'm not working. I want to go back." Even though, you know, he'd
24 be working at Mar-a-Lago.

25 He was very antsy to get back. So this didn't surprise me, that he came back

1 early. And we have changed dates in the past as well. You know, we almost
2 telegraphed -- amongst our ops group, we would, you know, have a plan for, hey, if he
3 comes back early, who's working this? How are we doing this? And we would prepare
4 for that. Because it was a common kind of an occurrence, of these types of things
5 happening.

6 Q Certainly the President's prerogative, and understood. But --

7 A Correct.

8 Q -- we also understand that -- was it an annual tradition that the President
9 would host a New Year's Eve party at Mar-a-Lago?

10 A Yeah, he usually did.

11 Q Okay.

12 A Absolutely.

13 Q And, up until this year, had he attended those New Year's Eve parties during
14 his term in office?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. And so, specific to this, did you understand that people had traveled
17 to and were present in Mar-a-Lago to ring in the new year with him on New Year's Eve?

18 A I wasn't following anything going on down there, to be honest with you.

19 Q Okay. Did you know that he would be attending the party that night on
20 New Year's Eve?

21 A I assumed he would be. I didn't know for a fact, but I assumed.

22 Q All right.

23 And, again, specific to the decision to cut this trip home, do you know why or did
24 someone tell you why he came back specifically?

25 A No, I wasn't. I was just told that he wants to be back. That's all I would

1 get told.

2 Q Okay.

3 And so, focusing on the time of that tweet and seeing it's at 5:51 p.m. on the 27th,
4 you know, what we have in exhibit 2, if your counsel is able to pull it up, or agency
5 counsel is -- we can also show it on the screen. It will be phone records from
6 Max Miller's phone, his personal phone.

7 A Uh-huh.

8 Q And so, showing you page 1 of those -- and, if you can see, it's got columns
9 of data, and we've added names to the phone records. It's a little bit small. We can --

10 A That's okay.

11 Q -- increase the focus.

12 A He's going to pull it up right here as well.

13 Q Sure. Sure. And I can tell you that the way the times are reflected -- you
14 see on the left the date, the time.

15 A Uh-huh.

16 Q And then you see -- the first phone number you'll come across is the number
17 that is called in the phone records, the person receiving the call. And the next phone
18 number is the person placing the call.

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q And then you had the length of time that the conversation lasts in seconds.
21 And then we've added the name of the person who was speaking with Mr. Miller,
22 whether they called him or he called them.

23 A Sure.

24 Q So, if you see, on December 27th at 5:15 p.m., so, you know, roughly
25 40 minutes before the President tweets out, you know, "See you in D.C., details to

1 follow," you see that Bobby Peede has a call with Mr. Miller for roughly, you know,
2 11 minutes.

3 A Okay.

4 Q And, again, the way you've described, they were working together on events
5 generally. There's nothing --

6 A Sure.

7 Q -- nothing about that.

8 However, if you continue on, there's a series of calls after the President's tweet.
9 So December 27th, starting at 6:19 p.m., there's a series of calls exchanged between
10 Mr. Miller and Bobby Peede --

11 A Okay.

12 Q -- and also Justin Caporale.

13 And, for the record, C-a-p-o-r-a-l-e.

14 Do you know Mr. Caporale?

15 A I do. I know of him. Yes.

16 Q And how did you know of him?

17 A Yep. I didn't work with -- I knew him when he worked over on the First
18 Lady side when I was with the Secret -- as the SAC of the Secret Service, but I knew him
19 when he left and went to the campaign.

20 Q Okay. And did you understand him to have helped put on campaign events
21 for the reelection for President Trump?

22 A Yes, he did.

23 Q All right. So, similar to Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede, that was his specialty,
24 events, correct?

25 A Correct. Yes.

1 Q And did you come to learn that Mr. Caporale was running the event on the
2 Ellipse that took place on January 6th?

3 A I did, yes.

4 Q Okay.

5 And so you see that Mr. Miller is talking with Mr. Peede, Mr. Caporale, Mr. Peede,
6 and then you on the night of the 27th, you know, within less than an hour of the
7 President's tweet.

8 A Sure.

9 Q Do you remember having the first conversation about this event at the time
10 with Mr. Miller?

11 A I don't, but this is probably typical, because Max and Bobby -- obviously,
12 Bobby being with him and Max on Twitter -- know that I don't necessarily always would
13 see something. They would definitely call and let me know if they had information.

14 Or, if I did happen to see something, I would call one of them and say, hey, what's
15 going on there? We were typically each other's first phone calls.

16 Q Okay. And so it'd be natural and in the normal course for Max Miller to
17 update you if there's a chance of the President having an event?

18 A Of something changing, an event or something, yes.

19 Q Okay.

20 A Or just calling in general, but yes.

21 Q Okay.

22 And the number that Mr. Miller uses to reach you is a phone number that -- I'll
23 just say the last four digits are 3371. Is that your phone number?

24 A It is.

25 Q Okay. And is that a personal cell phone or a work?

1 A It is a personal cell phone, yep.

2 Q And I'll represent to you that the number that Mr. Miller was using was
3 personal. The same is true for Mr. Peede. And, obviously, Mr. Caporale was in the
4 private sector at the time.

5 Do you know why you, Mr. Peede, and Mr. Miller were using your personal cell
6 phones at this time to talk about these events?

7 A I don't. I was -- I know I was -- at that time, December 27th, I was
8 working -- I do just handy stuff around the house. I was working on a vacation place
9 that I was at. So I don't know if he tried me on the other phone or -- but we'd talk on
10 the personal phone anyhow all the time, so that wouldn't be anything out of the ordinary.

11 Q Okay.

12 And there's another person that Mr. Miller starts speaking with starting the next
13 day, on the 28th, named Alexandra Stone, who we understood worked with Room One in
14 the White House. Is that right? Do you remember Ms. Stone?

15 A I do, yes.

16 Q Okay.

17 A She would be with Room One, correct.

18 Q And what were her responsibilities, as a general matter?

19 A Mostly the complex. Mostly -- Room One kind of is the overall of
20 everything. If something's broke on the complex, you know, she gets GSA to fix it.
21 Those types of roles. She's over the complex. It's a pretty good size -- a big size role.

22 Q Okay.

23 And if we just flip down to the next page of that exhibit 2, by the next day, you see
24 that, on the 28th of December, that Mr. Miller is having conversations with a woman by
25 the name of Katharine MacGregor, who we understood to be the Deputy Secretary of the

1 Interior.

2 A Oh, yes. Okay. I can remember -- I probably remember what this may be
3 about.

4 Q All right. So we can get into that, which is this: When you first learned
5 about the event and before the President committed, where did you understand it was
6 scheduled originally to take place?

7 A On the Ellipse. I remember we knew of the event that was going to be on
8 the Ellipse, and I remember Max bringing up that they were looking to have the stage
9 centered with the White House on the Ellipse, but that would be in line of the White
10 House -- I can't remember the exact name -- what's the -- the White House --

11 Mr. Huse. The Jeffers- (ph) --

12 Mr. Ornato. -- to the Jeffers- (ph) -- yes, the site, and they had to be 30 feet
13 over.

14 So I remember Max asking, who at DOI would Justin have to talk to if they wanted
15 to do a waiver? Because there's been waivers done before. And I remember
16 MacGregor's name coming up.

17 BY MR. TONOLLI:

18 Q Okay. But do you recall that the event by the organizers, the kind of the
19 grassroots organizers, was originally scheduled to be on Freedom Plaza, just like the prior
20 rallies in D.C. had been?

21 A I don't recall that.

22 Q Okay.

23 A I'm sorry.

24 Q So you don't have any knowledge of how the event got moved to the Ellipse?

25 A I don't remember that. No.

1 Q And on this issue of the placement of the stage for the Ellipse event, did you
2 yourself talk to Deputy Secretary MacGregor or anyone else within the National Park
3 Service or Interior about the issue?

4 A I don't remember exactly. I remember we discussed it. I don't remember
5 how we ended it, if I was going to give her a heads-up that a request was coming or if we
6 were going to give a heads-up to the Secretary of the Interior or if Max was just going to
7 call her.

8 And, from looking at this, I think maybe it was that Max was going to call her and
9 give her a heads-up, because they had worked on other national park sites together and
10 he had a relationship.

11 Q Okay.

12 So, other than Mr. Miller updating you about this, as best you can remember, you
13 didn't have any role in handling this with Interior?

14 A I don't recall if I was on an email thread or I sent any. I don't believe so, but
15 I don't recall.

16 Q And you mentioned that what Mr. Miller described to you was a desire to
17 have the White House directly behind the stage? Is that the reason why he wanted --

18 A Right.

19 Q -- the waiver?

20 A If I can remember, it was because, what if the President ends up going and
21 speaking? You'd want the White House to be the backdrop for the President if he was
22 to go. So, once the stage is set, it can't be moved if he decides towards the end to
23 actually go. So they wanted to set it up in case he was going to go, is what I remember
24 the conversation being.

25 Q So, again, you see here, by December 28th, Mr. Miller is having his

1 conversations with Ms. MacGregor. And am I right that there'd be no reason for
2 Mr. Miller to be doing this unless there is actually a chance that the President will attend?

3 A Sure. So, again, our job was to anticipate this, right? We'd want to
4 anticipate. so Max was doing what we'd want. Like, hey, if the President's going to go,
5 we need to make sure that we're getting on the ground early.

6 So I know Max was probably -- Max was working with Justin to make sure that, if
7 the President decides to go, that things were already done that can't be changed ahead of
8 time. So he was anticipating this, from what I remember.

9 Q Okay.

10 Now, we understand, Mr. Ornato, that by as early as, if not earlier, but at least by
11 December 29th, the White House -- and I use that term as a general term -- just the White
12 House was telling the event organizers and Mr. Caporale in particular that the plan for the
13 Ellipse event was for the President to speak and then tell the attendees of the event to
14 march to the Capitol.

15 Now, ultimately, the President does tell attendees to do that when he speaks on
16 January 6th, and he says, you'll march to the Capitol, after he was done speaking.

17 Do you remember becoming aware prior to the President's speech on January 6th
18 that that was his plan, to tell people to march to the Capitol?

19 A I was not aware of that.

20 Q So that never came up in any of the meetings that you had between, say,
21 December 27th and January 6th, that that was something the President would say?

22 A No. I was actually out of pocket. I didn't get back into the White House
23 until January 4th.

24 Q And so you were on leave between roughly Christmastime and January 4th?

25 A I came back January 4th, yes.

1 Q Okay. And so the time that you were on leave, were you participating in
2 those daily meetings -- or --

3 A No.

4 Q -- excuse me, those three-times-a-week meetings?

5 A No. We wouldn't have them when the President was outside the White
6 House, because the people that normally would be in them would most likely be with him
7 or out elsewhere. But we wouldn't hold those meetings.

8 Q Okay.

9 Now, he returned on December 31st, so, you know, roughly 5 days before you got
10 back, right?

11 A Right.

12 Q So, given what you just said, I imagine the meetings would start back up
13 once he was back on campus or at the White House?

14 A I probably postponed them to the Monday that I was back, January 4th.
15 That would've been our first one back.

16 Q Okay.

17 A Because when the President goes out of the White House, most people that
18 aren't going on a trip take their leave then. That's the only time you get a break.

19 Q Now, when do you remember it being confirmed that the President would,
20 in fact, appear at the Ellipse event?

21 A I remember seeing, I think, a document here that -- was it here? I
22 remember seeing when the scheduler, Mike Haidet, had sent out a confirmation. I knew
23 it was -- I remember it being after January 1. I remember it being over the weekend,
24 from what I recall, but I didn't recall exactly when.

25 Q So, if we look at exhibit 7 -- and just hold on one second. I don't know if

1 you can pull it up.

2 A We're trying right now.

3 Q Okay.

4 A I think we should be able to.

5 Q And if we go down to the bottom of the page -- it's now up on the screen.

6 A Okay.

7 Q And do you see that on December 31st at 9:00 a.m., 2020 --

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q -- it's redacted for privacy purposes, but someone within, it appears, the
10 President's protective detail writes to Bobby Peede and Max Miller?

11 A Sure.

12 Q And in the second paragraph, it says, "We are getting hit up from some of
13 our counterparts (Park Police, etc) regarding a possible event on the Ellipse on 1.6. We
14 haven't heard anything about this - can you please let us know what is being looked at
15 regarding this event?"

16 A Right.

17 Q And then, if you go up just a little bit, Bobby Peede asks Justin Caporale to
18 follow up.

19 And you can continue up. And this is all the same day, December 31st.

20 A Sure.

21 Q The person from the protective detail writes back and thanks Justin for the
22 call.

23 And so, you know, as we saw, it looks like there was discussion and efforts by
24 Mr. Miller and discussions with you at least a few days before December 31st, and the
25 PPD has to come to Max and Bobby about this.

1 A Right.

2 Q Do you know why they were coming to Bobby and Max and why it wasn't
3 escalated to them first, to the Secret Service from Bobby and Max?

4 A That's because -- that's normal.

5 So I was in operations for PPD, like I said earlier. And our partners -- Park
6 Police -- our partners will get information before us, because the White House staff may
7 not have it because they're not in -- it's an organization putting on an event, or something
8 of that nature, where they're looking for local police help, which would be Park Police
9 because that's their jurisdiction.

10 So Park Police would then want to know from the Secret Service, "Hey, is the
11 President coming?" Or it's the rumor mill: "Hey, we're hearing the President's
12 coming."

13 And so this is probably an operations person, which is Bobby's counterpart, on
14 their normal day --

15 Q Sure.

16 A -- and that they always go back and forth. That's their match -- they're
17 married up to each other. And I see John Crunkilton, who was the ASAC over
18 operations, so I'm sure that's -- he would've CC'ed his supervisor.

19 So this is an operations person hearing from Park Police that, hey, we're being
20 told -- and the operations agent is trying to draw out of the staff right now, "Hey, if you
21 know something, you've got to tell us. We've got to start this event." That was a
22 common thing that would happen throughout the year. Even when I was in operations,
23 this is what you tried to do, because you wanted your guys in there from the minute you
24 knew the President was going.

25 Q And, on that, this email doesn't include you, and this is December 31st while

1 you're still on leave.

2 A Right.

3 Q Did you have any direct interaction with Secret Service about the event, say,
4 between December 31st and when you returned to work on January 4th that you recall?

5 A Yeah, we had known at that point that it was confirmed, I think, over that
6 weekend. So I would've been talking probably to the SAC. We probably would've had
7 a conversation. I don't remember an exact conversation about it, but we probably
8 would've.

9 Q Okay.

10 A But a normal course of an event being announced and then ops for the
11 Secret Service and ops for White House staff, which is Bobby Peede, the advance ops, this
12 is normal. They just work -- they get hit up. We have it confirmed. It goes out to
13 about 100 people, and off they go running to do the event. This is kind of an everyday
14 thing.

15 Q And you said it was confirmed over that weekend. I think you're referring
16 to the weekend before you returned to work on Monday the 4th. Is that right?

17 A Correct, yes. I knew over, I believe, that weekend that it was confirmed.

18 Q All right.

19 And the point I raised earlier about the President directing rally-goers to march to
20 the Capitol after he was done --

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q -- and I understand you said that that never came up and you weren't aware
23 he was going to do that before he actually said the words. Is that right?

24 A Yeah, I don't -- I didn't even -- I didn't hear it on that day as well. But, yeah,
25 I didn't realize he was directing that.

1 Q If you had known that, is that something that would've been relayed, say, to
2 law enforcement counterparts because of the jurisdiction of rally-goers marching from
3 the Ellipse to the Capitol would cross over Park Service, MPD --

4 A Sure.

5 Q -- and the Capitol Police?

6 A Sure. If we had known -- I mean, that would've been passed in our Monday
7 meeting if we had known that that was going to be the intention, but we had no idea of
8 that.

9 Q Okay.

10 And we'll just kind of set the stage for -- there was quite a lot of discussion within
11 the White House and with the event organizers about who would share the stage with
12 the President at the rally event -- in other words, who would speak before him, because I
13 know no one speaks after him -- but about who would be there to speak before he took
14 the stage on the 6th.

15 Were you involved in any of those discussions yourself?

16 A No, I wasn't.

17 Q All right. Were you informed about any of those discussions?

18 A I knew Max was helping coordinate that with the organization. But I
19 remember it being very secretive of who was talking, or who was speaking, and some of it
20 being an unknown of who was speaking as well, that people -- it hasn't been signed off
21 on, so to say.

22 Q Do you know a woman by the name of Katrina Pierson? Last name is
23 P-i-e-r-s-o-n.

24 A I had heard the name at the time, it being the head of the organization that
25 was hosting this event.

1 Q Had you ever met her prior to that, given her work with President Trump on
2 his campaign in prior years?

3 A I don't ever remember meeting her.

4 Q Okay. Did you ever learn before the event on the 6th that she had
5 expressed concern about -- and quotes, because her words, not mine -- about the
6 President sharing the stage with, quote, "crazies" or, quote, "psychos" or, quote, "the
7 fringe"?

8 A I'm not aware of that.

9 Q All right.

10 Did you ever speak to Chief of Staff Mark Meadows prior to the event on the 6th
11 about the issue of who would be sharing the stage with the President?

1

2 [12:01 p.m.]

3 Mr. Ornato. No, I did not. That wouldn't be in my wheelhouse to do that.

4 BY MR. TONOLLI:

5 Q And the same question with regard to Dan Scavino, did you ever discuss that
6 topic with him prior to the 6th?

7 A No, I did not.

8 Q On January 3rd, a meeting was scheduled to take place the next day on
9 January 4th with President Trump and Ms. Pierson and others to discuss the question of
10 speakers at the event. And, again, I just have to ask, did you, at the time, know that that
11 meeting had been scheduled?

12 A I did not know.

13 Q And then when you held your first meeting when you were back to work on
14 the 4th, which was the day this happened in the morning -- is that when you would hold
15 the meetings in the morning?

16 A It would be, yes.

17 Q Were you aware that morning that Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede had been asked
18 to meet with the President later that day to discuss the Ellipse rally at all? Did you know
19 that they were going to do that?

20 A I knew they were going into the Oval for a meeting, but they didn't explain
21 exactly what it was all going to be about.

22 Q And who told you they were going to do that?

23 A One of them did. I don't remember which one. That night we got a
24 meeting in the Oval about the Ellipse, and that was it. I said, Okay. And that's normal
25 for any kind of, as I call it, a campaign rally or something like that. They would brief him

1 all the time on those things.

2 Q Did they raise any -- discuss in any way that there was going to be any sort of
3 hard decisions to be made or any concerns going into that meeting about what the
4 President's reaction to what they would be talking to him about would be?

5 A No, they didn't raise any concerns.

6 Q Now, as we understand at the meeting took place in the dining room off the
7 Oval Office the afternoon the January 4th. And I'll just ask, you weren't there for that
8 meeting, right?

9 A No, I was not.

10 Q Were you briefed about that the meeting by anyone afterwards before
11 January 6th?

12 A I was not.

13 Q Okay. As we understand it during the meeting on the 4th, there was
14 discussion of the speakers, but also the President raised wanting to go to the Capitol
15 himself after his speech at the Ellipse. And so I'll stop there and ask, before January 6th,
16 did you become aware that the President had expressed a desire to travel to the Capitol
17 on January 6th after he was done speaking?

18 A Not by the President expressing it. Early on, it was one of those
19 hypotheticals from the good idea fairy, that, Hey, what if the President got into the limo
20 and drove to the Capitol to show that he would peacefully protest with his -- and at that
21 point I said, yeah, no, the President goes from the Capitol to the White House once every
22 4 years. That's -- you can't do -- we're not doing that. And it was -- I believe it was
23 Justin and Bobby and Max, or one of them. Justin asked Max to ask. And so I believe it
24 was Max and I having the conversation. And Bobby was there or not. But this
25 was -- this would have been probably the morning, maybe the morning of the 4th that

1 conversation came up, and at which point, I had called over Bob Engel and said, you
2 know, would you be good with this? And it was an absolute not. And it was like all
3 right, we had a try, and that was the end of that. It never came up again.

4 Q Okay. So I just want to stop there and ask, so on the 4th, you recall Mr.
5 Caporale being present personally for the meeting?

6 A No, I'm sorry. He was not present. He had got -- I believe it was Mr.
7 Miller had gotten asked by Mr. Caporale, and he was passing the ask.

8 Q And the ask was, if the President wanted to, could he travel to the Capitol?

9 A Correct.

10 Q So your initial reaction to that was no?

11 A No.

12 Q And you called Mr. Engel to discuss that?

13 A I called and just said, Hey, in case you get asked, this is what I have told
14 them. And so we make sure we were on the same page. And I said I'm not speaking
15 for you, correct? And he said, no, no, we would not want to do that. And I said, right,
16 okay.

17 Q Why was that your reaction?

18 A Because it's ridiculous to think that a President of the United States can
19 travel especially with, you know, people around just on the street up to the Capitol and
20 peacefully protest outside the Capitol is what the ask was. I mean, to be able to secure
21 something like that is, you would have to secure it like Inauguration Day. It's unheard
22 of.

23 Q Yeah. And, you know, on that point, we also understand that the
24 President, in that January 4th dining room meeting, said -- or asked whether 10,000
25 National Guard troops could be deployed on January 6th. Were you aware of that?

1 A I was not aware of that.

2 Q Well, then, going back to the traveling to the Capitol, between the 4th and
3 the 6th, so the time that you said you discussed it with Max Miller the morning of the 4th,
4 did it come up again as a topic of discussion for you prior to the 6th? So later on the 4th
5 or at any point on the 5th?

6 A No, it never came -- I never heard about it again.

7 Q When it comes to the National Guard statement about having 10,000 troops
8 or any other number of troops, do you recall any discussion prior to the 6th about
9 whether and how many National Guard troops to deploy on January 6th?

10 A I do recall a conversation, I believe, it was with Mr. Meadows and the mayor,
11 Mayor Bowser. I remember he had -- he was on the phone with her, and we -- I had
12 walked in for something, and I was there, and he was on the phone with her and wanted
13 to make sure she had everything that she needed. Because I think it was the concern of
14 anti and pro groups clashing is what I recall. And not anywhere near the Capitol, this
15 was just out on the mall area or at the event; and wanted to know if she need any more
16 guardsmen. And I remember the number 10,000 coming up of, you know, the President
17 wants to make sure that you have enough. You know, he is willing to ask for 10,000. I
18 remember that number. Now that you said it, it reminded me of it. And that she was
19 all set. She had, I think it was like 350 or so for intersection control and those types of
20 thing not in the law enforcement capacity at the time. And then that's the only thing I
21 recall with that number 10,000 National Guard guardsmen.

22 Q And I imagine my -- others will have questions maybe to follow up on that.
23 But I'll just round out what I had been asking about. If we look at exhibit 8, Mr. Ornato.
24 Let's see if you beat us to the punch.

25 A Yeah, you did. Ultimate. Okay.

1 Q What I'll tell you is these are text messages between Katrina Pierson and
2 Max Miller.

3 A Got it.

4 Q And, again, starting at the top, you see January 4th at what is 1608, so 4:08
5 p.m., what we understand to have been after the meeting in the dining room with the
6 President about the speakers and these issues we've been talking about.

7 A Okay.

8 Q And, again, you see Ms. Pierson sends an emoji of her popping a bottle of
9 champagne, and the response from Mr. Miller is "You did a great job killing some of those
10 speakers." That's just to give you context. But further down, still on the 4th, you see
11 right there, Mr. Miller say to Ms. Pierson, "Just glad we killed the National Guard in a
12 procession." So in seeing those, and I know you weren't on these text messages, but is
13 that consistent? You know, and understand that the context which the President
14 brought these ideas up during the meeting, is that consistent with what you had told Mr.
15 Miller about whether the President should travel to the Capitol on the 6th?

16 A That's consistent with what I had said, but I didn't know these were brought
17 up in any other meeting.

18 Q Understood. Understood.

19 A Yeah.

20 Q So he met -- Mr. Miller never reported back to you that the President had
21 expressed a desire to do this?

22 A No, I did not know the President -- this was brought up from the President.

23 Q Okay. And given the sensitivity of the President wanting to do something
24 and it coming to the near end of his term, it wouldn't be natural for Mr. Miller to say, Hey,
25 this might be something that the President or the Chief of Staff asks you about?

1 A I wasn't -- I don't recall ever being asked. I definitely wasn't asked by the
2 President. I don't recall talking to the Chief of Staff about any motorcade. I am trying
3 to remember if the Chief actually -- now that we're saying it, I believe the Chief said, Hey,
4 did Max get with you and ask from Justin? I remember that. Being that I assume that's
5 what it was about, but he never specifically asked me.

6 Q Okay. So if we go down to the next page of that exhibit, still exhibit 8, you
7 see at the top, excuse me, down at the bottom relevant to what you just discussed, at
8 8:09 p.m. on the 4th, Ms. Pierson texted Mr. Miller a link to a political article about Mayor
9 Bowser requesting a certain number of National Guard troops be deployed on the 6th?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And if we continue on the third page of this exhibit, Mr. Miller uses some
12 colorful language in response to seeing the article. But his next comment is, if you stay
13 there, "but chief had already had said no for days." We understand him to be referring
14 to Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. Is that how he would be referred to?

15 A Ah, yes.

16 Q Okay. And then when he said, "the Chief had already said no for days," we
17 understand that to be a reference to no to the idea of having National Guard troops
18 deployed. And, again, he is saying for days. And this is on January 4th and
19 understanding you had been on leave?

20 A Right.

21 Q To your knowledge, had this been a topic of conversation that the Chief of
22 Staff was involved in?

23 A I don't recall that. I wouldn't know that. I came back on the 3rd, and so I
24 wouldn't have been in the Chief's office until it was the 4th or the 5th. He may have
25 been having that conversation when I overheard it.

1 Q Is it possible that Mr. Meadows held those meetings those
2 three-times-a-week meetings while you were gone after the President returned on
3 December 31st, but before you got back on the 4th?

4 A No. He didn't.

5 Q Okay.

6 A Not with my group.

7 Q And then the second sentence, Mr. Miller says, "The man is never wrong,"
8 we understand that to be a reference to President Trump who earlier in the day had
9 asked for National Guard troops. And so that call that you had with -- that you heard
10 between Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and Mayor Bowser, do you know approximately
11 when that was on the 4th?

12 A I don't remember if it was the 4th or the 5th. It would have been one of
13 those days.

14 Q Given the article that was forwarded that came out on the night of the 4th,
15 you tell me, but it would seem that that conversation must have happened before the
16 article reported the troops that the Mayor was requesting?

17 A It could have been, yeah.

18 Mr. Tonolli. I think do you want to pick it up from there on the day of.

19 Ms. Dayananda. Yeah.

20 Mr. Tonolli. Thank you, Mr. Ornato. That takes us up, I think, through
21 January 5th. Unless, and, again, we covered the issues, I'll stop there to see if there are
22 any questions for the planning for the event before we get to the day of and what
23 actually happened if anyone else has any questions.

24 Ms. Cheney. I have a question, Sean.

25 Mr. Ornato, what was your understanding that the President was going to do

1 when he got to the Capitol.

2 Mr. Ornato. The ask, again, was to peacefully protest is what I was told. And I
3 said, Well, where was he going to do that? You said, it was kind of a back and forth of,
4 you know, this is ridiculous. They said, Well, maybe they can get a little stage or
5 something like that and put him on it. And I said, No, that's the most ridiculous thing
6 ever. And that's where it ended. They were like okay, okay, okay. Max, I remember,
7 just kind of yes'd me to death, okay, okay, I get it.

8 Ms. Cheney. So he suggested that they needed maybe a stage for the President?

9 Mr. Ornato. If that was what would help the Service. If we put him on a stage
10 and the Service boxed him in with glass, it's not going to happen. That's the most
11 ridiculous thing. You know, they were, again, this is that, I use the term "good idea
12 fairy." This happens often of, you know, these ideas that come up, and that's where the
13 Service or myself or the military is just like, no, that can't happen because of A, B, or C.

14 Ms. Cheney. Did he ask you about the possibility of the President doing
15 something inside of the Capitol?

16 Mr. Ornato. No.

17 Ms. Cheney. Thank you.

18 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

19 Q Hi, Mr. Ornato. Before we start with January 6th the day of, I just wanted
20 to go back briefly to that call between Mr. Meadows and the Mayor which you said was
21 January 4th -- 4th, 5th?

22 A I believe, yeah.

23 Q Were you on that call, or were you told about that call?

24 A No, I happened to walk in to have to tell the Chief something, I remember, or
25 hand him something, and I overheard it.

1 Q I just want to be clear that the Mayor Bowser's response to the -- how would
2 you describe it? Was it an offer of National Guard, or an inquiry about whether she
3 needed additional National Guard?

4 A From what I remember, it was the Chief just checking in with the Mayor, are
5 you all set? Do you have everything you need type of thing? We can book to do
6 the -- if you need more -- I know, I think the request was, like I said, 350 or so. But if you
7 need more, the President threw out a number of 10,000. I just heard the Chief's
8 conversation, but that's what it sounded to be. I just had heard his side obviously.

9 Q Right. And there wasn't any step taken after that? It sounded like chief
10 from the -- from what you described earlier, the Chief said, We are all set. And did that
11 seem to end this idea of this number that you said was thrown out there of 10,000
12 troops?

13 A Yes. Yes.

14 Q I just want to switch back to summer for one question. Were you aware of
15 any effort by the White House to federalize the Metropolitan Police Department during
16 the summer protests as part of the security posture?

17 A I was not. I am sorry, I am actually, I felt the Metropolitan Police
18 Department was a federal type of -- because they're D.C., aren't they? I just assume
19 they were, actually.

20 Q They're actually controlled by the Mayor, though?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q But if you're not aware of any effort, though?

23 A No, I wasn't. I obviously wasn't.

24 Q Yes. Yes. Your confusion by the question itself. So let's switch to when
25 you came back to work on January 4th. I think you mentioned you did have that

1 Monday meeting. Is that right?

2 A Correct.

3 Q During that Monday meeting, can you just talk us through what the threat
4 picture was, if anything was presented to you during that briefing about January 6th?

5 A Yes, I remember the Service bringing up a lot of groups. I remember the
6 number being astronomical the first time in a while. We had that many groups who
7 were planning to protest. But after all that, there was obviously no civil disturbance
8 expected, but there obviously would be the kind of threat of a clashing groups. Because
9 if there's anti and that's just assumed -- if there is anti and there is pro, there is always a
10 threat of clashing groups. But that was mainly it. There was, I want to say,
11 somewhere between, if I can remember correctly, 50 to 100 different groups that were
12 planning. The number sizes, you know, could be four in a group. But I just remember
13 a lot of groups were planning that they briefed on, and there was a chance for pro and
14 con, pro and anti groups to clash.

15 Q Do you remember any groups in particular that stood out to you that could
16 be problematic?

17 A No, and they didn't read through every one of groups.

18 Q Who did the briefing from the Secret Service, do you remember?

19 A I don't remember who was there that day.

20 Q Did you receive -- is it a verbal briefing, or do you receive an app?

21 A It's verbal.

22 Q So there is no intelligence briefing from the Protective Intelligence Division
23 that's provided to you?

24 A Not to me, no.

25 Q Is that typical?

1 A Yes. That's typical.

2 Q Apart from these groups, was there a discussion crowd size, I believe, you
3 mentioned earlier?

4 A Yeah, again, they were trying to, you know, nail it down. Was it going to
5 be, I think, we're hearing numbers between 15- and 20,000, and then some people were
6 saying 50,000 which, you know, there is nothing that can back that number up. So the
7 magnetometers, you have to go with the most realistic number. And that's what they
8 went with. I think it was between 15 and 20,000, if I'm not mistaken.

9 Q And when you say "they went with," you mean the Secret Service?

10 A I'm sorry, the Advance Team, the Service, and Bobby Peede, his Advance
11 Team and the Service, yes.

12 Q So at the end of that briefing, are you receiving any other kind of threat
13 assessment other than what the Secret Service is providing you?

14 A Not for any type of event in D.C. like that, no.

15 Q What was your expectation of potential violence for January 6th?

16 A Again, the clashing of the groups on the mall or inside. Worse would be
17 inside the mags, but obviously people that are anti most likely wouldn't go inside the
18 mags, they would stay outside and wait for the pros to come outside. That was what I
19 was thinking.

20 Q So it sounds like the focus was on counter protesters?

21 A Correct.

22 Q Is that fair to say?

23 A Correct.

24 Q Is it fair to say that didn't bear out to be actually what happened on the 6th
25 in terms of the counter protesters being the issue?

1 A Correct. I'm not aware if there were any clashes like that.

2 Q And what was that based on, that expectation of the focus on the counter
3 protesters?

4 A I just think they're the numbers of the groups that were pro and anti. It's
5 just an assumption, obviously, when you get two groups together like that, or multiple
6 groups, I should say, that anything could happen.

7 Q Well, if that would be, what we say bear out during summer protests in D.C.?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Did that occur in the November, December rallies that my colleague talked
10 about?

11 A I don't remember if they occurred then.

12 Q So it sounds like the threat picture going into January 6th from the
13 perspective of your job was -- what was the worst-case scenario you were expecting?

14 A Right. When he, you know, leaves there and comes back to the White
15 House, is the White House Complex secure? Are we gonna have any issues? That's
16 what I was looking at.

17 Q Did you take any additional security measures for the White House?

18 A I wouldn't. I would ask the Service do they feel comfortable? Do they
19 feel secure? And if they're taking up any, which I don't believe any more than an
20 ordinary day at that time except for the event. They had people down there, so they
21 had extra people on being that it was around the event.

22 Q Do you have a sense of the numbers of how many additional people Secret
23 Service put for the event?

24 A I don't.

25 Q And would you have been involved in those discussions?

1 A No, I wouldn't have.

2 Q Were you involved in any of the interagency calls with DHS or the Bureau, or
3 DOD, leading up to January 6th?

4 A No, I wasn't.

5 Q Did you learn of any of the planning or coordinating that was going on to
6 prepare for January 6th?

7 A The only thing I remember with DOD and the National Guard was even
8 though the Mayor didn't want any more National Guard in D.C., that a request was made
9 to have kind of a, lack of better term, a quick reaction force out at Joint Base Andrews
10 being that it was a military installation. I remember Chief Meadows talking to DOD
11 about that, I believe, I remember Chief Meadows letting me know that, Hey, there was
12 going to be National Guard that's going to be at Joint Base Andrews in case they're going
13 to need some more, we're going to -- the Mayor would need any, we're going to make
14 sure they're out there.

15 Q Do you think that ask was made for QRF based on the crowd expectation,
16 the size?

17 A That was what my assumption was based upon all the groups that were
18 coming in and attending. And, again, the crowd sizes were, you know, the organizers
19 were saying, you know, there may be 50,000 here. So that's where it started, I think, to
20 scare the Chief a little bit of how many people were coming in for this event, and wanted
21 to make sure that they would be able to bring in National Guard if needed for this size of
22 this many people inside D.C.

23 Q Was it your sense that that request, that QRF request was made, had been
24 previously made, or that had been made by Chief Meadows?

25 A My assumption was it was made by Chief Meadows. I don't know who else

1 would have made that.

2 Q So let's just start with January 6th then the morning of, you said your office
3 is at the West Wing. Is that correct?

4 A That is.

5 Q What time did you get to your office that morning?

6 A I don't remember exactly. I remember, though, I came in a few minutes
7 early because I didn't want to get caught in any street closures or anything. And so, I
8 usually work out in the gym in the EEOB, and then I go to my office. I would have been
9 on complex probably by 6:30 in the morning at least.

10 Q Was that before or after you worked out?

11 A That's hopefully before. I don't, I don't remember if it was any earlier.
12 Sometimes I'm in there earlier.

13 Q Was there anything unusual that you noticed on your commute in in terms
14 of had the crowds already been forming?

15 A I didn't notice anything. I come in from the north end.

16 Q What time did you -- well, who was all -- who is present when you arrived
17 there? I understand it was kind of a bare-boned staff around that time?

18 A Yeah, so that's what -- also, one of my jobs doing that, obviously, still
19 working on the transition, Monica Block was -- we had days like January 1st. I
20 remember January 5th. I think January 10th. It was like every 5 days an allotment of
21 people would be off-boarded. So by the time we got to January 20th, there were only a
22 few people left on the complex. So there was kind of a bare-bones crew on that
23 morning, January 6th.

24 Q Who would that be?

25 A Oh, not from -- I remember seeing that day, I would say, obviously, Chief of

1 Staff Meadows, kind of his crew outside, his assistants outside his office that sit there. I
2 believe I remember seeing the Family, the First Family was on complex. I remember
3 seeing that, whether it was an email or seeing them personally. Don, Jr., and his
4 girlfriend at the time, Kimberly. And then I believe Eric was also there, if I'm not
5 mistaken. I'm not positive about that, Eric Trump. And then seeing some other
6 staffers walk around; I remember White House counsel would be walking around Pat
7 Cipollone; Robert O'Brien, I believe, may have been walking around. But those are kind
8 of the senior level staff would have been there that I remember. I can't remember
9 everybody.

10 Q Do you remember General Kellogg, Keith Kellogg being there?

11 A Yeah, he was there that day.

12 Q What time did you learn about -- well, let me just back up for a minute. Did
13 you perceive this was going to be a typical normal day when you arrived?

14 A I did. I had plans for that day to actually while everybody was down at the
15 Ellipse, I stayed back, and I was cleaning out my office and also getting -- because I knew
16 everybody would be down there, I didn't want to be seen taking stuff out of my office.
17 And then also, I remember dealing with, again, the transition. Big thing was I was
18 trying -- we were working with -- I was working with Jen O'Malley Dillon, Jennifer
19 O'Malley Dillon, to set up the first round of vaccinations for their core like 35 or so offsite.
20 So we would get White House Medical Unit. So by the time the inauguration happened,
21 they got their second COVID vaccinations, so the administration would be able to be up
22 and running inside the White House.

23 So that was right around that time, but I don't remember exactly what day that
24 was, but that's one of the things I was working on and especially still doing all the
25 classified stuff with her.

1 Q Now, were you aware of when the President left for the event at the Ellipse?

2 A I don't remember the President leaving. I remember Mr. Engel, Bob Engel
3 was walking around, they were delayed, and he was walking around the West Wing. But
4 that's how I would have known the President had left, the agents would have left with
5 him. So when I didn't see agents outside the Oval Office, I assume that's when I knew
6 he wasn't here anymore.

7 Q Where is your office in relation to where the Oval Office is?

8 A I'm more west towards the Chief of Staff's office and the Vice President's
9 office.

10 Q Did you see the Vice President at all that day?

11 A I don't recall seeing the Vice President that morning.

12 Q So was your plan at all to kind of monitor the events of what was happening
13 at the Ellipse or at the joint session?

14 A No.

15 Q And how did you first become aware of the situation at the Capitol, whether
16 it was the first outer breach, or just walk me through your timing of when you focused on
17 the Capitol rather than packing up your office?

18 A Sure. Yeah, no --

19 Ms. Cheney. Can I interrupt for just a second?

20 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

21 Ms. Cheney. Soumya, can we just take a quick break before we leave the Ellipse
22 event before we get to what's happening at the Capitol?

23 Ms. Dayananda. Sure.

24 Ms. Cheney. Maybe if you wanted to break for, it's 12:30 now, I am flexible, but,
25 you know, if people -- 10 minutes or 15 minutes, whatever people would like.

1 Ms. Dayananda. Sure. Ten minutes is great. Does that work with you, Mr.
2 Ornato?

3 Mr. Ornato. Sure. Absolutely.

4 Ms. Cheney. I see we have Lofgren. Did she want to ask a question before we
5 take a break?

6 Ms. Lofgren. This isn't the right sequence, but we've had reports that in the
7 morning before the rally, that Park Police encountered demonstrators outside of the
8 Ellipse, like over at the monuments, who had weapons and aggressively attacked the Park
9 Police. And I'm wondering was that reported into you or the Secret Service to give an
10 idea of what the nature of what might be encountered later in the day?

11 Mr. Ornato. Ma'am, that's the first I've heard about it. I never heard that there
12 was interaction like that outside on the Ellipse that morning, or outside the Ellipse.

13 Ms. Lofgren. Okay.

14 Mr. Ornato. I'm not sure if it was reported to the Secret Service.

15 Ms. Lofgren. Okay. Thank you.

16 Ms. Cheney. So we'll come back in 10 minutes.

17 Ms. Dayananda. It sounds good. Okay. Thank you.

18 [Recess.]

19 Ms. Dayananda. I thank Ms. Cheney and Ms. Lofgren.

20 Ms. Lofgren, were you able to finish your questions before we start again? I
21 didn't know if you had any follow-up.

22 Ms. Lofgren. No, I'm fine.

23 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

24 Q I think we paused when we were about to talk about when you learned
25 about the violence at January 6th, but let me back up. That morning of -- you essentially

1 thought it was going to just be an ordinary day, right, as you said?

2 A Correct.

3 Q And you were not aware if there was any order of deployment of troops,
4 10,000 troops by the White House on that morning?

5 A No.

6 Q And apart from that conversation that you overheard with Mayor Bowser
7 and Chief Meadows, you did not learn of any other additional efforts or order regarding
8 10,000 troops?

9 A No, not 10,000 troops, no.

10 Q Okay. So I think we were -- what was your plan in terms of how you were
11 going to be kept aware of the situation at the Ellipse or on the Capitol?

12 A So normal -- any time there is an event where the President travels, if
13 anything were out of the ordinary that it happened, I would eventually get an email or a
14 call from Bobby Peede or one of his Advance person, or Max if they were on the trip, or
15 Bob Engel, or Dave Cho from the Secret Service if they were on the trip; eventually would
16 send an email or something if something out the ordinary happened just to make me
17 aware, but that would be what I would be expecting to occur if anything was going on
18 down there at the Ellipse.

19 Q Prior to this, I know my colleague talked a little bit about this, but were you
20 aware that there would be -- could potentially be the crowd of protesters going towards
21 the Capitol?

22 A No, I wasn't aware that could -- that was a plan or that could have come up.
23 I was just concentrating on, obviously, the Ellipse and around it, which would be like
24 where the Washington Monument is, because of all that is close to the White House.
25 My concern would be the White House. I actually checked in that morning, I believe

1 with Bobby Peede and Max Miller just to see how things -- you know, how is it looking,
2 how is it going, mags are flowing, mags are open, those types of things, but I didn't get
3 anything more than that in our general conversation.

4 Q But, again, prior to January 6th, were you aware that the actual event and
5 the Protective Intelligence Division briefing was titled March to the Capitol?

6 A I don't recall that, if that was an actual title to anything. I wasn't -- if it was,
7 I wasn't paying attention to that because my concentration was the Ellipse and the White
8 House. That's what I was concerned with.

9 Q If you had been aware of it, would that have altered what you believe the
10 security posture should have been for the President or the Vice President?

11 A I wouldn't have had that. I wouldn't have had that call. I mean, the
12 people that would have that intelligence would make that call. That wouldn't be me.

13 Q Did you have any sense from Robert Engel that he or anyone on the
14 President's detail was aware that the crowd, not the President, would be marching
15 towards the Capitol?

16 A I didn't get awareness, no. I didn't know if they that awareness. I don't
17 know that.

18 Q And what's your contact with Tim Giebels at this time on January 6th about
19 who leads the Vice President's detail?

20 A None. I really would have contact with Tim Giebels in that capacity.

21 Q Did you have any contact with him on January 6th?

22 A No, I did not.

23 Q So you said you were getting updates about the magnetometers being open
24 and the crowd flow coming in. We do have some emails where you are getting those
25 updates and I --

1 A Right, I remember that. Yeah, there was updates on that stuff of how
2 many are in, how many numbers, how many are in line, those types of things. And
3 that's normal for any campaign rally. We have been through this, you know, through
4 the whole campaign. That's kind of an email that is generated and just kind of sent.

5 Q Did you learn of any weapons being confiscated from folks at the mags?

6 A Not at that time. I wasn't aware of it.

7 Q Not during the day of?

8 A The day of, afterwards that there were stuff nuts. I got to say pretty
9 normal. That there was sticks and I think there was helmets, if I am not mistaken, I think
10 I heard body armor was confiscated. But that body armor is probably one of the first
11 that I started there that -- but the Service was letting me know that so they were all
12 aware.

13 Q So let me just, and we received information from the Secret Service about
14 the types of weapons that were seized that day. They stated that there was 28,000
15 attendees who were screened. And from the individuals who were screened, you have
16 blunt weapons, 30; body armor, six; Taser, 29; knives or blades, 269; pepper spray, 242.
17 Was any of this conveyed to you in real time on January 6th?

18 A No, no. Nor would it be. I never have gotten any of that real time. I
19 have been sent -- after a rally or so, I have been sent -- I have actually asked for a picture
20 of everything at one rally in Houston one time, so I could show the campaign staff and the
21 staff that this is why we need time to mag people, because this is what the officers of the
22 Secret Service are taking off people as they're coming in. Like it's not just an easy
23 process you can do 5,000 people in an hour. It's a process. And they have to search
24 them. So I use that as a training tool of knowing the leeway of mag and everything.
25 But I didn't know that. And I wouldn't be given that knowledge real time.

1 Q Are any of those -- you mentioned the body armor was different. Is any of
2 this significant in terms of what was seized from that crowd, from your experience?

3 A In my experience, that's -- the body armor I don't remember so much in the
4 past. However, holsters, stun guns, Tasers, handcuffs, brass knuckles, lighters, blunt
5 weapons that has been taken off rallies throughout that I can remember. Then that's
6 why we have uniform division officers magging everybody.

7 Q So it sounds like before we kind of go through a TikTok, it sounds like
8 nothing -- when does anything become alarming to you, Mr. Ornato, in terms of the
9 security there at the Ellipse?

10 A At the Ellipse, everything seemed to go as I would have expected at the
11 Ellipse, until, I think, I get word that there are, I think, 28,000 or 25,000, whatever the
12 attendees are, but there are thousands of people on the Washington Monument slope
13 that aren't coming in and don't want to come in, they want to hang out from there. So
14 that's where I thought we were going to have problems on the slope of the Washington
15 Monument was kind of my first -- and I think Bobby may have relayed that to me, Bobby
16 Peede.

17 Q Bobby Peede. How would he have known that information about the folks
18 at the Washington Monument?

19 A He was out there. And then him and Max came back to my office once the
20 event had started, and they had the President there and he was speaking. They came
21 back because there was nothing else for them to do. They had a couple site guys there,
22 and everything was pretty standard for a site like that. And I remember being cold, and
23 they came back to the office and just said, you know, everything is going. He is going to
24 finish up his speech, and he'll be back. And Bobby was saying that there were a bunch
25 of people out on the slope that didn't come in, but that's probably the groups that -- the

1 pro and antis.

2 Q Did Bobby Peede or Max Miller express any concern to you at that time
3 about the growing crowd or the type of protesters who were present at the Ellipse?

4 A No, there was no concern. They didn't give me any concern.

5 Q Now, at this time, this would be after the President started his speech. Is
6 that correct?

7 A Correct. He was -- that's what they said. He was speaking when they
8 walked back.

9 Q Did you watch the speech?

10 A No, I didn't. That's typical. I normally don't watch the speeches.

11 Q So what were you doing at that time? This would be -- President Trump
12 speech began at noon.

13 A I'm not sure exactly what I was doing. I was working, like I said, on a lot of
14 things. It had to do with the transition, and also, off-boarding and people with Monica.
15 So there was a lot of things going on.

16 Q Are there TVs on around you?

17 A I have a small monitor, computer-sized TV in my office that was usually on
18 CNBC muted, and then any breaking comes across that is usually that's all on in my office.
19 My office is very -- I have a very small office.

20 Q So you don't watch the speech. When did you first start to understand
21 what was happening at the Capitol?

22 A My assistant had come into the office and said, Hey, turn on the news.
23 There's protesters clashing with Capitol Police at the Capitol. And I was like, Wow. So I
24 turned it on, and then that's where I saw the bike rack pushing and pulling type of thing
25 outside the Capitol is the first I saw of it.

1 Q So that was approximately, if you're talking the bike rack, that's around
2 1 o'clock. Is that from --

3 A Probably. I'm not exactly sure.

4 Q Now, from the whole morning up until that point, did you get any calls from
5 Robert Engel or anyone else in the Secret Service about what was happening at the
6 Ellipse?

7 A No, not that I can recall. There may have been emails that the event is over
8 or something. Bob, I know, swung by my office after the President came back. I said,
9 how did it go? He said it was fine. You know, we're back, and he said everybody is
10 dispersing. And I think I added, you know, are we going to have any problem here?
11 And he says, no, we're good at the House right now. And then that was the end. And
12 then the first thing I had noticed was when my assistant came in and said, Hey, there is,
13 you know, people clashing at the Capitol right now.

14 Q So just timing-wise, the President arrived back to the White House at about
15 1:20. Did your assistant alert you to what was happening on the TV prior to 1:20 or
16 after 1:20?

17 A No, it would have been after Bob came back.

18 Ms. Dayananda. Ms. Cheney, do you have a question?

19 Ms. Cheney. Yes. Thank you, Soumya. Mr. Ornato, I just wanted to go back
20 to understand the uniform division officers are running the mags. And as they're taking
21 weapons off of people, who would they give that information to?

22 Mr. Ornato. It would be their uniform division officer official that's there,
23 whether it's a lieutenant, captain, or inspector that was assigned that day, they would be
24 giving all that information. The collection of the weapons would go to one of their
25 supervisors that's there.

1 Ms. Cheney. And then, what would that supervisor do with that information?

2 Mr. Ornato. I'm not sure exactly when the magnetometer program, when they
3 report that to their uppers or their supervisors. I'm not exactly sure how that goes.
4 Eventually, it trickles to the Office of Protective Operations. And then over, if there was
5 anything wanted to be known or anything, then they would alert the detail. But unless
6 there was any -- and they would also alert our Protective Intelligence Division whether
7 you know -- but that's if they're stopping somebody with a gun or something of that
8 nature, they probably would have alerted them to maybe the body armor, but the other
9 stuff was pretty normal confiscation throughout magnetometer procedures.

10 Ms. Cheney. And how would the reporting work in terms of what you were
11 seeing outside of the mags? Obviously, you got people who are seeing activity outside
12 of the mags.

13 Mr. Ornato. Sure. So, again, in my capacity that I was in that day as the Deputy
14 Chief of Staff, I wouldn't have had any insight to that. The Secret Service -- my
15 assumption here is the Secret Service, Park Police, MPD, the officers, and everybody
16 that's out there would be -- would know all that, and they would be filtering that to each
17 other. They would be sharing all that information of what's going on and talking to each
18 other, because they would have a centrally located security room with a representative
19 from each agency in there, is my assumption.

20 Ms. Cheney. And so, and I want to be careful about sensitive information
21 about --

22 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

23 Ms. Cheney. -- how the protection process works, and we can ask you that
24 perhaps in a different setting. But in terms of the communication between, if there are
25 people who see things outside the mags and describing what's going on. For example, if

1 people were aware that there were people intentionally not bringing their backpacks in
2 through the mags, setting up kind of a sentry system, what would the communication be
3 to the President's detail?

4 Mr. Ornato. I'm not sure what it was that day, if there is something that the
5 Protective Intelligence Division, that whoever is doing that, that site for that day felt there
6 was something to pass, they would pass it to the supervisor of the Presidential Protective
7 Division. So that would be either the ASAC or the SAC or the DSAC, whoever is there.
8 That would have been the SAC at the time was there, Bob Engel. And then there would
9 have been two other supervisors that they may have passed or could have passed the
10 information to. And usually, they will if there's anything to highlight and for them to
11 know, they would definitely pass that information.

12 Ms. Cheney. And so if they passed that information, then, is that something that
13 the head of the President's detail would share with you, or would share with the Chief of
14 Staff?

15 Mr. Ornato. No, normally, that's a security role, a security function. There
16 wouldn't be anything really unless there was an immediate threat. But if it was
17 something that wasn't immediate to the President, the SAC of the detail may share it with
18 the Chief of Staff rep that's there at the time. I believe Meadows was down at the site
19 there. So he may have shared it with them, I don't know. But that would be
20 something onsite if the SAC of the detail felt it was necessary. But, normally, I wouldn't
21 know myself if I was there if they passed, they probably wouldn't have passed that
22 information to me.

23 Ms. Cheney. And did they pass that information to you that day?

24 Mr. Ornato. No, they did not. Not that day, I didn't know that. I learned later
25 on of things that were confiscated.

1 Ms. Cheney. Okay. And the same goes for things that were left intentionally
2 outside the mags?

3 Mr. Ornato. Correct. Again, I wouldn't have known at the time.

4 Ms. Cheney. Okay. And then, you mentioned few minutes ago that you had
5 concern about people on the Monument grounds. Can you just explain what your
6 concern was about them?

7 Mr. Ornato. Sure. Well, that was what we had given the intelligence about.
8 There were so many groups coming to D.C., you know, 100 groups or whatever it was.
9 And my concern was, well, if they're outside the mags, that means we don't know what
10 they have. You know, I'd rather everybody be inside the mags, because then you know
11 they don't have weapons if they're inside the mags. So if they're outside the mags and
12 there is large, large numbers, well, there may be something in there that, you know, you
13 know you're not really truthfully knowing what can happen, because you are not
14 controlling that situation.

15 So, again, that gave me pause for the White House because they are in close
16 proximity to the White House, a large group like that.

17 Ms. Cheney. Okay. Thank you.

18 Mr. Ornato. Yeah.

19 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

20 Q Just to follow up on that, Mr. Ornato, did it give you pause about the Vice
21 President, who was already at the Capitol at that time?

22 A No, and again, my role isn't with the Vice President as far as the operations
23 and everything I run would be for the President. They have a Chief of Staff and Deputy
24 Chief of Staff and everything themselves. So I wouldn't -- I don't know the Vice
25 President's daily events or anything like that. I would never have that kind of

1 information, or even bother with that information at that time.

2 Q Sure. I understand that. I'm just curious whether when you're seeing
3 that and learning that from Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede, whether it raises a broader alarm,
4 understanding your lane is the White House --

5 A Sure.

6 Q -- and whether you would --

7 A At that time, the first time I asked about the Vice President was when there
8 was clashing taking place outside the Capitol. That's when I asked about the Vice
9 President to the President's detail. Do we have any word on what's going on inside with
10 the Vice President?

11 Q Got it. And we'll get to that. I just want to -- you mentioned that when
12 Mr. Engel came back to the White House, you had a conversation with him. Did he
13 come to your office?

14 A Yeah, because you walked by it to exit, so he walked by and just poked his
15 said in and said, Hey, we're back, you know, everything went fine, and, you know,
16 everybody dispersing. And that was it.

17 Q Did you ever learn that there was an intention of the President to go to the
18 Capitol after the speech ended?

19 A No. I did not know that. I mean, I don't think -- that couldn't have
20 happened. Nobody had -- nobody would be prepared for that. There would be no
21 security to do that. There would be no -- I mean, that was like I said, talked about a
22 couple of days, whenever it was prior, and it was scoffed at and moved on, and I never
23 heard about it again.

24 Q So apart from that conversation you described earlier, you did not learn of
25 any intent on January 6th the President to go?

1 A No. I did not.

2 Q And if there had been a conversation on January 6th, would you have
3 learned about it?

4 A Maybe not. It all depends. Usually somebody would, you know, report it
5 up or report over, like, Hey, this is what I overheard or something, but I never heard
6 anything like that.

7 Q And the conversation with Mr. Engel was it -- again, this was about 1:20,
8 1:30, did everything seem status quo at that time?

9 A It did.

10 Q And there was no cause for alarm conveyed by Agent Engel?

11 A No, I don't remember any cause for alarm at that point.

12 Q When did you learn, because prior to that around 1:10, there was a pipe
13 bomb sound at the DNC? Do you remember learning about that?

14 A Yeah, I did hear about that. It wasn't -- I didn't get it real time. I heard
15 about it later on. I think I heard about two, if I'm not mistaken, later on, from some
16 emails that I believe were eventually sent. There was some confusion after the clashing
17 started at the attack at the Capitol. And some reporting was false. And there was just
18 some confusion. And then once the emails from the Emergency Operations Center
19 started, I think that's when I started to learn more of what was going on and what was
20 found.

21 Q So you did not learn about that in real time?

22 A I did not know that real time. That's all I can remember. Eventually, I
23 think I got an email about it.

24 Q From whom?

25 A It would have been, I believe, the Service would have forwarded that email

1 and let me have known that. I shouldn't say an email. They may have called me. I
2 don't recall offhand.

3 Q Were you aware that Vice President-elect Kamala Harris was in the DNC at
4 the time?

5 A Yes, I was. I passed that to the Chief as well, that that was found. She
6 was in there, and I believe they relocated her.

7 Q Did you find that out in real time, or were you relaying it to Chief Meadows
8 after the fact?

9 A After. It was after. It wasn't while it was happening. There is going to
10 be delays for reporting, obviously, by the time it gets to certain people. By the time I get
11 it, it's going to be delayed.

12 Q So can just talk me through how you're receiving information? You,
13 obviously, turn your TV on once Ms. Block comes into your office?

14 A Right. So then I see that happening, and then I asked the detail -- I ask Bob
15 Engel, you know, Where is the Vice President? What are they doing with the Vice
16 President in there? Let me find out. And then eventually he called back and
17 from -- and this is where, again, fog of war happens. The relay was the Vice President
18 was evacuated to his residence, to the VPR, the Vice President residence. So in hearing
19 that, I walked over to the Chief's office and let the Chief know, Hey, the Vice President,
20 they have taken him out of the Capitol -- or he is being evacuated to his residence. Chief
21 said, okay. Thank you. And then, from there, we just were waiting and trying to
22 monitor what was going on.

23 Q Well, let me stop you there.

24 A Yeah.

25 Q Who told you that the Vice President had relocated to his residence?

1 A It would have been Bob Engel is who would have passed the information.

2 Q Are you aware of how he learned that information?

3 A I was not.

4 Q And, obviously, we know that not to be true, correct?

5 A Right.

6 Q Did you ever go back to Agent Engel to figure out what the communication
7 gap there was?

8 A Yeah, so then, I don't know however time longer, the Chief poked his head
9 back in, the Chief of Staff poked his head back in to me and say, Hey, the Vice President is
10 still up there. They're holding up there. And I said, okay. I said, I'm sorry, let me get
11 back to you. And then I called over and Engel said, yeah, they're still there. They
12 relocated at the Capitol to where they relocated to. If they evacuate, they're going to
13 the residence. And I said, Okay. I said, just let me know if that were to happen, and he
14 said okay. And he said, did you not have that update? I said, no, I guess, it was
15 corrected. And he said, I'll have the Emergency Operations Center start putting you -- or
16 I'll start forwarding you the emails that our guys in the EOC are getting. And I said,
17 Okay, in the Emergency Operation Center. I said perfect. And then, sometime after
18 3:00, 3:00, 3:30 or so, I started to get those emails and see what was happening, and
19 that's where I had now some site picture of what was going on up there.

20 Q Is there a reason why you weren't on that EOC list from the beginning of the
21 day?

22 A Because it was Secret Service specific, and they wouldn't have put me on
23 there. That's not my role. They wouldn't have had me on there in normally.

24 Q So I'm just trying to get a sense of the timing of when the information came
25 to misinformation about the Vice President at his residence. When you are alerted to

1 turning your TV on, do you start watching what is occurring in real time?

2 A Correct.

3 Q Were you watching when the Vice President was rushed off the stage in the
4 Senate Chamber?

5 A No, I didn't see any of that. I just saw the outside clash. And I was going
6 in and out as well trying to get a site picture of, you know. I remember going over to the
7 White House Military Office and seeing what they have because, obviously, some of our
8 programs touch up at the Capitol and just making sure, you know, what are we seeing
9 here, and what does everybody have for a site picture.

10 Q So describe that scene at that point. Who is present there to kind of give
11 you what that site picture looks like?

12 A Whenever I went to watch military, it was General Howerton that I saw.
13 And the General basically said, Hey, you know this is where we're at, this is what we have,
14 and we're holding. So a lot of our programs resolve, obviously, around the President.
15 And so the President, one of the programs, it's not a -- the name of it -- it's not classified
16 or anything like that. But just the Presidential successor program, right? But the
17 President is secure. So that's what our main focus is, is the President is in the White
18 House, the President is secure, how is the White House Complex? Our site picture
19 looking around the White House at that time to make sure we're not going to be
20 compromised in any way.

21 Q And did the General's name that you mentioned, what his last name?

22 A Oh, I am sorry, Howerton. I believe it's H-o-w-e-r-t-o-n.

23 Q And he works out of the White House, the military office there?

24 A He was at the time. He was the director of the White House Military
25 Office.

1 Q Now, I get that the President is at the White House, your lane is the White
2 House, everybody seems secure. But clearly you're watching --

3 A Sure.

4 Q -- the escalating violence of what's occurring at the Capitol. What impact
5 does it have on you? Are you speaking to people? Are you calling people? Are
6 people calling you?

1

2 [1:15 p.m.]

3 Mr. Ornato. For the most part, right now, to be honest, I'm appalled, obviously.
4 I've got a pit in my stomach, and I want to be there with fellow officers trying to defend it.
5 That's first. So --

6 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

7 Q I understand kind of going through this day can bring out a lot of emotions,
8 and if you need a moment, I'm happy to give you one. But this is important to
9 understand, really what your view is here of what occurred and what the steps that you
10 took --

11 A Nope. I'm okay. I'm okay. Sorry. It's the first time --

12 Q No --

13 A -- kind of talking about it.

14 Q I appreciate that.

15 A So, again, I'm looking at, how are we -- and, again, I know you understand
16 that I'm concerned about the White House. I am concerned about the Capitol, I am
17 concerned about everybody out there, but I don't have the reach there. I don't have
18 any authorization or jurisdiction there. Now my only thing is asking, how could we get
19 more people there to stop this?

20 So I know there was a Federal -- an order went out. I remember calling the -- I
21 talked to the Secret Service. I think it was Bob Engel who told me -- I'm not sure exactly,
22 but somebody told me the Federal order went out: Any law enforcement person in the
23 area, respond to the Capitol.

24 So then I remember the chief saying, hey, I'm calling Secretary of Defense to get
25 that QRF in here. Because I didn't know at the time -- I just thought it was still outside

1 the Capitol, but they had breached the Capitol. The chief had told me that. I didn't
2 know that. Once they breached the doors, the chief, somewhere in that -- and, again,
3 it's fog of war, right? Everything that's happened is very fast, of everything going on.

4 The chief said he was making sure Secretary Esper -- I'm sorry, it wasn't
5 Esper -- the Acting Secretary --

6 Q Miller.

7 A -- Miller would get the QRF from the National Guard that was holding at JBA,
8 would get them in. And so I remember him saying to me, "Try to get Miller on the
9 phone." "I'll try."

10 So my immediate is -- I know I can get Kash Patel, usually, so I called him. And I
11 got Kash. I said, "Hey, are you near Secretary Miller?" And he said, "I can get to him."
12 I said, "Chief wants to talk to him now." So, as I was walking into the chief's office with
13 my phone, the chief got Miller on the phone. And so then I said, "Kash, he's talking to
14 him," and I hung up.

15 So that was kind of what was going on. And then I remember the chief telling
16 Miller, get them in here, get them in here to secure the Capitol now. And that's where I
17 remember the National Guard being, you know, ordered by the chief.

18 Q And, now, at that time you walked into Chief Meadows' office, who else is
19 there?

20 A I don't recall who was there. I mean, his outer there was his assistants, but
21 I don't recall if anybody else was in there. He was, at the time, obviously, running back
22 and forth between the Oval and his office.

23 Q Where was the President at the time?

24 A In the Oval area, as far as I can tell.

25 Q Did you go into the Oval at any point on the 6th?

1 A I went in one time when I got a report that two Capitol Police officers were
2 hurt.

3 Q And you conveyed that to the President in the Oval Office?

4 A No, I never talked to the President that day. I handed the chief a note that
5 said, "Two officers down. En route to hospital."

6 Ms. Dayananda. We can take a minute, Mr. Ornato. We'll take a minute.

7 Mr. Huse. We'll be right back.

8 Ms. Dayananda. Okay. No worries.

9 Mr. Huse. Thank you.

10 [Recess.]

11 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

12 Q Mr. Ornato, I know it was a hectic day and it brings out --

13 A Yeah.

14 Q -- a lot of emotions, so I appreciate you going through it with this level of
15 detail.

16 We paused when you said you went to the Oval and passed a note.

17 A Sure. So --

18 Q Can you -- go ahead.

19 A So I wrote down on a piece of paper that two officers were down and
20 unconscious. I believe I -- and I wrote that on just, like, a little card and walked into the
21 Oval. They weren't in the Oval. They were in the back dining room.

22 If you look down, the back dining room has a hallway from the Oval. I can see
23 the chief sitting at, kind of, one side of the table, the head of the table on one side, which
24 I assumed the President was at the other side, head of the table.

25 So, as I walked in, I looked at the chief to -- I got his attention. The chief gave

1 me, you know, kind of, one of these. I handed him the note, and I turned around and
2 walked out.

3 And that was my extent of going into the Oval that I can recall at that day and
4 dealing with anything on in there.

5 Q And who was in that dining hall area at that time?

6 A I just remember seeing the chief, and the President was off to the left at the
7 other head of the table. That's all I can recall seeing.

8 Q Did you have any conversations with the President at all on January 6th?

9 A I don't recall any. And that was the only time, I think, I was in his presence,
10 so I don't believe I can recall having any.

11 Q When you handed that note to Chief Meadows, was there a response from
12 him?

13 A No. Later on -- he just read it, and he looked at me and kind of, like, you
14 know, thanks for letting him know, as I saw him through the hallway.

15 He then came back out, and he said, "Hey, what do we know? How bad?"
16 And I said, "One I was told isn't breathing. We're getting" -- usually first reports are
17 always wrong, so I was hopeful that that was a wrong report. But I said, "We're getting
18 more information. I'll get it to you when it comes in."

19 And then anytime I had gotten something from the emails forwarded to me by
20 Mr. Engel, by Bob, I would -- if it had anything to do with an officer being injured -- or, I
21 remember, a shot was fired inside the chambers, that later to find out what had
22 happened, but we didn't know at the time. All we knew, a shot was fired. That
23 information there I would brief the chief on.

24 But, other than that, that was kind of the only -- what I would take out of those
25 emails.

1 Q When you're providing these updates on officer security to Chief Meadows,
2 are you conveying what I would assume is urgency to end this violence that's occurring to
3 Chief Meadows?

4 A Yes. Like, you know, the constant was, you know, where is the National
5 Guard? Why isn't -- you know, we've got to get control of this. And, obviously,
6 everyone has to take part to get control of this, but there was only so much I could do
7 from sitting where I was.

8 And, also, now we have to -- as a Service, you know, the mindset is, is this one
9 attack or now is there going to be an anti- coming at the White House? So that becomes
10 a concern. So --

11 Q I understand that, but can you describe what that conversation is like
12 between you and Chief Meadows?

13 A It's extremely quick, because he's running back and forth. It's in the
14 hallway of him passing my office, of what's going on.

15 But, you know, he understood the urgency, that's for sure. And he kept, you
16 know, getting Miller on the phone, wanting to know where they were, why aren't they
17 there yet.

18 Q And, at this time, are you going back and forth from your office to the Oval
19 Office?

20 A No. I don't go to the Oval Office again that I can remember.

21 Q You stay in your office in the West Wing?

22 A I stay in that end of the wing, yes.

23 Q Who's on that end of the wing watching what's occurring?

24 A I don't recall who was actually -- I know outside the chief's office was his
25 assistants, but my assistant was in my office with me.

1 But it's kind of -- I know Robert O'Brien is down that way, but I don't remember -- I
2 remember the NSA was going back and forth -- I don't remember what Robert O'Brien
3 actually was doing. I don't know -- you know, I wouldn't report to him or anything, so I
4 wasn't looking for him.

5 Q Uh-huh.

6 A It was the chief that I would always ask Bo, is he back, is he back? And my
7 assistant, I'm sorry, is Bo Harrison, and -- William Harrison. He goes by "Bo."

8 So I would always ask, is he back? And he's like, yeah. Update? And then I'd
9 give him, hey, this is what's going on. He's like, all right. And that was it. It was that
10 quick of an interaction.

11 Q Are you getting updates from individuals that you know from your law
12 enforcement career, or are you getting updates from the EOC emails?

13 A I'm getting updates pushed to me from Bob Engel that are being pushed to
14 him from the EOC.

15 Q Who are you in contact with, though, on your phone? We've learned,
16 speaking to many people, that a lot of --

17 A Sure.

18 Q -- the stuff that was happening in terms of urgent communications were
19 over people's phones and not relying on emails of JOC updates or NOC -- whatever
20 updates there are from these operations centers.

21 A Sure.

22 Q So who are you hearing from?

23 A I'm talking -- if I'm on the phone, I'm calling over to the White House Military
24 Office, just, again, checking with them. I would check with them, the White House
25 Medical Unit, and the Secret Service detail leader.

1 I think later in the day I talked to the deputy director of the Secret Service,
2 sometime later in the day. At that point, I think it was just a -- he was calling to say, are
3 you guys all set over there? Do you need anything else from us?

4 And I remember asking, you know, how many of our guys -- how many Service
5 guys are up there? And whatever, in the hundreds, responded. And that was kind of
6 the conversation. He was just checking in. But there's --

7 Q Did you --

8 A Yep.

9 Q Did anyone from -- let me go back to the -- the White House Military Office
10 person, is it always General Howerton that you're in touch with?

11 A It could've been General Howerton, or it could've been Brad Hoagland, who
12 was the deputy director, or the chief of staff there was Colonel -- he goes by
13 "Rainman" -- Colonel Howerton -- I'm sorry -- Colonel Hoffman.

14 Q And, as far as the Secret Service, it sounds like you and Mr. Engel are in
15 communication with each other.

16 A Yeah. If I remember correctly, it would've been Mr. Engel or Mr. Arruda,
17 because I believe Mr. Cho was doing the transition detail. He was with President-elect
18 Biden at the time, from what I remember.

19 Q But isn't Mr. Engel in the White House with you, with the President?

20 A No. His office is in the EEOB.

21 Q Okay. So he's not with the President at that time.

22 A No. No. The shift and the supervisor on duty is below the President in
23 their "down room," as we call it, W16.

24 Q I want to shift to the Vice President's location, which you mentioned briefly.

25 A Uh-huh.

1 Q During any conversations with --

2 Mr. Heaphy. Soumya, before you do that --

3 Ms. Dayananda. Sure.

4 Mr. Heaphy. Soumya, I'm sorry, could I just jump in with another question --

5 Ms. Dayananda. Yeah, of course.

6 Mr. Heaphy. -- or two about the dining room?

7 BY MR. HEAPHY:

8 Q And, Mr. Ornato, it's Tim Heaphy on the phone.

9 But I just wanted to quickly go back to the dining room and ask if you remember a
10 television being on when you went back to hand Chief Meadows the note and he was
11 back there with the President?

12 A I'm -- I don't recall. I'm assuming it was on, but I don't recall. I really have
13 a tunnel vision of a view of Mr. Meadows at that time, because that was my view of
14 focus. I wasn't looking around. I did not want to catch anybody else's eyes, meaning
15 the President's eyes. I was deemed to hand Mr. Meadows that note and walk out.

16 Q Okay. There is a television on the wall in the dining room. Isn't that
17 right?

18 A That is correct. That would've been to the right of Mr. Meadows. That
19 would've been behind him, to the right.

20 Q Okay. Yeah. Okay.

21 And was it, in your experience, Mr. Ornato, working in the White House, kind of
22 standard for the President himself to be back in the dining room watching television?
23 Was that an occurrence that you observed on multiple occasions?

24 A Not necess- -- I tried to stay out of the Oval, to be honest with you.

25 Q Yeah.

1 A And if the President was back there, I didn't -- that's his private space. I try
2 not to go back there.

3 If I had to go back there for any kind of -- like I said, handing a note on that day.
4 But, in general, if I went back there on another day, which was extremely rare, the
5 television would be on.

6 Q Okay. All right. That's helpful. Thank you, Mr. Ornato.

7 A Yep, absolutely.

8 Ms. Cheney. Soumya, I --

9 Ms. Dayananda. Oh, go ahead.

10 Ms. Cheney. I just wanted to see -- to get some more, sort of, specificity,
11 Mr. Ornato.

12 In terms of the communications that you received from the EOC, could you give us
13 a sense, first of all, of, you know, how often, how many times you got an email that made
14 you understand you needed to go immediately and convey that information?

15 Mr. Ornato. Sure. Sorry, ma'am. I don't recall how many the reoccurrence it
16 was, whether it was maybe, you know, once-an-hour update or something of that nature
17 unless something had happened. I don't recall.

18 But I remember passing about the officers, I remember passing about the shot
19 being fired inside, and I remember getting an update that at some point the National
20 Guard, however many members, were en route with also, like, State police from
21 surrounding areas and some police, and I passed that. So roughly about four times of
22 having to pass information in maybe 3 or 4 hours at that point.

23 Ms. Cheney. And those all would've been after the first time you went to see
24 Mr. Meadows, which was spurred by what you saw on television, the bike racks?

25 Mr. Ornato. I didn't see him for that. He had poked his head in and let me

1 know that they breached a door, the Capitol door. He had gotten that before -- I didn't
2 know that.

3 Ms. Cheney. So what did you do when you saw the reporting about the bike
4 racks?

5 Mr. Ornato. I had asked. He said, "Yeah, Capitol Police is up there. They're
6 asking for more units." The Service was sending over people that I know of. I know
7 Park Police was sending over people. I was just being told this information from the
8 Service, that they were getting it from listening to their partners.

9 Ms. Cheney. So you asked Mr. Engel?

10 Mr. Ornato. Correct.

11 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

12 And, in terms of the information coming from the EOC, was that coming to you by
13 email?

14 Mr. Ornato. It was. It was being forwarded to me on email, correct.

15 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

16 All right. Thank you.

17 Mr. Ornato. Yes.

18 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

19 Q Mr. Ornato, when my colleague Mr. Heaphy was asking about you entering
20 the dining hall, you stated you didn't want to catch the President's eye. Can you explain
21 what you mean by that?

22 A Oh, just because, at that point, that's not my role. I didn't want to be asked
23 any questions. This is -- again, I did not want to have to be asked about anything,
24 whether it was political or whether it was what's going on.

25 My voice was, to the President, at that point, was not going to be -- shouldn't have

1 been asked. It's the chief of staff who has his ear. The chief of staff is talking to him.
2 I am out of that scenario. It's not a place for me to be in.

3 Q What concerned you, though, about what he may ask you?

4 A I don't know, and that's why I -- things, you know -- I don't want to be asked
5 any questions at that point.

6 I'm also, as I've shared, pretty emotional about what's going on, as well. So, you
7 know, that these are people that were at the Ellipse and people that were on the
8 monument, you know, if they were here to see him and now they're doing this, I'm
9 obviously disturbed by it and pretty appalled. So I didn't want to have any conversation
10 at that point.

11 Q Did you feel that the President could have taken steps to stop the violence
12 that was occurring?

13 A Again, I don't know if that's the case. It's not my place to say that, if he
14 could've or he did or he didn't. I, again, am concerned about my operations and the
15 people that are doing it. I don't get involved. That's not my role, to get involved in
16 that.

17 Q Understood, but, as you said, the protesters who came there came to see
18 him. So, having the power to get the folks to come there to see him, did you think there
19 was a possibility that he could tell them to then leave?

20 A That never actually crossed my mind for that. When mobs get together, it
21 doesn't matter who's saying what. It's a mob mentality takes over. And we've seen
22 that throughout, I think, in a lot of -- in history with groups like this.

23 When a mob mentality is attacking one area, that group is going to do it no matter
24 if the leader is there or not. If there is a leader in that group of whatever protest group
25 that started this, even if they were there at the Capitol saying, "Hey, stop," it's a mob

1 mentality. Nobody's listening anymore; everybody's acting.

2 So I'm not thinking that, yeah, the President can shut this down. That's not
3 coming to my mind at that point. There's too many other things I'm doing.

4 Q Were you aware of some of the tweets that the President put out on January
5 6th?

6 A Later on. My assistant was monitoring Twitter and stuff, and he had told
7 me that they were going -- they went out.

8 Q One of those tweets -- and I'll just read it to you and not bring it out -- at
9 2:38, so this is after folks had entered the Capitol, not just the bike rack breach, quote,
10 "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of
11 our Country. Stay peaceful!"

12 A Uh-huh. I heard that after.

13 Q Did you consider this an order by the President to leave or a direction by the
14 President to those protesters to leave?

15 A Yeah, I mean, it was what it was. He was trying to gain peace again. He
16 was trying to -- you know, from what I was seeing, he's trying to put something out there
17 to have people back down of what they're doing.

18 But do I think it's going to help? At the time, I don't think it was going to help.
19 Again, this mob mentality. They were inside. Who's looking at Twitter that's attacking
20 police officers? They're not looking at their phones. They're doing what they came
21 here to do, and that's the thing.

22 I don't see how anything that he tweeted out -- or they've, even if -- whatever he
23 did, they're going to see this and all of a sudden stop. That's not the mentality I would
24 see happening to these people.

25 Q I understand that. I just want to walk you through --

1 A Sure.

2 Q -- to get your point of what impact -- I think your point is, what impact, if
3 any, would these tweets have had? Is that fair to say?

4 A Correct, yeah. Who's seeing them? Who's, you know --

5 Q Sure.

6 A People aren't picking -- yeah, exactly.

7 Q So, at 3:13, another tweet by the President: "I'm asking for everyone at the
8 U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law &
9 Order -- respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!"

10 Now, at this point, 3:13, obviously this has been -- this is after Ashli Babbitt had
11 already been shot. Secret Service had already responded, as you mentioned, hundreds
12 of law enforcement --

13 A Uh-huh.

14 Q -- Secret Service agents, I think is what you said. And it's still not an order
15 or a direction to go home. In fact, it says "remain peaceful."

16 Again, do you think that could've been a stronger statement by the President at
17 that time?

18 A I actually didn't even think about it till you just said it that there wasn't an
19 order to go home.

20 Again, the President, doing what Presidents do, try to gain control and order.
21 But I don't -- I put on my law enforcement hat. You know, there's nothing you're going
22 to be able to put out or say to these people to stop this attack, even if you're a President
23 of the United States. These people aren't seeing it. They're not hearing it. They're
24 involved in an actual assault.

25 So I really don't give credence or -- to what the President could say or what do.

1 That's just seeing -- people that are seeing that are people sitting at home watching this
2 on TV or looking at their phones and not involved in the actual attack.

3 You know, there's -- up at the Capitol -- the National Guard is what we were trying
4 to do. Obviously, Meadows was trying to get the National Guard in there. And that
5 was a constant of, "Hey, when's the Guard getting there?" and trying to get updates.
6 And I was getting it from the EOC that, you know, 1,100 Guard, or whatever the numbers
7 are, en route, en route. And I kept telling them, "Hey, they're coming," but it seemed
8 like forever, that they never came.

9 So, you know, that was a frustrating point. I remember passing that over to the
10 White House Military Office to --

11 Q Sure. And let me just --

12 A People are going to be the only thing that are going to stop them from
13 attacking at this point.

14 Ms. Cheney. Soumya?

15 Ms. Dayananda. Go ahead.

16 Ms. Cheney. Yeah.

17 So, Mr. Ornato, you know, we actually know from a number of sources, including
18 the filings with U.S. attorneys on the website that are public filings of the criminal
19 defendants, that they were, in fact, impacted by the President's tweets.

20 Mr. Ornato. Oh. Okay. I was not aware of that, ma'am. I'm sorry.

21 Ms. Cheney. Yeah. And I wonder, as you're analyzing the President's tweets
22 that day -- you know, this tweet at 2:24: "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do
23 what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution."

24 What's your assessment of that tweet?

25 Mr. Ornato. Well, again, in my personal capacity, I don't have -- in my Secret

1 Service or my deputy chief of staff of operations capacity, I'm not paying attention to
2 politics and those kind of tweets and those kind -- I just don't. I don't get involved.
3 That's not my job to do that.

4 You know, personal capacity, do I think those are necessary and do I think those
5 are helpful? Absolutely not. That doesn't help the country. It doesn't help anything.
6 I don't think those are helpful.

7 But there's nothing I can do in any capacity to stop any of that. There's nothing I
8 can bring forward to stop the President from tweeting those things.

9 Ms. Cheney. I understand that. I'm actually just trying to get your assessment.
10 And I know that you are aware -- and you mentioned Presidential succession -- that
11 you're aware the Vice President is first in line of succession.

12 Mr. Ornato. I am.

13 Ms. Cheney. Speaker of the House, second in line of succession.

14 Mr. Ornato. That's right.

15 Ms. Cheney. So -- and I appreciate that it was an emotional day and that it's
16 emotional talking about the law enforcement officers --

17 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

18 Ms. Cheney. -- who were brutally assaulted --

19 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh.

20 Ms. Cheney. -- by a mob that the President had summoned to Washington and
21 then told to march on the Capitol.

22 And I want to just mention one thing that I found very emotional. There's a
23 video -- I'm sure you probably have seen it -- of the Vice President and his family being
24 evacuated --

25 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh.

1 Ms. Cheney. -- down the steps. Are you familiar with that video?

2 Mr. Ornato. I saw a picture, not a video, but I saw a picture of it.

3 Ms. Cheney. When I saw that video, I was reminded of a very similar photograph
4 of my father --

5 Mr. Ornato. Yep.

6 Ms. Cheney. -- and Jimmy Scott --

7 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh.

8 Ms. Cheney. -- who was in charge of his detail, who evacuated him from the
9 West Wing into the bunker on 9/11, a very similar photo of them moving down the stairs.

10 Mr. Ornato. Right.

11 Ms. Cheney. So, as you assess what was happening that day and this notion that
12 somehow, "Gosh, nobody could've done anything," you know, I would just ask you to
13 really reflect on the gravity of that moment.

14 And certainly this was not just a political issue, if the Vice President of the United
15 States is under a direct threat.

16 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh. Yep.

17 Ms. Cheney. So the Vice President of the United States is under direct threat,
18 and the President was aware of the violence when he sent that tweet out. So, in your
19 view, would you still say that's just a political tweet?

20 Mr. Ornato. No, I wouldn't, but I didn't -- I don't know if the President actually
21 knew that the Vice President was at the Capitol, because I had let the chief of staff know
22 that the Vice President was at his residence, and there was confusion in the beginning.
23 And I'm not making an excuse, but I don't know if that was actually passed, if he was
24 there or not. Because the initial passing was he was evacuated to his residence.

25 Do I think the tweet is appalling? Absolutely.

1 Ms. Cheney. Well, even if he'd been --

2 Mr. Ornato. But --

3 Ms. Cheney. -- evacuated to his residence, he was --

4 Mr. Ornato. Yep.

5 Ms. Cheney. -- just having left the floor of the Senate at the time of the tweet.

6 So, under any circumstances, whether he was --

7 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

8 Ms. Cheney. -- evacuated to the parking garage or whether he was evacuated to
9 his residence, that would not have happened at the time the President sent the tweet.

10 So my question is, as you are thinking about the Presidential succession --

11 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh.

12 Ms. Cheney. -- and understanding that the Vice President himself was under
13 threat at the Capitol, you know, your concern about your fellow officers who were there
14 defending the Vice President, defending the Members of Congress, is very important, but
15 I wonder whether you had similar concern for the Vice President.

16 Mr. Ornato. I did, ma'am. And I was assured that the Vice President -- later,
17 when I realized that he was at the Capitol, I was told he was secure and there was no
18 threat at that time.

19 So the successor program was not enacted due to the -- the number one of it
20 being the President was secure. So there was no successor program that would've been
21 enacted, obviously, for the Presidency.

22 The White House Military Office, though, assured me that they had routes in and
23 out if they needed to get to different -- the House Speaker, if things needed to go where
24 they have another program to call in, even though the areas of concern, meaning the
25 west and the east slopes there at the Capitol, had people, that they would still be able to

1 get assets in, into another area.

2 I was told that the Members were being -- tried to be -- they were being
3 evacuated, they were going to one of the local military installations, that the Capitol
4 Police was bringing them, and then that the Vice President, eventually I found out, was
5 secure. He was fine where he was. And if they were to leave, they were going to his
6 residence, but he was okay. And the Service sent additional assets to secure his
7 perimeter.

8 So, based upon my training as a detail leader, as a special agent in charge and
9 everything, you know, Tim Giebels did what he was trained to do. He relocated the Vice
10 President to a secure location. He then holds, because we teach building defense, so
11 you hold, because you don't want to be forced out of anywhere because you can be
12 forced into an ambush. You hold, and you hold your perimeter. You hold that until
13 the building or the perimeter starts degrading around you, in which then you would move
14 to another location.

15 So that I know the Vice President was in a holding pattern in that area of the
16 Capitol and that they had that secure. So I knew that they were secure at that time.

17 Ms. Cheney. And, Mr. Ornato, have you talked to Keith Kellogg about your
18 appearance in front of this committee?

19 Mr. Ornato. I have not.

20 Ms. Cheney. Have you talked to Keith Kellogg since January 20th?

21 Mr. Ornato. I have not.

22 Ms. Cheney. Have you talked to anybody else about your appearance in front of
23 this committee?

24 Mr. Ornato. Sure. Members of my agency and my wife and some friends know
25 that I was going to be talking.

1 Ms. Cheney. Anybody else who's appeared in front of the committee?

2 Mr. Ornato. Yep. Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede knew that I was appearing in front
3 of the committee.

4 Ms. Cheney. And have you discussed your testimony?

5 Mr. Ornato. No, ma'am, I have not.

6 Ms. Cheney. Did they discuss their testimony with you?

7 Mr. Ornato. No, ma'am, they did not.

8 Ms. Cheney. Thank you.

9 Mr. Ornato. Yes, ma'am.

10 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

11 Q Just to follow up on that, did you have any -- did anyone from Mr. Trump's
12 legal team contact you about your testifying here in front of the committee?

13 A No, ma'am.

14 Q And, again, to follow up on Ms. Cheney's questions about the Vice
15 President's location, it sounds like from what you said -- did you think it was safe for the
16 Vice President to stay at the Capitol?

17 A I was being told it was. So that's not my determination to make. That is
18 the Secret Service's determination.

19 Q Did you --

20 A And if you're going to get to, hopefully, the General Kellogg statement, so I
21 can correct that?

22 Q Sure. Go ahead.

23 A Okay.

24 Q So let me just set it up for you.

25 A Please. Sure.

1 Q Did you ever make a recommendation that the Vice President should be
2 moved out of the Capitol?

3 A No, I did not.

4 Can I give you the scenario that is going to differ from Keith Kellogg's book or
5 whatever news reports --

6 Q Sure.

7 A -- that were out there, but can I give you the events that I recall took place
8 that day with that conversation?

9 Q Sure. Of course. Go ahead.

10 A So, once I learned that the Vice President was being moved to his
11 residence -- this was early on, obviously; false report, but misinformation -- I then walked
12 into the chief of staff's office, in the hallway. I was still kind of in the doorway. He was
13 on the phone. At a distance, I can see him on the phone, and he looked at me. So I
14 yelled to him that the Vice President was being evacuated to his residence. He gave me
15 a thumbs-up.

16 As I turned around, Keith Kellogg was coming down the hallway, at which point he
17 said -- and he's hard of hearing. He does have hearing aids. And he said, "Where is the
18 Vice President going?" I said, "They're bringing him to the VPR." He said, "Okay,
19 good." And he walked down the hall towards the NSA's office to go down the stairs.

20 That's the last I saw of Keith Kellogg and had that conversation.

21 For him to say that I was bringing him to JBA, I think he said, and then to Alaska is
22 absolutely ludicrous. And the reasons why are: Number one, all the locations a
23 protectee goes to, there are predetermined locations that they would be brought to for
24 safe havens. That is part of a program. So that is predetermined. The reason why
25 they're predetermined is so no outside influences can influence a protectee being

1 brought to any location.

2 The people that are making that decision to bring a protectee to another location
3 due to an imminent threat are going to be five people. They're going to be people that
4 are with that protectee. It's the detail leader at the time for the Secret Service; it's the
5 military aide; it's the chief of staff rep, whoever is filling that role at that particular time;
6 and it is the NSA rep; and then the doc if it's a medical emergency. Those five people
7 are the team that would move the protectee to one of the predetermined locations. No
8 outside influence can happen.

9 So that conversation, that's a false conversation. He may have had that with
10 somebody else, but it wasn't with me.

11 And, you know, knowing the programs and how I know them and being in the
12 positions I was in, I would have no influence, I would have no reason to call anybody on
13 the Vice President's staff or Vice President's detail to move the Vice President. That's
14 just not my role, and that's not anything I would do against any of the programs.

15 Q And let me just get on the record what you're trying to clarify here. I think
16 this was the Huffington Post and it's been reported elsewhere that "Mr. Ornato, who
17 oversaw Secret Service movements" -- I'm quoting here from an article in Huffington Post
18 on July 16, 2021, "reportedly told White House senior official Keith Kellogg in the West
19 Wing that agents were planning to move Pence to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland."

20 And you're saying you never said --

21 A I did not say that. Absolutely not.

22 Q Then General Kellogg responded, "You can't do that, Tony. Leave him
23 where he's at. He's got a job to do. I know you guys too well. You'll fly him to Alaska
24 if you have the chance. Don't do it."

25 A That -- that's absolutely false.

1 Q So you don't remember General Kellogg making that statement to you in
2 regards --

3 A I do not recall any of that statement being made or any of that interaction
4 with me. He may have had it with somebody else, but it was not with me.

5 Q Okay.

6 And the last part of that is General Kellogg saying, "He's going to stay there."
7 Quote, "If he has to wait there all night, he's going to do it."

8 A Right.

9 Q Did you ever have a conversation about -- apart from, it sounds like what
10 you're saying, relaying the information that the Vice -- the false information that the Vice
11 President was going to be relocated to his residence, did you have any other conversation
12 with General Kellogg?

13 A No. Not that -- about anything like that, I did not.

14 Q Did you have a conversation with General Kellogg about the ability to put
15 3,000 marshals on the streets?

16 A No, I don't recall that as well. I wouldn't -- I don't have that. That's the
17 Attorney General they report to. I wouldn't have anything to do with the U.S. Marshals.

18 Q I just want to read -- as you're aware, General Kellogg did testify in front of
19 the committee. I just want to see if this will jog your memory. This is what he said.

20 "Well, it's something I heard. That's what they were talking about. And the
21 timeline is when I mentioned earlier, is when, back in the, I believe it was Oval, I was
22 talking to Kayleigh, came back in the Oval, and that's when Mark Meadows came out and
23 said to me, 'Where is the National Guard?'"

24 You didn't mention Kayleigh McEnany, by the way. Did you see her?

25 A I don't recall. I don't recall seeing her. I may have. I just don't recall.

1 Q Okay. Let me go back to the transcript.

2 And then he says in response to Mr. Meadows' question, where's the National
3 Guard: "And I have no idea. That's when Matt Pottinger came in. But that's also
4 when -- it was about that time that I found for the first time I'd ever heard of it that Tony
5 Ornato, who was the chief of operations, former chief agent for the Secret Service, said,
6 you know, I can put 3,000 marshals on the street immediately."

7 A No. That is not true. I would have nothing to do with the U.S. Marshals.
8 They're under the Justice Department with the FBI and under DOJ. That would have
9 nothing to do with anything.

10 And, again, I may have relayed to the chief of -- I don't know if he overheard me
11 saying that they've called a Federal order that any law enforcement respond to the
12 Capitol. I relayed that. But, no, that "I can put 3,000" -- that's ridiculous.

13 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

14 Q Did you reach out to any law enforcement colleagues that you had about
15 asking them what their deployment was in terms of agents or officers?

16 A No. I just talked with the deputy director at the time of the Secret Service,
17 and he was just filling me in on -- but, no, I didn't reach out to anybody.

18 Q And, also, just so the record's clear, that's what Mr. Kellogg testified to in
19 front of the committee, and it was also reported in the book "Peril." And, in the book, it
20 states that you said, "We've got 2,000 marshals that we can call up right now and put
21 them out there."

22 A That is not true.

23 Q Okay. Did you mention any number of any other law enforcement,
24 forgetting that it was the marshals?

25 A No. I did not.

1 Q And, as you mentioned, the marshals are obviously under DOJ, which was
2 not the agency you were affiliated with.

3 A Correct.

4 Q I want to go back to -- obviously, you talked about who you saw that day at
5 the Oval Office, in the dining hall area, and as well as in the White House generally.

6 After Mr. Miller and Mr. Peede came back from the Ellipse event, were they also
7 around?

8 A I think Mr. Peede was. Bobby Peede, I think, went over to the EEOB to his
9 office. And, from what I remember, Max went home. He was done for the day.

10 Q Did you have any contact with the Senate Sergeant at Arms or the House
11 Sergeant at Arms --

12 A No.

13 Q -- Mr. Irving or Mr. Stenger?

14 A No, I did not.

15 Q Did you have any contact with any House or Senate leadership?

16 A No, I did not.

17 Q So, just so I'm clear, it sounds like the people that you're chiefly in contact
18 with are Mark Meadows, Bobby Engel, your deputy director, and -- anyone else that
19 you're in contact with, either by phone, email -- obviously you're getting the EOC's -- or
20 text messages?

21 A General Howerton.

22 Q Right. From the Military Office?

23 A Right.

24 And the deputy director, I think I talked to him one time. It wasn't like I was in
25 constant contact.

1 My assistant, William Harrison, he was there.

2 Q You mentioned you made one phone call to Kash Patel at DOD.

3 A Oh, that's right. Yes.

4 Q Was there any additional contact with Mr. Patel during the day?

5 A Later on, I believe, yes, he reached out for a Secret Service contact for
6 fencing.

7 Q Later that evening?

8 A Correct.

9 Q You mentioned that you were waiting for the National Guard to arrive.
10 What was your sense of what was happening? Obviously, you mentioned that
11 Mr. Meadows had a phone call with Secretary Miller. Did you have any discussions with
12 Mark Meadows or with anyone at the office about this time lapse that was occurring?

13 A No. You know, we kept -- every time the chief would ask, what's taking so
14 long, it would be, like, you know, this isn't just start the car and we're there. We have to
15 muster them up, we have to -- so it was constant excuses coming of -- not excuses, but
16 what they were actually doing to get them there. So, you know, we only have so many
17 here right now. They're given an hour to get ready.

18 So there's, like, all these timelines that was being explained to the chief. And he
19 relayed that, like, you know -- he's like, I don't care, just get them here. You know, and
20 get them to the Capitol, not to the White House.

21 So that was mainly what I remember.

22 Q Who were those conversations with on the DOD side?

23 A From what I remember, it was Acting Secretary Miller. There could've
24 been -- I mean, there could've been conversations with Kash Patel. I wasn't in there for
25 the conversation.

1 Q And I know we talked a lot about the tweets that the President put out in
2 that 2:24 to 3:13 and that 4:17 video that was finally put out. And I'm wondering if
3 there was anything -- from your perspective, from your law enforcement experience,
4 what could've been done prior to have avoided what occurred at the Capitol that day?

5 A Not have an event and bring that many people into D.C. would've been one
6 thing. But I don't know what else prior -- to think of right now, what else prior could've
7 been done to stop that. I mean --

8 Q You mentioned that the event, when we talked about what was seized of the
9 magnetometers, were, I think you used the word "normal" seizures. And would that be
10 normal for events that you were familiar with from the Trump administration, or is it
11 normal for rallies from prior administrations as well?

12 A Sure. From prior as well. It depends what area of the country you're
13 going to is what you see different things come up through the magnetometers. You
14 know, if you're in a State that has an open carry law, you'll see empty holsters coming in,
15 and you have to confiscate the holsters, because they'll usually lock their guns up in their
16 vehicle but they keep their holster on. And a lot, you know, have knives or, you know,
17 those types of things. So that's pretty normal.

18 Q Were you aware of any discussion about additional messaging from the
19 President in terms of holding a press conference on January 6th or getting out?

20 A I wasn't. I wouldn't be involved in any of those conversations.

21 Q Okay.

22 Ms. Dayananda. One moment.

23 Mr. Ornato, John Wood, one of the senior investigative counsels, has some
24 questions.

25 BY MR. WOOD:

1 Q Thank you, Mr. Ornato.

2 You mentioned earlier that, I think while the President was speaking at the Ellipse,
3 you may have been packing up your office, and you, sort of as an aside, said you didn't
4 want to be seen packing up your office. Why didn't you want to be seen packing up
5 your office?

6 A Well, if you can remember, there was press coverage of people bringing stuff
7 to their cars, and I tried to stay under the -- which obviously didn't happen too good, but I
8 tried to stay under the press radar at all times. So I knew the press was down there with
9 him, so I can get a couple boxes I wanted to get into my car to be brought over to the
10 headquarters here.

11 Q Okay. Did the fact that you were packing up some boxes from your office,
12 did that mean that you anticipated that on January 20th President Biden would be sworn
13 in?

14 A Yes. I was working on the transition for that to happen since I was given
15 that, I think, sometime in November.

16 Q And had any kind of message been sent that people were not supposed to
17 be looking for other jobs or expecting to leave because there would be a second Trump
18 administration?

19 A I did hear a rumor that some of our staff people were saying that they were
20 hearing they can't look for other jobs, which -- I made sure Monica Block told our staff
21 people that they absolutely should be looking for other jobs. But I didn't pay attention
22 to that.

23 Q Okay. Do you remember, when you heard that rumor, was it a rumor that
24 somebody in particular had said people shouldn't be looking for other jobs?

25 A No. I just heard it as a general rumor.

1 Q Okay. Do you remember who you heard it from?

2 A I don't. It was brought to me from Monica, who -- she was hearing from
3 her staffers that were saying, hey, are we not supposed to be looking for jobs? And I
4 said, no -- you know, she brought it to me. I said, tell them, absolutely, they need jobs.

5 Q Okay.

6 I want to pick up on another thing you said in passing. You mentioned
7 that things that Peter Navarro said were not taken seriously by the operations staff or
8 something to that effect. Could you explain what you meant by that?

9 A Yeah. I mean, Peter is very -- an excitable person. And throughout just
10 things all the time and -- like, hey, I'm getting -- this was during, like, campaign
11 time -- like, hey, I'm getting the President to go here, where he's going to do this, this,
12 and this. And, you know, it was just -- he was a good-idea fairy. He would throw those
13 things out there, and they would never articulate into anything. And he just liked to
14 think of crazy things that never came about.

15 You know, he always asked to travel, which he wasn't -- there was no need for him
16 to travel. So he was never manifested at times to different areas.

17 But, yeah, it was just -- it was common that he would try to drum up crazy things,
18 which we just didn't pay attention to.

19 Q Do you recall whether he had any crazy ideas that related in any way to the
20 events on January 6th, whether it was the rally or the protests or the joint session of
21 Congress?

22 A I don't recall anything to January 6th. Obviously, seeing that tweet that he
23 was telling the President there's going to be, you know, thousands and thousands of
24 people, that's how he always talked. So that I could definitely -- yeah, I don't recall that,
25 but if he was saying that, I wouldn't put it past him.

1 Q Okay.

2 My colleague Sean asked you about calls with a cell phone that ended in 3371.

3 A Correct.

4 Q And I think you said that was your personal cell phone.

5 A Correct.

6 Q Do you recall, did you send and receive texts on that phone as well?

7 A I can send and receive texts, correct.

8 Q Okay. First of all, did you ever text with President Trump?

9 A Text with him? No.

10 Q Do you know whether he texted with people?

11 A I don't. I don't believe so. I don't know, to be honest.

12 Q And I'm not suggesting he did. It's just, obviously, if there are such texts
13 out there, that would be of interest to us. But, to your knowledge, he did not send or
14 receive texts on a cell phone?

15 A No.

16 Q Did he carry a cell phone with him?

17 A He had a cell phone, yeah.

18 Q Do you know whether that was issued by the government or a personal cell
19 phone?

20 A It was a government phone.

21 Q Okay. How do you know that?

22 A We had given him it from the day he was President-elect. And then, when
23 he became President, the White House Communications Agency supplied multiple
24 government phones for them to be in places and also for the mil aide to carry. So there
25 was always a government phone and no personal phone to be used.

1 Q Okay. But do you know if, in addition to having a government phone, if he
2 also had a personal phone?

3 A I'm not sure. I would not know if he had a personal phone.

4 Q Okay. Do you know, when he left office, did he turn that phone in to
5 someone?

6 A I would assume so. I'm sorry, I don't --

7 Q Yeah.

8 A I don't know. Yeah.

9 Q Do you know who it would be that he would turn it in to?

10 A That would be -- the White House Communications Agency would've
11 received it.

12 Q Okay.

13 And then, obviously -- you made some reference to emails earlier in your
14 testimony. Was that a reference to a White House email account?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. Did you also have a Secret Service email account?

17 A I did.

18 Q Okay. But did you have access to it when you were detailed to the White
19 House?

20 A I did, but very little. I mean, I can't carry three phones around, so very,
21 very little did I use the Secret Service email for the White House job. I'd want it on the
22 White House account, so I wouldn't use the Secret Service email.

23 Q Got it. So you typically would carry two phones -- a personal phone, which
24 you just mentioned, and then a government-issued phone that had your White House
25 email in it.

1 A Correct. I would have the Secret Service phone as well, but not so much
2 paying attention to that one, because everybody knew to email me on the White House
3 phone.

4 Q Okay. So any emails relevant to the kinds of things we're discussing on
5 January 6 are likely to be only on your White House email, not your Secret Service email.

6 A Correct. Yes.

7 Q Okay. And what about your personal email? Would you have received
8 any or sent any personal -- any emails on your personal --

9 A No.

10 Q -- account related to --

11 A No.

12 Q -- official business?

13 A No. Absolutely not.

14 Q Okay.

15 And we do know from other sources -- so this is not from your phone, but -- that
16 you sent some texts, I believe, to Mark Meadows in the evening of January 6th. A
17 couple of them were just to Mark Meadows. And then a couple of them, it looks like,
18 you were on a chat with -- a text chat, that is -- with Ben Williamson and Mark Meadows.

19 This is not meant to be a memory test, but --

20 A Sure.

21 Q -- do you recall -- and if you'd like, if you have your phone with you and want
22 to look at it to refresh your recollection, you're welcome to. But do you remember what
23 those were about?

24 A No, I don't. But that wouldn't be uncommon, that just checking in or, you
25 know, the next day events, "Hey, what time are you going to be there in the morning?" or

1 something like that, I mean, but I don't remember what they were about.

2 Q Okay. Would you be willing to, if you still have those texts, share them
3 with counsel, you know, Secret Service counsel, and they can determine whether -- if
4 they're relevant to the kinds of things we're asking about, they could send them to us?

5 Obviously, if they're completely unrelated to the things we are asking about, we
6 don't need to see those. But if you could just share those with counsel and if they could
7 let us know whether they're relevant to what we're looking into, that would be great.

8 A Actually, I don't know if I can, because I have a new phone from this fall, and
9 I don't save my texts. So I don't know if that's possible.

10 Q Okay. Just do what you can. We understand.

11 A I will. I'll try -- I'll definitely go with my counsel.

12 Q Yeah.

13 And, as far as you know, all your emails from your White House email have been
14 properly saved and are with the Archives?

15 A Correct.

16 Q Okay.

17 BY MR. TONOLLI:

18 Q But just so I can follow up, were you using an iPhone, Mr. Ornato?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. Same phone number, the 3371?

21 A Right.

22 Q Okay. And so, just to be clear with Mr. Wood's question, it's beyond
23 January 6th. I think if you could just look, say, going back to when discussion of the rally
24 would've taken place, so mid-December, through the days after January 6th.

25 A Okay.

1 Q Okay?

2 And then, also, I imagine you were backing your phone up, as most folks do when
3 they have an iPhone?

4 A I don't.

5 Q You don't?

6 A Because my pictures took up all my storage.

7 Q Yeah. So, when you flipped, did you just upgrade to a new iPhone? Is
8 that what happened?

9 A I did.

10 Q Right. Okay. And so I imagine all your information came over with the
11 phone, like, your contacts and the like, when you switched to the new phone?

12 A I did. Yes.

13 Q Okay. So did you have a practice of deleting text chains?

14 A I deleted so my storage would stay low. But, yeah, I never really kept texts
15 or even emails. I'm one of those people that can't have any emails unread. Like, I
16 have to click them that they're read.

17 Q Yeah.

18 A I'm type A like that, or erase things when they're done, just to clean my
19 plate.

20 Q No doubt you want to see what's coming in. But, in terms of --

21 A Right.

22 Q -- text messages, did you have a practice of actually deleting them after you
23 read them?

24 A Eventually, yes. I would -- on the plane or something, I would clean up my
25 storage. I would delete texts, yes.

1 Q Okay. All right. So do you have any reason to think you would've deleted
2 texts from around the time we're talking about?

3 A I don't know specifically. I can look for sure --

4 Q Okay.

5 A -- and definitely get with counsel.

6 Q Great.

7 BY MR. WOOD:

8 Q My colleague Soumya made reference to the President's video statement,
9 which I think was released around 4:17 p.m. on the 6th.

10 A Uh-huh.

11 Q Do you know who was there when that video statement was filmed?

12 A I don't. I wasn't in there. It would've been somebody from the White
13 House Communications Agency that would have set that up with the social media side of
14 the House, which was run under Dan Scavino.

15 Q Okay.

16 And Soumya also asked you some questions about your interactions with the
17 President on the 6th while the attack on the Capitol was going on. It sounds like those
18 were very limited.

19 But did you ever hear from anybody else at the White House about whether they
20 made efforts to encourage the President to issue a statement asking people to leave the
21 Capitol?

22 A I didn't.

23 Q You also said earlier that, over the summer of last year, in the context of the
24 Black Lives Matter protests, that Attorney General Barr was put in charge of Federal law
25 enforcement. Was anything similar done with regard to January 6th, to your

1 knowledge?

2 A No. After January 6th, I know they extended the NSSE for the inauguration
3 to cover earlier. The Secret Service had that role. But January 6th, no, I'm not familiar
4 with anything like that happening.

5 Q Okay.

6 I think that's all I have.

7 Ms. Dayananda. I believe Ms. Cheney had some final questions as well,
8 Mr. Ornato, but we're wrapping up.

9 Mr. Ornato. Okay. Great.

10 Ms. Cheney. Thanks, Soumya.

11 Mr. Ornato, the emails that you were receiving from the EOC, would that have
12 included the report that the Metropolitan Police declared a riot at 1:49?

13 Mr. Ornato. I didn't start receiving them until after 3:00-ish, so I wouldn't
14 have -- I don't remember seeing that.

15 Ms. Cheney. So, in terms of prior to 3:00, your contact with Secret Service
16 would've been by email with Mr. Engel?

17 Mr. Ornato. Email or phone or walking over, yes.

18 Ms. Cheney. And did you talk to anybody else prior to 3:00 outside of the
19 complex, in terms of did you speak to anybody at the Secret Service besides Mr. Engel?

20 Mr. Ornato. Not that I recall. I don't remember if -- later on, after 3:00, I
21 remember having, like I said, that conversation with the deputy, but I don't recall any
22 other conversation before that or with anybody else.

23 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

24 And the committee will obviously get access to these records, and we'll follow up,
25 certainly, with the Secretary of Homeland Security about -- because your emails, as

1 Mr. Wood is pointing out, from your White House account are covered by the Presidential
2 Records Act.

3 Mr. Ornato. Right.

4 Ms. Cheney. Secret Service, Homeland Security emails are subject to the
5 committee's request --

6 Mr. Ornato. Right.

7 Ms. Cheney. -- for documents. So the entire range of emails around the EOC,
8 not just to you, but all of the documents connected to what was happening that day and
9 the Service response are documents that the committee expects to receive from the
10 agency.

11 Mr. Ornato. Right. Yeah, I wish I had the EOP account, that I was able to
12 review any of the documents or emails prior to them to refresh my memory. But,
13 obviously, NARA has all that information.

14 Ms. Cheney. And so the texts -- you know, you mentioned earlier -- and I know
15 Mr. Wood was asking about this -- the texts that you exchanged, and you said it was
16 normal for you to be texting with Mr. Miller on your personal cell phone.

17 Have you turned over those texts that would be covered by the Presidential
18 Records Act, official business on your personal cell phone?

19 Mr. Ornato. Not -- my personal phone. Usually if I'm texting with Mr. Miller, it
20 would be personal. He wouldn't text me anything that I can remember work-wise.
21 That would be a phone call. It would be easier to pick up the phone to talk to me or
22 email me on the work email, but not necessarily receiving a text.

23 I don't remember turning over any texts to the Presidential Act there for work
24 stuff, because if they were -- I don't remember ever receiving one for work, but if they
25 were covered under my regular email, they would be on that.

1 Ms. Cheney. Well, thank you, Mr. Ornato. We'll follow up on that, too,
2 because I think you did say earlier that you received a text from Mr. Miller about the
3 event at the Ellipse prior to the event at the Ellipse --

4 Mr. Ornato. Did I?

5 Ms. Cheney. -- on your personal cell phone.

6 Mr. Ornato. I'm not sure. I don't remember if it was a text or a phone call.
7 I know a phone call, yes.

8 Ms. Cheney. Well, okay, we'll make sure that you and your counsel have --

9 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

10 Ms. Cheney. -- Counsel McGahn's guidance about Presidential records and --

11 Mr. Ornato. Sure.

12 Ms. Cheney. -- what needs to be turned over.

13 Mr. Ornato. Absolutely. Thank you.

14 Ms. Cheney. And just to confirm again, you did mention you'd spoken to
15 Mr. Miller. What have you spoken to Mr. Miller about?

16 Mr. Ornato. Personal stuff. He's getting married. He informed me of that.
17 Those types of things.

18 Ms. Cheney. Not about January 6th?

19 Mr. Ornato. No. Today is the first time I actually have gone through all the
20 day's events of January 6th with anybody.

21 Ms. Cheney. Thank you.

22 Ms. Dayananda. John?

23 BY MR. WOOD:

24 Q So you said another thing I wanted to ask you. Just want to make sure I
25 understand.

1 You mentioned that you passed -- on the 6th, that is -- passed, I think you said,
2 three or four notes to Mark Meadows with updates, I think things like "shots being fired,"
3 updates on the National Guard and police on their way. But I think you said you only
4 went into the Oval area, specifically the dining room, one time. So how did you pass the
5 other notes to him?

6 A Verbal as he walked by my office or I went into his office. It was a verbal
7 passing.

8 Q Got it. Okay. So you did not actually see the President those times.

9 A No. No.

10 Q Okay. And so, when you say verbal, so those weren't actually notes. You
11 would've just told him --

12 A It was only the one note that I passed to him, correct.

13 Q I understand. Okay. Thank you.

14 Ms. Cheney. Soumya, I'm sorry, I just have one other question --

15 Ms. Dayananda. Sure.

16 Ms. Cheney. -- for Mr. Ornato.

17 So whose -- and I understand you were in an unusual situation because you were
18 detailed from the Secret Service.

19 Mr. Ornato. Uh-huh.

20 Ms. Cheney. So whose responsibility would it normally be to keep the chief of
21 staff informed about security issues connected to the President or the Vice President?

22 Mr. Ornato. So the detail leaders of both details have an open communication
23 with the chief of staffs of each detail. So the chief of staff for the Vice President is
24 talking to the -- it would be Tim Giebels on the V.P. side of the house, and the detail
25 leader, Bob Engel, would talk directly to Mr. Meadows.

1 The deputy chiefs of staffs, they didn't have to go through us. They could have a
2 conversation or an email exchange with the actual chief of staff directly. They would let
3 them know of anything going on.

4 Ms. Cheney. So, when the Vice President was evacuated from the Chamber,
5 from the Senate Chamber, is that the kind of thing you would expect the White House
6 chief of staff to be notified?

7 Mr. Ornato. Maybe eventually I would expect him to know that, sure. That's
8 why, once I got it, I immediately let him know of what happened. I didn't realize he was
9 on the Chamber floor at the time and was evacuated.

10 Ms. Cheney. But I think, just so we understand, it's not -- in the position that you
11 were in, it's not your -- you were doing it because you --

12 Mr. Ornato. Oh.

13 Ms. Cheney. -- got information flow, but you're --

14 Mr. Ornato. Correct.

15 Ms. Cheney. So would you expect that the person responsible for doing that, the
16 detail leader -- you know, if the Vice President is evacuated, the detail leader would
17 inform the chief of staff?

18 Mr. Ornato. So the chief of staff of the President, I would assume -- and there's
19 no direct line of information, of flow, that way. I would assume he would get it from the
20 chief of staff of the Vice President, because that's who is a direct report to the chief of
21 staff, is the Vice President's chief of staff. They talk often.

22 So I would've assumed that would've been a phone call from the staff to the staff.
23 By the time security does their job and gives notification, it's going to be later than
24 somebody on the staff picking up the phone and talking to Mr. Meadows.

25 So, for the detail leader or anybody on the Vice President's detail to relay that,

1 that's not going to come direct from them over to PPD, VPD to PPD. It's going to go up
2 to headquarters, and headquarters is going to put out an alert or going to let everybody
3 know what had happened. And then the Presidential detail SAC would then make either
4 myself or the chief aware of it.

5 So it would take time for that notification to take place if it was being done by the
6 Service.

7 Ms. Cheney. So, when that alert goes out, who would receive that alert?

8 Mr. Ornato. It all depends how the Intelligence Division is sending that alert.
9 Sometimes it's D.C.-wide for all supervisors, sometimes it's all, or sometimes it's just the
10 director's staff. And then sometimes it's phone calls to make sure that the details are
11 tracking.

12 But it would come from our Protective Intelligence Operations Center to the
13 details. And, also, if the details are on a trip, they have somebody tied to them that is of
14 Protective Intelligence that would be getting that direct from the PIOC. They would be
15 getting that direct from the Protective Intelligence Operations Center.

16 Ms. Cheney. And their chains of information flow presumably would be affected
17 by the gravity of the situation, right? So --

18 Mr. Ornato. Correct.

19 Ms. Cheney. Okay.

20 Mr. Ornato. Yeah, they reported that he was being relocated or evacuated up
21 the chain quickly from the PID agent, the Protective Intelligence Division agent, that was
22 with the Vice President's detail at the time at the Capitol. That would've been out of our
23 Washington field office. They would've then relayed that back up here.

24 Ms. Cheney. Okay. Thank you.

25 Mr. Ornato. Yes, ma'am.

1 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

2 Q Mr. Ornato, we thank you for your time.

3 I just wanted to ask you -- obviously, you've had experience in law enforcement as
4 well as now from the White House -- whether -- part of the mandate of the House
5 committee is to look prospectively and think about, you know, what lessons learned we
6 can take from January 6th. And I wanted to give you an opportunity to offer your
7 perspective on that.

8 A Sure. Obviously I don't think I'm going to bring anything that hasn't been
9 covered.

10 You know, overall coordination, event-wise, we've seen -- just like we learned
11 after 9/11 with the intelligence community needing more coordination, D.C. is compiled
12 of so many Federal agencies, and often at times there are silos built into these agencies.

13 Now, a lot of agencies, you know, will share information, and we -- we're a
14 warehouse. We don't collect protective intelligence. A lot of the times, we're a
15 warehouse. And if I'm speaking out of context, forgive me. But we take in all the
16 reporting from all the intel community, and then we decide there -- and, also, we monitor
17 social media and those kinds of things for threats on protectees.

18 But, as you can imagine, tweets, Instagram, all of those things that go out, it is
19 extremely difficult to monitor all of those accounts and get all that information in. You
20 know, as we go on in the technical world, there has to be more coordination or a
21 centralized location that is collecting all of these and also then pushing them out to the
22 agencies that they represent. Because every agency has a piece of the pie and
23 something different.

24 And I think an overall coordination is definitely something to come for the future,
25 and which the NSSEs do a great job of it, because that's where everybody's brought

1 together for subcommittees. The problem is, the NSSEs obviously need so much
2 personnel, so much money. And, you know, they have to -- because if everything is
3 important, then nothing is important. So there still has to be that group that deems
4 what is an NSSE, what can be an NSSE, what's a SEAR type of event, and elevate it too.

5 But, again, you need time to do that. So, you know, for this event, there was not
6 a lot of time in knowing that to build up to an NSSE type of role, which takes sometimes
7 weeks, sometimes months -- mostly months -- to do those types of events. To get that
8 coordination, it's a lot of time.

9 And that's what I think in the future here -- you know, better coordination for a
10 longer time and knowing what all the threats are out there.

11 Q Do you think, going forward, an NSSE designation for the joint sessions
12 would be advisable?

13 A I would think, if the intel -- because the intel group, you're going to know the
14 intel coming up to that. Then, if the intel drives it, then it's definitely advisable.

15 Q So --

16 A If the intel doesn't drive it, then, you know, you still have to put mechanisms
17 in place and assets in place for if the intel is not there but you still want to be prepared
18 for it and have a plan for if something does happen that wasn't projected.

19 Q And it sounds like, from what you testified to earlier, the intel was not there
20 from what you were receiving from the Secret Service.

21 A What I was receiving, I didn't predict -- I couldn't predict what was going to
22 take place there at the Capitol. I wish I could have.

23 Q And one more question about that. In your position at the White House for
24 the operations piece, is it always relying on domestic intelligence provided by Secret
25 Service? Or was it by virtue of you being prior Secret Service, that's who you were

1 receiving intelligence from?

2 A Nope. The deputy chief of staff does get an intelligence brief from the
3 Agency, from the CIA, almost like the Presidential briefing that takes place. It's usually
4 mostly international stuff, usually doesn't cover too much domestic, because that's what
5 the Agency does, is overseas.

6 But the FBI briefings and stuff, I didn't receive those. But that goes in, I would
7 assume, into the daily briefing, intel briefing, for the President and the chief.

1

2 [2:26 p.m.]

3 BY MR. DAYANANDA:

4 Q And just so I am clear, that's -- institutionally, the director of operations does
5 not receive an intel briefing?

6 A Not the whole intel briefing. Like I said, I think it was a couple times a
7 week, the agency would bring over the intel book and make me aware of things of, like, if
8 we were going to certain areas of the world of what was taking place or what could be
9 taking place. A lot of it was cyber here domestically from outside the world. Any of
10 these groups if I asked about, Hey, who are you guys seeing for this? It was mainly
11 again, a lot of groups are being seen in D.C., a lot of people, but that's all they were
12 seeing.

13 Q But did you receive any intel briefing from the Bureau about January 6th?

14 A No, I did not.

15 Q And there was nothing about the groups that you were aware of, whether it
16 was certain groups affiliated with domestic violence extremism that raised a flag for you?

17 A No, at that point, I didn't know each specific group. Like I said, there were
18 so many that is was just brief stuff, large numbers, and just kind of a generalization.

19 Ms. Dayananda. Ms. Cheney, did you have anything?

20 Ms. Cheney. Yeah, I wanted to just follow up on that, Soumya.

21 So I understand, Mr. Ornato, that -- well, let me ask you this way: When you
22 came into work on the 6th, is it your assertion today that you really just thought that
23 there was nothing to be concerned about.

24 Mr. Ornato. I was concerned about -- like I said, my concern was the White
25 House Complex, having -- I didn't know how many people were going to show up. So

1 coming in that day, I actually was betting on the lower end, because people were blowing
2 this up that there was going to be 50,000, 80,000 people out there. And, you know,
3 those are the people that are always trying to blow up the events. Sorry, I am using that
4 term, but trying to say that there is going to be more than actually shows to get people
5 excited about the event in the White House. However, from my dealings with rallies
6 and going on through the year, the percentage-wise was always about 20 to 25 percent of
7 what those people said actually showed up. So, I did not think we were going to have
8 that large of a crowd. I knew there was going to be, you know, anti and pro groups out
9 there. That was my concern was the clashing of the groups outside of the Ellipse.

10 Ms. Cheney. So you were concerned about potential for violence?

11 Mr. Ornato. Of the groups, correct. But not necessarily the Capitol. I did not
12 predict or could not predict anything that was going to take place at the Capitol.

13 Ms. Cheney. Thank you.

14 Mr. Ornato. Yes, ma'am.

15 BY MS. DAYANANDA:

16 Q And just to put one final point on that, is the concern about the protesters,
17 was that information relayed to you from the Secret Service briefing or from other
18 information that you were aware of?

19 A No, that was just from the Secret Service briefing.

20 Q Understood. Is there anything that we didn't ask you that we should have,
21 Mr. Ornato?

22 A No, you asked me more than actually I could have remembered until you
23 jogged some of my memory. So, no, I think you've gone through everything.

24 Q And we'll follow up on those EOC documents with Mr. Hughes and Mr.
25 Kremer. We appreciate your time today, but I think at 2:29. If there is nothing further,

1 we're off the record. Thank you.

2 [Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date