UNITED STATES SENATE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF SUPERVISORY INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020

The interview was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in Room SD-226, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.
Mr. Somers. This is a transcribed interview of [redacted]. Chairman Graham requested this interview as part of an investigation by the Senate Judiciary Committee into matters related to the Justice Department's and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's handling of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation, including the applications for and renewals of a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act warrant on Carter Page.

Would the witness please state his name and his current position at the FBI for the record?

[redacted]. [redacted], Supervisory Intelligence Analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Somers. Could you just do that one more time? It didn't come through very clearly.

[redacted]. [redacted], Supervisory Intelligence Analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Somers. Thank you. On behalf of Chairman Graham, I want to thank you for appearing today, and we appreciate your willingness to appear voluntarily. I will just note for the record, since I'm not sure it'll come through on the transcript, that we are doing this interview remotely via Webex.

My name is Zachary Somers. I'm the majority chief
investigative counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee. I'm here in the committee room. With me is senior investigative counsel Arthur Baker. Everyone else I believe is appearing remotely. I think Lee Holmes, our staff director, may join us at some point via Webex or in the room.

Mr. Holmes. I'm on, Zach.

Mr. Somers. I think just for the record I'd like to have everybody go through and just put their name on the record. I think the way to do it, we'll start with Ranking Member Feinstein's staff to go first. There's two staffers from Feinstein's office on the Webex, and then if we could go to the FBI counsel that are present, and then conclude with personal counsel, and then I'll get back to my preamble. So, Sara, maybe if you could start off on our chain of introductions.

Ms. Zdeb. Sara Zdeb, senior counsel for the minority Ranking Member Feinstein.

Mr. Fausett. Good morning. This is Andrew Fausett, also senior counsel for Ranking Member Feinstein on the minority staff.

[Pause.]

Mr. Somers. [ ], we didn't get that.

[Pause.]

[ ], FBI Office of General
Counsel, is here. Also with [redacted], FBI Office of General Counsel. I'm not sure, [redacted], if they were able to hear your name for the record.

Mr. Somers. So from the FBI, we just have [redacted] and [redacted]. Is that correct?

[redacted]. You also have [redacted], FBI OGC, on the line.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

Mr. Linehan. Patrick Linehan from Steptoe & Johnson on behalf of Brian Auten. Did that come through?

Mr. Somers. Yes, that came through.

Mr. Linehan. Great.

Mr. Somers. I think that's everybody.

Mr. Linehan. And, Zach -- this is Pat Linehan just for the record -- I just wanted to confirm on the record that other than a recording that the court reporter may be making, this proceeding is not being recorded either by video or audio?

Mr. Somers. No; we're just -- just the transcription by the court reporter.

Mr. Linehan. Great. Thank you.

One more. [redacted] just reminded me to ask that this is -- even though we're on Webex, this is considered unclassified?

Mr. Somers. I think your question was whether it was
This is an unclassified setting.

Mr. Linehan. Yes, that's right. I was just confirming that. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. Okay. I'll get back to my preamble now.

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure do not apply in this setting, but there are some guidelines that we follow that I'd like to go over. Our questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions first for an hour, and then the minority will have the opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time. We will go back and forth in this manner until there are no more questions and the interview is over.

Typically, we take a short break at the end of each hour of questioning, but if you would like to take a break apart from that, please let us know.

As I noted earlier, you are appearing voluntarily. Accordingly, we anticipate that our questions will receive complete responses. To the extent that you decline to answer our questions or if counsel instructs you not to answer, we will consider whether a subpoena is necessary.

In the room with Art and me is an official reporter taking down everything that is said to make a written record. So, we ask that you give verbal responses to all of our questions. Do you understand that?

Yes.
Mr. Somers. So that the reporter can take down a clear record, it is important that we don't talk over one another or interrupt each other if we can help it. The committee encourages witnesses who appear for transcribed interviews to freely consult with counsel if they so choose, and since we are not all in the same room, just as I mentioned before we went on the record, please let us know when you consult with your counsel just so that we know that that's what's going on.

We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we will take our time. If you have any questions or if you do not understand one of our questions, please let us know. If you honestly don't know the answer to a question or do not remember it, it is best not to guess. Please give us your best recollection, and it is okay to tell us if you learned the information from someone else. If there are things you don't know or can't remember, just say so and please inform us who, to the best of your knowledge, might be able to provide us with a more complete response to our question.

You should also understand that although this interview is not under oath, you are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. Do you understand that?

I think you may be muted. Could you try again? I
could read your lips, but I couldn't hear you.

Mr. Somers. I understand that.

Mr. Somers. Thank you. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand this?

Mr. Somers. Witnesses who knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements. Do you understand this?

Mr. Somers. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Mr. Somers. Finally, we ask that you not speak about what we discuss in this interview with anyone apart from those participating in today's interview by Webex or Art and I here in the room in order to preserve the integrity of our investigation.

That's the end of my preamble. Before we begin our first round of questioning, does anyone have any questions?

[No response.]

Mr. Somers. Okay. I assume that's no questions from anybody, and it is now 10:18, and we'll begin our first round of questioning.
Mr. Somers, have you read or reviewed the IG's December 2019 report on the Carter Page FISA applications?

Yes, I have.

Mr. Somers. And, for the record, are you the person identified as the supervisory intel analyst in the IG's FISA report?

Yes, I am.

Mr. Somers. And other than your personal attorneys and the attorneys from the FBI, did you speak with anyone in preparation for today's interview?

No.

Mr. Somers. According to the IG's FISA report, the Crossfire Hurricane investigation was officially opened on July 31st of 2016. What was your position at the FBI on July 31st of 2016?

On July 31, 2016, I was a supervisory intelligence analyst.

Mr. Somers. And is that the same position you hold now?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. And what branch and division of the FBI I guess are you in and were you in on July 31st of 2016?

On July 31, 2016, I was in the Counterintelligence Division.

Mr. Somers. Are you still in the Counterintelligence
Mr. Somers. And when were you assigned to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?

Mr. Somers. And do you recall when you stopped working on the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?

Mr. Somers. And did you stay with the Special Counsel's office until the Special Counsel's office I guess ceased to exist?

Mr. Somers. And then trying to understand sort of the nature of your assignment to Crossfire Hurricane, was this in addition to your usual duties? Was this the primary focus during this time period? Can you kind of give us a description of how this fit into your other duties you otherwise had at the FBI?

Between August 1st, August 2nd, 2016, up through probably the January time frame of 2017, this was my primary duty. Between January 2017 and approximately mid-March of 2017, it was an additional duty along with
working back in my particular unit in the
Counterintelligence Division. And then after mid-March of
2017 through the beginning of the Special Counsel, it was
my primary duty.

Mr. Somers. And then just to kind of get a picture of
all that, physically did you move from your -- I assume
you're assigned to headquarters. Is that correct?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Did you move offices within headquarters
to a different location to be part of the Crossfire
Hurricane team?

Initially, yes. In August of 2016, we
moved to a particular office, and we had a number of
different offices during that time.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And then did you move into
wherever the Special Counsel office was housed during the
pendency of the Special Counsel?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And how did you get assigned to --
who assigned you to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?

Start there.

The intelligence section chief assigned

me.

Mr. Somers. Is that Jonathan Moffa?

Yes.
Mr. Somers. Did he ask you if you wanted to join this investigation, or were you just assigned to this investigation?

He in effect assigned me -- I mean, asked me if I wanted to do it, but asked me to do it.

Mr. Somers. Okay. What was your -- or I guess at the time -- let's state the time. What was your specialty at the FBI in July of 2016?

I was, again, a special -- sorry, a supervisory intelligence analyst within the Eurasia Analysis Unit.

Mr. Somers. Do you have any specialization expertise -- I don't know exactly how you would characterize it -- on Russia in particular?

I have some, yes.

Mr. Baker. What is your educational background, sir?

I have a bachelor's degree in history from the . I have a master's degree in national security studies from . And I have a Ph.D. in international politics and strategic studies from .

Mr. Baker. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. Do you speak or read Russian?

I speak some. It's rusty.
Mr. Somers. And prior to being assigned to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation, were you working on the more general subject of Russian interference in the 2016 election?

To a certain extent, yes.

Mr. Somers. And how would you describe, very generally, obviously not getting into anything classified, the work you were doing on Russian election interference prior to joining Crossfire Hurricane?

Russian election interference has been a historical issue, and so that is something that is part and parcel of working that particular country target.

Mr. Baker. I want to back up just a second. How long have you been employed at the FBI?

Since January of 2005.

Mr. Baker. And did you enter on duty as an intelligence analyst or in some other capacity?

As an intelligence analyst.

Mr. Baker. And where did you work prior to the Bureau?

I was an adjunct professor while I was completing my dissertation.

Mr. Baker. An adjunct professor teaching --

I was teaching national security studies at


Mr. Baker. Is that the only institution you've taught at?

No.

Mr. Baker. What are the others?

I did some teaching at the [Redacted]. I did a little bit of teaching at the [Redacted]. And then most recently I have taught as a -- I've taught counterterrorism at [Redacted].

Mr. Baker. When you teach these courses, is there any specialty in these -- is there any subcategory of counterterrorism or counterintelligence that you specialize in or focus on?

No. It's been more -- it's more general than that. The course on counterterrorism is a general, almost a survey course.

Mr. Baker. Do you teach a course or have you ever taught a course that deals in some way, shape, or form with the ethics of intelligence or, more specifically, the ethics of spying?

I've never taught a course on that, no.

Mr. Baker. Have you written materials regarding the expertise that you teach on?

Have I written materials -- I'm sorry.
Mr. Baker. Have you published any books or articles about counterintelligence or counterterrorism?

No. The only book that I've published was my dissertation.

Mr. Baker. What about articles?

Articles, I have written articles on various issues involving defense policy and involving national security policy.

Mr. Baker. But you've never written an article about the ethics of spying?

No. I have written an article about the ethics of spying. I've just never taught a course on the ethics of spying.

Mr. Baker. But you have written an article on it?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. And where was that published?

It was originally published in, I believe, .

Mr. Baker. And that is the name of a magazine or a journal?

It is the name of a journal.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. Switching a little bit to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, in the course of your career, do you know approximately how many investigations
you have worked on that have involved FISA authority?

I would have no way of counting that.

Mr. Somers. Because it's a very -- is it a large number?

Over the course of the last 15 years, it would be a sizable number.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And in terms of -- I assume you were an analyst before you were a supervisory intelligence analyst. So I guess as an analyst or as a super -- maybe we'll start as an analyst. We've had a number of agents in that we've interviewed about FISA and FISA authority.

What's the analyst's role in a FISA application, in seeking FISA authority?

The analyst's role is a supportive role. It is assisting special agents in gathering information that they can use in applications.

Mr. Somers. And then is it -- and then once the FISA is up and running, does the analyst have a role in looking at the data that's received?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. And then in terms -- is the role any different of a supervisory intel analyst versus an analyst in terms of seeking FISA authority?

No.

Mr. Somers. Did you receive any training on the FISA
process?

Virtual training, yes.

Mr. Somers. And what did that training consist of?

It was going through the -- what a FISA is, what a FISA does, the Bureau's authorities to use FISA.

Mr. Somers. And did you receive that as part of your training to become an analyst, or is that an ongoing thing at the Bureau?

Both.

Mr. Baker. When you entered on duty, were you recruited by someone or entities already at the FBI? Or did you see a posting for a job? Or how did you become interested in employment at the FBI?

It was a general posting.

Mr. Baker. And what was the posting specifically for?

It was a posting for intelligence analyst.

Mr. Baker. So you applied, you went through some sort of interview process, and you were ultimately hired?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. When you were hired -- Mr. Somers talked a little bit about specific training concerning the FISA process -- did you go through a more broad, a more generalized training program with the FBI? Specifically, did you attend anything, any program at Quantico, Virginia, as you entered on duty?
Not when I entered on duty, but in the months following my entrance on duty, yes.

Mr. Baker. And what kind of training was that?

It was a program that they called at that time "ACES," and it covered a whole multitude of things, to include FISA.

Mr. Baker. And how long of a program is this?

I have a tough time remembering exactly how many weeks, but I want to say somewhere along the lines of 12, maybe 11.

Mr. Baker. And this was at Quantico, Virginia?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. And was this the program where the incoming or onboarding analysts are embedded for a certain amount of time of that training with the new agent trainees?

No. That was -- the program you're describing is something that happened subsequent to the training that I went through.

Mr. Baker. Okay. So you had a program of some weeks that was new intelligence analysts coming on board and learning what an intelligence analyst for the FBI does or what's expected and whatnot?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. Thank you.
Mr. Somers. And as part of this training, did the training include information on like what duties are owed to the FISA Court?

I don't recall exactly details regarding what duties are owed to the FISA Court. It was more of an issue regarding, again, kind of what's the authority of using FISA, maybe a little bit about process, but I don't recall exactly.

Mr. Somers. What about was there training on the Woods Procedures?

No.

Mr. Somers. Have you subsequent in your career received any training on the Woods Procedures?

No.

Mr. Somers. What, if any, is an analyst's role in putting together the Woods file in a FISA application?

An analyst's role is, again, supportive. It is providing, perhaps researching and providing information that the special agent can use in putting together the application.

Mr. Somers. So an analyst could be gathering information that -- if they were tasked by a special agent to do so, they could gather information that would then go in the Woods file? Is that accurate?

That is accurate.
Mr. Somers. Do you know what -- even if it wasn't through training, are you familiar with what duties are owed to the FISA Court?

To a certain extent, yes.

Mr. Somers. Are you familiar with the duty of candor?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. And what do you understand the duty of candor to be?

That you are required to be -- have candor with the Court.

Mr. Somers. Does the duty of candor require providing the Court with information, you know, if required by the duty, that could be contrary, could be exculpatory to the witness -- not the witness, the subject of the FISA application?

So I am -- I'm not a lawyer, and so in terms of what is exculpatory or inculpatory, I'm not in a position to determine that.

Mr. Somers. I'm just trying to understand what your knowledge as an analyst is of the duty of candor.

So I would say you need to be honest with the Court. That's my understanding of the duty of candor.

Mr. Somers. I'm sorry. You said "honest" and broke up a little bit.

Honest with the Court. That is my
understanding of the duty of candor.

Mr. Somers. Do you understand it to involve, you know, you might have to provide information that's not necessarily helpful to seeking a FISA application?

Again, I don't know at what point -- again, I'm not a lawyer. I don't know at what point things that are, again, exculpatory or inculpatory are required to be provided to the Court.

Mr. Somers. And what's your understanding of the Woods Procedures? What's the purpose of the Woods Procedures?

I would describe the Woods Procedures very much like footnotes or endnotes to be able to check your work so somebody can come behind you and determine whether or not you have -- you are able to match what you have in the application to supporting documentation.

Mr. Baker. In your role of supporting the agent investigators, were you ever told to find support for an assertion that the agents were making in a FISA application? Were you as an analyst ever said to go find this footnote, go find this endnote that we need to put in this application so we can show where this assertion that we're making comes from?

I have been asked over the years to find information to support applications, yes.
Mr. Baker. And is that process where you're asked, is this something formal where there's paper generated, sort of like a lead, please find supporting material for this assertion? Or is it less formal than that? Just how does it -- you said this has happened over the years. How do you know to start this task? And how do you report back on the completion of that task with what you found?

It is less formal than an actual lead. I've had situations where agents have emailed me to ask whether or not I could find something to assist.

Mr. Baker. And your title, supervisory intelligence analyst, can I assume from that that you supervise people also?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. And who are the people you supervise? Not names but titles and functional duties.

I would supervise intelligence analysts under me.

Mr. Baker. And how many intelligence analysts are under you?

Presently I don't have any intelligence analysts under me, but in the past I have had any number of intelligence analysts who have worked under me.

Mr. Baker. And how many would you have had during the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?
I think the number was approximately five or six.

Mr. Baker. So when you get these requests to find documentation to support an assertion, is this something that you yourself take and begin to look for supporting information? Or would this be something that you would assign to some of these analysts that you supervise?

It would depend on the situation.

If you could excuse me for a moment, I'm having some noise here on the side. If I could just figure out how to adjust that.

Mr. Baker. Sure.

Court Reporter. Someone is not muted.

Mr. Somers. It sounds like somebody is not muted. It sounds like there's typing going on.

[Pause.]

I'm back on. This is .

Mr. Baker. Okay. So you were saying that these requests for documentation for assertions made in the applications, they could have been things that you yourself would, for lack of a term, run with or they could have been things that you delegated down to somebody that you supervise?

That is correct. It could be either.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Somers. And then in terms of the actual application itself, as an analyst or a supervisory analyst, do you ever review, read all or parts of a FISA application?

On occasion, yes.

Mr. Somers. I should have said -- that's before it's submitted to the Court?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Do analysts ever write parts of a FISA application?

Analysts will sometimes provide information or even sometimes language that is given to the special agent that might be of use in an application.

Mr. Somers. And then if you're -- I'm just trying to understand the role in actually reviewing an application. If you're an analyst, you're working on an investigation and FISA coverage is going to be sought, an application is being put together, would you necessarily read the application?

No. It's much more ad hoc.

Mr. Somers. As an analyst, if you saw something in the application that you thought was incorrect, what would you generally -- what would your responsibility be to address that? And how would you address that?

Generally, you would address that with the
Mr. Baker. And what would happen if you, as the
case agent handling the FISA application.

person that's running with the request to find
documentation, or the employees you supervise, what would
happen if you could not find supporting documentation for
the assertion or you could only find information that was
contra or seemed to be contra to the assertion?

You would tell the case agent.

Mr. Baker. And how would that reporting to the case
agent go? Would that be still informal, or would it be
more formal since it potentially raises an issue with an
assertion made in the application?

I think it would still be probably less
formal.

Mr. Baker. And in the course of your career, have you
had instances or have you supervised individuals that have
had instances where they could not find documentation for
an assertion or they could only find contra information to
the assertion?

I don't recall exactly situations of that
happening right offhand.

Mr. Baker. Even if we narrowed it down more
specifically to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation, were
there any instances where you could not verify an assertion
or information seemed to be contra to the assertion?
Again, I would basically say at that point you're talking about what the case agent is looking at.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. How does the -- you know, you're a supervisor intel analyst; there's an intel analyst; then there's case agents; I assume special agents; then you have SSAs. What's sort of the chain of command there? If there's a case agent, but you're a supervisory intel analyst, are you guys completely in separate chains of command? Are you sort of superior to a case agent? Could you kind of explain that interaction?

We are in completely separate chains of command.

Mr. Somers. So even though you're a supervisory intel analyst, you don't actually have any supervisory authority over a case agent. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. And during Crossfire Hurricane, was Jonathan Moffa your direct supervisor?

That is correct.

Mr. Baker. So I would think at some point on the chain of command, as you go up -- I understand you're saying that you're in a separate chain of command as an analyst. But at some point as you go up, doesn't there become some common supervisor, maybe at the section chief
or the Assistant Director level?

So in this situation, the section chiefs are separate commands. The DADs would be -- excuse me, the Deputy Assistant Directors would be separate commands. But the Deputy Assistant Directors would both report to the Assistant Director of the Counterintelligence Division.

Mr. Baker. And who would that have been during Crossfire Hurricane?

Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. And who would the Deputy Assistant Director in your chain be?

I would say that depends on what point you're talking about in the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

Mr. Baker. Early part.

Early part in the investigation? The chain of command would have been from me on the intelligence side to Jon Moffa, with Jon Moffa reporting to Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. Middle part of the investigation.

Middle part of the investigation would have been me reporting on the Crossfire Hurricane matters to Jon Moffa, Jon Moffa reporting to the Deputy Assistant Director, Dina Corsi, and Dina Corsi reporting to Bill Priestap.
Mr. Baker. End part of the investigation.

End part of the investigation would have been me reporting to [REDACTED] reporting to Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. And how about for your agent counterpart? Who would their DADs have been?

It would have depended on the period of time we're talking about in the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

Mr. Baker. Beginning of the investigation.

Beginning of the investigation, case agents would have reported to SSA-1, SSA-1 would have reported to Peter Strzok, and Peter Strzok would have reported to Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. Middle part.

Middle part, the case agents -- well, it would depend on -- the middle part is rather more complicated.

Mr. Baker. How is it more complicated?

Different cases were in different field offices, and, therefore, you would have had case agents in their field office reporting to their field office chains of command with headquarters program managers. Those headquarters program managers would have been SSAs reporting to two different DADs. One DAD would be Jennifer
Boone, one DAD would be Peter Strzok, both of those DADs reporting to Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. And how would the difference between DADs be determined, who reported to which DAD? That would depend on what field office?

It would depend on which unit was program managing the cases in which field office.

Mr. Baker. Okay. And then in the end of the investigation, who would the DADs have been?

The end of the investigation, the case agents would have reported through SSA-2; SSA-2 would have reported to at that point Bill Priestap.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Were there any other DADs either on the intel side or the agent side that came in for a temporary duty or were just short tenured, either beginning, middle, or end of the investigation, or the names you've named pretty much covers it?

I've pretty much covered it, I believe.

Mr. Baker. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. All right. So I think earlier you indicated you were assigned to Crossfire Hurricane on either August 1st or August 2nd of 2016, and that you -- is that when you also became aware of Crossfire Hurricane, when you were assigned to it?
I believe I was assigned -- it was an email that was sent to me to report to intel section chief's office on the Monday following the 31st, and I reported on the Monday, and I was given information about where the case was.

Mr. Somers. And what was your understanding of what the case was when you were assigned?

I was told that a friendly foreign government had provided information to the FBI and that friendly foreign government information was predicing an investigation.

Mr. Somers. And what was it an investigation of?

So the friendly foreign government information indicated that an individual who had been an adviser of the Trump campaign had told a representative of that friendly foreign government that the Russians had indicated that they could assist the Trump campaign with the release of anonymous information detrimental to Hillary Clinton and detrimental to President Obama.

Mr. Somers. And when you were assigned, were there analysts already assigned to Crossfire Hurricane, or were they assigned after you?

They were assigned after me.

Mr. Somers. And I think you mentioned that you were supervising around the time of Crossfire Hurricane five or
six analysts. Were those five or six analysts, analysts on
Crossfire Hurricane, or were these five or six analysts you
were supervising in your usual job capacity?

The five or six are the analysts that were
under me in Crossfire Hurricane.

Mr. Somers. Were those the same people that you were
already supervising prior to Crossfire Hurricane?

I believe some I had been supervising and
some I had not been directly supervising.

Mr. Somers. So the ones you hadn't been directly
supervising, where did -- did you go out and get them? Did
Jonathan Moffa go out and get them? How did they get
assigned to Crossfire Hurricane?

If I recall correctly, Jon Moffa and I
talked about analysts that were in the division, in the
unit actually that I was part of.

Mr. Somers. But they weren't supervised by you prior
to Crossfire Hurricane?

Correct. We have multiple supervisors in
the unit.

Mr. Somers. Okay, but they're all at headquarters?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever pull any analysts not from
headquarters into Crossfire Hurricane?

There was one special -- sorry, one what's
called an "SOS," and she was brought over from WFO --
Washington Field Office, excuse me.

Mr. Somers. And then you just went through a minute
ago with Mr. Baker sort of how the case got split amongst
different field offices as it progressed. Did the analysis
section know that that stayed the same, it was always out
of headquarters? Or were they using analysts when the case
got more split up later on? Were they using analysts from
those field offices?

No. The analyst cadre became more diffuse
during that time.

Mr. Somers. So they could have been using analysts as
well from field offices?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Did you supervise then those analysts
that were being used from field offices?

So after the probably mid-March time frame
up through the beginning of Special Counsel's office, one
might call that a more -- a period of more recentralization
of the cases, and in that point I was doing a lot of
liaison work with the different field offices and the
intelligence cadres and attempting to centralize the
intelligence that was being done at that time.

Mr. Somers. And when you went to Special Counsel
Mueller's Office, did you bring analysts with you?
Yes.

Mr. Somers. And these were the same analysts that had been working the case, or were these new analysts?

In some cases they were analysts who had been working the case, and in some cases there were new analysts brought over.

Mr. Somers. Were those also from headquarters, these analysts?

Not all.

Mr. Somers. Not all. Were you responsible for bringing them into Special Counsel Mueller's team, for lack of a better term?

I would say in nearly all cases I had -- I was responsible for helping to bring them over. Not in all, though.

Mr. Baker. Did you have any role in bringing agents on board to either the Crossfire Hurricane team or to the Special Counsel's office? Did you have any input in agent selection?

No.

Mr. Baker. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. So how would you describe your role, let's say, right up to the first Carter Page FISA application being submitted? How would you describe your role in Crossfire Hurricane?
My role, I was supervising, again, a group of approximately five or six analysts. They were writing materials, assisting case agents, and I would be reviewing work as well as ensuring that my executive management was regularly briefed up on what was going on within the cases.

Mr. Somers. What about doing work yourself? Do you think you were more reviewing work of analysts versus generating your own product during this time period?

I don't recall generating my own product per se, but there were times that I would assist with searches or I would assist with material.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And then eventually in Crossfire Hurricane, four investigations are opened. There's the Crossfire Hurricane investigation; there's investigations opened of four individuals within the Crossfire Hurricane umbrella. Did you have any role in identifying those four individuals?

Our analysts, and myself included, looked, once the umbrella case had been opened, to see whether or not what kind of -- who would best fit certain parameters that were set up, and, therefore, we were engaged with case agents in providing case agents information that they could use in opening those cases.

Mr. Somers. But those names were given to you, I take it. Then you went and analyzed how they fit into the
Crossfire Hurricane investigation. Is that correct?

I wouldn't say that they were given to us. It was more that we had the umbrella investigation that was opened, and then evaluating individuals that in public source information were associated with the campaign or would have been actually in a position to have received or have been in receipt of the information that was shared by the friendly foreign government.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And I'm not asking you for any names here because these aren't people whose names have been out there. Did you look at other individuals other than these four individuals, you know, for possibly opening an investigation on them?

I don't recall exactly outside of the four investigations whether or not there were any other names that rose to the point of opening an investigation.

Mr. Baker. Do you recall any dissension among the FBI ranks about the individuals that were ultimately opened? Was there anybody saying, well, it shouldn't be this one or that one or whoever?

No, I don't recall that.

Mr. Somers. The IG's report indicates that DOJ was briefed on these four individuals on August 2nd. You said you joined on either August 1st or August 2nd. I assume -- well, I won't assume. Did you do any work immediately on
identifying these four individuals?

What page number are you referencing for that?

Mr. Somers. I just have a note here. I don't have the page number. I just have a note that on August 2nd DOJ was briefed on the Crossfire Hurricane investigation and that the names of the four targets were briefed to DOJ.

I'm going to speak to my counsel for just a moment, if possible.

Mr. Somers. Yes, that's fine.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

I'm back.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

I don't recall any DOJ briefing that you're talking about with respect to discussions of the four individuals.

Mr. Somers. Yeah, no, I don't believe that you were involved in the briefing. I think Mr. Moffa was. I was just getting back to your role in identifying the four individuals that cases were -- or, sorry, investigations were eventually opened on, and I'm just trying to understand what your role, if any, was in identifying these four individuals. And just looking at the time frame, I was -- I guess my question is: How quickly did you begin, if you were assigned on August 1st or August 2nd, how
quickly did you begin looking at these four individuals?

Number one, my recollection is that those cases were not opened on the four individuals on either August 1st or August 2nd. I believe my recollection is that we were looking at different individuals in the period of August 1st and August 2nd. I do not recall whether or not those four individuals were, for lack of a better term, kind of summarized by that time or determined by August 1st or August 2nd.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And one of those individuals was George Papadopoulos. What was your understanding in the early parts of Crossfire Hurricane as to who George Papadopoulos was?

George Papadopoulos was the individual who had provided the friendly foreign government with the information that predicated the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. We understood him to be an adviser to the Trump campaign on issues of, I believe, energy.

Mr. Somers. What was your understanding of how he could influence the Trump campaign?

I'm sorry. I don't quite --

Mr. Somers. I'm trying to understand what was your understanding of his role. You know, what did it mean to be an adviser to the Trump campaign on energy?

I believe George Papadopoulos was part of
the rollout of advisers on the Trump campaign that had taken place, if I recall correctly, somewhere in either mid- or late March of 2016.

Mr. Somers. Did you understand him to have a significant role on the Trump campaign?

[Redacted] I don't know if I would say "significant," but he was one of the main players that was announced as a Trump adviser sometime around March of 2016.

Mr. Somers. What about Carter Page? He's also one of the individuals who was opened on in early August of 2016. What was your understanding of who Carter Page was in the early days of Crossfire Hurricane?

[Redacted] Again, kind of the same type of thing, as an adviser to the Trump campaign on matters of international politics, primarily Russia.

Mr. Somers. And would you have characterized his role as significant in the Trump campaign?

[Redacted] Again, I don't know how exactly I would characterize it with respect to the campaign itself. He was one of the individuals, as per my recollection, that was also announced in the March time frame.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Now, just the mechanics of how this investigation worked. So you reported to Jonathan Moffa on the agent side. SSA-1 was roughly your equivalent on the agent side. He reported to Peter Strzok, and then
Moffa and Strzok both reported to Bill Priestap. I've got some questions about the information flow, I guess. Were there team meetings as part of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. And how often did you have those team meetings?

I think it depended on how things were going. They could be every other day. They could be sometimes every day. I think it would just depend.

Mr. Somers. And who attended those team meetings?

I think that also was dependent on situations.

Mr. Somers. These daily or every-other-day-type meetings, were these meetings that would be attended by Peter Strzok or Jonathan Moffa?

Yes, they could be.

Mr. Somers. Regularly? Did they regularly attend these meetings?

I would say regularly, yes.

Mr. Somers. What about Bill Priestap?

No.

Mr. Somers. Never or not regularly?

In the early part of Crossfire Hurricane, I do not remember Bill Priestap coming to any of our team
meetings.

Mr. Somers. Okay. What about people from the Office of General Counsel?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. Did the -- I'm trying to remember his identifier so I don't use a name. Did the OGC attorney attend these regular team meetings?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. What about the OGC unit chief?

On occasion, yes.

Mr. Somers. But not as regularly as the OGC attorney?

I don't think as often, but it would depend.

Mr. Somers. What about Trisha Anderson?

No.

Mr. Somers. Jim Baker?

No.

Mr. Somers. Lisa Page?

On occasion.

Mr. Somers. And then what about your DAD? I believe you said it was Dina Corsi?

That would have been in the March -- like late March to June time frame, and by that time -- oh, excuse me, no. I'll make a correction on that. That would have been in the January to March time frame, and the --
were not having regular team meetings during the January to March time frame.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Who was the DAD before Dina Corsi?

DAD -- I'm sorry. DAD at the initial part of Crossfire Hurricane?

Mr. Somers. Yes, yes.

So the DAD would have been -- well, they weren't reporting to -- it was Jon Moffa and Pete Strzok reporting directly to Bill Priestap. So there was not a DAD they were reporting to in between Bill Priestap.

Mr. Somers. I'm just trying to picture the structure here. So prior to Strzok becoming a DAD, he was reporting directly to Bill Priestap as well?

He and Moffa were reporting directly to Bill Priestap, yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. That clears up my confusion on that. Okay. So these are the regular team meetings. Who kind of conducted these meetings? Who was in charge?

I think it would depend. I don't recall exactly that there was somebody regularly in charge. I mean, if Jon Moffa or Peter Strzok were there, they would usually chair those meetings. If it --

Mr. Somers. And, otherwise, it would -- go ahead.

If it was case agents that were just meeting with the analysts, typically it would be a case
agent that would run the meeting.

Mr. Somers. Did you run any of these meetings?

I may have on occasion.

Mr. Somers. And would that be dependent on what the meeting was about? Is that a fair characterization?

I think that's a fair characterization, yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So we have these regular team meetings. Were there other meetings that might have been attended by, say, Bill Priestap?

I would not have insight into which meetings Bill Priestap would be going to.

Mr. Somers. I guess my question is: Did you attend any meetings with Bill Priestap about Crossfire Hurricane?

Yes, I believe I attended a few meetings with Bill Priestap about Crossfire Hurricane in the early period, and then I would say as time went on, there would be occasions to meet with Bill Priestap.

Mr. Somers. Did you brief things directly to Bill Priestap yourself?

I believe later on in the investigation I may have briefed Bill Priestap on things. Early part of the investigation, Bill Priestap would have been in meetings where I was briefing other individuals.

Mr. Somers. So he would have attended a meeting where
you were also providing information?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. And these meetings with -- would Jim Baker attend these meetings that Bill Priestap was in?

I think one of the briefings I did or two of the briefings I did for the seventh floor, Jim Baker was in the meetings.

Mr. Somers. What about Trisha Anderson?

I don't recall if Trisha Anderson was in those meetings.

Mr. Somers. Was Andy McCabe in these meetings?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. Director Comey?

I briefed Director Comey, but it was later -- later in the Crossfire Hurricane investigation, probably in the May time frame of 2017.

Mr. Somers. What did you brief Director Comey about?

It was the state of the investigations as of May of 2017.

Mr. Somers. Shortly before he was removed as FBI Director? Would that be right?

That would be correct.

Mr. Somers. And you briefed him on the state of all four investigations?

There were a host of things that we were
briefing Director Comey on, I was briefing, along with a
gentleman by the name of Paul Holdeman.

    Mr. Baker. Was this just a run-of-the-mill kind of a
status update briefing for Mr. Comey, or were there any
problems that had surfaced in the investigation that you
were calling to his attention?

    It was a status update.

    Mr. Somers. Was this in anticipation of congressional
testimony, or was it just a general status update on the
investigation?

    It was a general status update on the
investigation.

    Mr. Somers. What about Deputy Director McCabe? How
many meetings did you attend, roughly, that Director McCabe
was in?

    Probably three or four.

    Mr. Somers. And would that be about the same number
of meetings you attended that Bill Priestap was in, or were
there more meetings that Bill Priestap was in?

    I would say I would have had had more
interaction with Bill Priestap than I did with Andy McCabe.

    Mr. Somers. What about the Department of Justice?

    What were your interactions with the Department of Justice?

    In the March to May time frame of 2017, I
had some very limited interaction with individuals from
DOJ. In the early part of Crossfire Hurricane, I would have been on emails from individuals with DOJ, and in the January to March time frame, I was involved in interviews where there were DOJ individuals present.

Mr. Baker. Who were these individuals, either on email or in meetings?

In the early part of Crossfire Hurricane, I was on emails involving an OI attorney. In the middle part of the investigation, I was part of a 3-day interview where there was an NSD/DOJ representative at all three meetings. And in the latter part of Crossfire Hurricane, I was in touch with, again, DOJ attorneys from across the street regarding certain aspects of the cases that were in existence at that time.

Mr. Baker. Are all of these people below SES where you can't name names, or are there any ones that you can name names?

I believe most of them, if not all of them, have not been named, at least with respect to this IG report.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So with respect to the early time frame, you said you were on a number of emails with, I think you said, OI attorneys. Were there meetings as well, or was it just mainly by email?

Mr. Linehan. Did you say "OI attorneys" or "an OI
attorney"? Single or plural.

Excuse me just one moment.

Mr. Somers. Yes.

[Pause.]

back. I just want one point of clarification. I said "OI attorney," not plural, "attorneys."

Mr. Somers. Sorry. So you were on an email -- was it an email chain, or was it just you and the OI attorney?

It was an email chain.

Mr. Somers. So in the early -- this is prior to the first Carter Page FISA application being filed?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. You were on an email chain that involved the OI attorney, as identified in the IG report. Did you have any meetings with NSD?

I don't recall having any meetings with NSD.

Mr. Somers. Then in January to March of 2017, you took part in a 3-day interview where there were NSD attorneys. Any other interactions other than that 3-day interview with NSD during that time period?

Not to my recollection, no.

Mr. Somers. And then you said you had limited interactions between March and May of 2017. What did those
limited interactions consist of?

To the best of my recollection, there were DOJ attorneys that would come over to FBI headquarters that we would discuss certain aspects of the Crossfire Hurricane cases with.

Mr. Somers. You mean like how the investigation was going? Was this a status update thing, or were these specific questions about parts of investigations?

These would have been status updates as well as case agents talking to the attorneys about the status of cases and what needed to be done with cases.

Mr. Somers. What was DOJ's interest in particular during this March to May time period?

Again, they were getting status updates on a number of cases.

Mr. Somers. Would this be like are we renewing -- did they ask whether you were renewing the FISA application again?

I don't recall discussions with DOJ about that in particular.

Mr. Somers. Were you discussing the Flynn investigation?

There may have been discussions about the Flynn investigation.

Mr. Somers. Were there discussions of the Logan Act?
I do not recall discussions of the Logan Act.

Mr. Somers. Were there discussions about General Flynn's phone calls with Ambassador Kislyak?

I don't recall discussions with the attorneys during that time frame of the Kislyak phone calls.

Mr. Somers. Were these discussions about -- do you recall any discussions about interviewing Carter Page?

I don't recall discussions about interviewing Carter Page with DOJ attorneys.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you involved in the March interviews of Carter Page?

I was not.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall discussions about George Papadopoulos during these meetings with DOJ attorneys?

There may have been discussions about George Papadopoulos during those meetings.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall what was discussed?

I do not.

Mr. Somers. What about other Government agencies? Did you have any interaction with the State Department with regards to Crossfire Hurricane or any of the subjects thereof?

I don't recall having any contact with the
State Department regarding Crossfire Hurricane.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever receive any information from the -- maybe not directly but indirectly, from the State Department about Crossfire Hurricane?

We would have used information available in government systems probably from information derived from State Department reporting.

Mr. Somers. No, I'm thinking about whether you -- so the State Department -- were you aware that the State Department also interacted with Christopher Steele?

I think I recall that there were emails that had gone back and forth with our State Department liaison at one point that dealt with issues involving Christopher Steele.

Mr. Somers. So you saw that information?

Did I -- I'm sorry. I don't know what information you're talking about.

Mr. Somers. I'm sorry. I guess my question is: Did you see information from the State Department, did you see any documents, emails, communications directly from the State Department? Or is what you saw just from the FBI agent who was a liaison to the State Department?

My recollection is the latter.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

Mr. Baker. Did you or your analysts have any dealing
with or any knowledge of an entity known as the "Crossfire Hurricane Fusion Center"?

I did, yes.

Mr. Baker. And what exactly is that?

I'm going to talk to my counsel for a moment, please?

Mr. Baker. Sure.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back. Is everybody on mute?

I'm sorry. I was hearing some feedback.


Okay. So with respect to the Fusion Cell, I can acknowledge the existence of the Fusion Cell as that information has become public. However, any discussions in terms of my interactions with the Fusion Cell or other interactions with the Fusion Cell would actually be over and above the classification level for this discussion.

Mr. Somers. Can you tell us what it was?

I believe that would be over the classification of this discussion.

Mr. Baker. Can you tell us where it's at?

I believe that would be over the classification of this discussion.

Mr. Somers. Can you say whether it was outside of the FBI?
Again, my comfortability level in discussing this, I prefer not to actually even get close to getting over the classification level of this discussion.

Mr. Baker. Are any of your analysts assigned to it?

Again, I would give the same answer.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Let's walk back from that, and let's go back to the Hoover Building. It's my understanding that the intelligence analyst component profession is, relatively speaking, fairly new in the FBI, certainly the professionalization of intelligence analysts and the dedicated career track and upward mobility and whatnot. And my understanding of your background -- and you indicated it at the beginning of this interview -- I would consider you an intelligence analyst professional. That seems to be where you've spent your time at the Bureau, your teaching in that arena, you've published in that arena. That seems to be your expertise.

In your chain of command of Crossfire Hurricane, did you encounter any individuals that did not buy into the intelligence part of the FBI and the role of the intelligence analyst in an investigation like this?

I would say no. The people --

Mr. Baker. So everybody you encountered from the very top down to your level was completely onboard with the intelligence analyst role and the idea of validating and
vetting and everything that the intelligence analyst does?

I think by the time 2016 hit, I think there was enough comfortability, particular at headquarters, with the intelligence analyst role.

Mr. Baker. Was there any dissension at all, just what I would call "situational dissension," that maybe somebody had a disagreement with what an intelligence analyst was reporting on as it related to Crossfire?

I don't recall any dissension with respect to the intelligence analyst role in Crossfire Hurricane.

Mr. Baker. How about dissension regarding any particular aspect of the investigation? Was there any disagreement where the team split into camps as to whether something should or shouldn't be done?

I don't recall any of that.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. On page 79 of the IG report, it indicates that, "FBI officials told us that the early steps in the investigation focused on developing information about the four subjects and conducting CHS operations to obtain relevant subject specific information."

What did you do from the analyst side, if anything, early on to develop information about the four subjects?

So our analysts started to -- I mean, were able to dig through FBI holdings, dig through other
government agency holdings, dig through open-source material to put together full pictures for the case agents on each of the four cases.

Mr. Somers. And what does that product look like?

It depends on the situation. They're usually a Word document that is put together in a type of, for lack of a better term, tactical package, if you wanted to call it that way.

Mr. Somers. So there would be -- is that like a -- let's just take one individual and just say Carter Page. Is there like a memorandum that you guys are putting together on Carter Page in the early going? Is that fair?

You could call -- I mean, you could fairly all it a "memorandum."

Mr. Somers. So is it one document or is it more like a folder that has information about Carter Page?

I think that would depend. I mean, there were multiple documents that were written up.

Mr. Somers. So were you told that, you know, to basically go out and figure -- see everything you could on Carter Page? I mean, how does that tasking -- I'm just trying to understand how the tasking goes there. I'm not --

Usually that's --

Mr. Somers. Go ahead.
I would say usually that, what you just stated, is often the case. The case agent says, "I need you to find whatever you can on Subject A."

Mr. Somers. Okay. Is that what happened here on these subjects? You were tasked with finding information on these four subjects?

Pretty much our analysts were tasked with doing that, yes.

Mr. Somers. It looks -- yeah, I looks like our --

Mr. Baker. Can I get one quick one in?

Mr. Somers. All right. One last question, and then our first hour is up.

Mr. Baker. It's my understanding the agent population -- and I'm not just talking Crossfire Hurricane here -- the agents sometimes carry professional liability insurance, and I believe the Bureau or the Department even reimburses them a certain portion of that. Do intel analysts similarly carry professional liability insurance?

Not as many, but some do.

Mr. Baker. Now, being more specific with Crossfire Hurricane, did you ever become aware of analysts discussing about the possibility of needing insurance, liability insurance, because of being assigned to Crossfire Hurricane?

I think there was some discussion of
professional liability insurance with respect to the analysts who were on Crossfire Hurricane.

Mr. Baker. And what precipitated that discussion?

I think --

Mr. Baker. What was the concern?

Not so much as a concern as it is that this was going to be -- this is an investigation that would likely result in extra scrutiny.

Mr. Baker. So did analysts get this insurance or it was sort of ad hoc, piecemeal, some did, some didn't?

I would say that characterization is correct, ad hoc, piecemeal.

Mr. Baker. When you say there was a discussion, was there a gathering together of analysts to discuss the perils of this case and, hence, the possible need for insurance? Or was this, you know, just a small group of people that raised the issue? I'm just curious. What was the forum for the discussion about the potential need for liability insurance?

There was no overarching meeting, to my recollection, bringing the analysts together to talk about the need for professional liability insurance.

Mr. Baker. And, again, the need that was articulated or the need that you understood to be amongst the people that were talking about it was based on a general
heightened scrutiny that a case of this nature might get? Or were there specific concerns about the investigation?

I would say the former, a general heightened amount of scrutiny.

Mr. Baker. Did anybody have a specific concern about it?

Not to my recollection, no.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. We can go off the record now. Sara, do you want to take like a 5-minute break?

[Recess 11:23 a.m. to 11:34 a.m.]

Ms. Zdeb. So it is 11:34, and we can go back on the record.

thanks very much for being here. My colleague Andy Fausett and I, as we indicated earlier, are with the Ranking Member, Senator Feinstein, and we're going to tag-team a bit on our side. I have just a couple of quick follow-ups on the questions that Mr. Baker was asking you at the end of the last round, and then I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Fausett to continue our questions.

You had just indicated in response to Mr. Baker's questions on professional liability insurance that any discussion among analysts about whether or not to get liability insurance in Crossfire Hurricane would have been motivated more by a general sense that there could be some
heightened scrutiny associated with the investigation as opposed to specific concerns about the investigation. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Ms. Zdeb. And I think you also indicated that, beyond Crossfire Hurricane and as a general matter, in your experience, sometimes analysts in other investigations would get professional liability insurance and sometimes they would not. Is that correct?

That is correct, as well as if you are a manager of analysts, there is oftentimes discussion of whether to get professional liability insurance given the things that come up in management.

Ms. Zdeb. So is it fair to say that, to the extent there was some discussion among analysts or managers of analysts in Crossfire Hurricane about whether to get professional liability insurance, it would not have been unique to that investigation but, rather, something that, in your experience, happens in investigations as a general matter?

As a general matter, there are occasions where analysts will talk about getting private -- sorry, professional liability insurance.

Ms. Zdeb. Thank you.

Mr. Fausett. All right. good morning.
Can you hear me clearly, sir?

I can.

Mr. Fausett. Terrific. All right. So just to take a step back to more general matters, I know you testified or you stated earlier today that you've reviewed the Inspector General's report from last December entitled, "Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation." According to that report, the Inspector General and his office examined more than 1 million documents, interviewed more than 100 witnesses, including Christopher Steele and numerous current and former government employees.

Did you cooperate with the Office of the Inspector General's investigation?

Yes, I did.

Mr. Fausett. Were you interviewed as part of that investigation?

Yes, I was.

Mr. Fausett. How many times?

I believe four times.

Mr. Fausett. And about how long in total did you spend in these interviews, sir?

I would estimate perhaps up to 20 hours.

Mr. Fausett. And throughout your interviews, did you provide complete and truthful answers to the questions that
the Office of the Inspector General asked you?

Yes, I did.

Mr. Fausett. Did you or the Justice Department or the FBI provide the Office of the Inspector General with documents related to your involvement with the Crossfire Hurricane investigation?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Did the Office of the Inspector General ever complain that it needed more information from you, to your knowledge?

To my knowledge, no.

Mr. Fausett. And did it ever complain that it didn't get documents pertaining to your involvement?

I am not aware of any of that type of discussion.

Mr. Fausett. You stated earlier that you reviewed the report. Did you review the report before it was published?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And did you have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft that you reviewed?

Yes, I did.

Mr. Fausett. Now, recognizing that different witnesses will have differing recollections or interpretations of certain events, does the Inspector General's report accurately reflect the testimony you
provided to the Office of the Inspector General in --

Sir, I --

Mr. Fausett. -- specifically?

Sir, I have been asked if I could go off for a moment and speak with counsel. I apologize.

[Counsel confers with witness.]

back. Could you repeat your question, please?

Mr. Fausett. Sure. So you stated just a second ago that you had reviewed the Inspector General's report while it was still in draft form, and you stated that you did provide some comments back to it. Recognizing that different witnesses may have differing recollections or interpretations of certain events that may have been described in the report, does the report accurately reflect the testimony that you provided to the Office of the Inspector General?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Have you been interviewed by any other congressional committees about matters pertaining to Crossfire Hurricane?

No.

Mr. Fausett. And so, just to make sure I've got it right, you said you were interviewed four times by the Inspector General for approximately 20 hours total, so you
spent about 20 hours in total preparing for this matter and the various ways that you've been subject to oversight?

I think I spent approximately 20 hours being interviewed by the IG.

Mr. Fausett. There has been significant second-guessing of the decision to investigate whether anyone associated with the Trump campaign was assisting Russia in its efforts to influence the 2016 election. According to the Inspector General, the FBI learned in late July 2016 from a friendly foreign government, which is sometimes called "FFG," for the sake of simplicity, that George Papadopoulos had told a foreign official about a Russian offer to help the Trump campaign by releasing hacked emails damaging to Hillary Clinton. I know you spoke a little bit about that with our colleagues.

First, are you familiar with this term "friendly foreign government" or "FFG" for short?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And what does that term signify as a general matter?

As a general matter, that signifies that it is a government that is friendly to the interests and policies of the United States.

Mr. Fausett. And would you consider such a government to be a trusted ally or partner?
Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Is it fair to say, absent evidence to the contrary, and understanding that you take each situation as it comes, but that in general, when you have a source government or source official from a friendly foreign government, you would not ordinarily suspect that source or individual of fabricating information that's being provided to harm the United States?

I would say as a general rule that would be the case.

Mr. Fausett. And was there any evidence of fabrication or anything giving rise to suspicious circumstances here?

No.

Mr. Fausett. So, overall, was the fact that this came from a friendly foreign government significant in terms of the FBI's need to take the information seriously?

Well, the FBI takes information very seriously from all manner of people that it receives information from, so I don't know if I would say that this -- the basis of it coming from a friendly foreign government necessarily rises it above in terms of acceptance on the part of the FBI.

Mr. Fausett. Would you have been inclined to give it more credence, pending further review and analysis, based...
on the fact that it was coming from a friendly foreign
government as opposed to, say, a hostile nation or a nation
with adverse interests to the United States?

In that scenario, I would say yes, it
would be more comfortable taking something from a friendly
foreign government.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. So Bill Priestap, who opened
Crossfire Hurricane, told the Office of the Inspector
General -- and I'm going to quote now from page 53 of the
Inspector General's report. Mr. Priestap said, "...the
combination of the FFG information and the FBI's ongoing
cyber intrusion investigation of the DNC hacks created a
counterintelligence concern that the FBI was `obligated' to
investigate."

Do you have any reason to dispute Mr. Priestap's
explanation of why he opened the investigation?

So, to be clear, Mr. Priestap did not open
the Crossfire Hurricane investigation on the opening.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. Who opened --

So the opening was written by Pete Strzok.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any reason to question Mr.
Priestap's explanation based on his understanding of why
the investigation was opened?

I have no basis to dispute that.

Mr. Fausett. Do you understand what Mr. Priestap
meant when he described this situation, this friendly
foreign government information concerning George
Papadopoulos, as a "counterintelligence concern"? Do you
know what he meant by that?

I do know what he meant by that, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And what's your understanding of what he
meant by that? And what did you take it to mean?

When you look at the information that came
from the friendly foreign government and you compared that
with the fact that in July of 2016, late July of 2016,
there was information released on WikiLeaks from the DNC,
it basically kind of looked like this was a situation in
which the Russians may have been trying to interfere in our
election.

Mr. Fausett. So it sounds like you would agree that
the information then presented a legitimate
counterintelligence concern. Would you agree that the FBI
was obligated to investigate?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. I'd like to walk through some of the
specific events in 2016 and ask how they relate to this
counterintelligence concern. In March and then in May of
2016, FBI field offices identified a spearfishing campaign
by the GRU targeting email addresses associated with the
DNC and the Clinton campaign as well as efforts to place
malware on DNC and D Triple C -- DCCC -- computer networks, and I'm sourcing that from the Mueller report, Volume I of the Mueller report. I think we mentioned this already, but from your perspective, does that activity constitute a counterintelligence concern? Does it create a counterintelligence concern?

Yes, that activity would be a counterintelligence concern.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that?

Because it's a foreign entity or foreign government attempting to obtain information to which it is not supposed to have access.

Mr. Fausett. And then on July 22, 2016 -- and, again, I'm referencing the Mueller report here -- WikiLeaks published 20,000 emails stolen from the DNC, as you mentioned earlier. This was 6 days before the FBI learned from the FFG that the Trump campaign may have had advance knowledge of Russia's plans to release the stolen emails. I think we've covered this, but just to be clear, that in and of itself also creates a counterintelligence concern. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. And then on July 27, 2016, Donald Trump, then a candidate for President, said at a press conference, and I'm quoting now, "Russia, if you're listening, I hope
you're able to find" Hillary Clinton's emails. And according to Special Counsel Mueller's report, he uncovered that Russia attempted to hack Clinton's server for the first time later that same day.

Does that confluence of events, Candidate Trump's statement as well as the fact that Russia attempted to hack the server for the first time that same day, does that create a counterintelligence concern?

Russia's attempts to hack that server would be a counterintelligence issue, yes.

Mr. Fausett. Would the confluence with the statements made by then-Candidate Trump create a counterintelligence concern concerning the candidate or the campaign for President -- for Mr. Trump?

Which statements are you referring to?

Excuse me?

Mr. Fausett. The statement, "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find" Hillary Clinton's emails.

I'm not sure I would say that the statement itself would be a counterintelligence issue, but the confluence of events with the foreign government attempting to for the first time hack rises to the level of a counterintelligence issue.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that?
Again, you have a foreign government who is attempting to hack into information that it has no access to.

Mr. Fausett. Between March and August of 2016, the FBI became aware of numerous attempts to hack into State election systems. These include confirmed access and elements of multiple State or local electoral boards using tactics, techniques, and procedures associated with Russian state sponsors -- or state-sponsored actors, according, again, to Special Counsel Mueller in his report. Does that create a counterintelligence concern?

Yes, it does.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that?

It would be a foreign government attempting to get into information to which it does not have access.

Mr. Fausett. The Inspector General noted -- and I'm now actually quoting from the Mueller report -- that "the FBI learned that Russian efforts also included cyber-enabled scanning and probing of election-related infrastructure in several States." Does that create a counterintelligence concern?

Yes, it does.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that?

Again, it's a foreign government, an
adversary government, attempting to obtain information that it does not have access to.

Mr. Fausett. Now, some have expressed the view that there is no basis to investigate the Trump campaign's ties to Russia because Special Counsel Mueller did not ultimately charge anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign with conspiring with Russia. Is it fair to say that you think there was a sufficient basis, a reasonable basis, to investigate the Trump campaign's ties to Russia?

There was a reasonable basis to open the Crossfire Hurricane investigation and subsequent cases that followed on from that.

Mr. Fausett. As a general matter, does the FBI require analysts or -- I'm sorry, agents or the analysts who support them to have an expectation that they will find and be able to prove wrongdoing in order to open an counterintelligence or criminal investigation?

No.

Mr. Fausett. And what impact would imposing such a requirement have on the FBI's ability to investigate counterintelligence threats?

So you open an investigation either on the basis of a tip or information or articulable facts rising to the level of a national security threat. That's what you need to open an investigation.
Mr. Fausett. If that standard were that you needed to be in a position to prove wrongdoing or establish beyond a reasonable doubt the wrongdoing rather than the lower predicate, what impact would that have on the FBI’s ability to do its job?

It would be very difficult -- it would be very difficult to do counterintelligence investigations if that were the standard.

Mr. Fausett. So what is your response to the claim that there was never a valid reason to investigate possible ties between the Trump campaign and Russia?

I disagree with the assertion that there was -- that there was not viable reasons to open the Crossfire Hurricane investigation and the subsequent cases that came out of that.

Mr. Fausett. I wanted to ask you a few questions, drilling down just a bit into the alleged actions of George Papadopoulos and those actions in the context of the opening of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. Bear with me if some of this is a little bit repetitive, but we do want to be clear here as to your understanding of things.

Now, based upon what's in the Inspector General's report, the opening electronic communication for the Papadopoulos investigation noted that the Trump campaign...
may have had advance knowledge that Russia had stolen
emails and planned to release them to harm Hillary Clinton.
I think you talked about that earlier. It said that
Papadopoulos -- and I'm now quoting from page 60 of the
report -- "made statements indicating that he is
knowledgeable that the Russians made a suggestion to the
Trump campaign that they could assist the Trump campaign
with an anonymous release of information during the
campaign that would be damaging to the Clinton campaign."

Can you explain why these statements made Mr.
Papadopoulos a concern to the FBI?

So if the Russians had provided a
suggestion that Mr. Papadopoulos was aware of that it could
assist the Trump campaign through the anonymous release of
information that was detrimental to Hillary Clinton, then
that constitutes interference in our political process and
would be a counterintelligence concern.

Mr. Fausett. Now, I know you stated earlier that you
continued on after Crossfire Hurricane with the FBI wrapped
and supported the Special Counsel's office as well, so I'm
going to quote just a little bit again from the Special
Counsel's report: "Although the FBI first learned of the
FFG information in late July 2016, according to the Special
Counsel's report, Papadopoulos was told in April 2016 of
Russia's willingness to release 'dirt' on Hillary Clinton
`in the form of thousands of emails.'"

To your knowledge, did Mr. Papadopoulos report Russia's apparent offer of assistance to the FBI when he learned of it in April 2016?

Not to my knowledge, no.

Mr. Fausett. Did he come forward to the FBI in July 2016 when WikiLeaks began doing what Papadopoulos had been told the Russian Government would do, i.e., releasing thousands of emails on Hillary Clinton?

No.

Mr. Fausett. To your knowledge, did Mr. Papadopoulos ever come forward to report what he had been told about Russia's willingness to help the Trump campaign and harm Hillary Clinton?

To my knowledge, no.

Mr. Fausett. Would you agree, then, that the fact that Papadopoulos learned of Russia's willingness to harm Clinton by releasing thousands of emails, saw that release happen, and still did not come forward itself raises a counterintelligence concern that the FBI needed to investigate?

I would agree with that.

Mr. Fausett. And, in fact, the current Director of the FBI, Mr. Wray, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that, "Any threat or effort to interfere with our
election from any nation-state or any nonstate actor is the kind of thing the FBI would want to know." Do you agree with Director Wray that people should inform the FBI if they learn of information suggesting that a foreign government may be attempting to interfere in our elections?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And why is it important to do that?

Because the FBI needs to know if there are situations in which a foreign government is attempting to interfere with our political processes.

Mr. Fausett. According to the Inspector General's report, the foreign official who reported what Papadopoulos had told him was not aware of who else Papadopoulos had informed about Russia's offer to the Trump campaign. And the Inspector General further reported that you and others said -- and I'm going to quote now from page 59 of the report, that you and others collectively -- it's not individually attributed -- said "...the initial investigative objective of Crossfire Hurricane was to determine which individuals associated with the Trump campaign may have been in a position to have received the alleged offer of assistance from Russia."

So, in fact, it seems from that quote, if it's accurate, that one of the primary goals of the initial stages of Crossfire Hurricane was to determine who else on
the campaign, if anyone, knew of Russia's offer of
assistance. Is that correct?

Correct.

Mr. Fausett. After a 3-year investigation, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence recently issued a bipartisan finding that although it did not confirm exactly who Papadopoulos spoke with, and I'm quoting the Senate Intelligence Committee here, "it is implausible that Papadopoulos did not" share the offer with members of the Trump campaign.

Do you have any basis to dispute the Senate Intelligence Committee's finding that it is implausible that Papadopoulos did not share his offer with other members of the Trump campaign?

I think I would say that I'm not comfortable commenting on implausibility versus plausibility in that situation.

Mr. Fausett. Would you be concerned that Mr. Papadopoulos may have shared this offer with other members of the Trump campaign?

Yes, that would have been a concern.

Mr. Fausett. All right. Of course, as we discussed, our colleagues discussed with you earlier, Mr. Papadopoulos was not the only subject of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. The team opened individual cases on Paul
Manafort, Carter Page, and Michael Flynn as well in August of 2016. The opening electronic communication for the Manafort investigation noted that the Trump campaign may have had advance knowledge that Russia had stolen emails and planned to release them to harm Hillary Clinton, and it said

-- and I'm going to quote again from the Inspector General's report on page 60. It said that Manafort was "designated the Delegate Process and Convention Manager for the Trump campaign, was promoted to Campaign Manager for the Trump campaign, and had extensive ties to pro-Russian entities of the Ukrainian government."

Can you explain why these activities made Manafort a concern to the FBI?

So in this situation, Manafort had access within the campaign. Manafort had extensive ties to pro-Russian entities in the Ukrainian Government, which would have placed him in a position to be one of the individuals who could have possibly received the information that was related by Papadopoulos to the representative of the friendly foreign government.

Mr. Fausett. The opening electronic communication for Lieutenant General Flynn said that he "may wittingly or unwittingly be involved in activity on behalf of the Russian Federation which may constitute a crime or threat
to the national security."

It went on to note that Flynn was an adviser to Trump, had various ties to state-affiliated entities of Russia, and had previously traveled to Russia.

Do you recall what Mr. Flynn's ties to Russia were beyond what I just read back to you?

I remember there was discussion of Flynn's visits to Russia and interactions, and other than that, I'm not sure I can talk about that at this level.

Mr. Fausett. But can you say -- and I understand if you can't, but can you say whether these visits and interactions gave rise to similar concerns about having access and connections as you had with Mr. Manafort?

I would say yes, similar concerns.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. In addition to stating that Carter Page may wittingly or unwittingly be involved in activity on behalf of Russia, the electronic communication opening that investigation noted that the Trump campaign may have had advance knowledge that Russia had stolen emails and planned to release them to harm Hillary Clinton. We talked about that. It said, again quoting from the same page from the Inspector General's report, "Page was a senior foreign policy adviser for the Trump campaign, had extensive ties to various Russia-owned entities, and had traveled to Russia as recently as July 2016."
It also stated that he "was the subject of an...ongoing counterintelligence investigation assigned to the FBI's New York Field Office."

Can you explain generally why these activities made Mr. Page a concern to the FBI?

It would be similar to what was said before with respect to access within the campaign and then the availability or potential for Mr. Page to have been in a position to have received the information documented -- or, sorry, discussed by Papadopoulos to the representative of a friendly foreign government.

Mr. Fausett. So given this access that all four of these individuals had to the campaign and the connections that they had to various Russian actors, do you believe it was reasonable for the FBI to be concerned that members of the Trump campaign, whether Papadopoulos, Manafort, Page, Flynn, or perhaps others, perhaps even Candidate Trump himself, may have had knowledge of Russia's activities?

I believe it was justified to open these cases, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And just one sort of housekeeping matter for us. As you stated earlier, you continued on with the Special Counsel's investigation. I know there's been some confusion as to whether the nature of that investigation was purely criminal or also had a counterintelligence
component. Can you tell us, do you know whether the Special Counsel undertook any investigation into the counterintelligence concerns that may have been raised by contacts between individuals associated with the Trump campaign and Russia?

The Special Counsel's office was a criminal investigation.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. All right. Sara, do you have anything?

Ms. Zdeb. Yeah, I have just a couple of quick follow-ups on an exchange that you had a bit earlier with Mr. Fausett. So when he was asking you about Bill Priestap's assessment that the combination of the friendly foreign government information and the ongoing cyber intrusions by Russia created a counterintelligence concern that the FBI was "obligated" to investigate, I think you interjected that it was Mr. Strzok who opened Crossfire Hurricane, and I wanted to quickly clarify that for the record, if I could.

Just for starters, you joined Crossfire Hurricane a day or two after the investigation had been opened. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Ms. Zdeb. And the Inspector General -- and this appears in a couple of places in his report, but it appears...
I think for the first time on page Roman iii that it was Mr. Priestap who approved the opening of the case. And I think you probably were thinking earlier in the exchange with Mr. Fausett of the actual opening electronic communication, which was, in fact, signed by Mr. Strzok. But as the Inspector General found on page iii of his report, it was actually Assistant Director Priestap, Strzok's supervisor, who was the official who ultimately made the decision to open Crossfire Hurricane.

Do you have any basis to dispute the Inspector General's conclusion that it was actually Mr. Priestap who approved the opening of Crossfire Hurricane?

I do not. I was thinking of the electronic communication.

Ms. Zdeb. Thank you.

I think that's all we have for this round, so it is 12:03 and we can go off the record.

[Recess 12:02 p.m. to 12:52 p.m.]
AFTERNOON SESSION

[12:52 p.m.]

Mr. Somers. All right. We can go back on the record.

It is 12:52, and I think I'd like to just start by going through with you, [redacted] some events or instances or, you know, I don't know exactly how I would characterize them. It's a series of things that either were identified in the IG report or we've become aware of since the IG report. And I'd just like to gauge your awareness of these -- I think the relevant time frame would be prior to the final Carter Page FISA application, that third renewal being filed. So I would just go through these and ask if you were aware of them prior to that final renewal being filed. I think it might -- you know, one, it'll give us some information; two, it may steer us clear of asking some questions on these areas that are more specific if you didn't have any awareness of the items on my list, if that makes sense.

The first thing on my list is on July 5, 2016, Steele, according to the IG report, met with his handling agent, Handling Agent 1. And according to notes of Steele's, according to Steele, he told his handling agent that "Democratic Party associates' were paying for Fusion GPS's research, the 'ultimate client' was the leadership of the Clinton Presidential campaign, and 'the candidate' was
 Were you aware of that before the final Carter Page
FISA application?

No.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware that the DNC was the
ultimate client prior to the final Carter Page FISA
application?

I think by the time the final Carter Page
FISA came along, I think so.

Mr. Somers. Okay. On August 2nd -- this is Footnote
223 of the IG report. I'm going to shorten it a little bit
so I don't have to read the whole footnote -- you received
an email -- I don't know if you recall receiving it or
whether you would have actually read it, but there was an
e-mail sent that said that a confidential human source who
was run out of the New Haven Field Office had information
that Fusion GPS "had been hired by two entities (the
Democratic National Committee as well as another
individual...not name[d]) to explore Donald J. Trump's
longstanding ties to Russian entities."

Do you recall receiving that email?

Yes, I recall receiving that email.

Mr. Somers. And did you recall having that
information prior to the final Carter Page FISA
application?
Yes, I would have had that prior to the final renewal.

Mr. Somers. What about prior to the first application?

I received that email on or about August 2nd of 2016.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Is that what alerted you to the DNC being the ultimate client for the Steele dossier?

No. I believe that at that point it was still -- we understood Fusion GPS had a law firm client after it, and that we did not know exactly what the law firm after that was.

Mr. Somers. So you say you did not make the connection between this August 2nd email and the DNC being the ultimate client for the Steele dossier. Is that fair?

No, I had not made the connection with this email.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

That connection came later.

Mr. Somers. Okay. On August 17th, A government agency, another government intelligence agency, informed the FBI, I believe through a memorandum, that Carter Page had been approved as an operational contact for the other agency from 2008 to 2013, and the memo further provided that
provided information about Page's past contacts with
certain Russian intelligence officers. Were you aware of
that August 17 memo?

I was aware of the August 17th memorandum, yes.

Mr. Somers. You received it at the time or
thereabouts?

Thereabouts, yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you aware on or about
September 7, 2016, that the FBI received an investigative
referral from the CIA regarding U.S. Presidential Candidate
Hillary Clinton's approval of a plan concerning U.S.
Presidential Candidate Donald Trump and Russian hackers
hampering U.S. elections as a means of distracting the
public from her use of a private email server?

Mr. Heberling. Zach, this is Brian Heberling. Let's
just go off the record for a second and talk to.

Mr. Somers. Sure.

[Counsel confers with witness.]

Mr. Somers. We'll go back on the record.

Were you aware that on or about September 7, 2016, the
FBI received an investigative referral from the CIA
regarding "U.S. Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton's
approval of a plan concerning U.S. Presidential Candidate
Donald Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections as a means of distracting the public from her use of a private email server?"

I was aware, yes.

Mr. Somers. And just one follow-up. You were aware around that time, or you became aware later?

I was aware around that time.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you aware of the letter that Carter Page sent Director Comey on September 25, 2016, in which he stated that he had interacted with members of the U.S. intelligence community, including the FBI and the CIA, for many decades and that he eagerly awaited FBI's call to discuss any final questions they might possibly have?

I do recall that letter, yes.

Mr. Somers. And you recall seeing it around the time it was sent?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. I had asked you in the last round a little bit about State Department contacts with the FBI regarding Christopher Steele and two things that the State Department raised with the FBI. Were you aware that the State Department noted, based on their interactions with Christopher Steele and their review of the materials he provided the State Department, that Steele had provided incorrect information about a nonexistent Russian consulate.
I was not aware of that being reported to the State Department.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware of that generally?

Aware of what generally?

Mr. Somers. That the Steele reports reported about a nonexistent Russian consulate in Miami.

So I recall that one of the Steele reports actually had that in it, yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And do you recall knowing that that was not correct?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Do you further recall the State Department providing information that the State Department realizes that Steele is talking to the media, June reporting started, New York Times and the Washington Post have leaked all the best stuff, and there will be more? Do you recall receiving a report like that from the State Department?

I do not recall receiving a report like that from the State Department.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you involved in a November 21, 2016, meeting between the Crossfire Hurricane team and Bruce Ohr and possibly others at the Justice Department?

I was not.
Mr. Somers. Did you get a readout of that meeting?

I may have received a readout, but I don't recall exactly.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Do you recall that certain members of the Crossfire Hurricane team learned from Bruce Ohr that Steele was "desperate that Donald Trump not get elected and was passionate about him not being the U.S. President"?

I believe that was documented in the file after that meeting.

Mr. Somers. So you were aware of that?

At some point, yes, I was aware of that.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware that Ohr reported to members of the Crossfire Hurricane team during that meeting that reporting of criminal activities may be exaggerated or conspiracy theory talk so Steele cannot know whether all his reporting is true?

I'm not sure if that's in the write-up or not. I wasn't part of the meeting, so I wouldn't be able to -- I'd have to -- I'm not sure if it's in the write-up.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you aware that Fusion GPS -- this is also from that same Ohr meeting -- that Fusion GPS was hired by a lawyer who does opposition research and that Steele's reporting was being distributed to the Clinton campaign, Jonathan Winer at the State Department, and the FBI?
Again, I'm not sure exactly when I had an understanding of that.

Mr. Somers. Did you at some time have an understanding that the Steele reporting was going to the Clinton campaign?

At some moment, yes.

Mr. Somers. Prior to the final Carter Page FISA application being submitted?

I believe it would have been prior to the final Carter Page application being submitted, yes.

Mr. Somers. And what about the fact that Steele was sharing his information with the State Department? Were you aware of that before the final Carter Page FISA application was filed?

I was probably aware of it before the final application.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you aware that on December 17, 2016, the CIA expressed concern to the FBI about the lack of vetting for the Steele election reporting and believed it should not be included in the intelligence community assessment as it was Internet rumor?

I'm sorry. Do you have the date again? I apologize.

Mr. Somers. I'm sorry. December 17, 2016.

I was aware of that, yes.
Mr. Somers. You were aware of that at the time?

At the time, yes.

Mr. Somers. And you were aware that the CIA believed that it was Internet rumor?

Well, I don't believe that that is a CIA characterization. If I recall, that's actually a quote by someone who was characterizing what the CIA's position was.

Mr. Somers. Do you have any reason to question Jonathan Moffa's recollection that the intel section chief stated that the CIA viewed it as "Internet rumor"?

I have no reason to question Jon Moffa's comment on that, but I don't know if that's an exact quote.

Mr. Somers. Okay. You didn't have a separate conversation with the CIA where they said it was an Internet rumor?

No, I did not have a separate conversation.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Were you aware that in December of 2016 Crossfire Hurricane team leaders learned that Steele's primary sub-source from 2009 to 2011 was the subject of an FBI counterintelligence investigation that indicated that he might be a "threat to national security"?

Mr. Heberling. Zach, this is Brian Heberling again. For the reasons we discussed yesterday, we're going to tell to respectfully decline to answer that question.
Mr. Somers. Okay. And following up, and you can not answer this question either, but further that the Crossfire Hurricane team learned in December of 2016 that in 2010 the FBI went so far as to submit an application to the DOJ for FISA coverage on the primary sub-source? Were you aware of that?

Mr. Heberling. We're going to give [redacted] the same instruction. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. All right. Fair enough.

Did you learn in January 2017 that the primary sub-source lived in the United States?

[redacted] Yes.

Mr. Somers. So in learning that, did you realize that he was not "Russian-based," like the FISA applications represented?

[redacted] Yes.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall on January 12th or thereabouts, January 12, 2017, that the FBI received a report outlining an inaccuracy in Steele's reporting about the activities of Michael Cohen, a highly credible source stated that it did not have high confidence in this subset of Steele's reporting, and assessed that the referenced subset was part of a Russian disinformation campaign to denigrate U.S. foreign relations?

[redacted] This is from a footnote in the IG report,
correct?

Mr. Somers. Yes, it's from Footnote -- the
declassified version of Footnote 350.

Yes, I was aware of that.

Mr. Somers. You were aware of that at the time?

Yes.

Mr. Somers. And just for the record, you took part in
the -- I think you already said this earlier, but let's put
it on the record now. You took part in the 3-day interview
of the primary sub-source that occurred on or about January
-- started on about January 24, 2017?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall where that interview took
place?

It took place in the FBI Washington Field
Office.

Mr. Somers. So you're confident it did not occur at
the primary sub-source's lawyer's office?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And then back to this Footnote
350, the declassified version of it, on February 27, 2017,
were you aware that an intelligence community report
contained information about an individual with reported
connections to Trump and Russia who claimed that the public
reporting about the details of Trump's sexual activities in
Moscow during a trip in 2013 were false and that they were the product of Russian intelligence service's "infiltrating a source into the network of [redacted] who compiled a dossier on that individual on Trump's activities"?

Yes, I believe I was aware of that at the time.

Mr. Somers. At the time, okay. Were you aware of the March 2017 human source validation review of Steele that found that his "past contributions to the FBI's criminal program had been minimally corroborated"?

I believe I had received that report around that time.

Mr. Somers. Were you -- I don't know if you were either aware of -- well, I'll first ask it this way: Were you aware of the primary sub-source's March interview with the FBI?

I was aware of it, but I won't be able to say exactly when I was aware of it.

Mr. Somers. Okay. But you were not a part of that interview?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware that during that interview the primary sub-source stated that he never expected Steele to put the primary sub-source's statements in reports or present them as facts?
I believe I was aware of that, but, again, I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly when I was aware of that.

Mr. Somers. Do you know if you were aware of that before the final Carter Page FISA application was submitted?

I would estimate it probably was before, but, again, I don't have a clear recollection.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Do you recall learning that the primary sub-source said that the statements were "word of mouth and hearsay"; "conversations...had with friends over beers"; or were statements "made in jest" that should be taken with "a grain of salt"?

Is that a quote from the --

Mr. Somers. It's a quote from the IG report, from the Washington Field Office agent who took that March interview.

Again, I think I was aware of that reporting, but I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly when specifically I was aware of that reporting.

Mr. Somers. Do you think it was prior to the final Carter Page FISA application being submitted?

It could have been, but, again, I don't have a clear recollection.

Mr. Somers. Did the primary sub-source express any
sentiments like that during your 3-day interview with him?

Not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. All right. That's all I have on that sort of run-through line of questions. Let's stick with the primary sub-source, though, since we were kind of ending there with my previous line. So were you aware of -- you know what? I want to start with Christopher Steele. When did you first become aware of what's become known as the "Steele dossier"?

I believe that would have been either September 19 or September 20, 2016.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So when it came in -- the IG report says the Crossfire Hurricane team received it on September 19th.

That would have been the date then.

Mr. Somers. That's when you would have received it, okay. What did the FBI's initial efforts to -- I don't know if the word "corroborate" is correct, but to either corroborate or look at the Steele reporting consist of?

We immediately started to determine what aspects of the reporting that we could confirm or disconfirm, and so we began looking at FBI holdings; we began looking at open-source material and began looking at OGA material as well to see if there was anything that we could use to help verify, again, confirm or disconfirm.
Mr. Somers. Okay. On page 101 of the IG report, it says that, "After obtaining the six Steele reports on September 19, analysts on the Crossfire Hurricane team immediately began to evaluate the information in the reports. By the next day, they had completed a draft Intelligence Memorandum that summarized key points from the reports and identified actions that needed to be taken to assess the information."

Were you the author or one of the authors of that Intelligence Memorandum?

I was not the primary author, but I edited that document.

Mr. Somers. Okay. That seems like a fast turnaround to me. Is that a fast turnaround of an analytical product like an Intelligence Memorandum?

I wouldn't necessarily say that's a fast turnaround. It was a memo that was summarizing what we had received and then suggested or recommended courses of action based upon what we had received.

Mr. Somers. So it took everything at face value at that point in time. Is that a fair --

We were just -- we were just starting the analysis.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Page 125 of the IG report indicates that, "Also on September 19...in an email to the
OGC Unit Chief and OGC Attorney, the Supervisory Intel Analyst forwarded an excerpt from Steele's Report 94...concerning Page's alleged secret meeting with Igor Divyekin in July 2016 and asked, "Does this put us at least *that* much closer to a full FISA on [Carter Page]?' Do you recall that email?

I do.

Mr. Somers. Why would receiving that information move you that much closer to a full FISA on Carter Page?

I wouldn't be able to speak to that at the classification level of this.

Mr. Somers. I guess my question is: Why would this unverified information move -- this is the same day you received the Steele reporting. I'm trying to understand why -- how on the same day you received the reporting it would move you closer to receiving a FISA application.

It was a matter of what -- I think from the -- as far as saying based upon what's in that paragraph, it is information that was researched on Igor Divyekin.

Mr. Somers. Prior to receiving the Steele reporting, is that what you're saying?

Not prior.

Mr. Somers. What did you know about Christopher Steele on September 19, 2016? Had you used his information
previously?

No.

Mr. Somers. Had you ever met Christopher Steele?

Turned out yes, I had in the past.

Mr. Somers. Had you worked in a professional context?

In a professional context.

Mr. Somers. Had his information been used in an investigation that you had worked on previously?

I can't go into the details about what it is that I was working on where I had the interaction with Mr. Steele.

Mr. Baker. But it was during your time at the FBI?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. So you had some knowledge of Christopher Steele prior to receiving the Steele dossier on September 19?

So to be clear, at the time, no, I didn't make the connection. But after I had actually met Mr. Steele, I recognized him, came back, looked through some material, and realized that he and I had met in the past in a professional context on a particular matter involving the FBI.

Mr. Baker. So you realized that after seeing him or after digesting more information in files and his writings?

After seeing him.
Mr. Baker. Okay.

Mr. Somers. So when you're analyzing this material, if "analyzing" is the correct term -- I won't characterize it for you. But you get the material on September 19th. You draft the -- not you, I mean you and your team draft an Intelligence Memorandum about this material. How are you viewing this material? Are you skeptical of it? Is it -- what's your characterization of the material on September 19th and 20th?

The characterization I would give is that the FBI gets reporting from all manner of places, and we do the same type of thing with all manner of reporting, which is we look to see whether or not things can be verified. We look to see whether or not it matches things that are in open source or in classified holdings, and to determine whether or not the information that we've received is accurate or whether it can be confirmed or whether it can be disconfirmed.

Mr. Baker. You had used the term "FBI holdings" a few minutes ago in response to a question from Mr. Somers. What do you mean when you say you're checking "FBI holdings"?

I mean that we're using FBI systems to look at material that has been previously collected or previously investigated by the FBI.
Mr. Baker. And that would be something you could access if you came across a name or if a name came forward as either someone providing information or someone who could potentially be the subject of an investigation? You could check these holdings to see if there were previous contacts with this individual by the FBI?

In terms of -- possibly, yes.

Mr. Baker. So would you have checked these holdings when Mr. Steele first comes on the radar with this dossier? Would you have checked holdings to see what relationship the Bureau may have had with Mr. Steele?

I don't recall checking to see what relationship Mr. Steele had, but we were checking the names and entities and things mentioned actually in the reporting.

Mr. Baker. So, eventually, when you had names of people that were in the report, you would have run those names against "FBI holdings"?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. So in doing that, you would have -- if there were, in fact, a previous relationship with the FBI of any of these individuals in his reporting, you would have gotten a hit that there had been previous FBI interest or this person had been previously on the FBI radar?

Theoretically, yes.
Mr. Baker. And did that, in fact, happen with any of these individuals or with anything that you verified or attempted to verify through FBI holdings with the Steele reporting? Did you get hits?

So I'm not sure I'm comfortable talking about what I was able to find or not find in FBI holdings in a forum such as this.

Mr. Baker. But if you would have gotten something in an FBI holding, theoretically, that would have cast -- or would have been curious in that someone in the Steele reporting has previously been on the FBI radar, you would have let that be known to other people on your team?

Yes, in that scenario, certainly.

Mr. Baker. Was that done in this case?

Again, let me talk to FBI counsel for a moment.

Mr. Baker. Sure.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back.

Mr. Baker. Yes, sir.

Would you mind repeating the question just so that I --

Mr. Baker. Sure. I was asking, in your attempt to look into FBI holdings of either people that come on the radar in the course of this case or specifically in the
Steele reporting, did anything -- did you get a hit, a ping on a previous contact that any of these people identified or subsequently identified from the Steele reporting had been previously on the FBI radar?

So, again, I don't want to get into what I got a hit on or not or didn't get a hit on with respect to particular individuals in the Crossfire Hurricane case. However, I do want to emphasize that FBI holdings are organized oftentimes along what accesses one has, and, therefore, there are situations in which cases are restricted in the search function or prohibited in the search function, and, therefore, I would not necessarily always get all manner of hits on a particular individual or entity.

Mr. Baker. Did you subsequently to any searches or database checks, did you subsequently get any call or communication from another part of the FBI inquiring why you had queried someone where on your end you don't see a hit, but there is a message transmitted to someone else saying that someone has queried your case, and then that someone or that someone's supervisor reaches out to you or maybe your supervisor and inquires why you were searching whatever it was you were searching? Did that happen?

I don't recall getting any messages like that over the course of Crossfire Hurricane.
Mr. Baker. And if you would have gotten any kind of hit from FBI holdings that anybody in the Steele reporting had been previously known or concurrently known to the Bureau, you would have made that known to your team?

Yes.

Mr. Baker. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. Did you have other information other than the Steele dossier on September 19, 2016, that Igor Divyekin and Carter Page had a meeting in July of 2016?

No.

Mr. Somers. Is Igor Divyekin a person that would be known in the intelligence community?

I'm going to not answer that at this classification level.

Mr. Somers. So you had no knowledge of a secret meeting between Divyekin and Page, but you thought this information put us at least that much closer to a full FISA on Carter Page. Did you view the Steele dossier -- let's just call it that. I know it wasn't quite what you guys considered it at the FBI. But did you view the Steele dossier as raw intelligence?

I mean, it was reporting that we had received, but there was not a finalized -- yeah, I mean, it wasn't a kind of finalized report or anything of that sort. It's information.
Mr. Somers. And you went about verifying -- not you, the FBI and the Crossfire Hurricane team, which you were a part of, went about verifying the -- or trying to verify the information in the Steele dossier?

Trying to, yes.

Mr. Somers. Why?

To determine, again, whether or not it was accurate, to determine whether or not we could confirm material in it, or whether or not we could disconfirm material in it.

Mr. Somers. But why does the mention of a meeting between Page and Divyekin move you that much closer to a FISA application if you haven’t confirmed the information in the Steele dossier?

Mr. Linehan. Zach, if I could jump in, I just want to make a note that I think you’re mischaracterizing the email, the email in question. I don’t think he states it that declaratively in the email, but, you know, I’m not — he can answer. He can respond. But I just want to note that for the record.

Mr. Somers. Sure.

As I was saying, there was something about Divyekin. That’s all I can say.

Mr. Somers. Okay. What about were you aware at that time of Carter Page’s denial that he had ever met with
Divyekin or even knew who Divyekin was?

On September 19th?

Mr. Somers. Yes.

I don't believe I was aware of that denial on September 19th.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware of it in October of 2016?

If I recall correctly, that was from the September 23rd news article. Is that correct?

Mr. Somers. Well, there's a denial of -- according to the IG report, on page 364 -- I think it's in numerous places. But Page made "statements to an FBI CHS in October 2016 that the FBI believed supported its theory that Page was an agent of Russia but omitted other statements Page made" -- and this is the part I'm pointing to -- "omitted other statements Page made, including denying having met with Sechin and Divyekin, or even knowing who Divyekin was." So that's in October of 2016, Page makes a statement to an FBI CHS that he never met with Divyekin or even knew who Divyekin was.

Okay. Sorry.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware of that interaction between Carter Page and the FBI confidential human source?

I was aware of the interaction between Carter Page and the CHS. I'm not exactly sure the extent of my knowledge with respect to everything that was
discussed between Page and the CHS.

Mr. Somers. All right. Just for clarity, were you aware of his statements denying knowing who Divyekin was?

I don't recall exactly whether or not I knew those statements at the time or whether I learned about those statements subsequent to that time.

Mr. Somers. Do you think you learned about them prior to the first Page FISA application?

I'm not sure if I learned them before the first Page application.

Mr. Somers. What about prior to the first renewal?

Again, I'm not positive exactly.

Mr. Somers. What about prior to the last renewal?

I probably knew about it before the last renewal.

Mr. Somers. So getting back to some of the verification, on page 102 of the IG report, it says that, "They explained that the assessment" of Steele "involved determining the credibility of Steele, including understanding his record of furnishing reliable information, motivation, and possible biases; and verifying the information he provided through independent sources."

Where did you get your understanding of Steele's record of furnishing reliable information?

I understood that from Handling Agent 1.
Mr. Somers. Did you have any other sources of his reliability, at least prior to the first FISA application, other than Handling Agent 1?

No, not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. Did you consult his Delta file prior to the first FISA application?

No. I believe it was after the first — after the initiation.

Mr. Somers. Why did you not consult his Delta — not you. Why did the Crossfire Hurricane team, including you, not consult his Delta file until after the first application?

The Crossfire Hurricane team was interested in moving on the reporting itself. We were not focused on vetting Christopher Steele as a source at that time.

I'm going to go off for a moment.

Mr. Somers. Yes.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

So with respect to — you know, I don't know if anybody didn't look at the Delta file. With respect to my look at the Delta file, I know that that did not take place until after the first renewal.

Mr. Somers. Okay. How much corroboration of the -- or verification -- I don't know what the proper technical
term is -- of the Steele dossier was complete by October 21, 2016, when the first application was submitted to the Court?

Are you asking for a percentage or are you asking -- I'm not exactly sure.

Mr. Somers. Yeah, I'm asking what was the level of verification or corroboration.

I think by that time I would characterize it as, again, a distinction between facts and allegations as documented in the reporting, and that many of the facts, people, places, entities themselves could be corroborated or verified. In terms of the actual allegations themselves, I'm not sure many of the allegations could be verified at that time.

Mr. Somers. On page 196 of the report, and this is in reference to the last -- the third renewal, but it says, "Despite the FBI's efforts to corroborate and evaluate the Steele election reporting, we were told by the Supervisory Intel Analyst that, as of September 2017, the FBI had corroborated limited information in the Steele election reporting, and much of that information was publicly available."

Would you say that you had corroborated even less information by October 21st of 2016?

I don't know if I would say less
information by October of 2017, but I would say that in the end --

Mr. Somers. Sorry. 2016.

2016, excuse me. Could you repeat the question then?

Mr. Somers. Yeah, I want to know -- so you made a statement -- what I have from you is a statement that you made in October -- I'm sorry, in September of 2017 saying that the FBI -- this is not a direct quote of yours, but this is essentially what you told the IG's office -- the FBI had corroborated limited information of the Steele election reporting, and much of that information was publicly available. That's in September of 2017. There's not a similar statement from you regarding October 21, 2016, so I'm wondering how you would compare the corroboration statement you had in 2017 with where you were in October of 2016.

I would say on the basis of that question we had less information than we had in September of 2017.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Getting back to the question I was asking, so we went through understanding of the record of furnishing reliable information. You got that from Handling Agent 1. What about his motivation? What was your assessment of his -- what did it involve in terms of assessing his motivation?
Steele's personal motivation?

Mr. Somers. Yes, and providing this information to the FBI.

My understanding when we received the Steele material was that this information, again, was put together by Steele and his business intelligence firm, was being provided to the entity Fusion GPS, and that it was going to a law office, and that the potential existed that it was opposition research.

Mr. Somers. So you didn't know that it was opposition research, I take it, by that response.

Correct.

Mr. Somers. And you didn't know this, but you later learned that the DNC was the ultimate client for the Steele dossier. Is that correct?

Eventually, yes.

Mr. Somers. Did that or does that change your opinion from, you know, we thought it might be opposition research to it was opposition research?

I think that's a fair characterization.

Mr. Somers. So it moves from speculation to -- I mean, that's what the DNC's after if they're paying for the Steele dossier, right, is opposition research?

I don't know exactly what the DNC was paying for, so I won't characterize that.
Mr. Somers. Well, they weren't -- do you think the
DNC was paying for information that was favorable to Donald
Trump?

Again, I don't know what the DNC was paying for, but I will say that eventually it became clear
that this was opposition research.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And then the fourth thing it says in your assessment -- not your assessment, the FBI's
assessment, was "verifying the information he provided
through independent sources." What did that consist of?

Where are you quoting that from exactly?

Mr. Somers. Page 102. This is what I read earlier.
I'll read it again. "They explained that the assessment
involved determining the credibility of Steele" -- we went
through that -- "including understanding his record of
furnishing reliable information, motivation, and possible
biases; and verifying the information he provided through
independent sources." So now I'm to "verifying the
information he provided through independent sources," and
I'd like to understand just at a very general level what
you did to verify the information he provided through
independent sources.

I think that goes back to my comments
earlier regarding searching through FBI holdings, querying
OGA material, et cetera.
Mr. Somers. Including public information?

That would include public information, yes.

Mr. Baker. So when the words being used that this information or Steele's credibility was assessed, is this the same thing as him being validated as a source, or this is something different?

It would be something different.

Mr. Baker. Was he ever validated as a source?

Yes.

Mr. Baker. And was he determined to be credible? Did he pass whatever you do to be validated?

I believe from the IG report that it was reliable, was the word that they used for it.

Mr. Baker. In general terms, is there an enhanced validation process that the Bureau can do?

I'm not sure I could speak about the levels of validation that the Bureau goes about in this type of forum.

Mr. Baker. Is there more than one type of validation?

Again, I think you'd have to speak to somebody in the validation process for greater clarity on that.

Mr. Somers. Were you aware of SSA-1 requesting an enhanced validation of Steele in November of 2016?
I was aware of SSA-1 I believe asking for a validation, but I don't know if I recall that it was some sort of enhanced validation.

Mr. Baker. So what is the intelligence analyst role in validations in general, outside of Crossfire Hurricane? Are there intelligence analysts that are involved in validating sources?

There are intelligence analysts involved in validating sources, yes.

Mr. Baker. So there would be -- or are there intelligence analysts assigned to this validation unit that you just referenced?

I don't believe I referenced a unit on that, but there are analysts who are involved in the validation process.

Mr. Baker. Okay. You said that I would have to talk to somebody in a validation something, a unit, a division, or something. So would there be intelligence analysts assigned to whatever that something is, be it a unit or some other organizational entity?

Yes, there are intelligence analysts that are involved in the validation process on an official basis.

Mr. Baker. So your unit, where you're the supervisory intelligence analyst, if there had been any request of this
other validation entity, since your unit and your agent counterparts are working with Mr. Steele, you would have gotten any result of validation that was done on him. Correct?

I believe I received a report on the validation that was done.

Mr. Baker. And what kind of report was it? Was it a passing grade, a failing grade, an average grade? What does the result that you got tell you about Mr. Steele as a source?

They're not graded in that way, and so I think -- as I characterized just a few minutes ago, I think one of the terms that's outlined in the IG report as they describe the validation report is that he was determined to be reliable, and that there were questions about how much of his reporting had been corroborated.

Mr. Baker. Are you aware of any validation that was requested of Mr. Steele that was stopped, that was told to be put on hold or otherwise terminated by any FBI official?

I don't recall that.

Mr. Baker. Okay.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall writing with the staff operations specialist an Intelligence Memorandum on the Steele reporting in late September 2016?

I edited a memorandum from the SOS, yes.
Mr. Somers. And do you recall that in that memorandum there was information that was then later used as part of Steele's source characterization statement?

I am aware that that memorandum was subsequently used for the application, yes.

Mr. Somers. And I don't know if you recall -- I'm looking at page 161 of the IG's report, and I'm reading the source characterization statement for Steele that was in the Carter Page FISA application. It says, "This information comes from a sensitive FBI source whose reporting has been corroborated and used in criminal proceedings, and who obtains information from a number of ostensibly well-placed sub-sources. The scope of the source's reporting is from 20 June 2016 through 20 August 2016."

Do you recall where the information came from that Steele's reporting has been corroborated and used in criminal proceedings?

I drafted that language.

Mr. Somers. And where did you get the impression that his material had been corroborated?

It was based on my understanding that he had been -- his reporting had been the predicate for the FIFA investigation.

Mr. Somers. And where did you get that understanding?
My understanding came from the Handling Agent 1 and also SSA-1, who had learned that from Handling Agent 1.

Mr. Somers. And what about the "used in criminal proceedings"?

The same thing. It had predicated the FIFA investigation which actually resulted in indictments.

Mr. Somers. What about "who obtains information from a number of ostensibly well-placed sub-sources"? Where did you get that information?

I'm not sure that I drafted that particular language on there, but it was basically based on the reporting and how things were described within the reporting.

Mr. Somers. Are you aware of the fact that the handling agent said he wouldn't have approved this source characterization statement for Steele?

On the basis of what is written in the IG report, I am aware of that.

Mr. Somers. But you were not aware of it at the time?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. "According to Handling Agent" -- this is on page 162. "According to Handling Agent 1, he was clear with the Crossfire Hurricane team concerning Steele's role and that Steele had provided leads and not evidence in the
FIFA case." Did you speak directly with Handling Agent 1 about Steele and his role?

I don't recall speaking directly with Handling Agent 1 about Steele's role in the investigation. I recall that I had learned, again, either from Handling Agent 1 or from SSA-1 who learned from Handling Agent 1 that Steele's information had predicated the FIFA investigation.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever see this source characterization statement written by Handling Agent 1:

"[CHS] has been signed up for 3 years and is reliable. [CHS] responds to taskings and obtains info from a network of sub sources. Some of the [CHS'] info has been corroborated when possible"?

I don't recall if I saw that language or not.

Mr. Somers. So do you have any idea how Handling Agent 1's source characterization statement got changed to the one that ended up in the FISA application?

I didn't write the application. I understand that it has come from the Intelligence Memorandum language.

Mr. Somers. Do you know how the handling agent's source characterization statement got changed from what he wrote to what appeared in the Intelligence Memorandum?
No, I don't know exactly how that happened.

Mr. Somers. But you did in part write the Intelligence Memorandum?

I did.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever talk to the prosecutors in the FIFA case?

I did not.

Mr. Somers. Did anyone on the Crossfire Hurricane team talk to the prosecutors in the FIFA case, to your knowledge?

Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Somers. How about the agent on the FIFA case, either you or somebody else on the Crossfire Hurricane team?

I'm not aware of that.

Mr. Somers. What was your understanding of how Steele was collecting the information that was contained in his election reports?

At what point in the investigation are we talking about here? Upon initial receipt?

Mr. Somers. Early on. What was your understanding of -- prior to the first Carter Page FISA application.

I think on the basis of the reports themselves and on the structure of the reports themselves,
it was clear that he had -- I mean, there were a set of
sources that were being used and sources talking to sub-
sources.

Mr. Baker. What kind of -- as an intelligence
professional, what kind of problems, if there are problems,
what kind of problems exist when you have a source
reporting in essence which is what is in total information
that they are getting from this network of sub-sources?

What problems does that potentially present in using --

Mr. Baker. -- that material?

Theoretical problems that can arise are
things like Telephone Game where the sub-source is telling
the source one thing and then it gets reported inaccurately
or not quite accurately up the chain. You have the problem
of access, whether or not the sub-sources have the access
or are accurately talking about their accesses.

Mr. Baker. So there would be problems with the
ability on your end of assessing the information because
it's coming to you from one portal, for lack of a better
word, but that person is getting it from a network of
people that you really don't have much visibility into?

It's not inherently problematic. I mean,
the FBI handles information that involves sources and sub-
sources all the time. It means that the way of going about
trying to verify can be challenging, and that it requires a lot of digging into what's in the reporting and weighing what the reporting says against other types of things.

Mr. Baker. But it would certainly be problematic if you and your team of analysts get under the hood and actually start looking at the sub-source network and find that information -- or there's conflicting information from what's been reported by the main source, the author of the dossier. That would be problematic, right?

So if you went to talk to a sub-source and the sub-source indicated one thing and that was counter to what the source reported to the end client, yes, that could be problematic. If you talk to the main source and the main source tells you something different that's written in the end product, that can be problematic as well.

Mr. Baker. So how do you resolve -- if a main source says one thing and a primary reporter or sub-source says something different that was told to the main source, how do you resolve the conflict between two people saying two different things?

Sometimes you can't resolve the conflict between two people saying two different things. It's a matter of what you can find that maybe on the outside helps to weigh one thing or the other. And it also depends on circumstances.
Mr. Baker. Would the circumstances be altered -- or would the circumstances cause caution to fall on one side or the other if the information that's potentially incorrect is ultimately being presented in an application to the FISA Court?

That could be problematic, depending on when it's found out and things of that sort, certainly.

Mr. Baker. And how far and wide in the Bureau would information be, for lack of a better term, broadcast once you start talking to the real sources of information and where there are conflicts? What kind of alarm bells would go off? Would somebody say, whoa, this creates a problem here, we have people that are providing the information that we've looked at, and they're saying that that's not what they said, or it's inaccurate what's been reported? What kind of a hue and a cry would go out from the intelligence part of this Crossfire Hurricane or any part? How are people notified that we might have a problem here?

I think it again depends on circumstances. You could have any number of situations arise where -- you know, it depends on who's at the interviews. It depends on, you know, which units are involved. It's not an easy one answer to that question.

Mr. Baker. Even when it's ultimately -- the information's ultimately being presented to the FISA Court
and the whole process of getting to that Court is, for lack of a better term, special because of what the Court does, I would think there's an enhanced obligation to sound a louder bell that we might not be getting the true story and we might need to dig a little deeper before we present or keep presenting things to the Court. So I guess in the instant case, was there meetings, was there timeouts? Was there any concern that there's different information potentially coming from people below the author of these documents that conflicts with what's being given to the Bureau all bundled up and tied with a nice little bow?

The meetings with sub-sources were documented, and -- they were documented, and that documentation was put into the FBI's system of record where it was available to people on the Crossfire Hurricane team who would have been involved in the decisionmaking.

Mr. Somers. Who was the main source of the Steele dossier -- Christopher Steele or the primary sub-source?

So it would be the primary sub-sources where Christopher Steele was getting his information.

Mr. Somers. So whose reliability -- go ahead.

I mean, for the -- yes, it was the primary sub-source. Sorry.

Mr. Somers. So whose reliability is more important -- the primary sub-source's or Christopher Steele's?
Well, if -- again, it depends on when you're talking about things. If all you know is Christopher Steele and Christopher Steele's information has been used in the past and you don't know the identity of the primary sub-source, then what you have to rely on is Christopher Steele's reliability and whether or not that sourcing or that material has been used in the past and has been effective or it's been accurate or been used. Once you know the primary sub-source's identity, then it becomes inherent to determine whether or not this primary sub-source is reliable.

Mr. Somers. All right. To back up a second, so once you know there's a primary sub-source or once you understand this -- and I'm speaking specifically here about the Steele dossier. Once you know who the primary sub-source is, the existence of the primary sub-source, his reliability becomes more important than Steele's. Is that what you're saying?

I would say that it weighs more heavily once you've identified the primary sub-source if the primary sub-source is the one from whom -- where the information is being gathered and provided to Christopher Steele.

Mr. Somers. Okay. A slightly different question.

You say once you identify. By that do you mean the guy's
actual name or do you mean you identify that there is a primary sub-source?

Well, I would say if all you've identified is that there's a primary sub-source but you have no information about that primary source's access or that primary source's identity or anything of that sort, it's hard to necessarily judge what that primary sub-source's reliability is. I mean, what -- you're doing exactly what we did, which is you take a look at other information and you try to confirm or disconfirm what's in the actual reporting --

Mr. Somers. When did you --

Sorry?

Mr. Somers. I'm sorry if I cut you off. I thought you were finished.

No, that's fine.

Mr. Somers. Okay. When did you become aware that there -- not who he was or who he is, whatever. When did you become aware that Steele was using a primary sub-source for the election reporting?

I'm not exactly sure when we determined that there was a primary sub-source, but the reporting, the structure of the actual reporting lended itself to the idea that there may have been one primary guy that was getting information from a bunch of other sources.
Mr. Somers. And you knew that prior to the first FISA application, right? Because that's --

By the --

Mr. Somers. We talked over each other. Please go ahead.

No, I interrupted. Please ask your question.

Mr. Somers. You knew that there was a primary sub-source by the time the first FISA application was submitted. Correct?

Again, I'm not sure whether or not we were settled on one primary sub-source by the time of the first application. But, again, the structure of the reporting suggested that there may only be one person from whom he's getting his information.

Mr. Somers. You met with Christopher Steele in October of 2016. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. In person in a European city?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Did you ask him if he had a primary sub-source during that meeting?

We talked about the source network during that meeting, yes.

Mr. Somers. Did you ask him the names of his sources?
I'm not -- I don't recollect whether we specifically asked the name. I think we did.

Mr. Somers. Did he provide it?

No.

Mr. Somers. When you eventually figured out who the primary sub-source was, the FBI figured that out on its own? It didn't just get a name from Christopher Steele? Is that correct?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. And sometime contemporaneous with that identification of the primary sub-source -- I think we talked about this earlier -- his "FBI holdings" would have been checked?

Again, I don't want to get into exactly the process we used for identifying the primary sub-source at this classification.

Mr. Baker. But separate and apart from how he was or she was identified, you would have run whatever information you had in holdings and gotten some result if this person had been on the radar of the FBI prior?

FBI holdings had a part of it, yes.

Mr. Baker. And then you had said -- never mind on that one.

Mr. Somers. And we're almost out of time here. Just on this whole -- we've been talking a lot about the
assessment, the verification, the corroboration, whatever we want to call it. How important in terms of that process was, one, identifying Steele's primary sub-source, once you became aware that there was a primary sub-source or at least someone who appeared to be one of the primary sources, and then the rest of the network, how important of a task was identifying the primary sub-source and/or the rest of the Steele source network?

I would say it was an important part of the task.

Mr. Somers. Was it something that was regularly discussed at meetings amongst -- these meetings you described earlier?

I don't know if identifying the primary sub-source was something that was highlighted in the meetings that we had prior to the identification of the primary sub-source, but definitely trying to understand the reporting and to, again, confirm and disconfirm what we could of the reporting was something that was talked about.

Mr. Somers. Was it an important step in the process when you did finally identify the primary sub-source?

Yes, it was an important step.

Mr. Somers. Was that discussed in meetings, that, hey, we've identified the primary sub-source?

I recollect there were some meetings where
it was discussed, yes.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever discuss that with Peter Strzok?

I --

Mr. Somers. Let me rephrase. Was the identification of the primary sub-source ever discussed in a meeting that Peter Strzok was in?

Again, a meeting? I am not -- I'm not sure. I don't have a recollection of one specific meeting where it was discussed.

Mr. Somers. Was it discussed through any sort of messaging system, email or some sort of classified system?

Again, I'm not sure whether Peter Strzok received emails on it, but, again, it was discussed.

Mr. Somers. Do you believe he was aware of the identification of the primary sub-source?

Yes, I believe he was aware of the identification of the primary sub-source.

Mr. Somers. What about Bill Priestap?

Yes, Bill Priestap was aware of the identification.

Mr. Somers. What about Andy McCabe?

I don't know if Andy McCabe was.

Mr. Somers. What about Lisa Page?

I'm not sure about Lisa Page.
Mr. Somers. Director Comey?

I am not sure about Director Comey in terms of either the identity of the primary sub-source or that the sub-source had been -- yeah, I'm not positive.

Mr. Somers. That's what I'm asking, whether they're aware that he had been identified, not that you provided the name, which probably would have been meaningless.

I believe Director Comey was aware that the primary source had been identified.

Mr. Somers. Was he aware that the primary sub-source had been interviewed?

That I don't know.

Mr. Somers. Was Deputy Director McCabe aware that the primary sub-source had been interviewed?

That I don't know.

Mr. Somers. Was Bill Priestap aware that the primary sub-source had been interviewed?

Yes, I believe that Bill Priestap was aware.

Mr. Somers. Peter Strzok?

I believe Peter Strzok was aware.

Mr. Somers. Lisa Page?

Unclear.

Mr. Somers. I think we have probably run a little bit over our time, so --
Mr. Baker. Could I have 30 seconds?

Mr. Somers. Yeah, we have one last question for this round.

Mr. Baker. Correct me if I'm paraphrasing this wrong, but just a little while ago, when we were talking about discovering that there's inconsistencies between the source network and Mr. Steele's reporting, I think you said something to the effect that that would be documented and put in various FBI places for people to see or become aware of. How would the Department of Justice become aware of the inconsistencies? And how would the DOJ also become aware of this discovery of a source network rather than it just be singular reporting by Mr. Steele?

So I think what I was referencing -- I think you had asked specifically in this case what had occurred, and what I indicated was that the discrepancies or the inconsistencies were documented in the write-ups. Those write-ups were put into the FBI system of record, and that is available for people on the Crossfire Hurricane team.

With respect to how DOJ learns about that information, I'm not precisely sure. I would expect -- no, I'll just leave it at I'm not precisely sure.

Mr. Baker. But it would not be the role of you or someone in the intelligence side of things to do that. Is
that correct?

That's correct.

Mr. Baker. So I would draw from that that it's someone or some entity on the investigative side of things that would do that, maybe the case agent or supervisor of the case agent?

I think that's fair.

Mr. Baker. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. That's it for this round. I don't know if everybody needs a short break before the minority picks up again.

I could use a short break, please.

Mr. Somers. Okay. We'll take 10 minutes.

Thank you.

[Recess 1:58 p.m. to 2:16 p.m.]

Mr. Somers. We're back on the record. All right. So, I think, you wanted to clarify something from the last round of questioning regarding the handling agent's source characterization statement. If you'd like to go ahead?

Yes, thank you. So I think we were discussing two separate issues. We were discussing the Intelligence Memorandum that had a source characterization statement, and then on the top of page 161 we were discussing language that the handling agent had provided to
Case Agent 1 that was different than the language that was in the Intelligence Memorandum. I just wanted to clarify that I don't believe I ever saw the language the handling agent sent to Case Agent 1 regarding that source characterization. The source characterization that I helped to edit in the Intelligence Memorandum came from my understanding that Steele's information had predicated the FIFA investigation.

Mr. Somers. And you further believe that you got that information from Handling Agent 1. Is that correct?

Yeah, either Handling Agent 1 or from SSA-1 who received it from Handling Agent 1 --

Mr. Somers. Okay.

-- regarding FIFA.

Mr. Somers. Does that clarify everything?

Mr. Linehan. Yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

Mr. Linehan. It was the information from the handling agent but not the email that went to SSA-1, at least to the best of his recollection.

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Sara or Andrew, if you want to start your round.

Mr. Fausett. Yes, thank you, Zach. We'll begin the next round here at 2:18 p.m.
thanks for your patience in this process.

We had a lot of questions and answers about your knowledge of and interactions with the primary sub-source in the last round, and so I just wanted to ask a few follow-up questions for that based on your participation in his interview in January of 2017 and your expertise as an FBI intelligence analyst.

Some in the public domain have alleged that because the primary sub-source was not a well-connected current or former Russian official and wasn't based in Russia, the information that the primary sub-source provided to Mr. Steele was unreliable. Some have referred to it as -- and this is a quote here -- "second- and third-hand information and a rumor at best."

So in your experience as an intelligence analyst, can information that a source obtains from someone else turn out to be accurate and reliable?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And I guess, in other words, the fact that a source obtained information from someone else doesn't mean that it won't turn out to be useful or that it is a "rumor at best." Is that fair?

That is fair.

Mr. Fausett. And is it true that where a source has obtained information from other sources, it's particularly
important for the FBI to understand where that information came from, where it originated, which in this case would mean understanding the source's source network. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that the case?

Again, I would say that it's a matter of whether or not his sources have the accesses that they say they do in order to obtain the information that they are providing.

Mr. Fausett. And so the type of access that a source has is, in fact, a particularly relevant factor in evaluating the information. Correct?

One particular relevant factor, yes.

Mr. Fausett. Even if the primary sub-source was not a well-connected Russian official, if the information they gathered from their sources could still -- would it still be reliable -- or could be reliable, I should say, if members of that network had access to Russian officials?

Could be reliable, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And the memo that I believe you prepared memorializing your January 2017 interview with the primary sub-source identifies one of the primary sub-source's sources -- I believe it's Source 5 -- as having "ties to the Russian intelligence and security services." Would
someone with that background potentially have access to information pertinent to an investigation of ties between the Trump campaign and Russia?

I'm not precisely sure in that case whether or not that would be the case, but on a theoretical level, somebody with Russian intelligence service ties could have the accesses to basically help on a counterintelligence investigation.

Mr. Fausett. Knowing that someone had ties to intelligence and security services from Russia, would you want to better understand that source and their access because of the potential value it could have in understanding the reliability of the information?

Yes, that would be one reason to want to get more understanding into that source.

Mr. Fausett. The memo identifies another sub-source -- I think this is Source 3 -- as having "direct and indirect contact with a deputy or multiple deputies in" -- and then the text is redacted from your memo. Presumably it's referring to the Russian Government or a particular Russian agency. Would someone with that kind of background contact with a deputy or deputies in the Russian Government or a Russian Government agency potentially have access to information pertinent to an investigation of ties between the Trump campaign and Russia?
Potentially, yes.

Mr. Fausett. Another allegation about the primary sub-source is that the information they provided was unreliable because Christopher Steele paid them for it. Does the fact that a source has been paid in connection with providing information mean that the information is unreliable?

No.

Mr. Fausett. In fact, isn't it the case that the FBI routinely compensates sources who provide the Bureau with information?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Executive Assistant Director Michael Steinbach told us when he was interviewed by our committee that -- and I'm quoting now from his transcript -- "A source in almost all cases is doing it for some ulterior motive, get himself out of a jam for money." Is that your experience as well?

I would say that's an accurate statement.

Mr. Fausett. He also told us that -- and, again, this is a quote -- "With all sources you take a look at it, and you apply healthy skepticism. A lot of times source information is only partially correct, so you need to investigate to try to develop more information to run down those leads." Is that your experience as well?
That would be my experience.

Mr. Fausett. And is that how you approached Mr. Steele, the primary sub-source, and the primary sub-source's sources, with a healthy skepticism?

I would say that is an accurate assessment.

Mr. Fausett. And was that part of the reason at least why you interviewed the primary sub-source, to learn more about the information Steele had provided and determine what leads were worth investigating?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Now, a third allegation we've heard that's intended to discredit the primary sub-source that came up a little bit with our colleagues is the notion that he had ties to Russian intelligence, perhaps was even a Russian agent providing disinformation intended to harm Candidate Trump. I'm not going to ask you specific questions along the lines of our colleagues, but I do want to raise it as context for some more general questions that I do want to ask based on your personal experience and expertise.

It would seem to me, on the one hand, a source that has ties to a foreign government or intelligence agency generally can pose risks and could make the information they provide less reliable. Am I right about that?
Mr. Fausett. And I believe the FBI has methods for assessing the reliability of its sources. I think that was covered in some detail in the last round. Is that correct?

Correct.

Mr. Fausett. And you used those methods here?

So we look to try to verify and, as I've put it, confirm and disconfirm the reporting.

Mr. Fausett. Right. So understanding that there can be potential risks with relying on a source with ties to a foreign government, on the other hand, a source that has ties to a foreign government or intelligence agency I would think could provide some benefits. For example, the information they provide could be more reliable given the access that they have. Is that correct?

That would be correct.

Mr. Fausett. And the fact that a source has ties to a foreign intelligence service or may even be associated with a foreign intelligence service, does that necessarily mean that everything the FBI receives from that source is going to be disinformation?

No.

Mr. Fausett. In fact, much like paying sources in general, the FBI recruits and often pays members of foreign intelligence services, some of whom can go on to be some of...
the FBI's best sources. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. My colleagues asked you a number of questions about inconsistencies between the primary sub-source's account and Mr. Steele's account of certain matters described in his election reporting. You said to the Inspector General's office that you had no "pains or heartburn" about the accuracy of the Steele reporting based on what the primary sub-source said, and that's from page 244 of the Inspector General's report.]

You also said that the reason for the discrepancies -- and this is a little bit of a longer quote from page 189 -- that the reason for the discrepancies "was difficult to discern and could be attributed to a number of factors," such as "miscommunications between Steele and the Primary Sub-source, exaggerations or misrepresentations by Steele about the information he obtained, or misrepresentations by the Primary Sub-source and/or sub-sources when questioned by the FBI about the information they conveyed to Steele or the Primary Sub-source."

I guess my first question about this is: Is it all that unusual for there to be discrepancies between a source's accounting of certain acts and an accounting of the same facts as provided in this case months later by a sub-source? Is that all that unusual?
I don't know if I would evaluate how unusual, but it's not unusual.

Mr. Fausett. And those discrepancies don't necessarily mean that the source's version of the sub-source's assertions was wrong and that the sub-source's later accounting was right. Is that a fair -- I know it's tricky, but --

Could you repeat that one more time?

Mr. Fausett. I know. It's a tough one. My question is: The fact that there is a discrepancy between what the source said and what the sub-source may have said months later, that doesn't necessarily mean that the initial reporting from the source was wrong or that the later reporting from the primary sub-source was wrong. It could be either/or. Is that right?

It does not necessarily mean that -- yeah, I mean, I would agree with that. It does not necessarily mean that the first or the second would be wrong.

Mr. Fausett. In fact, in the summary you wrote of the interview, which the Department of Justice has since released with some redactions, you stated that during the interviews the primary sub-source "contradicted himself when asked about his contact with Russian intelligence and security services," initially claiming "to have no interaction with individuals in" -- and the redaction says
"Russia." But then, by the third interview, referring to previous contacts as intelligence and referencing another source's senior-level connections. Do you recall that aspect of your interview with the primary sub-source?

I do recall that.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. And is that -- as you sit here today, that's still an accurate description of your recollection of what -- how those interviews transpired?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And to that point, you actually told the Office of the Inspector General that you believed that -- and I'm quoting from page 192 of the report now -- "there were instances where the Primary Sub-source was `minimizing' certain facts" but that you "did not believe that he/she `completely fabricating' events." And I guess my question is: Under the circumstances of this case and given the timing of your interview with the primary sub-source in January of 2017, it isn't all that surprising for a sub-source to minimize certain facts for their own benefit, is it?

No, it is not uncommon.

Mr. Fausett. And what makes you say that? Explain why that happens.

Well, there could be any number of reasons why a source might minimize. The source may worry that the
source has done something wrong. It could be a situation
in which material has come out in public and the source has
second thoughts or wants to set up kind of a bit of
distance between what he or she might have originally
reported and what they are telling the FBI.

Mr. Fausett. And in this case, at the time of your
interview, there were materials out in the public, is it
safe to say?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. After the interview with the
primary sub-source, you and other members of the Crossfire
Hurricane team decided to interview Steele and obtain more
information about his sub-sources before that interview to
figure out whether the primary sub-source gave you the
accurate information or if Steele was accurate. Is that
fair?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. So then is it fair to say that you were
committed to resolving the discrepancies between the
primary sub-source's account in their January 2017
interview and the account as related by Steele, but that it
was premature at the time to conclude that they warranted
pains or heartburn?

I would say that is an accurate
characterization.
Mr. Fausett. There was also, I think, some mention of this two-page summary of an interview that you had prepared for others in the Crossfire Hurricane team. You explained to the Office of the Inspector General coming out of that interview that you were focused on -- and this is from page 244 of the Inspector General's report -- "using the additional information learned from the Primary Sub-source, particularly the identity of his/her sub-sources, to see what other investigative leads could be generated for the team."

Is it fair to say that that summary was not intended to provide a comprehensive account of the interview but, rather, reflected your focus on using the additional information that you learned from the primary sub-source to see what other leads could be generated for the team?

The memorandum was an overarching summary of the 3-day interviews, and it was not meant to be a comprehensive look at all of the inconsistencies.

Mr. Fausett. Was your decision not to include discrepancies in that two-page summary motivated by a bias against the President?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Did anyone at FBI senior leadership or in your chain of command tell you to omit inconsistencies between the two accounts in your written report or to
overlook them in general?

No.

Mr. Fausett. And, in fact, the summary was actually internal in purpose, right? It was intended for your own team and leadership to have, as you said, a basic understanding of what happened in summary?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. While we're on the topic of sources, the Inspector General's report noted -- and I'll just quote here for a little bit from page 308 of the report -- "The agents, analysts, and supervisors who worked on Crossfire Hurricane" said that confidential human sources "played an important role in the investigation." Jonathan Moffa, for example, said that confidential human sources are "one of the best avenues to potentially get some meat on the bones of the allegation that came through that started [Crossfire Hurricane], to get somebody talking about what that reality was, even if the reality was, this guy Papadopoulos knows nothing or...this is what happened that actually explains that predication.... [I]t was one of those few avenues...available to us in that moment, where you could start to get some clarity around...that initial predicating allegation."

Is it fair to say that the purpose of the FBI's use of confidential human sources in Crossfire Hurricane was to
The purpose of using CHSs was to determine the veracity of the information that had come from the friendly foreign government and that had predicated the Crossfire Hurricane investigations.

Mr. Fausett. And I think similar to what you actually stated to our colleagues, but just to be clear about this, with respect to the confidential human sources and with respect to the information that you were obtaining in general, your purpose was to either corroborate or dispel the allegations that had been made. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. Beyond Crossfire Hurricane, have you found confidential human sources to be a valuable tool for corroborating or dispelling allegations during the course of your work more broadly?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Is it fair to say that, in your experience and generally speaking, confidential human sources play an important role in the work investigating and understanding national security threats?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. Now, I have always understood sources
and methods to be things that the FBI vigorously protects.

Is that correct in your experience?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And why is it important to protect your sources?

Because sources can be burned, sources can run into difficulties, sources can lose access. Any number of things.

Mr. Fausett. Well, what are the risks generally of publicly disclosing the identity of a source?

Well, the source can't operate any longer.

Mr. Fausett. And are there additional risks, are there additional potential risks to the sources themselves?

There can be, yes.

Mr. Fausett. What kinds of risks?

There can be physical risks.

Mr. Fausett. And would there be a special concern about physical risks when you're talking about a source or number of sources who have connections to the Russian Government or Russian intelligence services?

There can be physical risks to that, yes.

Mr. Fausett. Would you say that it's a heightened concern with respect to Russia or the same as it would be for any government or intelligence service?

I would say elevated.
Mr. Fausett. And what's your basis for saying that?

[Redacted] I mean, the Russian Government -- there are any number of news articles that have come out recently regarding how the Russian Government handles internal dissidents and handles individuals who have crossed the administration in Russia.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. Does exposing a source's identity impact the FBI's ability to recruit other sources?

[Redacted] It can, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And I imagine that would be a particular concern if, again, there is a heightened risk of physical harm to the source arising from the disclosure?

[Redacted] Yes.

Mr. Fausett. In situations where a source whose identity is publicly exposed is still a current source for the FBI, in your experience, does disclosing that source's identity make it less likely that the source will continue cooperating?

[Redacted] I think it makes it more difficult for the source to continue cooperating.

Mr. Fausett. And is that for the reasons we discussed prior, or are there additional reasons why it would make it difficult?

[Redacted] I think just generally public exposure of a source makes it difficult for that source to continue
operating in a confidential way, which is the basis of why we call them "confidential human sources."

Mr. Fausett. Are you aware that the Department of Justice declassified the FBI's memo summarizing a January 2017 interview with Mr. Steele's primary sub-source, an interview you participated in, and that shortly after this memo was posted on our committee's website, a blogger deduced and Russia Today widely publicized the primary sub-source's identity?

I'm aware of that.

Mr. Fausett. And do you recall during your interview with the primary sub-source that they said unless their name goes public, they're fine when it comes to the source network, they don't believe they can travel, but feels that it would be in danger, as he put it, and then it's redacted after that. Do you remember that back-and-forth with the primary sub-source?

Can you repeat that? I'm sorry.

Mr. Fausett. Yes. The statement, I'll read you the exact quote, and this is quoting from your long summary of the interview on page 42. "Unless his name goes public, he is fine when it comes to his source network. He doesn't believe he can travel [redacted] he feels that he would be in danger, and as he put it, [redacted]."

I recall that.
Mr. Fausett. What are the possible consequences in this case of exposing the primary sub-source's identity?

I'd like to talk to the FBI attorney for a moment, please.

Mr. Fausett. Of course.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back. I wanted to clarify one point. I am aware of the article that came out regarding the primary sub-source. I am not confirming the accuracy of that article.

Mr. Fausett. Understood.

And the second thing is I don't think -- I think it's unwise to actually speculate whether or not -- the kind of dangers to the primary sub-source.

Mr. Fausett. Okay.

Ms. Zdeb. Could I just jump in before we leave the topic of sources and the primary sub-source? Again, appreciating the reasons why you may not want to speculate about certain aspects of this issue. You said a moment ago that if a particular source whose identity is exposed is a current source for the FBI, that publicly disclosing their identity could make it more difficult for that source to continue cooperating with the Bureau.

If a source whose identity is exposed is similarly situated to the primary sub-source in the sense that they
have their own network of sources that are providing information to them, is one consequence of publicly exposing the identity of that primary source that his or her own source network would then know that the information they are providing is being provided to the United States Government such that they might then become more reluctant to continue providing information to that source who has been exposed?

That is one potential consequence.

Ms. Zdeb. And you spoke some earlier about the efforts that the FBI undertook in this case specifically and might undertake in general in a case where you're dealing with a source network to identify the different members of that source network in an effort to run down information and assess its reliability. We've heard from other witnesses that, as part of that process, the FBI might, in the same way you did with the primary sub-source here, try to recruit and speak directly to the individual members of that source's own source network. Is that consistent with your experience?

Yes, that is consistent.

Ms. Zdeb. And so, again, if we're talking about the situation in which the identity of the source is exposed and that source has his own source network, if the FBI has been trying to identify and cultivate relationships with
individuals in that source network, I would imagine the FBI's job would be made more difficult if the identity of the primary source is exposed.

I would agree with that.

Ms. Zdeb. And this may be getting into another area where you don't wish to speculate, but I will just ask you anyway. Are you aware that yesterday the Wall Street Journal published an article purporting to identify the individual who is called "Source 3" in Christopher Steele's reporting?

I'm aware of that news article.

Ms. Zdeb. And so to the extent the public disclosure of a source can place that source at risk, can deter the FBI from recruiting future sources, and can make it more difficult for the FBI to develop or retain a relationship with that specific source, would those risks be present in this case with respect to Source 3 if, in fact, Source 3 were publicly identified?

I think I'd prefer not to address that specific hypothetical in this situation.

Ms. Zdeb. Fair enough.

Mr. Fausett. I would just ask one quick follow-up on that, and I apologize if my colleague asked it while I was distracted. But, hypothetically speaking, generally speaking, not specific to this case, if an individual is
publicly identified as a source, even if they are not actually the source, can there be -- in your experience, are there harms that might befall the person identified in that manner?

Potential harms, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And what would some of those potential harms be for that source?

In a hypothetical, it depends on the situation. So there can be reputational harms. There can be financial harms. There could even be physical harms, depending on the scenario.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. I want to sort of broaden out from the primary sub-source to the topic of the Steele dossier generally and just follow up with some of the questions that our colleagues asked you earlier.

The first thing I want to do is to just put Mr. Steele's election reporting in some context. Crossfire Hurricane, as we've all heard, was opened on July 31, 2016. The Inspector General determined that the Crossfire Hurricane team didn't even become aware of Steele's reporting until September 19th and that "the Steele dossier played no role in the opening of Crossfire Hurricane."

Are you aware of any evidence that disputes that finding from the Inspector General?

No.
Mr. Fausett. Inspector General Horowitz testified to our committee last December that the Carter Page FISA warrant application errors relating to Christopher Steele did not call into question "any part of the Special Counsel's report." As someone who is in the unique position of working in both the Crossfire Hurricane team and supporting the Special Counsel's office, are you aware of any evidence that disputes Inspector General Horowitz's testimony that the Carter Page FISA warrant application errors do not call into question any part of Special Counsel Mueller's report?

No, I am not aware of any evidence contradicting that.

Mr. Fausett. Similarly, former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who supervised the Special Counsel's investigation, testified before our committee in June. Senator Feinstein asked him to identify which findings in Special Counsel Mueller's 448-page report relied on information from the Steele dossier. Mr. Rosenstein said, "I don't believe there is any such information."

Do you have any evidence that contradicts Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein's testimony that no findings in the 448-page Mueller report rely on the Steele dossier?

No, I have no evidence.
Mr. Fausett. Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein also testified that none of the 199 criminal counts resulting from the Special Counsel's investigation relied on information obtained from Mr. Steele. Do you have any basis to disagree with Mr. Rosenstein's statement?

No, I have no basis to disagree with that.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. Just to be clear about what we're saying here, you don't have any evidence or reason to believe that Special Counsel Mueller or his team relied on the Steele dossier for any of the 199 criminal counts their office charged. Is that right?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. You talked a little bit earlier with our colleagues about the Validation Management Unit at the FBI and the unit chief's conclusion reflected at pages 185 and 186 of the Inspector General's report that Mr. Steele's election reporting had not been corroborated in the main. You took issue with this characterization and told the Office of the Inspector General that there's a distinction between allegations and facts and that it would not be appropriate to characterize all the factual information in Steele's reports as uncorroborated. And I think I heard you mention sort of the difference in your head between facts and allegations in response to some our colleagues' questions earlier, but I really want to give you a chance
to kind of clarify this point.

Can you elaborate? What is the difference between allegations and facts and what could or could not or has or has not been corroborated with respect to Mr. Steele?

So with respect to the Steele reporting, the Steele reporting details any number of allegations of involvement of certain figures in certain actions and then talks about interactions with Russian Government officials. It talks about interactions in different areas. It talks about personnel and individuals in Russian entities in different countries. So the distinction I would make would be that many of the individuals noted, not all of which would be very well known in open sources, are mentioned in a number of Steele reports, and the distinction between facts and allegations would be many of the names, entities, individuals, individual positions could be corroborated, but the actual allegations and the actions described in those reports could not be corroborated.

Mr. Fausett. If I'm hearing you correctly -- and I want you to please correct me if I'm paraphrasing you wrong.

Okay.

Mr. Fausett. But it sounds like you're saying those facts in Mr. Steele's reporting that could be corroborated through normal factual research, checking with other
agencies, checking with your holdings, et cetera, they were corroborated. The more complex, in some cases subjective allegations in the reporting that frankly are more difficult to corroborate, that's where there was no corroboration generally. Is that a fair --

I'm not sure I would describe it as the more subjective aspects or elements. I think what I would say is we were able to corroborate a great deal of the, again, Russian names, Russian positions, some of which were not very well known in open sources, some of which I'm not sure were in open sources, many of the -- the kind of context, but in terms of the core allegations of many of the reports, we were not able to corroborate, many of the core allegations, I would say.

Mr. Fausett. And would you say that many of those allegations would be difficult to corroborate in general?

Yes, absent, I think, probably very good sources.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. You were also asked about a December 2016 meeting that you and other FBI officials had with professional contacts of Mr. Steele. Notes taken by Bill Priestap and Peter Strzok suggest that these contacts provided some negative feedback about Steele, including poor judgment and pursuing people with political risk but no intel value. And this is coming from, again, the
Inspector General's report. You also talked a little bit at a separate meeting you did not attend involving Bruce Ohr where Mr. Ohr reportedly said that "Steele was desperate that Donald Trump not get elected and was passionate about him not being the U.S. President."

I just want to be clear about this. Do a source's motivations or biases automatically render any information they provide false, not credible, or unreliable?

No.

Mr. Fausett. In fact, you told the Office of the Inspector General that whether Steele's reporting -- I'm quoting now from page 102 -- "whether [Steele's] reporting was `opposition research' that was politically motivated was not an issue" -- that's an accurate quote?

That is an accurate quote.

Mr. Fausett. And that's because you would want to independently -- and I'll quote you again -- "vet the reporting to determine whether its contents were accurate."

Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. What impact would the inability for the FBI to rely on any source who has demonstrated a motivation or bias have on the FBI's ability to do its work?

It would be very difficult for the FBI to do its work.
Mr. Fausett. And why is that?

Because all sources have different forms of bias.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. When the Office of the Inspector General asked Mr. Steele about the "desperate" comment from Mr. Ohr, Mr. Steele said that he "was concerned that Trump was a national security risk, and...had no particular animus against Trump otherwise." That's coming from page 94 of the report. Do you have any basis to dispute Mr. Steele's characterization of his own words?

I don't have any basis to dispute Mr. Steele's characterization of his own motives.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. I do just want to briefly touch upon this footnote that came up, Footnote 350 from the Horowitz report, which initially was redacted, it was subsequently unredacted, and this has led to some assertions in the public sphere that the contents of the Steele reporting may have been, at least in part, the product of a disinformation campaign by the Russian intelligence services. There are also, frankly, some statements in the public sphere about you -- not by name, obviously, but by position title -- I think at one point labeling you as "indifferent" to that threat and providing a grossly inaccurate statement to the Office of the Inspector General concerning your awareness of that threat.
So I really just want to give you an opportunity to clarify. What did you mean when you spoke to the Office of the Inspector General about the concern that the Russian intelligence services may have penetrated the campaign? You had said -- it's quoted in the report in Footnote 342 that you had no information as of June 2017 that Steele's election reporting network had been penetrated or compromised. I just want to give you a second to explain. What did you mean, and what was your awareness of this threat generally?

So I think I'm going to just let that statement stand as it is.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. All right. More generally, on the question of the motivations for the Crossfire Hurricane investigation and the team and its members, our committee held a 6-hour hearing with Inspector General Horowitz last December. A number of allegations were made against the FBI during that hearing and subsequently repeated at other hearings and meetings of the committee. We believe these allegations have been investigated and answered by the Inspector General in his report, but I'm going to ask you a few questions about them because we continue to hear these allegations from people who don't have firsthand knowledge or evidence about Crossfire Hurricane.

The Inspector General found that there was no
documentary or testimonial evidence of bias impacting the FBI's work in the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

Nevertheless, there have been allegations that there was "tons of evidence of bias." So I want to ask you, did political bias impact any of your actions in connection with Crossfire Hurricane?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any evidence that political bias otherwise impacted the FBI's work in Crossfire Hurricane?

No.

Mr. Fausett. It's been alleged that the FBI engaged in a "massive criminal conspiracy over time to defraud the FISA Court." Do you have any evidence that the FBI engaged in a "massive criminal conspiracy over time to defraud the FISA Court"?

No.

Mr. Fausett. It's also been alleged that the FBI "purposely used the power of the Federal Government to wage a political war against a Presidential candidate they despised." Do you have any evidence that FBI agents purposely used the power of the Federal Government to wage a political war against then-Candidate Donald Trump?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any evidence that the FBI
wanted to attempt a coup against President Trump?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Some people have asserted that the Crossfire Hurricane investigation was a hoax or a witch hunt intended to hurt President Trump politically. Was it your goal to hurt President Trump politically?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any basis for believing that Crossfire Hurricane was part of a "deep state" effort to take down President Trump?

No.

Mr. Fausett. There have also been allegations, even more, that the purpose of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation was to change or nullify the results of the 2016 election. Was that your goal personally?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any evidence that the overall goal of Crossfire Hurricane was to change or nullify the results of the 2016 election?

No.

Mr. Fausett. When you joined the Crossfire Hurricane team at the beginning of August, did you have a predetermined outcome in mind for the investigation?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Throughout your time on the Crossfire
Hurricane team, did you ever get the sense that other members of the team had a predetermined outcome in mind?

No.

Mr. Fausett. From your perspective, having served on its entire duration, what was the goal of Crossfire Hurricane?

It was -- the goal of Crossfire Hurricane was to determine whether or not the truth of the foreign friendly government information was accurate.

Mr. Fausett. The Inspector General's report documents several steps that the FBI took to ensure that the Crossfire Hurricane counterintelligence investigation did not impact the 2016 election. I'll quote the report here from page 308: "...multiple witnesses told the OIG that they were very concerned about preventing leaks regarding the nature and existence of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation."

Why was it so important to keep the nature and existence of the investigation private?

Because we didn't want the investigation to impact the election.

Mr. Fausett. In its report on the midyear exam investigation, the Office of the Inspector General recommended that, "The Department consider providing guidance to agents and prosecutors concerning the taking of
overt investigative steps, indictments, public announcements, or other actions that could impact an election."

Now, there was no formal guidance to that effect, at least to our knowledge, while you were working on Crossfire Hurricane. But the Crossfire Hurricane team nevertheless took steps to avoid actions that could impact the 2016 election. Is that correct?

I'd have to go back and take a look at -- I'm unclear about what you mean exactly there.

Mr. Fausett. Well, let me just ask it in a more open-ended way. In your experience, did the Crossfire Hurricane team take any steps to make sure that they did not affect the 2016 election?

We were very cognizant about not taking steps to interfere in the election or taking steps that would interfere in the election.

Mr. Fausett. And an open-ended yes or no question. Were there any steps that you took that you would not have ordinarily taken in a run-of-the-mill investigation, whether national security or criminal, that you took in connection with this investigation because of the sensitivity of the investigation?

Not to my recollection.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. The existence of Crossfire
Hurricane remained private until months after the election when, in March 2017, FBI Director Comey disclosed it to Congress. So the steps that you and members of the team did take to keep the existence of Crossfire Hurricane a secret from July 2016 to March 2017 were successful, were they not?

I'd like to talk to FBI counsel for just one moment, please.

Mr. Fausett. Sure.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back. I wanted to make a point that your use of the term "you" in there, you know, there are steps that can be made that I am not involved in and was not a decisionmaker in or things of that sort. So I just want to be clear, when you're asking "you," I can speak to my own experience and my own observations and things of that, but I'm not -- I can't speak on behalf of the entire Crossfire Hurricane team, and I can't speak on behalf of the entire FBI for that.

Mr. Fausett. Sure. Just to simplify this a little bit, as just a basic factual matter, I think we all agree, but I want to make sure that you agree, that Crossfire Hurricane was not publicly disclosed until March of 2017.

Is that right?

That is correct.
Mr. Fausett. And were you aware of any leaks of Crossfire Hurricane's existence broadly before that point in time?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. If the existence of the investigation had been publicly known before the election, might that have harmed President Trump's campaign in some way?

It potentially could have harmed the election, yes.

Mr. Fausett. Could it have made it less likely that President Trump would have won the election?

I don't know if I'm going to speculate on that or not.

Mr. Fausett. Do you think if a member of the Crossfire Hurricane team had been conspiring to prevent then-Candidate Trump from being elected, they could have publicized the existence of the investigation if they wanted to?

I'm not going to speculate on that either.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. Is it fair to say that the Crossfire Hurricane team sought to avoid doing anything that could be construed, either then or now, as being political?

One more time with that question, please?
Mr. Fausett. Sure. Is it fair to say that the Crossfire Hurricane team sought to avoid doing anything that could be construed, then or now, as being political?

I believe that is fair, yes.

Mr. Fausett. And why was that important for the Crossfire Hurricane team to do?

The Crossfire Hurricane team had a job to do, and public revelation of that job would make it more difficult for us to do that job.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. I think, Sara, one last -- if you have anything, but I think we're done with this round. So thank you.

[No response.]

Mr. Fausett. Zach, do you want to move ahead or take a break?

Mr. Somers. Why don't we take 5 minutes and then come back?

[Recess at 3:05 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.]

Mr. Somers. Okay. Let's start up here again. It is 3:20. We'll start with what will hopefully be our final round or at least full round of questioning.

when we left off last round, you got a number of questions from the minority about the primary sub-source, but I'm going to have to take you back to the primary sub-source a little bit because of where we left
off when we ran out of time in the previous round.

On Roman v of the IG report, it states that, "Steele himself was not the originating source of any of the factual information in his reporting. Steele instead relied on a Primary Sub-source for information, who used his/her network of sub-sources to gather information that was then passed to Steele."

Do you agree with that characterization on Roman v of the introduction to the IG report?

I agree with that characterization.

Mr. Somers. So I think in a previous round with the minority you talked a little bit about, you know, whether it mattered or how much it mattered there were differences between what Steele reported in his dossier and what the primary sub-source actually had to say when the FBI eventually interviewed him numerous times. And I guess my question is: Given that you agree -- I can understand, obviously, sometimes there's differences between what sources and sub-sources may report, and sometimes those may be insignificant, sometimes they may be significant. But I would think that given that Steele was not the originating source of any of the factual information in his reporting, would you agree that maybe in this case the importance of those differences was actually important, the significance of those differences was actually important?
I don't think I'm saying that the significance of the differences wasn't important. I guess what I'm saying is that you have discrepancies that have to be figured out and noted, and the fact is that talking to the primary sub-source, there were differences and there were distinctions and there were discrepancies that were documented in that interview and that needed to be resolved.

I wouldn't say it necessarily, you know, negated Steele's reporting, but it just meant that there were things that then needed to be investigated, and there were things that needed to be resolved.

Mr. Somers. But if Steele had a bunch of sources versus going the way he did his operation through the primary sub-source, I would think discrepancies may be more understandable than they are in this case where the primary sub-source was the originating source of the factual information in Steele's reporting.

So I think as I described in the IG report, the discrepancies noted could be any number of levels. You could have a discrepancy between what the primary source told Steele and what Steele reported. You could have a discrepancy between what the sub-source told the primary sub-source and what was told to Steele. There's any number of levels of where those discrepancies
are, and so in that sense, what you have to do is determine
the best you can as to where those discrepancies might be
and to determine how to resolve those discrepancies.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Let me ask a similar question. On
page 133 of the IG report -- it's actually a question that
the OI attorney asked the case agent, but I'd like to kind
of ask it to you. And the OI attorney on September 30,
2016, in an email asked the case agent and the Crossfire
Hurricane team, "If the reporting is being made by a
primary source, but based on sub-sources, why is it
reliable -- even though second/third hand?" What's your
answer to that question, especially in the September 30th
time frame?

I guess I would answer to the extent of
reliability, you're looking at two aspects of reliability
there, is what I would think of. One aspect of reliability
is: What types of reporting has Christopher Steele given
in the past and what of this source has been used in the
past, if any? And I guess the second question you would
ask is: What can be in a short amount of time -- given the
time frame that you're talking about here, what in a short
amount of time can be vetted -- and, again, going back to
my distinction between facts and allegations -- to
determine whether there's something reliable or whether the
reporting's reliable?
Mr. Somers. So what did you learn about Christopher Steele's previous reporting? I mean, is it just what you got from the handling agent?

Yes. At that time, yes.

Mr. Somers. So what if in the previous reporting Christopher Steele didn't use a primary sub-source? What if he was out talking to sources on his own? Isn't that almost a completely different scenario?

Maybe a slightly different scenario, yes.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So I'm wondering, like how much -- you know, who did you talk to to understand what Christopher Steele's previous reporting to the FBI was?

So, again, I wasn't focused on Christopher Steele's previous reporting to the FBI during this time. I was focused on vetting this reporting.

Mr. Somers. But you said part of vetting that reporting was understanding his reliability to the FBI and previous reporting?

I said that's one angle of reliability that one could use, yes.

Mr. Somers. So you didn't --

In this case -- in this case, we were more focused on the character of this reporting and trying to confirm and disconfirm this reporting.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So other than talking to the
handling agent, you didn't do anything to look into
Christopher Steele's previous reporting to the FBI?

At that point, yes, that is correct.

Mr. Somers. So you get the Steele reporting on
September 19 of 2016, and at some point prior to January
24th of 2017 you identify, locate, and interview the
primary sub-source. Do you know why it took so long to
identify, locate, and interview the primary sub-source?

Actually, I might characterize that as a
very short amount of time to identify an unidentified
primary sub-source. I don't necessarily agree with -- I
don't agree with your characterization of it took a long
time.

Mr. Somers. Okay. That's fair. There were -- by
January 24th, two FISA applications had been submitted. Is
that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Prior to identifying and
interviewing the primary sub-source, did you believe he was
Russian-based, as is stated in the FISA applications?

I believed he was Russian-based up until
we had an identification -- once the identification was
strong yet tentative, I knew that he -- if it was the
person and we confirmed it was the person, it wouldn't be a
Russian-based source. And when we were able to actually
confirm that it was the person, we knew it wasn't a
Russian-based source.

Mr. Somers. Is that January 2017 when you were able
to actually confirm?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. Would that have triggered any interest in
going back and looking at prior Steele reporting when
something that maybe wasn't specifically asserted, but
there was certainly an allusion given that it was a
foreign-based reporting. Would that have -- when it was
learned that that's not -- and we've heard from previous
witnesses that there was sort of a surprise and maybe shock
-- maybe that's my word -- of what and where information
was really coming from, would that have triggered any need
or interest in going back to look at previous Steele
reporting?

I don't know necessarily if that in
particular would have triggered a need. I knew we went
back and looked at previous Steele reporting probably
around -- I think I looked at the Delta file in the
November time frame. But I don't recall that this
particular identification of a sub-source precipitated the
feeling like we needed to go back and look at Steele's
previous reporting.

Mr. Baker. So in the last round, our Democratic
colleagues went through a list of things, one of which -- and I'm paraphrasing; correct me if I've got it wrong -- was the idea, the concept, the fact that just because a source might have a contact or an affiliation with a foreign intelligence service -- and I'm thinking this might be similar in the criminal world. Just because a source has some contact with a criminal or a criminal enterprise doesn't necessarily mean that the information they're giving is incorrect or should be disregarded. Is that correct?

I would say that's correct.

Mr. Baker. In this particular instance, once the identity of this primary sub-source is known, was there anything subsequently learned that would cause questions about what the accuracy of that information might be?

On the basis of the sub-source's identity?

Mr. Baker. Yes.

I don't recall anything kind of raising to the concerns that this was fabricated or anything of that sort on the basis of who we had identified the sub-source to be.

Mr. Baker. So there was nothing considered that even presented the possibility that any information coming from this individual could be part of a disinformation campaign?

So I would say --
Mr. Heberling. Can I just interject here? I just want to make sure -- you're speaking sort of broadly. This is Brian Heberling. answers here are qualified by the conversation we had previously. He's not going to get into anything -- into any prior investigation or other information like that.

Mr. Baker. Okay.

Mr. Somers. Going back to this -- well, I think some of our other witnesses might have been -- I'll use the word "surprised." Art used the word "shocked." Were you surprised that the primary sub-source was based in the United States?

I don't remember being shocked. It was unexpected, but I don't think I would characterize it as "shocked."

Mr. Somers. Okay.

Ms. Zdeb. If I could briefly interject for the record, I think Mr. Baker was maybe taking a few liberties with the prior witnesses' testimony. None of the prior witnesses have used the word "shocked" to describe their reaction. I just wanted to clarify that for the record.

Mr. Somers. Sure. So once you learned the primary sub-source is U.S.-based, the FISA applications all say that he's Russian-based. Do you think that should have been corrected with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance
Court?

Again, I don't -- I am not involved in the probable cause analysis of FISAs, and I don't write FISA applications. That would be on the investigative and operational side.

Mr. Somers. I thought I read somewhere -- I don't have it at my fingertips here -- that you actually raised this issue, though, with, I believe, either OGC or the OI attorney and questioned whether that should be changed.

I believe you're referring to the March email I had with the OGC attorney when I was reviewing the initiation as well as the first renewal for potential release to Congress, and we were evaluating what could be --- what needed to be redacted and what could be left unredacted. And in that email, I noted to the OGC attorney that there was still the line of Russian-based in that and wondered if that needed to be changed.

Mr. Somers. And what response did you get back?

I did not get a response back.

Mr. Somers. Did you understand that at least at some point in time -- maybe it was after the interview, maybe it was before -- that the primary sub-source had some sort of contractual or some sort of employee-employer relationship with Christopher Steele or Orbis Business Intelligence?

I believe that came up during the
1 interview itself.

2 Mr. Somers. Do you believe that should have been
disclosed to the FISC?

3 Again, that's not -- I'm not the one who
evaluates what needs to be disclosed to the FISC and what
doesn't need to be disclosed to the FISC.

4 Mr. Somers. What was your role in writing the -- what
we have is a 57-page summary of your 3-day -- the FBI's 3-
day interview with the primary sub-source. What was your
role in writing that summary?

5 I was the primary writer.

6 Mr. Somers. And was that summary written as -- was it
a compilation of 302s put into one document, or was it
written that way as a 57-page --

7 It was written that way. Excuse me. I
need to speak to the FBI attorney one moment.

8 Mr. Somers. Sure.

9 [Witness confers with counsel.]

10 back. Could you repeat the
question, please?

11 Mr. Somers. Yes. I think what I was asking you was
whether the 57-page summary was sort of an original
document or whether it was put together based on 302s of
the interview with the primary sub-source.

12 It was not based on 302s, no.
Mr. Somers. Were there 302s separate from the 57-page summary of that interview?

So there were drafts that were put together that were shared with the case agent, and then from that I compiled the full document and sent that to the case agent, and the case agent uploaded it to our system of record.

Mr. Somers. Okay. The input -- so you drafted it. You sent it to the case agent for his review. Is that correct?

Correct.

Mr. Somers. Was his review -- was that all done electronically, by email, or by making edits? Or did you guys have conversations about it?

I think my recollection was via email. I don't recall there were many edits going on back and forth.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Did you discuss the interview with the case agent after it took place?

I don't recall extensive conversations about it, but I'm sure we did.

Mr. Somers. Did you discuss the interview every day after it was -- after each session was completed with the case agent?

I think we had kind of a little bit of after-action, but it wasn't an extensive amount.
Mr. Somers. Okay. So you complete eventually this 57-page-long summary that we've been provided. What did you do with this summary once it was completed?

I provided the summary to the case agent, and the case agent subsequently entered it, as I said, into our system of record.

Mr. Somers. What is your system of record?

One second so I can talk to the FBI to make sure I use the exact proper criteria and language for this classification level.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back.

Mr. Somers. Okay.

So it was inserted into our system of record, which is called "Sentinel," "FBI Sentinel."

Mr. Somers. So once it was in Sentinel, who had access to this summary?

Everybody on the Crossfire Hurricane team would have had access to it.

Mr. Somers. What about Peter Strzok?

I believe so.

Mr. Somers. Bill Priestap?

I believe so.

Mr. Somers. What about Lisa Page?
I don't know about that.

Mr. Somers. What about either the Director or the Deputy Director?

Don't know about that either.

Mr. Somers. All right. So you complete the summary. That's the written document. Were there any meetings about the primary sub-source interview?

I don't recall having any group meetings about the primary source interview. This was the period of time where we weren't really having team meetings as it was the January to March period.

Mr. Somers. Did it come up in any other meeting?

I provided, again, a two-page summary that was provided to a number of people, and I believe that -- yeah, I did a two-page summary that was provided to a number of people.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Did you ever discuss the primary sub-source interview with Peter Strzok?

Not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. Or Bill Priestap?

I may have with Bill Priestap, but I don't recall exactly.

Mr. Somers. The Director?

Not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. The Deputy Director?
Again, not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. Lisa Page?

Again, not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. What about the OGC unit chief?

I don't recall having a conversation with the OGC unit chief either.

Mr. Somers. SSA-1?

I'm not sure I had a talk with SSA-1 about it.

Mr. Somers. What about -- I think I might -- I think the SSA-1 may have rotated off by that point in time. The supervisory special agent in charge of the Carter Page investigation, did you --

I may have discussed it -- I may have discussed it with SSA-2.

Mr. Somers. Did you discuss it with -- you may have?

You don't recall?

I don't recall exactly.

Mr. Somers. What about with Jen Boone?

I believe, yes, with Jen Boone.

Mr. Somers. And what did you discuss with her?

I think she was one of the recipients of the two-page summary memo, if I recall correctly.

Mr. Somers. Did you discuss any inconsistencies between the Steele reporting and what the primary sub-
source told you with Jen Boone?

I don't recall going into detail about the inconsistencies with Jen Boone.

Mr. Somers. Do you recall discussing the inconsistencies with anybody at the FBI?

I don't recall -- outside of documenting the interview, I don't remember conversations where we outlined or discussed the inconsistencies.

Mr. Somers. How about anybody at DOJ?

Not to my recollection.

Mr. Somers. At some point in time, the representation switches in the FISA, I think for the final two renewals, that the sub-source was truthful and cooperative. Do you recall that language?

I do recall that language.

Mr. Somers. I think on page 190 of the IG report, it says -- and this is not the IG report saying it. It's what is in the FISA applications going forward: "the FBI found the Russian-based sub-source to be truthful and cooperative." Do you recall where that language came from?

I do not recall where that language came from.

Mr. Somers. Did you believe the primary sub-source to be truthful and cooperative?

I think my statement to the IG was
something along the lines of, "I don't think I could say a
blanket statement covering truthful and cooperative there.

Mr. Somers. Okay. On page 211 of the IG report, it
says, "The Supervisory Intel Analyst said that the
information from the interview with the Primary Sub-source
provided details used to identify sub-sources referenced in
Steele's reports, which assisted with the investigation."
Is that accurate?

That is accurate.

Mr. Somers. That sounds like there's like an extra
step in there, though. Why didn't you just ask the primary
sub-source who his sources were?

Can you ask that again? I'm not sure I
understand what you mean by a separate step there.

Mr. Somers. Well, it says the primary sub-source
provided details used to identify sub-source's reference in
Steele's reports. Instead of getting details from the
primary sub-source that would then allow you to identify
sub-sources, did you ask the primary sub-source who any of
his sources were?

No. We asked the sub-source who his sub-
sources were, and he provided information, and then we were
able to find other additional information about them.

Mr. Somers. So you didn't use details to identify
sub-source's reference in Steele's reports?
I think the -- I would say that the sub-source provided information during the course of the interviews, including the names of some of his sub-sources that helped us to basically then build additional information on those sub-sources.

Mr. Somers. Okay, but not identification, just additional information about those sub-sources?

Right -- again, I'm kind of unclear. I would say during the interview the sub-source gave us the names of some of his sub-sources.

Mr. Somers. So that's how you would identify them. Maybe we're just talking past each other. So I think you've answered my question, though. He gave you the names of some of his sub-sources.

Yes.

Mr. Somers. So, again, further down on page 211, it says, "However, in some instances, statements the Primary Sub-source made about what his/her sources told him/her -- and what he/she then provided to Steele -- were inconsistent with information attributed to his/her sources in Steele's reporting, as well as in the first Carter Page FISA application and Renewal Application No. 1....most team members told us that they either were not aware of the inconsistencies or, if they were aware, did not make the connection that the inconsistencies affected aspects of the..."
FISA applications. Further, Case Agent 1 and the Supervisory Intel Analyst told us that the Primary Sub-
source may have been `minimizing' certain aspects of what he/she told Steele."

Why didn't you make other members of the Crossfire Hurricane team aware of the inconsistencies?

Again, I documented the inconsistencies, as I am required to do, and those inconsistencies were put into the file, and that file was available to people on the Crossfire Hurricane team.

Mr. Somers. But you didn't take the -- you did not take the further step of going and talking to anyone about the inconsistencies?

Again, the case agent was there. The case agent is the one who maintains the FISA. I don't think I necessarily felt like I needed to go with the case agent being there.

Mr. Somers. I'm not asking whether you needed to. I'm just asking whether you did.

I don't recall going and talking to people affirmatively about inconsistencies.

Mr. Somers. Okay. And at the end of that quote, that long quote I just read, it says that the "Case Agent...and the Supervisory Intel Analyst told us that the Primary Sub-
source may have been `minimizing' certain aspects of what
he/she told Steele." What did you mean by that?

I think what I meant by that at the time was that many -- I mean, these reports had now been open in the press and that there may have been situations in which Steele was attempting to distance -- I'm sorry, excuse me.

Not Steele. The primary sub-source was attempting to distance himself or to minimize some of what he had told Steele when talking to the FBI in this instance.

Mr. Somers. And so you, I believe, said that you did not believe the primary sub-source -- you said the primary sub-source may not have been completely truthful. Would minimization be part of that?

I think I would -- I think yes, I would say minimization could be part of that.

Mr. Somers. Did you ever see the -- do you recall whether you ever saw the truthful and cooperative note in the FISA applications?

I don't recall seeing that in the FISA application.

Mr. Somers. Did you have any involvement in the June -- June or July 2018 13A letter to the FISA Court?

Not to my recollection, no.

Mr. Somers. "However, the Supervisory Intel" -- this is on page two -- somewhere around 244 or 245. It has your impression that the sub-source may not have been completely
truthful and may have been minimizing certain aspects of what he/she told Steele. "However, the Supervisory Intel Analyst told the OIG that, on the whole, he did not see any reason to doubt the information the Primary Sub-source provided about who he/she received his/her information from, which was the Supervisory Intel Analyst's focus."

So on the whole you believe the primary sub-source was being truthful?

I believe the primary sub-source was being truthful about who his sub-sources were. I don't think he was fabricating sub-sources.

Mr. Somers. What about -- yes, he might not have been fabricating sub-sources. Do you think he was on the whole truthful about everything he said in the interview?

I think he was truthful with respect to relating what his sub-sources were telling him.

Mr. Somers. Did the interview, the January interview with the primary sub-source give you any pause about using the -- continuing to use the Steele dossier information in the subsequent FISA applications?

I don't recall it giving me pause.

Mr. Somers. Did it cause you to reassess the Steele reporting in any way?

I think it led us to think that we had to do additional digging to determine whether or not we could,
again, confirm or disconfirm any of this. It meant we had
more work to do.

Mr. Somers. How did you convey that more digging
needed -- I'm assuming -- you said "we" needed to do more
digging. I assume that means the analysts that -- maybe
among others that worked for you. How did you convey that
they needed to do more digging?

I had analysts start to look at some of
the sub-sources and to determine, again, using the same
type of evaluating FBI holdings, OGA holdings, open source,
to see whether or not we could pull any information on any
of the sub-sources provided by the primary sub-source.

Mr. Somers. Do you know if your analysts had reviewed
the 57-page summary?

My analysts had seen parts, if not the
whole, of the 57-page summary, yes.

Mr. Somers. And then at some point after the primary
sub-source interview, I believe -- and I believe this
relates to the primary sub-source interview -- you told the
IG's office -- I think it's on page 190 of the IG's report:
"The Supervisory Intel Analyst explained that the team
members believed that an interview with Steele `would be a
good way of potentially looking to see whether or not [the
Primary Sub-source] is giving us accurate information [or]
did [the Primary Sub-source] tell [Steele] something
different."

Is that an accurate reflection in the IG report of your --

That is an accurate reflection, yes.

Mr. Somers. And I believe that it further says that that interview didn't occur until September of 2017. Do you know why it took so long for the interview to occur? I say --

I do, but I --

Mr. Somers. Go ahead.

I do, but I wouldn't be able to talk about it in this forum.

Mr. Somers. Did anyone ever consider not using the Steele dossier information in the two FISA applications that were filed during that time period?

Not to my recollection. But, again, I wasn't the one who was drafting the FISA applications.

Mr. Somers. But you don't recall any discussion of, hey, maybe we ought to put a pause on using the Steele information until we talk to him again?

I don't recall any discussions of that.

Mr. Somers. On page 192 to 193 of the IG report, it says, "FBI documents reflect that another of Steele's sub-sources who reviewed the election reporting told the FBI in August 2017 that whatever information in the Steele reports that was attributable to him/her had been `exaggerated' and
that he/she did not recognize anything as originating specifically from him/her. The Primary Sub-source told the FBI that he/she believed this sub-source was `one of the key sources for the "Trump dossier"' and the source for allegations concerning Michael Cohen and events in Prague contained in Reports 135, 136, and 166, as well as Report 94's allegations concerning the alleged meeting between Carter Page and Igor Divyekin. The Supervisory Intel Analyst told us that he believed this Steele sub-source may have been attempting to minimize his/her role in the election reporting following its release to the public."

Is that your recollection that you believed this Steele sub-source may have been attempting to minimize his/her role in the election reporting?

In some things, yes.

Mr. Somers. Why did you assume that they were trying to minimize versus being truthful?

Unfortunately, information regarding this sentence, I'm just going to have to let stand what's in there because in this forum I wouldn't be able to discuss this in any form in a way that would be at the level at which we are right now classification-wise.

Mr. Somers. Okay. But you did believe that the source was minimizing?

In some aspects, yes.
Mr. Somers. And you were ware of the information from a highly credible source regarding Cohen and the events in Prague? I think you testified to that earlier.

Correct.

Mr. Somers. But even given that information, you still thought the source was minimizing.

I'm not -- I think in this case, I think, again, where I thought the source was minimizing or what the source was minimizing about I don't think I can talk about here in this forum.

Mr. Somers. Okay. So you don't think the source -- there's something specific that you think the source was attempting to minimize?

I think there were some aspects that were specific that the source was trying to minimize, yes.

Mr. Somers. Did they relate to Michael Cohen and events in Prague?

Again, I'm not going to talk about that.

Mr. Somers. I think you spoke about minimizing, and you said there were "any number of reasons that a source might minimize." Is that accurate?

I believe that's accurate.

Mr. Somers. Would one reason that a source might minimize be because the source was an agent of a foreign government?
That's possible, but if a source was an agent of a foreign government and attempting to -- attempting to cede information to the United States, I'm not sure they would minimize in that sense. They might want to actually give more details, depending. I think it's very circumstance-dependent.

Mr. Somers. We talked about this some earlier, I think at least with regard to Divyekin. Hopefully I'm pronouncing his name correctly, although I'm not sure he'll be offended if I'm not. And I'd just like to ask -- and you may not know. I mean, you're not -- obviously, you said you're not the author of the FISA application. But I'd just like to run through three pieces of exculpatory -- what I'll characterize as exculpatory information just for purposes of asking the question. But I'd just like to ask you why this material, if you know, did not make it into the any of the Page FISA applications, the first being, you know, do you know why the Divyekin -- the Page denial of even knowing Divyekin, why that did not make it into the FISA application?

Again, as an analyst, I'm not a lawyer. I don't -- I'm not involved with the probable cause evaluation within a FISA. I would say I'm not the right person to ask that question.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Do you know why the Page denials
regarding his involvement in the Republican platform regarding Ukraine did not make it into the FISA applications?

I would give the same answer.

Mr. Somers. And what about Page's denials that he literally never met Paul Manafort and never said one word to him? Do you know why that didn't make it in the FISA applications?

I would give the same answer.

Mr. Somers. Did you use all this material, though, in analyzing other material, all these confidential human source recordings of Page?

I think some of the information taken from CHS interactions were analyzed and used in analysis, yes.

Mr. Somers. Do you know why Page's relationship with the CIA, previous relationship with the CIA, did not make it into the FISA applications?

Again, I'd give the same answer as before. I'm not a lawyer. I don't evaluate probable cause assessments with respect to FISA applications.

Mr. Somers. Do you know why information that Person 1 was an egotist, a boaster, and, according to Steele, may exaggerate -- may engage in embellishments didn't make it into the FISA application with regards to the information provided by Person 1?
Same answer.

Mr. Somers. Okay. I think to start the interview, I had asked you whether you'd reviewed the IG report, read or reviewed the IG report, and you had answered that you had. In reviewing the IG report, did you review the 17 significant errors and omissions identified by the IG?

I understand that there were 17, yes.

Mr. Somers. Do you agree that there were errors and omissions?

I wouldn't be the person to evaluate whether or not those are errors or omissions.

Mr. Somers. Did you review the 50 or so Woods errors in the appendix to the IG report?

I read through those, yes.

Mr. Somers. Do you agree that those were errors?

Again, I'm not the person to make the assessment as to whether or not those were Woods errors.

Mr. Somers. The IG's office also determined that the Crossfire Hurricane team's receipt of Steele's election reporting on September 19, 2016, played a central and essential role in the FBI's and the Department's decision to seek the FISA order. Do you agree with the IG's assessment that the Steele reporting played a central and essential role?

I have no reason to disagree with the IG's
assessment on that point.

Mr. Somers. Getting back to these 17 errors and omissions, whether or not you agree whether they're errors or omissions, were you aware of any of these errors -- what the IG characterizes as errors and omissions prior to the initial or any of the subsequent renewals of the Carter Page FISA application?

Again, I'm not going to -- I'm not going to characterize one way or another whether something's an error and omission. I'm not the person to actually --

Mr. Somers. I'm asking you -- I'm asking whether you were aware of the fact. I'm not asking you to characterize. There's 17 what the IG characterized as errors and omissions, and I'm asking whether you were aware of any of them prior to the filings of the Carter Page initial or renewal FISA applications.

Mr. Heberling. You know, Zach -- it's [redacted]. I don't really think it's fair to put 17 on his memory. If you want to take any one of them at a time and ask him factual questions, that's fine. But I certainly couldn't remember all that, and I don't think we should put on [redacted] memory what he recalls or doesn't recall about 17 errors and omissions, at least as alleged by the IG.

Mr. Baker. While Zach is looking at that, I just have a general question, certainly in the context of Crossfire,
but, I mean, if you could also include in your answer a broader scenario. Was there a concern at the FBI -- again, specifically to Crossfire, but maybe more broadly, was there a concern about leaking of things coming out of the Hoover Building that weren't supposed to come out to the press or just in general a concern about leaks?

I would say there's always a general concern about leaks, but I also know that in the IG report, it was documented that there were concerns about leaks and the potential for leaks with respect to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

Mr. Baker. Were you aware at the time that there had to be enhanced operational security or there had to be, you know, bringing people into Washington Field -- were there actually steps taken in the forming of the Crossfire team or the investigation to recognize the potential for leaks?

I think to my recollection the very fact that it was done as a "headquarters special" was part and parcel of trying to minimize the potential for leaks.

Mr. Baker. What exactly is a "headquarters special"?

I think it's -- a headquarters special is nomenclature that's used to designate maybe a special project or an investigation that the decision is made to actually run it out of headquarters rather than having a field office run it.
Mr. Baker. But yet there were parts of this that were still or subsequently run by field offices. Is that correct?

Yes, because the Crossfire Hurricane investigation morphed over time in terms of structurally.

Mr. Baker. So then there was no further concern about the leaks that ultimately started the case as centralized at headquarters? There was no longer a concern about that?

I think there was always a concern about leaks, but the fact is the Crossfire Hurricane structure morphed and changed over time.

Mr. Baker. Was there -- I mean, I understand there's always a concern about leaks, but was the culture at the FBI during this time one where there were a high incidence of leaks that was causing concern for the managers?

I'm going to talk to FBI counsel for just a moment.

Mr. Baker. Sure.

[Witness confers with counsel.]

back. Would you mind repeating the question for me, please?

Mr. Baker. I was just asking the centralization of the case initially --

Excuse me. Sorry. We're getting a lot of feedback here. Let me figure out what this feedback is.
Mr. Baker. That sounds quiet now.

How about now? It's better now.

Mr. Baker. Yeah, it sounds good.

Apologies.

Mr. Baker. The centralization of the case at headquarters initially, it seemed to be there was a concern about leaks, and then subsequently there's cases that are spun back out to the field. I was just curious. Was there no longer a concern about leaks? And then sort of as an add-on to that, was the concern about leaks just a general operational concern, or was there a heightened incidence of leaks at FBI headquarters during this time?

I do not recall any heightened concerns about leaks out of FBI headquarters.

Mr. Baker. But the reason for the centralization initially of the case was to keep a close hold?

Correct.

Mr. Baker. Were there operational impediments because it was being run out of headquarters rather than being run out of a field office?

I wouldn't say operational impediments, but as is discussed in the IG report, there were -- you know, there's no evidence room at headquarters and the like. So there are aspects that still have to be -- there still has to be interaction with field offices.
Mr. Baker. So even though it may be or it may seem centralized, the field office is really never completely cut out of it because they have capabilities -- because they're used to running investigations, they have capabilities that headquarters just normally wouldn't have?

I would say that's a fair statement, yes.

Mr. Baker. Okay.

Mr. Somers. Just on leaks, I think you -- and I don't want to rebut questioning from the last round, but I think you did characterize that there weren't many leaks or something to that extent in the last round with the minority. But I'd just ask you, you're aware of a September 23rd Yahoo News article, are you not, "U.S. intel officials probe ties between Trump adviser and Kremlin" by Michael Isikoff? You're aware of that article?

I am.

Mr. Somers. You're aware of an October 31, 2016, article in Mother Jones, "A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump"?

I am.

Mr. Somers. And are you aware of a February 2017 New York Times article about contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia?
Mr. Somers. Okay. That's all I have.

Mr. Baker. I just have two quick points, one sort of clean-up. Earlier, but not so long ago, regarding the learning that the primary sub-source was domestically based, I had said that maybe the word "surprise" -- and I said "shock" might be my word. I want to make it clear for the record that I had the impression from the answer given by the witness to, I believe, my question in a previous deposition was including both verbal and nonverbal communication, and I was definitely given the impression that the reaction to learning the source, the primary sub-source was domestically based was more than just a "casual surprise."

And then, finally, at some point I think you said earlier you left the Crossfire team because the work had been absorbed by the Special Counsel's office?

Yes, that would be correct.

Mr. Baker. And what time period would that have been?

It would have been May of 2017.

Mr. Baker. And when --

Mr. Somers. So when the Special Counsel -- just to be clear. This is probably clear to everybody, but I'm just not recalling it. When the Special Counsel's team is formed, the Crossfire Hurricane team basically went away? I mean, they may have been subsumed, but there was not a
separate Crossfire Hurricane team at the FBI while the Mueller investigation is ongoing. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Somers. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Baker. I guess my final point or question, how long were you on the Special Counsel team from the time that you -- or the case was absorbed over to the Special Counsel and you reported, how long were you on the team from that time?

May of 2017 until middle of 2019.

Mr. Baker. Okay. And I ask this sort of as a follow-up to the leaks questions, but also just I'm curious for operational security. When you left, were you instructed or were you aware of anybody that was instructed to "wipe their phones"?

No.

Mr. Baker. Thank you.

Mr. Somers. I think that's all we have. I don't know if the minority has another round. Obviously, they could raise something that could cause us to ask a few more questions, but we're complete in principle.

Mr. Fausett. I think we're in a position to move forward. We don't have much at all. But, I want to give you the chance if you want a break.

No, I think we can go forward.
Mr. Fausett. Okay. So I just want to kind of build on one topic of conversation in this last round, which was this notion of the primary sub-source being Russia-based and then not Russia-based, and just a basic question. Could an individual have meaningful relationships or insights into the activities of a foreign government even if they don't live in that country?

Yes.

Mr. Fausett. And just again, I'm sure it's apparent to you, but for the record, why is that the case?

Communication changes make it possible to keep in communication with individuals and even securely communicate with individuals globally.

Mr. Fausett. All right. And I think really the last two rounds there were a number of questions that you were asked about the Carter Page FISA applications and some of the errors that were identified by the Inspector General in his report, and I just want to follow up with a couple of questions.

First, to put the FISA errors in context, only 14 pages of the 448-page Mueller report addressed Carter Page, and in December of last year, when Inspector General Horowitz testified before our committee for 6 hours about the errors he identified in the Page FISA applications, he stated the errors do not call into question "any part of
the Special Counsel's report." Having worked in support of both Crossfire Hurricane and the Special Counsel's office investigation, do you have any evidence that the Page FISA errors call into question any of Special Counsel Mueller's findings?

I have no evidence to suggest that it calls into question the Special Counsel's findings.

Mr. Fausett. Okay. The Inspector General recommended a number of corrective actions, including changes to the Woods form and the FISA request form, which are designed to ensure that OI at National Security Division receives all relevant information, including confidential human source information, needed to prepare FISA applications. Director Wray has accepted and agreed to implement all of the Inspector General's recommended corrective actions.

Do you have any reason to believe that the FBI is not taking appropriate steps in response to the Inspector General's report?

No, I have no reason to believe that.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any reason to believe that the corrective actions that the Inspector General recommended and which the FBI is now taking will not adequately address the errors that the Inspector General identified?

I don't have any reason to believe that
the policies and procedures that they're putting in place
on the basis of the recommendations of the IG report won't
help the FBI in that area.

Mr. Fausett. Do you have any recommendations of your
own beyond those provided by the Inspector General for
improving or reforming the FISA process?

I would not be in a place to actually make
recommendations as to how to reform or improve the FISA
process.

Mr. Fausett. The Inspector General noted, and I'm
going to quote from Footnote 499 of the report now,
"members of the Crossfire Hurricane team told us that their
performance should be assessed in light of the full scope
of responsibilities they had in 2016, in connection with
the FBI's...counterintelligence investigation, and that the
Carter Page FISA was a narrow aspect of their overall
responsibilities."

Is there any additional contextual information about
your responsibilities as a member of the Crossfire
Hurricane team that you think is important to a full
understanding of the errors that the Inspector General
identified?

I don't think I have any comment on that.

Mr. Fausett. You were asked earlier about an email
you sent to FBI lawyers in September of 2016 forwarding
claims from Steele Report 94 that Carter Page secretly met with a Kremlin-tied official Igor Divyekin -- I'm not sure how you pronounce it, but I'll go with that -- in July 2016. In that email, again, you asked, "Does this put us at least *that* much closer to a full FISA on [Carter Page]?" That's on page 125 of the report.

At the time you sent that email, just to be clear, you had not yet had an opportunity to speak with the primary sub-source. Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. So when you asked the FBI lawyers whether the excerpt from Report 94 would be helpful in pursuing the FISA warrant, you had no independent reason to question the credibility of Mr. Steele's reporting at that point. Correct?

That's correct.

Mr. Fausett. And, in fact, you told the Office of the Inspector General that earlier that same day you had "researched information on Divyekin that elevated the significance of this particular allegation." Is that correct?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. I think we had a little back-and-forth with your attorney about the characterization of that question, so I just want to be clear here. Did you ask the
lawyers, the FBI lawyers, whether the excerpt from Report 94 would be helpful in pursuing a FISA warrant because you were politically biased against Donald Trump?

No.

Mr. Fausett. Did you ask it because you had an anticipated outcome or a preferred outcome in mind for the investigation?

No.

Mr. Fausett. In fact, you told the Office of the Inspector General -- I'm quoting from page 125 of the Horowitz report -- that you "wondered whether OGC would find that this information, along with the totality of the other information on Carter Page, brought them closer to probable cause on Page." Isn't that why you sent the email?

That is correct.

Mr. Fausett. And in your experience as an intelligence analyst at the FBI, is it unusual for an analyst to want to know whether there's enough evidence in hand to warrant a Court order for surveillance?

That is not uncommon.

Mr. Fausett. And why is that?

I mean, again, analysts aren't the ones that are making the probable cause assessment.

Mr. Fausett. And I think you've been very clear
about, you know, the role that you have played with respect
to the FISA applications, so I don't want to go through
that litany again. But I do want to be clear about one
thing. To the best of your knowledge, were any of the
reports -- or any of the errors, excuse me, identified by
the Inspector General in his report the result of political
bias?

Again, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Fausett. To your knowledge, did anyone in an FBI
leadership role, whether it's Director Comey, Deputy
Director McCabe, Peter Strzok, or anyone else in your chain
of command direct you or any other member of Crossfire
Hurricane to commit any of the errors identified in the
Inspector General's report?

The errors that are alleged in the report, not to my -- no. I would say the answer is no.

Mr. Fausett. All right. Sara, I'll defer to you if
you have any others.

Ms. Zdeb. I have nothing else other than to say thank
you very much, for your time and for being with
us. We also wanted to acknowledge that it is -- we
recognize that it is not the norm for the FBI to make
someone at your level and your position available for this
sort of interview, and, in fact, as we understand it, it is
contrary to their typical practice in investigations such
as this one. And so we appreciate your time today. Thank you.

Thank you. Yes, thank you.

Mr. Somers, it's [redacted]. Before we go off, can I add one thing to the record?

Mr. Somers. Sure.

[redacted]. You and I exchanged an email offline. I just want to make clear for the record that [redacted], whose name came up on a couple different occasions, was not at the time and is not now to my knowledge an SES employee. So we would request that his name be redacted in any transcript.

Mr. Somers. Sure. Just to clarify on that subject, I think I was asking [redacted] who his DADs were during the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. I think we got Dina Corsi being one. Were there others?

Sorry, that were in my chain of command in terms of DADs?

Mr. Somers. Yes, in your chain of command.

So, again, at the beginning of Crossfire Hurricane, the chain of command went me to Moffa to Priestap. The second part of -- the second part, excuse me, of Crossfire Hurricane, which would have been the January to late March period, the chain of command went from me to Moffa to Dina Corsi to Priestap. And then in
the third chain -- or the third period, excuse me, the March to June period, it would have gone from me to the individual that [REDACTED] just mentioned has to be redacted to Priestap.

Mr. Somers: So that individual is the intel section chief?

[REDACTED] No. On the third it would not be the intel section chief. He had a position -- he would have been an SSA at that point, I believe. Or a unit chief? A unit chief. Sorry.

Mr. Somers: I'm sorry. Okay. So a unit chief. So no DAD and no section chief?

[REDACTED] Correct.

Mr. Somers: Okay. I think that's all we have. I just wanted to clear that up since we were taking the individual's name off the record. I do want to thank you for appearing remotely today, taking the time out of your day to discuss these matters with us, and we appreciate that.

Mr. Baker: Yes, thank you very much.

[REDACTED]: Zach, this is [REDACTED] jumping in real quick. There were two references during, I believe, the first round to an OGA that I think were classified, and you indicated that you would make sure they were redacted. I just want to make sure that that gets followed through.
Mr. Somers. Yeah, I said the name of an agency, and I shouldn't have. Is that what you're referring to, [Redacted]? Yes. I just wanted to make sure that it didn't get lost in the --

Mr. Somers. Yeah, we'll take that out of there, since now I've really highlighted it by saying I shouldn't have said that.

All right. If that's everything, we'll go off the record.

Mr. Linehan. Hey, Zach? Zach?

Mr. Somers. Yes?

Mr. Linehan. Before we go off the record, I just want to confirm that we'll have an opportunity to review the transcript?

Mr. Somers. Yeah, if we decide to release the transcript, we will give you an opportunity to review it.

Mr. Linehan. Great. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Somers. All right.

Mr. Baker. Thank you, everybody.

Mr. Fausett. Take care, everyone.

[Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the interview was concluded.]