

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

INTERVIEW OF: RINAT AKHMETSHIN

Monday, November 13, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 9:40 a.m.

Present: Representatives Conaway, Ros-Lehtinen, Schiff, Himes, Carson,

Quigley, and Swalwell.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]

For RINAT AKHMETSIN:

MICHAEL TREMONTE
MICHAEL GIBALDI
SHER TREMONTE LLP
90 BROAD STREET
23RD FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10004

██████████ Good morning all. This is an unclassified interview of Rinat Akhmetshin.

My apologies if I mispronounced that. Thank you for speaking with us today.

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

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

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

This interview will be conducted at the unclassified level.

During the course of this interview we will take any breaks that you desire. We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions based on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your answer, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You are entitled to have counsel present for this interview and I see that you have brought them with you.

So at this time, would counsel could please identify themselves for the

record?

MR. TREMONTE: Michael Tremonte.

MR. GIBALDI: Michael Gibaldi.

██████████ Thank you.

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

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

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

We will continue in these 15-minute rounds until all questioning is exhausted. These time limits will be strictly adhered to by all sides and time will be kept for each portion of the interview with warnings given at the 5- and 1-minute

mark, respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that do you not discuss the interview with anyone other than your attorney. You are reminded it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

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

Mr. Akhmetshin, if you would raise your right-hand to be sworn.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to provide is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

[Witness sworn.]

██████████ And also as a reminder, if you could please make sure your microphone is on with the green light on and speak into it so the reporter can hear what you are saying.

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

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you for being here this morning.

Andre, are you ready to begin.

MR. CARSON: Yes, sir. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Akhmetshin.

Give some insight. Explain to us where you grew up and tell us about your time in the Russian military.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Good morning, Members and staff. My name is Rinat Akhmetshin. I was born January 22nd, 1968 in Kazan, Russia, which is a predominantly Muslim region of at that time Soviet Union and I was raised there. My father was in the military so we traveled a little bit around the country, but most of my time I spent there in Kazan.

I graduated from the high school in 1985. And in the same year I enrolled into University of Kazan to study chemistry. After my first year in the university, I was drafted in the Soviet Army --

MR. TREMONTE: I am going to ask you -- so there is a court reporter here who is typing your answers. And because you speak quickly and I can see her face and her facial expressions, she is not having an easy time. So try to slow down a little bit for her benefit, if nothing else.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. Thank you.

So after my first year in the university I was drafted in the Soviet Army. The draft was mandatory at that time. And I was assigned to a rather small and obscure part of the Soviet military called Commandant Service, which it has -- there is no equivalent in the U.S. Army, from what I understand, but it's something which kind of provides support to different branches of headquarters.

For example, there are people who are secretaries in that service, drivers, people who do guard duty for different parts of the military.

So I was assigned to that unit and I served there for 2 years. And I was discharged in, I believe, June 1988. And in September for the same year, I went back to the university and I graduated university degree in physical chemistry in 1992.

At the same year, I enrolled in a graduate school, also in physical chemistry. And after year there I decided to continue my studies, chemistry studies, in the United States. And I enrolled in the graduate school here in Washington, D.C., at the Catholic University of America.

MR. CARSON: When you served in the Commandant --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Commandant Services.

MR. CARSON: What were your duties? Did you do personal protection? Were you a driver?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did a number of things. So I did a lot of guard duty, which not a very fun thing to do. I also for a while I was a courier. So, you know, they give you these big keys with the handcuff, and two soldiers have Kalashnikov, it's like issue gun, and then they tell you, like, to go somewhere. Mostly fraud, like Baltic military district. I did a lot of, like, carrying documents there.

I was in support. I did a lot of guarding. I also did, you know, these troop movements. One of the parts of Commandant Service also is to ensure security of troop movements. So I was like really -- actually in the beginning, I was directing traffic. So this -- like, I had this, like, leather coat, helmet, this little stick.

MR. CARSON: Did you do advance work?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: What do you mean advance, sir?

MR. CARSON: Before the troop movement, you would scope out the area, look at potential risks, block off traffic.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, actually. Just to ensure that traffic, like, military troops move with least kind of hindrances so it doesn't hit someone or -- just, yes, both the roads, make sure that they go without stopping.

MR. CARSON: Who were your mentors?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Well, there are a number of people, you know, they were very good people who were -- I mean, like, you're on the -- I was a young kid, I was 18. So that's kinds of -- there were many people.

MR. CARSON: Anyone in particular?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There are many people.

MR. CARSON: Leadership.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, since I was so low in this type food chain, so I really, mostly, like some older fellows, soldiers, some officers.

MR. CARSON: Grad school.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir.

MR. CARSON: You ended at grad school before I took you back.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, sir, yes. I enrolled in graduate school here and professor wanted to have someone in her group which has more experience in the kinetics of reactions, so my Ph.D. was in bio-organic chemistry, it is a way how enzymes work with just different substracts.

So we did some work with that chemistry, but the majority of my Ph.D. thesis was on blood enzymes. So just finding these compounds which could -- because there are a lot of people who have blood enzyme deficiencies, for example, hemophilia one of them, more known one, but there are many other disease which are genetic.

So I've done some work with that professor. I published -- I wouldn't say extensively, but I published in a very -- probably the most important chemical journals there are in the United States and in the world. And in, I believe, in 1998 I graduate with Ph.D. in bio-organic chemistry.

MR. CARSON: Are you a dual citizen?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I am a dual citizen. Yes, sir.

MR. CARSON: How often do you travel back to Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Often. I still have a sister there. I have a mother-in-law. My daughter is also bilingual, double -- dual citizen. So I try to spend time there with my sister and my relatives as much as I can.

MR. CARSON: How much is that?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Sometimes like four, five times a year, easy. And sometimes, sometimes for the work I also travel to Moscow. I have some clients in Moscow.

MR. CARSON: So total maybe 8 to 10 times a year?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It could be. It is depending on the year.

MR. CARSON: Do you have any relatives in the military?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. My father passed away actually the year I was drafted, so it was in 1986.

MR. CARSON: Any current friends who serve in the military?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No one.

MR. CARSON: Do you still keep in contact with some of those folks you serve with?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not really. It's kind of things fell apart.

MR. CARSON: Tell us about your work as a lobbyist. How did you get into lobbying?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: After I graduated from -- I got my doctorate, I start looking for jobs, and so I went to few interviews. In meantime, I did postdoctoral studies. So I was with another professor in our department. I was postdoc. And I was actually looking for jobs.

And my wife at the time was also a graduate student, and so unfortunately there are not that many research chemistry positions in this town. There is mostly -- mostly my research was related to pharmaceutical research and the majority of the firms are, like, New Jersey, you know, just further, Midwest.

So I was looking for jobs and I saw an ad. This ad was looking for different jobs. And academia wasn't exactly what I was happy with. It's very difficult at

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

that time in research, money and all those stuff, and politics of departments was not very pleasant.

So I was also actively looking for opportunities outside of the academia. And one day I saw an ad in The New York Times -- there was a time when actually people read -- looked for jobs in the newspapers -- there was an ad, very short ad, which was looking for someone with advanced degree.

MR. TREMONTE: I'm sorry, Mr. Carson. I'm asking my colleague just to move the chair back a little bit. The court reporter is sitting at an angle.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So it was an ad that was placed by the law firm, which had a client who wanted to --

MR. CARSON: Which firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a firm called Coudert Brothers, which is no longer. It is one of the oldest firms in the United States, but it's kind of dissolved.

MR. CARSON: This was U.S. based?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, U.S. based. It is oldest U.S. international law firm I think it was, 1832.

So I came in for an interview and there was a partner there who kind of explained to me that it's a job for mostly to do with Central Asia, particularly a country called Kazakhstan, and that there's a former prime minister, who used to be a client of the firm at that time, decided to run for President.

And the country kind of was moving in more a dictatorial direction and he wanted to -- the Presidential election was coming up so he wanted to kind of address or find allies for his vision for Kazakhstan in the West.

So he set up -- and at that time, he was living in exile in Switzerland, so there is this Zurich-based foundation which was set up there, and they were

looking for someone in Washington, D.C., to represent the foundation and to have to manage political outreach of this country. Mostly administrative work, so just hiring public relation firms, lobbying firms.

MR. CARSON: Which foundation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was -- at that time the foundation is called, in English it's Kazakhstan 21st Century Foundation. It was based in Zurich, Switzerland, and we opened an office here in Washington, D.C.

MR. CARSON: And the foundation was a client of the firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Foundation was a client of the firm, correct, sir.

MR. CARSON: How long did you represent the foundation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: For long time. I would say for maybe about 10 years. The foundation later merged into this International Eurasian Institute. So foundation was -- you know, after my -- just one of the founders, my colleagues, former prime minister, wasn't able to -- was not allowed on the ballot.

And he was actually big, big -- he had many supporters here in the United States. There was Vice President Gore, there were Bilateral Commission. So there were a lot of people who wanted him to succeed. Unfortunately, just the turn in Kazakhstan took turn for worse.

So my client set up a political party so there's another kind of attempt to do electoral work and party was also banned from taking part in the elections.

And so -- and we ended up doing things just to more to promote more transparency. I was involved in this probably to this day largest Foreign Corrupt Practices Act case in the history of United States where the President of Kazakhstan accepted bribe from -- through American citizen from the Mobil, Exxon Mobil Corporation. So for a number of years I was very deeply involved in that

case.

In time we were supporting other people from the region, from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan. So it was -- I actually know a lot of your colleagues who were very supportive on issues of free press, political prisoners. There were a lot of people weighed in to help.

You know, it is unfortunate, like, you probably have seen some articles where they write, just, oh, he did this for Putin. And this is really simply factually not true. I mean, a lot of work I've done, the vast majority I would say, like 80 to 90 percent of my work was done to advance these issues of Central Asia. And there are thousands of people, like journalists, politicians, who will testify to that.

MR. CARSON: So if you can recall, you talk about transparency being a tenet of the foundation.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. CARSON: Do you remember the vision and mission statements, particularly outside of transparency? And to that point, who were the primary funders? Where'd you get your funding?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was -- it was -- one of the major, major fundraisers for that foundation was a former prime minister. His name is Akazhan, A-k-a-z-h-a-n, Kachegeldin, K-a-c-h-e-l-d-i-n, like Nancy, Kachegeldin.

So he was -- he still to this day -- Kazakhstan is a very complex country, it's like enormous and full of resources, but very scarcely populated. So -- and it's also tribal, so it has, like, three tribes there. And the tribal politics is probably more important than anything else there to this day. I mean, until probably 1920s it was like nomadic tribal country. So the tradition is still very deep there.

So he's a leader of one of the second largest tribe there. So largest one is

where the president, Nazarbayev, is. And there is like also small they call Zhuz, Z-h-u-z, Zhuz.

And so it is my understanding that the majority of the fundraising came from Mr. Kachegeldin and his supporters, mostly businessmen who are kind of in his immediate tribe.

MR. CARSON: Which tribe is that again?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's middle, Zhuz, they call Zhuz, Z-h-u-z, Zhuz.

MR. CARSON: And these business persons, what industry were they involved in? Textile?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I remember this gentlemen was in mining, banking. Mr. Kachegeldin actually he is not a poor man himself. He came into politics from being a businessman. So he had this large coal mine. I think it was biggest like coal mine person in Kazakhstan is my understanding.

MR. CARSON: Did you receive any bonuses for additional business that you brought to the firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not really. I had a salary. I had a salary.

MR. CARSON: You had a salary?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I had a salary, had an expense account. So it it was pretty generous, I'd say.

MR. CARSON: What kind of interaction did you have with Russian diplomats?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, it's interesting. Russians have very deep interest of Kazakhstan because they share -- I think largest Russian border is with Kazakhstan. And there are -- you know, actually there is a secessionist movement in the northern Kazakhstan, which is mostly Russian. It is very similar

to what we see in Ukraine these days.

It's also, ironically, it's also coal mines, just like in eastern Ukraine. So northern Kazakhstan is very industrial, it deals with these things.

So I would say every once in a while I would bring -- a lot of my work was to organize public events for journalists, for politicians from Kazakhstan. I will take them to meet with Members of U.S. Congress, with a lot of State Department people, people in other branches of U.S. Government.

And we also did a lot of public events. So, for example, there are, as you know, there are a number of think tanks throughout this town which have strong former Soviet Union focus.

And every once in a while -- and those events are usually pretty small, like people come, experts, journalists. And always there will be -- like almost always there will be some like third secretary of Russian Embassy, who will come and say, "You know, can we kind of talk to you about something or can we talk to your guests about this? We would like to kind of have a tea."

And I would know that they are more than diplomats when FBI later approaches me and says, you know, what's up with this guy? And so it is pretty clear.

But after a while they kind of stopped approaching me. But for a number of years it was usually like mostly in the late '90s there were several episodes where there's people who had affiliation with Russian Embassy. But I haven't seen or spoken to Russians diplomats now probably in a decade.

MR. CARSON: How often would you get visits from the FBI?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Fairly regularly.

MR. CARSON: And what would they essentially say to you? This

gentleman you met with last Thursday --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I'm not sure whether -- you know, a lot of stuff which we discussed was also they asked just like you guys asked to discuss. So I'm not sure whether I should discuss my interactions with those guys.

MR. CARSON: Generally speaking, what kind of things? They would alert you about someone you met with who happened to be a person of interest regarding an investigation?

MR. TREMONTE: May we just confer?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: Thank you.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So there -- you know, actually it's funny. Once I was organizing my kind of, you know, my business cards into an electronic database and I realized that I know so many like agents, special agents and other people, probably like a couple dozen.

MR. CARSON: You know them personally?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Personal.

MR. CARSON: Those agents who have visited you, did you have a prior relationship with them?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, no. Usually it happens like, you know, just agents come. They will say -- they probably were like mostly diplomatic confrontations. That's where the first people who --

MR. CARSON: That was their division.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That was first thing. And, for example, they would -- they'll come and talk. Do you know this guy? And what did he ask you about? What is his thinking? What is his interest?

And, you know, it's usually, like, it's not just conversation. It's Washington is a social town. And, quite frankly, I was very much interested in kind of telling or projecting on behalf of my kind of foundation to show that our vision has an attraction in Washington, D.C.

So there is Russians. Russians are also -- I mean like Russia is still a neighbor of Kazakhstan, so to project a strong opposition position in Washington, D.C., was beneficial to foundation and to people who believed that.

One of these kind of leaders of that organization was prime minister. He had this political agenda or desire to come back to Kazakhstan to kind of change things particularly. So for me there's absolutely -- I mean, it was natural as a part of my work to be able to show. So I was happy that Russians are interested in these matters.

MR. QUIGLEY: We're handing off.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sorry?

MR. QUIGLEY: We're handing off.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Good morning.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Good morning, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: So did you ever serve with the GRU?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Any other Russian intelligence service?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir. My active military service was between ages 18 and 20, and I really kind of was still a kid. And I was military Soviet Army officer. A sergeant, actually, not even an officer at that time. I commissioned as a first lieutenant in 1991.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. QUIGLEY: This would have been back then the KGB, right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I was at the Soviet Army. It was not the KGB, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: No, I'm just saying -- I'm asking you if you ever served with any Russian intelligence service, it would have been --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: My knowledge there are several intelligence agencies in the Soviet Union and KGB would be another one, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And you never served with them?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I had not, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did you ever work with any Russian intelligence service?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: As a part of my service, our unit for some time was providing support for entity called Osobyi Otdel special department.

MR. TREMONTE: Spell that.

MR. QUIGLEY: Can you spell that? And your counsel is correct, I think you're going to give our reporters accelerated carpal tunnel.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Osobyi, O-s-o-b-y-i, Osobyi, Otdel, O-t-d-e-l, which roughly kind of describes a special department.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what were their functions?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It is pretty much a counterintelligence unit of the Soviet Army.

MR. QUIGLEY: A what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Of Soviet Army.

MR. QUIGLEY: No, before that, a --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Osobyi Otdel, that's special department.

And we were supporting headquarters of military commands. For

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

example, for some time I served in Bots military command. It is like a Pentagon for that district. And so for some time I was attached to that unit, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what were your duties? What did you do for them?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Guard duty, and I carried some of their documents. I was a courier.

MR. QUIGLEY: So that's working with an intelligence service if you're carrying their dockets. You're acting as a courier, right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was a courier. I was they never -- when you join a service they assign you a position and rank. I was a private and then a sergeant of the Soviet Army. I have never been a member of KGB, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: But I was trying to broaden that. Working with them at any -- in your whole lifetime, even since you've been here to the United States, have you ever worked with Russian intelligence services?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In a capacity of a soldier I provide --

MR. TREMONTE: The question was since you moved to the United States.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Ah. No, sir, no.

MR. QUIGLEY: Any communication with any Russian intelligence service?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Any of their attempts to communicate with you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir. I have done -- if I may elaborate -- I have done one -- which was reported to the media -- I have done one pro bono project for Russian drug enforcement agency, not even for drug enforcement agency. It is something to do with this U.S.-Russia cooperation in fighting drugs in Afghanistan.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

So it was never at the direction of that agency and it was just pro bono work, kind of favor to a journalist who has done a lot of work.

MR. QUIGLEY: So when I ask if you've had any communication with these intelligence services, that would also include their liaisons, their representatives, interlocutors, right? I mean, anybody that you understand had some relationship with Russian intelligence services that you would have communicated with.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I mean, other than people, people approaching me just at these events, just political secretary asking some questions, you know.

As I earlier discussed with your colleague, just ever people from the Russian Embassy, which I believe were intelligence officers who approached me, and then just in that extent of this communication was well-known to American counterintelligence, FBI.

MR. QUIGLEY: So how often did that take place since you've been here?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In the beginning of work there were several, I would say three or four instances where people -- people were approaching me, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: When say at the beginning, when would that have been?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It ended some time -- once I think that my clients' or this foundation's work was kind of winding down and were moved into -- were not actively participating in the electoral politics in Kazakhstan. So I think they, from what I might deduce, lost interest.

MR. QUIGLEY: About what year are we talking about?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Maybe 2003, 2004.

MR. QUIGLEY: And that was the first time you understood that they reached out to you since you've been to the country, this country.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To the best of my knowledge, yes, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. QUIGLEY: I'm sorry, what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To the best of my knowledge. Since then I don't recollect any -- remember any approaches from people in the Russian Embassy.

MR. QUIGLEY: And none before that time.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And none other than I described.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. So there were -- did you say three or four?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would say it's been so long, I think so. But three or four, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what kind of questions were they asking you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: They're asking what kind of -- mostly, they were interested -- I -- you know, it's -- I wouldn't guess for them, but the question they would ask is probably just to gauge to what extent these opposition politicians in Kazakhstan have some kind of ear of U.S. Government, ear of U.S. administration.

MR. QUIGLEY: Let's just put it in the last 2 years, no communications, no one coming up to you that understood worked for the embassy?

MR. TREMONTE: The questions was the last 2 years.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir, no. I haven't spoken -- I had to renew my Russian passport recently, and before that 4 years and 5 years I haven't even seen a Russian permit.

MR. QUIGLEY: So how would you describe these encounters, as someone just bumps into you and starts talking, right?

MR. TREMONTE: Excuse me, these are the encounters back in the '90s?

MR. QUIGLEY: No. I'm talking about the types of encounters that we are talking about from 2003. How would you describe it? Did they just happen to come up to you and start talking?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the events, you know, saying, like, oh, I am media attache at this Russian Embassy. And there is this one guy, I remember him well, he said, I'm a media attache from Kazakhstan, and he's Russian. And he said, but, you know, I grew up in the Kazakhstan. I'm so interested in Kazakhstan. As a kid I rode horses there, you know. Some story, like personal.

MR. QUIGLEY: So you just describe these as someone who casually bumped up and started talking to you.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. Yes, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: None of these type of encounters have taken place, to you knowledge, in the last few years?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Oh, definitely not, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. You say that you travel back to Russia several times a year.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. QUIGLEY: It is because you have clients there and family.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And family, correct, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Can you tell us who your clients are in Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In addition to this political work here I also sometimes work as an expert in litigations and arbitrations which take place. And, you know, the Russian businessmen are very litigious and they like to settle their disputes, business disputes in the courts throughout the world, in the United States, but also a lot of cases are tried in London and Netherlands because of where those firm's are incorporated.

So I have a client, very old client, who used to be a banker and then he had an oil company. He also now has a hedge fund. So he has been one of my kind

of steady clients and I would say personal friends now for a number of years, for maybe like 15 years at least.

MR. QUIGLEY: And who is this?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: His name is Andrey Vavilov.

MR. QUIGLEY: You're going to have to --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Andrey, A-n-d-r-e-y, Vavilov, V-a-v-i-l-o-v, Vavilov.

MR. QUIGLEY: And do you know which bank he was connected to?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He was -- I don't even remember.

MR. TREMONTE: Could we have 1 second?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. QUIGLEY: The name of the financial institution or institutions he was tied to?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He had a bank. It was very early on, actually even before I met him. And I met him for first time when he had this oil company in Russian north, which he kind of developed, and then he sold it. And with the proceeds of the company he went into financial market. He's an economist. He actually is a professor at Penn State University.

MR. QUIGLEY: He's a professor where?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At Penn State University, of economics. So he is actually an economist, he publishes books, and he was a fellow here a number of --

MR. QUIGLEY: The name of the bank?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't -- this was before I met him actually. I met him in his capacity as the owner, one of the partners in the oil firm.

MR. QUIGLEY: The oil firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Servernay, S-e-v-e-r-n-a-y, second word Neft, N-e-f-t, Neft. So that was this, in that capacity --

MR. QUIGLEY: You got that?

THE REPORTER: Yes, sir.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Any other institutions today he owned or worked with?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He still had a hedge fund. His spouse passed away recently, so I saw him briefly.

MR. QUIGLEY: Any other clients you still have?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Past clients, you know. I had past clients. Mr. Vavilov is not a currently client and hasn't been a client for a number of years.

MR. QUIGLEY: And can you just give us a quick idea who the other clients were?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a chemical company. Another more recent client was the chemical company from Moscow.

MR. QUIGLEY: Name.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's called Eurochem, E-u-r-o-c-h-e-m, Eurochem.

MR. QUIGLEY: Any others?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There's a newspaper called Novay Gazeta, N-o-v-a-y, second word G-a-z-e-t-a, Gazeta. It's actually an opposition newspapers, it is still very prominent.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. I'm going to pass this on to Adam at this point. I'm going to pass this on to you now. Or Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Akhmetshin, good morning.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Good morning, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know Aras Agalarov?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: You never heard of that name before?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I heard the name, I never met him.

MR. SWALWELL: How have you heard of the name?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He is one the ethnic Jewish businessmen in Moscow. He is a real estate developer and he owns one of the biggest kind of entertainment centers in Moscow where the concerts take place, like Madison Avenue -- Madison Square Garden, something like that.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know anybody who works for him?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met in 2016 someone who works for him.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: His name is Irakly Kaveladze, I-r-a-k-l-y, Kaveladze, K-a-v-e-l-a-z -- Kaveladze-- okay, I will start again. Kaveladze, K-a-v-e-l-a-d-z-e, Kaveladze.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you meet Mr. Kaveladze?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: A client of mine requested my presence in one of the meetings and in a runup to that meeting I kind of -- I met him. Actually, I didn't know who he works for you, but afterwards he gave him his business card and it was an entity which I believe owned by Mr. Agalarov.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the client of yours?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a lawyer for this client of mine, this foundation called Hragi.

MR. SWALWELL: Can you spell that?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: H-r-a-g-i, Hragi.

MR. SWALWELL: What does the foundation do?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a foundation which was set up I believe in 2016 to advance or to restart adoptions of Russian orphans from -- orphans by U.S. citizens, which was kind of stopped in it 2012, I believe.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you come into contact with the foundation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have done legal work as an expert on the civil forfeiture litigation in Southern District of New York. And in that capacity I was reviewing some of the documents. And it came to my attention that the original story which was -- which later made its way into this law which was kind of adopted by you guys and by -- later signed into law by President Obama -- had a lot of inconsistencies.

And it also came to my attention that the story which was presented to U.S. Congress has never been checked by anyone within U.S. Government. And so I brought this fact to attention of these at that time clients of the law firm I was working with. And one of the suggestions they -- which I made for them --

MR. SWALWELL: I may have some more questions on that.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Please.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Akhmetshin, where is the Hragi Foundation organized? Is that out of the United States or out of Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe it is in the United States, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Are any Russian individuals on its board?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To my knowledge, there is it no board. I think that one of the efforts of the foundation was to set up a board and to set up proper fundraising for that foundation, but it never kind of materialized.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. TREMONTE: To your knowledge.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To my knowledge, yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Where did the funding that did come in, where did that come from?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not raise money for the foundation. I worked for the foundation. But to the best of my knowledge, as was told to me by the director of the foundation, the money came from, I believe, three or four Russian businessmen. And he gave me the names of these people and I entered them in my lobbying disclosure forms.

MR. SWALWELL: Who are the Russian businessmen.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The names escape me at this point, but one of them was a guy Denis Katzyv.

MR. SWALWELL: Can you spell that.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: D-e-n-i-s, Denis. And last name is Katzyv, K-a-t-z-y-v, Katzyv.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you met any of these individuals? Have you ever met them?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I only met Denis Katzyv.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you meet him?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met him first some time in late 2015, I believe like November or December.

MR. SWALWELL: Was that in Moscow or the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was in the United States, sir, in the offices of the law firm.

MR. SWALWELL: Approximately how much money had the foundation

raised in 2016 when it was set up?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do not know. I don't have direct knowledge of that, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the lawyer representing the foundation who hired you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She hired me -- actually, she didn't hire me, the director hired me. But her name is Natalya, N-a-t-a-l-y-a, Natalya, Veselnitskaya, V-e-s-e-l-n-i-t-s-k-a-y-a.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the director?

MR. TREMONTE: I'm sorry, just so the record is clear, you understood her to be the lawyer for the foundation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct, yes.

MR. TREMONTE: But she did not hire you.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She did not hire me, no. She was one of the counsels for the foundation, it is my understanding. I'm not sure.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the director?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There's this gentleman, an Armenian gentleman, his name is Robert, R-o-b-e-r-t, Arakelyan, A-r-a-k-e-l-y-a-n, Arakelyan.

MR. SWALWELL: Is he a U.S. citizen or is he from Moscow or from Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think he's a citizen of Armenia, but he might be U.S. citizen as well. I'm not certain.

MR. SWALWELL: What's his connection to Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I know he has a doctorate in economics from Russia, and I believe he was a personal friend of someone. I don't know exactly.

MR. SWALWELL: What timeframe was this set up in 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe it was set up some time, like, in late spring of 2016, late spring. Probably around March, April, probably April.

MR. SWALWELL: And just so I understand it, the purpose of the organization was to facilitate adoptions of Russian children by U.S. persons?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, that was an ultimate goal, but there were a number of intermediate goals as well.

MR. SWALWELL: What were some of the intermediate goals?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: First, to bring attention to U.S. Congress to the fact that original story of Mr. Magnitsky is a false story, it is a fabricated -- I mean, it was fabricated by a former U.S. citizen, someone who made money in Russia and gave up his U.S. citizenship to pay taxes in the United States.

And he was a tax criminal in Russia, and so in order to avoid paying taxes in Russia, it was a multi-million-dollar bill, he fabricated that story, and the U.S. Congress made no effort on checking that story. So one of the goals is just to expose that Mr. Browder is a liar.

MR. SWALWELL: Is this your personal belief or the organization's belief.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was -- it is my personal belief. I came to that knowledge through -- in the process of analyzing legal documents as part of the Southern District forfeiture case.

MR. SWALWELL: And it's fair to say this is also the belief of Russia's President, Vladimir Putin. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I cannot speak for Mr. Putin, but it was definitely my belief, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: But it's fair to say that your knowledge of Mr. Putin's

belief about the Magnitsky Act is that he also shares this view.

MR. TREMONTE: If you know?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not sure. You know, he has spoken critically, but fairly recently, not until probably recently. I don't remember him taking any position on that.

The government actually was surprisingly inactive in trying to kind of -- to check the facts. And to my knowledge, I was one of the first people who actually found factual inconsistencies in the story, as well as there's this documentary director who did a movie who found some other things which I missed.

And I believe that lawyer, this Russian lawyer, he also through analysis of the case, in tax case in Russia, also found number of falsehoods in Mr. Browder's story.

MR. SWALWELL: And you agree that when we are talking about the Magnitsky Act we are talking about sanctions that the United States has placed on Russia, that this is about sanctions. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I disagree. At least the goal of Hragi, and I know it because that's something which I have done personally, was never to overturn sanctions. We were supporting the passage of that bill and of global bill and one of other legislative strategies was to first of all to expose -- we were fully supporting.

And there are two, exactly two documents which I circulated on the Hill with your colleagues or with the staffers, and at no time, at no meetings, and at no written or otherwise communication have we ever asked overturn of the sanctions. We wanted to expose the fact that Magnitsky name should not be on that list. And it is almost like Russians are doing these security transparency law named

after Bernie Madoff? So that will be very exact influence of that.

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Akhmetshin, my question was the Magnitsky Act is a sanction against Russia.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do believe so, yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you first meet Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met her at the same day, same time as I met Mr. Katzyv. That's late 2015.

MR. SWALWELL: Where did you meet her first?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the office of the law firm.

MR. SWALWELL: Where was that located?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's in Rockefeller Plaza in New York.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Natalia in Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met her in Russia, yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: When was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met her a few times in Russia. I met her first time, I believe, in Russia in April of 2016. I've seen her before a number of times.

MR. SWALWELL: Where in Russia did you see her in April 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I had breakfast with her in hotel.

MR. SWALWELL: Which hotel?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's Ritz-Carlton hotel. It's in Moscow in Ritz-Carlton hotel.

MR. SWALWELL: Is that the one at the Red Square?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's not far from Red Square, yes. It's on Tderfkaya Street. It's T-d-e-r-f-k-a-y-a, Tderfkaya.

MR. SWALWELL: Why was that location chosen?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was at the time actually of my first lobbying contact. It's because your colleagues, congressional delegations of bipartisan delegation was staying in that hotel. So I went there to kind introduce Ms. Veselnitskaya to some of her colleagues and to kind of bring their attention to this fact or inconsistencies of --

MR. SWALWELL: Which colleagues were staying there?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There were a number of -- I don't remember all the -- I think there were like five or six or four or five.

MR. SWALWELL: Who do you remember there?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do remember Dana Rohrabacher.

MR. SWALWELL: I'll yield back.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, thank you, sir, for being here. Just a couple -- clear up a couple questions I had.

What year were born?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: 1968, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Six-zero.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Six-zero -- I'm sorry, 68.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, '68. My math was out the whack by you being 16 years old in '86 when you got drafted.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was 18?

MR. CONAWAY: Eighteen. So you said you served 2 years.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Two years, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: But you commissioned as an officer in '92?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: '91.

MR. CONAWAY: How did that work?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was a graduate student. I was a student in university. I also -- it's probably something like ROTC kind of thing.

MR. CONAWAY: So you rejoined?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not. ROTC is not a service, I believe. But I had an option to -- I had an option to get officer's degree.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So did that make you an officer in the Russian Army?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In 1991 it made me an officer in Russian Army?

MR. CONAWAY: How long were you an officer in the army?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Three months.

MR. CONAWAY: Three months. Okay.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And it was an officer of chemical and biological defense. I was wearing a lot of scrub suits and --

MR. CONAWAY: So after your 3 months of basic officer training you delisted, you quit?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, the Soviet times was already -- Soviet Union was falling apart. Russians were pulling out from Warsaw Pact. There were like so many officers who didn't have a job. And I didn't want to be, I just wanted to have this option to be been officer.

MR. CONAWAY: All right.

So you said you've had longstanding relationships with journalists?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. I did not say that, actually.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Well, do you have long -- you've known a lot of journalists over your career.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do know a lot of journalists.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: And you've got a newspapers for a client.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have a newspaper and it's still a very good friend of mine, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. On the Natalia thing, I couldn't figure out who's paying you, you kept using client and law firm, foundation interchangeably. So just to help me understand.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The foundation for this lobbying work I've done in connection with this Magnitsky, Global Magnitsky bill, I was paid by the foundation called Hragi.

MR. CONAWAY: By the foundation.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: But not the law firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not -- the law firm, you know, I had a very limited --

MR. TREMONTE: It is a pretty straightforward question. In connection with your lobbying work for Hragi, were you paid by the law firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I was paid by Hragi. The law firm never paid me.

MR. CONAWAY: By the four gentlemen that you remember one of them.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I don't believe they paid me. I believe I was paid by the U.S. foundation --

MR. CONAWAY: The foundation was funded by these four guys.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. It is my understanding that they have no kind of financial stake or those were just contributions. They did not direct any work of that foundation.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. You said you listed them on your foreign agent form?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: LDA. No, it is not a foreign agent. It is a LDA, lobbying disclosure act.

MR. CONAWAY: And just our rules require you to disclose not only the foundation that paid you, but also the funders of that foundation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I --

MR. TREMONTE: May I please have 1 second?

MR. CONAWAY: I'm just trying to figure out how they got --

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: Okay. So my client or the foundation consulted with counsel on the specific requirements and I don't think he knows himself what the requirements are, but he complied with them.

MR. CONAWAY: But with advice of counsel you disclosed all the --

MR. TREMONTE: Okay.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. Foundation had a special like someone who consulted them on fundraising and on lobbying disclosures.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. What else did you do with respect to working with this foundation again to try to do whatever it is, communicate with Congress, get the law changed, get the sanctions lifted with the Magnitsky Act? What else did you do besides that lunch meeting -- breakfast in London -- or breakfast in Moscow?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The whole work, lobbying work project was rather short. And I wish we would have been able to kind of continue. In addition to trying to bring these facts or lies behind original story to the attention of Members

of U.S. Congress, I have also tried to communicate this story to members of the press here and to -- and in this probably 4-week project, the whole project lasted like 4, 5 weeks max, I also organized a screening, or foundation, and I kind of was in charge of this, organize the screening of the documentary which was produced by the very famous movie director who has won Cannes movie festivals, Sundance movie festival prizes, film which kind of questions the facts behind Magnitsky. We did a screening here at the Newseum just down the street.

MR. CONAWAY: So you said that March, April timeframe, about 4 weeks of work. Then fast forward to June, why were you still involved in June?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We were still -- there were hearings actually coming up. So in April there was this -- we met first with this codel in April and then for --

MR. TREMONTE: Is it codel?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Codel, Yes. Congressional litigation.

Then there were some gaps in between. And so in total -- in total that's my lobbying work was about 4 weeks.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Then in June how did you come to go to the meeting with Donald Trump, Jr., and Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. So I was coming to New York on a private matter --

MR. TREMONTE: I'm sure you'll clear this up, but I just want to make sure that to the extent the question assumes that meeting had anything to do with Hragi, I'm sure the witness will clear that up.

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you, counselor.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. That's correct, thank you. That meeting had nothing to do and I was not aware of the meeting even taking place until probably

an hour or 2 hours before.

MR. CONAWAY: So had you maintained contact with -- and I can't pronounce her last name -- this Natalia V.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: You kept contact with her throughout April, May, June?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: And you were aware that she was still working diligently to communicate the errors associated with the Magnitsky Act?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: And who called you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think hearings were scheduled some time in mid-June. So that's kind of one of the reasons why I was still in touch with her. There was, I think, it's markup on that bill or something to that effect.

MR. CONAWAY: So how many times did you talk to her in May and June?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Four or five times.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. You work for the foundation. You are on an hourly basis, a project basis?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I bill them by the hour.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. So you bill them, even though the work was done in March and April, you continued to bill them in May and June?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I only bill for -- I wish I could bill as much as I can. I bill for the work I've done for research and communication.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. And you billed in May?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe I billed them in May.

MR. CONAWAY: And then you billed in June?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I billed them in June.

MR. CONAWAY: So take us -- walk us through how you got invited to a meeting with Donald Trump, Jr. What day was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That morning I was traveling to New York from Washington, D.C., on a private matter. I had a distant relative who was performing in this play in New York, and so my sister actually told me to go see it. And I was traveling there with a colleague and he had his own things, his wife just passed away at that time, and they have a scholarship set up at the Metropolitan Museum on art history.

So he was going there for a meeting with some of the regents there. And so he and I, we went to New York. And so he went to his meeting. I went to kind of run some personal errands. And I received a phone call from Ms. Veselnitskaya asking me to join her for lunch. And I said that's fine.

So I came to this place on Madison Avenue -- Madison and 62nd, I think. It's really not a very nice place. So we -- I walked in and Ms. Veselnitskaya was there already with that gentleman which your colleague was inquiring about, Irakly Kaveladze.

So she was there and there was an interpreter there present, and they were already kind of finishing their meal. I had lunch before so I joined them for a cup of tea and Natalia told me, you know what, we're going to this meeting with President Trump's son and so what do you think I should tell him?

MR. CONAWAY: Tell him in reference to what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To this Magnitsky story.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And I say, you know, it is a great issue for election

campaign because it shows that previous administration sometimes, you know, there is declaration of U.S.-Russia relationship. There are objective reasons for it, but some reasons for it are false, and that would be a good opportunity because there is also a large constituency of Americans who were affected by that law.

I personally met families who cannot take kids out of Russia who are stuck in that limbo. They already have papers to take the kids out. They adopted them. But the ban precludes them from taking these kids out of Russia.

And it is truly heartbreaking. I am a father myself and I actually once took Ms. Veselnitskaya to meet one of these people. Ms. Veselnitskaya is a mother of four. Her son is a marine now serving in the Pacific, Soviet -- Russian Pacific fleet.

And it is heartbreaking because there are -- really they tell the story, show the pictures of these kids, and most of them are like special needs kids. There is one lady lives just outside Washington, she has two kids, she has four or five of her own. And then she has two kids, one kid paralyzed from neck down and another girl has no leg. And, you know, it has been 4 years, now 5 years, she says "my kids." It is heartbreaking.

MR. CONAWAY: How did you actually go -- what happened that triggered you going to the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSIN: I'm sorry?

MR. CONAWAY: What happened at the lunch that triggered you going to the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSIN: So she tells me --

MR. TREMONTE: You need to let the Members finish.

MR. AKHMETSIN: I'm sorry, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: What happened at lunch that triggered you being asked to go to the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. So she asked me like -- and we were talking and she said, you know, you should join us. And I wasn't even dressed for the meeting. I was like wearing t-shirt, jeans. And she said, why don't you join us? And I said, like, you sure? She said, yeah, yeah. And she actually looked at this Kaveladze guy and said, yeah. So I say, fine. I was actually curious, how this even happens.

MR. CONAWAY: So after the meeting what role have you played with respect to the Magnitsky Act since that meeting, anything?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

[10:41 a.m.]

MR. AKHMETSHIN: After that meeting, I was trying to -- I proposed to include Ms. Veselnitskaya as a witness at the hearing which took place on U.S.-Russia relationship. So I wanted her to tell the story, because she researched it the first thing. And I have done screening of film. And that's pretty much -- nothing else since then.

The work on Magnitsky Act. She had some health problems throughout the summer. And although I believe it would have been very beneficial to everyone to have that story heard about this falsehood and about how this former U.S. citizen was able to bamboozle pretty much U.S. Government into signing a law which affected so many people, and truly destroyed the relations between U.S. and Russia. Unfortunately, the work of foundation ended at that point and I haven't done anything.

I tried to. I approached her sometime like late summer 2016, telling her this: Congress is still in session for a few more months. There will be markups, there will be conference, and there will be opportunities to bring this to the attention of -- but they were not interested or they had no money and so --

MR. CONAWAY: So, getting back to the meeting at Trump Tower, Donald Jr., it has been reported in the public media that one of the triggers for -- one of the incentives for getting the meeting was that Natalia, et al., her group, you, others, would provide the Trump campaign with opposition research on Hillary Clinton. Were you aware of that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware of that, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: You're not aware that that was the meeting, or you're not aware of the public reporting after that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I -- no, no, I read news stories. Sadly, it was in many of them. I did not do any research, opposition research on Hillary Clinton or anyone else from the campaign. I really have a very skeptical view of election campaigns, so there are no favors.

MR. CONAWAY: But sticking with the meeting, you went to the meeting under the -- with the only reason you came was the invitation of Natalia V and your previous work with respect to the sanctions under that law?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct, sir. And, again, I just want to set the record straight. It was not about repealing sanctions, as it's continuously being reported by the media. It's -- my work was to compel Members of U.S. Congress to make an independent investigation into the facts of Magnitsky's story, which was never done by anyone in the U.S. Congress, and I believe that if some staffers helped to fabricate that story. And that's my extent. It was never working to overturn sanctions. Our goal was much -- there was like an ultimate goal and a few intermediate goals in between. And so that's the only role with which I was invited to speak at the meeting.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Do you know Glenn Simpson?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do know Glenn Simpson.

MR. CONAWAY: How do you know Glenn Simpson?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He is an old acquaintance of mine.

MR. CONAWAY: How did you meet him?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met him, I believe -- I actually knew his wife quite well. She was a bureau chief in Wall Street Journal in Brussels in the early 2000s.

MR. CONAWAY: What kind of bureau chief?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: For Wall Street Journal.

MR. CONAWAY: For Wall Street Journal, okay.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Wall Street Journal, yes. And I've done -- in addition to work I do in the United States, I also have done some work on behalf of my clients in the European Union and EU and European Parliament, those organizations, OIC.

MR. CONAWAY: I'm sorry, did you say you were working for Fusion GPS?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I never worked for Fusion GPS.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. What kind of work were you doing, and who for?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In Europe. And so for that work I met the bureau chief of Wall Street Journal.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, you were working on behalf of the Wall Street Journal?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: What were you doing?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Let me try again. So I had client matters with respect to European Union, European Parliament matters. And so, I traveled to Brussels quite frequently. And we had some congressional -- European Parliament hearings organized there. So I always wanted the press to write about those. And so, in that capacity, I met the bureau chief of Wall Street Journal in the early 2000s.

MR. CONAWAY: And these clients were what kind of clients?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a complex. Central Asian people, and Russians as well, Central Asians.

MR. CONAWAY: So have you ever worked for Fusion GPS?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you worked personally for Glenn Simpson?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you worked, to your knowledge, through another entity for Fusion GPS or Glenn Simpson?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir. I've known him quite well and for a long time. I have never worked for him, and neither he worked for me.

MR. CONAWAY: Do you know if Glenn Simpson met with Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I know that they knew each other, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: You know that he knows her or that they met?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Oh, they know each other quite well.

MR. CONAWAY: And how do they know each other quite well?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe he worked for that civil forfeiture case, providing legal research for the case, and I believe in that capacity they knew each other.

MR. CONAWAY: What timeframe would that have been, how long?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The case was brought I believe in 2014. So probably 2015, '14, '15, '16.

MR. CONAWAY: Did you ever talk to Natalia about her work with Glenn Simpson?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Is that --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We worked together, like the three of us, a number of times.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, you and Glenn and Natalia were together?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct.

MR. CONAWAY: Over what timeframe?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Lunch. Having lunch, I guess. I had lunch with her.

MR. CONAWAY: Several times?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Maybe two or three items, easily.

MR. CONAWAY: In what timeframe?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: 2015, 2016.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Did the matter of the Trump campaign ever come up in those conversations?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. That was way before he was even a candidate, I guess.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, but you said it extended into the campaign.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not say it extended into the campaign, but 2016.

MR. CONAWAY: 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: He's a candidate in '16.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think he became a candidate --

MR. CONAWAY: June of '15.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, somewhere around that time.

MR. CONAWAY: Did the three of you talk about the Clinton campaign?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. We talked about Mr. Browder a lot.

MR. CONAWAY: About what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Mr. Browder, Bill Browder.

MR. TREMONTE: I want to caution you. So they're engaged in a matter, working as part of a legal team in connection with a civil forfeiture case. So you

should answer these questions did you talk about the Trump campaign, did you talk about the Hillary campaign; but to the extent that you discussed anything that related to the legal advice that was being provided by the team, that's privileged.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Thank you, yes.

A lot of it was in connection with the civil forfeiture case in Southern District.

MR. CONAWAY: So other than not working for Fusion GPS, do you have other clients or have you had other clients in which you were hired to either prepare opposition research or lobbying efforts or other interactions with the U.S. Government?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: With Fusion GPS?

MR. CONAWAY: No, I said other than Fusion GPS. Do you have other clients in which you've tried to influence, properly, Members of Congress, the media, on behalf of other clients other than --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have described some of the work which I've done.

MR. CONAWAY: That was back in 2003, '4. I'm talking about the timeframe, let's say 2010 forward.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I still had some Central Asian transparency cases.

MR. CONAWAY: And you were hired by them to do what inside the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Inside the United States, I mostly did research.

MR. CONAWAY: What kind of research?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And those cases were not -- I mean, for example, there was this something with this Catholic President, who was -- fell out with him, and he forced a lot of businessmen to pay bribes. So we were looking into his connections here, how he laundered money for the United States.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: So what were you researching here in the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was researching essentially these companies and contacts.

MR. CONAWAY: Would this be considered opposition research or research on individuals? It's not chemical research?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, it's not chemical research, no. It's open source research, just trying to find some traces of this.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. And did you hire other people to help you with that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I was hired to do this.

MR. CONAWAY: You were hired. You didn't hire private eyes or other investigators to help with this effort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir. No.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So what has been your relationship with folks at the DNC, the Democratic National Committee? Debbie Wasserman Schultz, do you know Ms. Wasserman Schultz?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I never met anyone from --

MR. CONAWAY: Have you met John Podesta?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, not personally.

MR. CONAWAY: Any law firms associated with the DNC?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Any --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I know a number of law firms in this town. They might have worked, but I never was involved in any electoral work altogether.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So back on your relationship with journalists or, I mean, you know journalists, you meet with them. Have you ever given a journalist a story as an unnamed source?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I've tried to get people to write about this. That's one of the reasons why --

MR. CONAWAY: And you've always asked that your name be attributed to the story itself?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I've been in a number of stories, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: But have you ever been a source, an anonymous source, an unnamed source, a source who's not authorized to speak on a matter but you pushed the effort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I never was -- you know, I never was granted any security things. I never worked for the government. I was just a person.

MR. CONAWAY: That wasn't the question, sir.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sorry?

MR. CONAWAY: That wasn't the question.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Okay.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you gone to a journalist -- you've already said you've had longstanding relationships with them. That sometimes breeds familiarity. Have you, either on background, or off the record, or given them a story in which they reported it and you were an unnamed source or you were the -- but your name was associated with the information you gave them. Have you done that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That could have happened, sir, yes.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. CONAWAY: How often?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I don't really -- I'm a private person. I really am not very happy that my name is now out in the press.

MR. CONAWAY: The question, though, was how often?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Maybe a few times in my life. If you know the story and you don't want to be dragged into it.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Have you been paid by folks to do that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. TREMONTE: You mean by journalists?

MR. CONAWAY: No. Paid by anybody to go to a journalist and out a circumstance that you believe to be inappropriate, incorrect, or wrong.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Wrong?

MR. CONAWAY: Have you been paid to be a source?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't believe that, never explicitly. I was paid to get a story out or to tell a story. That's what public relations people do. You are trying to tell a story.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you been paid by Fusion GPS to facilitate getting their stories out?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, never.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you been paid by somebody that Fusion GPS paid to pay you to do that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir, never. I never had any financial relations with the firm.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Were you the source of any stories with respect to the 2016 election on behalf of, or against anybody?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir, never. I sincerely had a very skeptical view of that election campaign, and I had no interest in it, or no knowledge of it.

MR. CONAWAY: You had no what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No knowledge of facts of that thing. So I was not involved in the campaign or --

MR. CONAWAY: During the campaign, you did not act as an unnamed source?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I never, never.

MR. CONAWAY: For either the Clintons or the Trumps?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you.

MR. TREMONTE: Excuse me. Would this be an okay time to take a break? I think we've been going --

MR. CONAWAY: Well, our 45 minutes is up at 11:15.

██████████ If you can hold off, that would be great. Thank you.

EXAMINATION

BY ██████████

Q I just want to go back through a couple of things, and thanks again for coming to speak with us today.

You said you had known Glenn Simpson of Fusion GPS quite well for some time. How did you first meet Mr. Simpson?

A He was the husband of bureau chief of Wall Street Journal. And he has written also about issues of Central Asia, so I knew him in that capacity. So he has done stories about Central Asia, and I introduced him to my clients. So that's --

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

Q Right. But when did you first meet?

A When he was a reporter. Probably mid 2000s.

Q Mid 2000s?

A Yes.

Q So like 2005, 2006?

A I would say probably closer to 2008. Just before Wall Street -- before he left from Wall Street Journal. Maybe 2 or 3 years when he was on -- he left 3 years from Wall Street Journal, I guess.

Q What was the nature of your relationship with Mr. Simpson?

A He was a journalist. He is a very pleasant person and funny. And he is a great investigator, and he has done a very interesting story which had relevance to the issues which were important to my clients.

Q Such as?

A Such as corruption, transparency in Central Asia, their attempts to subvert justice in the United States.

Q And did you continue to keep up your relationship with Mr. Simpson over the years?

A I would run into him every once in a while, maybe have a drink.

Q When you say "run into him every once in a while," what do you mean?

A Somewhere like, you know, I see him in a bar or, you know, just that kind of thing and I say, okay, let's grab lunch, or let's grab a drink. So after he left Wall Street Journal, I've probably seen him a handful of times.

Q A handful?

A Yes.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

Q When you say you just ran into him in a bar, in like, New York City you just bumped into him in a bar or did you guys plan on meeting there?

A No. Just he said, oh, I haven't seen you in a while, let's kind of have lunch. And I remember once it happened we had lunch. We kind of caught up. He start his new business and, you know, just had lunch and we parted ways.

Q And when you say he started his new business, what new business are you referring to?

A He had this private research company.

Q And when did he inform you of that?

A After he left Wall Street Journal, I guess.

Q About what year?

A It's been a while ago. I don't remember. So just after he left Wall Street Journal. Probably late 2000s.

Q And what did you -- what did he, Mr. Simpson, tell you that his new company would be doing?

A Private research.

Q For what?

A I -- look, I -- if people don't want to tell you stories, they don't tell. He said like, you know, I'm working doing this thing. He said, now I'm not a journalist.

Q No, I understand that. And if that was the nature of the conversation, that's all I want to know. Has he, Mr. Simpson, ever told you what his company does?

A Doing due diligence.

Q But you have never asked him or he's never shared with you any

details of those?

A I don't remember, sir. I really -- you know, people will tell you -- I don't remember him sharing details, and I never pry people for their stories if they don't want to tell them.

Q Okay. Have you ever worked on behalf of Fusion GPS?

A Never, sir.

Q Have you ever worked on behalf of a law firm retained by Fusion GPS?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Okay. Let me turn your attention to --

BY [REDACTED]

Q If I could just follow up on that last question. Just to make sure that I understand what you said earlier correctly, you were engaged to work on some litigation in the Southern District of New York, a civil forfeiture case. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And was Fusion GPS also retained to work on that case?

MR. TREMONTE: To your knowledge.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To my knowledge, I believe so, yes, sir.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And you were retained to work on that case by a law firm, correct?

A That is correct, yes.

Q Do you know whether Fusion GPS was retained by the same law firm?

MR. TREMONTE: If you know.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not sure, sir. I know that they had a role in that litigation. I'm not sure. There are several law firms which were part of it.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So they had a role in that litigation. You had a role in that litigation. Did you ever work together in any way with Fusion GPS or people retained by Fusion GPS in that litigation?

A Not with them. I had a very narrow set of questions which I worked on, and it's -- that engagement was -- lasted for I would say 3 months. Leading up to depositions, they hired me with a specific task, and which I performed for them. I billed them money, and that was the end of my relationship with the law firm. I never worked with Fusion GPS on that case.

[REDACTED] Thank you.

MR. TREMONTE: Can we just have a minute, please?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: So just to clarify, and I want to be very careful here not to invade on privileged communications, but it's our understanding that there are communications in connection with the civil forfeiture matter where any number of people were, for example, on emails that went around.

So you asked if he worked with. The answer was no. I just want to make sure that to the extent that the term, or the phrase "worked with" might encompass email communications that were in the nature of group communications or in the nature of kind of administrative communications in connection with that representation, there were some where both individuals who worked with Fusion GPS and Mr. Akhmetshin were on those communications.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And, Mr. Akhmetshin, what law firm retained you for that matter in the Southern District?

A It's Baker Hostetler.

Q When did they retain you?

A They retained me, I believe in September of 2015.

Q And was that as an expert, as a consultant?

A That is correct. They retained me as an expert in run-up to depositions which were doing in connection with some facts related to Russian banking and other issues.

Q Was it a flat fee arrangement, or an hourly rate?

A No, it's by the hourly rate. So I billed them by the hour.

Q And is that relationship with Baker Hostetler still ongoing?

A No. It lasted for about 3 months, and once depositions were over there, was no need in my expertise. There was very little I could contribute to the case.

Q So they paid you and that was your -- that was the last involvement you had with the matter in the Southern District of New York?

A Correct. Yes.

Q And you've had no other matters relating to that case in the Southern District of New York since then?

A No.

Q Okay. Let me turn your attention to -- and I'm just going to call her Natalia V, because I won't pronounce her name correctly. When did you first meet Natalia V?

A I met Natalia V at the end of 2015, at the offices of Baker Hostetler.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

Q And that was the first time you had ever met her?

A Correct. Yes, sir.

Q Had you heard of her name before, or her work?

A You know, when I started working, I had seen her name like in some of the documents. But I was not -- I was aware of the counsel in Russia who was part of the case, but I was not -- I hadn't been on the phone with her and I believe she didn't even know I exist. So --

Q Right. And I just want to clarify. When I asked had you ever heard of Natalia V before --

A I have, yes, sir.

Q And how did you hear of her and when?

A I -- when I started working on that case, I've seen her name in some of the documents.

Q When you say "that case," sorry?

A Civil forfeiture case in the Southern District of New York.

Q Okay. Prior to that case, you had never heard of Natalia V?

A I had not, no, sir.

Q Okay. And you never heard of her work in Russia or anywhere else?

A No.

Q Okay. So when you became aware of Natalia V in, I think, late 2015, you said, what was your first encounter or communication with her?

A I was introduced to her in the office of Baker Hostetler, in the New York office of Baker Hostetler.

Q Was that an arranged meeting? Did you know that was happening?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

Did they call you in as you were in your consultant duties? How did that unfold?

A As I mentioned to you, that in the process of working in that civil forfeiture case, I was reading a lot of documents and trying to kind of to see -- and I saw this major, like, fabrication or -- I will give an example of inconsistency between Russian original and English translation of the same document.

And the English translation contained extra -- numerous extra paragraphs, which were very important, because they changed completely the -- for example, if they use like Russian copy of deposition of someone, and then English text will have paragraph which did not exist in the Russian, original Russian, because I read both Russian and English. And for me -- and I am actually fairly good. Being a scientist and research, I believe I pay good attention to detail. So some things inconsistencies jump at me, and I wanted to find those to use in the deposition.

So -- and I saw those things, and I kind of brought it up to the attention of the lead attorney in that case. And I said, like, how interesting, this thing. And that's -- and obviously, I made a connection immediately to this law here which was adopted in the United States, Magnitsky law. And I thought that might be a very interesting kind of fact for his clients to know. And that's -- and in order to communicate this thing, I was introduced to Ms. Veselnitskaya at the end of 2015.

Q So I'm just trying to get the sequencing right. So tell me if this is an unfair characterization, but were you -- was part of your role to serve as a translator for the firm in this matter and that's how you met Ms. Natalia V?

A I did not translate documents, per se. So the documents were already translated and they were part of the docket. So those documents were already filed by -- I believe some of them were filed by the prosecutor's office,

some of them were filed by the defense. So I was reading the actually docket. So I was reading the docket and these Russian-English documents and comparing translations, trying to find what the inconsistencies are in those documents.

Q And then when did you first then thereafter meet Natalia V? How did you guys meet? Was she in the room working with you? Did she come in later? Did the firm say, go meet Ms. Natalia V and continue your work?

A Yeah, I was introduced by -- I came to the -- they told me to come to that office at certain time. I believe they had their own meeting and then kind of came in. And I know they were kind of leaving already the room, and they -- kind of I came in and introduced me. And kind of they explained -- they asked me what do I do for the case? And, you know, I just kind of -- we had this, like, social interaction. And, you know, we spoke Russian. And I said like, look, there's this stuff. You know, I just was working the case, and this is what I found out. And Natalie said, how interesting, so tell me more. And then kind of -- and that's kind of how the beginning of the relationship.

Q And then thereafter, after that meeting, how did you communicate or when did you meet with Natalia V?

A I think I've seen her in that year. Maybe when she came to Washington, D.C., we spent like a couple days. You know, we had this debriefing. I mean, I showed her what I found out, and then what are the inconsistencies in the case and what are the issues. And I also told her like, look, this is, I would say, scandalous. I think that you should try to -- you know, if there's like U.S. law based on this fabrication that you get to tell the story.

But I would say also maybe an ulterior reason for them to do that, because the civil forfeiture case in the Southern District also was brought by Mr. Browder.

So he actually kind of pushed it. He wasn't able to find any attention from the U.S. Treasury or FBI or other entity. So finally, he was able -- the Homeland Security office took the case, and which I find -- and I've seen a few complaints, civil forfeiture complaints.

The civil forfeiture complaint which was filed by this special agent in Homeland Security was -- consisted of these like literally verbatim paragraphs copied and pasted from the Browder's website, which I find interesting. They later amended it once the lawyers pointed it out. They scrape all those like plagiarized language, and they kind of typed it up in their own words. But, you know, just like literally paragraphs of this original civil forfeiture complaint were taken from the website of -- without verifying.

And there's this film which I encourage everyone to watch. Mr. Necrossoff (ph), where they depose that agent. And the lawyers asked him, did you check the facts? He said, no, it's like -- it's on the internet, it's in the law, so I made no effort to check these things.

Q So when you met with Natalia V in D.C. subsequent to the meeting, your first meeting with her in New York City, did you two arrange to meet in D.C.? Who reached out?

A I believe so, yes, of course. I mean, we didn't bump into each other. There must have been some arrangement, yes.

Q Do you recall what the arrangement was?

A I don't remember. Might be lawyers invited me to meet with her. Maybe she called me. I don't remember, sir.

Q Okay. And you met with her for a few days in Washington, D.C.?

A I would say a couple of days, yeah. Not like day to night, but, you

know, an hour here, a couple of hours there.

Q Were there any other topics of conversation that came up that were unrelated to the matter in the Southern District of New York?

A No.

Q Did you discuss politics in America?

A No. I have very little interest in it.

Q Did you discuss the Donald Trump campaign?

A No.

Q How about the Hillary Clinton campaign?

A No.

Q Bernie Sanders?

A No.

Q Okay. After that time in Washington, D.C. that you spent with Natalia V, when did you communicate or hear from her next?

A I might have seen her maybe once or twice afterwards. You know, I suggested them to kind of to start to tell the story in the United States. So hence, the Hragi was born. Because my suggestion was to her like, you know, there are ways to tell that story and the context in which the story could be told. That legislation which actually have not been moving for, you know, for a year and a half since it was introduced. So I said like there's this piece of legislation which could be -- and in that context, the story could be told.

Q And in all your conversations with Natalia V, did you come to learn who had retained her services?

A It was very clear to me who. She was a lawyer --

MR. TREMONTE: Did you learn specifically who had retained her services

as opposed to forming an understanding or a belief?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She never told me. I only had general -- I figured it out, but I don't remember she ever specifically told me I'm a lawyer retained by such-and-such.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And when you just said that you figured it out, who did you figure it out to be?

A I believe it's Mr. Katzyv who was her client.

Q Who was her client?

A Yes. And they were childhood friends as well.

Q I was going to ask, how did you figure it out that Ms. Natalia V was working for Mr. Katzyv?

A Because she said that we are friends. And, you know, since she was -- from her role in this conversation, I think that she was active in the civil forfeiture case. So I believe she was a Russian counsel for that case.

Q Okay. And your knowledge of all of the things, let's call it Magnitsky-related, where does that come from? Is that just public domain knowledge, in-person meeting?

A I did my own personal research of this issue.

Q And how did you conduct that?

A That research was done as a part of, like became a byproduct of the work I've done for -- in connection with civil forfeiture litigation in the Southern District of New York case.

Q Okay. So that was all done as part of your services to on your -- who had retained you --

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

A Correct.

Q -- for that purpose?

██████████ Five minutes.

██████████ Thank you.

BY ██████████

Q When was the last time you saw or heard from Natalia V?

A I saw her, I believe, this summer sometime, like in June.

Q Around the time of the Don Jr. meeting at Trump Tower? Sorry,
that's --

A A year after.

Q That's a year later.

A Yes.

Q Going back to -- or actually -- strike that.

Did you introduce Natalia V to Glenn Simpson?

A No.

Q How did the two of them come to meet?

A I don't know. But they knew each other when I met her.

Q So the first time you met Natalia V, she had already had a separate
relationship with Mr. Simpson?

A I believe so, yes.

Q And in your relationship with Mr. Simpson, in your communications
with him, did you ever discuss Natalia V?

A I don't remember. We might have. As I mentioned to you, we
might have had like a couple of meetings together, or lunches.

Q So in those couple of meetings or lunches together, did you ever

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

discuss the origination of the relationship between Natalia V and Glenn Simpson and Fusion GPS?

A Not to my knowledge, no, sir.

Q No? Do you know if Natalia V has ever been a client of Fusion GPS or Glenn Simpson?

A I don't know, sir.

Q You don't know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q In the remaining time, I just had a couple follow-up questions on the circumstances of the June meeting.

I believe you mentioned earlier that you traveled from D.C. to New York with a colleague.

A Correct, yes.

Q Who was the colleague you were traveling with?

A It was Mr. Edward Lieberman.

Q And could you just briefly describe your relationship with him?

A He and I, we were working -- he was the partner who hired me to do my very first job. And he and I would do a few things together, a few clients together. We represent clients together, yes.

Q Any Russia clients, or primarily Central Asia clients?

A Central Asia clients. Represent government of Kyrgyzstan, for example, together.

Q That's Kyrgyzstan?

A Kyrgyzstan, yes.

Q And you mentioned that when you're in New York, Ms. Veselnitskaya

called you and invited you to lunch?

A Correct. Yes.

Q Did she know that you were going to be in New York?

A I don't remember. This question was kind of brought up several times. I don't remember. It's been already a while since that happened. But she might have had some knowledge of me being there. Could be. I don't remember, sir.

Q And because you had just gotten to New York that day, right?

A Correct.

Q And so when you were at -- at the end of lunch, it was Mr. Kaveladze, Ms. Veselnitskaya, and her translator, who you met, and then you all went over to Trump Tower together. Is that right?

A Correct, sir.

Q And when you were going, you understood the meeting to be primarily about the Magnitsky Act, telling this story of discrepancies in Mr. Browder's account, that sort of thing?

A No.

Q What did you understand the purpose of the meeting to be?

A I think that Ms. Veselnitskaya also in her work on behalf of her client came upon information about this large American hedge fund committing securities and tax fraud in the United States as well as in Russia, in investing money with Mr. Browder. So that's the story she wanted to tell. And her research traced that money to be contributed to DNC. That was my understanding.

Q And you gained that understanding how, at lunch, or when did you

learn?

A You know, at lunch I've seen -- because she kind of came out of this -- she discovered it and she reported it actually to the Russian law enforcement agencies.

Q Right. But just how -- you described what you understood the purpose of the meeting was, from her perspective. Did you know that before the meeting or only after you got there?

A I have seen this, I guess. There was some discussion of the Ziff Brothers.

MR. TREMONTE: Hold on. It's a very specific question. Did you know that Natalia was going to be addressing those issues that you just described before the meeting, or did you only know that that's what she was going to do at the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I -- I knew that she was going -- I learned about her agenda at the meeting, yes. She told me --

MR. TREMONTE: At lunch or at the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the meeting at Trump Tower.

BY [REDACTED]

Q But when did you learn what the agenda for the meeting was going to be?

A At the meeting.

Q But going to the meeting, you didn't know what the agenda was?

A She said that -- there was a conversation about many things at the --

[REDACTED] One minute.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There was a conversation at the meeting about a

number of things, and the Ziff Brothers fund came up in that discussion. So I --

BY [REDACTED]

Q Right. I was asking about exactly what you knew --

A The agenda of the meeting. I learned about the agenda of the meeting at the time of the meeting at Trump Tower.

MR. TREMONTE: Just one second, please.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: Sorry. Thank you very much. Go ahead.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So, in other words, one of the things which kind of -- again, my assumption. I don't remember she said explicitly what -- this is my agenda, these are my talking points. But I seen there's a memo she developed about Ziff Brothers. It was at the table at the restaurant.

MR. TREMONTE: At lunch?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At lunch, yes.

So she might have -- I don't remember exactly, sir. I don't have a clear recollection. But that matter was the first matter she brought up at the meeting with -- at the Trump Tower.

[REDACTED] Okay. Thank you. I think we'll leave it there. Our time is up, and we'll go ahead and take a break.

MR. CONAWAY: Be back in five.

[Recess.]

MR. SWALWELL: Mr. Akhmetshin, going back to that first meeting with Natalia, you described it as being April 2016. The first time you and Natalia met in Russia was April 2016 at the Ritz Carlton. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And you said you remembered Congressman Rohrabacher being present at that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He was not present at that meeting. We met for breakfast. And a codel was just leaving for -- it was Sunday. They were going for church services. And in the lobby, I approached Congressman Rohrabacher, whom I've known for a number of years. He was a big champion of human rights in Central Asia, and I worked with his office extensively.

And so I kind of asked for a meeting, and they suggested to meet them in the afternoon in another location where they did this press conference.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you meet him later that afternoon?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We did, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you just happen to run into him at the Ritz Carlton, or did you know he was coming to town?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I knew that he's coming to town, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Natalia with you when you ran into Mr. Rohrabacher?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you introduce Natalia to Mr. Rohrabacher?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, briefly. But this was kind of in a rush. They were leaving, you know, just for the services. And then there was his staffer, he asked to follow up with his staffer, and which I did. And we arranged for later that afternoon to come in to sit down and to talk to --

MR. SWALWELL: Where did you later that afternoon sit down and talk to Mr. Rohrabacher?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. It was -- I don't remember exact

building. It was I think some of the Russian think tanks and they give these -- it was bipartisan code. So there are several members and they kind of -- they gave this press conference there. And we met, like, in the lobby -- not a lobby but a little like sitting room just outside the main room.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Natalia with you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She was with me, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you have a personal meeting, though, with Mr. Rohrabacher? Were other Members of Congress present?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There was a Congressman Hill from Arkansas. He was a member of the code. He was there as well.

MR. SWALWELL: So the two members of Congress were Congressman Hill and Congressman Rohrabacher?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Actually, so first it was Congressman Rohrabacher, and then, you know, he had to go somewhere. So there was a Congressman Hill was there. And we kind of explained to him the issue, and that's -- it wasn't a long meeting. It was probably 10 minutes.

MR. SWALWELL: And Natalia was there?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Natalia was there. So he had the chance to speak, and I translated for her.

MR. SWALWELL: Those were the four people at the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. There might have been -- there might have been a staffer, actually. There was a staffer as well.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you speak at all during that meeting with Mr. Rohrabacher in April 2016 about the U.S. elections?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Well, they were well underway, is that right, April 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And you acknowledged earlier that you have a lot of familiarity with how elections work and that the Magnitsky Act actually could be affected by the outcome of the election?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not say that.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, you understand how -- you seem to have a deep familiarity with the U.S. Congress. You would agree with that, right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do, yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: And you knew that in April 2016, the U.S. Presidential election was intensifying and that the primaries were underway?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. Yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: And you were meeting with a Member of the U.S. Congress in Russia at that time?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you at all discuss the U.S. Presidential election in that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir, not to my recollection, and I would be surprised if I had.

MR. SWALWELL: It wouldn't have been anything that would have affected the Magnitsky Act, in your mind?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Elections, you mean?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't believe at that time that was relevant.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you discuss Donald Trump at all in that meeting?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you discuss Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, not to my recollection.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Rohrabacher discuss Donald Trump at all in that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. He was present for very -- I'm sure you've done codels yourself. It's always on the run. So you kind of try to be respectful of Members' time. And we presented that story and that, you know, our findings, and that was pretty much it. So there was not back-and-forth discussion.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you see Mr. Rohrabacher after that meeting anywhere?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In Russia or in the United States?

MR. SWALWELL: In Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: How about the next time you saw him in the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I actually came to visit his office.

MR. SWALWELL: When was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There was -- there was -- there was a markup of a bill that was coming up in his subcommittee. And I came in the run-up. I had the follow-up communication with his staffer afterwards, and I shared with him a copy of the documentary, and so for -- to inform them. And after that, when the markup was coming up, I believe I came to visit Mr. Rohrabacher. I don't remember exact details. Probably late April, I would say, late April, early May.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Natalia with you in that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you see him at all after that meeting in Washington and before the June 9th meeting?

MR. TREMONTE: "Him" being Congressman Rohrabacher?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. Probably not. I don't remember. I think -- I've done these, like, two visits on the Hill, and one was like in run-up to this markup. And the second one -- and he also introduced an amendment, which did not pass. So I think that was the -- I think I've seen him only once after Moscow meeting.

MR. SWALWELL: In the meeting in Washington in April 2016 with Congressman Rohrabacher, was the Presidential election ever discussed?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Donald Trump?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. I am nearly certain no.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Rohrabacher know that you -- let me restate that. Did Mr. Rohrabacher have any knowledge prior to the June 9th meeting that you would be meeting with Donald Trump Jr. at Trump Tower?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't believe so. I didn't know that.

MR. SWALWELL: You said that the first time you met with Natalia in Russia was April 2016. When was the next time that you met with Natalia in Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was probably already like in the fall of 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you meet with her --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I met with her in the United States after that.

MR. SWALWELL: No, I understand that.

MR. TREMONTE: -- the meeting occurred in Russia.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe I met with her sometime, like, in the fall, like, late fall of 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: Is it fair to say that the only time you met with Natalia in Russia prior to the June 9th meeting at Trump Tower was in April 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To the best of my recollection, yes, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Would you describe your relationship with Natalia as a friendship as well?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I wouldn't call it friendship.

MR. SWALWELL: You would not?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would not. She was very sympathetic to me. I think she is a hardworking single mother. And she is smart, which is not very common in Russia, unfortunately.

MR. SWALWELL: Is she a friends of yours?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I wouldn't say friend, but I personally like her, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Has it ever been a romantic relationship?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met General Flynn?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Has Natalia ever talked about General Flynn?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember once her mentioning it.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Rohrabacher ever talk about General Flynn with you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember him ever mentioning it.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Pass it back actually to Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Hi, Mr. Akhmetshin. My name is Adam Schiff. I'm from California.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Good morning, Congressman.

MR. SCHIFF: I want to ask you about the adoption issue. You said you focused on adoptions, not on the Magnitsky Act. Is that your testimony?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: My testimony was that the ultimate goal of Hragi was to start adoptions, and that's the issue which I personally believe strongly, as a parent and as a dual U.S.-Russia citizen. Intermediate goal was to expose the fraud behind that story.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, now, when you made your filing, your Lobbying Disclosure Act, you identified four Russian patrons of the organization that you would come to work for. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct, sir, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Are those four individuals, are they considered oligarchs?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think so.

MR. SCHIFF: They were just Russian businesspeople?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: They are Russian business -- I never met anyone other than Mr. Katzyv from that place.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Katzyv?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. He's the only one I knew.

MR. SCHIFF: And does Mr. Katzyv run an orphanage?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He doesn't run an orphanage, but I know that he is very active in charities. I'm not aware of his orphanage work, but he is very active in charitable causes in Russia.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SCHIFF: Now, Mr. Magnitsky wasn't involved in the adoption of American children, was he?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not to my knowledge.

MR. SCHIFF: And Mr. Browder wasn't either?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember, sir, no. I doubt that he was.

MR. SCHIFF: The only connection between any of this and adoptions is that after the Congress passed the Magnitsky Act, Putin retaliated by cutting off the adoptions by Americans of Russian children, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. It was cowardly act. I personally find it disgusting.

MR. SCHIFF: And so, when you say you're working to facilitate the reinstatement of American adoptions, it's really working to repeal the Magnitsky Act, is it not?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And you think that the Russian Government is going to allow adoptions to resume without dealing with the Magnitsky Act?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think that my understanding and my research made me conclude that the reason why these Russians retaliated in a very -- again, I would like to say for the record, in a very disgusting and cowardly way, to stop these adoptions, because about 60,000 Russian kids were adopted by U.S. citizens, and most of them have a brilliant chance in life, the one which would never have in Russia.

But it's not about this adoption. It's retaliation of this Russian affiliation was in disgust the fact that this law in Russia --

 5 minutes.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: -- in the United States was named after someone who was a tax criminal. It's like Bernie Madoff. Russia adopts this stock market transparency law named after Bernie Sanders. That's an equivalent.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Akhmetshin, that has nothing to do with adoptions, does it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sorry?

MR. SCHIFF: That has nothing to do with adoptions, does it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: What?

MR. SCHIFF: The name of the Magnitsky Act.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The reason why Russia retaliated was because Magnitsky's name was put on that legislation.

MR. SCHIFF: And you understand how the Russian system works as well as how the American system works, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And businesspeople and oligarchs often put themselves at the service of the Kremlin in their work, don't they?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not to my knowledge.

MR. SCHIFF: Not to your knowledge?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We probably read the same newspapers. I am not a Russian oligarch.

MR. SCHIFF: But you have some knowledge of the Russian system, do you not?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do have, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And you're not aware that Russian oligarchs often work in the service of the Kremlin if they want to retain their wealth?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have no direct knowledge of that, sir. I have read newspapers which state that. I have never worked for Russian oligarch who had done something to retain his wealth or some -- I was never involved in a project which were done to retain their wealth.

MR. SCHIFF: So this is a revelation to you that Russian oligarchs put themselves at the service of the Kremlin?

MR. TREMONTE: I realize this is not a deposition, that objections are not characteristic here, but I think that is not a fair characterization of Mr. Akhmetshin's testimony. I think the point that he is trying to make is he does not have personal --

MR. SCHIFF: Counsel, he can make his own point for himself.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir. I just would like to concur with my counsel. I have no personal knowledge. I read these stories, but then -- it might happen, but I was personally never part of any of those projects.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you give an interview to The Financial Times?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And in one of your recent interviews, did you tell the reporter for the Times, Katrina Manson, quote, "I will never fuck with the Russian State. I will never do things against the Russian Government. It's stupid. Simply, the stakes are too high"?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct, sir, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And so were you to testify against the Russian State or Russian Government, would you feel that would put your business at risk?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It will put my family in risk. And I don't want to -- I would say, if I could quote a word from there, I wouldn't do that because just I

would be afraid of retaliation.

MR. SCHIFF: Would that include testimony along the lines that the oligarchs work in the service of the Russian Government to try to repeal the Magnitsky Act?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I just simply don't want to say something which I don't know. I mean, you do have a direct knowledge of that?

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Akhmetshin, what I'm asking you is, do you consider that a statement that would get you in trouble with the Russian State? Is that part of your -- is that part of any reticence to acknowledge that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I -- it's not a reticence to acknowledge. It's a reticence to say something I have no firsthand knowledge.

MR. SCHIFF: In the same interview, Mr. Akhmetshin, you were asked whether you were in any intelligence networks. And you said: When I'm in Moscow, I'll go drinking, I'll go out drinking with these people. They know who I am and they know I'm a mercenary.

Were you indicating to the reporter that you go out drinking with people you know to be involved in Russian intelligence?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have had drinks with someone I suspected to be a Russian intelligence officer who often tease me in those words that I'm a mercenary. And they would never trust me. I lived in this country for such a long time. To be involved in just this whole spy thing is -- I think is just invention.

MR. SCHIFF: And would you discuss with these people you would go drinking with that you knew or suspected were part of Russian intelligence your work with respect to the Magnitsky Act?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I haven't seen that person to whom I referred to

in a number of years. So --

MR. SCHIFF: Does that person still work with Russian intelligence?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't know. He was a journalist here. He was my tennis partner also.

MR. SCHIFF: And who was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He is a reporter for Etartas (ph).

MR. SCHIFF: And what's the reporter's name?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: His name is Andre.

MR. SCHIFF: What's his last name?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Surzhansky.

MR. SCHIFF: Can you spell that for us?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: S-u-r-z-h-a-n-s-k-y. And for the record, I -- he has never indicated to me he works for Russian Intelligence Services.

██████████ One minute.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, your statement, though, to FT was: When I'm in Moscow, I go drinking with these people. They know who I am, and they know I'm a mercenary.

This was someone you just described that was here in the United States, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So who were the Russian intel people you would go drinking with in Moscow?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe that I had him in mind.

MR. SCHIFF: When you had lunch with Ms. Veselnitskaya, did you ask her how she was able to set up a meeting with people that high up in the Trump

campaign?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not, but I was very surprised actually that she got that meeting.

MR. CONAWAY: Time.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So I'll just pick up where Ranking Member Schiff left off.

MR. TREMONTE: I apologize, sir. You don't have a name plaque.

[REDACTED] Sure. First name is [REDACTED] last name is [REDACTED] I'm one of the majority staffers, along with [REDACTED]

MR. TREMONTE: Thank you.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So when she told you that this meeting was with high-ranking officials in the Trump campaign, did she specifically identify who you would be meeting with?

A She said with Trump's son. She didn't say which son, but she said with Trump's son.

Q And you were just telling Ranking Member Schiff that surprised you?

A It did, yes.

Q And why were you surprised?

A I don't know. She doesn't speak English. So how she got -- I was surprised. And I was curious, actually, just to go to the meeting.

Q Right. So sort of an obvious point but an important one, that if she doesn't speak English and, as far as we know, Donald Trump Jr. doesn't speak Russian, she would have had to have some intermediary to set up that meeting. Is that correct?

A I suspected so, yes, sir.

Q And did she tell you, either right then or later, how, in fact, she had managed to set up the meeting?

A I doubt she has ever kind of told me specifically how the meeting was arranged, but I kind of figured it out.

Q And what did you figure out?

A I felt that it was this Irakly Kaveladze was kind of conduit to that encounter.

Q Now, in 2017, long after the meeting, there was some public disclosure of emails relating to the setting up of this meeting that involved, among other things, communications between a gentleman named Goldstone and Donald Trump Jr. Do you have any -- do you know Rob Goldstone?

A I'm sorry?

Q Do you know Rob Goldstone?

A He never introduced me by the name, but I have seen him in that meeting. He was like stocky British guy.

Q Had you ever met him prior to that meeting?

A No.

Q Had you ever -- when you -- when you saw him in the meeting, who did you think or know that he was?

A I'm not even sure whether he introduced himself. So we came in, and Irakly seemed to know him. So he was -- once we came up out of the elevator, he was just literally standing there at the reception area. So we came in. We shook hands.

I don't remember he -- he might have introduced -- I just don't have a clear

recollection of that. But we -- and then he and Irakly kind of engaged in some kind of conversation, and soon afterwards the meeting started.

Q So you gathered that he was, in some way, connected or had some sort of relationship with Mr. Kaveladze?

A I assumed that. I did not know for a fact.

Q And you also said that you gathered that Mr. Kaveladze had some role in setting up or brokering the meeting. How did you learn or figure that out?

A Because I doubt she would have ever -- Veselnitskaya that is, would have ever been able to kind of do that. So it was never explicitly discussed, but, you know, just that was my assumption.

Q And what did you understand the relationship to be between Ms. Veselnitskaya and Mr. Kaveladze and/or Mr. Goldstone? Do you know how she knew them?

A I don't know.

Q Did you find out later?

A No.

Q When emails relating to this meeting were publicly released by Donald Trump Jr. earlier this year, did you have a chance to read those emails?

MR. TREMONTE: Other than reviewing documents with counsel.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. Only I read it in connection with my work with my lawyers.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And without disclosing -- but you are familiar with Mr. Goldstone's -- are you familiar with Mr. Goldstone's characterization of the premise for the meeting?

MR. TREMONTE: As reported in the press?

BY [REDACTED]

Q As reported in the press?

A Only what I saw in the -- I was never in an email chain with him or never met him, never was in communication with him.

Q And when he characterized the meeting to Donald Trump Jr. in those emails as sort of providing dirt on Hillary Clinton, what was your reaction when you read that in the press?

A I don't remember that this curious issue was something Ms. Veselnitskaya wanted to raise with Trump Jr.

Q Because what she wanted to raise was this information she had found about the Ziff Brothers. Was that your testimony earlier?

A That is correct, yes, sir.

Q And that, according to Ms. Veselnitskaya, the Ziff Brothers had some sort of connection with the Democrats and/or Hillary Clinton?

A I believe that her finding, the one -- the issue she wanted to communicate at the meeting, which she did communicate at the meeting, was that Ziff Brothers have done some illegal things, and the proceedings of those crimes have made its way into DNC funding.

Q So when you read later Mr. Goldstone's kind of offer at this meeting relating to negative information on Hillary Clinton, did you understand that negative information to be what you just described, the connections between Ziff Brothers, their illegal activities, and Hillary Clinton? Was that the negative information on Hillary Clinton that was going to be shared in this meeting?

A No, I don't think so.

MR. TREMONTE: Could we just have a minute?

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: One point of clarification.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So this whole issue, Ms. Veselnitskaya went in there and presented this story of Ziff Brothers. And then she said, and now -- you know, she is a very emotional person. And now this money ended up here in New York, and then -- now it's in DNC. And Trump Jr. said, so where does it go to here, could you show me? She said, hell, how do I know? I am just a Russian lawyer. I could tell you this is a bank. I've heard it's either Citi or Chase Bank in 53rd Street in Manhattan. That's where the money ended up.

And he said, so -- and where does it go? Don Jr. said, where does it go to Hillary? She said, hell, I don't know. You have to do these things. I told you that this is where, and you research these things. And now it's so comical. She's just like uh, you could see like he was kind of interested in this thing, and like, uh.

And then she said, and adoption. She didn't even give him chance to breathe. And then -- and they clearly were like not interested, you know, just kind of -- it almost like became awkward. And I kind of jumped in with my 90 seconds to stop her, because they really didn't want to interrupt her mid-word, but she was just going and going, going about adoption stuff.

BY [REDACTED]

Q I think we will want to get back to the specific circumstances of the meeting, but my specific question earlier was, when you read Goldstone's emails to Donald Trump Jr. after they were in the media this year referring to dirt on Hillary, what, if anything, did you read that to be referring to?

A I was surprised, because I personally think she kind of likes Hillary. Probably -- not probably, but she kind of -- I think she identifies with her, like lawyer, you know, just woman, in her late ages. And --

Q Sorry. Who identifies with Hillary?

A Veselnitskaya.

MR. TREMONTE: You mean in terms of sort of appearance?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Appearance, exactly. I don't think she wanted to talk about Hillary Clinton. I was surprised to see that description or that determination of the meeting, because, you know, I don't think she went in there to talk about Hillary Clinton. She went there to talk about Ziff Brothers and just offer them this whole thing about DNC.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Right. Understood. So why did, if you know or have any idea, because you were in the room, why did Mr. Goldstone tell Trump Jr. that the meeting was going to be about sharing negative information on Hillary if the purpose was to share information on Ziff Brothers?

A I have no idea, sir.

[11:52 a.m.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Now, you mentioned that prior to the meeting, when you met up with Natalia V and others, at the end of lunch, you somehow became familiar with the general topic of the meeting and you saw that she had some document with her. Is that correct?

A That's correct, yes.

Q And to the best of your knowledge or recollection, that document sort of laid out the story of the Ziff Brothers or the talking points that you wished to share in the meeting?

A That's how I remember it, yes, sir.

Q And was that document, was that anything that you had helped her with?

A No, she developed it. I believe she hired some people to help her with that document.

Q And do you happen to know who she hired?

A I'm not sure.

Q Do you know whether Glenn Simpson or Fusion GPS had any role in preparing those talking points?

A I would be surprised, because a lot of it had to do with Cyprus and it has this like research into the Greek issue, and, you know, a lot of documents -- on Cyprus. Cyprus is this -- there is a sort of offshore jurisdiction which a lot of businesses used to kind of hide the money and then run less transparent schemes.

And one of the advantages of Cyprus is that a lot of people work there done

in Greek. So it literally is Greek to like most of the people who are not Greek.

So it must be someone who had expertise in Greek language.

Q Did she tell you that or was this your assessment?

A I was aware of the Cyprus corporations issues before that?

Q Was the document she had in Russian or English?

A I believe it was in English. I don't remember.

Q So do you have any -- and you said -- I believe it was your testimony earlier that to your knowledge she's not an English speaker.

A She's not.

Q So someone other than her would have had to put the document in English, right?

A I believe so, yes, sir.

Q But do you know who that was?

A I don't know.

Q So after the -- and, again, we'll get back to the meeting -- but after the meeting, did those of you who were in the meeting or some subset of you get together?

A Yes, sir.

Q Can you briefly describe who and where?

A This group of four of us, Veselnitskaya, Kaveladze, translator, and I, we, after meeting ended, we went downstairs. And I believe there was a coffee shop there like Starbucks, some coffee shops.

So we sat there and that's when -- actually that's what Kaveladze give me his business card for the first time. And I had -- I spent probably like 5 minutes with them and left. I had an appointment later. So when I saw them later that

evening, so --

Q And what were the circumstances under which you saw them later that evening?

A As I mentioned, I went to attend a theater play. And afterwards I told her, "Hey, I'm here." Actually it was a Russian language performance. And I said, "Like, I am here to see a play and would you be interested?" So I purchased a ticket for her and translator and they joined me at the play later like around 8 o'clock in the evening.

Q And did you have dinner with Natalia as well?

A No, actually they were late, so --

Q So after the -- so it was you, Natalia, and the translator who went to the theater. And then afterwards you just all went your separate ways or what happened then?

A Went other separate ways. And I might have seen her later in Washington, but I haven't seen her in New York afterwards.

Q And so did you -- you mentioned previously that you, Natalia, and Glenn Simpson had all had lunch together. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Did the three of you get together during this trip to New York?

A I don't remember seeing Glenn during that trip.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Akhmetshin, in 2015 were you involved in litigation concerning international mineral resources?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: IMR? Yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And did that case involve the hacking of materials and the dissemination of private stolen materials?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. It was -- the case was about arbitration, commercial arbitration in Netherlands.

MR. SCHIFF: Didn't that case involve one of the parties having their computers hacked and then documents that were -- that reflected ill on the company that was hacked being published?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There were allegations of that.

MR. SCHIFF: Were there also allegations in that that you helped organize the hack or theft and dissemination of those documents?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir. There were allegation of that which were never proven and later withdrawn by the people who made those allegations?

MR. SCHIFF: And were they withdrawn as part of a settlement?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware of that, sir. I'm not sure.

MR. SCHIFF: Who were you hired by in that litigation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was hired by a law firm.

MR. SCHIFF: And who did the law firm represent?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The law firm represented the opposite firm in that litigation. It's a Dutch litigation or arbitration entity. I don't remember. I think it was arbitration.

MR. SCHIFF: And what law firm hired you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's called Salisbury & Rand.

MR. SCHIFF: And what were you hired to do in the litigation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To do research.

MR. SCHIFF: To do research on international mineral resources?

MR. TREMONTE: I just want you to be careful. He was hired by a law firm for the purpose of presumably that law firm rendering legal advice. I just

want to be careful not to tread on any privilege.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, thank you. And there was a lot of stuff which was done as part of this attorney-client relationship. So I was hired to do research to support that litigation.

MR. SCHIFF: And the party that you were hired to do the research against, was that the party that was subsequently hacked?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware if there was like direct relationship between these two things, but there were allegations of hacking, which were again not proven and later withdrawn.

MR. SCHIFF: I just want to establish the basic fact, though, that the party you were hired to do the opposition research for later alleged that it had its computers hacked. Is that correct?

MR. TREMONTE: He was hired to do legal research.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was hired to do like legal and commercial research on -- which had -- which was related to that litigation in Netherlands.

MR. SCHIFF: And the adverse party was the subject of hacking. Is that correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Adverse party alleged to be hacked. And that allegation later was withdrawn and was never proven and there are no criminal complaints or anything like that that was fired.

MR. SCHIFF: And the adverse party also alleged that the documents that had been hacked were published, correct?

MR. TREMONTE: Do you remember? If you remember the pleadings which speak for themselves.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I remember there was something to that effect. I

don't remember exactly, it's been a while ago.

MR. SCHIFF: And were in fact documents belonging to that company published?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware of that.

MR. SCHIFF: And during the course of your work in that case did you ever come into contact with any individuals, either in person or in writing, that were engaged in the hacking of the other client, the adverse firm?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever retain someone to hack as a part of your research in that case?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Absolutely not.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you ever discuss with anyone who claimed to have hacked the company in that litigation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember having any discussion in that connection or meeting anyone who might have claimed that they hacked adverse party in that litigation -- or anyone, for that matter.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, that would be something you'd recall, wouldn't it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would recall, yes. But I never hacked, I don't know who hacked, never hired someone to hack.

MR. SCHIFF: And you never had discussions with anyone who represented that they had obtained private documents belonging to that company?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not through hacking.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have conversations with people who had obtained private information belonging to the other company through other means than hacking?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There were a number of litigation connected to the adverse party, which is a group of businessmen from Central Asia. And there were this -- a group of British SEC had been investigating them for and visited them from London stock exchange. So there were a lot of former employees of that company which were providing documents to journalists, not to me. So there were a lot of open source information about this adverse company which were floating around at that time.

MR. SCHIFF: So there were private parties who were former employees or current employees of the adverse party who may have been leaking the documents?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe that they made criminal complaints against the company, members of the board of that company.

MR. SCHIFF: And were they disclosing the documents of that company?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so. And I -- again, it's been a while ago, but I if remember these proceedings correctly, there were these three individuals -- who, by the way, are -- they are not the nicest people in the world. They were involved in child prostitution and they're under countless investigations throughout Europe.

MR. SCHIFF: Are were you involved in securing these documents from then employees of the adverse company?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have used open source information for -- in my work for the law firm and that's --

MR. SCHIFF: Well, that wouldn't be an open source. My question is, were you involved in securing documents belonging to the adverse company from then employees of that company?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have never met with the employees of the adverse company personally. And I never acquired anything from the, knowingly or unknowingly, from these people.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever tell Steve Levine, an editor for Axios, that you were an officer in the Soviet GRU?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never.

MR. SCHIFF: So if Mr. Levine was quoted as saying that you, quote, "openly described his meeting, your years as an officer in the Soviet GRU, the military intelligence arm, serving in Afghanistan," that would be a false statement by Mr. Levine?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was an inaccurate statement by Mr. Levine, which he later adjusted, and he has published recently an article where he addressed that.

MR. SCHIFF: In an article in CNN it was stated that you were quoted as saying, "Some of my clients are national governments or high ranking officials in those governments." And at one point one is referred to as including a Russian oligarch.

Have you represented a Russian oligarch?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have, sir. Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And which oligarch or oligarchs?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Oligarchs are people in my count like someone who is over \$1 billion?

MR. SCHIFF: And which Russian oligarchs have you represented?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I represented Andrey Vavilov. He is a very old client of mine.

MR. SCHIFF: In what matters?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In a number of matters, actually.

MR. SCHIFF: And have you spelled his name for us already?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And can you give us a general description of what kind of matters you've represented him in?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I represented him on matters connected to the work when he was in oil company. He had this oil, a large Russian state oil company, which was trying to push him out of that field, and there was a big kind of angle which I thought that I helped him to develop, was about his ecological work, because --

MR. SCHIFF: Which oil company was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: This was Lukoil. It is a Russian -- large Russian. I believe it is even listed here.

MR. SCHIFF: And when did you represent him in that litigation or that --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was just a conflict, it was not litigation.

MR. SCHIFF: When did you represent him in that matter?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: A while ago, 2003, I think, 2003. So it was actually around 9/11, like around 9/11 and afterwards?

MR. SCHIFF: And have you represented him more recently than that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have represented him on a number of other issues of course, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what kind of issues?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: His wife -- I'm sorry, his daughter, there was an attempt to kidnap his daughter by someone. So he needed some assistance in

addressing this issue.

MR. SCHIFF: Any other matters?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He had a hedge fund here which they were trying to set up, so I advised him on his publicity, public -- PR work in connection with that thing.

MR. SCHIFF: And what's the name of the hedge fund?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Oh, God, it's been a while. I don't remember now. It's no longer here. It was with -- through Goldman Sachs. And after -- I remember, I think, 2008 there was kind of prohibition on derivative trading and stuff like that. It was a quant fund and they -- kind of their business model was kind of upsetting the United States, so they -- I think that they withdrew from the United States and I think they are trading now in Europe somewhere.

MR. SCHIFF: Any other matters?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I represented him also, one of his personal nemesis -- I mean former business partner has made an attempt to come to United States, he was a member of -- corrupt member of Russian parliament, Duma. And so Vavilov asked me to help to tell story about him. He was personally not happy about this person getting U.S. citizenship or U.S. political asylum rather, and so he asked me to kind of conduct a public awareness campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: And did that public awareness campaign involve spreading information about him being anti-Semitic?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe he was a supporter. I believe at that time there was this thing about this material support for terrorism. So my thought was that he provide material support for anti-Semitism. That is correct, yes. We

made that point and we briefed members of U.S. media and the Jewish communities about this gentleman.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Conaway asked you earlier whether you had ever been an anonymous source. Were you an anonymous source for information against this individual with respect to these claims of anti-Semitism?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think there were -- I think there was a gentleman who was the face of those, he made those claims openly. So I don't believe I was an anonymous source. I was very much someone who -- there were people who were in front of that effort and identified themselves in that effort.

██████████ Sorry, 4 minutes.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you.

Mr. Akhmetshin, you told the AP --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sorry? I told --

MR. SCHIFF: The Associated Press.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: AP.

MR. SCHIFF: At one point that you did not know if Veselnitskaya's documents were provided by the Russian government.

What can you tell us that you do know about where the documents came from that she showed you at the lunch prior to the meeting at Trump Tower?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe she retained a due diligence firm which developed that knowledge, the documents and these documents.

MR. SCHIFF: Due diligence.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Due diligence. I mean private investigation firm?

MR. SCHIFF: So she had a private investigative firm put together that document?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes.

MR. TREMONTE: You have got to be careful. If you know something, tell them that you know it and how you know it. If you're assuming --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Thank you. I assume. I could only assume. I'm not sure, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you mentioned earlier that you thought she'd come upon -- and maybe I misunderstood -- the information on DNC and the Ziff Brothers while working for a client who you believe was Mr. Katsyv.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Is that what you believe or do you believe that it was by investigative firm or a combination of the two? I'm not sure I'm following you.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe it is a combination of two, or I assume it was a combination of two.

MR. SCHIFF: And tell us what your belief is and what is the basis of your forming that belief.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: My strong belief is that the part about Ziff Brothers she developed by herself through going through the tax case. There is a massive tax case which she analyzed and that case was -- I'm sorry.

So I believe this information about the Ziff Brothers, some of it was developed through analyzing Russian tax case which she spent time. She mentioned to me once she spent months going through these like volumes and volumes of that tax case.

And I think that once kind of money left Russia she traced it to Cyprus and that's where she needed help of someone who had understanding of Cyprus commercial and banking and corporate structures. And I believe that part was

developed by someone else, because I just cannot see her being able to find that information.

MR. SCHIFF: And when she spend months and months working on this tax case, was that for Mr. Katsyv?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, it was referenced in the emails that you were not a part of that setup, the Don Jr. meeting, that this came as a result, this information, this derogatory information, came as a result of the crown prosecutor, who I believe is a reference to Mr. Chaika. What do you know of her relationship to Mr. Chaika?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware of it.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether Mr. Chaika was also a source of the information or some of the information in the document that were you shown?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't know, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: Swap out?

MR. SCHIFF: Sure. Thank you.

MR. CONAWAY: I did have one question.

You said Glenn Simpson and Natalia had a relationship separate and apart from interactions with you. Is that accurate?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes, sir.

MR. CONAWAY: And that she doesn't speak English. Do you know if Glenn Simpson speaks Russian?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think he speaks Russian. At least I'm not aware.

MR. CONAWAY: So at the luncheons and meetings where the three of

you were together, you would do the translating?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think he was always accompanied by a translator, a very capable man.

MR. CONAWAY: So she was never by herself.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think so, no. There's always -- in interaction there was always someone translate for her.

██████████ Thank you, sir.

BY ██████████

Q I just want to talk to you about sourcing. Your name has come up frequently in the media, and a lot of times it has come up the media has described you as a former Russian intelligence officer. Is there any accuracy to that kind of reporting?

A There is zero accuracy to this reporting. And it is very hurtful and unfortunate.

Q So have any of these media outlets who have reported you as such, as a Russian intelligence officer, reached out to you to correct the record?

A Some people, as Congressman Schiff mentioned about Steve Levine, whom I've known for a long, long time, he reached out to me and he said, "Look, what was your effort?" And I think that lately only people who are intentionally determined to smear me, they put this out there. The majority of these like responsible reporting mention me as a former Soviet army officer or Soviet military, sir.

Q Any other major media publications reach out to you to correct your past as not being involved in Russian intelligence?

A I think that by now I believe the record is straight and accurate. So I

was never intelligence officer. And I believe that, as I mentioned to some news outlets, that there this determination, determined campaign, smear campaign against me because I just uncovered some falsehood and instead of addressing those things it is easier for them to say, "Oh, this is a KGB guy, that's why. Don't trust him."

Q You had mentioned that there may be a smear campaign against you. Can you give us some reasoning as to why that might be the case?

A Because I, as part of my lobbying work, I discovered that there's a concerted effort by some people to present a false narrative of Magnitsky story and when -- and no one checked on that. And when I pointed out those inaccuracies, instead of admitting this, they said, "Oh, this is this a KGB plot." And I think that's the reason why.

Q So is it fair to say through your own personal experience that media reporting about dual Russian-American citizens is not always accurate?

A I believe it is rather xenophobic, and I wouldn't say it's racist, it's not racial. But I think that it's easier. If only because someone was born in Russia doesn't mean that they are KGB agents.

Q In your experience with the media here, can you point this committee to other individuals who have received similar unfair treatment by the media as you have?

A I believe that it happens very often.

Q But any other Russian-Americans that you can point us to?

A Who were smeared similarly?

Q Yes. Yes, sir.

A I don't know. Look, since childhood I speak for myself only, I don't

comment on other people.

Q No, I understand that, but have you become aware of anyone over the years that you've lived here?

A I will give you an example. My daughter follows hockey. There is a hockey team here, and there's a hockey player, Alexander Ovechkin. He is very good guy actually. My daughter, we met him once when she was a baby. And then we kind of -- nicest young man.

And recently he started this campaign, like Team Russia, and he's been smeared like, you know, these horrible things I wouldn't mention here, like, "You're Putin's bitch." All those things. And, look, I mean, he has a right to have this opinion and to like Putin and it's kind of it's up to him. But it's just immediately paints him as a -- okay.

I will give you example of someone who is not a Russian, your colleague Dana Rohrabacher, for whom I have great respect. He could be unusual, probably he speaks his mind a lot. But at no time has he ever been, like, Putin's, like, KGB stooge and other things. He is listening, and he has open mind. And I think that he is, unlike most of the people, fought against communism. And I think that to say these things about him is just simply dishonest and inaccurate.

Q So it is an unfortunate reality, but sometimes the media does portray people falsely.

A Absolutely.

Q All right. Speaking with the sourcing I want to switch gears a little bit, though, and turn your attention to what has now become known as the Steele dossier or the publication publicly by Buzz Feed that was written largely by former SIS officer Christopher Steele. Are you aware of this publication?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

A Only through the media.

Q Have you read any portions of it through the media?

A I scanned through it. It's rubbish, I think.

Q And in your scanning of this document, the Steele dossier, you stated it as a rubbish. Why would you say that?

A I think it's just some of the things which are described, they are quite unlikely, I think.

Q Such as?

A One point which kind of I find interesting is that they -- there's a discussion, this one memo and discussion of proceedings of Russian National Security Council. And I'm thinking like, it's so highly unlikely these leaks from Russian Security Council will ever happen because just it is -- it's impossible.

MR. TREMONTE: It is beyond speculation.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think some of these things are just I think incredulous and unlikely.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

BY [REDACTED]

Q In your reading of the Steele dossier, did you find any piece of it to be credible?

A I did not focus on it completely, and it's been a while. I read it when it was published probably earlier this year, I think, and that's -- I just -- I have a kind of skeptical recollection of it. I don't remember details of it.

Q Okay. So is it fair to say, as you just did, that as you view the Steele dossier, it's skeptical?

A I am skeptical of that, yes.

Q Of the document. And you are skeptical because its credibility is lacking, you think?

A Just I could only have a personal opinion about it, I don't know for a fact what's there, what the sourcing for that document was, or how it came together. But my personal opinion I think it's quite unlikely.

Q That's my next line of questioning. The document referenced a number of sourcing or sources. Do you know of any of the sources, personally or indirectly, that were mentioned in the Steele dossier?

MR. TREMONTE: Again, he's not asking you to speculate.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't know, sir, no.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And are you, Mr. Akhmetshin, the source of any information that was produced in the Steele dossier?

A Oh, absolutely not.

Q Do you know Christopher Steele?

A No.

Q Have you ever met any of Christopher Steele's associates that say they knew Christopher Steele or were working on behalf of Christopher Steele?

A No, sir, no.

Q Did it surprise you or are you aware that Christopher Steele was working at the behest of Fusion GPS?

A I was surprised.

Q And why did that surprise you, sir?

A I don't know. I don't think that their expertise was in Russia generally, so --

Q Their -- sorry -- their being?

A Fusion GPS. I think that is all they do, is like support litigations, you know, commercial litigations.

Q So in your estimation of that, based on your years-long relationship with Fusion GPS founder Glenn Simpson, you believe that their work was mostly in litigation support?

A That's how I understood it, yes.

Q Did you know of any other cases in which Fusion GPS had forayed outside of the litigation support venture outside of the Steele dossier?

A I'm not aware of any of this. Plus, he doesn't have any Russia experience, so why would he do that?

Q I'm sorry, he?

A Glenn Simpson.

Q So based on your years-long relationship with Glenn Simpson, who you stated has no Russia experience, does he speak Russian?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

A No, not what I know.

Q Does he -- has he ever utilized a translator in your conversations with him?

A I don't remember, no. With me, I speak maybe not perfect English, but okay English.

Q No, but in your group meetings, not with one on one.

A I think if other Russians, other than Veselnitskaya?

Q Uh-huh.

A I don't remember him being in other conversation with any other Russian other than Veselnitskaya.

Q And so when it was you, Mr. Simpson, and Natalia V, would you do the translating?

A No, there was always a translator present.

Q And who brought that person?

A She brought.

Q She being Natalia V.

A Natalia, correct.

Q Was it always the same translator?

A She has two translators, I think one American, one Russian.

Q Okay.

A Or had. I don't know.

Q Circling back to the Steele dossier, have you personally ever been contacted by anyone to verify the contents of the Steele dossier?

A Not to my recollection.

Q Since the production of Steele dossier in January 2017 by Buzz

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

Feed, have you, other than what you've told us already, gone through any lengths to verify the credibility of the reporting in the Steele dossier?

A Absolutely not.

Q Are you aware of any individuals that have done so, that is, gone through or been contacted by any entity to verify any of the information in the Steele dossier?

A I'm not aware of anyone who has done it?

Q And have you had any conversations with Glenn Simpson or anyone associated with Fusion GPS as to the contents of the Steele dossier and its verification?

A I never discussed that dossier with Glenn.

Q How about anybody else?

A With no one else from Fusion GPS.

Q Who else did you discuss the dossier with?

A You know, in the bar, you know, you meet with the buddies, saying like this is rubbish.

Q So it's barroom chatter.

A Yeah, exactly, I'm sure. But with no one -- nothing meaningful.

Q Are you aware if the Federal Bureau of Investigation utilized any of their source network to provide material in the Christopher Steele dossier?

A I'm not aware of that.

Q In your relationships with the past with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, do you know if any of the information you provided them was portrayed in the Christopher Steele dossier?

A I don't believe so.

Q You don't believe so?

A I don't believe so.

Q Okay. Is there anyone else that you can direct us to that would have a concrete answer to that question?

A I don't know of anyone who might be helpful to this.

[REDACTED] Just a moment.

[REDACTED] You have about 3 minutes.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q So I believe you mentioned earlier that you sponsored a film screening related to some of your research efforts. Is that correct?

A The film was done independently from me. But the film -- the film was produced independently from me, but I became aware of this film sometime in the spring of 2016. And I went to a -- attempt to the film to be screened in Brussels in European Parliament some time in April, I believe.

Q Was it screened in Brussels?

A It was not. It was banned from the last moment, like, was very dramatic.

Q Did you attempt to set up any other screenings in Europe?

A I did not.

Q And why was it banned in Brussels?

A Because there is -- this Mr. Browder has kind of pretty much threatened someone there so that screening didn't help any.

Q But it was screened here in the United States. Is that right?

A That is correct. Yes, sir.

Q And that screening occurred in June 2016?

A Yes.

Q And in fact the screening occurred just a few days after your meeting in New York at Trump Tower? Is that right?

A That is correct. Yes, sir.

Q And you were involved in sort of promoting or assisting with PR for that screening?

A I was.

Q And on whose behalf were you doing that?

A Of my client. As I thought it would be very beneficial education opportunity to present these shortcomings in original.

Q I'm sorry, which client was this?

A Hragi, that was a client I worked for.

Q So on that, you had earlier stated that the entire Hragi project lasted 4 or 5 weeks, yet you mentioned that as a part of your work for Hragi you had a lobbying contact with a codel in Moscow in April of 2016. And then you just said that you did the film -- you promoted the film screening in June of 2016 on behalf of Hragi. So that's longer than 4 or 5 weeks, isn't it?

A Oh, but, I mean, the actual work was done -- I think about billing hours. So --

Q So 4 or 5 weeks of billing hours over what period of time?

A Over probably 2, 3 months.

Q And what were those --

A So I'd say like -- okay, April started, April, May, June, 3 months.

Q Thank you.

MR. QUIGLEY: Hello again.

Let's go back to the meeting at Trump Tower, June 9th, 2016. The meeting takes place with who in attendance?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: When we arrived to the Trump Tower there were four of us. It was me, Veselnitskaya, translator, and Kaveladze. And then at the meeting we are joined by someone which now identified as Gold -- Goldstein, this British guy.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. QUIGLEY: Goldstone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Goldstone, yes.

And then if I remember correctly, there was Trump Jr., there was Kushner, there was -- what's his name -- Paul Manafort.

MR. QUIGLEY: Paul -- Mr. Manafort was there.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. And might be someone else. I don't remember. So very large room.

MR. QUIGLEY: And how long did the meeting last?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: 15, 20 minutes, I think. As I remember it. It's been a while, yeah.

MR. QUIGLEY: So did one person run the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Who was that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Trump Jr. clearly was in charge.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Did everyone who was there speak?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. QUIGLEY: Who did not speak?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not sure Kushner said something. He was there for some part and then he left.

MR. QUIGLEY: Was he there at the beginning?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He was there at the beginning?

MR. QUIGLEY: But he left before it was over?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He left before it was over, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did Mr. Manafort speak?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Might have. You know, sometimes small talk, I

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

guess.

MR. QUIGLEY: But of those three, Mr. Manafort, Mr. Trump, and Mr. Kushner, Donald Jr. was the one doing most of the speaking, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. So did he open the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what did he say?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Just, you know, like Americans like small talk in the beginning, so. And I told Veselnitskaya also, you know, Russians usually jump into the issue, I said -- I believe it was right after they got, they won nomination. You know, the primaries were over. And I told here, like, just don't attack people right away. Have conversation, nomination, that small stuff. And she did, by the way.

So it was like some small talk, nice room, nice view, dramatic. The room was rather large and beautiful views of Manhattan.

MR. QUIGLEY: The meeting begins with small talk?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. And when did it -- at what point did it become business?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think that after small talk kind of period ended, Jr. said like, so what brings you here? Just kind of -- again, guys, it's been a while so --

MR. QUIGLEY: And he was directing that toward Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And what did she say?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And said: I believe you have some information for us.

MR. QUIGLEY: How did he say that exactly?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember verbatim, something to that effect. I wish I would remember. I was very skeptical of the meeting to begin with actually, so --

MR. QUIGLEY: Because?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I thought -- I never thought they would ever win President's office.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. So he said something like, "What brings you here?"

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yeah, what brings you here? I believe you have some information for us.

MR. QUIGLEY: How did he phrase that part? As close as you can to remembering his exact words.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I mean, like, small talk, welcome, nice views, something Russia, and when did you get here. And then he said, like: So I believe you have something, some information for us.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did he describe it that way? Did he use the word "dirt"?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember if the word "dirt." I think it would be too vulgar, I guess. It was very -- this was very lighthearted meeting and there were very, like, polite young man so. I don't think the word "dirt" was used, at least not to my recollection.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. And how did she respond?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And then she said: Look, I've been involved in this

commercial litigation on behalf of my client, and as a part of this research I uncovered that there's these hedge funds from New York has violated both U.S. and Russian tax and securities laws and this money made its way to DNC coffers.

MR. QUIGLEY: How did she describe that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think she said like first, and then she kind of went on into details, you know, what and how.

MR. QUIGLEY: To the extent you can recall, how did she describe that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I kind of feel like maybe there would be a turn for me to speak, so I kind of was thinking what I would say. And since I heard that story before, so I kind of like zoned off.

But it was pretty much the same speech she have give, because I heard her describing this before as well. And it was that there's this firm, instead of booking these -- they made this \$800 million profit on trading these illegally traded Russian securities, and that it was never booked as a trade, it was booked as a loan. So I really -- I wish I could give you more --

MR. QUIGLEY: So she describe their illegal activities?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And then I believe you said that it made its way to the DNC.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. QUIGLEY: How did she describe that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And she said just: And then this money ended up in the United States and the owners of that hedge fund are -- they were actively -- active in kind of supporting DNC electoral efforts.

MR. QUIGLEY: So she said that the money from the hedge fund made its

way to people --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I mean, the profits, the illegal profits, criminal profits, I think.

MR. QUIGLEY: All right. So the criminal profits made their way to the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Manhattan, yes. She was specific about the bank, somewhere like on 53rd Street, I believe.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did she name the bank?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was either Citi or Chase, as I remember. One of those big banks.

MR. QUIGLEY: So the illegal profits made their way to banks in the United States?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. QUIGLEY: And from that she said: How did it get to the DNC?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And then she: And these people are like major contributors to the DNC. And Jr. said: So where does it go to Hillary? Could you show us the money trail to Hillary?

And she said: Hell, I don't know. I mean, I could trace it here, and that this is like very American thing. I mean, kind of I gave you this information, it's up to you to kind of trace it down.

And, you know, he's like: Eh. It's like, he's kind of like engaged. And then, you know: Eh. Okay, you know. Kind of -- I think that just he immediately lost interest. She said, like: I have nothing on Hillary.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did he ask any other follow-up questions before, as you say, he lost interest?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, this Natalia is like she's a very emotional person, so she didn't have him second to breathe. She says: But, because of this adoption. And she went on like, you know -- and, you know, they were polite.

MR. QUIGLEY: So the conversation began with: So you have something for us. And then her description is his followup.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. And she said: But, you know, because of these things, like, you know, that adoption, you know, this fake law was -- not fake law, the actual law, but based on a fake narrative was adopted. And because of that U.S. citizens got and that kind of thing.

And she went on and on. And then I felt like -- and the people were like so not interested. And then like it became like almost awkward. So I thought I would just undercut her and then I gave my 90 seconds.

MR. QUIGLEY: So when you spoke, you spoke about what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I said that, yes, that's correct, there's this law which was adopted in the United States without ever being checked for factual accuracy. And because that law affected a lot of American citizens, and it worsened, it was the beginning of the end of U.S.-Russia relations. I said that this -- like, I remember the term I used, low-hanging fruit, just to check these facts is fairly easy and to make an issue --

MR. QUIGLEY: So what you're saying is that you only spoke about the adoption issue.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. That's the only thing I know actually.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Now, you said earlier that she had a document with her research, correct? She brought that to the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe she did, yes. Yes, she did. It was on the

desk, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. And did she hand that to anyone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was asked that question before. I don't remember exactly whether she handed or not. But she had it on her for sure, it was at the desk as I was sitting next to her and that was in front of her.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. So the fact that Mr. Trump asked the question, so you have something for us, something along those lines, is that correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, something like do you have information you want to share with us. Something to that effect. I don't remember verbatim.

MR. QUIGLEY: So clearly the meeting was to follow up with the information they believed that they were going to get.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I could only assume, sir, I don't know for a fact.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Now, you said you had heard her talk about this issue many times before?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. Because she had talked about it in what context to you?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Like Mr. Browder, because he managed, he set up his criminal scheme, and then she kind of was very broad of her like finding these things which he was involved with. Because he's the guy who was, I would say, personal nemesis of hers.

MR. QUIGLEY: But she had talked to you about this several times.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She had, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: How did she describe what she had talked about, what she had found out so far?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She said, like, you know, she was very proud of it,
so --

MR. QUIGLEY: Do you have any idea how long she had been working on
it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She said for a number of months.

MR. QUIGLEY: And you had spoken to her about it how many times
before the Trump Tower meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think she came sometime like in the spring. I
haven't been in contact. Sometimes I will talk to her like two, three times a day,
and then sometimes like I haven't her from her in a couple months. So some time
then probably before, I mean, March maybe was the first time I heard about it.

MR. QUIGLEY: You mentioned Cyprus. How did she describe the
involvement in Cyprus as it involved these concerns that she had in the money?
Are you suggesting she was laundered through there?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, because, you know, I believe that she traced
this money from the Russian proceeds of this crime, she traced it to Cyprus, and
someone helped her with the Cyprus research?

MR. QUIGLEY: Someone had what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Helped her with Cyprus research.

MR. QUIGLEY: She had said that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes. I don't remember. Again, it's
been a while ago. But there was absolutely no way she could do it on her own.

MR. QUIGLEY: Because?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Again, because it is in Greek. The corporate
documents were in Greek.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. QUIGLEY: The corporate documents that had gone through Cyprus were in Greek?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. TREMONTE: You assume.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I assume. I believe, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: Did she tell you that they were --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think she said something to that effect.

MR. QUIGLEY: Okay. So to your understanding, who would have been able to help her do that research?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe some private due diligence firm, that's how I understood it.

MR. QUIGLEY: She didn't say that she had traveled to Cyprus to talk about this with an entity?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember her mentioning that.

MR. QUIGLEY: She didn't talk at all about how she found out or understood how this worked through Cyprus?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She mentioned that -- now it kind of all blends in together, but it is my understanding, either through her direct mentioning it to me, but that she engaged a due diligence firm with expertise in tracking down these Cyprus corporate and banking issues. And that firm produced that research which she later reported to both Russian Government and to whoever would listen to her.

MR. QUIGLEY: What's your knowledge of money laundering as it works in Cyprus?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Again, just like I told your colleague, I have no direct

knowledge of things, but I do read often that it's a very popular offshore destination for funds from former Soviet Union, and Russia in particular. So the Cyprus corporate structures are -- were used often for to conceal the ownership of the transactions or the companies or banking accounts. Again, I could only -- I have no direct knowledge of that, I just have what I read and I've seen in the past.

MR. QUIGLEY: Back to the meeting. When Natalia went on to discuss adoptions, did she also discuss the Magnitsky Act?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She did, yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And did Trump, Mr. Trump, react to what she had said and what you had said about this in any way?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He said: Look, we are not in power anymore -- we are not in power. So, you know, one thing that stuck with me, he said like: When -- not if we come to power, he said, when we come to power, come see us again. I thought like that was rather kind of brave to say that.

MR. QUIGLEY: You mentioned Mr. -- you saw Mr. Goldstone at Trump Tower.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have seen him once, yeah?

MR. QUIGLEY: Was that the day that we're talking about?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes, he was a part of the meeting?

MR. QUIGLEY: Oh, he was part of the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. QUIGLEY: And did he say anything at the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. Sorry.

MR. QUIGLEY: How much time do I have? We'll flip back.

MR. TREMONTE: Is there a lunch break in the offing?

[Discussion off the record.]

[12:54 p.m.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Mr. Akhmetshin, just picking up with the same line of questioning regarding the Donald Trump Jr. meeting June of 2016 in Trump Tower which you attended.

Do you have any information that Donald Trump Jr. during that meeting solicited any information from any of the attendees regarding then-candidate Hillary Clinton?

A I don't think he asked explicitly for it.

Q Did he ask implicitly or indirectly for it?

A I mean, as I described, you know, when Veselnitskaya made her presentation, he said, so could you show me how did the money go to Hillary? And so would that qualify as implicit --

Q So when you say the money would --

A -- designation?

Q -- the money would go to Hillary, what money are you referring to?

A I mean just like, you know, just --

MR. TREMONTE: Hold it, hold it. You weren't referring to anything. Mr. Akhmetshin was just describing a statement made by Mr. Trump Jr. in answer to your question. If you want to know what he thinks it was referring to, that's a separate --

BY [REDACTED]

Q What was the statement made? Not what you think. What was the statement made by either Natalia V and Donald Trump Jr.?

A So Natalia made a statement that money obtained through criminal

acts, violation of tax and securities laws by the U.S. hedge fund have made its way into the United States, and from there -- including people who are owners of that hedge fund. They are large contributors to DNC causes. And so he -- Jr., Trump Jr. asked, so could you show us how does that money flows to Hillary Clinton? So would that describe it?

MR. TREMONTE: Don't ask.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Okay. And Natalia Veselnitskaya said, I don't know, you know. I can only tell where it ended up, and how it's being disbursed in the United States I don't know.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Were there any other statements by Donald Trump Jr. in relation to that specific subject line?

A I think they kind of dropped it at that, to the best of my recollection. I don't remember exactly.

Q And to the best of your recollection, did anyone in the meeting that was representing the Donald Trump campaign ask for any further information from any of the attendees regarding that subject matter?

A I don't think so, no.

Q Did you? Did you ask?

A I did not, no.

Q Did Natalia V volunteer any further information to Donald Trump Jr. during the 15- to 20-minute meeting?

A I don't think so.

Q Putting the meeting aside, in your capacity here as an American citizen, did you do any work, officially or unofficially, for any candidates for

President during the 2016 election?

A No.

Q Are you aware, do you have any information that you're in possession of, or aware of that then-candidate Donald Trump and his campaign colluded with the Russian Government to rig the election, for lack of a better word?

A I'm not aware of any of this information.

Q Are you aware of any information or evidence that any employees, officially or unofficially, of Donald Trump himself worked with the Russian Government and/or Russian officials to affect the 2016 U.S. Presidential election?

A I'm not aware of any of his contacts or contact -- or work.

Q Lastly, you had stated -- I know you've had a longstanding relationship with Glenn Simpson. Do you know anyone else at Fusion GPS?

A I know a few other people there.

Q Who? Who do you know there?

A I know a couple of other people there.

Q Who are those people?

A I know this Tom Catan.

Q Anybody else?

A I know this like -- her name escapes me. She's a young researcher there. It's a girl. Tyler I think her name.

Q How do you know Tom Catan?

A I've known Tom Catan for probably longer than I've known Simpson, actually. He was a Financial Times reporter here.

Q And is that how you first met Mr. Catan?

A I met him in that capacity, yes.

Q And have you and Mr. Catan ever done any journalistic work together?

A I believe he has written about this Kazakhstan corruption in Kazakhstan at some point. So that's -- I believe that's how. It's been a long time. He then left Financial Times to work for Times of -- for Times of London. And I remember I had drinks with him once in Madrid a long time ago, but never professionally. Since then, I haven't had any contacts with him.

Q So about how long ago was that when you saw him in Madrid, ballpark?

A Ten years ago, maybe.

Q And have you ever -- since that time, have you ever done any professional journalistic work on behalf of Mr. Catan?

A I have not.

Q Has he asked you for any information regarding the subject matter we're here today discussing?

A No.

Q Has anyone else at his firm, or at the behest of his firm, or any law firms at the behest of his firm, asked you for information relating to the subject matter we're discussing here today, namely the 2016 Presidential election and Russian interference?

A No, no one ever approached me on these issues.

Q Okay, thanks. [REDACTED]

BY [REDACTED]

Q So just to follow up on that line of questioning, I believe you explained earlier that part of the work that you do is an attempt to raise awareness

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

for your clients, is to get journalists to write about stories, based on information that you found and share with journalists. Is that correct?

A That is correct, yes.

Q And, in fact, you've done that quite a lot with lot of journalists over many years. Is that correct?

A You could say that, yes.

Q And that, sometimes, even you may be quoted or referenced as an unnamed source in newspaper or magazine articles. Is that correct?

A I might have been off the record once or twice. I don't know. Who doesn't?

Q And, so, were you ever involved in these sort of conversations with journalists or attempts to -- in any of your conversations with journalists, or attempts to get your material into a newspaper story, or any of the times you're quoted as an unnamed source, did any of those conversations or articles have to do with connections between Russians and Donald Trump and his associates?

A No, never.

Q So you're appearing here today at our invitation, and we appreciate you being here and spending the time that you have with us. The specific invitation, in addition to your testimony, requested the production of documents that reasonably could lead to the discovery of any facts within the investigation's publicly announced parameters. This was our August 17th letter to you.

On August 31st, 2017, we received a response from counsel saying that you were available to discuss an interview, which we've since arranged, and we appreciate that. It also stated that you do not possess any documents that are responsive to your -- that's our, the committee's request.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

I think, you know, understanding the parameters are somewhat broad, I think we've discussed a number of matters that might touch on -- or, I guess, to the extent that you have documents that are in your possession that touch on the matters we've discussed here today, would you be willing to produce those documents?

MR. TREMONTE: To the extent that there are any and they're not privileged, we would endeavor to produce them to the committee.

██████████ We appreciate that. I just wanted to mention a few categories of things, based on what we've already talked about that I think would fall in that scope.

One would be lobbying disclosures related to any of the Russia-related work that we've discussed today, either produce or point us to where those are publicly available; other documents that might bear on lobbying contacts, such as the April 2016 meeting in Moscow with the congressional delegation or similar; billing records for work performed on behalf of Hragi or Baker Hostetler, understanding that such records are generally not subject to attorney-client privilege; and documents reflecting, sort of, any business or non -- any business communications with either Natalia V, Glenn Simpson, or Thomas Catan of Fusion. And there may be others, but those are ones that come to mind, based on some of the things we've discussed today.

And additionally, to the extent there are documents, I believe you mentioned some emails, for instance, from Baker Hostetler, to which Mr. Akhmetshin as well as members of Fusion may have been a party. To the extent you've identified those documents and, you know, you believe they're privileged, we could figure out the best way to at least note that as well.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. TREMONTE: And I'm available for -- understanding the nature of your requests, we'll take it under advisement, and I'm available to have further conversations without officially convening.

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

MR. SWALWELL: Going back, Mr. Akhmetshin, to the June 9th meeting, our staff is going to provide you with what's marked as exhibit 1. It's a rectangle to represent the table at Trump Tower. Can you take a moment, and in your writing, using the initials of the people who attended, just write where they were seated at the table. For example, you would be RA.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To the best of my recollection. It's been a while, so --

MR. SWALWELL: Yes. Do you mind signing it as well at the bottom?

MR. CONAWAY: We'll get you a copy of it.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Again, it's to the best of my recollection. So it seems like there were more people there than the thing, so I put the question marks there. But there might have been more people sitting on the opposite side from us.

MR. SWALWELL: You wrote JK. Is that Jared Kushner?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Kushner, correct. Yes. He was sitting directly in front of me.

MR. SWALWELL: You wrote DT Jr. Is that Donald Trump Jr.?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: RG, is that Rob Goldstone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. So might be someone in between. I think -- I

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

have this recollection that there are more people, like density people on the opposite side, or I might be wrong. It's been a while so --

MR. TREMONTE: But you do recollect Goldstone being there?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think so, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: You wrote PM. Is that Paul Manafort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Paul Manafort, correct. He was sitting like at the like end of the table.

MR. SWALWELL: You wrote RA. That's yourself?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is me, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: NV is Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: NV is Natalia.

MR. SWALWELL: Who is AS?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's a translator. Anatoli Samochornov. He was a translator. Actually, did I put IK there?

MR. SWALWELL: Well, you put IK at the end of the table. And that's Ike?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Ike. That is correct.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you see Ivanka at all at that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not at the meeting.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you see her at all that day?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you see her?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the time when we were hitting the elevator. So she was just waiting for elevator. We -- it was like 3-second interaction.

MR. SWALWELL: Was that at the end of the meeting or before the meeting?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the end of the meeting, yes. We were heading down and I think she was heading up.

MR. SWALWELL: Which floor did you see her on?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I can't remember. Whatever floor where the conference room was.

MR. TREMONTE: The same floor?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The same floor, yes. So she was just also leaving at the same time as we were leaving, but I think she took the elevator up and we took elevator down.

MR. SWALWELL: Was she with Jared, her husband?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, she was alone.

MR. SWALWELL: During the meeting, how many times do you remember Don Jr. asking for information on Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: If I remember correctly, it was that one time, where he said, so where's -- kind of how does it go to Hillary, this money? That's -- again, it's been a while so that's -- I think that was kind of one mention of her. Of Hillary Clinton, you mean, right?

MR. SWALWELL: Did Jared Kushner ever speak at all during the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember him speaking at all, actually. He left after a while.

██████████ One minute.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So my counsel here advises that, you know, just -- again, it's not the first time I talk about this. There are other people in the government who are -- so, you know, I was listening to this thing and I was sitting

in front of -- in front of Kushner. And Natalia was like going on and on about the Ziff Brothers.

And I was sitting there and thinking to myself like, you know, here's this billionaire Jewish kid, and they are billionaire Jewish kids. And I thought that -- and, you know, I was thinking also, because if you're going to meetings, best to know what your audience is. And I was thinking like maybe they're buddies, maybe like go to same synagogue or like it's a small town. I mean, there are not that many billionaire young men in New York.

And I was thinking to myself, because I remember he was there present when this whole Ziff Brothers was discussed, and then, you know, he just -- and then he left, because I don't think he was around for the adoption discussion. But he left and --

MR. SWALWELL: Was Jared there when Donald Jr. asked how it leads to Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember whether he left before or after, but he definitely was there when she discussed Ziff Brothers. That's one detail I remember, because I was sitting there and think like -- I was quite sure that she has no understanding of the, like, basic map of New York, which even I don't have. So I'm sure it's like much deeper relationship between people there.

And so I was sitting there and thinking like, you know, she's saying all these stories. They might be like good buddies, you know, they go surfing together like.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you talk to Jared Kushner at all before the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you greet Donald Jr. before the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember even we shook hands in the

beginning. So I think that at the end we shook hands, but I don't think in the beginning. We kind of entered the room. Like, it's a very large room, so it's like -- really like basketball court size and -- or maybe not that much, but -- so we kind of entered kind of in the beginning. And then in the beginning I think that there was some kind of introductions around the table, but I don't think I spoke with Kushner or Donald Trump directly.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you greet Paul Manafort before the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not before the meeting, but I had like 5-second discussion with him like on the way out. So --

MR. SWALWELL: What did you talk about?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was like small talk, because, you know, we were -- if you could see from the scheme, like, you know, we were seated at the very end of the table. So we kind of exiting like next to each other.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you met Paul Manafort before that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: At any time during the meeting or at any time before the meeting, during the meeting, or after the meeting, did you tell Mr. Manafort that you and he had met before?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I said we have an acquaintance in common. So it was just like -- you know, it's like it's a long walk so I -- not to make it awkward, so I kind of mentioned someone.

MR. SWALWELL: Was who the acquaintance that you had in common?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: So-and-so has done some work with Manafort in Ages.

MR. SWALWELL: Who is that?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: His name is Lanny Wiles.

MR. SWALWELL: Can you spell that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Lanny, L-a-n-n-y; Wiles, W-i-l-e-s, Wiles.

MR. SWALWELL: What was the nature of the work he had done with Mr. Manafort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, he told this very interesting anecdote. He does a lot of, like, advance work for campaigns, and I think he worked for President Reagan a number -- on both administrations. He did a lot of election work.

So he told me once a story that in Ages or during the Reagan administration, the U.S. supported someone named Jonas Savimbi, who was this Angolan, I'll say terrorist or like warlord, but he was very friendly to U.S. interests there. And it's a funny story. He said that, you know -- and he was tasked with doing -- you know, he's not a political person. He kind of runs like the plane, cars on time, you know, just hotel rooms are booked.

And so he said that we went to JFK to pick up this Jonas Savimbi. And -- so in the comment he said, I put like, I don't remember, like 30- or \$50,000 like for the incidentals for -- and he said like the U.S. Government was paying for the visit, so it was like very lavish. They put them in the Waldorf Astoria. So they come -- they came -- and again, it was Ages, so there's no like controls I don't think.

So he said, I put out like a large amount of my own, 30-, \$50,000 for these, like, room incidentals. And they come in. He said they were like really thugs, you know, just like warlords. And so he said that I come in and I go to one to settle. I go to my room, and I get a phone call like literally he said like 10, 15

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

minutes afterwards. They say, you know what, you should put up more money, because they ordered like all these -- like this room service. They ordered like cases of whiskey and stuff like that. He said, okay, so he put out the money.

And then afterwards, he said when we saw them -- and I think he's spoken to Congress, Jonas Savimbi. I mean like Americans were very supportive of him. And so when he said that we sent them away, I went back to collect my bags. And he said, I'm -- and this concierge said, like, you know, the manager of the hotel would like to see you, sir. He said, I walk into his office, and on his desk there are like -- you know, there's like -- there's this gun, there's a hand grenade, there are clips, this collection of clips. And this manager of the hotel said, Mr. Wiles, it looks like you've got a problem. And Lanny said, no, sir, I think you've got a problem. And so -- I thought it's a funny story.

MR. SWALWELL: I guess I don't understand how that relates to Mr. Manafort.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And they worked together on that -- they worked together with Manafort on that account on Southern District.

MR. SWALWELL: That was brought up in the conversation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yeah. So I said like, you know, we --

MR. TREMONTE: Was it brought up in the conversation with Mr. Manafort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, no, no. You know, he kind of shrugged it off. I mentioned, yeah, we have this acquaintance in common. And he didn't react at all. He didn't strike me as a man of many words. So literally like, you know, walking out of the room, like, a 5-second conversation.

██████████ Five minutes, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Manafort take any notes during the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know what, he was like -- almost didn't look like he pays attention. He was like on his whatever device, probably -- it looked like BlackBerry to me. Just something -- he was just almost like laying down in his chair, because the chairs with -- you know, the back goes back. He was like almost like half laying and then on his phone. So it looked like he was checking his email or doing something. I don't remember anyone taking notes, actually.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Kushner take any notes?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Mr. Kushner on his cell phone or have his cell phone out?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Donald Trump Jr. take any notes?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think so, no. He was like clearly in charge.

MR. SWALWELL: Did he have a cell phone out?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Your recollection is that the meeting lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That's how it felt. I don't know. Maybe longer. It wasn't a long meeting, actually.

MR. SWALWELL: Was there any follow-up with anyone in the meeting in the days afterwards? Not the meeting downstairs but in the days afterwards, did you follow up with anyone in that room?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I didn't have any contacts for anyone and not that I'm aware of, no, or was part of.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: You said that your recollection was that you went to the coffee shop in Trump Tower. At any point, did you have a drink with Rinat and Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: With who, I'm sorry?

MR. SWALWELL: I'm sorry. With Ike and Natalia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We had coffee downstairs, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: It was coffee, not an alcoholic drink?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think alcoholic drink. It was too early, I think, for that.

MR. SWALWELL: What time do you remember the meeting being?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Something in the afternoon, like after lunch.

MR. SWALWELL: Does 4 o'clock sound correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It sounds like a little late. I thought it was earlier, but, you know, I -- it felt like we went there straight from the lunch.

MR. SWALWELL: You, Natalia, and Ike?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And the translator.

MR. SWALWELL: And the translator. Is it possible that -- let me back up. Did you greet anybody in the lobby before you went up to the conference room?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. Actually, I was -- going up or down?

MR. SWALWELL: Going up.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: To the meeting, right?

MR. SWALWELL: Yes.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I was actually also surprised. We kind of -- I follow this Ike, because, you know, Ike and Veselnitskaya were walking up

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

front and the translator and I were walking behind them. So, you know, Manhattan streets like midday kind of busy, so there might have been some -- they were in their conversation. I was in conversation with the translator. He's a very nice person and very kind of cultured person. Actually, then I mentioned that I'm going to see a theatre play, and he was very much interested in seeing it, so I invited him to join.

MR. TREMONTE: I'm sorry. What happened when you got to the lobby?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: We walked into the lobby. So kind of we were kind of -- I think we separated. They were walking up front of us, but we were not walking like back to back. And so we kind of were walking from the Fifth Avenue. So we're walking on -- so we're walking south on -- on Madison then till 57th Street. On 57th Street, we crossed to Fifth Avenue. And from Fifth Avenue, we just entered the building. There's no one -- I thought there would be some kind of security or where you sign in or something. I don't remember any -- at any point signing in anywhere.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Mr. Goldstone in the lobby?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He was -- we met him upstairs already, the floor where -- he was waiting there at the floor where the meeting took place.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you know where to go?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I followed Ike and Natalia.

MR. SWALWELL: I'm sorry?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I followed Ike and Natalia. They were ahead of us. I had no idea where to go.

MR. SWALWELL: Was Aras or Emin Agalarov mentioned in the premeeting lunch at all? Were they discussed?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I don't remember. I would have remembered.

No.

MR. SWALWELL: Were they discussed during the meeting in the conference room at Trump Tower? Did either of their names come up?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Is that something that you said -- you said you would remember if they had come up at the lunch.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would have remembered, yes. And I don't remember it came up at the meeting -- or at least, again, it's been a long time ago. So I just don't specifically -- don't have a recollection of their names being brought up at the -- at the meeting.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you discuss the Presidential campaign? You're now June 2016. The convention is approaching. Was that discussed at all at Trump Tower?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Just that I suggested Veselnitskaya to congratulate them on winning the nomination, because I think he just won, Jr., Donald -- not Jr. His father, Mr. Trump, won the nomination. So I told her like, you know, congratulate them on the nomination, something. But I don't think it was discussed like in a strategy or anything.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it discussed?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She said like congratulations on winning nomination. And he said, yes, we're like excited, some -- I wish I could tell you. I don't want to say something which is really not true. But I don't have that recollection other than this small talk.

MR. SWALWELL: At any time --

MR. CONAWAY: We're at a break. Do you guys have anything?

██████████ No, sir.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Chair.

At any time in the meeting, did Don Jr. suggest that if his father were to win the Presidency, that they would revisit the Magnitsky Act or the adoption issue?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think it was said in that terms, but, as I mentioned, something which actually stuck with me at the meeting, when we were -- I think somewhere at the end of the meeting when we were just getting up, he pretty much told her, look, we are not in the government, you know, there's nothing we could do to kind of to address this issue, and -- but then he said, when we win, come back see us again.

So that's -- I think that phrase I remember very distinctly, because when he said that when we win, I thought to myself, yeah, right, like kind of -- because I was absolutely certain they were not going to win. And so that I remember correctly. So maybe the reference which is something you referred to, I think that was the stuff. Like when we win, come see us again, something to that effect.

MR. SWALWELL: Did anyone else reference if they were to win, or discuss that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He clearly was an alpha male in this whole -- he was the one who kind of ran this thing. So I think he was the only one who really kind of spoke meaningfully there.

MR. SWALWELL: The documents that Natalia brought to the meeting, were there enough for every person at the table, or was there only one set?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't think she -- I haven't seen her distributing like around the table, but I don't know whether she had them with her at the meeting.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

And, again, you know, when they were leaving I don't know whether they changed hands or not or she left it with them. She was kind of like dejected afterwards, so I don't think -- I don't remember if documents were given or not.

MR. SWALWELL: Were the documents in English or Russian, or both?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you view the documents?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I saw the documents. I would assume it was in English, but I don't remember exactly. It would be ridiculous to bring Russian language documents to a meeting of English speakers. I would say it probably was in English.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you review the documents at the lunch before the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not.

MR. SWALWELL: You did not.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was aware, because I've seen that file before, so I assumed that was it.

MR. SWALWELL: When you saw the file before, were they in English or Russian?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think I've seen a Russian version of that, but -- so I thought that was something to -- I might have like skimmed through. But it was clear to me that was about the Ziff Brother kind of --

MR. SWALWELL: When would you might have skimmed through them?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: At the lunch, yes. At the lunch. When I came in, you know, they were already in conversation. They were already -- and have eaten before. So I came in and I remember I had like an espresso with them and

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

kind of -- and they were kind of finishing their meal. And there's this kind of conver -- and there was already kind of -- you know, when you come in, like conversation already going and kind of you are --

MR. SWALWELL: Did you arrive at that lunch with Natalia, or did she get there before?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I came there, already they had been there already. So I arrived, they are way into their lunch. I don't know when they started, but when I came in they were already like finishing their meal.

MR. SWALWELL: At any point when you were at the lunch, were Hillary Clinton's emails ever discussed?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember that.

MR. SWALWELL: Is that something you would remember?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would remember it, because I remember what was discussed at that meeting. The different tax avoidance schemes in the history of Russian economy, history of these bubbles and schemes. So they were like -- I remember they were going for these like -- some of these ways people steal money in Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: And just going back to these documents, did they reference the Democratic Party at all, from what you viewed?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think the documents were mostly about these like, you know, commercial, how -- explaining how the crime took place, you know, how they structured the crime and what was this -- what amounts of money, companies, corporations.

But I think there was somewhere like mention of the DNC, because I remember DNC was something which kind of was spoken about. I don't

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

remember as a term "Democratic Party" per se was used, if it was.

MR. SWALWELL: Now, Natalia brought her own translator, is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: What did you understand Mr. Kaveladze's role to be?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He brought us there, I guess. I don't know what his role was, but from practically, he kind of brought us there and we came into the meeting.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Natalia ever tell you that Mr. Kaveladze was going to be the translator?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, because when I came in, the translator was with her already. It was Kaveladze, her and the translator at the restaurant.

MR. SWALWELL: If Mr. Kaveladze was the person who brought you in, as you said, you went through without going through security, did it strike you as unusual that he didn't play any role in the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I thought the whole meeting was unusual. I don't remember --

MR. SWALWELL: Hold on, Mr. Akhmetshin.

Did Mr. Kaveladze say anything during the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not to my recollection.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever see him greet Don Jr.?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think -- if I remember correctly, we were sitting on opposite sides. I mean, there was -- at the end there was this kind of handshake kind of thing, but I don't remember it was in the beginning or not.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Kaveladze ever greet Jared Kushner?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Again, I don't know. Jared Kushner was not there

when we were leaving. He left already.

MR. SWALWELL: You have a pretty clear memory of that.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I remember him leaving. As I mentioned to you, this like episode where I was thinking like he might have known the Ziff Brothers. So that's why I remember. He left -- he left before the meeting ended.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Kaveladze ever greet Paul Manafort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever see Mr. Kaveladze speak with Mr. Goldstone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. They seemed to know each other, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Was that before or after the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was before the meeting. When we came in, there was this kind of some conversation, because they had -- they clearly knew each other. So that was clear to me at least, or, at least, again, I assume. I'm not certain.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you ever use the -- or have you ever used the messenger app Telegram?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I do, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: You do. How long have you been using that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: For a long time, since probably it was invented. It's a free way to speak with foreigners.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever communicated with Natalia via Telegram?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, I have, when she's in Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: How about with Ike, have you ever communicated with

him via Telegram?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. I think I used WhatsApp. I might have. You know, it could be.

MR. SWALWELL: When would you have communicated with Ike through a messenger?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: In the summer of this year.

MR. SWALWELL: With regards to what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Well, when this whole -- in the spring, when this whole, like, hysteria, I would call about Russia started, you know, all these contacts, it was very clear to me that this meeting -- it's a matter of time until the fact of the meeting will come out. And, you know, it's -- and when people were kind of chased for less unusual kind of reasons. For example, I remember for a while there was this Russian -- this old guy, old ambassador. He met with some people, and it was like a huge story. Like yeah, ambassador meets with this campaign, which I personally think that wasn't unusual. I mean, I'm sure there's like other ambassadors met with the campaign as well.

So it was clear to me that it's really a matter of time, because, you know, it was very serious effort, which I'm sure was warranted as well, so --

MR. SWALWELL: So, just so I understand, you and Mr. Kaveladze spoke via a messenger app before it was public that you had the meeting at Trump Tower?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. And then I met him in person.

MR. SWALWELL: When did you meet him in person?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Sometime in June, I think. June of this year.

MR. SWALWELL: Where did you meet him?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He was staying in a hotel, was in Moscow already, because I take my daughter to Russia when her school is over for summer for grandmother and things. So I remember we just probably -- it was around, like, maybe 15th or -- between 15th and 20th, maybe later. Around the 20th of June. So I contacted him to set up a meeting, and he said, I'm going to be in Moscow, let's meet there.

MR. SWALWELL: And the purpose of the two of you meeting after the June 9th, 2016, meeting but before that meeting would become public, was for you to talk about that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. I told him we should tell about this meeting ourself so it doesn't become so crazy. We should get ahead of the story.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you get ahead of the story?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I wish we were.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you tell anyone else?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Say again?

MR. SWALWELL: Did you tell anybody else other than the people who were in that meeting that this had occurred?

MR. TREMONTE: Other than your lawyers.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: About the meeting or -- I'm sorry.

MR. SWALWELL: I'll rephrase it. Other than the individuals who were at the meeting and the lawyers you have spoken to about the meeting, prior to it becoming public, did you tell anybody else about that meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I told two journalists.

MR. SWALWELL: Which journalists?

MR. TREMONTE: Can you give us a second?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. TREMONTE: Thanks very much.

MR. SWALWELL: Who were the journalists?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There's a journalist from Associated Press, AP
journalist.

MR. SWALWELL: I'm sorry?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: There was one journalist from Associated Press, AP
journalist.

MR. SWALWELL: Which journalist?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He used to be diplomatic editor. His name is
Desmond Butler.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was the other one?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Another one is a journalist with BuzzFeed. His
name is Aaron Roston, R-o-s-t-o-n.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you tell these journalists about the June 9th
meeting prior to it becoming public?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have, yes. I did.

MR. SWALWELL: When you and Ike met in Moscow --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I wish I had gloves.

MR. SWALWELL: When you and Ike met in Moscow, what did you
discuss?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I told Ike -- it was very -- we had a breakfast and it
was very -- before that, I also met with Veselnitskaya in May of this year in New
York.

MR. SWALWELL: Was the purpose of that meeting to also talk about the

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

June 9th, 2016 meeting that had not yet become public?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And what was the purpose of meeting with Mrs. Veselnitskaya?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I told her, like, this story is a very important story for American news discourse and political discourse, and it's a matter of time when the story kind of comes out. So if we tell the story ourselves, it will be less crazy. And it was crazy, trust me.

MR. SWALWELL: Did Mr. Kaveladze want to get ahead of the story?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, he kind of was -- he was kind of philosophical about it.

MR. SWALWELL: What do you mean? What did he say?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He said, you know what, they don't even know you were there, and -- because he said -- because he knew that the meeting was going to be -- I think that he was aware that this meeting was disclosed to whoever was -- maybe to you guys. I don't know. It was disclosed to someone. And he was kind of philosophical about that. And he said, you know what, no one even knows who you are and they don't even remember you. So let's --

MR. SWALWELL: Was he encouraging you not to go public with the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I -- first of all, it was -- it wasn't my story. You know, I was brought in. It was a client's story. I kind of had a duty to my clients to -- unless they would disclose it. I thought it's important to disclose that meeting, and kind of, at least, to have it told ourselves, not as something sinister and this like, oh, you know, this KGB came and then they directed Trump to run

his campaign. That's ridiculous. But, unfortunately, that's how it ended.

MR. SWALWELL: When you spoke with Ms. Veselnitskaya, what was the conversation there about the June 9th meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: The same thing.

MR. SWALWELL: And what did she want to do?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: You know, I remember I had like maybe a 5-minute conversation where we stepped out. She was -- I think there was some fear for legal things, and so she stepped away. She had a cigarette outside. You know, they have a little courtyard there in the hotel where she stayed. And I said, like, look, this is crazy. It's going to kind of come out. Let's tell it. You know, there are journalists already -- at that time, I told her there are journalists who could write it, and then let's tell it in our own words, because if you don't tell your story someone tells it for you. And she said, oh, no, you know. She was kind of dismissive of my stuff. And, again, it was like a short conversation. And look, I could only tell what I can tell.

MR. SWALWELL: When you spoke with Ms. Veselnitskaya about the June 9th meeting, did you recollect what had happened in the June 9th meeting? Like, did you guys share what your recollections were of the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I don't remember. Really, I mean, she stepped out to have a cigarette. Kind of I was there, stood by the -- I knew that she's going to be there, and kind of I didn't even have a chance to reach out to her. So it kind of was a very rare opportunity when I could see her. So, you know, I told her, let's do it. And then she kind of was dismissive of this thing, said oh, no, just kind of --

MR. SWALWELL: Did she have an opinion as to whether or not you

should get the story out?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was never -- because, you know, I have a duty to my clients. Just there are things which I --

MR. SWALWELL: My question was, did she express an opinion, yes or no, to get the story out?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She didn't want to -- she did not want to get the story out, or she was kind of dismissive of my concerns.

MR. SWALWELL: Did she urge you to not say anything about it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, she didn't say anything.

MR. SWALWELL: When you spoke to Ike in Moscow, did the two of you discuss what you had recollected occurring at the June 9th meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. He -- I told him we should get the story out, it's a matter of time.

MR. SWALWELL: Other than --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He actually agreed with me. He said, yes, that's kind of -- it's important to do this. But, again, he said, it's not my story, and so, I cannot make a call on that.

MR. SWALWELL: Other than speaking to the two journalists, did you ever tell anybody in Russia about the June 9th meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: You're kind of laughing.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. It's -- I mean, it's ridiculous. I mean, I thought the whole meeting was ridiculous.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, I guess, just as you had said, you were asked about -- you were asked to go to the meeting about 2 hours before. Is that right?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Even less, I think.

MR. SWALWELL: You're in New York at Trump Tower, right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: And it's the midst of a U.S. Presidential election?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Had you ever met before with a Presidential candidate or their family?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I knew Hillary Clinton, but --

MR. SWALWELL: Well, I guess had you ever met with a Presidential candidate during a Presidential campaign, or their family?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, and I have no interest.

MR. SWALWELL: My question is, it seems like this is a pretty exciting thing to go to, right, something you would remember.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not for me. I was curious, but not excited.

MR. SWALWELL: And after that meeting, you didn't share it with anyone else in the world?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I shared it with two buddies of mine.

MR. SWALWELL: The two reporters?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And you didn't tell anyone else in the world that you had gone to Trump Tower and met with the President's son?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I might have mentioned it to my wife.

MR. SWALWELL: I'm sorry?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I might have mentioned it to my wife, who doesn't really care about those things.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: No one else?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever talk on any of those -- well, which messenger apps do you use other than Telegram and WhatsApp?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: WhatsApp. I think sometimes Signal, but Signal --

MR. SWALWELL: When did you download Signal?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Well, when it came out. It's -- they're all free apps. You know, just some of them work well, and then they stop working, because too many people use them, so that's kind of -- or then upgrade the capacity. I talk to my sister all the time on Telegram, not because we have something fun to discuss, but, you know, just like it's cheap.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it ever discussed -- were any -- let me rephrase that.

At the June 9th meeting, was there ever discussion about people in the meeting communicating by messenger apps?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember any reference to it.

MR. SWALWELL: Was it ever suggested that people in the meeting should download messenger apps to stay in contact going forward?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I don't remember that.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever communicated with Jared Kushner by any messenger app?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Paul Manafort?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Donald Jr.?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: How about Rob Goldstone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Felix Sater?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you know that name?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I -- from the newspapers only.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever worked with anyone who did business with any of Donald Trump's projects in Kazakhstan?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Are you familiar with Donald Trump trying to do business in Kazakhstan?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have seen stories around it.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have any personal knowledge of any of those businesses?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't have any personal knowledge of those interactions. And I think it was the other way around. I think Kazakhstan wanted to do business with him here.

MR. SWALWELL: How do you know that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: From the newspapers.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever have any clients who were seeking to do business with Donald Trump?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you ever work with Gazprom as a client?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: How about Rosneft?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: You mentioned that when Mr. Schiff asked you about the statement you made to the Financial Times about not, quote/unquote, "fucking with the state," is there anything about your testimony today that you have not told us because you are afraid that it would reflect poorly on Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I am very critical of Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: I'm sorry?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I am very critical of Russia personally myself.

MR. SWALWELL: But you did make a statement that you go out of your way not to fuck with the state.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I would probably be careful not to take a client which will be against the Russian State. But it's my choice to take clients or not. I mean, there are other clients I wouldn't take.

MR. SWALWELL: When was the last time you went to Russia?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: About 3 weeks ago.

MR. SWALWELL: Did you discuss --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Or 4 weeks. Maybe more. I don't remember.

MR. SWALWELL: How many times have you gone to Russia since the election in 2016?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And reenter? In the summer, I try to leave Washington. You know, my daughter is there, so -- but sometimes I do trips like coming in and out of Russia summertime. And maybe five, six times since then.

MR. SWALWELL: And have you discussed with anyone on any of those trips to Russia your testimony to this committee or any investigative body in the

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

U.S. Government?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: I'm going to pass it to Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Akhmetshin, you said you had spoke with AP and BuzzFeed about the meeting. Did you initiate the contact with them to tell them about the meeting, or did they call you about it?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: They're very old friends of mine, so I mentioned to them because it's kind of something funny.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I don't think it's something funny. You were concerned about this coming out and that there would be a commotion about it and wanted to get the story out first, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And you raised this with your client, Mrs. Veselnitskaya, and she was not supportive of the idea of your fronting the story, correct?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: But you did it anyway?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I mentioned it to these reporters maybe sometime like in the summer, even like a few weeks after the meeting happened. So it was -- I mentioned it right away after the -- I mean, like way before this -- I'm sorry, way before this whole craziness about Russian contacts was even an issue.

MR. SCHIFF: So you told Mr. Butler at the AP about this meeting well before it became public?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Oh, yes, a year before.

MR. SCHIFF: And when you had the meeting with Mrs. Veselnitskaya and asked her about getting the story out, and she downplayed that idea, did you

subsequently talk with Mr. Butler again?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He, from time to time, would encourage me to -- because he was very excited to run that story. But, you know, I said like, look, it's not my story. And then he actually -- I'm somewhat disappointed in the journalistic profession these days. But, you know, him and this other gentleman, they're very, I mean, honorable people. I said, like, look, I will tell the story and then just you -- but --

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Akhmetshin, my question is, after your conversation with Ms. Veselnitskaya in which she downplayed the idea of your getting the story out there, did you then call Mr. Butler again about this meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember calling him. It's not like that's the only thing in my mind.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you speak with him again about this meeting after your meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I had already spoken with him in --

MR. SCHIFF: Correct.

MR. TREMONTE: Did you speak with him again?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have, yes, yes. Not immediately afterwards, but at some point again.

MR. SCHIFF: And subsequent to your meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya, when you had contact with him, did you initiate that contact or did he?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I mean, we see each other socially.

MR. TREMONTE: Do you remember one way or the other?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. If the meeting somehow happened, I don't remember if it was him approaching me or me approaching him.

But we regularly meet for lunch or drinks.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you contact BuzzFeed after your meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I probably speak to that guy every day.

MR. SCHIFF: How do you speak with him every day?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He's a buddy of mine. I'm sure you have friends you hang out with. You're a much busier person.

MR. SCHIFF: I don't hang out with friends from BuzzFeed every day.

Well, did you initiate contact with the Associated Press or BuzzFeed after the meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya, in an effort to shape the story about what happened at Trump Tower?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. They reached out to me. I mean, they -- they -- from time to time, they were pestering me, saying like, you know, let us run that story. And I said, look, it's not my story. And then kind of that's where it was, and they were respectful of this.

MR. SCHIFF: During the meeting at Trump Tower, did the meeting begin with a discussion of the Ziff Brothers and the documents in the folder?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Our meeting began with, like, small talk.

MR. TREMONTE: After small talk.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: After small talk, yes. Ziff Brothers. Ziff Brothers, DNC, disappointment there's nothing on Hillary, adoption stuff, wrap up and --

MR. SCHIFF: So Donald Trump Jr. made it clear he was disappointed there wasn't a more direct connection to Hillary?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not in his words, but I sensed that, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: You could tell from his demeanor that he was hoping for a

lot more than what was presented to him?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes. It was palpable almost.

MR. SCHIFF: It was palpable?

You have to answer yes --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: -- or no, as the case may be.

Was it also palpable that Mr. Kushner lost interest in the meeting when it became clear it was not going to be about better dirt on Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember at what point he left. Like he definitely was there for Ziff Brothers discussion. I don't know when, at what point. Somewhere afterwards, he left, but he was present there for the Ziff Brothers presentation.

MR. SCHIFF: And he didn't seem particularly interested in the adoptions issue?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. I'm not even sure he was there for the adoption part.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether he was also under the impression he was going to be getting better stuff on Hillary Clinton at the meeting?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not sure, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And how about Mr. Manafort, did he lose interest after the Ziff Brothers part of the conversation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I think he really seemed so disengaged in the beginning. He was like sitting in his chair like on his phone, and kind of -- I don't -- he was not engaged at all, actually.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you recall whether Mr. Kushner asked a question

along the lines of whether that was it, or there was any other information pertinent to Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember. And I think that it is, again, my recollection, and I'm not certain, absolutely certain about this, but, you know, the person who ran this whole meeting was Trump Jr., and he seems like the guy who was like directing. I don't think that people kind of even spoke outside him. I think he was like the alpha person in that.

MR. SCHIFF: So you don't recall one way or the other whether Mr. Kushner said anything along those lines?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I don't remember, sir, no.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have any conversation during the meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya or Kaveladze or the interpreter in Russian? Was there any discussion amongst yourselves in Russian?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: During the meeting?

MR. SCHIFF: During the Trump Tower meeting.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I don't remember.

MR. SCHIFF: So there was no sidebar in which you conversed with each other in which you communicated to Ms. Veselnitskaya that either this doesn't seem to be what they're interested in or anything along those lines?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, that I don't remember. And it would have been kind of -- it was very -- kind of very fast, like, back-and-forth meeting. So I don't think we even had -- now we have this like time to step out or something. No, it was nothing like that.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether Ms. Veselnitskaya has any ties to Russian intelligence?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not aware of any.

MR. SCHIFF: Would you know if she had?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I wouldn't.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know how she was able to get the meeting at Trump Tower with these three top people during the campaign?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She didn't tell me.

MR. SCHIFF: Did she tell you what your role in the meeting was supposed to be?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She asked me about this whole -- you know, this Browder issue. She said, why don't you tell me first. And that's -- so I assume I was brought in to talk about this whole Browder adoption/Magnitsky misrepresentation.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned earlier in testimony that the Magnitsky Act had affected so many people, and you expressed concern about that.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: What people are you talking about?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: American citizens and Russian kids.

MR. SCHIFF: It also affects the people who are sanctioned under the Act, does it not?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: They are absolutely meaningless.

MR. SCHIFF: They're what?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: People who are sanctioned by that Act are nobodies. There's a prison doctor. Does he have an account in the United States? It's ridiculous.

MR. SCHIFF: So everyone sanctioned under the Magnitsky Act is a

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

nobody, in your view?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I -- you know, people keep adding -- U.S. Government keeps adding people to it, but the ones which I've seen, these people are there like prison warden, some lieutenant from police, or colonel of the investigative body, prosecutor. I doubt they have any financial interest in this country.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, these were people who were involved in the detention and ultimate death of Mr. Magnitsky, were they not?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe so, yes. And I think that prison -- I do believe that he -- it's a tragedy. He was a young man and had two kids. It's really disgusting. But sadly, people die in prison on Rikers Island often, too.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned that -- and I apologize, I think I was out of the room -- that you didn't believe the allegations in the dossier. Is that fair to say?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I was skeptical of it, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And why are you skeptical?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It was -- these things look so incredible, incredible sounding. Just all these things. I come -- I don't know. Again, I scanned through this thing. I was very skeptical of this document altogether.

MR. SCHIFF: But you testified you don't really understand how Russian intelligence operates. Is that fair to say?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Was it about Russian intelligence?

MR. SCHIFF: Well, do you understand how Russian intelligence operates?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No more than you. Maybe you probably know more

than I do.

MR. SCHIFF: So what is your answer? Do you understand how Russian intelligence operates?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you have any independent basis to either verify or refute the allegations in the dossier?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have no independent way to have my opinion one way or another.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned that it came to your attention that the facts behind the Magnitsky Act were not true, and this is how you got involved in this issue. How did that come to your attention?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have conducted research in run-up to depositions in the civil forfeiture case in Southern District. And I was just reading documents side by side, Russian and English documents, and I saw that English translations were doctored and fabricated. You know, there are paragraphs there which are important paragraphs and the facts were misrepresented.

[1:54 p.m.]

MR. SCHIFF: Those were -- if I understood correctly, and correct me if I am wrong -- those were in-court pleadings.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: The translation of documents for the pleadings were inaccurate translations. Is that what you're saying? That they were lifted from the Magnitsky website or the Browder website?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. They were lifted and prosecutors setting I think that they just presented them, they filed them from -- and with the reference to the website. And I actually went and checked where this stuff is online as well. So I just -- I made -- I did it very diligently.

But I saw that stuff on the Magnitsky website is -- English translations are inaccurate. And some of the facts -- you know, I also looked into Mr. Browder's testimony as to your colleagues and he testified by that time twice.

MR. SCHIFF: My question, Mr. Akhmetshin, is why did you initiate this research into whether the facts of the Magnitsky Act were true?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I initiated research as a part of my work. I did work for research in -- I was preparing questions for the position.

MR. TREMONTE: You don't want to get too specific --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Yes. So I did it --

MR. TREMONTE. But in connection with the work on the civil lawsuit.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: So prior to your work for the foundation --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: -- and during your work on the Prevezon litigation --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: -- you learned information that was inconsistent with Mr. Browder's account of what happened with Mr. Magnitsky.

MR. TREMONTE: Did you say prior to the work on the Prevezon litigation?

MR. SCHIFF: No. Prior to work for the foundation and during the work for Prevezon.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is correct, sir. Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Certain facts came to your attention you thought were inconsistent with Mr. Browder's account --

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. Schiff: -- about what happened to Mr. Magnitsky.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: Can you just tell us generally what the Prevezon litigation involved, not any attorney-client matter -- but were the allegations or what the issues involved in the litigation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Prevezon as a corporation, Cyprus also, Cyprus-based corporation which is -- was accused by the prosecutor in Southern District of laundering proceeds of alleged theft of taxes from Russian treasury. And so the case was brought in and -- but never, never kind of --

MR. TREMONTE: That's your understanding of the case? What you just said?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: That is my understanding of the case. Thank you.

MR. TREMONTE: Okay.

MR. SCHIFF: So Prevezon was accused of money

laundering -- laundering money through Cyprus that involved Russian tax money.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm not sure about Cyprus part, but it was accused by U.S. prosecutors of laundering some of the illegal alleged tax theft money for these real estate projects in the United States.

MR. SCHIFF: And Prevezon, is Mr. Katzyv one the principals of Prevezon?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And was it in the interest of Prevezon to discredit Mr. Browder in connection with that litigation?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sure they would have been happy to show that he fabricated the facts and lied.

MR. TREMONTE: That's an assumption of yours?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: It's only assumption. I am not -- I cannot tell what's in their heads. But I think that it will be good for a lot of people, not just Prevezon.

MR. SCHIFF: Was Mr. Browder going to be a witness for the government in the litigation against Prevezon?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I believe he was a witness.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you ever met Attorney General Jeff Sessions?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Not in person, no.

MR. SWALWELL: How did you meet him?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I did not.

MR. SWALWELL: Have you talk to him before on the phone?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: [Nonverbal response.]

MR. SWALWELL: How about George Papadopoulos?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Carter Page?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: Rick Dearborn?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No.

MR. SWALWELL: May 4th of this year Michael Weiss of CNN published a CNN Investigates article about you and Dana Rohrabacher. Are you familiar of that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct. Yes.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: And it said that the two of you met in April of this year in Berlin. Is that right?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Correct.

MR. SWALWELL: In that story, Mr. Rohrabacher described you as someone with, as he quoted, an ulterior motive who is involved with people who have an agenda and also said he could not rule out that you might still be connected to the Russia security services. Did you see that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I saw that, yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. When he said, still might be connected, can you just shed some light on that? Did he believe -- did he ever express to you that he believed you were connected to Russian intelligence services?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He never told me that. I've known him for a number of years. I don't think he has ever personally expressed this opinion to me. I was surprised. And I'm sure that might have been also quote --

MR. SWALWELL: That might be what?

MR. TREMONTE: Just answer the question.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Could you repeat the question again?

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. SWALWELL: Well, in the story it said that you might still be connected. Did he ever express to you that he believed you before were connected?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: He has never mentioned that to me ever.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And have you spoken to him since the story?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Since the story?

MR. SWALWELL: That I referred to, the CNN story?

MR. TREMONTE: May 4th, right?

MR. SWALWELL: That's right.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, I have not.

MR. SCHIFF: Counsel, you had indicated that when my colleague asked about the documents that may be relevant to the questions we've asked, that you would take that request under advisement. We'll need to know whether you're going to comply with the request. And if there are documents that you believe are privileged, then we would need a privilege log. But if the response is ultimately, yes, there are responsive documents, but no, we won't provide them, then we'll need to know, because we would need to issue a subpoena.

So I just want to make sure that we don't leave with the understanding that you're just going to take this under advisement.

And I would add to the category of documents we will be interested that my colleague mentioned any documents that refer to in any way the meeting at Trump Tower. So that would include any communications on Telegram, or iMessage, or any other app, WhatsApp, between you and Mr. Kaveladze or Ms. Veselnitskaya or others, before or after or during that meeting, just so that we understand that that's part of our interest.

UNCLASSIFIED, COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

MR. TREMONTE: Thank you. We'll take that under advisement as well. Although I'm not thoroughly familiar with the procedure here, I have the feeling that I'm going to be in contact with some representative of the committee and may well get written correspondence in the near term. But I understand the request, Congressman, and we will, again, take it under advisement.

MR. SCHIFF: We will be following up with you. Thank you.

MR. CONAWAY: Sir, did you mention in the previous question that you met Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'm sorry?

MR. CONAWAY: That you've met Hillary Clinton?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I have. Yes.

MR. CONAWAY: And when?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: My colleague's wife used to be a close adviser, a confidant to her.

MR. CONAWAY: Who is that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Evelyn Liebermann.

MR. CONAWAY: Your colleague's wife. Which one is the adviser, you colleague or your colleague's wife?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: My colleague's wife.

MR. CONAWAY: Is a what kind of adviser?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: She worked for Hillary Clinton.

MR. CONAWAY: On the campaign?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: On the campaign, I think she worked for her. And as I remember she worked in the Senate for her, but in the White House she worked.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. So how did you meet her, how did you meet

Hillary Clinton through that?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Hillary Clinton through her, I mean, in her house, socially.

MR. CONAWAY: So you've going to Hillary Clinton's house.

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No. Hillary Clinton was a frequent guest in her house.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, at the colleague. So you were there at a fundraiser? What was the event?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: No, it's just dinners, I think. Some functions, I think birthday parties or something to that effect. I met her a few times. Last time I saw her the funeral of Evelyn Lieberman.

MR. CONAWAY: And so how often have you met with her?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Four or five times maybe.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Do you think she'd recognize you on sight?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: I'd be surprised.

MR. CONAWAY: Did you donate to her campaign?

MR. AKHMETSHIN: Never.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, gentlemen, anything else?

Thank you very much for your patience and your time today. The instruction that [REDACTED] give you at the beginning of the meeting will dictate the process going forward. And we appreciate you being here.

For that, we're adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 2:10 p.m., the interview was concluded.]